



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Library of Virginia Reading Rooms to Close on Saturdays and Mondays Effective November 14

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For Immediate Release

(Richmond, Virginia) --The reading rooms of the Library of Virginia will be closed on Saturdays and Mondays starting November 14, 2016. The move is a result of the drop in recent revenue projections, which led to Governor McAuliffe reducing the operating budgets for executive agencies by 5 percent for the current fiscal year. The Library had no option but to turn to staff cuts to absorb the 5 percent operating budget reduction. With the loss of 18 employees, the Library is unable to keep the reading rooms open six days a week. Effective November 14, 2016, the reading rooms will be open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

“The decision to close the reading rooms was made reluctantly but providing effective service on Saturdays and Mondays for patrons without adequate human resources was no longer possible. Since the Governor's announcement of the staff reductions at the Library of Virginia I and other members of the Library Board have been contacted by members of the general public who are very upset about these staff reductions,” said R. Chambliss Light, Jr., chairman of the Library Board.

Librarian of Virginia Sandra G. Treadway said, “Closing on Saturdays and Mondays is necessary because of the loss of 12 full time and 6 part time employees. Suspending our Saturday hours and closing our reading rooms on Mondays is heartbreaking for us, but is necessary. It will make it difficult for citizens who do research in the Library's unique holdings; however, we will continue to offer our constituents alternative avenues to information. When the Library is not open, citizens can still access numerous reference and research resources through the Library's main website (www.lva.virginia.gov) and also via Virginia Memory (www.lva.virginiamemory.com).”

Other service areas will also be affected. It will take longer, for example, to fill orders for digital images of material in the collections. Training for state and local records officers will be offered less frequently, and response times for records management-related questions may be extended. Moreover, it will take longer to provide access to new collections, and the Library's ability to offer programming will be diminished.

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The Library of Virginia has been open on Saturdays throughout the years since shortly after World War II. The Library holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion. Its collections now total approximately 123 million items. The Library of Virginia attracts more than 200,000 visitors annually from across the state and nation. Since its 1997 opening at its 800 East Broad Street location in historic downtown Richmond, the Library has consistently ranked among the area's most visited cultural attractions.

Since FY 2008, the Library's general fund budget has been reduced nearly \$3.5 million. The Library has taken previous reductions from its limited discretionary funds and from staff reductions in behind-the-scenes departments so that it could keep the reading and research rooms open to the public six days a week. Before the economic recession in 2008, the Library employed 195 full-time and 45 part-time staff members. At the start of the current fiscal year, before this new round of reductions, its staffing level stood at 123 full-time and 14 part-time employees. The loss of these 18 employees necessitated the closing of the reading rooms on Saturdays and Mondays.

The agency will remain open from Monday through Friday. Full-time public service staff will continue to respond to mail, e-mail, and telephone requests and will pull materials to fulfill research, photocopying, and digitization requests. This work will primarily be done on Mondays, since there is not sufficient staff coverage to complete this work when the reading rooms are open to the public.

If you would like more information about the Library, please visit our website, www.lva.virginia.gov.

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November 1, 2016