

Hennepin County Library and Minneapolis Public Library: Creating a New Consolidated Library System

Summer 2007

Background:

In May, the Minnesota Legislature approved historic enabling legislation to authorize the consolidation of Hennepin County Library and Minneapolis Public Library systems. A unified system will provide more seamless, convenient services to current and future residents across Hennepin County, with excellent library programs and services that are responsive to needs of individuals, families, businesses, community organizations and neighborhoods.

Fast Facts:

- The merged system will include 41 libraries located throughout suburban Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis. Residents will also have access to outreach services including two Readmobiles and the public website.
- The united system will be called the Hennepin County Library.
- All individual library names will be retained, including Minneapolis Central Library.
- The current Hennepin County Library board will expand from 7 to 11 citizen members. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners is responsible for appointing Library Board members. Three of their initial appointments to this expanded board will be Minneapolis residents.
- A fair and sustainable financing structure will ensure overall long-term viability and accountability. While the tax base will change over time, a merger will not significantly shift the relative library taxes currently paid by Minneapolis and suburban taxpayers. The City of Minneapolis will contribute \$7.8 million in the first year to support operating costs. This annual contribution will be phased out over ten years. The City of Minneapolis will also contribute funds to fully support for three years, any extension of hours of libraries located in Minneapolis.
- A merged collection will include more than 5 million books, CDs and DVDs (in 40 world languages), nearly 1,600 public computers and more, representing the largest library collection serving more patrons than any other in the state.
- In 2006, library users from both systems checked out more than 16 million books, magazines, CDs and DVDs and made nearly 12 million website visits. Nearly 115,000 new library cards were issued in 2006.

Guiding Principles Support Library Consolidation

Two advisory committees – the Committee on the Future of Libraries in Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Public Library Advisory Committee – examined options for providing the best 21st century library services to all Hennepin County residents. Both committees concluded that one united library system was the best solution. The Minneapolis Public Library Board, the Minneapolis City Council, the Hennepin County Library Board and the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approved guiding principles and support for state legislation enabling the merger.

For more information, visit www.hclib.org and click on “Merger Updates”.