

Sawyer Free Library Announces Grand Reopening of Transformed Historic Building

Celebrations to Kick Off with Public Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, September 5 at 3PM with Lt. Governor Driscoll

GLOUCESTER, MA, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After nearly two years of renovation, expansion, and modernization, the Sawyer Free Library is proud to announce the grand reopening of its historic home at 2 Dale Avenue. To celebrate this major milestone, the Library will host a [Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on Friday, September 5](#), followed by a Community Open House on Saturday, September 6. All are warmly invited to attend and explore the newly revitalized space.

This once-in-a-generation transformation marks a bold new chapter in the Library's nearly 200-year legacy as a pillar of civic and cultural life in Gloucester. The result is a vibrant and inclusive public space designed to support 21st-century learning, creativity, and community connection.

"The new Sawyer Free Library reflects the spirit of our city: rooted in tradition, driven by creativity, and focused on building an inclusive, dynamic future", said Mern Sibley, President of the Library's Board of Trustees.

"This represents one of the most significant civic investments in Gloucester in a generation," said Gloucester Mayor Greg Verga. "It reflects what's possible when we invest in public spaces that serve everyone."

"We are incredibly proud to welcome everyone back into a new Sawyer Free Library that is [reimagined, renewed and ready to inspire](#)," added Library Director Jenny Benedict. "This Library will serve our community as a launchpad for lifelong learning, innovation, and connection for decades to come."



The newly renovated, modernized, and expanded Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester, MA, officially unveiled at its ribbon cutting ceremony — marking a new chapter in community learning, access, and engagement.



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*Mern Sibley, President of the
Board of Trustees, Sawyer
Free Library*

Designed by Oudens Ello Architecture and Dore + Whittier Architects and built by W.T. Rich Company, the \$28 million construction project seamlessly blends the original 1913 structure and 1976 addition with a striking new 14,000-square-foot expansion. The project was guided by extensive community input and completed on time and within budget.

The transformed Gloucester Library redefines community learning and gathering with expanded amenities and cutting-edge technology, including a Children's Room and

Early Learning Center, Teen Room, Digital Learning Lab, Podcast Studios, 100-seat Community Room, study and conference spaces, and quiet reading lounges. Highlights include a Local History Research Center with rare manuscripts, a digital archive, and an interactive Gloucester History Timeline, plus the preserved desk of historian Joseph Garland. Visitors can also enjoy the refreshed Matz Gallery, a dramatic three-story mural by Leslie Bartlett, and vibrant outdoor spaces like the Fountain Plaza and Library Greenway. The collection has grown to over 66,000 items, with enhanced access through features like after-hours pickup lockers. Designed to Net Zero Ready and LEED Gold standards, the Library showcases all-electric systems, rainwater harvesting, and climate-resilient landscaping, setting a new benchmark for sustainable public buildings.

"The long and challenging journey to restore, expand, and revitalize one of Cape Ann's greatest public resources has reached a successful ending through the tireless work of dedicated trustees, donors, and a community that cherishes the tradition of a free public library," said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester). "Now, its doors will open wide again to allow us all to begin our own countless journeys in the future, made possible by the resources and the inspiration inside its incredible new spaces."

"As the daughter of a school librarian, I've always understood the power of libraries to open doors and bring communities together. The reopening of the Sawyer Free Library reflects Gloucester's deep commitment to knowledge, creativity, and civic life," said Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante (D-Gloucester). "The facilities in the expanded library will serve every generation — supporting early literacy, digital access, lifelong learning, and community gathering in one space. Thank you to the many partners who helped make this transformative project a reality."

The \$28 million construction transformation was made possible through generous public and private support, including over \$10 million from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, \$6 million from individual donors, \$1.85 million from corporate donors, and \$200,000 in local government and community partner grants. In addition, the Library

Corporation contributed \$2 million to the project during the design phase from trust funds. The capital project has reached completion on time and within budget.

To date, 65% of the Library's capital campaign goal has been raised. Fundraising continues to fully cover construction costs and support the Library's long-term vision. To contribute, visit: sawyerfreelibrary.org.

"This is Gloucester's library," said Sibley. "Honoring its legacy while boldly embracing the future with a mission grounded in inclusion, sustainability, and lifelong learning."

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