



Agenda: Board of Trustees
January 8, 2026, at 4 pm
Conference Room, Downtown Library

Access, Connection, & Service

Library Board President – Monica Challenger

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: December 4, 2025
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Library Board Committee Reports
 - Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - No Action
- G. Library Director's Report
- H. Old Business
- I. New Business
- J. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **February 5, 2026 at 4 pm**, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email musilj@crlibrary.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
December 4, 2025

Board members in attendance: [President] Monica Challenger, [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Chris Casey, Ana McClain, Susie McDermott, Jade Hart (in person); Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: Elisabeth Hepworth, Hassan Selim

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Kevin Delecki, Erin Horst, Jessica Musil (in person); Patrick Duggan (via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: November 6, 2025
Ms. McDermott moved to accept the consent agenda. Mr. Elges seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.
- C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Tyler reported that the Foundation has received another major philanthropic gift for the new Busse Branch. She hopes to make the announcement by the end of year. To celebrate the new branch's opening, they are actively pursuing grand opening gala sponsorships. They have received several confirmations this early in the planning process.
 - The year-end appeal was mailed at the end of November and gifts are starting to come in. Ms. Tyler didn't know how well the mailing would do as the fall Friends and Foundation newsletter, which was sent in mid-October, was slow to receive the typical responses. The GivingTuesday campaign, which generally has low earnings, still exceeded expectations in support of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL).
 - The Foundation is planning an 80th birthday celebration for Dolly Parton on Jan. 17. The event will include activities with library staff and enrollment partners.
 - Ms. Challenger asked if other non-profits are seeing challenges donations. Ms. Tyler believes some are experiencing hesitant donors, operational challenges, and growing concerns around federal and state grants. The Foundation's primary operational concern is the rising cost of stamps. Ms. McClain asked if donors can opt out of posted mailings to save postage and receive information electronically. The Foundation doesn't have a system for that yet but Ms. Tyler is looking at options.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. The Friends will host their final sale of the year this Saturday, Dec. 6 at the Very Cherry Holiday annual open house. They will have books for sale on two floors: the main floor will have giftables and in the basement, shoppers can find a wide range of books. They received a great collection via donation, which should appeal to a majority of readers.
 - Ms. Slappey shared her appreciation for Friends volunteers who helped with a special project to test out and assemble different book cards. Last month, she shared a story about an individual who helped at the large fall sale at the downtown library in November. She saw the individual again in the downtown area and reconnected with him to thank him for his efforts.

F. Board Education: Advocacy Update – Amber McNamara

- As this year closes, we're preparing for the next legislative session. The news already has reported on upcoming priorities for this session. To start, Ms. McNamara wanted to set context.
- In 2023, HF 718 was passed. It was a tax reform bill, making significant changes to the state's property tax system including creating a new Adjusted City General Fund Levy and establishing new caps on tax base growth. Special library specific levies were removed under this bill. Cities have a general fund levy cap of \$8.10 per \$1,000 in taxable value, which has already impacted city budgets across the state.
- Iowa utilizes a rollback system, where a percentage of a property's assessed value is subject to taxation to limit the growth of residential property values statewide to no more than 3% annually. The 2023 law implemented mechanisms to manage property tax growth within the rollback system. If home values increased, this system would ensure taxable value stayed within the limits to prevent tax increases. There are many discussions on how this can help or hurt cities. Ms. McNamara gave examples of how this can harm cities, such as Cedar Rapids, including revenue growth may not keep up with inflation, high growth communities can be constrained, budget volatility, and less flexibility during emergencies. If cities can't make revenues through taxes, they move to fees, permits, and special assessments. This system can affect credit ratings, reduce a city's financial resilience, make municipal debt appear riskier and increase borrowing costs for infrastructure. There's a mismatch between local needs and state rules. Revenue caps set by the state ignore local labor markets, inflation differences, growth or decline, and regional infrastructure needs. Finally, service cuts likely become unavoidable, such as reduced library hours, cuts to recreation programs, delay new fire or police hires, postpone capital projects, and close facilities or consolidate departments.
- SF 2442, which was passed in 2024, is a fine-tuning of HF 718. Last year, HSB313/SSB 1208 was proposed but didn't make it out of session. If enacted, it would replace the "rollback + assessed-value fraction taxed" system with a "full value taxed but revenue growth capped" model. It would change the 3% cap to a 2% cap and shift taxation into a more harmful way for cities.
- In last year's legislation, library staff watched several bills specifically targeting libraries. This included proposals for library board authority changes, removal of obscenity exemptions, and association membership restrictions. In May, a federal judge struck down an Iowa law passed in 2023 banning certain book content in school libraries. We saw proposed cuts to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. And HF 196, which would reestablish library tax levies, died in the first funnel.
- In addition, SF 507 had an impact – prohibiting cities and counties from having DEI offices, training, and certain policies. Implementation is confusing, as we have discussed previously. We are continuing to follow the guidelines as we understand them from the city attorney and discussions with our partner libraries at MLN.
- Ms. McNamara walked through the 2026 session dates, which starts Jan. 12 and ending approximately on April 21. For this next session, we are looking at property tax reform. The Governor has been clear she's working on this and others in the House and Senate have also made public comments. The Governor has been quoted on reducing tax property burden is to: "...find new ways to maybe find better and more efficient ways for government at all levels to deliver services to our citizens."
- The library offers resources, such as an advocacy toolkit, email alerts, and supporting organizations, like ALA, ILA, and United for Libraries, have information on bills to watch. For this year, Ms. McNamara is developing one-sheet conversation starter guides for specific audiences, such as business leaders, parents and caregivers, etc.
- Ms. Casey and Ms. Hart thanked Ms. McNamara for the update and important information impacting the city and library. Ms. McClain asked about states without property tax and how they support their libraries. Without property tax, money comes

from income tax, sales tax, and special levies. Mr. Elges noted that the tax caps don't offer solutions to continue services. For cities to make up on lost revenue, it forces them to go back to the state and ultimately relinquishes control of a city's ability to take care of needs. Ms. Schmidt also noted cities already have limitations on spending, highlighting that collections are purchased with bonding and recently, digital items are no longer eligible and must come from property tax revenue. Our council will be very limited on what they can prioritize. If things continue to move forward, we can't operate the same as we do now. Ms. Schmidt doesn't know what that looks like yet but maintaining is not likely if the cap drops to 2%. We can't ignore what's happening and must think strategically about our future.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - There is no report as the board education's primary focus was on advocacy.
- Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hart provided an update on the Downtown Library Plaza. Library and City staff walked through the project area to discuss corrections before Thanksgiving week. Contractors had to remove and re-pour a 20-foot section for ADA compliance and remove a trip hazard. The railing was also installed. Now that it has snowed, final testing for compliance is delayed.
 - In November, we were thrilled to share the Busse Branch with library staff, trustees, and donors through several hard hat tours. Feedback has been positive and generated a lot of excitement as people can truly visualize the scale of the new branch. Now that winter is approaching, most site work will have to pause. The general contractor feels good about the progress made so far into the season. Most of the exterior glass has been installed. The final glass, which will arrive by the end of this year or early next year, is all corner glass pieces. By re-measuring and installing the corners last, contractors can adjust sizing due to construction variances. Contractors will continue to work on the drywall finishes throughout the building. Following this, interior finishes can be painted. Tile installation for bathrooms will start this month as well, starting on the east end of the building. Raised access floor staging has started and installation will begin on the west end. Subcontractors have already started installing and pulling cabling throughout the building for internet needs. Library and City staff are working together to get this branch on the City fiber network. Currently, Ladd is routed through the downtown building for the City network.
- Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey reported on the October financials; she reviewed the memo. At this time, there are no issues with the current budget. No progress has been made on the FY27 budget since last meeting. The Finance committee's conversations have mirror Ms. McNamara's report – they are building a budget in an unknown future. It's difficult to build a budget without knowing about state funding and the City's budget. More than likely, the budget will be submitted and will require amendments. Ms. Casey appreciates the relationship Ms. Schmidt has created with the City is extremely beneficial and important to the library. We have to create relationships and partnerships in times like this.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** 1.07 Library Finance and Purchasing Policy. This policy notes the process and approval thresholds for purchases. The committee's only discussion was the approval levels for the library director, who wished to keep this the same. It mirrors the City's Policy except for the bolded areas, which designate the library director versus City Manager or Library Board versus City Council. There is no change.

- **Action:** 3.04 Behavior Policy. This policy, which notes acceptable behavior in the library, was reviewed. The committee has no recommended changes. Ms. McClain asked if it was posted anywhere in the building. It is on the public posting boards but we operate under the assumption that people aren't aware it exists when discussing concerns about behaviors with patrons.
- **Action:** 4.05 Non-Smoking Policy. The committee added a line to included that vaping is also prohibited on library property. Updated to include no vaping.

