



The Extra

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Newest edition of library's Bookmobile arrives for duty

By John Clayton
Editor

Mandy Watts recalls the thrill that came with the arrival of the Laurens County Library Bookmobile as it made its regular stops during her childhood.

"It was always the most exciting day," said Watts, who grew up in Mountville and awaited the Bookmobile's monthly arrivals.

The county's new Bookmobile officially arrived to similar excitement Tuesday evening for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Historic Courthouse prior to the meeting of Laurens County Council. The new \$130,000 Bookmobile replaces its 20-year-old predecessor, which limped into retirement with a number of mechanical issues.

"This is the best way to spend taxpayers' dollars," said Laurens County Councilman and Laurens School District 56 Assistant Superintendent David Pitts.

Laurens County Council Chairman Joe Wood cut the ribbon to put the new Bookmobile officially into service. The library's Bookmobile program began in 1940.

"This keeps us out there," said Laurens County Library Director Ann Szypulski. "So many people have shared with me their great memories of the Bookmobile, and we hope to be creating that for an entirely new generation."

The interior space of the new Bookmobile is roughly the same as the old one but the latest edition includes unique features. A public-address system, an awning and space for outdoor shelving is designed to allow the Bookmobile to be involved in festivals and other events.

However, Szypulski said her favorite feature of the new vehicle is its increased accessibility for the physically disabled. Several of the Bookmobile's regular stops include retirement facilities and even private homes for the elderly.

"The most special difference is the wheelchair lift," she said.

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Photo by John Clayton

WELCOME ABOARD — Laurens County Bookmobile Librarian Julian Shabazz (top right) welcomes visitors aboard the library's new Bookmobile. The vehicle was unveiled at a ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday evening on the Laurens Historic Square.

Coats of Kindness provides warmth for those in need

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

Shirley Clark had worked with School District 55 for more than a decade, but an experience with a student about three years ago prompted a ministry to provide gently used winter coats and accessories for anyone who might need them, and now she has opened a permanent location in Laurens.

Located at 205-C Fleming Street, it's open Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. both for donations and to anyone who's in need of warm clothing and blankets.

She still recounts that conversation with the little boy in a Laurens school, however, as the beginning of her non-profit ministry.

"I'm usually traveling to three different schools, and I was asking this little boy one day where his coat was, and he said he left it at home, and when I saw him again he said the same thing," Clark said. Eventually the child admitted that he didn't have a coat, and it was Clark's first realization that this might be a problem for others in the community as well.

As a Christian, she saw Luke 3:11 in the King James Version of the Bible as a command, "He answereth and saith unto them, 'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.'"

"I started collecting donated coats then," Clark said, "and I started keeping them in my car."

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