

Library Express brings library service to Hugo community

A news release from Washington County -- July 12, 2010

Washington County Library has brought a new community asset to the City of Hugo, as well as all Washington Library patrons, with the introduction of the Washington County Library Express. Library Director Patricia Conley called the Library Express an innovative new way to deliver services to areas where a full-service library may not be close by. She noted that this could also be an option for expanding library service in times of tight budgets and in diverse locations, such as transit centers.

“Hugo is a community which is seeing substantial growth. We want to make sure access to library services is a cost-effective benefit which can contribute to that growth,” Conley said.

Located at the Hugo City Hall, 14669 Fitzgerald Ave. N. in Hugo, just off State Highway 61, the Library Express offers a place where patrons can order, pick up and return library materials, using a self-service kiosk, locker system and book return.

“This is a new system for us, the first in the state, and we’re excited about the possibilities,” Conley said. “We’re cooperating with Carver County Library, and applied for a federal grant together and will share what we learn. Carver County is installing an Express Library in the City of Victoria. We hope this will be seen as a model for local governments working together to provide service more efficiently.

“Once customers have a chance to give it a try and see how easy it is, I think they’ll be impressed by it,” Conley said. “We can see people stopping by the Library Express to pick up their books right along with the rest of their daily errands. It’s a fast process and will only take a few minutes to pick up the items they have put on hold. Because the Library Express is self-service and located outside Hugo City Hall, it will be open 24 hours a day. It can really be a convenient part of our customers’ daily lives,” Conley said. The computer kiosk, which is inside City Hall, will be available during normal City Hall hours, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

To request books, customers use their library card number and must have an e-mail address on file with Washington County Library. Library cards are available online or through any Washington County Library. Using either the Library Express kiosk or the Washington County website from their own computer at http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info_for_residents/library/ customers designate the Library Express (Hugo City Hall) as the pickup point. They will be informed via e-mail when their materials are available. The items will be available for 48 hours from the time of delivery to the library. Delivery schedules are currently being finalized. When they pick up the items, customers will enter the last four digits of their library card number onto a keypad. They will then be directed to the locker number where their checked out items are located.

The Washington County Library Express equipment was delivered and installed in early July. The equipment cost \$44,000, plus installation costs. Service is now available. There will be a ribbon cutting at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 29, at Hugo City Hall.

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Minnesota Department of Education, State Library Services.