The motion to approve the reviewed policies 1.07 and 3.04 and revised policy 4.05 as presented in the packet passed with unanimous approval.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt reported. In November, we had the opportunity to tour the new branch with staff on the Nov. 11 all staff day. It was a lot of fun and people seemed thrilled to see the space. Staff day in general was really great and staff seemed to enjoy talking about books, as we focused on readers advisory work.
- Ms. Schmidt has given multiple presentations recently with the Downtown Rotary and the Wise Women Circle. The presentations have been fun because Ms. Schmidt and Ms. Tyler get to see firsthand the excitement over the new branch. They have more presentations planned in the community for December, January, and February.
- This month, Ms. Schmidt attended the Dementia Innovation Forum, which was also hosted virtually at the library. During the forum, she spoke with Mercy staff about the library's commitment to supporting caretakers and those living with dementia by hosting this event and dementia-specific training for library staff. Along those same lines, the library provided an update to the City on our portion of the Age Friendly Action Plan. Details, on library-specific action steps for the City's plan, are included in the packet.
- We are also in conversation with a local non-profit about potentially taking over the café space. In the new year, we expect to meet again to discuss their questions and a plan.

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

Swingin' Christmas

'Glee' star Jane Lynch brings holiday show to Hancher, 1C



Cy-Hawk game

Iowa women take on ISU tonight in Ames

Sports, 1B

The Gazette



Wednesday, December 10, 2025

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Closing some Cedar Rapids schools 'necessary'

C.R. district aims to reduce budget by more than \$10M

By Grace King, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Closing schools “is necessary” as the Cedar Rapids Community School District examines how to reduce its annual budget by more than \$10 million after

a decade of declining enrollment.

Options to reduce costs include consolidating four to six elementary schools, closing Truman Early Learning Center — a preschool program in the district — outsourcing non-teaching duties, and eliminating outside consulting contracts.

“No decisions have been

made yet,” school board President Jennifer Neumann said at the board table Monday.

“While ultimately, the board will need to approve the plan, we are asking district staff, families and taxpayers to provide critical and knowledgeable input to help craft the plan.”

The Cedar Rapids school district has seen more than

2,000 fewer students since 2017, with almost 1,000 of those students leaving the district in the last two years. During that time, few budget reductions have been made, said Karla Hogan, chief financial officer and deputy for the Cedar Rapids district.

Last month, the district announced a decline of 624 certified students this year, result-

ing in a loss of about \$5 million in revenue for the 2026-27 school year.

As enrollment declined, the number of teachers in the district remained steady at around 1,100.

“We weren’t prioritizing where we were spending our money,” Hogan said in an

► SCHOOLS, PAGE 10A

Grant funding restored for Iowa libraries, museums



Audrey, Gideon, Rachel and Mary Phillips pick out library books during a visit Aug. 26 by the Marion Library's Bookmobile to Thomas Park. The library is one of hundreds in the state to benefit from recently reinstated federal funding. (Nick Rohlman/The Gazette)

Libraries, advocates celebrating move while highlighting continued uncertainty

By Grace Nieland, The Gazette

DES MOINES — Iowa libraries can once again access millions of dollars in federal aid following the reinstatement of previously terminated grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The federal agency last week announced that “upon further review,” it would be reinstating hundreds of grants put on hold earlier this year following a directive from President Donald Trump to

wind down agency operations.

Per the IMLS posting, the reinstatement “supersedes any prior notices which may have been received related to grant termination” and grantees were urged to access the agency’s electronic grants management system for additional information.

The announcement follows a November ruling from a federal judge who found the administration’s efforts to dismantle the congressionally created agency were unlawful. The suit was filed against

► FUNDING, PAGE 9A



Mindy Clark of Cedar Rapids is framed through an O in “Iowa” as she visits the Cedar Rapids Public Library on April 4 in southeast Cedar Rapids. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

Most Iowa farm groups grateful for latest federal financial aid

But they continue calls for bolstered trade markets

By Erin Murphy, Gazette Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — Most Iowa farm groups are expressing appreciation for the \$12 billion in federal assistance planned by President Donald Trump’s administration, while those farmers also continue their calls for stronger and more reliable foreign trade.

Trump on Monday announced the latest round of federal financial assistance to farmers. The latest agricultural aid package — Trump also issued \$22 billion in aid to farmers during his first term in the White House — was created in response to trade market disruptions and high production costs, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

U.S. farmers for months have been dealing with low crop prices, high production costs and diminished trade markets.

Trump on Monday said the latest round of farm assistance will be funded by revenue from tariffs. Those tariffs have been among the drivers of the increased costs, reduced trading markets and suppressed crop prices, farm groups and ag economists say.

Trump’s administration this week blamed the agricultural economy’s struggles on previous President Joe Biden’s administration.

The administration will make one-time payments to row-crop farmers by the end of February, the Associated Press reported. USDA will calculate per-acre payments — capped at \$155,000 per farm — for each crop based in part

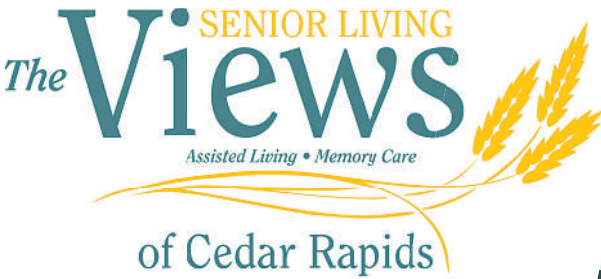
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CHARLES CHUCK H. BAMMERT III
Marion

Charles "Chuck" H. Bammert III, 67, of Marion, Iowa, passed away on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at the Dennis & Donna Oldorf Hospice House of Mercy in Hiawatha, Iowa. Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 11, 2025, at Murdoch Funeral Home & Cremation Service in Marion. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 12, 2025, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, located at 915 27th Avenue, in Marion. Cremation will follow services on Friday, and the inurnment will take place at a later date at Cedar Memorial Park Cemetery, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Charles was born on February 2, 1958, in Cedar Rapids, the son of Charles Henry II and Clarice "Tess" Nadine (Kilts) Bammert. Chuck, as he was affectionately known, graduated from Jefferson High School, and embarked on a fulfilling career as a printer. His professional journey began at the former Wagner Printing Company in Cedar Rapids and later continued at J&A Printing in Hiawatha, Iowa, until his retirement. On August 30, 1997, Chuck was united in marriage to Denise Ann Schuettpelz at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Marion, a partnership that enriched his life significantly. He was an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where he helped in different groups and committees. As a devoted family man, Chuck attended all his daughter's activities and cherished moments like participating in 'Father and Daughter' dances with her at recitals for several years.

Chuck was man of many interests; he enjoyed golfing and bowling with his brothers, with whom he shared countless memories on the bowling league for several years. His passion for watching the TV series, Supernatural, and football was well-known among his loved ones. With an infectious sense of humor, Chuck brought laughter and joy to those around him, often catching people by surprise with his playful wit.

Traveling, cooking and grilling were among his favorite pastimes, and he greatly looked forward to holiday family gatherings, where Chuck could bond with those he loved most. His affection for his family extended to their beloved puppy, Finn, with whom he cherished quiet moments of cuddling. Chuck's genuine spirit and commitment to his family will be profoundly missed by all who knew him.

He is survived and lovingly remembered by his wife of 28 years, Denise Bammert of Marion; two children, Isabella "Izzy" Bammert of Marion, and Andrew (Lourdes) Reed of Cedar Rapids; two 'brother-like' cousins with whom they shared a home, Ray (Shirley) Kilts of Fairax, Iowa, and Don Kilts Sr. of Cedar Rapids; father-in-law, Erwin Schuettpelz of Marion; sister-in-law, Debbie (Kim) Offerman of Delran, New Jersey; brother-in-law, David (Rena) Schuettpelz of Cedar Rapids; five grandchildren, many nieces and nephews; his faithful & loving side-kick, his yorkie puppy, "Finn"; and special family friends, the Pauly's.

Chuck was preceded in death by his parents; younger brother, Jerry Bammert; brother, Jerry Kilts; aunt, Donna Kilts; and mother-in-law, Hazel H. Schuettpelz.

The family would like to express their sincere gratitude to the staff at Mercy Hospice, and their dear friend, Julie Pauly, for all the love, care and support they gave to Chuck during his final days.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Chuck's memory may be directed to the family to be designated later.

Please share a memory of Chuck at www.murdochfuneralhome.com under obituaries.



RITA JOANNE MEIMANN REHAK
Cedar Rapids

Rita Joanne Meimann Rehak, 93, died on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at Cottage Grove Place, Cedar Rapids. A funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, December 11, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Ludmila Catholic Church, by Father Ken Glaser. Visitation will precede the funeral at 9:30 a.m., at the church. The rosary will be recited at 10:15 a.m., immediately prior to the service.

Burial at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery, Ames, Iowa. Murdoch-Linwood Funeral Home & Cremation Service in Cedar Rapids is assisting the family.

Survivors include daughters Lisa Ernst, Gail Loskill, Janet Wilkie, Diane (Bruce) Dalton, and Sue Blome of Cedar Rapids, and son John (Grace) Rehak of Omaha. Also surviving are 15 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Notre Dame Sisters, 3501 State Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68112.

For a full obituary and to share a memory of Rita, please visit www.murdochfuneralhome.com under obituaries.



