

Library survives budget crises

The day after the first Monday closure of the Eugene Public Library, nearly 6,000 books waited to be reshelved.

That was March 15, and it took library employees a week to "recover," remembers Carol Hildebrand, assistant city librarian. "Usually we can get books back on the shelves within 24 hours."

Almost a month later it still takes "an extra couple days to recover from Mondays," Hildebrand says. The library began closing on Mondays after it was asked by the city to reduce expenditures. It will also be closed on Sundays after May 23.

The library needed to cut \$75,000 from its budget, so all part-time employees — the equivalent of 11 or 12 full-time workers — were laid off. The book budget was frozen and a vacant full-time position was left unfilled.

The city of Eugene asked for a 5-percent cut, but it has a



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15-percent impact because it only covers one-third of the year, Hildebrand says.

Salary is the main expenditure of the library, she says, because the building is open to the public for more than 50 hours a week, which means a lot of employee overtime.

Most of the Monday business is showing up on Tuesday, Hildebrand says. "I don't know if business will level off, but let me put it this way — there will be no time off on Tuesdays."

Library workers have to face large stacks of returned books when they show up Tuesday. "People probably drive up, see we're closed, say 'Oh, darn! I forgot,' and leave their books," she says.

"The public's biggest problem is just trying to remember. The staff's biggest problem is dealing with the same number of people in less time."

The library decided to close Mondays rather than Sundays because Sunday hours were already short (1-5 p.m.) and would not cover the cutbacks requested by the city, Hildebrand says.

The overall community response has been positive, Hildebrand says. The library has acquired 15 to 20 new volunteers. "The volunteers are very helpful, so we take the time to train them," she says.

"People do care about the library."

Law school event features chief justice

Arno Denecke, chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, will be the keynote speaker at a Student Bar Association-sponsored symposium on Oregon court reform April 17 at the University's law school.

The symposium is set to begin at 9 a.m. with Denecke's address, and will continue through the morning with various speakers from the congressional and judicial branches of Oregon government.

Three successive panel discussions are planned. The first will focus on the upcoming May 18 ballot measure that would give the governor the authority to appoint the State Supreme Court chief justice. The others will focus on authority over administrative and fiscal control of circuit courts and consolidation of circuit and district courts. In addition to Denecke, other speakers will include state Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, Hans Linde, associate justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, and George Joseph, chief judge of the Oregon Court of Appeals.



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