



## Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees

March 5, 2026, at 4 pm

Community Room, Ladd Library

### Agenda:

1. Call to Order. Presented by Library Board President Monica Challenger
2. **Action:** Consent Agenda
  - Minutes: February 5, 2026
3. Public Comments and Communications
4. Foundation Report. Presented by Charity Tyler
5. Friends of the Library Report. Presented by Libby Slappey
6. Board Education: Director Advocacy Opportunities. Presented by Dara Schmidt
7. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Advocacy Committee. Presented by Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
    - No Action
  - Building Committee. Presented by Jade Hart, Committee Chair
    - No Action
  - Finance Committee. Presented by Chris Casey, Committee Chair
    - **Action:** FY26 Linn County Agreement for Library Services
    - **Action:** Purchase Order and Payment Approval – cost of modifying and moving the materials handling system from Ladd to Busse. \$98,900 total to RFID Library Solutions
    - **Action:** Purchase Order and Payment Approval – Internet and Phone Services for the three libraries. Not to exceed \$102,000 for five years to ImOn Communications
  - Personnel and Policy Committee. Presented by Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
    - No Action
8. Library Director's Report. Presented by Dara Schmidt
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **April 2, 2026, at 4 pm**, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library.

*Notice:* 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](mailto: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

February 5, 2026

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

Board members unable to attend: Hassan Selim

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

Others: Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person)

## Minutes

- Call to Order
  - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm
- **Action:** Consent Agenda
  - Minutes: January 8, 2026
  - Mr. Elges moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. McClain seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- Public Comments and Communications
  - There being none, the meeting continued
- Foundation Report. Presented by Charity Tyler
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Tyler. The Foundation has scheduled a Big Dreams Donor Reception for March 12. Invitations will be sent soon. The Stay Home and Read appeal will likely go out by the end of February and will be focused on raising money for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL).
  - Ms. Tyler and Ms. Slappey are working on the joint Friends and Foundation Spring newsletter, which will be sent in April.
  - Foundation staff are working through recognition details for the Busse Branch donor wall.
  - At the board level, Ms. Tyler is continuing to focus on new board member recruitment.
- Friends of the Library Report. Presented by Libby Slappey
  - Ms. Slappey reported. The Friends are planning their semi-annual large sale at the downtown library over the weekend of April 10-12. Volunteers are in the process of shifting old book carts to the Cherry Building and books from that building to the downtown library.
  - Internet book sales continue to go well. Ms. Slappey noted that Friends will accept text book donations, which they can sell online. Recently, they sold a 2023 statistics book for \$73, which would have cost the student double. She appreciates it when people think of the Friends with donations of textbooks, and encouraged people to pass the word.
  - Ms. Slappey thanked Ms. McClain for recommending a friend to purchase books purely for decorating. She's eager to see how they've been re-purposed.

- Board Education: Accreditation and ADA Review. Presented by Dara Schmidt and Jessica Musil
  - Ms. Schmidt reported on the State Library's Accreditation process. The overall goal is to encourage the ongoing development of high-quality public library services in Iowa. Libraries are accredited every three years and must meet one of three tiers: Tier 1, which includes 29 standards; Tier 2, which includes Tier 1 and an additional 12 standards; and Tier 3, which includes Tier 1 and 2 standards, 6 Tier 3 standards as well as 20 of 38 optional standards. In addition to the standards, libraries must provide documentation and an ADA review as well as review all policies at least once in that three-year cycle. Accreditation standards are tied to funding. Ms. Schmidt reviewed the various sections of accreditation, which includes Library management, personnel, collections, access to virtual and physical spaces, programming, community relations, and the facility. Our library is submitting our accreditation again to maintain our Tier 3 status. Ms. Challenger asked about a proposed bill that intends to impact accreditation standards. Ms. Schmidt reads the current language as proposed stating that libraries can't be part of an organization, such as the American Library Association (ALA), that requires you to have particular policies. Currently, ALA does not require libraries to have specific policies as that is the trustees' role. Accreditation standards require certain policies and the standards are set by the State of Iowa independent of ALA or other outside organizations.
  - Ms. Musil presented next. The Accreditation process requires an ADA review for one of four priorities: Approach and Entrance; Access to Goods and Services; Toilet Rooms; and Additional Access. Libraries are encouraged to use this information to remove barriers in their buildings. For this cycle, Ms. Musil completed the Toilet Rooms review – all spaces are accessible according to the guidelines. However, for the purposes of this report, she will instead on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) instead. WCAG was first introduced in 1999 to ensure web content is accessible. A recent update to the guidelines now includes websites and PDF content, requiring accessibility for screen readers. For library staff, this means updating documents on the website for compatibility. Ms. Musil showed examples of how the documents look on the back end to ensure they are tagged appropriately for the user and screen reader to navigate the document. Staff are working on the updates for PDFs going back through FY24 and then documenting the process. WCAG compatibility is another commitment the library makes in ensuring access to our materials, online content, programs, and spaces.
- Library Board Committee Reports
  - Advocacy Committee. Presented by Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
    - Ms. Hepworth reported. She noted there is no action but there has been a lot of legislative activity that impacts libraries. HS636, which limits school's partnerships with public libraries and book mobiles, passed in the House's Education Committee and will move on to the full House for debate. HF2270 was just introduced and would not allow libraries to adopt policies based on requirements from outside organizations. Ms. Hepworth reminded everyone of the Advocacy Toolkit on the library's website with tips and information on how to engage with elected officials as well as the Advocacy Alerts email. Ms. McNamara noted there are two other bills that the library is monitoring: SF2119 which would appeal the obscenity exemption that protects public libraries, accredited schools, and universities from prosecution from using certain materials; HF 2136 on library record confidentiality which would allow a parent or guardian to access a minor's

record upon request. Iowa Code currently prevents that. SF2177 is the newest and would require libraries and third-party vendors from accessing pornographic material. This is interesting because it assumes libraries and their vendors provide illegal materials.

- Ms. Schmidt noted that we've noticed that subcommittee assignments come late in the day, the day before. We're working closely with area libraries to get personal representation at these meetings. Ms. Hepworth noted that another benefit of the Advocacy Alerts is provided links for public comment to voice concerns on the bills. Looking at the digital comments, there is overwhelming support for libraries, access, and reading.
- Ms. Casey noted that HS636 would also impact students who use their school IDs as library cards and while we don't have it here, it will harm students in the state. In addition, the bill would impact some rural areas, as the school library is also the public library. Ms. Hart asked about the school IDs and library cards we previously had with the Cedar Rapids Community School District. We paused this partnership when school library collections were under attack by the legislation. That bill passed and is currently under litigation. At the time though, a conservative approach was to wait and see. However, Ms. Schmidt has been in conversations with the school district prior to HS636's introduction and there is interest now with an established leadership. Though we'll need to watch the outcome of this proposed bill before moving forward. The relationship with the schools have always been positive and collaborative.
- Building Committee. Presented by Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Hart provided an update on the Busse Branch. Interior finishes are really bringing the space to life. Drywall and painting are complete in all major areas, a majority of the drop ceiling has been installed, and the raised access floor will be done by mid-month. Most of the interior glass for spaces such as the office, meeting room entries, and study rooms are now in place.
  - The bathrooms will be completed this month as contractors install the final fixtures, such as toilets and sinks. Contractors plan to start placing carpet and finish concrete sealing for areas without tile and carpet.
  - Overhead garage doors – for both the garage and trash room – are now installed. Interior doors and hardware will arrive on-site this month and installation will begin.
  - The bid for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) has closed and the library is working with City Purchasing and the architect to ensure the bid submissions meet our needs. Contracts should be in place this month so furniture and shelving can be installed throughout March, April, and May as lead times allow.
  - Behind the scenes, library staff are working with the City to ensure we have utilities and services, such as fire and sprinkler contracts, insurance, and Solid Waste, setup for when we have occupancy. In addition, the IT team is developing their bid for new network equipment and computers for the branch.
- Finance Committee. Presented by Chris Casey, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Casey reported. We are six months into the fiscal year. At this time, expenditures are slightly over and revenues are slightly under due to some

expenses being posted in advance and revenues are bill a month behind. It is expected to even out as the year moves forward.

▪ **Action:** FY27 Budget

- Ms. Casey moved into reviewing the proposed FY27 budget. For Library Operations 151, Personal Services considers raises and steps as well as the annual refresh savings, which totals \$192,000 this year. The City takes a percentage off Personal Services to recoup money in transitions and open positions.
- Ladd Library's rent remains in the budget. However, after the lease is terminated, we will amend the budget to move the remaining dollars into Personal Services for increased staffing needs to support the new branch.
- After the Busse Branch opens, we won't need project management support anymore so the \$20,000 we previously paid to FMS will be removed.
- The library's request for \$100,000 in additional materials funding was approved. This will ensure permanent funding to support digital materials from operations (151) versus CIP 316. Materials funding will be split: \$100,000 will be in operations for digital materials and \$250,000 in CIP for physical materials only. This first year, we may spend more on the physical collection to expand our opening day collection at the Busse Branch.
- Our request for 1 FTE for a Patron Services Specialist was denied. However, with the library's previous restructuring plan, will ensure that the library opens with appropriate staffing.
- City Council has not yet approved this budget but it is being recommended from the City Manager and Finance Director for approval. The budget hearing is not yet scheduled.
- There are no significant changes to Library Grants 7010 and CIP 316, which shows the branch's construction and materials.

*The motion to approve the FY27 budget passed with unanimous approval.*

- Personnel and Policy Committee. Presented by Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - Director's Evaluation Quarterly Check-In.
    - Ms. McDermott reported. We had a quarterly check-in this past month for Ms. Schmidt's evaluation process. The results were similar with positive things to say during a challenging time for the library with the new library, budget constraints, and legislative impacts.
    - Ms. McDermott reminded everyone that they need to respond to the check-ins as it's one of the primary roles of a trustee to evaluate the director. We receive responses from most and she'd like responses from all.
- Library Director's Report
  - Ms. Schmidt reported. The project team – library, OPN, and City – are reviewing the Busse Branch's Discovery Garden quotes, as they came in higher than expected. We've been discussing, not only the logistics of that, (we are under in other places) but the timing aligned with continued conversations with the Parks department. We're looking very heavily into opportunities for more collaborative work for their phase 1 and our garden.

Can we save money? More details are in progress, should be able to report back in a month what the result looks like.

- Old Business
  - There being no old business, the meeting continued.
- New Business
  - There being no new business, the meeting continued.
- Adjournment
  - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library

TOP STORIES

# Bill aims to close library ‘loopholes’

Iowa House panel advances effort to bar partnerships between schools, libraries

By Maya Marchel Hoff, Gazette-Lee Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — Iowa public and charter schools would not be able to enter into agreements with public libraries providing students with access to books and other materials under a bill advanced by state lawmakers Wednesday.

The legislation, House Study Bill 636, was advanced by the Iowa House Education Committee, 14-9, on Wednesday evening, with Republican state Reps. Chad Ingels, of Randalia, and Thomas Moore, of Griswold, joining Democrats in voting against the bill.

A subcommittee had advanced the bill 2-1 along party lines earlier in the day.

The bill is the latest effort by Republicans in the Iowa Legislature to limit children’s access to content and materials they view as obscene.



Rep. Helena Hayes  
R-New Sharon

State Rep. Helena Hayes, a Republican from New Sharon, said she believes students should have access to books, but pointed to an Iowa law passed in 2023 that bans books with sexual content from public school libraries and said student access to public libraries goes against that legislation.

The 2023 law is the subject of ongoing litigation in federal court over arguments that it violates First Amendment free speech rights.

“The schools operate under certain standards of statutory



American Library Association President Sam Helmick, of Iowa City, testifies against legislation that would ban partnerships between public libraries and public schools during an Iowa House subcommittee meeting Wednesday in Des Moines. (Maya Marchel Hoff/Quad-City Times)

law. Any contracts that come into that should also comply with them,” Hayes said. “I think that’s pretty standard and respected.”

Republican Rep. Brooke Boden, of Indianola, who chaired the subcommittee, also signed on to advance the bill and said she has heard interest in the legislation from other members on the Iowa House Education Committee.

Currently, some school districts in Iowa partner with public libraries to help supplement their own facilities or to access additional educational materials. Along with banning these agreements, the legislation also would bar bookmobiles, or mobile libraries, from hosting events on public school property.