VIRGINIA "GINNY" WATT
Cedar Rapids

Virginia "Ginny" Watt, 69, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, passed away Sunday, December 7, 2025, at The University of Iowa Hospital, Iowa City, Iowa. Celebration of Life: 3 p.m. Friday, December 12, 2025, at Murdoch-Linwood Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Cedar Rapids with visitation to begin one hour prior.

Ginny was born September 13, 1956, in Peoria, Illinois, the daughter of Donald and Doris (Small) Carron. She graduated from Metamora Township High School in 1974. On May 27, 1978, Ginny was united in marriage to Montylee Watt in Alton, Illinois. Ginny received her BA in Special Education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 1989. She worked as a teacher at KinderCare, and she also worked at Rockwell Collins. Ginny loved quilting, crocheting, word finds, crosswords, reading, judging high school speech competitions, and video games, especially World of Warcraft.

Survivors include her husband, Montylee Watt of Cedar Rapids; children, Devin (Gianna) Watt of Manilla, Philippines, Melissa Watt of Ohio, Valerie Cross (Shane) of Atkins, Iowa, and Ian Watt of Cedar Rapids; nine grandchildren; sisters, Shannon Doerr, Kelli Doerr, Gail Hidden, and Valerie Sinks; many nieces and nephews; and her dogs, Lily and Rosie.

She was preceded in death by her infant brother; parents; maternal grandmother, June; and nephew, Shannon Watt.

Memorials may be directed to the Cedar Valley Humane Society in Ginny's honor.

Please share a memory of Ginny at www.murdochfuneralhome.com under obituaries.



DEATH NOTICES AND OBITUARIES

The deadline for obituary and death notice information to appear in the next day's paper is 1 p.m. Sunday through Friday and 1 p.m. Friday for Sunday publication. Death notice information including name, age, residence, date of death and name of funeral home handling arrangements are published as news items in the daily index free of charge. Arrangements pending and all other obituary material will be published for 50 cents per word. Pictures are \$10, \$25 and \$45 for black and white photos; \$35, \$50 and \$75 for color photos. Prepayment is required. For more information, call 319-398-8221 or email Obits@TheGazette.com

Raul Malo, frontman of The Mavericks, has died at 60

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Raul Malo, the soulful tenor and frontman of the genre-defying, Grammy-winning band The Mavericks, has died. He was 60.

Malo died Monday night, his wife, Betty Malo, posted on his Facebook page. He had been battling cancer. The frontman of The Mavericks had documented his health journey on social media since he disclosed in June 2024 that he was receiving treatment for colon cancer.

In September 2025, Malo said on Instagram that he was battling LMD, or leptomenigeal disease, a rare complication when cancer spreads to membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord.

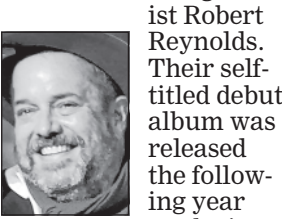
The diagnosis forced The Mavericks to cancel dates with Dwight Yoakam in the middle of a joint tour. Malo left home in Nashville, Tenn., to seek treatment in Houston, keeping his fans updated along his health journey.

"He was called to do another gig — this time in the sky — and he's flying high like an eagle," Betty Malo wrote. "No one embodied life and love, joy and passion, family, friends, music, and adventure the way our beloved Raul did. Now he will look down on us with all that heaven will allow, lighting the way and reminding us to savor every moment."

Malo's band praised his deep commitment to the "preservation of the multilingual American musical repertoire" and his steadfast championing of "music education as an inspiration for every child across America and throughout the world."

Born Raul Francisco

Martínez-Malo Jr. in Miami to Cuban parents, he co-founded The Mavericks in 1989 with drummer Paul Deakin and bass guitar-



Raul Malo
2021 photo

ist Robert Reynolds. Their self-titled debut album was released the following year on the independent, Miami-

based label Y&T Music. Some call the band alt-country. Others describe it as Americana, roots, Latin, Tejano or swing. It's all of the above and more, driven by songs written by Malo, his expansive guitar style and his broad vocal range, from a soaring, velvety baritone to operatic high notes.

His musical prowess was in the blend, also incorporating rock, traditional country and surf. In the early days in Miami, The Mavericks played punk and rock clubs to get their sound out there.

"I grew up in a household where we listened to all kinds of music," Malo said in a 2020 NPR interview. "I just remember it was a celebration of all these cultures."

Raul has a BMI award for songwriting, for "All You Ever Do Is Bring Me Down," and was nominated for several solo Grammys, including one for his album "Lucky One" and another for his work with the Latin supergroup "Los Super Seven."

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Betty; sons Dino, Victor, and Max, mother Norma, sister Carol, and Mavericks bandmates Paul Deakin, Eddie Perez, and Jerry Dale McFadden.

Funding/Grant reinstatement massive win for libraries

► FROM PAGE 1A

the administration this spring by attorneys general from 21 states, not including Iowa.

Among affected grantees are the Science Center of Iowa in Des Moines, the Dubuque Museum of Art and the State Library of Iowa, which uses annual IMLS funds to support library operations and initiatives across the state.

In a written statement to The Gazette, State Librarian Brenda Hall said the state agency is "pleased and grateful" for the restoration of the IMLS grant funding and is now working on communicating the change to the broader Iowa library system.

"The State Library remains committed to the core programs and services that federal funding supports," Hall wrote. "We are focused on sustainably expending our current grant award while also monitoring the federal budget process as we await confirmation of" future funding.

'THOSE DECISIONS ARE NOT UP TO US'

Marion Public Library Youth Services Manager Bob Reynolds said the restoration of IMLS funds is welcome news for the Marion library and others across the state.

"There's this kind of idea that IMLS isn't a major part of helping libraries and

museums, but while it's not a huge (percentage), it's still a form of advocacy and support that helps all local libraries," Reynolds said.

While the Marion Public Library does not receive federal funds directly, Reynolds said it utilizes several statewide services offered through the State Library that are funded by the annual IMLS "Grants to States" program.

In fiscal 2025, Iowa received roughly \$2.2 million through the program. Combined with state matching funds, library systems statewide received about \$3.5 million under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

Related initiatives include patron-facing programs like IA Shares, a state-run delivery service to support the sharing of materials between libraries, as well as funding support for accreditation and continuing education services for Iowa libraries and their staff.

Following this spring's IMLS funding clawback, Reynolds said several of those programs experienced "hiccups" or changes.

IA Shares went from a twice-a-week delivery service down to once a week, for example, and many libraries lost access to the Brainfuse online homework help services when the State Library switched to a scaled-back test prep program.

Reynolds said the restoration of IMLS funds should allow for a reconsideration of those changes, or at the very least more consistency moving forward.

Ely Public Library Director Sarah Sellon echoed the same, adding that patrons don't always realize that those decisions are made at the state level rather than by individual libraries.

"Ultimately, those decisions are not up to us," Sellon said. "We're still waiting to hear at this point (what the IMLS restoration) means for our services, ... but we're hoping for some good news soon."

In certain aspects, smaller libraries like Sellon's are more reliant on IMLS funding compared to larger systems because they have a smaller property tax base to pull from and tighter budgets to work with.

The Ely library supplements its existing catalog using the IA Shares program, for example, and through the state's Bridges eLibrary program, a state-funded e-book and audiobook buying consortium funded in part using IMLS funds.

Without IMLS funds to help cover those program costs, Sellon said smaller libraries would be hard-pressed to fill the gaps themselves.

PROJECTS CAN MOVE FORWARD

In addition to the grants

to states program, IMLS also distributes millions of dollars in grants annually for more specialized programs or initiatives. Two Iowa projects received such funding last year for a combined investment of \$271,000.

This spring, however, awardees — the Science Center of Iowa and the Dubuque Museum of Art — were told those grants were being put on hold. Funds for both have now been released.

For its part, the science center was set to receive a \$196,046 grant to update all of its exhibits with bilingual labels and to engage in surveying and outreach to better engage underserved communities and increase museum access.

Science Center of Iowa CEO Curt Simmons said work on the project ceased this spring after the announcement that its grant funds were being terminated. After last week's reinstatement, however, staff began a full review of grant materials to ensure the project remains feasible.

Staff remain highly interested in the project, Simmons said, but must also evaluate logistic elements such as the reassignment of staff who had been moved to other projects following the funding freeze.

"We felt really great about the project and like it was a

strong proposal to reach new audiences and serve more people with all the great programming we already do, so we're certainly going to try to figure out how to get it done," he said.

While celebrating the return of previously allocated IMLS funds, state and federal advocacy groups also are urging caution given uncertainty about future allocations with American Library Association President Sam Helmick noting that much of the agency's future now falls to Congress.

Congress first established IMLS in 1996 to oversee grant funding for libraries and museums across the country, and the agency is funded through the legislative body's annual federal appropriations process.

"We are breathing a sigh of relief, but the fight is not finished," Helmick — who also is community and access coordinator for the Iowa City Public Library — said in a written statement. "The administration can appeal court decisions. Congress can choose to not fund IMLS in future years. ALA calls on everyone who values libraries to remind their Congress members and elected officials at every level why America's libraries deserve more, not fewer resources."

