



Carroll County Public Library | 1100 Green Valley Road | New Windsor, MD 21776

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 16, 2024

Library Wins Maryland Association of Counties Prestigious County Innovation Award

Westminster, MD – Carroll County Public Library’s Exploration Commons at 50 East, a first of its kind space for libraries, won the prestigious **County Innovation Award** from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance.

About Exploration Commons at 50 East

Exploration Commons at 50 East is a community and innovation center, located in the same building as the downtown Westminster Branch of Carroll County Public Library. The space provides access to a high-tech makerspace, commercial teaching kitchen, and meeting rooms, designed to foster collaboration and innovation. Following the free public library model, Exploration Commons has no membership fees, and class costs are minimal, based only on materials used. This accessible approach allows trained, dedicated staff to provide classes tailored to various skill levels, meeting individuals where they are and enabling them to successfully turn their ideas into reality.

Exploration Commons is designed to bring the Carroll County community together. Through events, programs, classes, and services, Exploration Commons promotes innovation, fosters social connections, encourages community involvement, and provides a space for collaboration and lifelong learning. It is where community members can work together and learn from each other. As a free and accessible space in Westminster, Exploration Commons enriches the library’s role as a community resource, supporting creativity, education, and collaboration for all.

About the County Innovation Award

The award was established to recognize superb and leading-edge county programs that improve the overall quality of life and service delivery for a county’s residents. The Honorable Ingrid Turner, Prince George’s County Circuit Court Associate Judge, MACo Past President, and former Prince George’s County Council Member, instituted this award during her term as MACo President in 2012. The award is now a collaboration of the [Academy for Excellence in Local Governance](#) and MACo, with support from the [Local Government Insurance Trust](#).

The County Innovation Award is issued to one urban county and one rural county each year. According to Maco, all nominees were impressive, addressing issues in their communities and serving the needs of residents in ways that were indeed “outside the box.” To view all nominees, visit <https://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org>.

#

Media Contact: Lisa Picker, Director of Communications, at 443-293-3196 or lpicker@carr.org