Thirteen people out of a large group of attendees testified during the 15-minute-long subcommittee. Eleven spoke against the bill and two spoke in support of it.

Multiple groups representing education advocacy organizations and school districts said prohibiting these partner-

ships would decrease student access to libraries in rural areas and reduce efficiencies created by shared facilities.

Linda Smithson, president of the Iowa Association of School Librarians and the library director for the Clinton Community School District, said the legislation would restrict access to books and libraries, as multiple schools across the state do not have their own libraries and use public ones.

She said her own school district uses this partnership. She also noted that between eight and 10 schools in rural Iowa house the communities’ public libraries.

“This bill would prohibit partnerships between schools and public libraries, partnerships that already work to reduce the barriers for our students,” Smithson said. “Transportation, internet access, family availability all affect whether our students can reach a public library.”

Christopher Rants, representing Des Moines Public Schools, said five schools in the district do not house their own libraries. Instead, the district partners with Des Moines Public Libraries to allow students in grades seven through 12 to use their student IDs as a library card, which parents are notified about.

He said this model aligns with the goals of the state’s Republican administration to increase government efficiency and asked lawmakers if the state would provide more funding or guidance if the bill is enacted.

“Des Moines Public Schools has listened to what we’ve been told by the state,” Rants said. “I hope the Legislature will give us some guidance or funding or something on what you

want us to do if you don’t want us to partner with the public libraries. We’re trying to be efficient and following state guidance, but we don’t have physical space for a library.”



Rep. Elinor Levin  
D-Iowa City

Democratic state Rep. Elinor Levin, of Iowa City, declined to sign off on advancing the bill, arguing that it would restrict students’ access to books.

“Why would we want students to have less access to books? Why would we not want to engage that excitement in reading?” Levin said.

## SUPPORTERS’ ARGUMENTS

Katherine Bogaards, representing Protect My Innocence, said the legislation was necessary to ensure minors are barred from accessing sexually explicit materials through public schools, calling the partnerships “loopholes.”

“Once again, Iowa is facing a situation where schools are enabling access to materials that have been shown to be harmful to minors,” Bogaards said.

Jeff Pitts, representing the Iowa Faith and Freedom Coalition, said he was able to find a book he characterized as “sexually explicit” on a shelf 2 feet off the ground at the Des Moines Public Library’s downtown branch earlier that day.

Last year, GOP lawmakers introduced legislation to prohibit sexually explicit material in public libraries by repealing a section of the Iowa Code that says the state’s obscenity laws don’t prohibit the use of “appropriate materials for educational purposes” in public libraries. The bill failed to make it to the governor’s desk.

# C.R. man sent back to prison for selling fentanyl

He sold drugs to undercover police

By Trish Mehaffey, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — A Cedar Rapids man, who was already on federal parole when he distributed fentanyl pills to undercover law enforcement, was sentenced this week to nearly four years in prison.

Gregg Morris McGee, 49, pleaded guilty Aug. 27 in U.S. District Court to one count of distribution of a controlled substance.

According to information at sentencing, McGee was convicted in 2015 and sentenced to 10 years of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a felon and three years of supervised release following his prison term.

On March 9, 2023, McGee was released from prison. His first term of supervised release was revoked in July 2023, and he was sentenced to 21 additional months in prison followed by one year of supervised release.

On Nov. 13, 2024, McGee was released from federal prison a second time, but in January 2025 he distributed 99 fentanyl pills to law enforcement officers. He then distributed 169 purported fentanyl pills to law enforcement officers in February 2025, but a lab analysis showed the pills didn’t contain any controlled substances.

Both these distribution incidents happened while McGee was on federal supervised release.

U.S. District Chief Judge C.J. Williams sentenced McGee to 46 months in prison and ordered him to serve three years of supervised release following his prison term.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Dillan Edwards and investigated by a Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force consisting of the DEA; Linn County Sheriff’s Office; Cedar Rapids and Marion police departments; and the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement.

Comments: (319) 398-8318; trish.mehaffey@thegazette.com

# Bill would create legal protections for black bears

Proponents of proposed legislation say protection of black bears could lead to establishment of hunting and trapping rules

By Olivia Cohen, The Gazette

Several times a year, Iowans report sightings of black bears in the state. Those animals would gain new protections under a bill that received unanimous support from a House subcommittee Wednesday.

The bill — HF 2099 — would make black bears a protected furbearer species and set fines for unlawfully killing a black bear. It was introduced by Republican Rep. Brian Lohse, of Bondurant.

There have been nine black bear sightings in Iowa since 2024, Lohse said during a House natural resources subcommittee meeting Wednesday, referencing data from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Black bear sightings have been rising, especially in northeast Iowa, where bears can cross into Iowa from Minnesota and Wisconsin.

“Black bears are not that far from Iowa’s border,” Vince Evelsizer, state furbearer and wetlands biologist with the DNR, said in a news release issued in April 2025. “We typically have two to five bear sightings each year, which we believe are usually younger males.”

Lohse said the idea for the bill came from his son’s desire to protect the bears so they can be hunted for recreation.

“The point of this bill is to provide them with protection, with a coming risk of bear population expanding ...,” he said. “And anecdotally, I would say part of the reason that my son would love to protect them is eventually, he would love to hunt them himself.”

With state protection, a black bear hunting “season” could eventually be created. Currently there are no harvest regulations for bears in Iowa because they are not recognized as wildlife species under Iowa’s hunting laws.

Current Iowa Code lists the following as “fur-bearing animals for the purpose of regulation and protection”: beaver, badger, mink, otter, muskrat, raccoon, skunk, opossum, spotted skunk or civet cat, weasel, coyote, bobcat, wolf, groundhog, red fox and gray fox.

The proposed bill includes a \$2,500 fine for someone who illegally takes a black bear.

Lohse said allowing black bear trapping and hunting in Iowa also could create tourism opportunities, drawing out-of-state hunters.

## MIXED REACTIONS

Preston Moore, Iowa state director for the nonprofit Humane

World for Animals, said the organization is apprehensive about some of the language in the proposed bill.

“Our biggest concern with this bill is that it’s being framed as a black bear protection bill,” Moore said. “Yes, it would protect black bears on the surface, but it would also open the door to the Natural Resource Commission establishing a trapping season against this species.”

Only two states — Maine and Alaska — currently allow black bear trapping.

Moore said trapping is widely illegal because it is “incredibly cruel and inhumane and incredibly unpopular with the general public.”

The Iowa Cattlemen’s Association also is opposed to the bill, and any legislation that protects bears in general.

“There are well documented cases of bears attacking livestock,” said Jake Swanson, a lobbyist for the association. “Certainly, you could appreciate our concern there as a group that raises cattle primarily, so for that reason we are registered opposed.”

Supporters of the bill include the Iowa Conservation Alliance. The organization’s lobbyist, Jim O’Brien, said the bill is the “first step” toward protecting black bears.

That “will allow our wildlife professionals at

## THE GAZETTE

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# INSIGHT

## The Gazette Editorial Board

Todd Dorman, Insight editor, columnist;  
Zack Kucharski, executive editor;  
Becky Lutgen Gardner, digital content manager

## Letters guidelines

Length limit: 250 words  
Email: editorial@thegazette.com  
Mail: 116 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
Questions?: (319) 398-8262

### THE GAZETTE'S EDITORIAL

# Banning school-library teamwork undercuts education

For dubious reasons, Republicans who control the Iowa House are pursuing a bill that would prohibit public and charter schools from entering into agreements with local public libraries to give students access to books and other materials.

Republicans who support the bill claim the agreements amount to a loophole in Iowa's law banning books with descriptions of sex from school libraries. So, apparently, we need another misguided law to enforce the lawmakers' original book ban blunder.

The bill, House Study Bill 636, was approved 14-9 by the House Education Committee. It was opposed by Democrats and two sensible Republicans, Reps. Chad Ingels, of Randalia, and Thomas Moore, of Griswold.

It would prevent schools from allowing bookmobiles to deliver materials to students. Schools would also be barred from entering into agreements with libraries, such as allowing students to use their school IDs as library cards.

"Once again, Iowa is facing a situation where schools are enabling access to materials that are harmful to minors," said Katherine Bogaards, representing Protect My Innocence, in support of the bill.

Cedar Rapids Public Library Director Dara Schmidt said the library has no formal partnership with local schools, although it regularly visits classrooms and school events. After the derecho, students could use IDs as a library card.

"I think it's ridiculous when headlines and legislators refer to this as the 'loophole bill.'" Schmidt said. "It's not a loophole for schools and libraries to work together."

The situation we're facing is how to inspire kids to read and ensure they have access to all sorts of books and other educational materials. This bill completely ignores the educational benefits of public library access and focuses on an imaginary threat concocted by culture warriors.

"Why would we want students to have less access to books? Why

would we not want to engage that excitement in reading?" said Democratic state Rep. Elinor Levin, of Iowa City.

It's a very good question. The bill also ignores the fact that many schools across Iowa lack libraries and rely on public libraries to fill that role. Also, as many as 10 school districts in Iowa house public libraries in school facilities to cover two needs at less cost.

Des Moines has five schools without library facilities, and has worked out an agreement to allow seventh through 12th-graders to use ID cards as library cards.

Is the Legislature really going to destroy these partnerships? Are lawmakers prepared to offer grants to build libraries at these schools?

This bill needs to go on the scrap heap. Drop the culture war crusade and get back to work dealing with real problems Iowans face.

Comments: (319) 398-8262; editorial@thegazette.com



**24-HOUR DORMAN**  
TODD DORMAN

## Reynolds can't stop kicking trans Iowans

Gov. Kim Reynolds may have introduced the perfect Republican legislative bill.

It yanks away more local control, which Republicans love to do, and further marginalizes a small group of Iowans who lack the political power to fight back. It's just the right mix of vindictive callousness without a hint of empathy.

You may remember last year the Legislature made American history by becoming the first state to remove a protected class — gender identity — from its Civil Rights Act. It was the capstone of Reynolds' ceaseless drive to make transgender people vanish.

It turns out that was not enough. Reynolds is floating a bill this year that would prohibit cities or counties from including gender identity in local civil rights protections. So, if you live in a city where leaders and residents feel strongly about protecting trans Iowans from discrimination, tough luck. You must conform to the demands of your red state overlords.

Communities would be barred from creating any civil rights protections beyond what's covered by state law. It strikes a provision in Iowa law allowing communities to offer civil rights protections beyond what state law protects.

Or here's an idea, leave trans Iowans alone.

God forbid a community would want to remain welcoming as it tries to attract people to move in or stay put, as well as recruiting companies bearing investments and jobs. Pulling in the welcome mat during a labor shortage is dumb.

But our state GOP leaders have repeatedly shown they want an Iowa populated only by white, straight, Christian conservatives. Diversity has become a dirty word, along with equity and inclusion. It's replaced by homogeneity, discrimination and exclusion.

According to numbers compiled by the Des Moines Register in December, 18 communities classify gender identity as a protected class. Cedar Rapids, Marion, Iowa City, Coralville and Johnson County are on the list. So are Council Bluffs, Fort Dodge, Bettendorf, Davenport and Decorah.

But somewhere along the line, Reynolds decided the existence of transgender people is among Iowa's biggest problems. She would personally put an end to it.

It started with prohibiting trans girls from playing in girls' sports, which is politically popular. But that was just a gateway drug for the governor, who went on to lead the charge for an array of draconian bills that rained shame down upon our fellow Iowans to protect us from manufactured fears. Reynolds is especially interested in making the lives of trans kids miserable.

In 2023, Reynolds said she met with the families of trans kids. "My heart goes out to them. I'm a parent, I'm a grandmother, I know how difficult this is."

Reynolds misspoke. She meant that her foot went out to them. She's been kicking around trans Iowans ever since.

But now that I think about it, this is not the perfect Republican legislative bill.

There's nothing in there about making our water dirtier, cutting rich guys' income taxes, underfunding public schools, punishing poor people or pledging undying allegiance to President Donald Trump.

Then it would be perfect. But don't give them any ideas.

(319) 398-8262; todd.dorman@thegazette.com

### COMMUNITY LETTERS

#### Three questions on Linn County landfill expansion

Regarding the possible expansion of the Linn County Solid Waste Facility:

1. Have we (as a society) still not figured out how to stop producing so much waste?
2. Is burying the stuff in Linn County still the best solution?
3. Whatever happened to the plan to incinerate it?

