

FORT BEND COUNTY LIBRARIES

NEWS RELEASE

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Public Information Office

SIENNA BRANCH LIBRARY OPENS APRIL 24; OLYMPIC CHAMPION MARK LOPEZ TO BE GUEST SPEAKER

The grand-opening ceremony of Fort Bend County Libraries' Sienna Branch Library will take place on Saturday, April 24, beginning at 10:00 am, at the new library, located at 8411 Sienna Springs Blvd. in Missouri City. The library is a joint project between Fort Bend County and Houston Community College.

Mark Lopez, silver medalist in Taekwondo at the 2008 Olympic Games, will be the guest speaker. Lopez replaces Dr. Mae Jemison, who had a last-minute scheduling conflict. Officials from the county, Houston Community College, and Missouri City will also attend the ceremony.

Lopez, along with his sister Diana and brother Steven, made sports history when all three siblings made the USA Taekwondo team and won medals at the Olympic Games in Beijing. Having begun taekwondo when he was five years old, Lopez is currently ranked #1 in the world in his weight class, and is training for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. A native of Fort Bend County, Lopez graduated Magna cum Laude from the University of St. Thomas with a degree in Finance and a minor in Philosophy.

Located at 8411 Sienna Springs Boulevard, the library sits on a 4.5-acre site adjacent to the new Houston Community College campus which opened last fall. The new library, designed by Stoa/Golemon/Bolullo Architects, is a two-story building, with 44,989 square feet, making it the second largest library in the system. On opening day, the library will employ 21 full-time staff and 18 part-time staff.

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The library is part of a \$130-million bond referendum approved by voters in May 2006, which included \$24.5 million for three county library projects -- the Sienna Branch Library, a library in partnership with the University of Houston campus in Sugar Land, and renovations at George Memorial Library in Richmond.

The library was designed to be family-friendly, with individual areas for children, teens, and adults. The general library areas on the first and second floors are enhanced by natural light from a series of glazed windows framing spectacular views of the neighborhood and community college.

The library includes community meeting rooms, study rooms, a puppet theater, and a computer lab for technology classes and general public use. An additional 36 computers will be available for public use outside of the computer lab. The library has free WiFi access for individuals wishing to bring their own laptop computers to the library.

Beginning in June, the Youth Services department will have a full range of children's programs, including Mother Goose Time for infants, Toddler Time for babies from 12 to 36 months of age, Story Time for 3 to 6-year-old children, and school-aged programs for children in grades 1 through 5. Programs designed for teens in grades 6 through 8 will also be available.

The library will offer introductory computer classes for adults. Patrons may learn computer basics such as how to use a computer, how to search the Internet, and how to use Microsoft Office programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

A wide variety of books for children and adults are available for recreational reading and research. Magazines, newspapers, and audio-visual materials are also on hand. The library offers audio books that can be downloaded from home, as well as a generous assortment of databases that patrons may access in the library or from home.

The Sienna Branch Library is the first library in the system to utilize Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in its check-out system. This new feature is built in to the outside and inside book drops, and enables items to be automatically checked in as they are returned in the book drop. The Sienna library has six self-check machines with RFID technology – four in the Circulation (check-out) department, one in the Adult Services department, and one in the Youth Services department.

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“The Sienna Branch Library is the first county library/college partnership in the Fort Bend County library system,” says Library Director Clara Russell. “Part of our library mission is to provide an environment of lifelong learning and enrichment for the entire, diverse community, and this new venture just reinforces our commitment to providing a continuum of service for people of all ages. We hope the residents in the area will find the new library a pleasant and enjoyable place where they can study or just relax with a good book.”

The hours of operation for the new branch library will be as follows: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 am - 9:00 pm; Friday, 7:30 am - 5:00 pm; and Saturday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. The library will be closed on Sundays.

For more information, call the libraries’ Public Information Office at 281-341-2677.

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