

William L. McBride  
November 8, 2012  
St. Helena Island Branch Library Dedication

Thank you. Good Morning. I am very pleased to stand before you today as we join together to officially open this great Library that will help shape minds of the future.

I would like to first thank my fellow members of Beaufort County Council for moving this project forward, for allocating funds and working to locate the additional money required to complete this undertaking. I would also like to thank the US Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, state delegation, the LowCountry Council of Governments, The Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, County Administrator, Library Director Wlodek Zaryczny and County staff for their valuable contributions to this new St. Helena Branch Library.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to our good friends at the Penn Center. There is no location on St. Helena Island more appropriate for a library than here at Penn.....one of America's most historically significant African American educational and cultural institutions. The educational traditions of Penn Center are highly compatible with the educational traditions of our public library system.

Since 1993 the Beaufort County School District allowed the County to house a library at St. Helena Island Elementary school. We appreciate that generosity. However we could not expect the schools to provide a library on the scale our residents deserve.

Before the elementary school space became available the County operated a bookmobile, which began in 1958. Prior to that, two local ladies, Mrs. Wilhelmina Barnwell and Mrs. York Bailey delivered books in their own personal vehicles to children on St. Helena and Lady's Islands, until they had more "Book Outposts" than their cars could handle.

We all know the opportunities for learning should not end when a person finishes his or her formal education and a good public library will facilitate a lifetime of learning. When I look at the faces here today I'm encouraged and heartened by the contribution we are making to the future of young and old. There is nothing more valuable than a free library card to continue deepening the knowledge and access to the world of information.

This new facility includes a well-equipped comfortable and versatile state of the art community room where our citizens can gather and engage in the projects that will better them as individuals; it will enrich their families and will strengthen the community. They can hold meetings or informal gatherings where knowledge, ideas and plans can be developed, shared and implemented.

This new library is a symbol of how valuable a community is. This library serves to strengthen our bonds and our history. It serves as an investment in the people of St. Helena and there is no greater investment a government can make than in its people. This library has been part of my dream for the people of this island and northern Beaufort County for many years. I'm sincerely thankful to all who made it possible. Thank you.