City services

Cedar Rapids launches online snowplow map

Iowa Today, 2A



Iowa football

Senior Hawkeyes are helping out before bowl

Sports, 1B



The Gazette

Tuesday, December 23, 2025



Partly cloudy. H 42 L 29 7B

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\$2.50

Iowa to participate in Summer EBT in 2026



Cedar River Academy kitchen manager Teresa Murray bags up food during a Healthy Kids Iowa program event June 17 in Cedar Rapids. During the summer food program, each eligible child received \$40 worth of food including frozen items like ground chicken, juice boxes and string cheese.

Healthy Kids Iowa reached less than third of estimated 220,000 eligible children

By Erin Murphy and Maya Marchel Hoff, Gazette-Lee Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — Iowa announced on Monday that it will return to a federal summer food assistance program, while tying the program’s \$40 per month per child to Iowa’s new healthy foods initiative. The announcement came on the same day a report made available to The Gazette showed Iowa’s program in 2025 fell well short of reaching the number of children that the federal pro-

gram would have. Gov. Kim Reynolds said the state will participate in the federal Summer EBT program, also known as SUN Bucks, which will provide families with \$120 over three months, or \$40 per month per child, on pre-loaded electronic benefit transfer cards to purchase food during summer break. The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved the state’s waiver to align Summer EBT with Iowa’s “Healthy SNAP” program set to go into effect Jan. 1, which

► SNAP, PAGE 8A



Brandy Lowery of Cedar Rapids loads up cartons of eggs she received during the Healthy Kids Iowa summer food program event June 17 at Cedar River Academy in Cedar Rapids. (Savannah Blake photos/The Gazette)

Park near new library will honor Allsop family

Trust recently announced ‘significant’ investment in Cedar Rapids library project

By Grace Nieland, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — A city park planned near the new Cedar Rapids Public Library — Busse Branch will be named Allsop Park in honor of a “major gift” from the charitable trust of a longtime Cedar Rapids business leader. The Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation announced the gift and dedication in a Monday news release. The donation comes from the Robert and Elizabeth Allsop Charitable Trust, although its total was not disclosed. “This remarkable gift goes a long way to fulfilling our vision of a library within a park, creating a community hub that will offer much-needed park space for generations to come,” Library Foundation Executive Director Charity Tyler said in the release. The family-run trust responsible for the gift is named for Robert Allsop, a longtime Cedar Rapids business leader who died in 2022, and his wife, Elizabeth. The donation will go toward the westside library project, which is currently under construction on 20th Avenue SW off Edgewood Road. The 40,000-square foot facility is expected to double available collections and meeting spaces when compared to the existing Ladd Library on Williams Boulevard SW. To further honor the contribution, the library’s meeting rooms will be collectively named the “Allsop Conference and Learning Center.” That will include the 150-person Allsop Auditorium, as well as an adjacent kitchenette and the 16-person Allsop Community Room. “Investing in the future of the westside library is an investment in people — young

► PARK, PAGE 9A

Disability rights lawyers face budget cuts, reassignments

Trump administration trying to limit legal access

By Tony Leys, KFF Health News

The Trump administration is trying to slash access to lawyers who defend the rights of Americans with disabilities, advocates say. Most of the lawyers work either for the Department of Justice or for disability rights agencies that Congress set up in every state decades ago. Many of the Justice Department lawyers quit in 2025 after being reassigned to other duties, their supporters say. And Trump budget officials proposed deep cuts to federal grants supporting the state-

based legal groups. People with disabilities have the right to live in their communities if possible. Federal laws and court decisions say they may attend school, work jobs and go to restaurants, movie theaters and other public places. If they can find lawyers, they can file legal challenges when those rights are denied. The federally funded attorneys quietly work to ensure the U.S. lives up to promises made by the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws, said Alison Barkoff, a health law professor at George Washington University. “I think many families of people with disabilities, or even many people with dis-

abilities themselves, don’t hear about it until they Google, ‘Where can I get help?’” said Barkoff, who helped lead such efforts under Presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama. The attorneys’ goals include ensuring that people with disabilities have the services they need to live in their own homes, instead of having to move into nursing homes or other types of institutions, Barkoff said. “These are people who, if these supports are ripped away, are going to have to leave their communities and their families, at a higher cost for taxpayers,” she said.

► LAWYERS, PAGE 8A



Isaac Schreier of Ankeny shows how he uses his specialized wheelchair to get around when he has broken bones from a condition called osteogenesis imperfecta. His parents, Maria and Jake Schreier, received legal assistance from the nonprofit group Disability Rights Iowa after the private company managing Isaac’s Medicaid benefits refused to pay for the wheelchair. (Tony Leys/KFF Health News)



OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICES

CEDAR RAPIDS

Joan M. Hinton, 95, died Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025. Teahen Funeral Home.

CEDAR RAPIDS

Marilyn K Randall, 88, died Monday, Dec. 22, 2025. Cedar Memorial Park Funeral Home.

DECORAH

Colin C. Ahlstrom, 56, formerly of Waukon, died Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025. Martin-Grau Funeral Home.

MAQUOKETA

Cheryl McCullouch, 59, died Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025. Carson Celebration of Life Center.

OTHER DEATHS

Elizabeth F. “Betty” Schoentag, 87, of Cedar Falls, died Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025. Jamison-Schmitz Funeral Home, Oelwein.



National Park Service Ranger Betty Reid Soskin works at the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park on July 12, 2016, in Richmond, Calif. (Associated Press)

Betty Reid Soskin, oldest U.S. park ranger, dies at 104

Washington Post

Betty Reid Soskin, who served as the nation’s oldest park ranger and relayed firsthand accounts of segregation as a Black woman on the World War II home front, died Sunday at her home in Richmond, Calif. She was 104.

Her death was confirmed by her son Bob Reid, who did not know the exact cause but said she had been in declining health.

“She led a fully packed life and was ready to leave,” her family said in a statement on social media.

Soskin, who joined the National Park Service at 85 and retired when she turned 100, used her role as the nation’s oldest park ranger to share the untold stories of Black women, including herself, who served on the home front during World War II.

At that time, she worked as a file clerk at Boilermakers Local Auxiliary 36, a segregated union for Black workers. According to the union, Soskin worked at the sprawling Kaiser Shipyards, where thousands of women helped construct some 700 Liberty and Victory ships.

While many were familiar with tales of the women who worked in factories as men went off to fight — known as “Rosie the Riveters” — a key detail was often omitted from those histories.

“That was always a White women’s story,” Soskin said in an interview with the Washington Post in 2015. For most of the war, she said, Black women were not permitted to be “Rosies” until 1944, when some began to be trained as welders.

In 2016, the union apologized to Soskin for the way she and other Black workers were relegated by the union to an auxiliary segregated lodge during the war.

“I’m not trained as a historian. My presentations are based on my oral history,” Soskin said. “A bottomless well of memories come up depending on questions the public asks. [The memories] are always on tap for me,” she added.

The ranger spent her days sharing her experiences with visitors to

the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond. “Black women were not freed or emancipated in the workforce,” she told the Post. “Unions were not racially integrated and wouldn’t be for a decade. They created auxiliaries that all Blacks were dumped into. We paid dues, but didn’t have power or votes.”

Soskin was born Betty Charbonnet in Detroit on Sept. 22, 1921, and grew up in a Cajun-Creole, African American family in New Orleans. In 1927, after a devastating flood hit the city, her family relocated to Oakland, Calif., according to a Park Service biography.

In 1945, Soskin and her husband at the time, Mel Reid, opened one of the country’s first Black-owned music stores, Reid’s Records, which operated until 2019. In 1972, Soskin and Reid divorced, and four years later, she married William Soskin, to whom she remained married until his death in 1988.

According to her former employer, she later went into local and state politics, working as an aide to a Berkeley City Council member and for State Assembly members.

Soskin was working in Richmond as a field representative for a California assemblyman when she met with Park Service planners to discuss the development of an urban park paying tribute to World War II home front workers. In 2003, she left her state job to become a consultant to the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park and four years later, at the age of 85, became a park ranger.

In a statement on social media, the park paid tribute to Soskin’s time as a ranger: “She was a powerful voice for sharing her personal experiences, highlighting untold stories, and honoring the contributions of women from diverse backgrounds who worked on the World War II Home Front.”

In addition to her son, Bob, survivors include two daughters, Diara and Dorian; five grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

Barry Manilow postpones concerts after cancer found

Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — Barry Manilow has postponed his January concerts after the discovery of a cancerous spot on his left lung.

In a statement, Manilow said the cancer was caught early, and his prognosis is good. “The doctors do not believe it has spread, and I’m taking tests to confirm their diagnosis,” he said. “No chemo, no radiation. Just chicken soup and ‘I Love Lucy’ reruns.”

His representatives said the cancer was considered Stage One, and Manilow would undergo surgery by the end of December.

