

Surprise! Forecast Says Minnesota Has a Budget Surplus

By John Michaelson, December 2, 2011

ST. PAUL, Minn. - Minnesota state officials are now predicting a surplus of \$876 million for the remainder of the current two-year budget cycle, although the celebration is muted.

Minnesota AFL-CIO President Shar Knutson says the improved budget came on the backs of many families, as the fix – pushed by the Republican-controlled Legislature – is the result of budget shifts, borrowing and cuts to important programs.

“You know, it’s kind of like putting all your groceries on your credit card and then cheering because you have money in the bank. So, the fact is that there are still thousands of people unable to find work, and schools still have to borrow money, and property taxes increasing on seniors and the middle-class – we’re not ready to celebrate yet.”

While the state sits on its current surplus, the forecast also predicts a deficit of \$1.3 billion for fiscal years 2014-15. Knutson says that means more major budget decisions, and she feels the only way to make up the ground that’s been lost is through smart choices.

“What we’re looking for is a legislative session where the legislators will work with the governor, to really – really – begin addressing that deficit fairly. Instead of just protecting the millionaires, we want it to be done fairly and so that everyone pays their fair share and at the same time we can create family-sustaining jobs.”

The state budget forecast will be updated again in February, shortly after lawmakers convene to begin the 2012 session. The state says all the current surplus will be used to restore depleted state reserves.

A new library for a new age

The age of the 'shushing' librarian may be over

Kaitlyn Egan, news editor - December 5, 2011

Though beautiful and cozy, the Arlington Hills Library is a dated facility struggling to meet the needs of its 21st century patrons.

But soon a new library facility will be providing state-of-the-art services thanks to the Payne-Maryland project, which will feature a community center complete with library, rec center and community park.

"This project is the love of my life right now," St. Paul Public Library deputy director Debbie Willms said with a smile. An updated facility will address the ever-changing needs of the East Side community.

The library held focus groups to explore possible program changes and to determine the diverse community's needs.

The input has been helpful to library planners and those who were involved feel a part of the plan, Willms said.

"If we're able to talk with people and share our excitement; it's contagious," she said. "It's a really good thing. It shows a real concern for the welfare of the neighborhood."

The Arlington Hills Library is a historic building and will not be demolished, added Willms, who heads the library's part in the Payne-Maryland Project and has been watching it all come together. The nearly 100-year-old Carnegie library is a beloved neighborhood icon.

"Library folks will work directly with District 5 and this neighborhood to decide what will happen with the library building as we move forward," St. Paul Parks & Rec planning manager Tom Russell told attendees at the Aug. 24 meeting. "It has to be a community use by law... so you guys will all be a part of that working with District 5."

The updated Payne-Maryland Project design plans will be presented to the public at 6 p.m. Dec. 8 at the Arlington Recreation Center.



Arched windows do add charm to the interior of the two-story Arlington Hills Branch Library. Photos by Linda Baumeister/Review

CHANGING NEEDS

Kit Hadley, St. Paul Public Library director, said technology changes affect everything from how materials are presented to what patrons expect when they come through the door.

The St. Paul Public Library now lends books in digital form, so patrons can get them on their e-readers or computers. The Internet, can now answer questions traditionally answered by librarians. Neighborhood libraries also offer public computer labs. Librarians used to spend much of their time helping patrons locate sought-after books. Now, they're more likely to be teaching patrons how to conduct research on their own.

"What used to be individual patrons getting help from individual librarians ...today takes the form, more often, of classes and lectures and other kinds of presentations that require a group space," Hadley said.

And the Arlington Hills Library just doesn't have that kind of space. The lower floor has a larger, multi-functional space with a nook of cozy couches in one corner, but it's not a place where multiple programs can take place at once, said Joanna Brookes, the Arlington Hills Library branch supervisor.

The space is used as a children's story and play space in the mornings, a senior space and job assistance workshop in the afternoons, and a homework nook

St. Paul Public Library has partnered with 3M to provide a pilot program that will allow the library to lend e-readers. The Arlington Hills, Sun Ray and Central branches will receive the 3M e-readers sometime in the first quarter of next year, said Debbie Willms, St. Paul Public Library deputy director.



From top: the Arlington Hills Branch is currently located in an historic building at 1105 Greenbrier St. on the East Side. Plans are in the works for a new multi-purpose library as part of the Payne-Maryland project. Middle and above, Arlington Hills Library Branch Supervisor Joanna Brookes leads a Tuesday morning storytime, entertaining youngsters with both reading books and puppet play.

and conversation circle in the evenings.

Several multi-functional library spaces would help patrons take advantage of all the programs the library has to offer. Increasingly, people are looking to libraries as a place where the whole family can go for social, technological and traditional library needs.

“I think that the era of the ‘shushing’ librarian is over, but that does not mean that people don’t desire a space in a library that’s quiet,” said Hadley. “We need to respect that and provide that.”

That’s why the new library in the Payne-Maryland community center is so important.

A WIN-WIN

With a community center and library both at the same site, both entities can benefit from sharing meeting spaces.

“The Payne-Maryland project will have more of those types of spaces than what exists at either the rec center or library now,” Hadley said. “Because of the collaboration, there will be more of that space than if a new stand-alone [library] was built.”

Though the library in the new community center will be larger than the current Arlington Hills Library, the actual space for the collection will not increase. Hadley noted the remodel of the smallest St. Paul Public Library, the West Seventh building, as an example. The remodel didn’t increase the space but rather reorganized it and presented the collection more efficiently.

“What libraries have discovered is that you actually make the selection more accessible to people when you don’t cram the shelves as full as you used to,” Hadley said. “You used to have to store a lot of material that wasn’t necessarily in high demand.

“We now know how to get people the material they want, so we devote the shelf space to very high-demand material that is visually more accessible to people,” she said. “The circulation actually increases, and we anticipate the same approach at the Payne-Maryland project.”

THE NEW AMENITIES

Along with increased space, the library will offer a state-of-the-art computer lab thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Science and the MacArthur Foundation. The St. Paul Public Library was one of only 12 groups nationwide to receive the grant for digital learning labs for youth. The grant will provide funds for planning and design of the labs, one of which will be part of the Payne-Maryland project. The library will also offer high-speed wireless Internet and plenty of electric outlets for those who want to use their own computers.

The new library will also offer automated self check-out and self check-in. The Payne-Maryland Project will be the fourth St. Paul Public Library to use self check-in. The automated services allow librarians to spend more time with patrons and less time behind a desk and managing the physical materials, said Brookes.

Patrons will also be able to use several of the library’s services after hours. A vending-like system will allow patrons to pick up reserved materials even if the library is closed. Computers and Internet will still be available after hours and the children’s section will be open to groups who want to use it after the library is closed.

THE MOVE

Brookes said the eventual move from the Arlington Hills Library to the new library space in the Payne-Maryland community center will interrupt services for about a month. However, mobile book service will be available in the neighborhood during the move.

The new library space will also feature an “opening day collection” of brand-new popular materials, Willms said. Patrons will have “first crack” at the collection of new books, audio, video and e-reader materials when the new library opens. “I can’t wait for the shovels to be in the ground,” said Willms. “It’s going to be such an asset for the community.”

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Payne-Maryland project updates to be revealed

Exterior design altered to better match neighborhood

Kaitlyn Egan, news editor - December 5, 2011

After months of compiling feedback and tweaking designs, St. Paul Parks & Recreation is ready to present the updated designs for the Payne-Maryland project at the Arlington Recreation Center Dec. 8.

