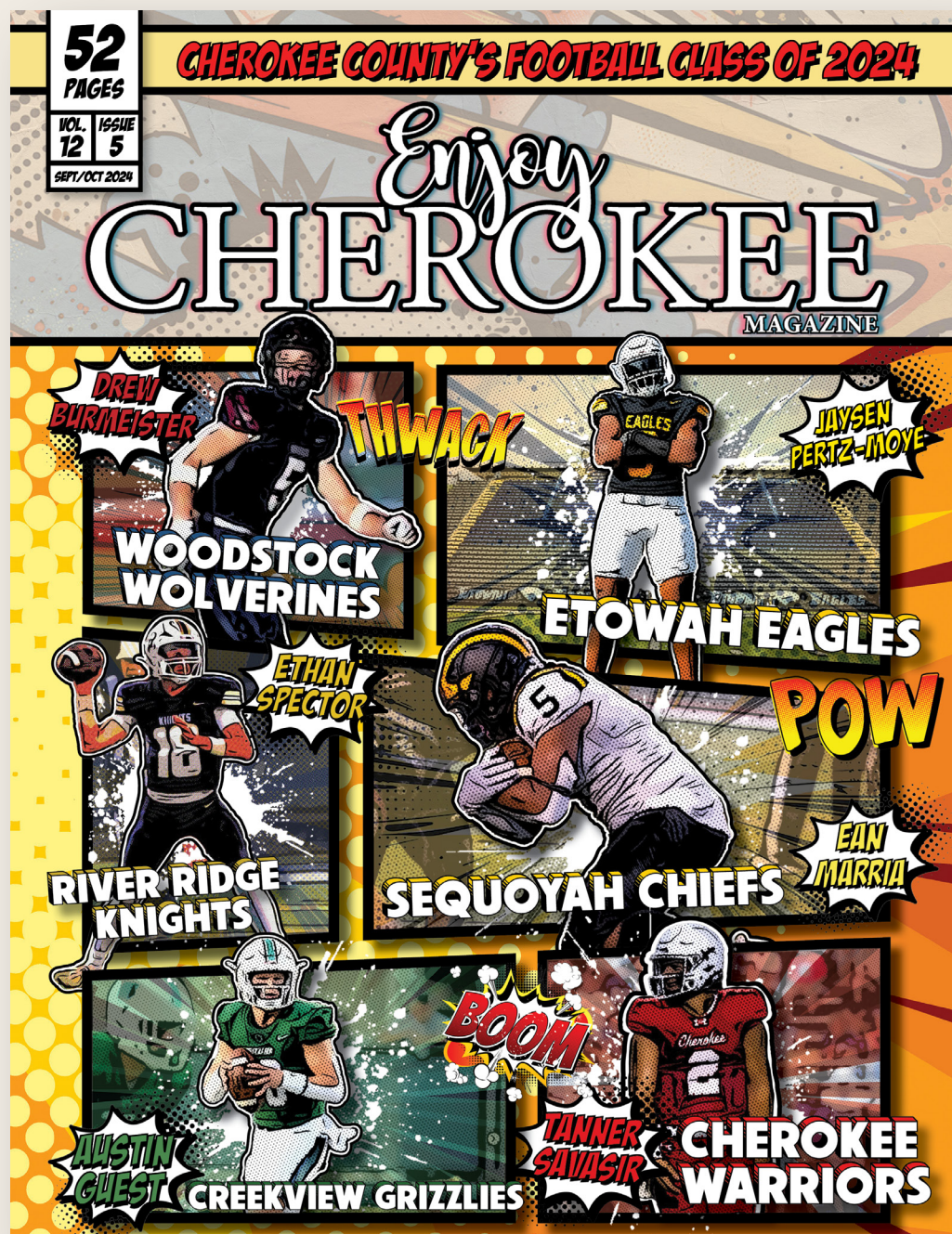


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ABOVE A peek inside Hickory Flat Public Library's new Third Space

RIGHT Cherokee County Board of Commissioners Vice Chair Richard Weatherby, SRLS Executive Director Angela Cortellino, SRLS Board Chair Tom Hill, and Cherokee Library Board Secretary Carmen Slaughter joyfully celebrate the library's ribbon cutting.



