

# City's public library re-opens for business

## *Lead paint removed from walls while historic building was closed*

By John Zucal  
Managing Editor

After the doors were closed for 10 weeks, the Orange Public Library has re-opened with what city officials said should be a healthier atmosphere.

The library was permitted to open Monday after city health officer Vincent DeFilippo gave a satisfactory review, following the removal of lead paint which had chipped from some of its walls. It was replaced by fresh coats of paint. In a statement issued by the Mayor's Office, DeFilippo said tests showed conditions were safe for residents to begin entering the century-old building.

"The tests for lead paint have come back negative and the library no longer presents any health concerns," said DeFilippo.

The library was closed beginning April 30 when two orders to resolve the lead-paint concerns had not been satisfied. During a further review prior to its closure, DeFilippo said there were concerns about the possibility of asbestos within the plaster under the paint of some of the walls. It was not known if asbestos had been found.

The condition, which initially

was reported during 2003, led to the suspension of library Director Doris Walker, pending a hearing before the Orange Library Board. The board also hired a contractor to remove the old paint and replace with new paint.

Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. said that, even though the lead-paint concerns had been resolved, age-related problems require the library to undergo renovations.

"While the immediate health problem has been resolved, the building is still in serious need of renovation. We must use this crisis as an opportunity to reorganize and renew our historic library," said Hawkins.

"I have met with the library board to discuss how we can move forward to save the library and renovate the building. I have enlisted the clergy of Orange to work with the Library Board and the Friends of the Orange Library."

Operating hours for the library are Mondays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. The library is closed on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer months.

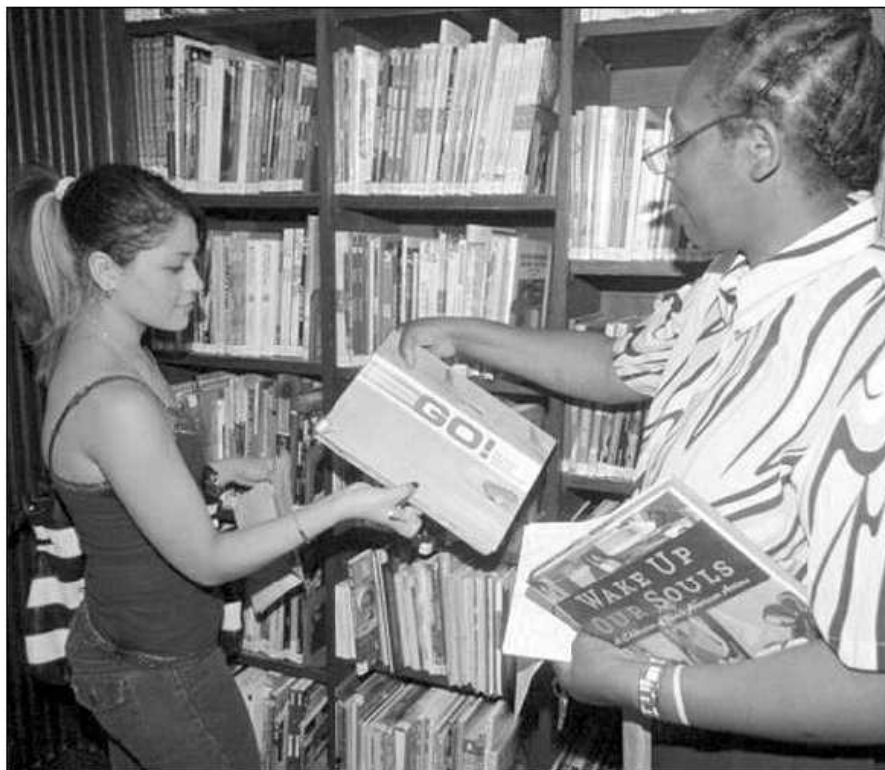


Photo By Barbara Kokkalis

Yovana Sola, left, searches for a book Monday with the help of Reference Librarian Alice McMillan during the first day of the Orange Public Library's operations after it was closed for more than two months for removal of lead paint.