Richard Lensing  
Marion

#### Trading places might work

When I first heard about a state representative's idea to annex three counties in Illinois along the Iowa border due to their dissatisfaction with the state of Illinois, I was dumbfounded. However after thinking about it, I propose the following idea.

We could offer them Johnson, Linn and Polk counties. All based on past voting they are somewhat unhappy with the way the state is operating at this time. The positives would be eliminating three problem spots for



Clay Bennett is a syndicated cartoonist distributed by Tribune Content. Comments: tcaeditors@tribpub.com

the Republicans, the U of I could be the free thinking institution it needs to be, while offering three potential areas in Iowa where a women would have her choice restored. Negatives are a loss of 10 percent of Iowa popu-

lation and tax revenue. These would be no real concern, however, as the brain drain and the revenue deficit are not on their radar at this time.

Kevin Melsha  
Fairfax

### GUEST COLUMN | NORMAN SHERMAN

# Trump's legacy: Fear and loathing

The "good old days" when I was a kid growing up in Minnesota included an economic depression and a world war. We couldn't pay the rent and my brother died serving in the Navy when his plane crashed. Yet today, I think of those days as almost idyllic whenever I listen to Donald Trump and read what he has done to my Minnesota — to our Minnesota.

The old-fashioned ice man brought ice when we had ice boxes and not refrigerators. I am old enough to remember those days. But that chunk of ice made life better. Today, the ICE man cometh with bullets and racist nonsense in both words and actions. The result has been deadly.

The dramatic murder of two good citizens is horrifically visible on television and described in the papers. What is not easily visible is what caring citizens see and describe.

Here is what a Minnesotan who cares has written and which appeared in America, the Jesuit monthly magazine. She's a mother of five, she's a doctor — but more important, she's a

neighbor who cares.

"We are buying groceries for families who have not left the house in over a month because they fear being targeted by ICE. We are driving children to school because their bus stops are no longer safe. We are organizing patrols to stand outside day cares and schools, to make sure children and parents can get in and out safely. We are fundraising rent money for neighbors who can't go to work for fear of detainment or deportation. We are helping find midwives for pregnant women terrified to go to hospitals and finding nurses willing to check on elderly and disabled neighbors with serious conditions."

"Neighbors are organizing to help protect neighbors from the federal government. ICE agents are everywhere. The aura of fear is palpable ... Pregnant mothers are not going to their prenatal appointments because they are scared to leave their homes. This week I helped a mother find home birth resources because she is due to deliver any day now.

"My 7-year-old and I watched a man being pulled from his car at a red

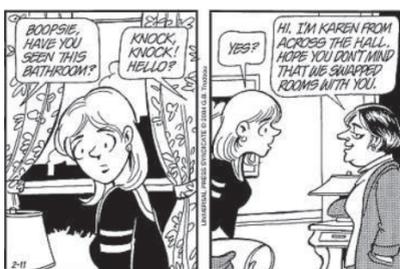
light. My daughter works at a restaurant, and it had to close because the owner fears for the safety of his staff. My kids' events are being canceled left and right because schools are afraid — basketball games, mock trial competitions, and even school fundraising events. The custodian at the Catholic Church attached to my children's school was deported after living here for 25 years."

I hope that Donald Trump, his enablers, and his minions will find an ounce of decency in their depraved souls to make this Minneapolis nightmare go away.

He is a curse on our society beyond Minnesota. He is a gaudy Midas with the wandering hands of a teenage boy. He insists on touching everything in sight. The Kennedy Center, Dulles Airport, Penn Station all targets of his ego. He wants his name on them all. I would throw in a sewage treatment plant in for balance.

Norman Sherman of Coralville has worked extensively in politics, including as Vice President Hubert Humphrey's press secretary, and authored a memoir "From Nowhere to Somewhere."

### DOONESBURY | GARRY TRUDEAU



### MALLARD FILLMORE | BRUCE TINSLEY



# IOWA TODAY



## WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

### Iowa farm animal sanctuary celebrates 10 years

What a decade means to the Iowa Farm Sanctuary in the top pork-producing state

By Elijah Decious, The Gazette

OXFORD — When Shawn and Jered Camp started Iowa's first animal farm sanctuary in rural Johnson County, it was a "moo moo here" and an "oink oink there."

All of it started when Shawn, a former restaurant manager, and Jered, a former 4-H'er who grew up around farm animals, wanted to do something more to help a cause they cared about.

In just a decade, the vegan couple has grown the Iowa Farm Sanctuary from a 10-acre field to a 40-acre pasture that's home to more than 150 animals of all types and sizes today.

There, they care for residents, educate visitors about some of the realities of meat production, and host programs like LEAP (Leaders for Ethics, Animals, and the Planet,) an alternative to 4-H for children who want to raise animals.

Shawn Camp, executive director and cofounder of Iowa Farm Sanctuary, spoke with The Gazette about the progress of animal welfare in Iowa, how to further advance humane treatment of farm animals and the significance of the vegan organization's 10-year milestone in America's top pork-producing state.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

**Q.** Tell me how you get into this — what prompted Iowa Farm Sanctuary?

**A.** Jered and I, we were living in a new construction home in North Liberty, both working regular day jobs and had become passionate vegans. As we were transitioning to a vegan lifestyle, we decided that we wanted to volunteer at a farm animal rescue. It seemed like we could be doing more with vegan activism.

So we started to look around to see where we could potentially volunteer and get to interact with rescued farmed animals, and there was not a sanctuary in the state of Iowa.

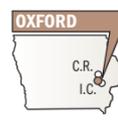
We were both so young and driven that we're like, "Well, we can do that." I wasn't in love with the work I was doing, and Jered had a background caring for farmed animals, and so we just kind of started that way.

We got our nonprofit status, 501(c) 3, and started looking for a small acreage, and that's kind of how it all started.

We got the ball rolling back in 2015 and rescued our first animals (in) July 2016.

**Q.** How many animals are in your care, and what types of places do they come from?

► SANCTUARY, PAGE 3C



## IOWA LIBRARIES TURN TO ADVOCACY

Libraries turning to individual and collective action to advocate for continued materials access

By Grace Nieland, The Gazette

**C**EDAR RAPIDS — When Dara Schmidt entered her library science program in 2005, she thought she knew what to expect of the field.

Schmidt, now the director of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, went in ready to learn about how information is processed, preserved and distributed, and she graduated with the goal of using that knowledge to serve her community.

What she didn't expect is also having to learn how to defend her profession from regular attacks at the state and federal level.

"If you had told me 20 years ago ... that it would be a significant part of my job to have to argue for the very existence of a public library in 2026, I would have thought you were crazy," Schmidt said. "I thought we did this already, but here we are."



Cedar Rapids Library Director Dara Schmidt speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Westside Library on Oct. 18, 2024, in southwest Cedar Rapids. TOP: A woman is framed through an O in Iowa as she visits the Cedar Rapids Public Library on April 4, 2025, in southeast Cedar Rapids. In recent years, Iowa libraries have come under increased legislative scrutiny — pushing many to turn to advocacy. (Jim Slosiarek photos/The Gazette)

Iowa libraries have become something of a legislative lightning rod in recent years with a slew of proposals coming out each session that could affect library operations across the state, if not the country.

The change has pushed many librarians to merge their traditional role as

educators and public servants with that of advocates working to protect continued community access to information and imagination.

### LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, RHETORIC ON THE RISE

Iowa Library Association President Brittany Jacobs said legislative

scrutiny around library operations seemed to really pick up steam within the last three or four years. The focus started on school libraries, she said, before extending to the field more broadly.

The proposals were one thing, she said, but what

► LIBRARIES, PAGE 4C

If you had told me 20 years ago ... that it would be a significant part of my job to have to argue for the very existence of a public library in 2026, I would have thought you were crazy.

Dara Schmidt, Cedar Rapids Public Library director

## IOWA PROFILE

### Dance Marathon volunteer pulls from experience as cancer sibling

'We were writing cards to siblings ... That was a huge deal to me'

By Vanessa Miller, The Gazette

IOWA CITY — As family liaison director for the University of Iowa Dance Marathon student organization — which over its

31 years has raised more than \$39 million "for the kids" — Amelia Earley has become good at listening.

Now a 21-year-old UI senior, Earley meets the families where they are — both literally and emotionally — at low moments in hospital hallways or celebrating at trampoline parks, zoos,

or the annual Big Event, which earlier this month raised another \$1.69 million.

"Every dancer has a story," Earley said. "Every family obviously has a story. Every staff member on Level 11 has a story. Everybody has a story, and Dance Marathon is part of it for

everyone involved."

Of course, Earley has a story too. And while she doesn't mention it or talk about herself when connecting with the families she serves, she pulls from it a level of understanding and empathy developed over her formative years

► EARLEY, PAGE 2C



Amelia Earley, a University of Iowa human physiology major on the pre-med track, is the family liaison director for UI Dance Marathon. (Contributed)

# Libraries/Legislative scrutiny rises

► FROM PAGE 1C

stuck out most was the hostility and “vitriol” that seemed to accompany them.

“It used to be a given that libraries are good,” said Jacobs, who also serves as director of the Burlington Public Li-



**Brittany Jacobs**  
Director of the Burlington Public Library

brary. “So to see the Legislature turn around and introduce bills that call us out and demonize libraries was shocking to say the least.”

For example, several state-level proposals have revolved around the kinds of library materials accessible to children and teens.

That includes the 2023 passage of Senate File 496, a state law that requires school libraries to contain only “age-appropriate” materials without any descriptions or visual depictions of sex acts or other harmful material.

The law drew swift legal challenges over its relatively broad nature, supersession of local control and alleged failure to consider the age of the reader and holistic literary value, and large portions of it remain blocked by a court injunction.

Still, state lawmakers have forged ahead this year with attempts to enact similar restrictions in public libraries through proposals such as House File 2309, which passed through a subcommittee late last week.

Proponents of both bills say they revolve around the protection of children and teens and the strengthening of parental control over what kinds of content children are allowed and able to readily consume.

But some Iowa libraries say the bill presents a “solution looking for a problem” and that it implies librarians are actively pushing sexually explicit books or other kinds of harmful content onto young readers — which has bled over into how some people view the field more broadly.

Schmidt recalled attending a committee hearing at the Statehouse last year, for example, where another attendee called her a “pedophile” for questioning the logistics of a proposed law



Book shelfer Loraine Bennett returns books to the correct locations April 4, 2025, at the Cedar Rapids Public Library in southeast Cedar Rapids. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)



American Library Association President Sam Helmick, who also is the community and access services coordinator at the Iowa City Public Library, testifies Feb. 4 against legislation that would ban partnerships between public libraries and public schools in Iowa during an Iowa House subcommittee hearing. (Maya Marchel Hoff/Quad-City Times)

around materials access for children. “They had no evidence for that, and it’s absolutely not true. But there’s this jargon around the profession now,” Schmidt said. “We just want to help people, but in certain circles ‘librarian’ is a bad word right now.”

## PROPOSALS SPARK INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE ACTION AT LOCAL LEVEL

Jacobs said that shift in public discourse has pushed many libraries to identify ways to tell their own stories in an effort to present an accurate depiction of library operations and advocate for continued materials access.

Some libraries have taken a direct approach to doing so through in-

dividual or collective action at the local level, although Jacobs noted not all libraries have the capacity or staffing to do so.

In those instances, libraries can lean on groups such as the Iowa Library Association or the American Library Association who frequently visit the state Capitol during legislative sessions to speak on bills related to library operations.

“I think we have more librarians and library champions engaged in the legislative process now than we have in a very long time, if ever,” Jacobs said. “That’s the silver lining of all this.”

Joa LaVille, a youth services manager at the Marshalltown Public Library, recently took the direct approach toward

that work in writing to state legislators in opposition to House Study Bill 636.

The bill, which has since moved through a House subcommittee, would bar Iowa’s public and charter schools from entering into certain agreements or partnerships with public libraries — ostensibly to prevent students from accessing books at public libraries that would not be allowed in school libraries.

In her statement, LaVille stated the bill would be detrimental to the various library-school partnerships that have served Marshalltown students for decades.

“These partnerships maximize taxpayer investments by giving all children and their families the opportunity to utilize resources for information, improve literacy, and have a positive impact on reading achievement,” she wrote. “This is an important way to level the playing field for all.”

