

## Eudora Welty Library reopened June 22 following fire repairs, named Literary Landmark

The grand re-opening of the Eudora Welty Library in Jackson, MS took place on June 22, 2009, coming a little less than a year after a fire broke out causing the popular downtown branch to close indefinitely.



Mechanical Room  
July 25, 2008

For Carolyn McCallum, Executive Director of the Jackson/Hinds Library System, the re-opening is one of several reasons to celebrate this summer. “We’re looking forward to having the public back and enjoying the services they so badly need,” she said. “We’re excited.”

In addition to having folks back in the library, she’s pleased for other reasons as well. Administrators who have been working in the library for the past months will now have a much better working environment. During the fire that broke out last July, McCallum said the library’s climate control units were destroyed.

Large, portable coolers were brought in to provide some circulation and to protect the inventory of books, videos and other items, but working conditions have been less than pleasant, especially during hot summer months, she said. Other improvements have also been made at the location. Carpet was replaced in the Juvenile department and also the main reading area. Some areas were also repainted.

McCallum said patrons will be pleasantly surprised when they visit. “We’re glad to have the HVAC system working again,” she said. “Having air has been a lifesaver.”

On the morning of July 25, 2008, in the dead of summer, fire broke out in the facility when the air conditioning and heating unit shorted out around 9:30 that morning, setting off the blaze. Seconds later, McCallum, administrators and other staffers made their way to the parking lot to watch helplessly as plumes of smoke poured out of the building.

McCallum said none of the library’s items were destroyed, thanks to quick work from the Jackson Fire Department.

Cooke Douglass Farr Lemons, an architectural firm, was hired by the city to re-design the HVAC system. A number of contractors, including Mid-State Construction, Bomac Electric and Metro Mechanical were brought on to make the repairs. McCallum was unaware as to how much the project cost, but expects it to be in the area of \$1,000,000.



Mechanical Room  
June 19, 2009

The library also achieved a milestone of its own. The Friends of Libraries U. S. A., the Mississippi Library Commission and the Jackson Friends of the Library, in honor of Eudora Welty’s centennial, dedicated the facility a literary landmark. Since 1986, the Friends of Libraries U. S. A., through its Literary Landmark Register Program, have designated as historical literary sites more than 100 historic homes, libraries, museum collections, scenes and inspirations of writers, poets, journalists, and social commentators who have contributed to America’s rich literary heritage. The Eudora Welty Library becomes the ninth such landmark in Mississippi.