Manilow, 82, hopes to be back onstage in time for a Valentine’s Day weekend engagement at his “home away from home” at the Westgate resort in Las Vegas. Manilow has a long relationship with the Westgate time-share company.

The cancerous spot was discovered by “pure luck (and a good doctor),” Manilow wrote. He had been struggling with a stubborn case of bronchitis, so his doctor ordered an MRI, which discovered the cancer at an early stage.

In addition to his planned Orlando concert, other affected Florida cities include



Barry Manilow performs on his “Hits 2023” tour Jan. 17, 2023, at Amway Center in Orlando, Fla. (Orlando Sentinel/TNS)

Tampa, Sunrise, Estero and Jacksonville.

Known for hits including “Mandy,” “I Write the Songs,” “Looks Like We Made It,” “Can’t Smile Without You,” and “Copacabana (At the Copa),” Manilow is on a farewell tour. He announced in September that the January concert at the Kia Center would be his last in Central Florida.

In his 50-year career, Manilow has released more than 40 albums and charted 51 Top 40 singles, including 13 that reached No. 1. A Grammy, Tony and Emmy award-winner, he has sold more than

85 million albums and was named the No. 1 adult-contemporary artist of all time by Billboard and R&R magazines.

Manilow last performed in Orlando in January of 2023, when he headlined a concert celebrating his 50-year career. Prior to that show, he told the Orlando Sentinel that while he was slowing down, he wasn’t finished with showbiz.

“I’m waiting for the shoe to drop, to wake up and look in the mirror and feel older and retire,” Manilow said then with a laugh. “But so far, so good.”

His Jan. 7 Orlando show has been rescheduled for March 13 at the Kia Center. January ticket holders will be able to use their current tickets in March.

“Just like you, we were all looking forward to the January shows and hate having to move everything around,” Manilow wrote. “I’m very sorry that you have to change your plans.”

His statement ended on a positive note, wishing fans “a wonderful Christmas” and a happy new year.

“And remember,” he wrote. “If you have even the slightest symptom, get tested!”

Hundreds mourn slain Brown student

Sophomore Ella Cook was 1 of 2 killed in campus shooting

Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A Brown University sophomore who was killed in an attack at the Rhode Island university was remembered Monday as “smart, confident, curious, kind, principled, brave,” at a funeral in her home state of Alabama.

Hundreds gathered at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in downtown Birmingham to remember Ella Cook, 19. She and freshman MukhamadAziz Umurzokov, 18, were killed Dec. 13 when a gunman entered a study session in a Brown academic building and opened fire on students. Nine other students were wounded.

Authorities believe the attack was carried out by Claudio Neves

Valente, 48, who had been a graduate student at Brown studying physics during the 2000-01 school year. Neves Valente then fatally shot Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Nuno F.G. Loureiro at Loureiro’s Boston-area home two days later, officials said.

Neves Valente, who had attended school with Loureiro in Portugal in the 1990s, was found dead days later in a New Hampshire storage facility, killed by a self-inflicted gunshot wound. An autopsy determined that Neves Valente died Dec. 16, the same day Loureiro died in a hospital.

The federal government has since announced an investigation into Brown to determine if the school violated the Clery Act, which requires higher education institutions to meet certain campus safety and security requirements in order to

receive federal funds. As part of their investigation, the U.S. Department of Education on Monday said it had requested various information from Brown, ranging from security reports, audits, dispatch and call logs, to when emergency notifications have been utilized.

In Alabama, Cook’s family on Monday invited attendees to wear “Easter colors,” underscoring Cook’s Christian faith, at an Episcopal funeral service that also nodded to the Christmas season.

The Rev. Paul F.M. Zahl, who formerly led the church, read from several letters written by members of the Brown community to Cook’s parents, Anna Bishop Cook and Richard Cook, who raised Ella and her two younger siblings in the affluent Birmingham suburb of Mountain Brook.

“Ella was smart, confident, curious, kind,

principled, brave. She had a big impact on campus in only three semesters,” Brown professor of political economy David Skarbek wrote. “I used to tell Ella, ‘We need an Alabama to Brown pipeline.’ In fact, her nickname on campus was Ellabama.”

Zahl told the congregation that the funeral was “a kind of bigger stage, a kind of more amplified mic” for Cook to spread her Christian faith.

“I pray now that everyone who has loved Ella so much in this life would be given a vivid, individual feeling of Ella’s love, still present with us,” Zahl said. “Because Ella’s love is eternal and entirely altruistic.”

Cook was an accomplished pianist who was studying French, math and economics at Brown, where she also served as vice president of the college Republicans.

Park/Updated timeline expected in '26

► FROM PAGE 1A

and old — whose lives will help shape the future of Iowa and the world,” Steve Allsop said in the release. “To the Allsop family, investment in the library was natural.”

Once complete, the Busse Branch will sport a north-facing facade made entirely of glass that will overlook what will eventually become Allsop Park. Plans for the park are currently under development with an updated timeline expected in 2026.

Previously completed community polling for the project showed a desire for amenities such as walking trails, a com-



Charity Tyler, executive director of the Cedar Rapids Library Foundation, speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Westside Library on Oct. 18, 2024, in southwest Cedar Rapids. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

munity garden and an area dedicated to youth activities.

“We’re pleased to move into the next phase of planning,”

Parks and Recreation Director Carrie Mardorf said in the release. “This support helps us continue developing the park space and aligning

it with the broader goals of the library project.”

The library itself is expected to open in the fall of 2026. The \$25 million project is funded through a mix of private donations and public dollars — including \$10 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds.

The branch is named for the Busse Foundation, a family-run charitable trust that this year announced a \$3.5 million donation to the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation’s \$10 million “Inspiring Big Dreams” capital campaign.

Comments: grace.nieland@thegazette.com

To: Chris Casey, Finance Committee Chair
From: Dara Schmidt
Date: 12/18/2025
Subject: December Committee Meeting Financial Report

Library Operations:

- Budget reallocation was posted in November from Personal Services to Discretionary account 522101 for \$176,776.17. The balance to get to the needed \$200K will come from unspent funds from the cancellation of Cloud Library in January.
- Total Expenses (less transfer out) is 3.86M of budgeted 8.44M or 46% spent. This is slightly over spent but timing is not taken into account for Ladd Library lease, IT software/front heavy costs, etc. Personal Services is now currently overspending but should be a timing of pay outs vs actuals going forward.

Library Special Revenue – fund 7010

- No concerns

Library CIP – fund 316

- No concerns

FY27 Budget

No progress since last month. Current draft state includes:

- Personal Services is built with a refresh savings of \$192K.
- Ladd Library Rent remains in 524100, we will reallocate via amendment in FY27 to personal services.
- Removed transfer of \$20K to FMS for project management.
- Funding increase requests submitted (not included in the workpaper currently – will add if approved);
 - \$350K for circulation material relating to subscriptions and processing/cataloging tasks
 - 1 FTE Patron Services Specialist (grade 18, step 1)

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General Fund - Library

2025-11-30

Account	Prior FY 2025 Actual	Current FY 2026 Adjusted Budget	Current FY 2026 Actual	Favorable (Unfavorable) Variance	Percent of Budget Received/ Spent	Current Month FY 2026 Actual	Current FY 2026 Adopted Budget	Budget Change
Revenues								
Taxes								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Licenses & Permits								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Intergovernmental Revenue								
422001 State Operating	30,776.85	115,000.00	30,341.72	(84,658.28)	26%	-	115,000.00	-
423000 Local Govt Grants and Reimb	191,240.44	300,000.00	70,996.37	(229,003.63)	24%	-	300,000.00	-
	222,017.29	415,000.00	101,338.09	(313,661.91)	24%	-	415,000.00	-
Charges for Services								
431006 Printing & Duplicating of Form	13,498.31	25,000.00	15,163.05	(9,836.95)	61%	2,845.55	25,000.00	-
431012 Dept Charges-External to City	85,616.73	272,367.00	91,499.50	(180,867.50)	33.6%	22,861.64	272,367.00	-
431201 Library User Fees - Not Fines	18,361.69	10,600.00	16,291.99	5,691.99	154%	682.07	10,600.00	-
	117,476.73	307,967.00	122,954.54	(185,012.46)	40%	26,389.26	307,967.00	-
Fines & Forfeits								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Other Revenue								
461001 Building Rental	17,928.00	43,455.00	10,016.57	(33,438.43)	23%	583.20	43,455.00	-
471002 Contributions & Donations	-	70,000.00	-	(70,000.00)	0%	-	70,000.00	-
471003 Sale of Inventory	293.20	2,000.00	390.02	(1,609.98)	20%	56.00	2,000.00	-
471005 Other Miscellaneous Revenue	-	3,500.00	-	(3,500.00)	0%	-	3,500.00	-
471007 Cash Over (Under)	(1.15)	-	(11.40)	(11.40)	0%	5.85	-	-
	18,220.05	118,955.00	10,395.19	(108,559.81)	9%	645.05	118,955.00	-
Transfers In								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Total Revenues	357,714.07	841,922.00	234,687.82	(607,234.18)	28%	27,034.31	841,922.00	-
Expenditures								
Personal Services								
								reallocated to 522101 to cover online subscription circulation material/access not owned by the City
511100 Regular Employees	1,846,758.88	4,393,749.83	1,937,908.72	2,455,841.11	44%	366,146.41	4,570,526.00	(176,776.17)
511200 Temporary/Seasonal Employees	9,828.00	43,368.40	14,295.75	29,072.65	33%	-	43,368.40	-
511300 Overtime	32,090.02	114,773.40	27,239.15	87,534.25	24%	7,055.42	114,773.40	-
511400 Other Special Pays	8,767.88	13,180.00	37,430.58	(24,250.58)	284%	33,364.46	13,180.00	-
512100 Group Insurance	312,549.80	889,723.00	334,651.19	555,071.81	38%	65,996.99	889,723.00	-
512200 Social Security Contributions	139,506.68	361,272.00	149,450.73	211,821.27	41%	28,460.31	361,272.00	-
512300 Retirement Contribution	175,580.11	446,664.00	185,751.78	260,912.22	42%	33,237.54	446,664.00	-
512400 Unemployment Compensation	-	-	(5,155.37)	5,155.37	0%	-	-	-
512500 Workers' Compensation	24,397.53	147,525.00	63,957.67	83,567.33	43%	11,479.54	147,525.00	-
512600 Other Employee Benefits	1,470.08	3,658.00	331.81	3,326.19	9%	(1,208.42)	3,658.00	-
	2,550,948.98	6,413,913.63	2,745,862.01	3,668,051.62	43%	544,532.25	6,590,689.80	(176,776.17)
Discretionary Expenses								
521100 Advertising & Marketing	3,423.99	5,000.00	4,797.03	202.97	96%	4,315.17	5,000.00	-
521104 Consulting & Technical Service	-	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0%	-	10,000.00	-
521105 External Contracted Labor	18,928.10	52,274.00	24,167.32	28,106.68	46%	5,884.16	52,274.00	-
521107 Legal Services	13,141.29	-	2,275.00	(2,275.00)	0%	-	-	-
521108 Other Professional Services	1,374.38	9,523.63	56.07	9,467.56	1%	36.00	9,523.63	-