The 6 p.m. meeting will reveal design developments since the last public meeting Aug. 24 and present new interior and exterior schematics for the facility.

Phase I of the project will cost an estimated \$14 funded by Recovery Zone and Economic Development bonds. The partnership between Parks & Recreation and the St. Paul Public Library will create a community center complete with a recreation center, library and community park.

Phase II of the project incorporates private partners Arlington Hills Lutheran Church, Bradshaw Celebration of Life funeral services and other organizations into the community campus.

"We don't have a facility north of I-94 and east of 35E where we can hold programming for 12 hours (a day)," said St. Paul Parks & Rec's public services manager Brad Meyer. The partnership with the library promises shared costs, extra space and diverse programming that "we've never been able to offer," Meyer said. "We need this in order to be a 21st-century Parks & Rec department."

THE REVEAL AND FEEDBACK

Design developments and schematics will be presented to the public but there are no blueprints yet, Meyer said. "How the building will look visually will be there."

This design presentation for the Payne-Maryland project will unveil the basics of what will be offered, though people can still offer advice on the aesthetics. There will be time for discussion and feedback, but the time has passed to make major changes.

"Shovels are going into the ground in the spring," Meyer said.

Parks & Rec gathered feedback from East Siders via focus groups, discussions, suggestions, concerns and online surveys. All were considered and used to improve the design to better fit the East Side, Meyer said.

Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, proved to be an effective way to reach those who don't traditionally attend meetings. Parks & Rec traditionally use the online survey to get feedback and opinions from people who rent parks or plazas for events. The Payne-Maryland project is a hot topic for many East Siders, and the availability of the online survey helped designers gain even more feedback.

"We found we had a really strong response online too, in addition to surveys in person," Meyer said. "We try to be as creative as possible to reach additional audiences."



These former exterior designs for the Payne-Maryland project were presented in August. St. Paul Parks & Rec will reveal new designs at the Dec. 8 presentation. The design was revised after many residents said the architecture didn't fit in with the rest of the neighborhood.

Design presentation for the Payne-Maryland Project will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Arlington Recreation Center, 665 E. Rose Ave.

Visit stpaul.gov/paynmarylandproject to give feedback, follow updates and view progress reports on the project.

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR CHANGES

Many East Side residents said the exterior design of the building didn't fit in with the rest of the neighborhood. They panned it as looking "like something that belonged in Minneapolis or the suburbs."

Meyer said project designers got the message. Staff toured the neighborhood and talked with community members to see what they did want the facility to look like.

"The footprint itself hasn't necessarily been altered, but

the way the outside of the facility looks has been altered to what we think fits more into the neighborhood,” Meyer said. “The new design will be different than what people saw the first time, and it’ll be something to be excited about.”

The interior layout of the space has been changed slightly as the project has learned more about specific programming needs.

PLAYGROUND

Focus groups also helped develop the new playground area of the project Oct. 11 and Nov. 3.

“The outcome of those meetings are going to be factored into the presentation Thursday night,” said Meyer. There is no final design for the play area yet and the community will continue to have input as plans develop.

However, Meyer said the community did decide on several important parts of the new play space.

The play area needs to be a free-flowing space but still have equipment for both toddlers and adolescents. Meyer said this may mean equipment suitable for both age groups is located in the middle of the area, while age-specific equipment is located more towards the edges.

People put a priority on landscaping and natural elements that meld into the natural environment. The area must be welcoming and open, but still have shade for those hot summer days.

The play area must be something that’s sustainable. Residents wanted material choices that will last and something that the community will continue to use.

GREATER THAN ITS PARTS

Patrick Seeb is the executive director of the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation and was asked to lead Phase II of the project.

“[The Payne-Maryland Partnership] is really in pretty active but still early discussions with a number of organizations,” Seeb said. Some interested organizations already have a presence on the East Side while others would like to expand into the neighborhood. One interested organization focuses on diabetes education while another is involved with employment training and preparation.

Seeb hopes the organizations that get involved in the Payne-Maryland Project will create a continuation of service. For example, Arlington Hills Lutheran Church offers classes

for those learning English as a second language. The library will provide convenient access to reading material for these community members and employment training can help new English speakers become more marketable.

Seeb added the partnership has a strong interest in incorporating a multicultural partner as it embarks on Phase II.

“It would be really important,” he said. “We’re still searching for those conversations.”

The East Side needs a collaborative facility like this project, Seeb said. It will improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, making it safer, vital and more attractive.

“No one organization will make this,” said Seeb. “It’s really going to be a collection of like-minded organizations... The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”

ACCOMMODATING CHANGE

Leslie McMurray, executive director of the Payne Phalen District 5 Planning Council, is looking forward to the Dec. 8 reveal.

“We want to preserve the existing (recreation) facilities in the neighborhood while embracing the opportunity of the new Payne-Maryland Project,” McMurray said. “It’s a “both/and” approach because we think the need in this neighborhood justifies the investment by Parks & Rec.”

McMurray attended several focus groups and found people have a strong interest in what will actually happen in the building. Focus groups voiced a need for an indoor walking track, specific areas for teens and quiet areas for seniors, she said. The groups also wanted to foster creativity and inclusion through color, art and multicultural elements representative of the neighborhood.

“A lot of people investing and using the project are young families who will have their first home in the neighborhood,” McMurray noted. As the housing market improves, new investments in the neighborhood will likely come from young families buying their first homes.

“We just want to honor their needs with this project,” she said.

The facility also must have the ability to change over time. McMurray pointed out; “We are a fast-changing neighborhood.”

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12/6/11

Here are a couple of daylight photos of our rotating billboards. There are 16 designs rotating at present, with "Get Carded" and "Check Us Out" running 20% of the time, and the other 14 alternating. This is the first of the 11 billboards, and it's in Eagan (see specific address on photos). Tomorrow I hope to be able to pass along examples of what these billboards look like at night!



Sally Lederer
Community Relations Manager
MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency)
An alliance of metro public libraries

CC295 □ MSP 7080 □ Hwy 77 @ Hwy 13 (Nicols Rd.) N/F □ Eagan, MN 2011-12-05 09:42:40



CC295 □ MSP 7080 □ Hwy 77 @ Hwy 13 (Nicols Rd.) N/F □ Eagan, MN 2011-12-05 09:44:18



MN Senate Takes Up Viking Stadium Funding Options

John Michaelson, Public News Service - December 6, 2011

The Minnesota State Senate holds another information hearing today on the push for a new stadium for the Vikings pro football team.

The president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, Shar Knutson, says she hopes the talks will lead to a deal that has the support of both the team and of state lawmakers.

“Two reasons: Football’s very important to Minnesota; it brings in a lot of revenue. But also, it creates a lot of jobs in a sector that desperately needs jobs. The unemployment within the building and construction sector in Minnesota is much, much higher than it is nationally, and that’s high enough.”

The Minnesota AFL-CIO has not endorsed any specific plan, but Knutson says if it’s decided that gaming dollars will be used, the proposal for a casino in downtown Minneapolis would be most beneficial.

“If it came down to gambling, then we prefer the Block-E proposal, because it will create more jobs than the other options: many more jobs, actually.”

Knutson says that view is held because, in addition to the thousands of jobs during stadium construction, a casino would also provide permanent jobs.

Funding is the focus of today’s hearing, following last week’s hearing at which potential locations were reviewed. The Vikings have their sights set on Arden Hills, near Minneapolis, but officials in Minneapolis are hoping to keep the team there. The Vikings’ lease at the Minneapolis Metrodome expires at the end of this season.

