San Jose libraries offer residents Chromebooks, iPads, Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout

By Jana Kadah :: Bay City News April 28, 2021

Residents can now check out HP Chromebooks and iPads from the San Jose Public Library.

The extension of the library's tech device lending options is through the city's SJ Access initiative, which seeks to provide residents with equitable access to all things digital, library officials said this week.

There are 600 Chromebooks, funded by the tech companies KLA and HP, and 3,000 AT&T Wi-Fi Hotspots, purchased by the city, available for pickup from any Express Pickup library location.

However, the 120 iPads, funded by a grant from Apple, and 35 Dell laptops, purchased through a California Emerging Technology Fund grant, are available at select San Jose Public Library pickup locations.

The library expanded the tech device lending program last week, and since then a combined total of 74 percent of the Chromebooks and iPads have been checked out by library card holders, library officials said.

Any device can be checked out for a 90-day period that can be extended for up to 30 days. Electronic devices must be requested in advance and require an appointment for pickup.

At the appointment, library staff will provide an overview of the device and offer a user guide in multiple different languages so residents can successfully use it at home.

A library cardholder of any age can rent an electronic device but those 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult when picking up the device.

Since the start of the pandemic, the city and the San Jose Public Library Foundation have been trying to enhance library services and provide more opportunities for residents without internet or digital devices.

In August of last year, the library provided 12,800 free high-speed AT&T Wi-Fi hotspots to students and 3,000 hotspots to members of the public, and also made laptops available for checkout, held online computer classes and tech support as well as offered outdoor Wi-Fi access at city libraries.

To make an appointment to check out a device or learn more about the SJ Access Initiative, people can visit www.sjpl.org/SJAccess.