General Fund - Library

2025-11-30

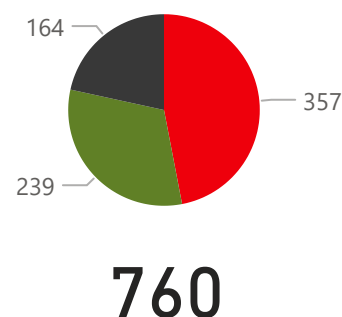
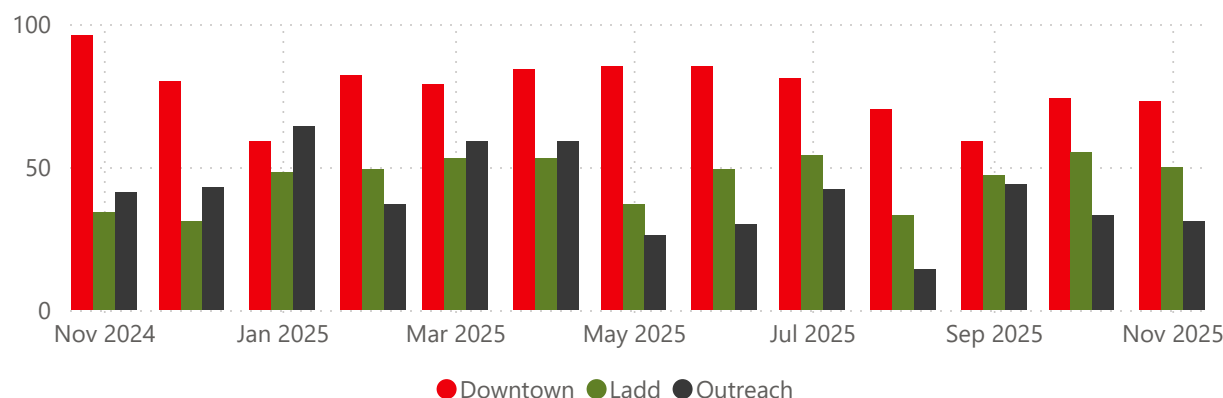
		Prior FY 2025	Current FY 2026 Adjusted	Current FY 2026	Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent of Budget Received/	Current Month FY 2026	Current FY 2026 Adopted	Budget
521109	External Banking/Financial Fee	5,931.53	20,700.00	4,723.36	15,976.64	23%	88.99	20,700.00	-
521110	Security Services	348.77	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
522100	Computer Hardware	30,968.44	40,000.00	26,949.58	13,050.42	67%	-	40,000.00	-
total budget increase needed is \$200K, have to absorb balance within discretionary. \$176,776 came from Personal Service position changes.									
522101	Computer Software	193,943.69	398,996.17	386,315.22	12,680.95	97%	38,534.47	222,220.00	176,776.17
522102	IT Services - External	24,141.11	40,000.00	50,296.73	(10,296.73)	126%	2,632.72	40,000.00	-
522104	Building & Grounds Services	4,756.68	25,000.00	2,239.14	22,760.86	9%	260.00	25,000.00	-
522105	Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Serv	13,615.79	15,000.00	6,819.90	8,180.10	45%	3,762.40	15,000.00	-
523107	Phone Services	13,067.75	32,950.00	10,468.13	22,481.87	32%	-	32,950.00	-
524101	Rental of Equip & Vehicles	-	500.00	1,096.80	(596.80)	219%	(51.10)	500.00	-
525102	Printing, Binding, & Duplicate	9,192.86	16,950.00	4,385.79	12,564.21	26%	1,693.78	16,950.00	-
531102	Awards & Recognition	-	250.00	53.83	196.17	22%	53.83	250.00	-
531103	Books & Subscriptions	105,153.51	127,171.80	46,665.39	80,506.41	37%	8,905.00	127,171.80	-
531105	Cleaning & Janitorial Supplies	117.66	1,250.00	265.78	984.22	21%	66.89	1,250.00	-
531106	Computer Supplies	842.70	5,000.00	1,223.16	3,776.84	24%	56.46	5,000.00	-
531109	Equipment/Furniture/Fixtures	12,829.27	17,800.00	4,206.58	13,593.42	24%	773.37	17,800.00	-
531116	Office Supplies	4,998.46	15,320.00	4,475.89	10,844.11	29%	1,457.01	15,320.00	-
531117	Paint Supplies	1,083.22	-	300.82	(300.82)	0%	-	-	-
531118	Program Supplies	19,897.42	37,000.00	12,213.92	24,786.08	33%	1,675.22	37,000.00	-
531119	Shop Supplies	273.60	250.00	1,152.27	(902.27)	461%	(206.20)	250.00	-
531120	Sign & Signal Supplies	149.02	-	113.06	(113.06)	0%	-	-	-
531123	Uniforms	-	1,694.00	-	1,694.00	0%	-	1,694.00	-
531124	Personal Protective Gear	258.06	-	450.39	(450.39)	0%	18.60	-	-
532103	LP Gas	33.54	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
533100	Building & Grounds Supplies	1,017.08	20,741.28	1,144.33	19,596.95	6%	-	20,741.28	-
533101	Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Parts	2,152.10	-	408.69	(408.69)	0%	73.43	-	-
542102	Conferences, Training, Travel	13,796.21	23,200.00	7,408.18	15,791.82	32%	2,708.06	23,200.00	-
542103	Dues & Memberships	755.00	10,000.00	5,543.04	4,456.96	55%	-	10,000.00	-
542106	Licensing Fees	-	-	60.00	(60.00)	0%	-	-	-
542108	Postage & Freight	3,517.04	13,500.00	2,726.36	10,773.64	20%	628.37	13,500.00	-
542111	Mileage Reimbursement	925.60	3,000.00	1,032.36	1,967.64	34%	164.22	3,000.00	-
Other Expenses		500,633.87	943,070.88	614,034.12	329,036.76	65%	73,530.85	766,294.71	176,776.17
521106	Health Services	79.65	-	177.00	(177.00)	0%	-	-	-
522107	Routine City Facility Charges	69,280.36	349,135.23	61,998.72	287,136.51	18%	27,736.39	349,135.23	-
522108	Routine City Fleet Charges	1,935.56	899.00	142.79	756.21	16%	-	899.00	-
523100	Electricity	98,373.67	243,800.00	102,196.51	141,603.49	42%	21,164.86	243,800.00	-
523103	Natural Gas	154.74	4,500.00	126.49	4,373.51	3%	33.58	4,500.00	-
524100	Rental of Land & Buildings	230,631.42	249,000.00	231,033.29	17,966.71	93%	3,375.00	249,000.00	-
525104	Liability Insurance	20,484.72	63,422.00	29,212.86	34,209.14	46%	5,285.17	63,422.00	-
525107	Property Insurance	67,588.35	171,950.00	71,645.85	100,304.15	42%	14,329.17	171,950.00	-
525108	Vehicle Insurance	625.00	1,500.00	625.00	875.00	42%	125.00	1,500.00	-
532101	Gasoline Fuel	170.85	498.58	97.90	400.68	20%	-	498.58	-
Capital Outlay		489,324.32	1,084,704.81	497,256.41	587,448.40	46%	72,049.17	1,084,704.81	-
Debt Service		-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Transfers Out		-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
571100	Transfer Out-Inter	-	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	100%	-	20,000.00	-
to FMS for CIP management services - final year									
		-	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	100%	-	20,000.00	-

