



For Immediate Release

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**Photo attached*

**NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY REBUILDING EFFORT BOOSTED
BY MICHIGAN-BASED MASCO CORPORATION**

NEW ORLEANS, La. (March 15, 2006) – Rebuilding efforts for the New Orleans Public Library have received support from Michigan-based Masco Corporation (NYSE: MAS). Masco Corporation is a global manufacturer of home improvement and building products as well as a leading provider of services that include the installation of insulation and other building products.

Masco Corporation is donating nearly 1,000 used books, collected by its employees, to the library. The company is headquartered in Taylor, Michigan.

Eight of the library's 13 sites were severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina and subsequent levee breaks in August 2005, with their book collections destroyed by flood and rain water and resultant mold. Total damage is estimated at more than \$20 million. In addition, 90 percent of the library's staff was originally laid off due to the loss of local tax revenue.

The New Orleans Public Library is in the midst of an aggressive effort to rebuild. According to City Librarian Bill Johnson, the rebuilding effort, while challenging, is meeting with success. "Slowly, but steadily, we are replenishing our library stock and we've been able to bring back some of the laid off workers," said Johnson. "More than 1,000 people a week are now taking advantage of our open branches for books and computer availability. Thanks to the helpful donations of books like those from Masco, and financial contributions, we plan to do more than return to normal – we are focused on creating a model urban library for the 21st century."

Johnson said they have nearly reached capacity for donated books, and the library is now encouraging those who want to help to turn their attention to providing financial support. "Rebuilding our infrastructure is critical, and costly," said Johnson. "People may want to consider book fairs and book sales to benefit the library. We will be able to target those funds directly to library services. Installing wireless internet capacity, providing desperately needed services and programming to returning people of all ages, and bringing staff back to allow increased hours are just some of the needs we have and to which we look to others for help."

(more)

Masco Corporation's donated books are part of its informal "library," established by employees who liked to read and share novels, according to Masco's Mail Center Supervisor, Sherry Rost.

Rost, who maintains the Masco "library," said the idea for the donation came from a Masco employee who has been following the New Orleans Public Library rebuilding effort. "We began informally collecting and sharing books several years ago," said Rost. "Once we learned of the need in New Orleans, the employees who participate thought donating some of the books would be a great way to put them to further use. We can't think of a better way to do that than to help the people, and the public library, in New Orleans."

For more information about the New Orleans Public Library rebuilding effort, please contact Kim Tran at ktran@gno.lib.la.us or (504) 596-2615.

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Masco Corporation Mail Center Supervisor Sherry Rost packages more than 1,000 books donated by Masco employees to the New Orleans Public Library.