The state senate hearing begins at 12:30 p.m.

More details are at bit.ly/vedbMH.

Agreement with County Will Keep the Newport Library Open

By: TIM HARLOW, *Star Tribune*, December 10, 2011

The city will take over responsibility for running the library, but the county will provide some services.

The Washington County Board on Tuesday is expected to sign off on a plan that will give the city of Newport the authority to operate its own library, but still receive some services from the county.

Come January there will be some major changes in how services are provided at the library, which has served the community for more than 122 years.

Most notably, the city will assume the responsibility for operating and paying for the library at 405 7th Av. Only a scant rotating collection of books will remain on the shelves as most of the current county inventory in Newport will be sent to other libraries. In its place, the county will install a Library Express system that allows patrons to use a public kiosk or a personal computer to reserve materials and have them delivered to a bank of lockers. Those will be placed at City Hall.

"It won't be the same way, but we are looking forward very positively that the library will meet the needs of the citizens," said Jo Bailey, president of the Newport Library Board. "We look forward to the day we can have it the way it was."

The Newport City Council recently voted 5-0 to approve a Joint Powers Agreement with the county that will keep the doors open. Without the agreement, it is likely the city would have no library service at all.

The Newport branch, one of the smallest in the Washington County System, was scheduled to close Dec. 30 as part of a budget-balancing measure. The system also has cut all Sunday and Monday hours at its remaining six branches, and 11 staff members are likely to lose their jobs, library officials said.

The agreement between Newport and the county is similar to one negotiated with Marine on St. Croix. It calls

for the county to give the city \$5,000 to help cover the costs of setting up a Library Express, which has been used for the past two years in Hugo and is being installed at Marine on St. Croix. The county also will donate computers, but the city will pay to provide Internet access, all utilities and the salary of a part-time librarian. That will cost about \$24,700 a year, said administrator Brian Anderson.

Overall, Anderson said, the change will be good for Newport once people get used to it. On the upside, he said, is the fact that with the lockers, library users will be able to pick up and return materials 24 hours a day and not just when the library is open.

The agreement with Washington County also calls for programs such as story times and author nights to continue. The city also plans to add more computers and allow groups such as the city commission to use the space for community meetings.

"People think this is a positive thing," Anderson said. "We view this as an opportunity to increase and improve the service. We can transform it to meet the needs of the city."

According to Washington County Library statistics, about 3,700 people used the Newport Library in 2010 and checked out 6,039 items.

Unlike Lake Elmo, which voted to leave the Washington County Library system and run an independent library, Newport will retain its affiliation with the county. That means Newport residents will be able to use their library cards at any Washington County Library without paying a fee.

"We certainly wanted to maintain a presence in the community," said Library Director Pat Conley. "That was our goal."

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St. Paul's 2012 property tax levy goes lower

By Frederick Melo, 12/14/2011

The St. Paul City Council on Wednesday dug cash out of nooks and crannies in the city budget to soften the blow on taxpayers and hold the increase in the 2012 property-tax levy to 4.98 percent.

Mayor Chris Coleman this week proposed a 5.5 percent increase, down from 6.5 percent planned in August.

The council's vote, held before an audience of about 100 firefighters wearing yellow union shirts, aims to preserve funding for the fire department's Rescue Squad 2, a specialty rescue unit that had been in danger of being dissolved under the mayor's budget proposal. Council members feared that losing one of the city's three rescue units would leave a hole in emergency response.

The approved budget also seeks to fund overtime costs for firefighters and their supervisors with the intention of reducing or entirely eliminating "brownouts," where rigs go unmanned for up to 24 hours.

Whether Rescue Squad 2 is safe from cuts remains unclear. While the council can set general policy and specific funding levels for departments, ultimate decisions for how that money will be spent rest with the mayor and department heads.

"If the mayor chooses not to restore Rescue Squad 2, it won't be restored," said council president Kathy Lantry, who called the fate of Squad 2 one of the few major sticking points in budget negotiations with the mayor's office.

Fire Chief Tim Butler has said his priority is maintaining adequate staffing at all times and that the city can function with two rescue squads. On Wednesday evening, a public information officer for the fire department referred all questions back to the mayor's office.

"The mayor has worked hand in hand with Chief Butler to ensure the safety of the city...and the chief has made a management decision that the city would be better covered under the decommissioning of that squad," said Joe Campbell, a spokesman for Coleman. "The mayor has said he's going to let the chief be chief and manage the fire department."

The adopted budget also protects a police motorcycle unit, which had been in danger of being disbanded, and allows police to continue to park their vehicles overnight at public housing facilities, where some officers live as part of a residential program.

The budget, hammered out after months of negotiations between the council and the mayor's office, includes a \$2.5 million affordable-housing trust fund; directs \$75,000 to homeless shelters in the winter months; and restores 12 of

the 40 hours in cuts to morning library hours. As a result, six or seven library employees will be hired back.

"For the most part, there's agreement, not only with the seven of us, but with the administration," Lantry

said. "I think we should also acknowledge there are cuts in this budget. There are some folks who work for the city today that won't after January 1....Did everybody get everything they wanted? No, but that doesn't happen in life, and it won't happen in the budget, either."

Lantry predicted about six city employees would be laid off early next year, while other positions will be eliminated through attrition.

For instance, the council was able this week to free up \$94,000 by not filling the position of

spokesperson for the Department of Planning and Economic Development after that employee's recent departure to a state office.

The council funneled another \$300,000 toward general spending from the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, effectively reimbursing the general fund for HRA work hours performed by council members and their staffs. Other funds came from bond refinancing and greater-than-anticipated revenue from tax increment financing districts, which are business districts that are allowed to use their own property taxes toward development and improvements.

The new property-tax levy will be \$99.3 million - about \$4.7 million, or 4.98 percent, larger than the current year.

The mayor's budget proposal, unveiled in August and responding to continued reductions in state aid, called for a \$100.7 million levy, which would have been a 6.5 percent increase. Coleman announced Monday that half of nearly \$2 million in previously unidentified revenue would be used to hold the levy to a 5.5 percent increase. The council's action Wednesday with the final 4.98 percent increase went a step further.

The overall city budget will be \$556 million next year, in addition to a \$37.18 million capital improvement budget for construction spending.

At the end of the meeting, Lantry recognized two departing council members: Pat Harris, who has served on the council since January 2000, and Lee Helgen, who has served since January 2003. Harris chose not to run for re-election, and Helgen was defeated by first-time challenger Amy

Brendmoen by about three dozen votes in the November election.

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Members of St. Paul Firefighters Local 21 make their way to City Hall to attend Wednesday's city council meeting focused on approving a 2012 budget and property tax levy. (Photos by Richard Marshall, Pioneer Press)



St. Paul firefighters John Galle, left, Kevin Creamer and Jon Slavik were among some 100 members of Local 21 who attended Wednesday's city council meeting.

St. Paul trims levy increase

By: ROCHELLE OLSON, Star Tribune, December 14, 2011

City Council whittled Mayor Coleman's proposal and voted to reinstate funds for firefighter overtime.

The St. Paul City Council and Mayor Chris Coleman agreed Wednesday to shave the city's levy increase to 4.9 percent, to maintain seven library positions and perhaps restore some money to the Fire Department.

The mayor initially proposed a 6.5 percent levy increase, but he dropped the number to 5.5 percent on Monday after the city collected more revenue than expected through the fall.