Those partnerships range anywhere from the library’s distribution of storytime kits to area preschools all the way up to a library-led book club for high school students.

The Marshalltown Public Library also partners with the local school district to offer its EMERGE program through which all sixth-

graders from the nearby Lenihan Intermediate School, with parental permission, can participate in monthly field trips to the library.

LaVille said those and other partnerships are not always broadly known or recognized, but they serve an important role in the community.

“Libraries get taken for granted sometimes, and it’s maybe kind of a ‘You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone’ sort of thing,” she said. “Librarians are not very good at bragging about what we do ... but maybe we should be.”

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS KEY

Some Iowa libraries also are pushing for more community engagement to complement staff members’ advocacy efforts.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library, for example, has designed an “advocacy toolkit” that it makes available to residents interested in learning more about the intersection of library operations and the lawmaking process.

The annual toolkit includes the basics about how a bill becomes a law, lists contact information for local legislators and outlines tips on how to have a conversation with someone you disagree with.

The library also keeps a running list on its website of active propos-

als that could affect the library, where they’re at in the legislative process and how to provide feedback to lawmakers.

Cedar Rapids Public Library Community Relations Manager Amber McNamara said the kit is meant to be educational, but not prescriptive. It doesn’t tell users how to feel about a certain proposal or provide canned feedback.

Users could just as easily use the kit to argue in favor of a certain bill as they could to argue in opposition.

“Libraries are good at taking information around a subject that can be overly complicated or hard to understand and working to synthesize it in a way that community members can take it in and do something about it,” McNamara said. “So this seemed like a natural thing for the library to provide.”

Cedar Rapids library staff presented the toolkit at an American Library Association conference last year, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive with libraries across the country reaching out to learn about how similar measures could be implemented.

The library’s board of trustees also has its own advocacy committee.



**Elisabeth Hepworth**  
Cedar Rapids Public Library board of trustee member

Volunteer trustee Elisabeth Hepworth currently chairs that group and said the goal is to educate residents on the basics of advocacy and the operations

of libraries and local/state government more broadly. The committee has collaborated on the advocacy toolkit over the years, as well as more broadly discussed how to highlight the library’s existing community partnership and impact.

“The crux of what a library represents is a resource hub,” Hepworth said. “So the intent behind our advocacy efforts has really been about how to funnel that into a constructive, thought-provoking way that equips people they need with the tools to advocate effectively.”

Comments: grace.nieland@thegazette.com

## YOUR EASTERN IOWA WEATHER

**CEDAR RAPIDS/IOWA CITY** Highs are for today; lows are for tonight

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	MOON PHASE
Mostly Sunny Wind: NW 5-15 <b>CEDAR RAPIDS</b> High 59 / Low 37 <b>IOWA CITY</b> High 61 / Low 38	Partly Cloudy Wind: SW 10-20 <b>CEDAR RAPIDS</b> High 64 / Low 40 <b>IOWA CITY</b> High 64 / Low 43	Slight Chance of Showers ... Wind: SE 20-30+ <b>CEDAR RAPIDS</b> High 61 / Low 47 <b>IOWA CITY</b> High 64 / Low 50	Mostly Sunny, Windy Wind: NW 20-30+ <b>CEDAR RAPIDS</b> High 59 / Low 29 <b>IOWA CITY</b> High 64 / Low 35	<b>RISE</b> 6:45 a.m. <b>SET</b> 4:58 p.m.

CEDAR RAPIDS		DAYLIGHT	
Normal high/low	32/15	Sunset tonight	5:40 p.m.
Record high	73 in 1921	Sunrise tomorrow	7:01 a.m.
Record low	-19 in 1905	Today's daylight	10 hrs. 37 min.
High/low temp Saturday	55/25	IOWA CITY	
24-hour high Friday	57	Normal high/low	32/15
24-hour low Friday	24	High/low temp Saturday	53/23
Total precipitation for February	Trace	24-hour high Friday	57
Normal precipitation for February	1.22"	24-hour low Friday	20
Normal precipitation through February	2.32"	Total precipitation for February	Trace
Total precipitation for 2026	0.60"	Total precipitation for 2026	0.61"
(Precipitation totals at The Eastern Iowa Airport)		(Precipitation totals at Iowa City Municipal Airport)	

## RIVER LEVELS IN EASTERN IOWA

CEDAR RIVER		MISSISSIPPI RIVER	
Waterloo (13)	6.01 steady	La Crosse (12)	4.96 falling
Cedar Rapids (12)	6.41 falling	Lansing (17)	7.88 steady
Conesville (13)	7.76 falling	McGregor (16)	7.92 falling
<b>IOWA RIVER</b>		Guttenberg (15)	5.87 rising
Marshalltown (19)	11.39 falling	Dubuque (17)	8.10 steady
Belle Plaine (15)	8.37 falling	Bellevue (17)	5.81 rising
Marengo (15)	8.42 rising	Quad Cities (15)	4.64 falling
Iowa City (24)	10.54 steady	Muscatine (16)	6.21 falling
<b>WAPSIPINICON RIVER</b>		<b>CORALVILLE POOL</b>	
Independence (12)	5.04 rising	Above sea level	683.40 steady
Anamosa (15)	5.79 rising		

**TOP WEATHER STORY** Highlights from history, trivia and events in weather

### Tropical Cyclone Gezani

A tropical cyclone has hit Madagascar’s main port city with high winds and heavy rain, causing devastation on the island. Tropical Cyclone Gezani made landfall near the Toamasina port Tuesday night as a Category 2. Housing collapses have caused the deaths of at least 31 people and have left more than 6,000 people displaced. The president of Madagascar has said that 75 percent of the city’s infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed. Residents have been without power since Tuesday. Madagascar is especially vulnerable to storms off the Indian Ocean and is also still recovering from another deadly tropical cyclone that moved through two weeks earlier. It has been hit by more than a dozen tropical storms since 2020.

— Meteorologist Camille Dinka

For up-to-date weather info, visit [www.kcrg.com/weather](http://www.kcrg.com/weather)

## IOWA CLIMATE/SATURDAY

EASTERN IOWA	Waterloo	59/22/none
Anamosa	Williamsburg	53/23/none
Davenport		
Decorah		
Dubuque		
Independence		
Manchester		
Monticello		
Muscatine		
Tama		
Washington		
ACROSS THE STATE		
Ames	64/24/none	
Council Bluffs	61/43/none	
Des Moines	61/32/none	
Fort Dodge	63/27/none	
Mason City	57/26/none	
Ottumwa	53/27/none	
Sioux City	64/31/none	

## TRAVELERS' WEATHER

Atlanta	61/49/sh
Boston	31/24/sun
Chicago	56/36/sun
Cincinnati	50/34/m
Cleveland	47/31/pc
Dallas	67/47/cd
Denver	67/34/pc
Detroit	43/29/cd
Honolulu	79/68/sh
Houston	73/53/pc
Indianapolis	53/36/m
Kansas City	61/43/pc
Las Vegas	68/49/cd
Los Angeles	67/52/cd
Memphis	59/46/sh
Milwaukee	48/32/sun
Minneapolis	49/37/pc
Nashville	59/42/m
New Orleans	74/55/sh
New York	39/31/cd
Omaha	65/41/sun
Orlando	83/63/sh
Philadelphia	42/31/m
Phoenix	79/56/pc
Portland, Ore.	52/36/cd
Raleigh/Durham	54/44/m
St. Louis	56/38/cd
Salt Lake City	57/39/cd
San Francisco	60/50/sh
Seattle	45/33/cd
Sioux Falls	63/35/pc
Tampa	78/63/sh
Washington, D.C.	45/37/m

sun=sunny, pc=partly cloudy, cd=cloudy, sh=showers, ts=t-thunderstorms, m=rain, sf=snow flurries, sn=snow

# INSIGHT



A woman clutches a U.S. flag July 3, 2025, as she prepares to take the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony in San Antonio. (Associated Press)



**24-HOUR DORMAN**  
TODD DORMAN

## Republican bills are a warning for public libraries

Some cleared the funnel, some did not. But the threat to libraries isn't going away

Our public libraries ooze democracy. We espouse a lot of grand ideals about the need for an informed citizenry, the importance of education, the value of free speech and expression and the promise of equality. And public libraries in more than 500 Iowa towns, big and small, are fulfilling them all.

We could go down the list of all the ways libraries serve us, guide us and teach us. But you already know they're far more than stacks of books.

We also know that if Republicans who control the Statehouse can't seize control of an important Iowa institution, such as libraries, they'll seek to restrict its mission, undermine its work and subject it to an old-fashioned political flogging.

Public schools, state universities, civil rights laws and local governments are among the many victims of reckless overreach.

So far in 2026, libraries have faced the prospect of joining that list.

Some bills targeting public libraries that made headlines survived the legislative funnel deadline this past week. Some didn't make the cut.

But no proposal is truly dead until lawmakers end the session this spring. It's common for "dead" bills to rise again, especially in a session's final hours. And if, as expected, Republicans keep control of the Legislature, there's always next year. Many bills that once seemed like long shots eventually become law.

One bill still alive is House Study Bill 720, which would disrupt funding to libraries that fail to enforce rules keeping kids from accessing any books or materials deemed inappropriate, mainly books describing a "sex act." Public libraries could face the same book banning barrage as school libraries.

The bill would hand oversight of libraries over to city councils. They would have the final say in disputes over appropriate content. What could go wrong?

House Study Bill 636 also survived. It would prohibit public schools from forging partnerships with public libraries to provide materials for students. The library might try to slip some banned books into its book mobile. It's all

► **DORMAN, PAGE 8C**

**GUEST COLUMN | ED TIBBETTS**

# BORN IN THE USA

## A moral defense of birthright citizenship

Soon, the U.S. Supreme Court will consider the four-decade-long crusade to overturn a long-held consensus of U.S. law: The idea that people born in this country, simply by virtue of their birth here, are American citizens.

Birthright citizenship centers on the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which reads:

*All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.*

This right does not extend to the children of foreign diplomats and, for far too long, Native Americans were not considered citizens. But for the better part of 160 years, the straightforward proposition as stated in the sentence cited above has been accepted to mean what it says.

Unfortunately, since the 1980s, right-wing lawyers and politicians have been aggressive in their attempts to undermine this U.S. legal constant by suggesting the qualifier,

"subject to the jurisdiction thereof," ought to exclude the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants. And in an executive order Donald Trump is pursuing the idea our long-held and common understanding is, in fact, wrong.

As a historical matter, I believe the most succinct argument in favor of the traditional interpretation of the Citizenship Clause centers on how members of Congress at the time of its adoption responded to concerns that U.S. citizenship would be extended to the children of Chinese who were living in the U.S. and, especially, to so-called "Gypsies."

In 19th-century America, the Roma, or "Gypsies" as they were uncharitably called, were the closest equivalent to today's illegal immigrant, a category that didn't exist at the time, according to legal scholar Garrett Epps, who wrote an authoritative legislative history of the Citizenship Clause.

They were reviled in certain quarters, even as there were doubts they were even present here. One lawmaker at the time characterized them as itinerants who "wander in gangs" and "settle as trespassers." Had there been a Fox News back then, the Roma would certainly

have been a favorite target.

Yet, during the debate over the Citizenship Clause, it was made clear citizenship should be given to the U.S.-born children of Chinese immigrants and the Roma. U.S. Sen. John Conness, of California, a naturalized citizen himself, affirmed the idea "the children of all parentage whatever, born in California, should be regarded and treated as citizens of the United States."

This view echoed the opinion given earlier the same year by Sen. Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, who responded "undoubtedly" when asked whether the 1866 Civil Rights Act, which he had drafted would consider the children of the Chinese and Roma citizens.

Three decades later, an 1898 U.S. Supreme Court decision confirmed what has become our long-held understanding of birthright citizenship.

Critics of the traditional interpretation of citizenship, however, have sought to pry apart this understanding. And over the past 40-some years, they have made labyrinthine arguments that seek to distort the plain text of the 14th Amendment and the Citizenship Clause's history.

► **TIBBETTS, PAGE 8C**



**TO A CANDID WORLD | ALTHEA COLE**

## Is Randy Feenstra finally courting Republican voters?

The presumed front-runner for the Republican nomination for Iowa governor appears finally ready to meet grassroots conservatives where they are. Congressman Randy Feenstra appeared at the Feb. 17 monthly gathering for MAGA Nation, a conservative group formed last year to maintain the energy behind President Donald Trump's 2024 win.

