



# Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Carnegie Carnegie Secures Funding to Renovate Library Interior**

The Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall has secured funding to restore the interior of its beloved Library. The ambitious project includes new lighting and wiring, restoring plaster, painting, carpeting, life safety upgrades and a new, ergo-dynamically correct computer station.

The ACFL&MH received a \$180,401 grant from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and a \$50,000 grant from PPG Industries Foundation, as well as money from ongoing fundraising to undertake the \$400,000 project. The State grant is made to Carnegie Borough on behalf of the Library. This is the third Keystone grant on which the Library and the Borough have collaborated.

Executive Director Maggie Forbes has managed the campaign that has raised more than \$8 million to restore and revitalize the Library & Music Hall since late 2003. The historic landmark facility is now weatherproof, structurally sound, accessible, has comfortable seating in the Music Hall and a restored lobby and dressing rooms, plus air conditioning in the Library. The rare Civil War room was meticulously restored in 2010 and the old waterlogged gym has been converted to attractive, multi-purpose programming space.

“Every improvement has been gratifying,” says Forbes. “Structural upgrades are more essential than cosmetic ones, but making the Library beautiful again is so exciting.”

Library Director Diane Klinefelter echoes Forbes’ enthusiasm. “When I was hired in 2006 improvements were underway. It’s a dream come true that it’s the Library’s turn now!”

The renovation is far more than cosmetic. The Library’s electric lighting is as egregiously inadequate as the natural light from its signature windows is beautiful. Past decades of unchecked water damage have left places in the Library where the crumbling plaster is held up with painted-over duct tape. Handsome as they are old library tables make for very uncomfortable computer stations. Life safety upgrades such as sprinkler systems and emergency lighting are essential to bring the Library into code compliance. New paint, carpeting and a gracious new seating area around the Library’s handsome fireplace will complete the transformation.

The Library’s lovely historic character never fell victim to years of deeply entrenched poverty and water damage; its striking bone structure was always apparent. The improvements will enhance not alter this character. “The circulation desk will be better illuminated, not moved or changed,” promises Klinefelter.

Board and staff are committed to continuing Library services during the renovation. "We realized it will be easier on patrons, staff and contractors to move Library services downstairs rather than try to share a construction site," says Forbes. "It will also expedite the renovation."

The Library will be closed Friday, May 15 through Monday, May 18 to make the move. It will reopen on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> in the Studio. There will be an as yet unscheduled closure in the fall to move everything back upstairs.

Klinefelter, who is part of the design team for the renovation project, is also masterminding the move of Library operations to the basement Studio during construction. Computers, check out service, children's programming and a temporarily reduced circulating collection will all be available in the Studio. Patrons can continue to request and receive materials from other Allegheny County libraries. Construction is scheduled to begin the end of May and continue through early October.

"I can't tell you how grateful we are to our generous donors and to the Borough for its support. And we are so lucky to have such a talented and committed staff," says Board President Isabel Ford. "The renovation will cause some temporary inconvenience, but come October, we will have so much to celebrate!"

The Design Alliance Architects are the project architect and Landau Building Company is serving as construction manager.

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The Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall opened in 1901. It is one of only four libraries in the country (three remaining) that Andrew Carnegie endowed. The ACFL&MH is Mr. Carnegie's enduring thank you gift to the town that incorporated and took his name in 1901.

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