Under the plan unanimously adopted by the council, the owner of a \$149,300 home will pay \$34 more in taxes next year. With fee increases for sewer, water, rights of way and recycling, the homeowner will pay an extra \$108 next year on top of the \$1,321 paid in taxes and fees in 2011.

Council President Kathy Lantry said the council agreed with Coleman on most items in the \$600 million budget. "I'm hopeful the priorities we've set out will be implemented by the mayor," Lantry said.

The council unanimously approved a series of actions required to adopt the budget. Members said the budget struck an admittedly painful balance between trying to hold down tax increases while maintaining services such as public safety and libraries. Keeping the library positions will allow longer hours at some facilities.

St. Paul has a strong-mayor system so Coleman has discretion in whether to follow the council. Although he agreed to the levy increase, he said staff must review the entire package.

The Fire Department budget remained the most notable disagreement between Coleman and the council. The final resolution remained unknown late Wednesday.



Mayor Chris Coleman Photo: Glen Stubbe, Star Tribune

Coleman initially slated the agency for a \$400,000 cut in overtime. The council restored the money. He also wanted to take out of service one of the city's three specialized rescue squads that handle hazardous material incidents and rescues from wells.

Fire Chief Timothy Butler said decommissioning a rescue squad "offers the best balance of citizen and firefighter safety" and prevents the temporary daily closures -- known as "brownouts" -- of fire stations.

Firefighters said the move would leave a "large swath of the city, that is already underserved, in further peril."

After the council vote, Coleman declined to say what he would do. "At the end of the day, Chief Butler has to make decisions based on public safety," Coleman said. "The question is, what's the best way to provide service?"

Dozens of city fire fighters were in the council chamber for the vote, as they were during a budget hearing weeks ago. The firefighters and the mayor's office sent out preemptive news releases early in the day supporting their divergent positions.

In adopting the budget, council members acknowledged the hardship. Council Member Russ Stark said some residents are "seeing double-digit increases for the same or reduced services."

The mayor said the trend will continue "unless balance is restored" by the governor and the Legislature, which have slashed local government aid and shifted the tax burden for a decade.

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THE BOOKMARK: The latest from the local scene

By LAURIE HERTZEL, December 17, 2011

Holiday readings coming fast and thick as snowflakes--including with Carol Connolly, St. Paul's poet laureate, and Garrison Keillor.

Time, again, for the holiday edition of Carol Connolly's Readings by Writers. Held in the graceful University Club in St. Paul, this month's event will include eight authors, with readings bookended by music from violinist Mary Scallen and flutist Jim Miller.

Featured writers include poets, novelists and memoirists -- Jill Breckenridge, N.M. Kelby and Sarah Stonich among them (full disclosure: I will be there, too), and books and holiday breads will be for sale.

The event is free, but Connolly will pass the hat in support of Public Art St. Paul's sidewalk poetry project. The sidewalks may be snow-covered now (or will be soon), but come spring you will want to look down and discover a poem at your feet.

It all begins at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at 420 Summit Av.

Meanwhile, the man himself, Garrison Keillor, will read from "A Christmas Blizzard" on Wednesday at the Virginia Swedenborgian Church near his bookstore in St. Paul. The book is Keillor's version of "A Christmas Carol," set in a raging blizzard in North Dakota on Christmas Eve. The free reading begins at 7:30 p.m. at 170 Virginia St.

ALSO ...

- The winter/spring lineup of Talk of the Stacks, held at the Central Library on Nicollet Mall, has been announced. Gabrielle Hamilton, chef and author of the memoir "Blood, Bones and Butter," will be here Jan. 31; David Treuer, author of "Little" and the forthcoming "Rez Life," Feb. 21; and Benjamin Busch, actor from TV's "The Wire" and author of "Dust to Dust," March 27. All events are free. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. and talks begin at 7 p.m.
- "Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community," by Brenda J. Child, will be published in February by Viking Press. Child, a member

of the Red Lake Ojibwe Nation, teaches at the University of Minnesota and is the author of "Boarding School Seasons."



Carol Connolly photo: Tom Sweeney, Star Tribune

- "Dorothy Molter: The Root Beer Lady," by Sara Guy-Levar and Terri Schocke, has been published by Adventure Publications. Molter lived in the BWCA for more than 50 years and grew famous for brewing her own root beer, which she gave to visitors at her wilderness cabin. Guy-Levar runs the Dorothy Molter Museum in Ely, where Schocke also works.

- "A Secret Keeps," a picture book by Marsha Wilson Chall, illustrated by Heather Solomon, will be published in the spring by Carolrhoda Books. Chall teaches at Hamline University in St. Paul.

- "Tallyrand and His World," a biography by Rosalynd Pflaum of Minneapolis, has

been published by Afton Historical Society Press. Pflaum is the author of several other biographies, including one of Marie Curie.

- "What Boys Really Want," by Pete Hautman, will be published in January by Scholastic Books. Hautman, who lives in Minnesota, has won a National Book Award and several Minnesota Book Awards for his young-adult fiction.
- Sarah L. Sladek of Maple Grove has written "The End of Membership as We Know It: Building the Fortune-Flipping, Must-Have Association of the Next Century," published by the Center for Association Leadership.
- "Pitch," poems by Todd Boss, will be published in February by W.W. Norton. Boss lives in St. Paul. His previous book with Norton was "Yellowrocket."

Balancing budget with beauty

Community still underwhelmed with exterior design of

Kaitlyn Egan, news editor - December 18, 2011

Many neighbors remained unimpressed with revised exterior designs for the Payne-Maryland “Miracle Center,” including City Councilmember Dan Bostrom.

“This is going to be something that will be here for the next 50, 60, 100 years, and we want it to be done right,” Bostrom said.

More than 100 community members, including many of the same East Side people who attended the last design review, filled the Arlington Recreation Center Dec. 8 to see how the community’s critiques and suggestions had changed the Phase I designs. The architects’ big news was an updated exterior and the elimination of the third floor.

Phase I of the Payne-Maryland project will cost an estimated \$14 million funded by Recovery Zone and Economic Development bonds.

The partnership between St. Paul Parks & Recreation and the St. Paul Public Library will create a community center complete with a recreation center, library and community park.

“It’s taken some time, but we’ve come a long way,” said Tom Russell, manager of finance and planning for Parks & Rec. The project planners spent the last several months reviewing community input and critiques, as well as touring the neighborhood to look at the architecture to help inspire the exterior redesign.

But neighbors still felt the revised exterior designs left much to be desired.

UPDATES AND REACTIONS

St. Paul has never done a project like this before, said Chris Gibbs from HGA Architects and Engineers. In fact, there aren’t many cities in the Midwest that have done something like this before.

“We’re breaking new ground,” he told the crowd.

It is an “interesting balancing act” designing an East Side facility that honors the past but still welcomes the future, Gibbs said as he presented the updated project designs to the scrutinizing and often skeptical crowd.

The project has lost a floor, going from a three-level facility to a two-level.

The third floor was eliminated to “help us align the budget a little bit better,” Gibbs said. The proposed facility lost about 6,000 square-feet, but much of that was corridor and open space. The programming spaces were not eliminated, just repositioned, Gibbs said.

The exterior of the building has a new look, too, which project designers hoped was more to East Sider’s liking.

Many people said the 45,000 square-foot building “felt big,” Gibbs said, “maybe too big for this neighborhood.”

Architects tried to solve that problem by using “punched openings” and large viewing windows to break up “blocky” sections of the building. The facility could also feature large etched glass pieces displaying neighborhood history, including Miracle on Ice coach and legendary East Sider Herb Brooks.

