PUBLIC HEARING

TITLE: PORTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY INTERNET USE POLICY

SOURCE: PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES - LIBRARY DIVISION

COMMENT: On February 15, 2000, the Porterville City Council approved the Porterville Public Library’s Internet Use Policy by Minute Order. A new law now requires that a public hearing must be held to establish the policy. Legislation signed by the President in December 2000, the Children’s Internet Protection Act, requires libraries which receive telecommunication discounts to:

A) Have filtered Internet access to block obscene images, child pornography and any material “harmful to minors”; and

B) Hold a public meeting to establish an Internet Use Policy; and

C) Adopt and implement the policy.

The San Joaquin Valley Library System (SJVLS), of which Porterville is a member, received Federal funds. As a result, each member library must be in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) for the System to be eligible for funding. The Library’s current Internet Use Policy which is already in effect, covers the required safety issues for minors.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the Library’s Internet Use Policy to be in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act.

ATTACHMENT: Porterville Public Library’s Internet Use Policy

ITEM NO.: 31
PORTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
INTERNET USE POLICY

The Porterville Public Library provides collections, resources, and services to meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of our diverse community. In support of its mission to deliver these services and in response to advancing technology, the library offers public access to the Internet.

The Internet is, in general, an unregulated medium. Not all information via the Internet is accurate, current, complete or confidential. While much valuable information is posted on the Internet, some is obscene as defined by applicable laws or may otherwise be harmful or inappropriate for minors. The library attempts to balance the desire for free access against the need to avoid material that is inappropriate for minors.

The library cannot be held responsible for any information accessed through the Internet. As with other library materials, a child’s access to the Internet is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. Parents are encouraged to come to the library with their children and supervise their Internet sessions. They must assume responsibility for their children’s use of the Internet at the library. Children and parents are encouraged to read Child Safety on the Information Highway published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Interactive Services Association which provides valuable tips about Internet safety for children.

All library computers are equipped with screening software that attempts to limit access to obscene material as defined by applicable laws. However, the Internet is too big and changes too fast for a product to block everything deemed objectionable or unsuitable. Parents and guardians must understand that the library cannot insure that a child will not purposefully or accidentally access such materials. A child’s use of the Internet should always be supervised by a parent or guardian.

The Library assumes no responsibility for damages, whether direct or indirect, arising from its connection to the Internet.

The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session at any time.

Illegal acts involving Library resources may be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal officials.