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02-04

January 4, 2002

For Immediate Release:

THIRTY-MONTH RENOVATION PROJECT NEARLY COMPLETE; BOOTH TO OPEN SOON

CHARLESTON – Months of waiting have been narrowed down to weeks as workers continue to put the finishing touches on Eastern Illinois University's long-awaited Booth Library renovation project.

Crews from the William C. Meyers Company began moving books back into the renovated structure on Thursday, while various contractors continued to finalize their respective projects. And library administrators, operating for the past two-and-a-half years from temporary offices in nearby McAfee, look forward to the move into their new quarters, tentatively scheduled to begin Monday, Jan. 7.

Those scheduled to be moved in earliest all have offices on the upper level of the building.

"We realize that our students, as well as the university's library employees, are eager to see Booth Library open and operational," said Interim President Louis V. Hencken. "However, due to some unforeseen delays in construction work, we have decided to postpone opening the library to the public-at-large until we're confident of the building's complete safety."

A major portion of the yet incomplete work in the renovated building includes the

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installation of handrails and treading on the stairwell leading from the new south entrance. Travel on such an unprotected surface could prove to be treacherous, especially if patrons began tracking in the water, snow or slush commonly associated with winter weather.

Work also remains to be completed in the building's atrium, while minor glitches in the building's telephone system also demand attention before employees move back in. Crews also continue to install shelving.

And, as is common with any construction project, a great deal of cleaning also remains. Crews, including some university-hired students, began dusting, mopping and vacuuming the day after Christmas, with work continuing this week.

According to Stephen Shrake, EIU architect, most of the new furniture for the building has been delivered, and approximately 80 percent of that which has been delivered has already been put into place.

"Although we are disappointed at the brief delay in opening the newly renovated library, we are dedicated to maintaining library services and access to collections throughout this period of transition, said Allen Lanham, dean of Booth Library.

"Our branch libraries will continue to offer services, and we will post daily announcements at each branch library and on our Web site (<http://www.eiu.edu/~booth>) about the progress of the library relocation."