STORY BY
Abigail Hayman, Canton
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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STEP INTO THE STORY INSIDE THE NEW HICKORY FLAT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Bookworms, assemble! It's easy to get caught up in our busy lives. We often forget to take time for ourselves and allow ourselves a much-needed break. Visit the newly renovated Hickory Flat Public Library for your next reading fix, because you and your TBR List deserve it. A branch conveniently located for Canton, Holly Springs, and Woodstock residents, the reimagined space has much to offer on its shelves and beyond.

"This grand reopening is a community celebration," says Angela Cortellino, executive director of the Sequoyah Regional Library System [SRLS], which serves Cherokee, Pickens, and Gilmer counties. "People think that libraries are no longer relevant. That's not true for our libraries!" From 2022 to 2023, the SRLS circulated 1,079,739 items and greeted more than 388,575 visitors across its tri-county region, helping engage visitors through literacy, technology, and community.

A World of Imagination

Filled with bright colors and a warm, cozy atmosphere, Hickory Flat Public Library encourages all guests to find excitement in a world of books.

As you first walk into this inviting space, look to your right to find the Friends of the Library nonprofit bookstore. "There are so many ways to support our community," says Sarah Childers, SRLS marketing manager. "This October we'll highlight different ways to support the library by celebrating Support Your Library Month.

The Friends of the Library is a group of volunteers who support our library. Any individual can donate to Friends of the Library and support the library."

Libraries are designed to engage the local community and provide a space to linger and find comfort when the world gets too busy. Beyond the second set of doors, you will find a new feature—the Third Space. Designed to be seen as a "third home" for patrons, the room offers a safe space apart from home and office where visitors can work, collaborate, and rest. With plenty of places to recharge your electronics and recharge yourself, like the coffee machine, the room is perfect for all ages. It is meant for the community, a space that gives back joy in the form of knowledge. ▶▶

►►► A special feature for teens is the newly added Teen Room. A cozy space, the room features vibrant colors and seating that feels modern and relaxed for its young adult audience. The perfect space to hang out after school or for a study session, teens can enjoy an assortment of books and technology and, most importantly, find solace as a community. Four individual study rooms are also available within the library space, an excellent choice for professionals, creative people, and students. “After renovation, I got this feeling of excitement and a happy place when I walked in for the first time,” says Laurie Darrow, branch manager. “I hope that our guests can experience that too.”

Creativity Thrives

Step into a real-life storybook when you venture to the left side of the library, where the children’s area thrives. Books for preschool, elementary, and middle-grade students fill the space of this welcoming spot, complete with cozy seating for children and families. Its warm and inviting colors welcome children to step into a world of imagination.

Families can also benefit from library events this month, including storytimes and literacy building with Beau the Reading Dog on September 5, part of the CAREing Paws Reading Education Assistance Dogs program.

Walk into the Flex Room across from the children’s area, and you will find plenty of high-rise tables for library programs and activities. Stroll outside, and discover a playground designed for children—interactive, fun, and magical—with bright colors and a safe, open environment for children to run around. It’s perfect for moms and dads needing entertainment for their children, and what better place to learn the importance of play and creativity than at the library?

Adjacent to the children’s area is a Community Room, which can be reserved for events and workshops. Shades of teal and blue plus bright lighting invite guests to explore their creative side or connect with like-minded professionals in their community. Guests can use the accessible technology and resources, including the room’s whiteboards, projector, coffee machine, and cozy seating. The space is designed for Cherokee County residents to brainstorm, collaborate, and find new ways to connect.

