

Administrative and Staff Reports for October 9, 2025 Board Meeting

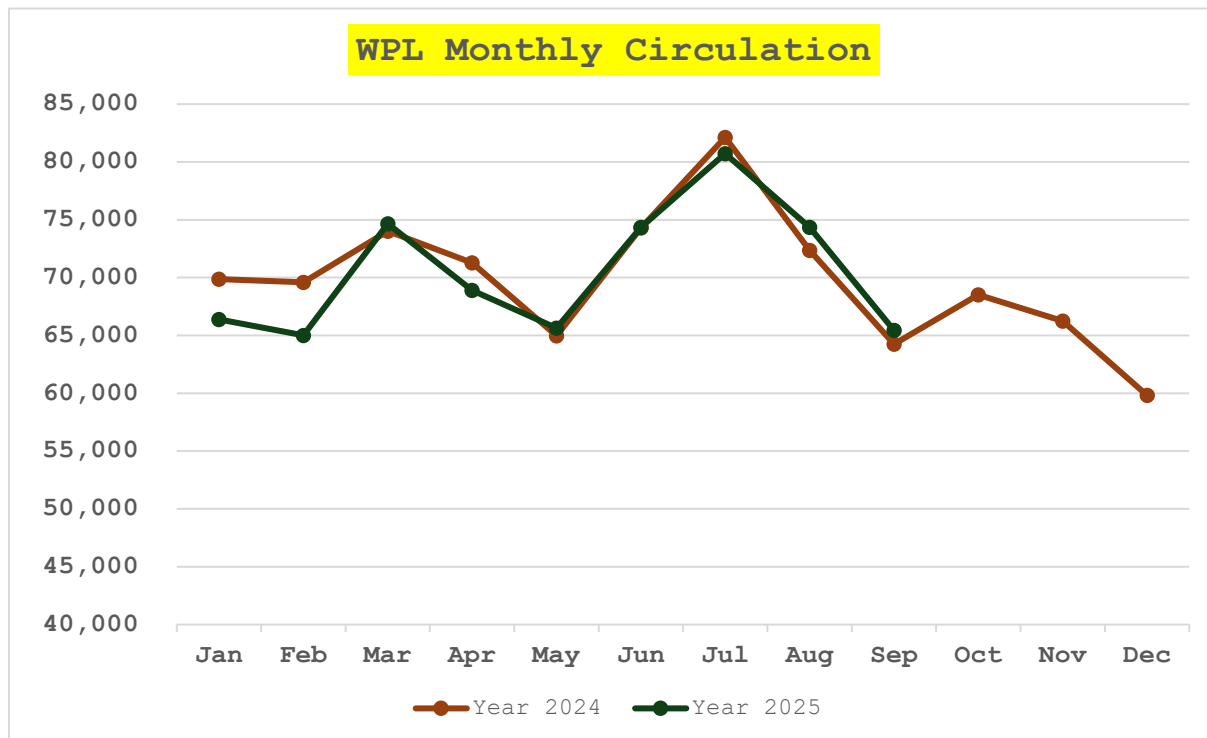
LIBRARY DIRECTOR, BRUCE GAY

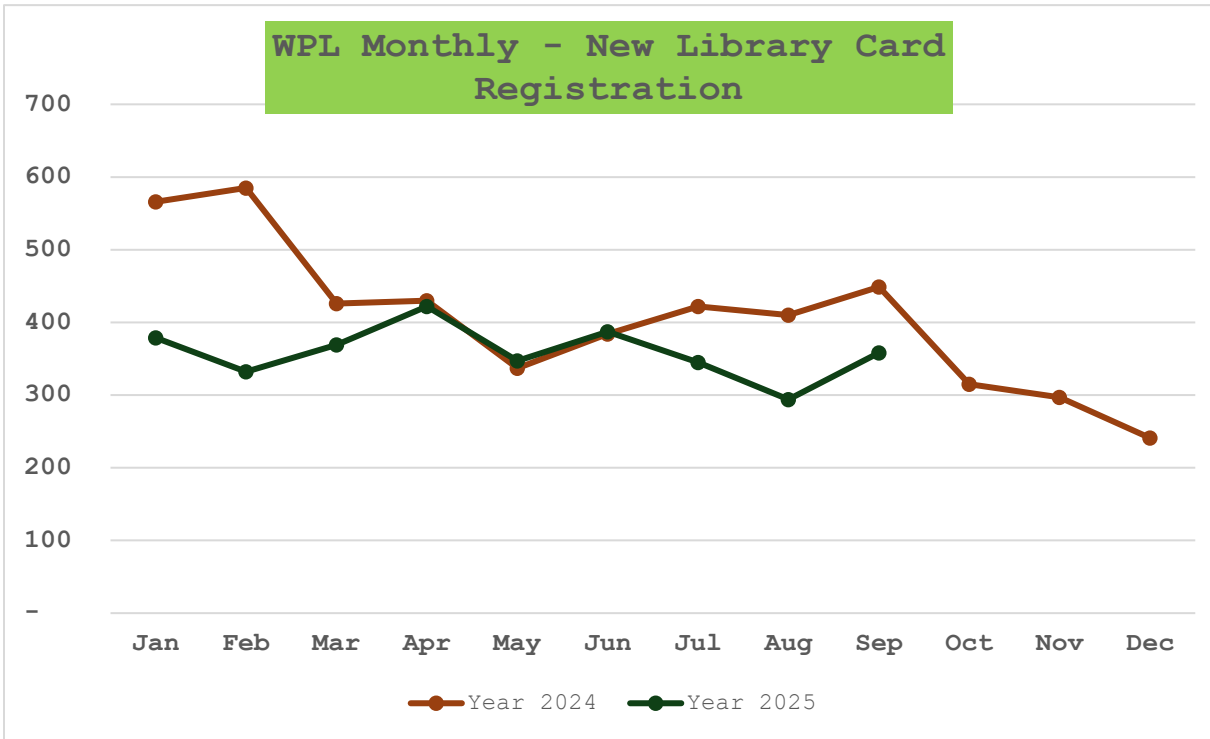
