



**NEWS RELEASE**  
For Immediate Release

**The Sonoma County Library Plans 10-Day Closure**

All 13 libraries in the Sonoma County Library system will be closed from 2:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve through Sunday, January 3, 2010, to help make up for a budget shortfall. The Library's website and all online services also will be shut down during this time period. Details of the closure and instructions for cardholders about returning and renewing library materials will be available online and at the libraries by mid-November.

The Library, which gets 90 percent of its income from property taxes, needs to cut its operating budget by \$1.7 million this fiscal year to make up for a shortfall in tax revenues. The Library Commission voted to close the libraries for 10 days in an effort to avoid layoffs.

"We know that people love their libraries and are dependent on the services we offer and that closing the libraries over the holidays will be a hardship," said Library Director Sandy Cooper. "But we decided it would be better to close for 10 days rather than lay off staff or eliminate programs."

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After reaching agreement with SEIU union representatives on a cost-cutting plan, the Library Commission voted for the 10-day, system-wide closure, which will require the entire Library staff to take an unpaid work furlough. The union also agreed to a rollback of two percent in the cost-of-living adjustment and to employees picking up an additional 1 percent of their retirement contribution. Those cuts, along with an offer of early retirement to nine employees and \$600,000 in other operating costs, will save the Library \$1,244,000, according to Director Cooper. The Commission still faces a \$500,000 budget deficit this fiscal year.

“The Library values its patrons and deeply regrets that the deplorable structure of the State's financing structure necessitates this action,” said Library Commission Chair Margaret Lynch.

The Sonoma County Library serves residents countywide through a Central Library in Santa Rosa, 10 regional libraries, two rural stations, bookmobile service and online library services available 24/7 at <http://sonomalibrary.org>. Last year some 2.6 million people visited their local libraries and checked out more than three million books, DVDs, audiobooks and other items.

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