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For Immediate Release

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Asks Allegheny Regional Asset Board for \$1 Million Funding Increase

(PITTSBURGH, PA – August 29, 2007) – Dr. Barbara K. Mistick, President and Director of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, appeared before the Allegheny County Regional Asset Board (RAD) to request a \$1 million funding increase. The request for the 2008 operating year calls for \$17,764,000 and will allow the Library to increase library hours, preserve its historical collections, provide services to children and teens and improve technologies in each neighborhood library.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's RAD budget request also includes an additional \$5.4 million for capital improvements for the Library's 19 locations. The 110-year-old system faces a number of age-related facility issues. The proposed capital improvements include adding air conditioning and handicapped accessibility to several neighborhood libraries and upgrading the space used for county-wide shipping and distribution of more than 5 million items each year.

Dr. Mistick stressed the importance of local funding to support libraries. Libraries nationwide receive an average of 81% of their funding from local government. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh gets 62% of its funding from local government.

The original intent of RAD was to provide a dedicated funding stream for library services and parks, those assets which are widely enjoyed and contribute to the quality of life for people throughout the county, generally at no charge to users. The Library's 2008 funding request relies primarily on local dollars, as was the vision of founder Andrew Carnegie.

"Carnegie Library and RAD have been good partners," stated Mistick. "We need to continue to work together to make sure that libraries are seen as a priority by our community and funded accordingly."

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is already the single largest recipient of RAD dollars, having received \$16.8 million for 2007. Unfortunately, says Mistick, that amount still leaves the Library struggling to make its operating budget keep up with the pace of expenses. The Library has 19 neighborhood locations throughout the cities and also serves as the district service center for the county, providing county-wide services including business library centers and shipping services.

"Pittsburgh is woefully behind other comparable cities in the amount of dollars the library spends per capita," stated Dr. Mistick. "Compare our \$16 per resident to Cleveland's \$120 per resident or Philadelphia's \$42 per resident. How can our region be a leader when our libraries have so little to spend in providing critical community services?"

RAD will announce its preliminary budget allocations on October 1, at which time they are open for public comment. Citizens can voice their support for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's funding increase by contacting the Allegheny Regional Asset District directly at:

One Smithfield Street
Suite 310
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: 412-227-1900
Fax: 412-227-1905
TT Assistance
1-800-654-5984
E-mail: info@radworkshere.org

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About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

“Free to the People” since 1895

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country’s great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region’s most visited asset. Each year the Library provides more than 6,000 free programs, classes and other learning and training opportunities that are tailored to meet the dynamic and diverse needs of people living in Western Pennsylvania.