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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public library initiates mobile hotspot lending program

LITTLE ELM (December 19, 2016) It may be hard for many Little Elm residents to imagine, but there is a substantial number of local households with no internet connectivity.

“Recent studies have revealed that over a third of Little Elm homes are not enabled with internet service,” says Library Manager Lynette Roberson. “Whether it’s cost or availability or a temporary situation, we want to ensure that those who want access to the World Wide Web are able to have it, regardless of obstacles.”

That sentiment is the basis for the Little Elm Public Library’s Mobile Hotspot Program, a free initiative that allows library patrons to check out a device the size of a pack of cigarettes that pulls down an internet signal for internet-enabled devices in homes or businesses.

Called mobile hotspots because the devices are battery operated, allowing users to transport them to virtually any location, and they provide connectivity to up to ten devices within their Wi-Fi range.

The program is currently active with 11 mobile hotspots available for check-out. To be eligible, however, patrons must have a valid Little Elm library card in their name, have no outstanding fees or other charges pending, appear in person at both check-out and return, and must read and sign a mobile hotspot lending agreement. The hotspots can be checked out for up to two weeks, and can be renewed for an additional two-week period if devices are available. Borrowers must be at least 18 years of age.

Library staff emphasizes that parents, guardians and adults are responsible for the appropriateness of internet use.

“Unlike books, DVDs or other library materials, these mobile hotspots cannot be carelessly left to linger at home,” added Roberson. “Late fees and other charges will be assessed if the device is not returned on time or is returned in disrepair. Borrowers must understand the importance of keeping the hotspot from becoming damaged, lost or neglected.”

To discourage late returns, the mobile hotspots are disabled after the two-week lending period expires. If there are no pending holds or waiting lists for the devices, they can be rechecked for additional time.

“Residents who are moving into new homes and have to wait for service from a provider can use the mobile hotspots to gain access to the internet, as long as they meet the criteria,” she said. “Families who may not have internet service, but who have students with school-issued computers can use the mobile hotspots for specific projects. Business travelers or vacationers who meet the criteria can also take advantage of these devices.”

The Little Elm Public Library is one of a small handful of libraries in the Dallas-Fort Worth area that provides this service. A generous donation from the Little Elm Friends of the Library provided seed money for the program’s establishment.

“Our staff is very excited about offering this service, and I’m confident that residents will take full advantage of the program,” said Roberson.

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ABOUT LITTLE ELM – Little Elm is one of the state’s fastest growing communities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Lewisville, the Town was incorporated in 1966, adopting the Council/Manager form of government. The population increased dramatically over the last several years, growing from under 4,000 in 2000 to over 30,000 today. Little Elm’s population exceeds the state average in education and income, and is increasingly trending younger and technologically proficient. The Town’s footprint is just over 21 square miles and boasts some 66 linear miles of shoreline within its boundaries.