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OPEN BORROWING: TEN MILLION CHOICES – ONE LIBRARY CARD

While out running errands, do you suddenly remember that you need to pick up a copy of The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini to read for that new Book Discussion group you joined at your Condo?

Need a book with cutting edge science experiments for your ever so busy high schooler?

How about a movie for you and your significant other's Friday night "dinner and a movie" get together?

If you have a valid library card at any of over 150 public libraries in Northern New Jersey, your problems are solved. You can walk into any participating public library and borrow right from their shelves.

The program is called Open Borrowing. The libraries in The Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS); Libraries of Middlesex (LMxAC); Morris Automated Information Network (M.A.I.N.); Passaic County Automated Libraries (PALS); and libraries in Sussex and Warren Counties have joined together to allow patrons from any of their libraries to have in person borrowing privileges at any other member library.

"All anyone who is interested has to do is go to their home library and get a green Open Borrowing sticker affixed to their library card. This means that they are a member in good standing and may enjoy the privileges of Open Borrowing", said INSERT NAME HERE XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

"With almost half the libraries from the most densely populated areas of the state participating, geography is no longer a barrier", said Robert White, Executive Director of BCCLS. He adds, "We know that last year residents took advantage of Open Borrowing to the tune of \$1,200,000. If you consider the price of a book to average \$20, with 61,000 loans annually, that equals \$1,200,000 worth of value. That's a huge bang in anybody's book and with the addition of Sussex and Warren Counties, we expect those numbers to keep growing."

Formerly funded by a grant from the New Jersey State Library but now paid for by the participating libraries, Open Borrowing members are considering making an appeal to elected officials of the 22 legislative districts within the Open Borrowing area. White concludes, "4,500,000 New Jersey residents are eligible for this service which our public libraries are currently self-funding from their already strained budgets. We'd like to speak with our legislators to see if we might get some funding from them."