

# **Hundreds attend Mid-County Regional Library reopening ceremony**

By Hector Flores

Hundreds of people attended a celebration at the Mid-County Regional Library in Port Charlotte on Monday to mark the reopening of the hurricane-damaged facility.

In his remarks to the crowd, Charlotte County Commission Chairman Joe Tiseo said, “The Mid-County Regional Library faced significant challenges following Hurricane Ian. Extensive water intrusion impacted much of this facility. But from that adversity, something remarkable has emerged — a stronger, more resilient library that better serves our community.”

The repairs and interior improvements cost \$6.9 million. Design and permitting for the main building were completed in July 2024, with the courtyard infill finalized in July 2025. Construction began in January 2025 and was successfully completed in January 2026. Libraries and History staff then embarked on a massive restocking of materials and equipment to prepare for the public. Insurance covered the mitigation and repair costs and the Federal Emergency Management Agency provided funding to reimburse the county for insurance deductibles.

Among the many repairs were the replacement of nine rooftop HVAC units, installation of a brand-new roofing system, sealing and repainting of the entire structure, updated finishes, including new furniture, shelving, and upgraded infrastructure, and enhanced life safety systems to improve both security and the overall customer experience.

Community Services Director Tommy Scott said the absence of the library was about more than not having access to books. He said, “The community was without a trusted gathering place. The loss of space affected public events, election polling, civic meetings, educational programs, and the everyday community gatherings that help bring people together. The absence of this library reminded us how essential these spaces are, not only for reading and research, but for connection, participation, and public service.”

Chairman Tiseo spoke highly of the architectural and construction teams and lauded the work of staff in getting the library back up and open to patrons. “I want to recognize our incredible library and history staff for their patience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to serving the community — even during the challenges of this closure.” Scott talked about how his team handled their time away from their home library: “When Mid-County closed, they did not simply pause their work. They adapted, relocated to other branches, took on new responsibilities, supported one another, and continued serving the public with professionalism, creativity, and heart.”

Tiseo closed his remarks by thanking the public: “We are incredibly grateful to our community for your patience and support during the closure. Your enthusiasm and commitment to this library made this reopening possible.”

I encourage everyone who ever patronized Mid-County Regional Library to see the transformation and take advantage of the new technology, re-designed seating and meeting areas and whatever else you enjoyed when you visited before the hurricane. If you haven't been at the library before, this is a great opportunity to see all it has to offer beyond borrowing books.

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