

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

[www.ci.norfolk.ne.us](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us)

June 28, 2010

## “Library Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning”



The Norfolk Public Library doesn't have central air conditioning this summer for a couple of reasons- equipment that's at the end of its lifespan and rules on how the replacement is purchased.

Mike Caldararo, Director of the Norfolk Public Library, wants Norfolk citizens to understand that it isn't the city's choice to have a library without air conditioning this summer. Problems began a year ago when the library's air conditioner started malfunctioning. Caldararo

remembers it clearly as it quit working altogether the end of July, his first month on the job.

"It is the original heating/cooling system in the library which was built in 1977. It's been worked on through the years but has never been replaced. It has actually operated beyond the years of its useful life," Caldararo said.

City officials determined that the heating/ventilation/air conditioning system (HVAC) needed to be replaced rather than repaired so an engineering firm specializing in HVAC was hired to design an environmentally smart energy plan for the library.

The nationally known company submitted a design and estimated costs for the project in March; however, it was determined that the firm had miscalculated the amount of time it would take for the city to pay for the project.

"The plan as presented by this company was unacceptable and too costly," Caldararo said.

At that time, the city council took steps to terminate the contract with the firm and establish an agreement with a different company. The new company had to completely start over with their own design with environmentally friendly features. On June 16th they presented the plans to the city council for approval. When the city approves it, the plan will go through the bidding process as to what company will do the work. It's estimated that the costs for the HVAC system will be nearly \$400,000 with some of the money coming from a US Department of Energy grant and some from a council priority fund already set up in the budget. Bids will be due July 13th with work on the project beginning immediately. A completion date of September 15th is anticipated.

"We're not like a private company that can turn right around and get new equipment installed. The bidding process and funding requirements take more time. This is tax money we're spending and we need to make sure we're getting the best value for that money," Caldararo said.

It's estimated that at least \$100,000 is saved by using the plans of the recently contracted company to do the design work.

As for the heat this summer, Caldararo said it hasn't affected the library too much. One recent afternoon when the temperature was at 90 degrees, there were 15 cars parked in the parking lot. The eight computers used to access the internet were full. Jim Nelson of Norfolk sat in a chair reading a magazine. He said the warm air in the library didn't bother him.

"It's warm but it's not unbearable. I've got to find out what Tiger's doing," he said, pointing to a Sports Illustrated magazine at his side. Nelson said he planned on spending at least a half hour sitting in the library reading his favorite magazines.

Caldararo said that circulation at the library hasn't gone down and that internet usage had even increased somewhat.

"We've got portable air conditioners and fans and we run the system fan to bring in some cool air. We also keep the doors open and keep the lights off in certain parts of the library when they're not needed," Caldararo said.

Record numbers of people joined the summer reading program. It's estimated that there are 1800 people currently enrolled in the program. Some of the related program events are held in the evening when it's cooler.

Caldararo said a more relaxed and cool dress code for library employees was set in place allowing for dress shorts and sandals to help them keep cool. Summer hours for the library have changed to open and close an hour earlier. The library is open from 9 am to 7 pm on Monday through Friday, 9 to 5 on Saturday and is closed on Sundays.

Anne Pruss, City of Norfolk reference librarian, said she appreciates how city officials have been accommodating for library employees.

"It's actually been very tolerable in here. Typically, if there isn't a lot of humidity, it's not that hot in here. We don't set our air conditioner at a very low temperature at home so I'm used to it," Pruss said.

She understands that people who are used to working in very cool office or work spaces may find it to be more uncomfortable to be in the library than she.

And she knows the problem is temporary as does city administration.

"We are so appreciative of employees and citizens who have continued to support the library and our goals of reaching as many people as we can through the library resources and programming. It's been challenging but things will get back to normal in a few months," said Sheila Schukej, Human Resources Manager for the City of Norfolk.

Until then, library patrons are encouraged to come in and check out the books, magazines and newspapers at the library.

"It's less than ideal when you step in but it's bearable," Caldararo said.