



**Contact:**  
**Trina Walker**  
**412-578-2483 (office)**  
**412-330-7901 (mobile)**  
**walkert@carnegielibrary.org**

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Board of Trustees Approves Plan to Reduce Cost Structure Due to Declines in Funding**

- *Four Branches to Close, Two to Merge, One to Relocate in Effort to Protect Quality of Programs, Collections and Services*
- *Library Hours to be Cut; Staff to be Reduced; Fines and Fees to Increase*
- *New Programs to take Library Services out to communities*

PITTSBURGH, October 6, 2009 – A plan to reduce costs and protect the quality of library services for the citizens of the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County has been approved by Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Board of Trustees. The plan includes reducing library service hours, closing and merging locations, reducing staff, and increasing fines and fees. In conjunction, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) system will expand outreach efforts through partnerships, technology and other programs that deliver critical library services throughout the community. The plan was reached after a year of independent studies and community input.

“The decision by the Board of Trustees was an extremely difficult one to make,” said Jacqui Fiske Lazo, Chair of the Library’s Board of Trustees. “We understand the importance of our public libraries to individuals and to the community. After more than a year of study and deliberations, however, we determined that it was necessary to take these actions. It is the Board’s responsibility to the public and to our funders to create a sustainable system that acknowledges the reality of reduced funding. We are fully committed to the Library’s mission of engaging our community in literacy and learning and will continue to work to protect and improve upon the long term sustainability and quality of our library system.” said Ms. Lazo.

Plan specifics include: a 28 percent reduction in service hours across the Library system; the closure of four neighborhood library locations – CLP-Beechview, CLP-West End, CLP-Hazelwood and CLP-Lawrenceville; the merger of CLP-Carrick and CLP-Knoxville, into a single new library location; the relocation of CLP-Mt. Washington to the neighborhood’s Virginia Avenue business district; and closing the Library’s Allegheny Depository. The Library will reduce staff by approximately 30 positions and increase certain fines and fees.

“We understand the tremendous loss that will be felt in these neighborhoods,” said Dr. Barbara K. Mistick, President and Director of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. “But we are determined to assure that the Library remains a part of people’s lives – even without a building. Our plan is to take library services out to where they are needed. This includes dynamic outreach programs to children and families including early learning programs for preschoolers and reading programs and homework help for school-age children and teens. We’ll enhance remote access to library services via our Web site and other digital services. We’ll expand opportunities for volunteerism, partnerships and collaborations with community organizations,” added Dr. Mistick.

(MORE)

The Library's Board also agreed to a plan to seek additional long-term revenue from local sources. Nationally, local funding accounts for 80% of library sources of revenue; for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, only 70% of revenue comes from local sources. The Library is calling for a city/county task force to examine the public policy of library funding and recommend revenue streams dedicated for libraries that will keep up with the demand for library services.

"We have been candid with city, county and state officials over the past several years that our system is chronically underfunded compared to other library systems around the country," Mistick added. "Unfortunately, we can't meet the ongoing financial challenges we face by simply trimming more expenses. We now must take the necessary action to reduce our library system's cost structure. My fear is that unless we are more fully and consistently funded, more cuts will be necessary in coming years."

In June, the Library projected a \$6 million shortfall by 2014 if no changes were made to its current system in terms of projected funding and operating expense. An ongoing trend of increasing operating expenses and declining funding from local and state sources were compounded by the economic climate.

Throughout the year, the Library's Board of Trustees evaluated factual and analytical information, including studies by the RAND Corporation and Carnegie Mellon University, as well as internal data analysis. Ideas and anecdotal perspective were gathered via focus groups, Town Hall Meetings and numerous conversations with library staff, elected officials, community stakeholders and funders.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's 2009 operating results will reflect a 10% reduction from 2008, which it has achieved by implementing efficiency measures at the beginning of the year and again mid-year, including job attrition, consolidation of job functions, adjustments in staffing and library hours, cuts in operating budgets and a salary freeze.

The Library's 2010 budget must balance expenses with projected revenues. The Allegheny Regional Asset District accounts for approximately 70% of the Library's operating budget, and has announced a preliminary allocation to the Library for 2010 of \$17.6 million, the same as it was for 2009. The Library's budget will require further evaluation once the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agrees on the yet unresolved state budget. With the public library subsidy still unknown and expected to decrease by up to 50%, the Library may be required to make additional cuts for 2010.

The Library forecasts that expenses will continue to outpace current sources of revenues over the next several years. If additional revenues are not found, the Library will face additional cuts as early as 2011.

###

### **About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh**

*To Engage our Community in Literacy and Learning*

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country's great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including the Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset, with 2.6 million visitors in 2008. Each year the Library provides valuable resources, programs, classes and training opportunities that engage the community in literacy, and life-long learning.

To learn more about Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, please visit [www.carnegielibrary.org](http://www.carnegielibrary.org).