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NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

VALENTINE'S DAY OPENING OF LIBRARY SWEET NEWS TO EAGER EIU STUDENTS

CHARLESTON – Eastern Illinois University's Valentine's Day gift to its student body, as well as to faculty and staff, has been more than three-and-a-half years in the making.

At 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 14, the doors to the renovated and expanded Booth Library will once again be open for business to the university community and public-at-large.

"We are pleased that Booth Library is now equipped to meet the needs of an anticipated 20,000 visitors per week who, we expect, will take advantage of the enhanced services we provide," said Allen Lanham, library dean.

In commemoration of the opening, a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled to take place at 1:30 p.m. in the library's north foyer. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

The event also is expected to include the "ceremonial moving of the books." Fifty-four years ago, when the library first left Old Main, a photographer caught students and staff moving armfuls of books from one building to another. Members of Eastern's current administration, as well as members of the faculty, staff and student senates, will participate in a similar move as part of Thursday's ceremony.

Eastern also will participate in a larger, more elaborate rededication observance,

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Eastern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

scheduled to take place later this spring. A specific date has not yet been set.

The most recent renovation/expansion of the Mary Josephine Booth Library – originally dedicated on May 27, 1950, and recipient of a later addition completed in 1968 – began in mid-1999. Since that time, members of the university community have utilized library services at temporary sites located both on- and off-campus. According to Lanham, all temporary sites will be closed to the public as of midnight Wednesday, Feb. 13.

Library patrons will discover that, even though construction work is continuing inside Booth, none of it should affect “business as usual.” All service desks, including the circulation, reference, reserve and periodical areas, will be open and have library personnel ready to help visitors become acclimated to the new building.

Patrons also will enjoy many enhanced features including the modernization and expansion of the library's computer laboratories and its electronic classrooms. The library's study and conference tables are wired for data and power, and there are listening and viewing rooms, as well as a dozen group study rooms.

And, Lanham added, nearly 75 percent of the library's collections have been safely returned to their permanent homes. But should anyone require an item still stored at one of the temporary sites, a library employee will retrieve that item in a timely manner.

“We've come home,” Lanham said. “And while there's still work – mostly cosmetic – yet to be completed, we will provide our students with the full range of library services that they both need and want, all under one roof.”

Booth Library's hours will remain at 8 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Fridays; 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Saturdays; and noon to 11:45 p.m. Sundays.

Pending completion of Booth's new south entrance later this month, patrons with disabilities are asked to phone 581-6071 to make special arrangements for entering the library.