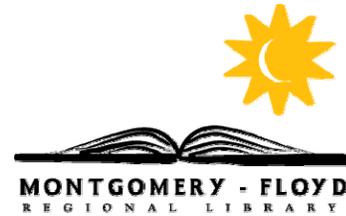


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Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Urges Patrons to Return Materials

In order to protect tax dollars that have been invested in the library's collection, the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MFRL) Board of Trustees approved the use of a collection agency to encourage patrons to return long overdue materials.

Starting in November, accounts that are more than 60 days overdue will be sent to a collection agency. The collection agency will then contact delinquent library users to urge them to return long overdue items to the library and pay any overdue fines. A \$12 service fee will be passed on to each patron whose account will be handled by the collection agent.

The MFRL Board made this decision with fairness to all library patrons in mind. Materials not returned on time are not available for others to borrow. If the library has to replace the items long overdue, it takes money away from purchasing new items. In the past year, 2,300 items valued at a total of \$42,000 have not been returned. Older outstanding accounts will also be considered for collections.

The MFRL Board hopes this practice will encourage all library borrowers to return items by the due date or to renew items by bringing them in, calling their library or going online at www.mfrl.org (My Account.) Book drops are available at all the libraries for returning items after the libraries close for the day.

"The library is committed to providing excellent service and having materials available for everyone," said MFRL Board Chair Michael Hemphill. "We want patrons to know that if they have large fines or items that are long overdue, please visit the library and talk to staff. They will help you."

"The vast majority of library patrons will never notice that the library is now using a collection agency," said MFRL Director Paula Alston. "A small number of people keep library materials long past their due date. But those few people have checked out and are keeping a significant dollar amount of materials out of circulation. Attempting to recover this material is the fiscally responsible thing to do."

Patrons will be notified with two overdue notices and a bill if their materials are overdue. Each library user will have ample time to respond before it becomes necessary to turn the account over for collection.

Unique Management Services (UMS) has been selected as the collection agency for the library. UMS works with libraries throughout Virginia and the United States and specializes in the recovery of overdue materials. The company has an excellent record of treating patrons professionally. For more information, call or visit your nearest Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library.

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