With more name recognition and money in the till than the other four GOP can-

didates, Feenstra's campaign strategy to date seems to have been to bypass county parties and grassroots groups such as MAGA Nation and quietly coast to the nomination on relative name recognition, supplemented with paid ads.

I drove two hours to West Des Moines to see if the Randy Feenstra at the splashy MAGA Nation event was the same Randy Feenstra I met two months ago at a barely publicized, sparsely attended Dec. 19 stop in Cedar Rapids that

was organized by his campaign.

### RECAP: 'YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE'

Taken aback by the anemic performance I had just witnessed at from the presumed front-runner whose lackluster effort had already caught the ire of many Republicans, I shook Feenstra's hand at his Dec. 19 campaign stop and quietly told him that he will lose the election.

As I mentioned in the column I wrote the following week, I also told the good congressman, who politely listened as I told him why he would lose, that he should tell me so to my face at his inaugural gala in 2027 if I end up being wrong. I'll happily eat humble pie if he stops Rob Sand from buying the governorship with his rich wife's money and his humble boy-next-door act.

"I'll remember this conversation," was Feenstra's reply.

The next time we crossed paths was at Tuesday's event, minutes before it was to start. This time, our interaction was a bit briefer.

"Hi, I'm Randy Feenstra," he said with a smile as he extended his hand.

"We've met," I replied with my own smile. And that was the extent of it.

To be fair, it's hard to recall every name and face and conversation when there are

► **COLE, PAGE 8C**

# Tibbetts/This is shameful

► FROM PAGE 5C

However, their efforts to redefine this phrase fall short. As John Yoo and Robert Delahunty, two prominent legal scholars, wrote in a recent issue of National Affairs: ‘Aliens within the territory of the United States are, and always have been, ‘subject to [its] jurisdiction’ because they have a right to enjoy its protection and a reciprocal duty to obey its laws.’

That said, I don’t mean this to be an exploration of the legal and historical arguments over the Citizenship Clause. As offensive as it is to see the Trump administration and its right-wing allies try to unravel the Constitution, it is equally insulting, if not more so, to watch them try to dehumanize innocent children in this quest.

There is no greater evidence of this pursuit than the foul term, ‘anchor babies,’ which has been used for years to try to convince Americans these precious children aren’t human, let alone citizens, but objects to be scorned.

They are given no intrinsic worth or sympathy; in this view, they are simply products of their ‘illegal’ parents’ corrupt schemes — contrivances enabling their families to root themselves here in order to steal taxpayer-funded benefits from ‘real U.S. citizens.’ This in spite of the fact that several analyses, including a recent study by the libertarian Cato Institute, demonstrate that immigrants provide more benefits to the U.S. than extract in costs.

This analysis extends to undocumented immigrants.

Still, the assault continues. It is abhorrent to watch these so-called conservatives, who in other contexts say they revere children, nonetheless characterize these particular children as illegitimate commodities.

‘To punish babies, much less to proscribe and entirely outlaw them, because of the perceived sins of their parents is alien to our moral and ethical tradition,’ Epps wrote. ‘Guilt is not hereditary; it is individual.’ He quotes the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel: ‘The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.’

In Iowa, there is no better example of the violation of this moral and ethical tradition than the brief in support of the Trump administration filed by Attorney General Brenna Bird and several other Republican-led states.

Throughout the brief, these innocent children are not considered for their humanity. They aren’t thought of as miracles with God-given potential. They are demeaned as mere tools of corruption.

The brief cites another right-wing trope, ‘birth tourism,’ to overstate the number of children who are born to undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Then, it connects these children to their parents’ ‘criminal activity’ by cherry-picking news media

reports and ignoring the findings of numerous studies that debunk the idea migrants commit more crimes, or even as many, as U.S.-born Americans.

In a section purporting to catalog the annual cost of undocumented immigrants, Bird alleges that in Iowa, ‘the cost of illegal immigration has been more than a hundred million dollars for decades.’

She invents this claim by misusing a nearly 20-year-old study from the Iowa Legislature. The report itself has notable limitations. It calculates the annual cost of undocumented immigrants by assuming they receive the same level of benefits from the state budget as legal residents. They do not. Undocumented immigrants don’t get access to most government programs. However, the bigger sin is Bird’s disregard for the study’s own acknowledgment that undocumented migrants also *pay taxes in this state*.

Bird conveniently ignores this plain fact insofar as Iowa is concerned. Undocumented immigrants are simply portrayed as a financial drain. (The brief does make a glancing reference to immigrant tax payments elsewhere, but it effectively dismisses their contribution.)

This view is not surprising; it is fully in keeping with the practice of disregarding and dehumanizing people who are in the U.S. without documentation, including the citizen children they bring into the world.

We have seen how the Trump administration and its allies seek to portray immigrants as dangerous, even ‘deranged,’ criminals in their quest to build public support for cruelly rounding up families and banishing them, often to unsafe countries with which they have no connection.

Americans should know better than to buy this con.

Fewer than 14 percent of the immigrants the Trump administration arrested last year had violent criminal records.

This is why you see protests all over this country. It is not that protesters don’t care about the law. They simply believe in applying the law humanely. They know migrant families have, in many cases, fled dangerous countries and are here to make a better life for themselves and their children. In some cases, they have been invited to seek refuge here.

Americans who oppose Trump’s mass deportation scheme, along with the violence that has become a central part in carrying it out, see the faces of these migrants. They recognize their humanity. Trump does not. He and his allies, like Stephen Miller and Krisi Noem, don’t want Americans to see their faces, either. Which is why they seek to rob these migrants and their children of their human dignity.

## A SAD LEGACY

Reginald Oh, a law professor at Cleveland State University, wrote a few years ago, ‘dehumanization is still a central part of the racial dis-

crimination that African Americans and other racial groups experience today. When we look for it, we can see dehumanization virtually everywhere.’

It runs through our history. Slavery was dehumanization, Oh writes. So, too, he says was Jim Crow segregation and the ban on interracial marriage.

It also is present in our immigration debates today. Clearly.

Republican political leaders in Iowa, just like Trump, would rather the people of this state not credit immigrants and their children with their humanity.

This is shameful.

There have been several occasions throughout Iowa’s history that this state has been at the forefront of progress for civil rights in the US. In the courts, in the Legislature and through its people, the cause of equal opportunity is a part of our common heritage; however, the present-day Republican leadership in Iowa is putting this state on the opposite side of its best historical traditions.

In this case, they seek not only to strip children of their right to citizenship, but their humanity, too.

I realize the question of birthright citizenship is mostly seen as a legal and historical matter. And as I have noted, the law and U.S. history are on the side of our long-held practice of recognizing citizenship for all who are born here. But, outside the debates of lawyers and historians, there is a more central question for all of us.

Who are we as a nation? Are we a people who would cast out innocent children?

I don’t think this is what most Iowans, or Americans, really want.

Our history is full of people, of patriots, who have rejected the dehumanization tactics of those who would oppress others. They, and we, have not always been successful in this effort. And at times it has taken far longer than it should have to bestow the dignity owed to all people. But I believe the history of the U.S. since its founding is one of progress; of striving to fulfill our most worthy ideals.

As the writer George Cassidy Payne wrote on Common Dreams a year ago:

‘The 14th Amendment, ratified in the ashes of the Civil War, was nothing short of revolutionary. It sought to upend centuries of exclusion and injustice by affirming a profound truth: that citizenship is not a privilege of the few but a birthright for all born within the nation’s borders. It declared that neither the color of one’s skin nor the circumstances of one’s birth could define one’s place in society.’

There is, and should be, a place for every child born in the U.S. They are human. They belong. They are, in fact and by right, citizens.

To say otherwise is to defy the U.S. Constitution, our history and who we aspire to be as Americans.

Ed Tibbetts’ work can be found at Along the Mississippi, which is part of the Iowa Writers Collaborative.

# Dorman/What are we going to do about it?

► FROM PAGE 5C

part of the plot to corrupt our children. You can read all about it in the fiction section.

Two other bills missed the funnel deadline but could make a comeback.

One is Senate File 2119, which would scrap exemptions to Iowa’s obscenity law for public libraries. Then, mad moms who oppose liberty can sue libraries over books they’ve decided are “obscene” in their minds, but not in state law.

Also dead, or just sleeping, is House File 2309, which would create a criminal statute prohibiting libraries from distributing “material harmful to minors.” It also permits parents to sue if they believe the law has been violated.

It looks like this tumult is all about sex, which seems to be an obsession under the Golden Dome of Wisdom, now redder than the scarlet A on Hester Prynne’s chest.

No law or right is safe if Republicans can envision a scenario in their narrow minds where porn falls into the hands of third-graders. Never mind how implausible it is or what damage will be done by avoiding it at all costs. Besides, it’s good politics.

But the funny thing is, this whole war on books got revved up in Iowa after LGBTQ people became increasingly accepted in our society. Old laws and attitudes were fading away. Christian Conservatives didn’t have an easy target.

And some LGBTQ people had the audacity to write books about their experiences living with fear and discrimination.

Same with Black authors tackling racism and police brutality. Books were written by all sorts of authors who tell heartrending stories about sexual assault, school shootings and other real-life traumas, tragedies and entrenched injustices.

It seems like the more literature deviated from the world view pushed by conservative Republicans, the more intense their efforts to ban books and lessons became. Teachers in Iowa can’t even mention the existence of LGBTQ Americans to students, maybe all the way through high school if Republicans get their way.

One person’s “loss of innocence,” is another person’s broader understanding of the world as it exists far away from the nearest Pizza Ranch.

Meanwhile, the rest of us must decide what sort of state we want to live in.

Are we going to allow Moms for Liberty, now with no liberty, to call the shots? Do we want crusading Christian conservatives to intimidate librarians into avoiding any books that might offend their delicate sensibilities? Are we going to allow politicians to turn baseless fear into more political power? What are we going to do about it?

All we’ve got are those principles and ideals we’re supposed to revere and defend as Americans. They are not negotiable. We can make that clear in November.

Still not sure? Go to a public library and figure it out.

Comments: (319) 398-8262; todd.dorman@thegazette.com

# Cole/Feenstra is starting to show up to face tough audiences

► FROM PAGE 5C

over 776,000 Republican voters to court. Perhaps I’m not the only outspoken blonde who told the supposed GOP front-runner to his face that he’s going to lose.

## ABSENCE BEGETS CRITICISM

Feenstra did at the MAGA Nation gathering exactly what was expected: he faced a tougher audience than he was accustomed to. He took their questions and (mostly) answered them — and he did it with more energy and intensity than I have seen from him previously.

But it seemed somewhat a projection of the criticism he has been fending off from people in his own party for months now.

Feenstra has earned that criticism. He’s ducked some notable events, such as the sold-out Jan. 27 primary debate organized by conservative group Moms for Liberty that was moderated by popular WHO Radio host Simon Conway. The debate had been scheduled for the evening of Jan. 27 — the same day as President Donald Trump’s recent visit to Iowa. Feenstra caught a ride to town with Trump on Air Force One.

Instead of traveling 10 miles that evening to participate

in the most widely broadcast GOP primary debate to date, Feenstra caught another ride back to Washington, D.C.

‘And the very next day you turned around and came right back (to Iowa) again,’ Conway told Feenstra during a Feb. 16 radio interview. ‘Why didn’t you just come to the debate?’

Feenstra said that flying back to D.C. on Air Force One gave him an opportunity to spend a couple hours with Trump.

‘To me, it was just so valuable to be with the President talking about our state and how we can get it to grow,’ he said.

It also gave him two hours to pitch the president for an endorsement, which Feenstra confirmed he is actively seeking.

## NO DEBATES UNTIL PRIMARY OPPONENTS CONFIRMED

Speaking with the media after the MAGA Nation event wrapped, Feenstra attributed his absence from debates to the candidate filing period, saying that until the March 13 filing deadline, ‘we don’t even know who’s gonna be in the race.’

When I asked him if he expected any other candidates to file, he said he had ‘no idea’ and didn’t answer a follow-up

question about whether additional primary challengers would affect his campaign strategy.

By putting so much emphasis on knowing who the other Republican candidates are, Feenstra seems to acknowledge that getting past the June primary isn’t a slam dunk.

