



For Media Inquiries Only:

Marquel Sennet

Director of Communications and Public Affairs

Marquel.Sennet@shreveportla.gov

Samantha Bonnette

Marketing & Development Manager

sbonnette@shreve-lib.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 24, 2022

City of Shreveport partners with Shreve Memorial Library on Universal Digital Access

Residents of Shreveport will soon have the option of getting free internet thanks to a new initiative of the City of Shreveport and Shreve Memorial Library. “Universal Digital Access” is a new service to provide free Wi-Fi through the libraries using a newly developed city cellular network. The service will allow residents of Shreveport currently without home internet service to access the library’s Wi-Fi network from home.

“Having stable internet is something everyone wants, but not everyone can afford,” said Mayor Adrian Perkins. “Partnering with the Shreve Memorial Library system to offer free wireless hot spots is a game-changer for those living around these libraries. They will now be able to access the internet from their homes allowing them to work or learn remotely.”

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the digital divide in Shreveport became very clear. The City of Shreveport’s I.T. Department created a sensor and mounted them on our garbage trucks to map where the internet had been adopted and where it wasn’t. In Shreveport, the internet is not affordable for many who earn \$35,000 or less, which is a 42.8 percent of our residents.

“Providing access to information resources is the main purpose of public libraries,” stated John Tuggle, Shreve Memorial Library Executive Director. “The economic and educational synergy created by these types of digital equity efforts boosts our communities’ abilities to grow and prosper. Universal Digital Access is a win-win for everyone.”

Library patrons will be able to check out a Universal Digital Access kit from select Shreve Memorial Library branches. Universal Digital Access kits allow residents within the cellular network coverage area to connect to the Shreve Memorial Library Wi-Fi service from home. Participants must have a Shreve Memorial Library card to check out a Universal Digital Access Kit. Kits will be checked out for a period of six months at a time.

Currently, the Universal Digital Access service is in beta testing and is expected to be available to the public beginning November 1. During the pilot phase, a limited number of Universal Digital Access kits will be available at the following Shreve Memorial Library branches, with plans to expand the service to other library branches in the future. Kits will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

- Hollywood/Union Avenue Branch, 2105 Hollywood Avenue
- Atkins Branch, 3704 Greenwood Road
- Cedar Grove-Line Avenue Branch, 8303 Line Avenue

####