DEDICATION OF THE SOUTH WEST BRANCH LIBRARY

Good afternoon to you all! I’m Virginia Rutledge, Vice chairwoman of the Warren County Library Commission. It is really an honor and I’m very pleased to be a part of welcoming you today at this official opening of the newest branch in our Library System.

For me, and I hope for each of you, the opening of a new library is an opportunity to celebrate the real value that libraries provide to our community. It’s a time when we should re-commit ourselves to the promotion and support of libraries, which continue to directly and indirectly enrich the lives of so many of our fellow citizens.

Do some of you remember the old card catalogs that were ubiquitous in libraries? Some have claimed that libraries, like those old card catalogs, are obsolete in today’s digital, on-line world. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Our libraries continue to provide essential services to our community. For some, it is life-changing just to have free internet access. For others, it is a critical resource to improve their education or find their next job. The way I see it, we are investing in the success and productivity of our neighbors and ourselves.

Our libraries should always be welcoming places where individuals can gather to study, research, explore, create or even just relax. Whether it’s by literally exploring faraway places or feeding the mind to spur imagination and creativity, a library serves as a portal that provides access, and that access can transform someone’s life from a very narrow existence to one that opens up the whole world.

My serving on the Library Commission for over ten years now, with so many dedicated fellow commissioners, has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

We are fortunate to have the talents and the leadership of Maureen Baker Wilkinson, our Library Director. I really appreciate Maureen’s dedication and her constant professionalism. She has always been a generator and strong advocate of new ideas and innovative programs that keep our libraries fresh, engaging and user-friendly for the patrons. She has assembled premier staff at each branch – a staff that serves as the friendly faces of our libraries and are always focused on serving the public and the needs of each individual
who walks through the door. Thank you to all of our librarians and staff and volunteers.

Last but certainly not least, we are thankful for the vision and wise leadership of our Warren County Freeholders, Rick Gardner, Ed Smith and Jason Sarnofski. Your action and commitment was the essential component to realizing the dream of giving a library to residents of southern Warren County. Thank you on behalf of the Library Commission and on behalf of all the residents of Warren County.

This is truly a proud day for us all. Thank you.