



Santa Rosa County Public Information ▪ 4499 Pine Forest Road ▪ Milton, Florida ▪ 32583 ▪ (850) 983-5254

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#091023-LIBHRS

Contact: Joy Tsubooka
Public Information Officer
(850) 983-5254, (850) 393-8304 Cell
joyt@santarosa.fl.gov

Library Hours Modified

Due to declining county revenues and a reduction of 59 percent in the state’s aid to Santa Rosa County Libraries, commissioners approved the county administrator’s recommendation to reduce library hours by five hours per week at the October 22 committee meeting. The major affect of the declining revenues caused by the downturn in the economy, is reductions in staffing, including two fulltime positions and nine student positions or 215 hours per week.

Based on library usage statistics compiled over three years and over 700 surveys recently completed by library users, the following new library hours will be effective November 9 in hopes of meeting both residents’ needs and the manpower required to operate the five county libraries:

	CURRENT	Hrs/day	New Hours		Change	New Hours		Change
All Libraries			Gulf Breeze, Jay, Milton, Pace			Navarre		
Mon	9:00-7:00	10	9:00-5:00	8	-2	10:00-6:00	8	-2
Tues	9:00-7:00	10	11:00-7:00	8	-2	10:00-6:00	8	-2
Wed	9:00-7:00	10	11:00-7:00	8	-2	10:00-6:00	8	-2
Thurs	9:00-1:00	4	9:00-1:00	4	none	10:00-6:00	8	4
Fri	9:00-4:00	7	9:00-5:00	8	1	10:00-2:00	4	-3
Sat	9:00-1:00	4	9:00-1:00	4	none	10:00-2:00	4	0
Total Hours		45		40	-5		40	-5

Based on the survey responses, staff input and library usage statistics, the new library hours at the Gulf Breeze, Milton, Pace, and Jay libraries provide flexible library hours that include morning, evening, and weekend hours based on:

- Patterns of use for students who use the library for homework that generally depend on working parents to take them to the library after work, typically come between 5 and 7 p.m. from early to mid week
- Working adults typically visit the library after 5:30 p.m.
- High early morning library usage

The Navarre Library visitors needs differ; therefore the Navarre Library will have a unique new scheduled based on:

- Student library usage is generally from 3-5 p.m. because many families in this area have a stay at home parent that typically bring students earlier in the day.
- Military personnel are a large part of the Navarre work force that leave work between 4-4:30 p.m. and visit the library by 6 p.m.
- Low early morning library usage

The county library director, Linda Hendrix, explains, “Many factors must be considered in making changes to library hours. Our foremost library service goal is to provide the highest possible level of library service to the

greatest number of our citizens, while also considering the welfare and safety of library employees, schedules for youth programs and community groups who use library space for their meetings.”

While usage of the library system continues to rise with a 27 percent increase in checkouts for fiscal year 2008/09, and the annual visitor count increasing 15 percent or nearly 640,000 visitors, the days and times residents actually use the libraries echoed previous usage statistics. Usage patterns have remained steady with 78 percent of checkouts occurring Monday through Thursday, 16 percent on Friday, and six percent on Saturday. Likewise, 80 percent of library traffic occurs Monday through Thursday, 14 percent on Friday, and only six percent on Saturday. Both checkouts and visitor counts are consistent for all three years of data collection at all five libraries.

Thanks to technology, the impact of reducing library hours is reduced by the availability of 24-hour, seven day a week access to library materials via the library’s Website. The library offers access to over 8,000 electronic sources including consumer magazines and student journals that can be downloaded for personal use. Students can find authoritative coverage for biography, literature, history, social sciences and the consumer can find auto repair, test preparation, investment services, health, online book clubs, downloadable audio books and downloadable DVDs. All it takes is a Santa Rosa County Library card, which can be obtained at any library or through the mail by registering via the Library Website at no cost.

The Santa Rosa County Library System is a department of the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners. Libraries are located in Gulf Breeze, Jay, Milton, Navarre, and Pace. Find further information at www.santarosa.fl.gov/libraries

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