General Fund - Library

2025-11-30

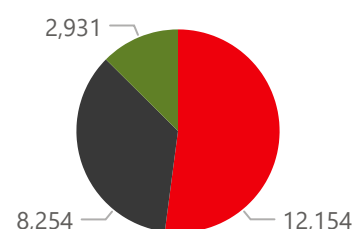
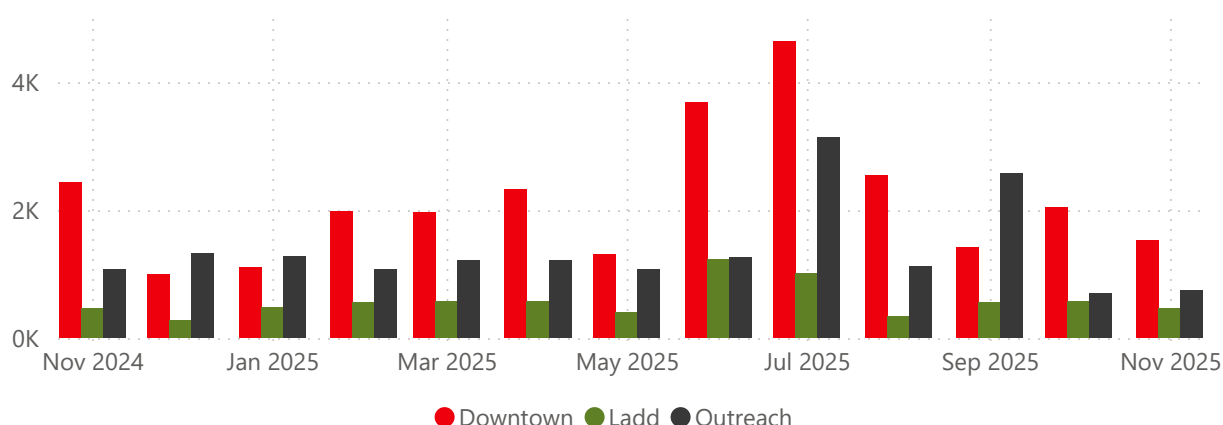
	Prior FY 2025	Current FY 2026 Adjusted	Current FY 2026	Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent of Budget Received/	Current Month FY 2026	Current FY 2026 Adopted	Budget
Total Expenditures	3,540,907.17	8,461,689.32	3,877,152.54	4,584,536.78	46%	690,112.27	8,461,689.32	-
Net Revenues Over / (Under) Expenditures	(3,183,193.10)	(7,619,767.32)	(3,642,464.72)	3,977,302.60		(663,077.96)	(7,619,767.32)	-

Programs



760

of Programs



23,339

of Attendees

Programming had a fun (and busy!) December, wrapping up school outreach for the year, and welcoming back our friends for TubaChristmas. Jane Austen's 250th Birthday was celebrated in style with trivia, tea, and a string quartet; patrons had the opportunity to visit each week to watch the Lord of the Rings trilogy on the big screen; and so many kids got messy making Snowflake Slime while out on Winter Break.

The Opportunity Center continued to welcome in dozens of people seeking help, and continues to expand its offerings for workshops and classes to ensure patrons can find the help they need.

Final plans and preparations were made for the launch of the Winter Reading Challenge that runs from Jan.1 to 31 – our 7th winter challenge! Make sure to read your 300 minutes before the end of January to earn your mug!

I have been working with an elderly patron over the past few months with his new smartphone. The first two reference appointments we had were all about spam phone calls. Despite turning on all the anti-spam options on his phone at the first meeting, he was continuing to receive dozens a day. I downloaded a third-party app to help identify the spam calls at our second appointment and we hoped for the best. At our third appointment this week, he told me that he had been receiving 40-ish spam calls a day initially. But now that he could see they were spam, he didn't pick up the calls and was instead blocking every number they called from. Finally, after about two weeks of that, he was getting a lot fewer spam calls!

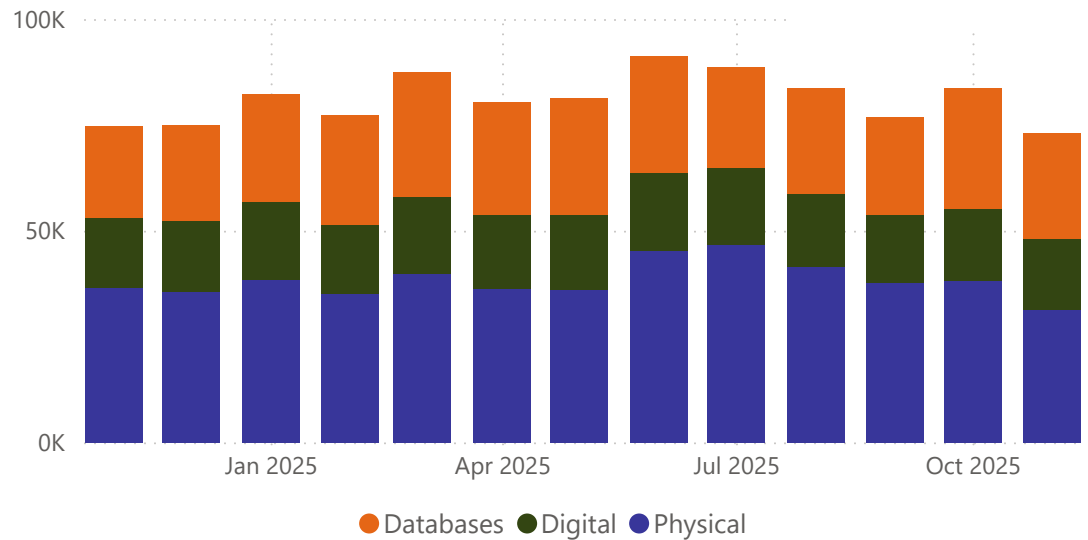
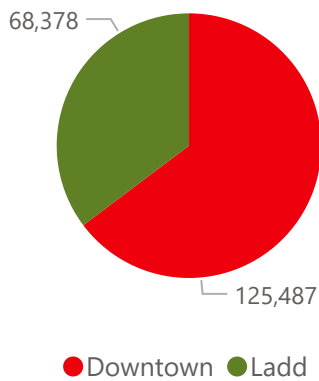
Now that the spam issue was better, I was able to fix a few other things on his phone (like the in-call volume being too quiet). I was even able to show him how to text people on his phone. I then helped him text some photos to his sister. These photos had the last information she needed in order to book a flight for him. He told me it would be the first time he had seen his sister in 60 years. - Rebecca Vernon, Public Service Librarian

A new patron came up to the desk and asked if we have unisex or gender neutral bathrooms. I said unfortunately we do not, since we rent this space, but was able to share with them that the new library will have many single-stall bathrooms. The patron was really touched by that, and excited to start using the library. I gave them a copy of the Open magazine for more details on the Busse Branch. - Alyssa Telecky, Patron Services Specialist

Borrowing & Collections

125,104 **85,297** **193,865** **1,483** **405,749**
Databases Digital Physical Technology Total

Physical Circulation, by Location

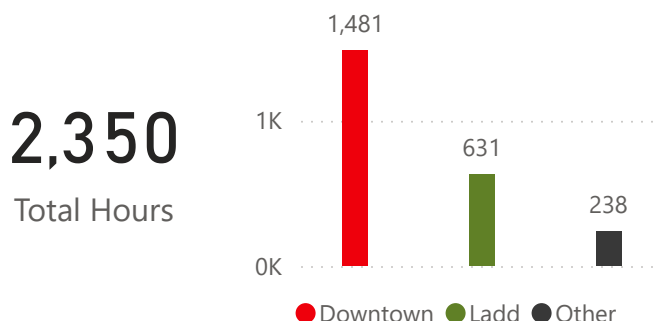


The Materials team continues to work on keeping up with materials deliveries. The publishing industry slows down significantly in the winter, so new releases are at a minimum. Our current shipments are made up of backordered materials we're receiving from Ingram after needing to switch our orders during the Baker & Taylor shut down. Baker & Taylor is officially closed down and we aren't receiving more materials from them. The process to close down cloudLibrary is nearly complete. Some titles we purchased long-term licenses for many years ago are able to be transferred into Libby, so we're working through that process now. This will add a few thousand titles of mostly older publications to our Libby collection in January.

The team also uses this quieter time to focus on material inventory reports to check for loss. If materials show up missing in the inventory process, the team runs reports to double check for them and often finds things out of place rather than truly lost.

