

Timberland Library Warns of Late Fees Beginning Thursday - NO Amnesty **Local News**

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ABERDEEN, Wash. - The Timberland Regional Library (TRL) Board of Trustees voted last night at its regular monthly meeting to begin charging fines for overdue library materials beginning October 2009 and charging for computer printouts beginning January 2010. The meeting was held this month at the Montesano Timberland Library (W. H. Abel Memorial Library).

Charges for overdue library materials

A charge of \$.15 per item per day for all types of materials will begin on October 1, 2009. Overdue fines will be capped at \$5.00 per item. Twelve out of the 15 largest public library systems in Washington State currently charge fines. Input from recent patron surveys and town hall meetings indicated many people believe such fines are acceptable and even expected given the library system's budget constraints.

The decision is meant to encourage prompt return of library items as well as provide revenue for operating the library system. Library materials returned on time will be available sooner to others who want to check them out, reducing the number of copies TRL needs to purchase. The annual estimated revenue from overdue fines is \$525,000.

To avoid accruing overdue fines, borrowers will be encouraged to return items on time or renew them if possible. Patrons who have signed up for email notices from the library will receive "pre-overdue notices" before the due date.

Charges for computer printouts

A charge of \$.10 per page printed from TRL public access computers will begin January 2010. Staff will need the time to install an online print management system and bill/coin acceptors and update procedures for the system's 27 libraries. There will be no charge for pages printed from the online library catalog. Again, the charge is consistent with many other public library systems in the state.

The action regarding computer printouts was taken to recover the cost of paper and toner and to reduce waste. The estimated 50% reduction in supplies and the number of printers needed, based on the experience of other public libraries will save over \$25,000 annually. Annual revenue generated is expected to be at least \$40,000.

Less staff time will be needed for troubleshooting and repairing printers and refilling toner and paper. Staff will help patrons who need assistance with procedures such as printing just the needed portions of lengthy documents and retrieving their prints. Pages will print when paid for; if the money is not inserted, the print job will cancel automatically after a period of time, so if a document was unintentionally sent to a printer, the patron can simply allow it to time out.

2009 budget update

A special meeting of the TRL Board was held prior to the regular meeting to discuss an amended 2009 budget. TRL Administrative Services Manager Michael Crose outlined ongoing cost-cutting actions that will result in a balanced 2009 operating budget by the end of the year, without using cash reserves. Reductions in administrative expenses, training, travel and facilities upgrades, along with leaving most vacant positions unfilled and drastically reducing the use of substitutes and extra staff hours will result in the needed \$850,000 worth of cuts. The Board and administration will begin work on the 2010 budget in June.

For further information, email comments@trlib.org or contact the Timberland Regional Library Administrative Service Center at 943-5001 in the Olympia area, or 1-877-284-6237 from other areas.