



City of  
**Santa Monica**<sup>SM</sup>

**Santa Monica Public Library**  
601 Santa Monica Boulevard  
Santa Monica, California 90401

CITY OF SANTA MONICA  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

P. Lamont Ewell  
City Manager

'09 JAN 15 P 4 :19 January 9, 2009

Dear Lamont,

*Library Board*

*Edward Edwards,  
Chair*

*Ken Blackwell*

*Ken Breisch*

*Gene Oppenheim*

*Dan Stern*

The Library Board members have had a chance to discuss the Library and city budget plans for next year and we wish to share our recommendations with you and council. We recognize the economic climate is dynamic and grim, to say the least. That said, we wish to focus on two basic priorities that have broad impact on Library service – facility maintenance and the Library's automation system.

A story we have seen in the media recently is that difficult economic times typically result in heavier library usage. More people are turning to public libraries for free access to books, movies, music, magazines and newspapers, not to mention the programs for children and adults. This increased use translates into more wear and tear on library facilities.

During tough economic times maintenance is often one of the first lines in the budget to be cut. However, the Board feels strongly that the condition of the Main and Branch libraries must be a priority. Adequate funding for cleaning the facilities and maintaining their various systems is one of the foundations of providing excellent service. Even a great staff and wonderful collections and services cannot overcome a dirty, drab facility.

The second priority the Library Board wishes to address is the Library's automation system or Integrated Library System (ILS). The ILS includes the online catalog, patron database, circulation records, acquisition system and more. Included in the budget plan for 2009-2010 is an allocation of \$300,000 in capital improvement funds to replace the existing system, Sirsi. That system is more than ten years old and suffers from being based upon an out-of-date database system and limited support and development. It is time to update this software, allowing staff to improve internal processes and enhance the online experience for Library patrons.

Santa Monica residents have consistently demonstrated the value they place on quality library service. The ongoing study of possible locations for a new library in the Pico Neighborhood reinforces this fact once again. As we begin the fourth year of use of the Main Library it is important to recognize the need to maintain what we have and support the core services people have come to expect.

We appreciate the support you and the City Council have shown for Library service over the years and request your consideration of these Board priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Edwards', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Edward Edwards, Chair  
Santa Monica Public Library Board