

## **The Atchison County Library is pleased to announce the construction of a new library and community center in Rock Port**

The Atchison County Library is pleased to announce the construction of a new library and community center in Rock Port, Missouri. This significant project follows the library's acquisition of properties adjacent to its current facility in July of 2024.

The library's Rock Port branch, built in 1851, has faced structural challenges, including a 2018 evaluation recommending substantial roof and facade replacements. The new facility will provide a much-needed upgrade and expansion for the community.

The new library and community center will be a carefully planned, multipurpose space designed to cater to the diverse needs of Atchison County residents. The building will comprise a range of amenities, including:

- A dedicated children's area with an adjoining mother's room
- Tripled shelf space for an extended book collection
- A community conference room for public use (meetings and gatherings, etc.)
- An employee break room
- Two family-style public restrooms
- A coffee and conversation area
- An interior walking track
- Green space with outdoor seating
- A computer lab for technological access
- A genealogy room for historical research

The library has collaborated with Creal, Clark & Siefert, a reputable architectural firm with experience in Atchison County and library construction. This partnership ensures that the new facility will be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. They are currently renovating a building in Tarkio for the Atchison County Health Center and have worked on renovation projects for Rolling Hills Library in Savannah, Missouri, and Mound City Public Library in Mound City, Missouri.

“Words cannot express our excitement in announcing this project,” remarked Jennifer Roup, Library Director. “The new library and community center will serve as a valuable resource for our town for generations to come.”

Jennifer further emphasized that the new library will offer three times the shelf space for books, highlighting that the facility offers more than just an extensive collection of literature.

“I believe our community will appreciate all aspects of the new library, but the children’s area and the indoor walking path will be a huge asset to the building,” Jennifer stated.

She also noted that the board, staff, and architects have conducted numerous meetings to brainstorm ways to make the space as useful as possible for the community. Their objective is to create a hub of resources for Rock Port and provide a communal gathering place for all age groups. With a genealogy room, computer lab, quiet spaces to read and study, and a conference room, there will be something for all community members to use and enjoy.

“We want our community to know this new facility reaches far beyond books. It will be such an amazing space for people of all ages and stages of life for many generations,” said Janet Griffin, Library Board President.

Demolition of the existing structures is scheduled to begin in February. During construction, the Rock Port branch will temporarily relocate to the Farm Bureau building on Hwy. 136 and Main Street (formerly Midwest Chic Boutique). The temporary library will continue to offer books, free Wi-Fi, computer access, printing, and customer service. While the book collection will be limited, new arrivals and popular titles will be available and can be easily transferred to and from other locations upon request.

To facilitate the next crucial steps of the project, a Friends of the Library group will be formed shortly, and information on joining will be provided soon. Interested individuals seeking information about joining Friends of the Library and fundraising initiatives can contact Jennifer at [director@aclibrary.com](mailto:director@aclibrary.com).

The library will continue to provide updates on the project’s progress as construction advances. Residents can follow along on Facebook or read updates on the library’s website.