And it may not be. Without Trump’s backing, Feenstra is reduced to assuring Trump loyalists that he is ‘working on’ getting the President’s blessing and ‘earning it every day.’ Meanwhile, some of those same loyalists have actively urged the President to withhold his backing in the governor’s race. To date it is the only major race in Iowa in which Trump has not made an endorsement.

Feenstra is also missing the endorsement of influential conservative evangelical leader Bob Vander Plaats — who made waves in 2020 when he endorsed Feenstra for Congress over then-incumbent Steve King. Vander Plaats announced earlier this month that he was backing Adam Steen, the former head of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services who launched his campaign in August.

‘I believe you cannot win the governorship without motivating your base,’ Vander Plaats told media personality

Steve Deace, who also endorsed Steen. ‘And Congressman Feenstra has just been inept at motivating the base, whether it’s his campaign or whether it’s his or a combination of both.’

If Steen continues to gain steam or if any of the other candidates blossom, securing enough votes in the June primary could be a challenge. If no candidate receives a minimum 35 percent, the nominee will be chosen by state convention delegates — typically those who attend caucuses and participate in their county party functions.

That’s far from a done deal, but with five candidates vying for it, nomination by convention isn’t an outlandish possibility.

## NOMINATION CONVENTION COULD SHAKE THINGS UP

If Iowa Republicans select their gubernatorial nominee at the party’s June 13 convention, Feenstra’s campaign could arrange for enough supporters to be convention delegates, easily clinching his nomination.

Or the delegation could be mostly comprised of grassroots activists and members of the county party organizations he’s been quietly keeping at arm’s length.

That makes events such county central committee meetings and other grassroots groups especially important — even to a so-called front-runner flush with campaign cash.

His appearance at Tuesday’s event didn’t do enough to endear its attendees to the well-financed Feenstra. The best they could do was agree — vehemently, for what it’s worth — that they will vote for Feenstra if he is the Republican nominee.

‘One hundred percent. Because we don’t have any other choice,’ said Waukee resident Carmela Rollins. ‘If you get Sand, I’ll guarantee, you’re gonna be another New York, another Minnesota.’

Their acquiescence won’t be enough to get Feenstra across the finish line in November. Not if he and the GOP has to put energy and resources into rallying the base that they should be putting toward defeating the shameless self-promoter Sand.

Tuesday’s event was better than what I’d previously observed, but it couldn’t cure me of my concerns about the governor’s race in Iowa.

I said it in December, and I’ll say it again now: if Randy Feenstra is the nominee, Iowa Republicans will lose in 2026.

Cedar Rapids Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Finance Committee Memo

To: Chris Casey, Finance Committee Chair  
From: Dara Schmidt  
Date: 2/19/2026  
Subject: February Committee Meeting Financial Report

**Operations** – Slightly over on total expenditures at 62% or \$5.23MM of \$8.46M budget and slightly above revenues at 61% or \$510.4K of 842K budget. Some expenses have posted in advance and some revenues are billed a month behind.

Building Rental is lower than budget this year due to café closure. We are moving forward with a business plan review with a potential vendor and hope this will improve by the end of the year.

**Action Items:**

**Annual Linn County Contract** – Each year Linn County contracts with all public libraries in the county so that residents in unincorporated areas can receive library service like residents. The cost per library is based on a multi-tiered usage formula. This year the revenue for the Library is \$80,899.34.

**RFID Solutions Contract to move existing materials handler** – The cost to move the sorter is \$98,900.00 which requires board approval. This is part of the overall capital budget for the Busse Branch and is an expected expense. Though this cost is high, moving our existing sorter saves hundreds of thousands over purchasing new.

**Internet Service Provider and Phone Service** – The library worked with City Purchasing to go through a formal bid process, resulting in recommending the contract be awarded to ImOn Communications, not to exceed \$102,000 for five years.

No concerns or comments to note for January relating to SR 7010 or CIP 316.

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General Fund - Library

2026-01-31

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
<b>Revenues</b>								
<b>Taxes</b>								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
<b>Licenses &amp; Permits</b>								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
<b>Intergovernmental Revenue</b>								
422001 State Operating	96,778.19	115,000.00	95,034.99	(19,965.01)	83%	360.37	115,000.00	-
423000 Local Govt Grants and Reimb	191,240.44	300,000.00	201,156.37	(98,843.63)	67%	94,661.82	300,000.00	-
	288,018.63	415,000.00	296,191.36	(118,808.64)	71%	95,022.19	415,000.00	-
<b>Charges for Services</b>								
431006 Printing & Duplicating of Form	19,029.28	25,000.00	21,127.09	(3,872.91)	85%	3,248.95	25,000.00	-
431012 Dept Charges-External to City	128,891.52	272,367.00	137,720.87	(134,646.13)	51%	23,113.18	272,367.00	-
431201 Library User Fees - Not Fines	26,001.97	10,600.00	24,184.87	13,584.87	228%	6,917.62	10,600.00	-
	173,922.77	307,967.00	183,032.83	(124,934.17)	59%	33,279.75	307,967.00	-
<b>Fines &amp; Forfeits</b>								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
<b>Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities</b>								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
<b>Other Revenue</b>								
461001 Building Rental	26,199.40	43,455.00	12,633.02	(30,821.98)	29%	1,737.22	43,455.00	-
471002 Contributions & Donations	17,137.75	70,000.00	17,937.68	(52,062.32)	26%	-	70,000.00	-
471003 Sale of Inventory	517.50	2,000.00	576.61	(1,423.39)	29%	94.10	2,000.00	-
471005 Other Miscellaneous Revenue	-	3,500.00	46.84	(3,453.16)	1%	21.84	3,500.00	-
471007 Cash Over (Under)	(3.24)	-	(16.87)	(16.87)	0%	(0.84)	-	-
	43,851.41	118,955.00	31,177.28	(87,777.72)	26%	1,852.32	118,955.00	-
<b>Transfers In</b>								
	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>505,792.81</b>	<b>841,922.00</b>	<b>510,401.47</b>	<b>(331,520.53)</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>130,154.26</b>	<b>841,922.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>								
<b>Personal Services</b>								
511100 Regular Employees	2,600,200.68	4,393,749.83	2,693,469.55	1,700,280.28	61%	464,376.29	4,570,526.00	(176,776.17)
511200 Temporary/Seasonal Employees	17,828.00	43,368.40	14,295.75	29,072.65	33%	-	43,368.40	-
511300 Overtime	48,545.24	114,773.40	41,208.45	73,564.95	36%	7,573.38	114,773.40	-
511400 Other Special Pays	16,279.25	13,180.00	44,819.46	(31,639.46)	340%	186.88	13,180.00	-
512100 Group Insurance	442,233.61	889,723.00	468,209.19	421,513.81	53%	69,277.92	889,723.00	-
512200 Social Security Contributions	204,502.53	361,272.00	214,353.08	146,918.92	59%	38,651.69	361,272.00	-
512300 Retirement Contribution	258,288.73	446,664.00	267,608.33	179,055.67	60%	49,189.61	446,664.00	-
512400 Unemployment Compensation	-	-	(5,155.37)	5,155.37	0%	-	-	-
512500 Workers' Compensation	35,633.74	147,525.00	90,996.38	56,528.62	62%	16,013.95	147,525.00	-
512600 Other Employee Benefits	4,121.21	3,658.00	2,490.32	1,167.68	68%	377.87	3,658.00	-
	3,627,632.99	6,413,913.63	3,832,295.14	2,581,618.49	60%	645,647.59	6,590,689.80	(176,776.17)
<b>Discretionary Expenses</b>								
521100 Advertising & Marketing	5,958.58	5,000.00	7,640.04	(2,640.04)	153%	-	5,000.00	-
521104 Consulting & Technical Service	-	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0%	-	10,000.00	-
521105 External Contracted Labor	27,132.39	52,274.00	34,773.08	17,500.92	67%	5,552.00	52,274.00	-
521107 Legal Services	18,827.29	-	4,845.00	(4,845.00)	0%	610.00	-	-
521108 Other Professional Services	1,516.52	9,523.63	56.07	9,467.56	1%	-	9,523.63	-
521109 External Banking/Financial Fee	9,520.95	20,700.00	7,662.24	13,037.76	37%	554.14	20,700.00	-
521110 Security Services	348.77	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-

foundation billing is 1 month behind so % should be 50% = on target

% of budget is high but should go down as FY proceeds with eliminate of positions not incurring costs

pay outs for people no longer employees of \$37,220.58

**General Fund - Library**

2026-01-31		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	
521115	Other Inter Department Charges	975.00	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	
522100	Computer Hardware	31,238.44	40,000.00	27,401.62	12,598.38	69%	262.05	40,000.00	-	
522101	Computer Software	194,200.43	398,996.17	457,626.36	(58,630.19)	115%	37,723.99	222,220.00	176,776.17	covers subscription based/non city owned circulation materials
522102	IT Services - External	26,800.58	40,000.00	51,965.98	(11,965.98)	130%	1,089.75	40,000.00	-	
522104	Building & Grounds Services	4,756.68	25,000.00	4,459.14	20,540.86	18%	1,720.00	25,000.00	-	
522105	Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Serv	14,115.79	15,000.00	7,280.69	7,719.31	49%	249.00	15,000.00	-	
523107	Phone Services	18,155.44	32,950.00	17,998.49	14,951.51	55%	2,493.14	32,950.00	-	
524101	Rental of Equip & Vehicles	-	500.00	1,096.80	(596.80)	219%	-	500.00	-	
525102	Printing, Binding, & Duplicate	9,214.61	16,950.00	6,139.81	10,810.19	36%	-	16,950.00	-	
531102	Awards & Recognition	-	250.00	53.83	196.17	22%	-	250.00	-	
531103	Books & Subscriptions	124,323.54	127,171.80	46,698.39	80,473.41	37%	33.00	127,171.80	-	
531105	Cleaning & Janitorial Supplies	1,009.23	1,250.00	290.47	959.53	23%	24.69	1,250.00	-	
531106	Computer Supplies	887.69	5,000.00	1,216.67	3,783.33	24%	-	5,000.00	-	
531109	Equipment/Furniture/Fixtures	12,936.69	17,800.00	6,554.15	11,245.85	37%	2,347.57	17,800.00	-	
531116	Office Supplies	6,498.34	15,320.00	5,402.60	9,917.40	35%	323.73	15,320.00	-	
531117	Paint Supplies	1,547.28	-	550.63	(550.63)	0%	234.33	-	-	
531118	Program Supplies	22,078.02	37,000.00	17,415.40	19,584.60	47%	1,676.72	37,000.00	-	
531119	Shop Supplies	876.76	250.00	1,888.58	(1,638.58)	755%	689.87	250.00	-	
531120	Sign & Signal Supplies	149.02	-	237.56	(237.56)	0%	124.50	-	-	
531123	Uniforms	-	1,694.00	-	1,694.00	0%	-	1,694.00	-	
531124	Personal Protective Gear	1,150.00	-	647.47	(647.47)	0%	197.08	-	-	
532103	LP Gas	33.54	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	
533100	Building & Grounds Supplies	1,213.81	20,741.28	1,234.87	19,506.41	6%	90.54	20,741.28	-	
533101	Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Parts	2,514.20	-	725.27	(725.27)	0%	9.47	-	-	
542102	Conferences, Training, Travel	14,465.21	23,200.00	10,151.26	13,048.74	44%	2,086.08	23,200.00	-	
542103	Dues & Memberships	877.50	10,000.00	7,853.93	2,146.07	79%	2,038.39	10,000.00	-	
542106	Licensing Fees	-	-	60.00	(60.00)	0%	-	-	-	
542108	Postage & Freight	4,879.05	13,500.00	3,954.16	9,545.84	29%	665.07	13,500.00	-	
542111	Mileage Reimbursement	1,278.89	3,000.00	1,327.00	1,673.00	44%	152.19	3,000.00	-	
		559,480.24	943,070.88	735,207.56	207,863.32	78%	60,947.30	766,294.71	176,776.17	IT costs heavily prepaid early in FY = timing
<b>Other Expenses</b>										
521106	Health Services	392.35	-	177.00	(177.00)	0%	-	-	-	
522107	Routine City Facility Charges	138,752.11	349,135.23	120,262.78	228,872.45	34%	23,407.72	349,135.23	-	
522108	Routine City Fleet Charges	1,935.56	899.00	142.79	756.21	16%	-	899.00	-	
523100	Electricity	139,809.83	243,800.00	138,553.38	105,246.62	57%	18,254.89	243,800.00	-	
523103	Natural Gas	2,074.50	4,500.00	1,314.94	3,185.06	29%	952.84	4,500.00	-	
524100	Rental of Land & Buildings	237,513.92	249,000.00	237,675.79	11,324.21	95%	3,356.25	249,000.00	-	Ladd Rent billed/posted for 12 months already = timing
525104	Liability Insurance	29,837.04	63,422.00	39,783.20	23,638.80	63%	5,285.17	63,422.00	-	
525107	Property Insurance	94,623.69	171,950.00	100,304.19	71,645.81	58%	14,329.17	171,950.00	-	
525108	Vehicle Insurance	875.00	1,500.00	875.00	625.00	58%	125.00	1,500.00	-	
532101	Gasoline Fuel	241.75	498.58	132.16	366.42	27%	-	498.58	-	
		646,055.75	1,084,704.81	639,221.23	445,483.58	59%	65,711.04	1,084,704.81	-	
<b>Capital Outlay</b>										
		-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	
<b>Debt Service</b>										
		-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	
<b>Transfers Out</b>										
571100	Transfer Out-Inter	-	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	100%	-	20,000.00	-	
		-	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	100%	-	20,000.00	-	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		4,833,168.98	8,461,689.32	5,226,723.93	3,234,965.39	62%	772,305.93	8,461,689.32	-	
<b>Net Revenues Over / (Under) Expenditures</b>		(4,327,376.17)	(7,619,767.32)	(4,716,322.46)	2,903,444.86		(642,151.67)	(7,619,767.32)	-	