Volunteers

Volunteer Hours



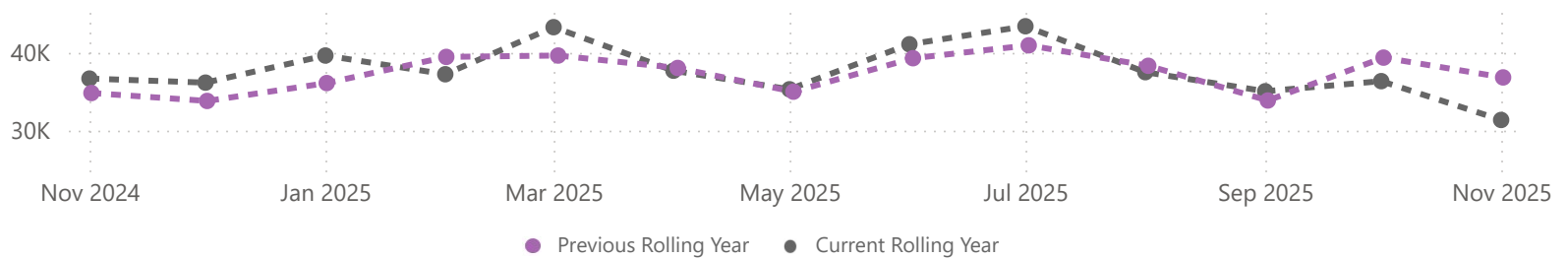
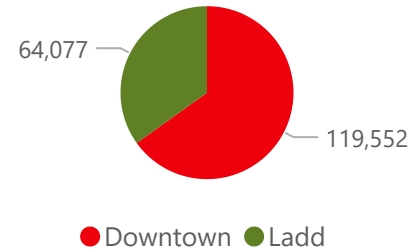
2,350
Total Hours

As 2025 comes to a close, we are grateful for all the volunteer support we've been given over the past year. In the past year over 120 people have applied to be a library volunteer. We've worked with over 10 groups and over 140 individuals. Volunteers support our operations with pulling holds and organizing shelves, assisting with our programs, helping behind the scenes with program preparation and in the sorter room, and delivering books to homebound older adults. We look forward to engaging volunteers in our new Busse Branch in 2026! Volunteer Hours in November 2025: 407.

Visits

183,629

Physical Visits

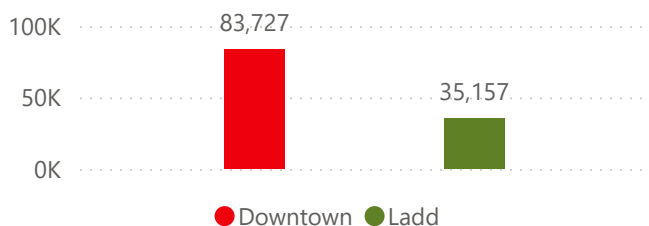


December has been a great month for the Public Service Team. Work, that staff started in November in preparation of issues we see during the winter months, has paid off. This work continues to focus on the skills and training staff have developed through de-escalation, boundary setting, and relationship building. We also have worked with community partners to ensure we are providing accurate and reliable information to individuals needing access to services and resources. Due to an increase in demand for this need in the community and ongoing changes for a variety of reasons, this work remains ongoing – yet staff have persevered and remained resilient in demonstrating the library's role in the community.

A patron, Z, has been coming into the library for several months. He is always friendly and ready to engage in conversation when the opportunity arises. He recently discovered that I do stand-up comedy, and this is a thing that he is really interested in. Since then, we spend several minutes each day we see each other talking about comedy, joke writing and performing. I was able to let him know about the comedy open mic that happens every week and since then he has been writing jokes and sharing them with me, in hopes of trying to get up on stage soon. We have been able to build a relationship on this shared passion. - Wes Shirley, Branch Supervisor

Technology Access

PC Uses



345,400

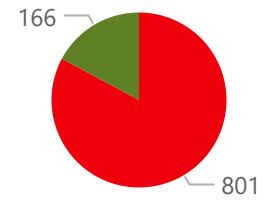
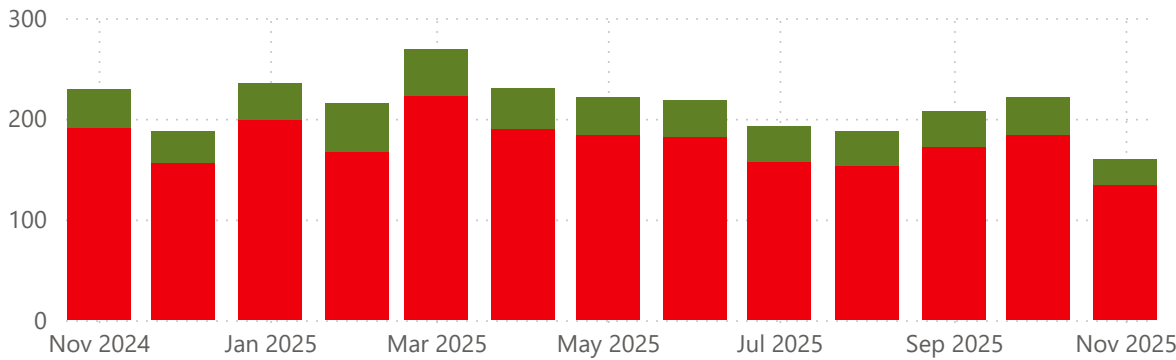
Virtual Visits

157,645

WiFi Sessions

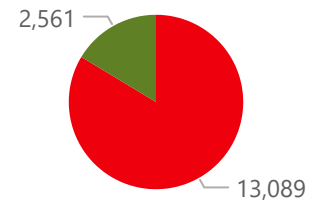
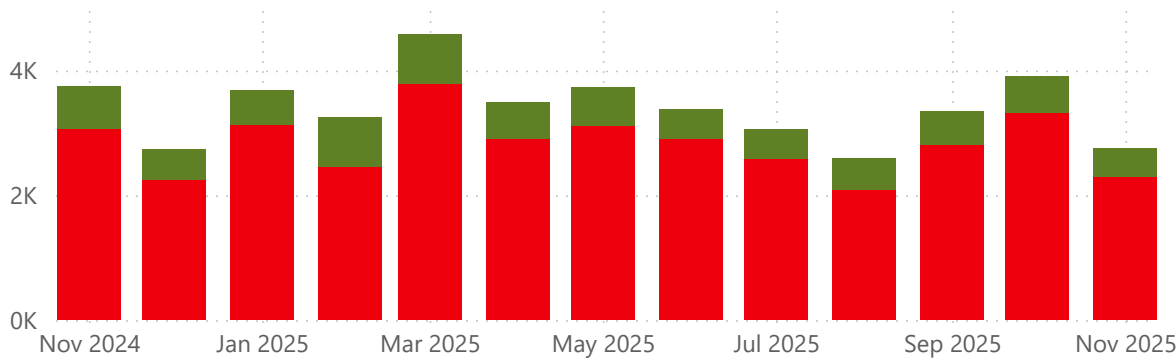
The Technical Solutions team is working with the City's Purchasing department to release an RFP (request for proposals) for internet service for the downtown building and the new Busse Branch. This will help with predictability and long-term planning. Once the proposal period has closed, the team will evaluate the vendors and make a decision. The team continues to work with contractors to coordinate technology needs, hardware purchases, and installation once the building is fully enclosed and secure.

Meeting Room Use



967

of Reservations



15,650

of Users

● Downtown ● Ladd

For the month of November, there were approximately 160 total reservations, serving about 2758 people. Most notably, we hosted the Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library's Big Book Sale and Linn County Elections.

In combination with a display in the Commons, the Hoover Presidential Foundation hosted Presleigh-Anne Johnson in Whipple Auditorium for "Keeping up with the Hoovers: Dining, Diplomacy and Entertainment at the White House." Collins Aerospace and amateur astronomers showed a documentary in Whipple Auditorium and Willis Dady hosted their Donor Appreciation event at the library.

The Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) 6th District had a day-long workshop, which included presentations and public speaking as well as service projects. Local students, such as Prairie Creek Choir performed at the library and Xavier students both volunteered and received a presentation by Wes Shirley regarding how the library supports housing insecure citizens.

Community Relations is looking forward to a really big year! We are looking at our calendar for 2026 and anticipating the celebrations to come and how we can support that, along with the regular work we do each year. We are promoting our winter reading challenge, which runs the month of January. The coffee mug has proven to be quite popular each year, so we are excited about the new one for 2026. In addition, we're promoting winter programs and helping to highlight some of our amazing resources to patrons. We were excited to celebrate the new year with a highlight reel of the new building project and showing off the progress over the past 12 months. If you haven't seen it, be sure to check it out on our social media.

I was helping a child find Dogman books and was coming from the front of the library. As I was taking him to the back I noticed he was walking much slower than me. I started hopping from red carpet square to red carpet square to slow myself down. I turned back to him and noticed he was doing it too. I told him "The floor is lava! So we gotta be careful!" he caught up to me and we made it to the graphic novels unscathed. He thanked me and said "That was fun!", I agreed. - Lysh Holley, Patron Services Specialist

Calendar of Initiatives: FY26-27 Plan Year One									
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