



7 Myths Concerning the Library District Plan for Improved Facilities

Myth #1 - The District's need for new/improved facilities was caused by the transfer of Romeoville into the District in 2008.

Fact: The majority of Romeoville as we know it now has always been a part of the Des Plaines Valley Public Library District. In fact, as of 2008 nearly 2/3 of the Village of Romeoville lay within Lockport Township and thus fell within the boundaries of our library district. Working out an agreement with the Fountaindale Public Library District to add the portion of Romeoville north of 135th Street to our district was simply an effort to clean up a “boundary” that no longer made sense and unite as much of the Village as possible into a single library service area.

Myth #2 - As hours are cut and services wind down at the Fountaindale Library in Romeoville, it is clear that Fountaindale is somehow cheating Romeoville.

Fact: As part of the 2008 agreement to transfer the “North Romeoville” territory from Fountaindale to Des Plaines Valley, it was agreed that Fountaindale would stop taxing and Des Plaines Valley would start to collect taxes in the transferred area. All of the taxes collected by Des Plaines Valley in the transferred area are being passed on to Fountaindale (under this 4 year contractual agreement) to continue providing services in Romeoville until June 30, 2012. However, since the Des Plaines Valley library tax rate is so much lower than the Fountaindale rate, there is now less funding to operate that facility than was available under the Fountaindale tax rate. So in essence, the residents in the transferred territory are now paying *much* less in library tax and receiving reduced library services as a result. This sharp drop in funding is being phased-in over the 4 years of the agreement, which is why we will see further cuts in service each of those years.

Myth #3 - I don't care what happens to the Des Plaines Valley Public Library District. All I care about is my Crest Hill Library (or my Lockport Library, or my Romeoville Library).

It is unfortunate that the nature of district taxing bodies and the history of this region are such that our residents do not see themselves as part of the “whole” that is the Des Plaines Valley Public Library District. There is no such thing as the “Crest Hill Public Library” nor the “Lockport Public Library”. Each of those facilities is merely a *branch* of the **Library District**. The fact remains that none of our communities is the true “home” of our District. All District residents deserve the same level and quality of service and each of our three communities is an equal partner.

Myth #4 - With the economy at a standstill now is not a good time to be taking on this project.

There will never be a better or more inexpensive time to accomplish the necessary improvements to our library facilities. Interest rates for public bond sales are at an all time low. Construction costs have plummeted and building materials are “on sale”. We may never see a time when it will be cheaper to make these improvements. True, the economy is suffering but it has already shown signs of reawakening. Waiting 5 years for interest rates to climb and construction materials/labor costs to soar is a very short-sighted strategy.

Myth #5 - The libraries we have were good enough for my family all these years; I don't see why they can't serve for many more years. I am voting "NO" so things can stay the same.

Fact: If our referendum never passes, library services will definitely not remain the same. The result of never passing a referendum will mean a great loss of funding for the libraries in Crest Hill and Lockport in 2012, thus necessitating a drastic reduction in hours, staffing, and services. This would occur because Romeoville tax dollars would need to be kept in Romeoville to cobble together some form of library service in that town equal to whatever we are doing in Crest Hill and Lockport at that time. Thus, the fate of library services in all three communities is greatly tied to the outcome of the February 2010 referendum. (See also Myth #6 below). The result of a successful referendum will bring us three libraries that feel and look like "new", yet don't carry the price tag of new buildings.

Myth #6 - Because Lockport and Crest Hill already have libraries, the only real need for new District funding is in Romeoville.

Fact: The code violations, poor design, and inefficiency of the existing Crest Hill and Lockport facilities are all well documented. The Crest Hill facility is also grossly undersized to the community which it serves. Though the need for improved facilities in Crest Hill and Lockport is obvious, it is only half the answer. When the territory in "North Romeoville" was transferred into our District in 2008, the agreement stated that *"If Des Plaines Valley does not successfully pass a referendum by 2012, they agree to explore other means to provide said services at a level consistent with the provision of library services elsewhere in the Des Plaines Valley district at that time."* This essentially means that if the referendum never passes, in 2012 Des Plaines Valley will have to reduce services in Lockport and Crest Hill to a low level in order to pull together enough funding to rent a space and start services from scratch in Romeoville. We are a District with each town equal to the next, and we are legally bound to have our services reflect that by 2012.

Myth #7 - This District's plans are grandiose and wasteful. Our need for better libraries could be met with just a few million dollars.

Fact: The Des Plaines Valley Public Library District is one of the most fiscally conservative library districts in the greater Chicago area and our tax rate is among the lowest library rates in Will County. For decades our Board chose to not increase taxes even in times when they could easily have done so. Our current Board and staff work hard to bring excellent services to the public despite severe budget and facility limitations. In short, everything about our operations and planning has been with an eye toward fiscal conservatism and keeping costs low. With that said, there are bottom line costs which we cannot avoid if we are to improve our libraries. As an example, we are negotiating hard to secure a fair purchase price for the Fountaindale library in Romeoville, but ultimately that price will be in the millions of dollars and that is before any of the necessary renovations have been completed. Similarly, the basic improvements that are needed in our Lockport facility, while very cost effective and conservative in scope, will have an unavoidable cost measured in millions of dollars. In Crest Hill, we could unwisely spend a bunch of money taking resident homes through eminent domain and adding onto an awkward and inefficient building, or we can build an adequately sized, centrally located new building with potential for expansion in future years. Rest assured that the bottom line tax impact of our February 2010 referendum plan will be **drastically lower** than any previous plan. Our aim for this plan is to keep the cost to the average home at just \$3.00 more per month.