

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Historic Western Branch Library Reopens Saturday, September 8 *Branch Closed Earlier This Year for Major Renovations*

LOUISVILLE (August 22, 2012) – The Louisville Free Public Library’s historic Western Branch will reopen to the public at 12:30 pm, Saturday, September 8 with a special ceremony followed by an open house to showcase the extensive renovations and remodeling efforts that necessitated the branch’s temporary closure earlier this year.

Mayor Greg Fischer and Library Director Craig Buthod will unveil the results of the \$500,000 project which includes extensive renovation of the inside of the historic structure, including the creation of a new reading room specifically for the African American archives the branch houses. A new teen space features computers and comfortable study areas for students. The highly popular children’s area has been transformed with new collections and furnishings. In all, the renovation has increased the number of public computers available from 12 to 20 and seated reading capacity to 40 people.

The historic Western Branch was built in 1908 as one of the first Carnegie libraries in the Louisville system. Located at the corner of Tenth and Chestnut Streets, the Western Branch is widely recognized as the first free public library in the nation for African Americans that was staffed entirely by African Americans. The branch’s significant African American archives include the papers of both noted librarian Thomas Blue and poet Joseph S. Cotter Sr.

“We have been eagerly awaiting this day for six months,” said Mayor Fischer. “It is tremendously exciting to see the outstanding results of our commitment to both preservation and education. We can all be very proud of this historic landmark and all it represents in terms of life-long learning and community spirit.”

The project was announced as part of the Mayor’s 2011-12 budget and funded through a Community Development Block Grant, with additional support from the Library Foundation. MS&R Architects of Minneapolis, in collaboration with local architect Eric Hansen of Icon Engineering and Inspections, developed the design. David Contractors, Inc. managed the project.

“The Western Branch is truly a historic treasure in our library system,” said Buthod. “We are proud to be the stewards of this landmark and so pleased to be able to reintroduce it as this very much improved community asset.”

For more information about the Louisville Free Public Library, go to www.flpl.org or call 502-574-1611.

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