

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Self Checkout @ Your Library**

**WHAT: self checkout**

**WHO: adults**

**WHEN: available during regular library hours**

**WHERE: Wicomico Public Library, Main Library**

**SALISBURY, MD – May 14, 2009** – In response to customer requests, library customers can now use a credit card in the Main Library to pay library fines and fees at the self service check out computer. In addition to quickly checking out library materials, customers can now see any fines or fees due, scan a credit card to make a payment, and print out a receipt on the spot. In the first two weeks, without announcement or signs, a dozen people have found and used the service to pay nearly \$200 in fines.

This is the latest piece of the Library's Patron Empowerment project, designed to meet the public demand for online and self-service features. In 2007, the local library consortium (including Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester County libraries) received a grant from the IMLS to upgrade the online catalog and related customer services. This allowed improving the catalog by adding book jacket pictures and reviews and added several ways that customers can more effectively use their libraries.

Since 2007, nearly 700 people have registered for library cards online, gaining immediate access to online services. People routinely renew books online, and request the items they want to borrow. With the new "book cart" feature, they can easily request a list of

items and receive an email notice when the items are available at their library. This April alone, customers placed requests for 6,691 items from their home computers.

Self check out stations were installed in eight libraries throughout the consortium in 2008, allowing customers to bypass the lines at service desks and check out their own library books. An average of 10,000 items per month are now checked out by customers using these stations.

In April, 2008 customers were offered the option of paying fines and fees online with a credit card. This has proved to be convenient and popular; customers have made nearly \$12,000 in online payments since then. They have cleared their records and been able to continue to use library services; the libraries have been able to use the funds to replace lost materials. Customers have been able to make credit card payments from any computer with internet access. Until now, they have not been able to make credit card payments at the service desks in the library because the system is set up only to accept online payments. With the new system, the credit option is available at the service desks at the self check computer at Wicomico Public Library.

For more information on this or other library services, visit us on the web at [www.wicomicolibrary.org](http://www.wicomicolibrary.org) or call 410-749-3612.

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