LIBRARY SERVICES CONTRACT 2026

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into by and between Linn County, Iowa ("County") and the Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees ("Library") under the following terms and conditions hereby mutually agreed upon by the parties:

1. This Agreement is made pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 336.
2. Library agrees to provide library services to all Linn County residents living outside of incorporated cities on the same terms and conditions, including fees, as it provides library services to residents living within the corporate boundaries of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
3. County agrees to contribute an amount not to exceed \$80,899.34 to Library for library services.
4. Library shall not use the County's contribution to reduce the library's funding level from the City of Cedar Rapids, nor shall the contribution by the County, or any portion thereof, be used to provide services or purchase materials or equipment to be accessed solely by residents living within the corporate boundaries of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A violation of this paragraph will be considered cause for termination of this Agreement.
5. The contribution by County for library services as set out in Paragraph 3 shall not exceed one-half of the amount contributed by the City of Cedar Rapids for the same period. County may require Library to provide a report of its annual budget, purchases, and expenditures as well as a summary of services provided before disbursement by County of any installment. Noncompliance with the terms of this paragraph may affect the amount of the contribution set out in paragraph 3 and may be considered cause for termination of this Agreement.
6. Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 336.19, this Agreement may be terminated at any time by mutual consent of the contracting parties or in any other manner provided by law.
7. Each party to this Agreement represents and warrants to the other that:
  - a. It has the right, power, and authority to enter into and perform its obligations under this Agreement.
  - b. It has taken all requisite action (corporate, statutory, or otherwise) to approve the execution, delivery, and performance of the terms and conditions of this Agreement, and this Agreement constitutes a legal, valid, and binding obligation upon itself and in accordance with its terms and conditions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto affixed their signatures.

LINN COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By: Krista Rainey-Margwald  
Chairperson

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - President

Date: 2-12-24

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print - Name

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# INVOICE



**RFID Library Solutions**

**RFID Library Solutions, Inc.**

11030 89th Ave N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Phone # 763-273-4643  
eric@rfidls.com [www.rfidls.com](http://www.rfidls.com)

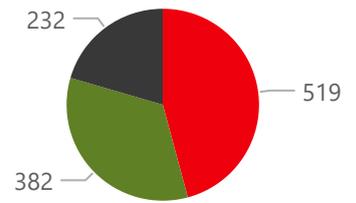
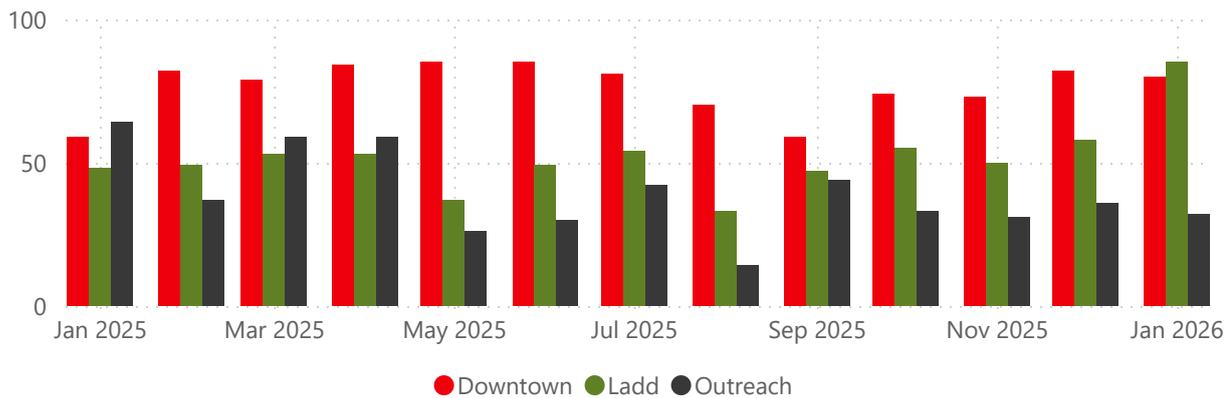
Date	Invoice #
2/9/2026	CRPL292026

Bill To
City of Cedar Rapids Finance Department-Accounts Payable 101 First Street SE PO Box 2148 Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-2148

Ship To
Cedar Rapids Pub. Lib. Busse Branch 20 <sup>th</sup> Ave Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

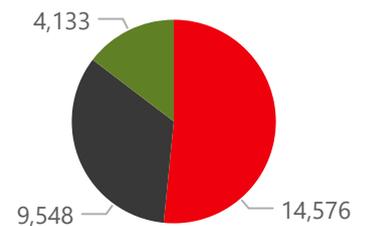
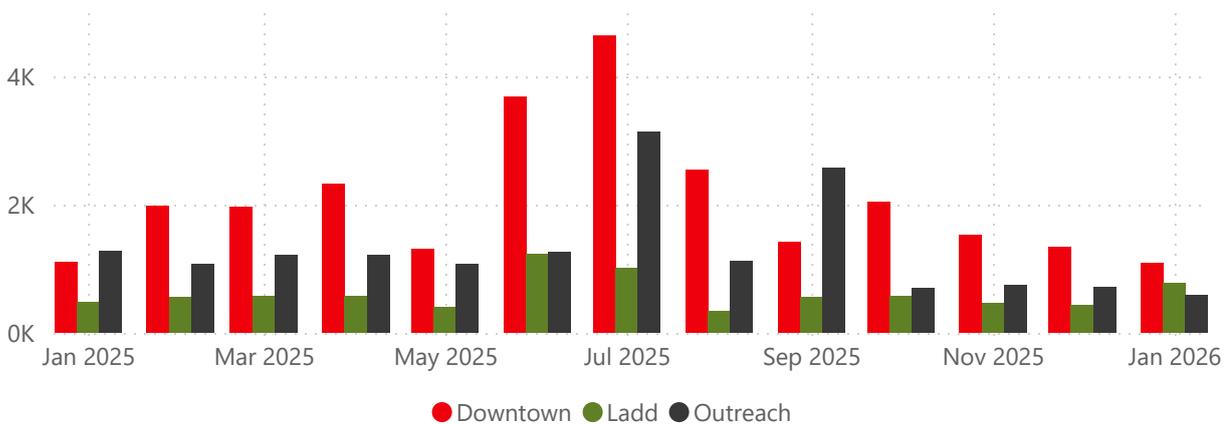
P.O. Number	Terms	Ship	Via	F.O.B.	Project
Busse Branch	Upon Receipt	2/9/2026	Hand Delivered		Busse Branch Sort Move/Upgrade
Quant...	Item Code	Description		Price Each	Amount
1	Transport Conveyors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace ALL conveyor belts, along with corresponding flight patterns.</li> <li>Replace ALL white belt path inserts &amp; internal belt supports as needed.</li> <li>New conveyor sensor brackets, transitions &amp; RFID Antennas.</li> <li>Clean, dust and vacuum around grey conveyor modules.</li> <li>New drive shaft sprockets, bearings book return sensors</li> <li>Re-use Aluminum extrusion legs &amp; connector plates</li> </ul>		\$13,550.00	<b>\$13,550.00</b>
1	AC System Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(5) New AC motors &amp; Variable Frequency Drive controllers.</li> <li>New lighted E-Stop push buttons.</li> <li>Additional RFID reader &amp; antenna for Int. Ret. Material check-in</li> <li>New Enclosure, PLC, Cordsets, Receptacles, Circuit Breakers, Terminal Blocks, etc</li> </ul>		\$46,950.00	<b>\$46,950.00</b>
1	Sort Conveyor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(2) Addition sort zones with ARB belting.</li> <li>New sort sensor brackets and reflector brackets.</li> <li>Sort bin refurbishment: bungees, floor pads &amp; tighten loose hardware.</li> <li>Clean, dust and vacuum around conveyor legs/sidewalls/underside.</li> </ul>		\$16,500.00	<b>\$16,500.00</b>
1	Return Induction Bin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match design of existing induction bins</li> </ul>		\$4,000.00	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
2	Basic Sort Bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dimensions 20" w x 20" d x 42" t</li> </ul>		\$1,250.00	<b>\$2,500.00</b>
1	Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 RFIDLS Technicians for 5 days of travel.</li> <li>Includes mileage, hotel, meals, truck rental &amp; any misc. expenses.</li> <li>Labor, tools, and any additional supplies.</li> <li>System training, user manual &amp; <u>1-year warranty</u></li> </ul>		\$15,400.00	<b>\$15,400.00</b>
Thank you for your business.				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$98,900.00</b>
				<b>AMOUNT DUE</b> <i>(25% Down Payment)</i>	<b>\$24,725.00</b>

Programs



1,133

# of Programs



28,257

# of Attendees

Programming welcomed some warm days to draw people into February programs! Attendance at our ongoing programs (Early Learning programs, Dungeons and Dragons, etc.) have been growing again, and workshops in the Opportunity Center are seeing huge increases in participants. Specials programs like our Superb Owl Party and Cat Café have drawn hundreds of new and returning patrons into the building as well. We continue to see dozens of patrons using the Maker Spaces each month as well – both new users and Certified Learners. Summer plans are also in full swing, and we are beginning to look toward what Programming will look like in the Busse Branch.

A patron came to the library asking if someone could do an antique evaluation for him. I told him that was out of our scope but I could give him the contact information for antique dealers/estate liquidators who could help him. So, we started looking for local addresses in Cedar Rapids. And then he showed me his possession: according to him it was an Original 1776 Declarations of Independence document, one of the rare Dunlap Broadside prints. We did some Internet research and found that those were immensely valuable and exceptionally rare. Only 26 copies of the first printing were known to exist. And one had sold for around 8.4 million dollars in 2000.

