County library warns public about growing pains

System upgrade under way will open the way for faster Internet, new wireless service

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WALHALLA — The Oconee County Public Library began its transition to a new network upgrade and wireless system Monday that will enhance and expand its services to the public.

Library officials said that the Metro-E network upgrades would allow OCPL to have the capacity it needs to handle accessible streaming video. That service will be announced at a later date.

At the same time, work is under way to have wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) service available in all branches, perhaps as early as this afternoon.

OCPL Director Sue Baldwin instructed her staff to make the public aware that they could be confronting some inconveniences this week as the upgrades are made.

"We are standing at the edge of a new era for the Oconee County Public Library," Baldwin said in a memo to OCPL employees.

Baldwin said that all branch system services might encounter interruptions as Information Technology (IT) consultants do "a brain transplant" on the library system.

At the Seneca library branch Monday, notices were taped on the screen of new desktop computers telling patrons that the computer network might be down during parts of the day.

Blair Linson, who will be taking over next week as the new Seneca branch manager, said the inconveniences will be short lived compared the long-term enhanced services the public will receive in return.

Library officials say the Metro-E network upgrade "will change the library forever" and increase demand for library programs and services.

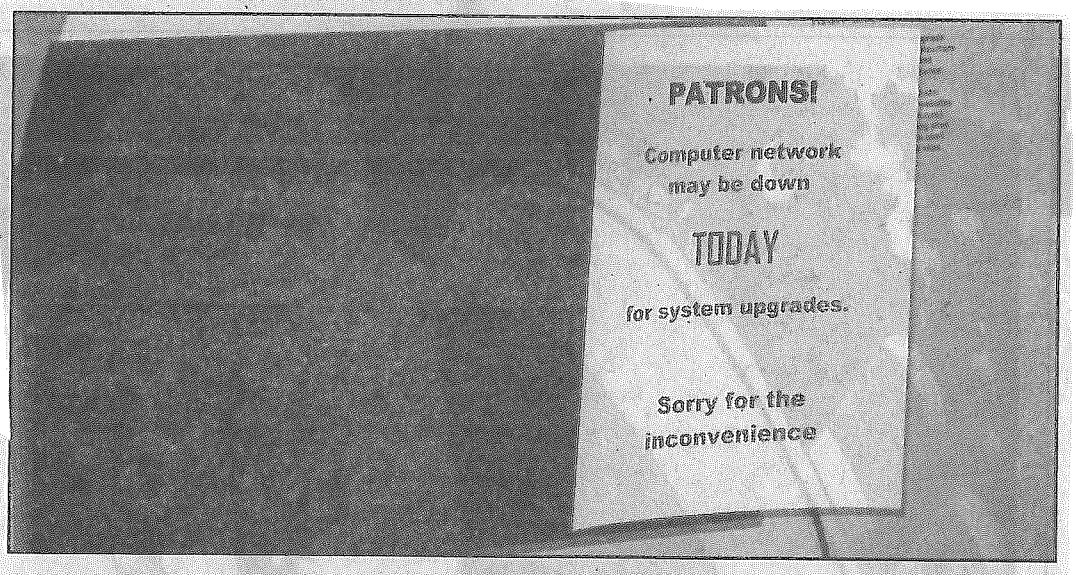
"We're witnessing history in the making," PCPL Board Chairman John Adams said Monday.

Adams said he tried the library's Internet service Monday and said he connected almost instantly.

"That's important because people have limited time to go online on our computers," Adams said.

To complement the installing of Metro-E, all branches will be fitted with new computers.

OCPL expects to formally celebrate the roll out of its new technology in September.



Staff photo

A sign on one of the Seneca Library's new computers warns patrons to expect spotty service as all Oconee County public library branches began on Monday to switch to a new wireless system. As part of the upgrade, the Seneca branch had all its desktops replaced with new computers. Every branch will be fitted with new computers for public use in time for a complete technology overhaul to be completed by early September.