

Libraries offering Wi-Fi laptops and hotspots

Over 400 Wi-Fi enabled devices, including 300 new Wi-Fi enabled Lenovo Chromebook laptops and 100 hotspots, are now available at Scenic Regional Library locations, with an extended six-month checkout period.

The devices were made available to the library through a Federal Emergency Connectivity Fund grant, awarded October 12.

The \$246,498 grant, which came from American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds, provided the devices for circulation. The grant's goal is to provide broadband connectivity to individuals in rural areas, and unlike most library grants, does not require any matching funds. It is the largest grant for services the library has received in its history.

The grant funds include the monthly Wi-Fi costs for the new devices, along with the library's existing 75 hotspots. The Wi-Fi connectivity cost is \$20 per month per Chromebook and \$30 per month per hotspot. The grant funding will reimburse the library for the connectivity costs on its existing 75 Wi-Fi hotspots dating back to July 1, 2021. This will save the library \$27,000 this fiscal year.

The library's existing 75 Wi-Fi hotspots were checked out a total of 1,293 times this past year. Pre-



viously, the hotspots were only available for a two-week checkout period. The devices are also available to Washington Public Library patrons.

To check out a device, individuals must be over the age of 18. Only one device is available per household. If interested in checking out one of the new devices, patrons should visit or contact their local branch.