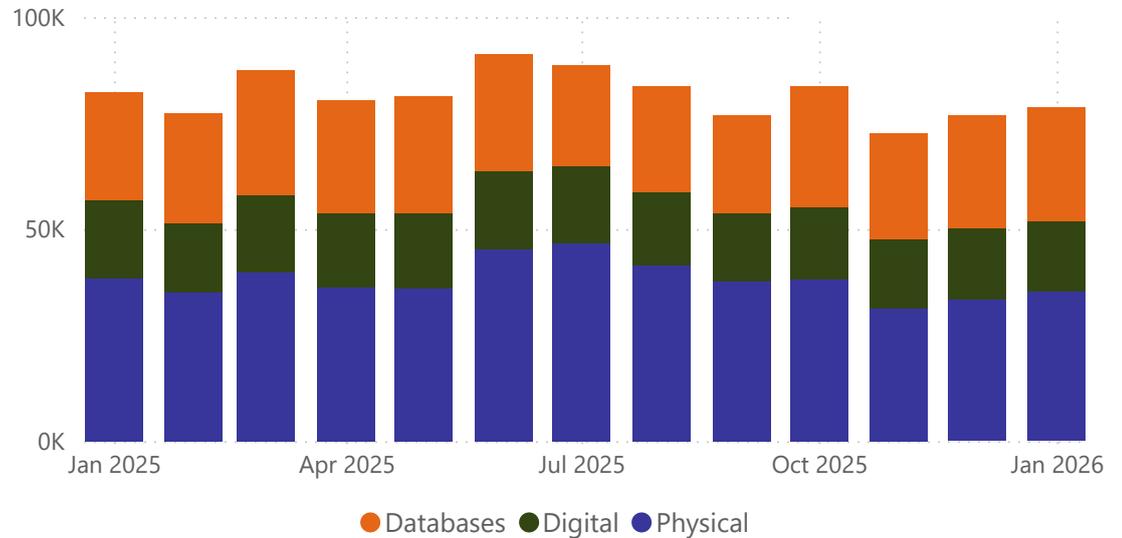
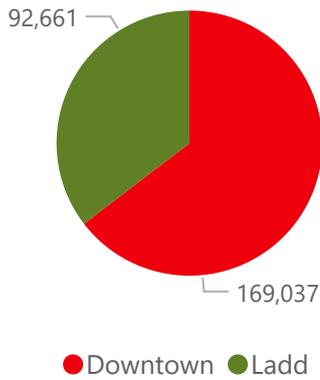
Patron was extremely happy with all this information. I even showed him how he could get an free online evaluation done by Sotheby's. He was very thankful to the library for the research and the right direction. He was visibly excited and in all his excitement, told me that he would make a donation of a million dollars to CRPL if he could sell it for at least 5 million! - Sampurna Ghosh, Patron Services Specialist

*I have used the Cedar Rapids public library for over 60 years and have always found the staff friendly and very helpful. When my grandson was young, I took him there several times for children's events. I have helped Friends of the Library with many book sales, which make books and other media available for a low price to many people. - Patron submission through the website*

Borrowing & Collections

178,603 Databases      117,986 Digital      261,698 Physical      2,592 Technology      560,879 Total

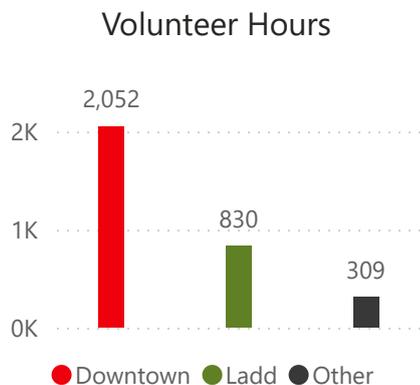
Physical Circulation, by Location



The Materials Team is preparing the Ladd collection to move to the Busse Branch after the summer season. This involves several steps. First, we'll evaluate the collection for ageing or worn materials that we wouldn't want to move. In the case of heavily used materials that are still popular, it's a great way to know what to replace with fresh copies for the new branch. The Ladd staff has kindly helped us complete multiple inventories of the collection, which keeps our records accurate but also helps us with this clean up process. The library has received generous donations to help us purchase some new materials for opening, so once older materials are cleared from the collection, we can use these funds to replace popular items and buy copies of new releases in preparation for higher foot traffic. We'll also look at either adding some collections we've traditionally kept Downtown like Tonies, or expanding Spark Kits and Wonderbooks.

Volunteers

3,191  
Total Hours

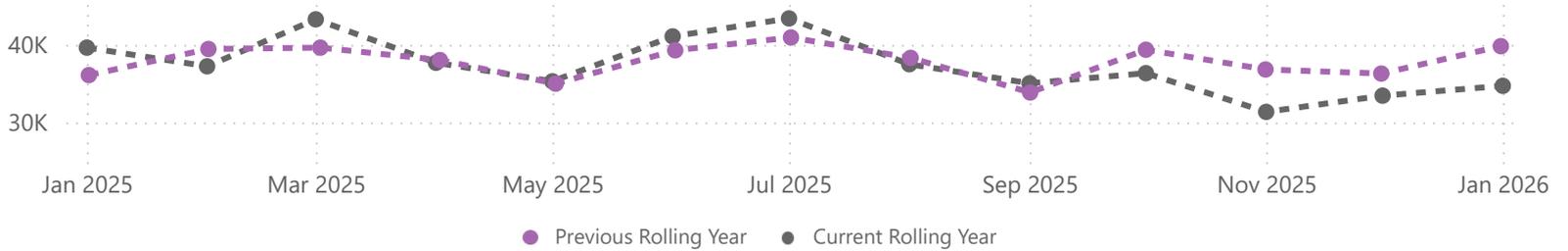
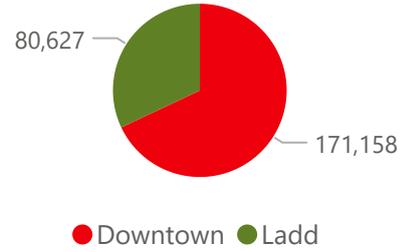


The library will reopen our volunteer application process this spring including piloting a short-term community service volunteer program. This is in response to the need we hear from the community for court-directed service hours. These volunteers will still need to pass a background check, but their overall onboarding process will be much shorter allowing them to complete their hours in a more condensed time frame. Tasks for these volunteers will focus on cleaning at the Downtown Library. We will launch the program later this month. Volunteer Hours in January 2026: 450 hours

Visits

251,785

Physical Visits

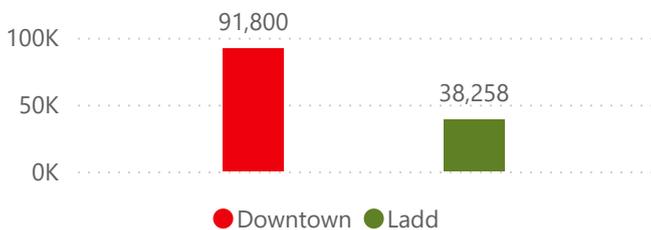


February has seen a significant increase in teen usage after school hours. Based on issues last year, all Public Service Managers/Supervisors at Downtown have prioritized being on the floor at the time the teens have started to come in. We have seen great success in proactively building relationships with this population and setting the teens up for success. Overall we have seen this work and not had the volume or severity of incidents we started seeing last year with this population. This work will continue through the remainder of the school year to ensure our teen population feels a sense of belonging in the library while not impeding on the access of others using our space.

*A young woman has been coming in almost daily the last couple of weeks, she has a very positive energy and always takes time to chat with staff. She stopped me and Lexi this morning to share that she was previously homeless and she wanted to express how valuable the library has been in her life, and how she notices the attitude that staff has toward patrons, even when our work may go unnoticed by others. She said "you're like the silent 'p' in raspberry--most people don't notice it, but I know it's there." - Alyssa Telecky, Patron Services Specialist*

Technology Access

PC Uses



400,541

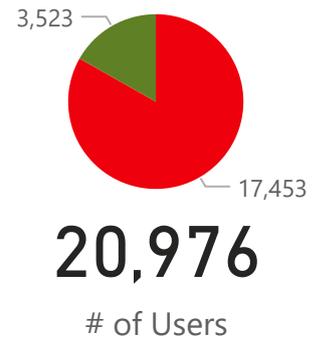
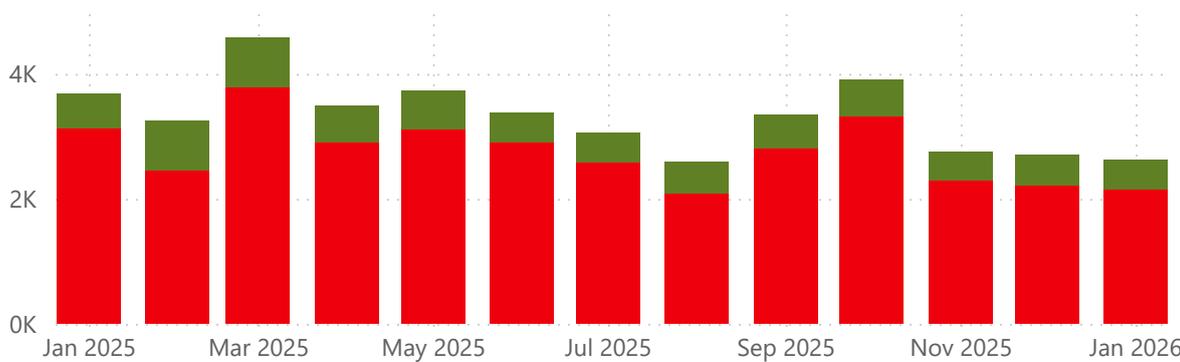
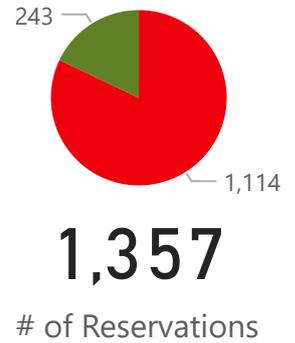
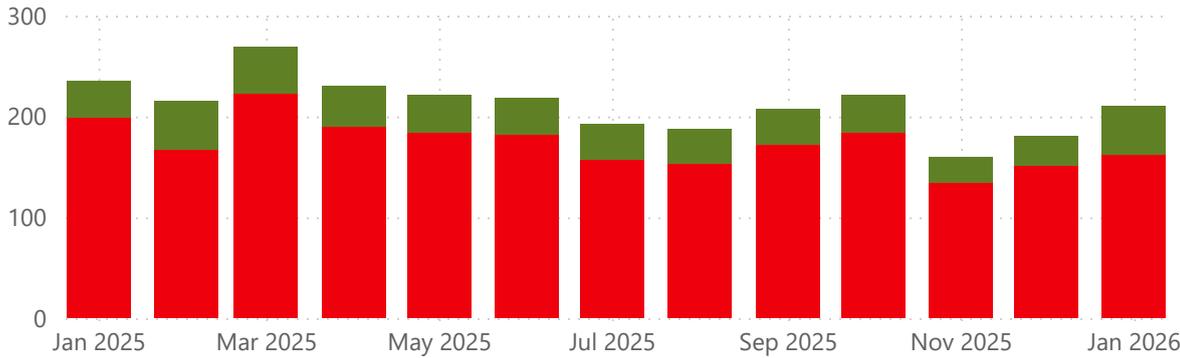
Virtual Visits

174,753

WiFi Sessions

The Technology Solutions team is beginning to purchase hardware for the Busse Branch and focusing on new contracts that cover both Downtown and Busse. The smaller hardware purchases like digital displays or screens for meeting spaces can be made quickly for installation. IT works with the City Purchasing Department on larger purchases or long term contracts with service to ensure competitive pricing. The team is currently working on contracts for internet, phone service, and printing for both locations for simplicity's sake.

Meeting Room Use



● Downtown ● Ladd

The month of January brought 210 unique reservations to the library serving approximately 2,629 patrons.

The Cedar Rapids Cosplay group began meeting at the library and is extending their experience to the Maker Rooms in the coming weeks. A new event at the library, the Miss Cedar Valley and Miss Linn County Pageant was held at the library this year. Various politically identifying groups reserved space at the library, solidifying the library's importance as a safe and neutral place for civic engagement.

There were various informative or educational presentations at the library discussing mindfulness, women's health, continuing education for arborists, financial wellness and Medicare and Social Security navigation.

Families and individuals are still using the library to celebrate – birthdays, showers and celebrations of those who have passed away. Larger scale family game nights were hosted and "family focused" gatherings were held as well.

Community Relations has enjoyed celebrating the springtime by completing the latest issue of *OPEN+*, which explores the many amazing programs and services we offer. We turn our focus now to all things summer! Our programming team is finalizing the programs and we are working on our collateral for 2026.

We have been working on the plans for the Busse Branch, including understanding signage and any special display opportunities. The team has built out our calendar with the knowledge that summer will be extra busy this year. We are also working on selecting and implementing a new project management tool to help keep us connected and organized across the work we do.

*I currently utilize my public library up to 5 days a week. I do not have internet access at my home and I am a full-time online student. Without the library my success would not be possible. I encourage people to take time to look at bills that restrict content and burden libraries with unnecessary paperwork, monitoring, and strain on resources. Our librarians have shown a passion for providing children with age appropriate, inclusive, and educational material and I think we should let them continue to do so. - Patron submission through the website*