However, many in the crowd didn’t like the modern look and said it still didn’t give off that East Side “aura.”

Though the proposed façade is brick, just like many of the buildings in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood, the facility still lacks the arched windows, cornices and gables many were hoping for.

Gibbs explained the facility’s size and design didn’t lend itself well to these details and adding them would cost more money.

But Bostrom told attendees that foregoing the fancy chrome and steel for timeless design would be well worth it. He used the Arlington Hills Library as an example of a “classy, ageless, timeless” building.

“Don’t be satisfied with ‘It looks okay,’ and ‘It looks all right,’” Bostrom said. About 28,000 cars would pass by the Payne-Maryland center every day, Bostrom added.

“This is our opportunity to made a big impression.”

TWEAKS AND FINE TUNING

After the meeting, some attendees left comments to the tune of “You can’t have it all and still have the programming that we need,” Parks & Rec public services manager Brad



More than 100 people attended the reveal of updated Payne-Maryland project designs at the Arlington Rec Center on December 8.
Photo: Linda Baumeister/Review

Meyer said after the meeting. It sums up the project planners' predicament well.

"Programming is the No. 1 priority," he said. In order to keep all the high-quality programming inside the center, the outside design needs to be budget savvy.

The final price tag will become more apparent as the project moves closer to breaking ground, Meyer said, leaving less wiggle room for exterior design costs at this point.

"The final design is near 100 percent," Meyer said, "but there is a potential for minor exterior design changes, including window arch or shape changes or other minor changes, to be made prior to the final construction documents.

"There will be some small tweaks to be made based on feedback we received -- just not a complete re-do," Meyer said, though budget will be the main driver of any of those tweaks. So unless more money becomes available, arched windows and gables may be difficult to squeeze in.

The details of a design are hard to convey via a drawing mock-up, Meyer added. Hopefully, the Payne-Maryland center will feel more like home once public art, creative sidewalk inlays, historical nods and other detail elements come into play, Meyer also noted.

MODERN LIBRARY ON THE WAY

The current Arlington Hills Library building is on the National Register of Historic Places and can't be knocked down, representatives from Parks & Rec and the St. Paul Public Library explained.

"The City will consult to determine all restrictions on sale and reuse (of the building)," Parks & Rec explained in a project FAQ sheet distributed at the meeting. The city will then work with District 5 and community members to request proposals from those interested in acquiring the building.

The nearly 100-year-old Carnegie library is a beloved neighborhood icon.

"It just tears me up to see the sun come through the windows," said Joanna Brookes, the Arlington Hills Library branch supervisor. Though she loves the building, she listed some of its many shortcomings at the Dec. 8 presentation: The bathrooms are downstairs. The open stairway poses a danger to toddlers. The downstairs programming space is very limiting. And there are many issues with poor wiring and Internet "dead spots."

Brookes is looking forward to the move to the Payne-Maryland center and all the opportunities it will provide, including a state-of-the-art youth computer lab.

The St. Paul Public Library recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Science and the MacArthur Foundation. The grant will provide funds for planning and design of youth computer labs, including one in the Payne-Maryland center based on a Chicago program aimed at helping inner-city kids express themselves.



The newly redesigned entrance for the Payne-Maryland community center. The updated exterior designs are based on community comments and feedback, but many residents remain unenthused about the center's appearance.



Above, a view of the community center from Maryland Avenue.



The redesigned exterior of the Payne-Maryland center seen from the town square area.

TIMELINE

Demolition of Kendall's Ace Hardware and the Bradshaw funeral home, site preparation and installation of the geothermal well field for the center, will begin in the spring. Construction of the facility and furnishing work will begin in early summer of 2012 and span about 14 months. The Arlington Hills Library and Parks & Rec should be able to move in around August 2013.

There are still plenty of opportunities for community involvement and feedback, the FAQ sheet said. The project will be looking for community instructors and program volunteers as plans move forward. The community will also have a hand in public art for the facility and the future use of the Arlington Hills Library building.

Kaitlyn Egan can be contacted at kegan@lillienews.com or at 651-748-7816.

Saint Paul Public Library Manages to Ward Off Deep Budget Cuts

By Michael Kelley, Dec. 19, 2011

In the negative world of library budgets, cutting one's losses can be counted as a win. This is what happened December 14 in St. Paul where the City Council passed an FY12 budget that will reduce the public library's operating budget by only \$600,042, instead of the \$976,622 proposed in August.

"In Saint Paul, we were facing a proposed 7 percent staff reduction and ended up with a 3 percent reduction, resulting in no staff layoffs and restoring 12 open hours per week," said Kit Hadley, the director of the Saint Paul Public Library. "The outcome is good because it wasn't as bad as we anticipated and because there was consensus among council members that mitigating the proposed cuts to the library was one of the top priorities," she said.

The final numbers look like this:

- Operations: \$16,518,935 (down from \$17,495,557);
- Staff cuts: 5.3 FTEs, instead of 12.1 (positions already vacant, thus no layoffs);
- Collections budget: Cut just over \$400,000;
- Open hours: Reduced from 691 to 657 (instead of 645).

Downward though the figures may be, context matters. Since late 2008, the state has reduced local government aid (LGA) to St. Paul by \$27.7 million. LGA accounts for about 30 percent of the city's general fund revenues. This has created

a volatile budget situation. Against this backdrop, convincing the council and Mayor Chris Coleman to mitigate cuts to the library budget was not a small feat, according to Peter Pearson, president of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, who help lead the advocacy efforts.

"Our elected officials have a difficult job balancing the needs of St. Paul's residents with limited resources," Pearson said. "When you look at the funding that the City Council reinstated, the library received a pretty big portion of that.," he said. The council made an overall adjustment of \$1.4 million to the budget, and it voted to raise its property tax levy by nearly 5 percent.

Even though city officials, in part as a result of strong advocacy, view the library "as somewhat of a sacred cow in the budgeting process," the future remains very uncertain, Pearson said. He noted that the Republican-controlled state legislature wants to cut LGA funding even more, perhaps even zeroing it out. However, St. Paul has been fortunate that private donors have stepped in.

"A local foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, just informed us that they have approved a grant of \$468,000 to The Friends of which \$200,000 is earmarked for library materials in 2012," Pearson said. "So this will go a long way to help address the cuts in materials funding," he said.

Congress Cuts LSTA Funding for FY12; Obama Expected to Approve

By Michael Kelley, Dec. 19, 2011

President Obama is expected to sign the \$915 billion budget bill for FY12 that Congress passed over the weekend, and the bill contains reduced appropriations for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Government Printing Office (GPO), whose top administrator, the public printer, will soon be out of a job.

LSTA funding stands at \$185 million, a 2.3 percent cut from the \$189 million received in FY11. Susan Hildreth, the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (which administers LSTA), said she was pleased with the level of support. "Ideally there would be a higher level of funding. But fiscal constraint is currently a fact of life at the federal level," Hildreth said.

Under LSTA:

- Grants to States was appropriated at \$156.6 million (down from \$160 million);
- Native American Library Services was funded at \$3.8 million (down from \$3.9 million);
- National Leadership for Libraries was funded at \$11.9 million (down from \$12.2 million);
- The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian received \$12.5 million (down from \$12.8 million).

LSTA is a major source of revenue for IMLS, the agency responsible for distributing the majority of federal library program funds to the states. IMLS had requested \$193.2 million for LSTA. The House passed the final budget 296-121 on Friday, and the Senate passed it Saturday on a 67-32 vote.