A Beacon of Discovery

The Sequoyah Regional Library System is all about connection, which is why there are several nods to the Sequoyah brand throughout the library. Imprints of the green leaves in the SRLS logo can be found in the children’s area as well as in several of the rooms within the library, hidden treasures for the community to explore. The library has reopened with the creative concept that it is for everyone, a space people in the community can identify with and find comfort. “It’s a space everyone can connect with,” says Laurie Darrow.

The Hickory Flat Public Library first opened in 1993 and was open for thirty years before closing for renovation in late 2022. Renovation began in January 2023 with a groundbreaking ceremony. Since then all those involved have worked hard to create a library that serves as a beacon of discovery. “Whether you’re browsing our collection, attending a program, hosting a meeting, or simply relaxing, we are excited to officially welcome you to the Hickory Flat Public Library,” says Sarah Childers.

Beyond The Shelves

While working on this project, architect Chad Smith designed the library from the inside out. “Renovation was a challenge, but we responded with determination,” says the president of CAS Architecture. “We used roof pop-ups to allow natural light into the building and into

the adult, children, and teen areas, bringing a sense of joy to the library’s design. We wanted there to be an openness for visitors to be bold and playful.” Through the windows, residents can see what makes the library unique. Much like a crystal geode, a world of color awaits visitors of the Hickory Flat Public Library.

Core memories can be made in the new and exciting space, where sharpening minds can find meaning beyond the shelves. The Hickory Flat Public Library is not just a home for books; it’s a space for people in the community to grow with each other. Hope lives in every corner of the library for all of Cherokee to see and experience. Libraries like the Hickory Flat Public Library continue to help our vibrant county flourish and allow our imaginations to take flight through literature. When in need of community and inspiration, consider visiting the Hickory Flat Public Library, a community gem. 📖

“After renovation, I got this feeling of excitement and a happy place when I walked in for the first time.”

— Laurie Darrow,
branch manager

National Library Card Sign-Up Month

This September highlights an exciting event: National Library Card Sign-Up Month. Any Cherokee County resident can receive a library card. It takes only a few minutes to sign up, and library cards can be used at any of SRLS’s seven branches. For parents and educators eager to encourage children to read, SRLS offers a program where all Cherokee County School District students in grades K-12 can use their lunch card to check out up to five books, without fees. Parents can opt-in for the feature, also known as EZ Student Access, during the school district’s enrollment season. In previous years 80 percent of Cherokee County students enrolled in the library system. “Community members who sign up for a card in September will receive a Discovery Passport with discounts for local businesses inside. We hope to increase awareness of everything you can do with a library card, so we can continue to welcome new patrons to our library,” SRLS marketing manager Sarah Childers shares.



ABOVE Community members and readers of all ages gathered on Thursday, July 25, to celebrate the official re-opening of the Hickory Flat branch with a ribbon cutting and cake for all.

Existing Building
New Building

PRIMARY SPACES

- 1 Welcome Point
- 2 Bookstore
- 3 Community Room
- 4 Third Space
- 5 Flex Space
- 6 Outdoor

AGE GROUP SPACES

- 7 Children’s Computers
- 8 Children’s Book Browsing
- 9 Storytelling
- 10 Teen Space
- 11 Book Browsing

FEATURE SPACES

- 12 Study Nooks
- 13 Conference Room

ADMINISTRATIVE SPACES

- 14 Workroom
- 15 Break Room

HICKORY FLAT PUBLIC LIBRARY
2740 East Cherokee Drive, Canton



Find library hours, events, and branch locations online at SequoyahRegionalLibrary.org.

did you know?

NEW Sq. Ft.
7,802
RENOVATED Sq. Ft.
10,390
TOTAL Sq. Ft.
18,192

ABOUT
TWICE THE SIZE
of the previous branch



24,258
SHELVING CAPACITY



\$8,754,039
CONSTRUCTION COST



\$2,000,000
GA STATE GRANT



PARKING
Original = 57 Spaces
NEW = 26 SPACES
Total = 83 Spaces



STUDY ROOMS
Large = for 100
Medium = for 10
3 Small = for 1 to 4