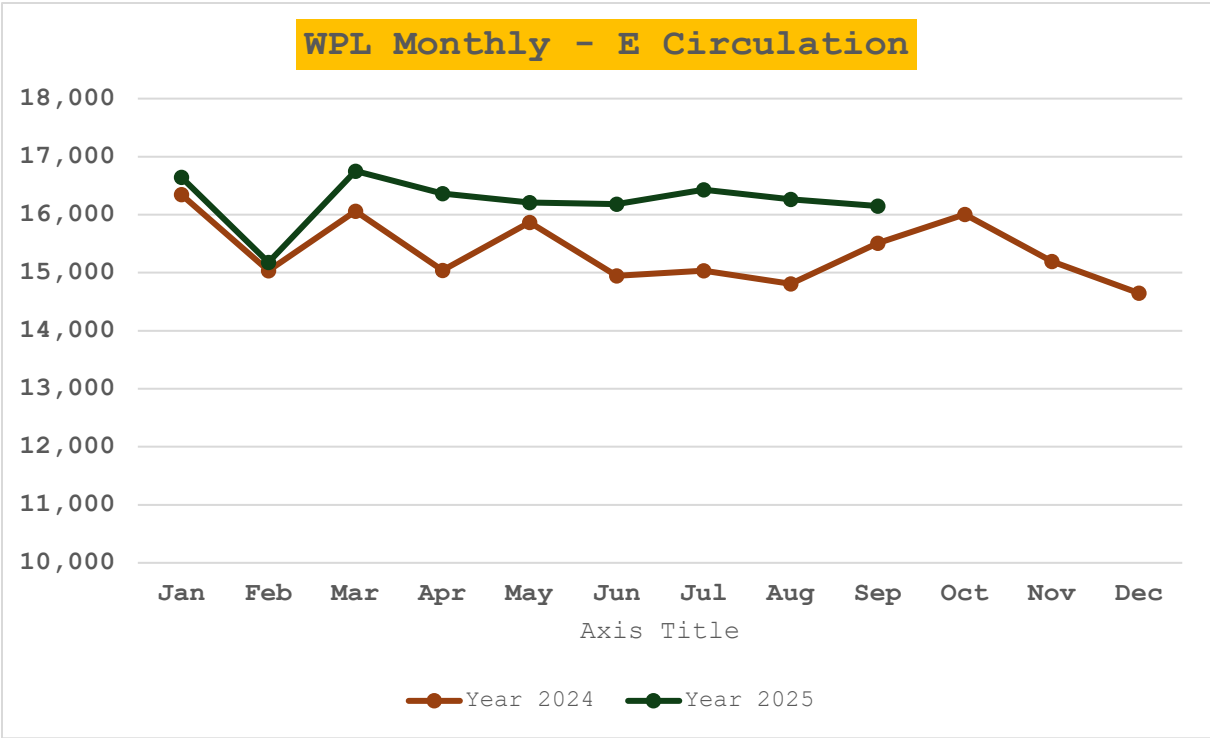
September saw school back in session and brought students back into the building. Staff has been preparing for Waukesha Reads.