"We are disappointed that LSTA was cut," said Jeffrey Kratz, an assistant director for government relations in the American Library Association's Washington office. "We feel this money helps a lot of libraries throughout the country and any more cuts to this hurts them on the local level," he said.

The Government Printing Office and the Superintendent of Documents both avoided the substantial cuts that an earlier House version of the budget had envisioned and which engendered some concern this past summer about the impact on the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the Federal Digital System (FDsys).

GPO was appropriated at \$126.2 million, down from \$135.1 million, and the Superintendent of Documents will be funded this year at \$35 million, down from \$39.8 million.

The GPO did not return calls and emails seeking comment; however, Jessica McGilvry, an assistant director for government relations in the ALA's Washington office, said that the level of GPO funding "was better than we thought and we are hoping for the best."

"It's more money than the House was initially proposing, but we can't say how GPO is going to spend the dollars it's being appropriated," McGilvry said. "They have greater concerns at the moment about the upheaval there, and we are not sure what direction that will take and how that will affect FDLP and FDsys," she said.

McGilvry was referring to William Boarman, the public printer, who will soon be out of a job. Boarman was first nominated for the GPO's top job in April 2010, and he got a recess appointment from President Obama earlier this year.

But unspecified objections raised Saturday have killed his nomination, and recess appointees have to step down if they are not confirmed by the end of the Senate's term (which will happen at year's end).

"Having been nominated originally 20 months ago, having been reported out of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee unanimously twice, and not having been permitted to learn and respond to the nature of the objection to his confirmation, Boarman is disappointed in the result of Saturday's Senate action," the GPO said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Boarman named Davita Vance-Cooks as Deputy Public Printer, the second-highest ranking position at the agency. Vance-Cooks is the first woman ever to be appointed to that position. She has been chief of staff for the public printer since January.

The budget also includes \$28.6 million for school libraries and \$12.4 million for the Electronic Government Fund, up from \$8 million in FY11. The latter promotes Web-based transparency on public spending through programs such as Data.gov and USAspending.gov.

St. Paul Libraries to Reduce Morning Hours

By Frederick Melo, 12/19/2011

A few changes are coming to the St. Paul Public Library system in 2012, including reduced morning hours at most locations and expanded career search and computer literacy classes in foreign languages.

Library officials said Monday they'd received a \$468,000 grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to enhance several services, such as a work-study program that partners with area colleges to employ students as computer-literacy instructors and job-search mentors.

The grant also will allow the library to expand the mobile workplace program that launched in June 2010. The effort involves meeting low-income residents at public housing and community centers to teach computer and job-search basics, resume preparation and other computer-based skills.

The classes are taught in Spanish, Somali and Hmong, with help from a Karen translator. "We'll be able to expand the services of the mobile workplace and hire community liaisons who teach computer classes in Karen, Amharic and Oromo," said library spokeswoman Sheree Savage.

The Otto Bremer grant also will help expand the library's collections budget for new books, videos and other materials. The library system will use part of the grant to improve efficiency of its handling system in light of staff reductions. In partnership with 3M, the library system's first automated sorter and check-in machine arrived this October at the Sun Ray Library.

Thanks to a last-minute cash infusion from the St. Paul City Council in the 2012 budget, staff reductions will occur through attrition rather than layoffs, Savage said. The staff will be reduced in hours by the equivalent of 5.3 full-time employees, rather than 12.1 employees as originally envisioned in August.

The library system will shave 34 hours from its schedule by reducing morning or evening hours at 11 of its 14 locations. The St. Paul Central Library, the West Seventh Library and the Bookmobile are the only sites not impacted by the scheduling changes.

"We're open 691 hours per week right now," Savage said. "Effective Jan. 30th, 2012, we'll be open 657 hours per week. In August, we were looking at being open 645 hours per week."

The Otto Bremer Foundation, which owns Bremer Bank, made \$30 million in grants this year. The library grant will be distributed through the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, a private nonprofit.

The library's operating budget, including debt service, for 2012 will be \$16.5 million, about \$600,000 short of what would have been needed to maintain staffing services and open hours at 2011 levels. The collections budget was cut by about \$400,000.

A before-and-after comparison of scheduling changes is posted at sppl.org/about/library-locations/2012-hours.

Frederick Melo can be reached at 651-228-2172.



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[2011](#) > [December](#) > [19](#) > [MNBA Announces 2012 Book Artist Award Winner](#)

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MNBA Announces 2012 Book Artist Award Winner

Added by [Ann Hutton](#), last edited by [Ann Hutton](#) on Dec 19, 2011

Labels [minnesota](#) [book awards](#) [mnba](#)

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library is pleased to announce [Cave Paper](#) and its founders, Bridget O'Malley and Amanda Degener, as the winners of the 2012 Minnesota Book Artist Award (MNBA) sponsored by [Lerner Publishing Group](#). This annual award, presented by the [Minnesota Center for Book Arts \(MCBA\)](#) and the Minnesota Book Awards, recognizes a Minnesota book artist or book artist collaborative group for excellence throughout a body of work, as well as significant contributions to Minnesota's book arts community.

For more information about the 2012 Book Artist Award Winner, [click here](#).



Black women writers turn a book reading into a true community event

By Courtney Algeo, *Lit Lyfe*, December 20, 2011

Lately I've been thinking a lot about the roles of speaker and listener at readings. Often, readings of prose or poetry serve the purpose of publicity—a new book or project that must be advertised, which makes sense. The words being read are, in essence, a free sample of a product being sold. And the listeners—the attendees at a reading—are the market to which that creation is being offered. While this view is a cynical one, and while it can't be easy for writers to travel around shilling books that came out of their fingertips as art, sometimes the literary community, no matter how small or large, can feel a little commercial—especially in times of economic strife. And it bums me out.

Last week, deep in the throes of this sort of weird angst about the literary community I pressed on and took my sad bookish bones out to the Kenwood Café for the Birchbark Books Reading Series, featuring the Twin Cities Black Women Writers. That night, listening to a group of talented local writers read their work—some of which was from completed or forthcoming books, some from pet projects that aren't yet finished—without any real sense of agenda, renewed in me a joy of community that I hadn't felt in some time.

From what I understand, based on Mary Moore Easter's gracious over-the-microphone thank-you to Carolyn Holbrook, the reading was originally only meant to be Holbrook's. However, Holbrook invited some women from her writing group (the Twin Cities Black Women Writers) to share the spotlight with her and read some of what they'd been working on. The group, assembled by Holbrook about six years ago, and containing anywhere between six to ten women at any given time, began out of the desire of these talented women to get feedback from other black women with the ability to discuss issues unique to their community.

The first to read was Mary Moore Easter, a poet/dancer/choreographer with fantastic posture who has been head of the dance program at Carleton College for 40 years. She read for us a yet-unfinished crown of sonnets about seeing the Terracotta Warriors on a visit to China with her husband. It was a captivating poem, a story beginning with her experience viewing the army and ending (for now) with the experience of the man who discovered them.

Next to read was Aundria Sheppard Morgan, the author of an intense-sounding memoir entitled *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*, some of which she read. While hearing Easter read was especially lovely because she had tamed the wild sonnet and I felt as a bubble in a sea of appreciators of the form, listening

while Morgan told us artfully arranged intimate details about her life, my role as an audience member became more intuitive; less brainy. The crowd groaned with sadness in unison, and we became more of a Greek chorus, interacting with her, and supporting her. It was a fulfilling time, and I was so happy to be there, being part of what we became as a group.

