



MEDIA RELEASE

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ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNOUNCES IDEA LAB OPENING DAY

Erie, PA – September 25, 2017 – The Erie County Public Library will unveil the completion of Phase 1 of the Blasco Master Plan on Saturday, October 28, at 10 a.m. at the Blasco Memorial Library. A ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring community leaders will be followed by equipment demonstrations and tours.

Phase 1 includes the Idea Lab –a creative and collaborative space for the Erie County community, where people can explore their ideas and learn to turn them into reality. It will feature a public makerspace, a digital media studio, a community classroom, spaces for collaboration, and resources for job seekers and small business development.

“The Idea Lab is just another way that the Erie County Public Library is working to ensure it serves all people of Erie County,” said Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. “The services of the Idea Lab will provide an opportunity for any resident – no matter their age, their education level or their income – to have access to the tools they need to start a business or fuel their entrepreneurial spirit.”

The Idea Lab will give the public access to shared equipment, like 3D printers, sewing machines, and a vinyl cutter, as well as classes on design, technology training, and job seeking taught by community partners and staff.

“Libraries have always been at the forefront of innovation, giving people access to ideas and information in ever-evolving formats,” said Erin Wincek, director of the Erie County Public Library. “Up until the late 1800s, only the wealthy and educated had access to books, but public libraries stepped in to give everyone free access to these resources. In the 1990s, libraries began providing public internet computers to ensure that everyone had the most current information and ideas of the time. And today, libraries continue to ensure their patrons have equal access to educational opportunities by creating shared spaces where patrons can learn design and technology skills, which are increasingly necessary for success.”

Phase 1 work also includes a new public services desk that streamlines service into a central space, the addition of self-service holds and checkouts, and an improved workspace for staff.

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