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Louisville Free Public Library Director Craig Buthod Announces Retirement

LOUISVILLE (November 7, 2014) – The Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) is losing one of its biggest advocates. Library Director Craig Buthod announced today he is stepping down as the city’s top librarian – a post he has held since 1998 – by the end of the year.

“Under Craig’s leadership, our library system has flourished – from new buildings to eBooks to programs such as the *How-To Festival*,” Mayor Greg Fischer said. “Craig’s commitment to lifelong learning was evident in the work he did every day on behalf of all 760,000 citizens of Louisville. Our city is grateful for his long leadership and service.”

The search for a new library director will begin immediately. Mayor Fischer has appointed Library Advisory Commission Chair Tad Thomas and Library Foundation Chair Debra Murphy as co-chairs of the search committee. The city’s Chief of Community Building, Sadiqa Reynolds, will represent the mayor in the search. State Commissioner of Libraries Wayne Onkst has also agreed to serve on the committee. According to Mr. Thomas, “We will conduct a thorough nationwide search to find the best library director for Louisville.” Mayor Fischer is expected to appoint an interim director to serve during the search process.

Library Director Buthod credits LFPL’s many accomplishments during his tenure to the dedication, creativity, and hard work of library staff and community supporters. “As for me personally, I feel a little like Lou Gehrig when he said ‘I’m the luckiest man on the face of the earth.’ For forty-two years I’ve gone to work every day in a library, a place where I could engage with smart people pursuing their education, and I could learn something myself every day. What could be better than that?”

Under Buthod’s leadership, LFPL has worked hard to be adaptable, creative, and relevant to the needs of the community. Today the library serves more than 10,000 visitors each day in person, and another 10,000 virtual visitors online. And the volume of books, eBooks, CDs, DVDs and other materials circulating to the public has increased 25% since he took over.

Highlights of his tenure at LFPL include development of the Library’s Master Facilities Plan (a long range capital plan to help the Library meet state standards), a massive increase in computers and new technology tools like the Treehouse online coding course, and expanded hours of service – “every school night in every neighborhood.”

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Community

Community partnerships and innovative educational programming have been integral to the library's resurgence in the community. From the successes of the *Authors at the Library* series – attracting more than 75 *New York Times* bestselling authors to Louisville – to the popularity of programs like the *How-To Festival*, Buthod has worked tirelessly to turn the library's gaze outward, reaching into and engaging the community in new and exciting ways.

Educational Partnerships

One of the core missions of the Louisville Free Public Library championed by Buthod is the support of education in this community. Under his direction, LFPL has taken special steps to strengthen its connection to all schools in Louisville by issuing library cards to all Jefferson County Public School, Archdiocese, and private school students. The Student Power Plus card – an educational partnership between area schools, LFPL, and the Library Foundation – gives students access to all public library resources, and serves as a discount TARC pass.

LFPL also offers students access to a wide array of homework help and sophisticated ACT/SAT test preparation tools, from study guides to fully proctored practice tests, all for free. Similarly, the Library, in partnership with JCPS Adult Education, works to help adults attain their GED by providing space for free GED classes and online practice tests.

Even before children start kindergarten, LFPL works hard to help get them ready for school. Early childhood reading initiatives like weekly storytimes at every location, the *Read with Me* program, and most recently, the *1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge*, have been the cornerstone of Buthod's efforts to support early literacy in Louisville.

Summer Reading

LFPL has become well known for its extraordinarily successful Summer Reading Program, which encourages children to read for fun during the summer. This year, more than 28,000 children and teens completed the program reading at least 10 books each. In addition to helping foster a love of reading, the program is a valuable tool to ensure that children maintain and strengthen their reading skills, making them better prepared when they return to school in the fall.

Flood Recovery

August 4, 2009 was a difficult day for the Louisville Free Public Library. In just under three hours, freak flash flooding from a record-breaking rainfall put the historic Main Library's lower level under seven feet of water destroying books, bookmobiles, computers and building systems. Totalling more than \$7.8 million, the damage closed the Main Branch for nearly three weeks.

Where many saw only destruction, Buthod and his team saw opportunities to improve. By leveraging the flood recovery work underway, the library was able to add significant donor dollars to insurance proceeds to constitute, at that time, the largest library capital improvement project in forty years. Totalling more than \$11 million, the project included restoration of the Main Library's Great Hall, its two grand staircases, and marble flooring; the creation of a new children's wing, teen center, auditorium, and five new adult education classrooms; and the refurbishment of reading rooms, the library's highly successful "Job Shop," and all the building's mechanical and electrical systems. The project also included landscape improvements around the building, preservation of the exterior limestone on the 1908 Carnegie wing, replacement of 87 windows, and major flood mitigation improvements.

New Libraries

In 2009, LFPL celebrated the opening of a brand new, state-of-the-art library in Newburg – the first new stand-alone public library to open in Louisville in many years. The marked success of the Newburg Library, coupled with strong civic support, began a building and expansion trend for LFPL that continues today. Library projects have included:

- a new \$2 million LEED-certified Fairdale branch
- a \$1.4 million renovation and expansion of the Shawnee Library in Louisville's West End
- a \$400,000 renovation of Louisville's historic Western Branch Library
- renovations of the Bon Air, Shively, and Middletown branches
- a new 40,000 square foot state-of-the-art Southwest Regional Library serving more than 100,000 people living in the area

Craig Buthod came to Louisville from the Seattle Public Library in 1998. A native of Tulsa, Buthod began his career at the Tulsa City-County Library System. He was named Librarian of the Year for the United States in 2010.

Louisville Free Public Library connects the residents of Louisville and Jefferson County to knowledge and information at our 18 locations and on the Web at www.lfpl.org. Come on in, the whole world's inside.

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