



**W**hen the going gets tough, the average family's solution is to get creative. In rethinking their budgets during this difficult economic period, many in Saint Paul are returning to a familiar place: their neighborhood public library — a center of culture, community and learning, and a gateway to the technology and digital literacy required for success in the 21st century workplace.

The City of Saint Paul is known for its strong library system. Our libraries are not simply in the “book” business. They are in the business of learning and development, aligning their resources with the needs of the community. They have the tools to help people acquire essential workforce technology skills and apply for jobs, prepare their children to learn, and support youth in school success — with well-trained staff to assist.

The return on public investment in our libraries can be measured in higher circulation, more relevant materials, better outreach, expanded access, passionate and qualified staff, more computers and increased bandwidth — all of which, in turn, translate to **more educated workers, increased community prosperity, more engaged and safer neighborhoods, and a more successful society.**

### On the Right Track

The Friends applauds the Mayor's commitment to closing no libraries. We also support his intention to use the remaining \$8 million in Invest Saint Paul funds to leverage community resources and create a new joint-use library and recreation center, replacing the old Arlington Hills Branch Library and Arlington Recreation Center. In a city with growing numbers of people from other lands, it's more important than ever that opportunities for increased literacy are available to all. This innovative facility will be good for the entire community when complete, but will immediately create new jobs for those who build it. The planned renovations that will follow at Highland Park and Sun Ray are equally visionary for the Library's long-range capital plan, and all contain good long-term strategies for saving money for the City.

#### **Today we ask the Mayor and City Council to reconfirm their commitment to Libraries by restoring the cuts in hours.**

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library understands the necessity of budget cuts, but hopes that between now and December, as economic forecasts are updated and if more Federal stimulus funds become available, additional money may be found. If so, we request that the City Council and Mayor use some of that money to restore the cuts in hours. The Library provides some of our community's greatest resources, but access to those resources is critically important. Restoring the cuts in hours is our highest priority in this budget cycle.

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### The Library is Our Future

The City should consider an increase in the Library levy in 2011 if further reductions are anticipated. We can also ensure the Library's strong financial future through the sale of library buildings and land. The Friends urges the City to have the proceeds from the sale of the Lexington Branch and Arlington Hills Branch added to the Library Agency's fund balance.

**Recognizing that our Library is a transformational force in the lives of everyone in Saint Paul — helping people find jobs, enhancing financial literacy for homeowners and small business owners, supporting education, providing access to information and telecommunications services, promoting early literacy and connecting communities — should make keeping access to those resources a priority for the future health of our great city.**



**SAINT PAUL  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**