Though she was “headlining” the event, Carolyn Holbrook read after Morgan. I feel ashamed of myself for not having known who Holbrook was before attending. She is a woman who every woman should know. The founder of SASE: The Write Place, which in 2006 merged with Intermedia Arts, Holbrook also spent time serving as the program director for The Loft Literary Center, and won a Key Sexton award at the Minnesota Book Awards last year. (There are plenty more things on her résumé, too.) She read the chapter about her rise in the ranks of Minnesotan arts administration from a book she is currently working on, which she received a Travelers grant to write telling the stories of 20 leaders in the local nonprofit sector. While Holbrook's chapter was fantastically written, peppered with darling asides and much giggling from the audience, the thing she said that struck me most was, “I come from a long line of female role models,” which gave me the chills because there is no doubt in my mind that it's true—and I am positive that she is continuing that legacy with her children, and the children she has had as students in her various capacities as a teacher.

Wrapping up the evening was Sherrie Fernandez-Williams, recipient of multiple writing awards and selectee for the Loft Mentor Series in Creative Nonfiction. Williams is also the author of a memoir chronicling her long relationship with an unfaithful man, excerpts of which she shared with us that evening. Though all of the women were spectacular, I've got a sneaking suspicion that Williams was definitely my favorite, because I didn't write anything down in my little notebook, which is usually what happens when I am wholly captivated by a reader. She is a natural-born storyteller, a gift that translates so well to readings. Her face was expressive, her speaking tone changed to add dimensions to the story, and her body language hinted that she understood the performative element of reading to a crowd.

When I think of the word “refreshing” a lot of things come to mind, but I never thought an event like this would top that list. The Minneapolis literary community continues to surprise me and delight me at every turn. That Birchbark Books Reading Series event was one of the best I've been to in the Twin Cities, and good on curator Michael Kiesow Moore for making it happen. I am definitely looking forward to more events like this.

Cave Paper founders win Minnesota Book Awards book artist honor

By Mary Ann Grossmann, 12/20/2011

Cave Paper and its founders, Bridget O'Malley and Amanda Degener, are winners of the 2011 Minnesota Book Awards' Book Artist Award.

Sponsored by Lerner Publishing Group and presented by Minnesota Center for Book Arts, the annual award recognizes a Minnesota book artist or book artist group for excellence and contributions to Minnesota's book arts community.

O'Malley and Degener have worked together as book artists for more than 17 years. Cave Paper, based in Minneapolis, is known for teaming with private presses worldwide, often providing and designing custom papers for deluxe limited editions, according to Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, which facilitates the Minnesota Book Awards.

"O'Malley and Degener's attention to detail and high quality of the finished papers are central to Cave Paper's mission and reputation," the Friends said in announcing the award.

Cave Paper's groundbreaking work in the hand papermaking field has led to invitations to the partners to teach and lecture around the world. Their work can be found in many public collections, including the Walker Art Center and St. John's University in Minnesota, as well as the Library of Congress.

O'Malley has taught papermaking at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design since 2005; Degener was active in Minnesota Center for Book Arts during its founding years and was its artistic director.

The women will accept their award at the April 14 Minnesota Book Awards gala at Crowne Plaza Hotel-St. Paul Riverfront in downtown St. Paul. An exhibition celebrating Cave Paper's work will be on display Jan. 20-March 25 at Open Book, 1011 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis, home to Minnesota Center for Book Arts.

Papermakers Win State Book Artist Award

Women behind Cave Paper in Minneapolis honored.

By: LAURIE HERTZEL, Star Tribune - December 20, 2011

Bridget O'Malley and Amanda Degener, the two women behind Cave Paper in Minneapolis, have been named the Minnesota Book Artist Award winners for 2012.

Since 1994, they have been making handcrafted and hand-dyed paper out of Belgian flax, cotton rag and denim, dyed with natural dyes such as persimmon juice, indigo and walnut. The paper is used, mainly, in limited-edition and fine-press books, though they also produce a line of journals and cards. Their work sells around the world.

The art of papermaking captivated O'Malley when she was still in college, studying art at St. Catherine University in St. Paul. "It can seem so very, very simple -- in fact, it's just fiber and water, at its most basic," she said. "But the complexity and nuances that can be manipulated in the process are so enormously interesting that I feel I have so much yet to learn."

The two women met at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and started Cave Paper in July 1994 -- so named because it is located deep in a basement in a late-1800s warehouse in downtown Minneapolis. It has limestone walls that are two feet thick and no windows.

"Papermaking is not the neatest process," O'Malley said. "You need access to water, and we do a lot of dyeing of the paper, so there's a lot of mess involved." A basement, with a floor drain, works well.

O'Malley is also a printmaker, which she studied at the University of Iowa after graduating from St. Kate's, and Degener is a sculptor. An exhibit celebrating their work will run Jan. 20 through March 25 at Open Book, 1011 Washington Av. S. in Minneapolis, with a reception honoring them on Feb. 10.

They also will be honored at the Minnesota Book Awards gala on April 14 in downtown St. Paul.

St. Paul Library gets grant to help unemployed find jobs

By Joe Kimball | Published Tue, Dec 20 2011

The St. Paul Library is getting \$468,000 from the Otto Bremer Foundation to help unemployed people find work.

It will allow the library to “provide resources and assistance to unemployed people looking for work, especially those confronting barriers of culture and language,” city officials said.

The money will mean more computer classes in multiple languages, expanding a work/study program to enhance job search and digital literacy services, improving the capacity to handle materials expeditiously so staff can spend more time assisting patrons and supporting the collection budget.

The St. Paul grant was part of a wider Bremer Foundation package totaling \$7 million designed to

improve economic conditions for vulnerable people in poverty.

“Libraries are a crucial part of our Saint Paul community,” said St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. “From free access to computers, books and online resources for individuals and families, to job and small business assistance that help support entrepreneurship and retraining, libraries impact every one of our residents. This grant is a testament to Otto Bremer’s commitment to Saint Paul.”

Kit Hadley, St. Paul Library director, said: “We’re absolutely honored to be named a grant recipient of the Otto Bremer Foundation. This is a significant award for the Saint Paul Public Library and allows us to provide critical services in high need. We are very grateful.”

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LOCAL 501 MAKES HOLIDAYS BRIGHTER WITH \$1,500 IN DONATIONS

Submitted by mcody on December 21, 2011 - 4:03pm

The holidays will be brighter thanks to donations from MAPE Local 501. Local 501 gave \$1,500 for its fourth quarter charitable donations to eight organizations.

The recipients, along with the amounts they received are listed here: \$250 – Hunger Solutions, Dorothy Day Center (St. Paul), Rescued Pets are a Wonderful (RPAW), Animal Ark and Theresa Living Center/Caroline Family Services (single moms), and \$83.33 – Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, Greater Twin Cities United Way and Union Gospel Mission.



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12.28.11 Local 1702 Meeting - December 28th

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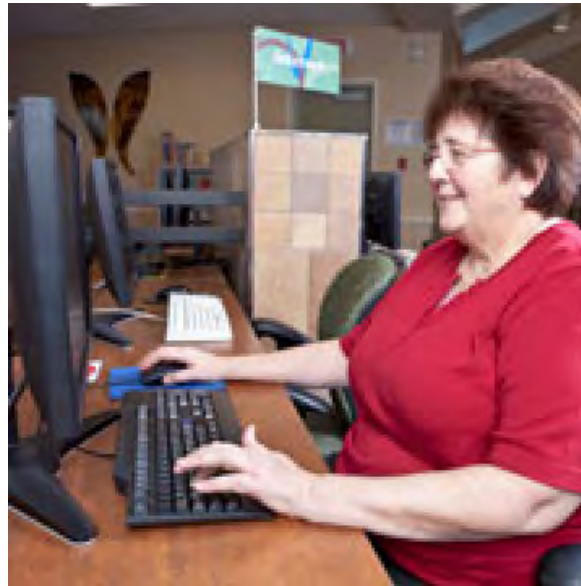
The library: A first stop on the road to recovery

By Lee Egerstrom, *Minnesota 2020*, December 27, 2011

The St. Paul Public Library system will be doing more to help Minnesotans find work and prepare for careers in the coming year even though budget cuts are shortening the hours the libraries will be open to serve the public.

Minnesota 2020 has saluted public libraries from time to time as essential locations for information and computer access for people especially harmed by the economic downturn of the Great Recession and the weak economy that followed. Recent announcements from the Otto Bremer Foundation and from the St. Paul libraries show neither need for such services nor problems with funding and staffing these services have gone away even though we are technically in a period of economic recovery.

The good news from the Bremer foundation came Dec. 18 when it said it granted \$468,000 to Friends of the St. Paul



Library to help the public libraries with career search and computer literacy classes in foreign languages. Frederick Melo, writing in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, said the computer instructors and job search mentors will have Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Karen, Amharic and Oromo language skills to work with the mostly new residents entering the workforce.

Unfortunately, Melo also reported on how St. Paul libraries are cutting staffing through attrition and will reduce library hours by 34 hours per week to cope with a projected \$600,000 budget shortfall in 2012.

While an excellent example of changing to support the needs of a community, this story also demonstrates how diminishing public support for libraries has them turning to the nonprofit sector to fill revenue voids.

Lee Egerstrom is an Economic Development Fellow at Minnesota 2020.

Carnegie Corporation Awards \$5 Million to New York City Public Library Systems

December 28, 2011

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has announced a \$5 million grant to New York City's three public library systems: New York, Queens, and Brooklyn.

The grant, which boosts the amount that Carnegie has provided to the city's public library systems to approximately \$15 million over the past fourteen years, will be used to expand services and resources across each system and strengthen the long-standing partnership between the region's public libraries and public schools. Collectively, the more than two hundred libraries within the three systems provide learning resources, including access to computers and other technology, to more than one million school children.

"There is no greater expression of democracy than a library and no stronger signifier of the potential of our nation to succeed in today's challenging times," said Carnegie Corporation president Vartan Gregorian, who led the New York Public Library from 1981 to 1989. "Carnegie Corporation is proud to support New York City's libraries, which embody Andrew Carnegie's deep belief in the power of books and learning to change the world."

"Carnegie Corporation Awards \$5 Million Grant to New York City's Public Library Systems." Carnegie Corporation of New York Press Release 12/22/11.

<http://carnegie.org/news/press-releases/story/news-action/single/view/carnegie-corporation-awards-5-million-grant-to-new-york-citys-public-library-systems/>

New digs for Arlington Hills Library, new life for its old home on St. Paul's East Side

By Kyle Potter, Pioneer Press - 12/30/2011

Tucked away on a residential street in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood, the Arlington Hills Library is one of three historic Carnegie libraries in St. Paul. It was built in 1917, but come September 2013, it won't be a library anymore.

The books, computers, staff members and patrons will shift a few blocks away to the Payne-Maryland Center, a community super-center with a library, recreation center, classrooms and a \$14 million price tag. Construction will begin next summer.

But unlike some of the facilities the Payne-Maryland Center will replace, the Arlington Hills Library building won't be razed.

St. Paul Public Library staff, city officials and community members are working to make sure the building remains in use once the switch is made. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.



It's unclear what will be the building's next tenant. Leslie McMurray, executive director for the Payne-Phalen District Five Planning Council, said residents have raised several possibilities,

such as a multi-use arts and history learning center or a meeting place for neighborhood groups.

"We're concerned that it remains an asset for community use - that we're expanding resources for the neighborhood and not losing them," McMurray said.

The council sent a letter to St. Paul Public Library

Director Kit Hadley requesting that it be involved throughout the process of determining the building's future.

"We didn't want to be surprised," McMurray said.

Plans for repurposing the building will start to take shape in the first quarter of 2012, according to city documents. With help from the council and the community, the city will write a request for proposals to attract a new owner.

Carnegie libraries are named for steel tycoon and industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who helped fund the construction of 1,689 libraries across the country.

Of the 66 libraries built throughout Minnesota in the first part of the 20th century, 48 are still standing. More than half of those have been repurposed over the years.

Joanna Brookes, branch manager for the Arlington Hills Library, said the facility doesn't have the flexible space the library needs, and its age makes upgrades difficult. Nonetheless, she said, it will be hard to let go of the Carnegie library - both for her and for Payne-Phalen residents.



"When the sunlight comes through the windows, it just has a library-like feeling," Brookes said. "I suppose it's kind of like your first house....You still kind of feel nostalgic about the older one."

For more information on the Payne-Maryland Center project, go to www.stpaul.gov/paynmarylandproject.



Lake Elmo Library Now Perpetually Quiet

The Rosalie Wahl Library in Lake Elmo was open for the last time Friday. A temporary city-run library will open Tuesday.

By: TIM HARLOW, Star Tribune, December 31, 2011

For four hours on Friday, a green neon sign in the window of the Rosalie Wahl Library read OPEN, but at 2 p.m. sharp it blinked off for the last time.

It was more than the end of the business day -- it ended the last chapter of the charming library in downtown Lake Elmo. It also ended the east metro community's 50-year association with the Washington County Library system.

Starting Tuesday, Lake Elmo will begin operating its own library in temporary quarters at the Lake Elmo Regional Arts Center. Its goal is to establish a permanent home in a yet-to-be-chosen location within the next few months.

The county, meanwhile, will pack its 9,000 books, computers and furniture and distribute them to other branches. The building at 3479 Lake Elmo Av. N is for sale.

"It's really a shame," said Cathie Sullivan, of Lake Elmo, who on Friday afternoon stopped by to peruse the collection one last time. "It's too bad."

Deborah Peterson said she'll miss walking and biking to the library with her 3-year-old granddaughter, Giselle. Gloria Knoblauch will miss sitting on the library's deck. Bill Sullivan will miss the comfortable chairs he sat in while reading magazines.

But most, like Rhonda Place, also of Lake Elmo, said they will miss the convenience and friendliness of the tiny library where librarians knew many patrons by name. "It's small, but it meets my needs," Place said while returning a book Friday. "It will be sadly missed."

City leaders, unhappy with the service the county was providing at the Wahl Library, voted earlier this year to secede from the county system. They decided to use the \$260,000 in allocated taxes to run their own library.

Lake Elmo residents who want to continue using Washington County libraries will have to pay \$60 for a library card. Lake Elmo officials have said they will reimburse each household for the cost of the card.

Across town at the Arts Center, volunteers spent the day preparing for Tuesday's opening of the Interim Lake Elmo Public Library, said Judy Gibson, secretary of the Friends of the Lake Elmo Library, the group heading the city's efforts.

The group has distributed fliers that say the interim library will have a small collection of books, CDs and DVDs for adults and children as well as computers, newspapers and magazines. It also proudly announces one amenity the Wahl Library didn't have: free coffee.



With the help of librarian Martha Riel, Rhonda Place was one of the last patrons on Friday to check out a book at the Rosalie Wahl Library in Lake Elmo.

Photo: Tim Harlow, Star Tribune