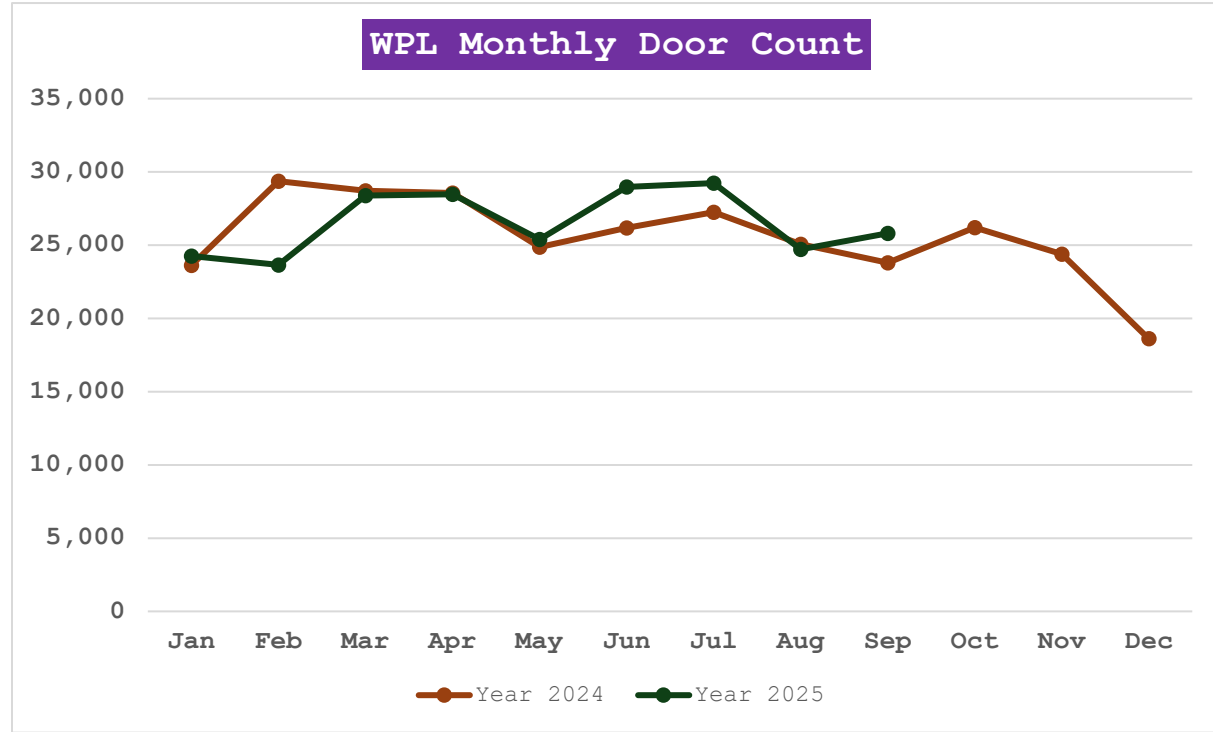
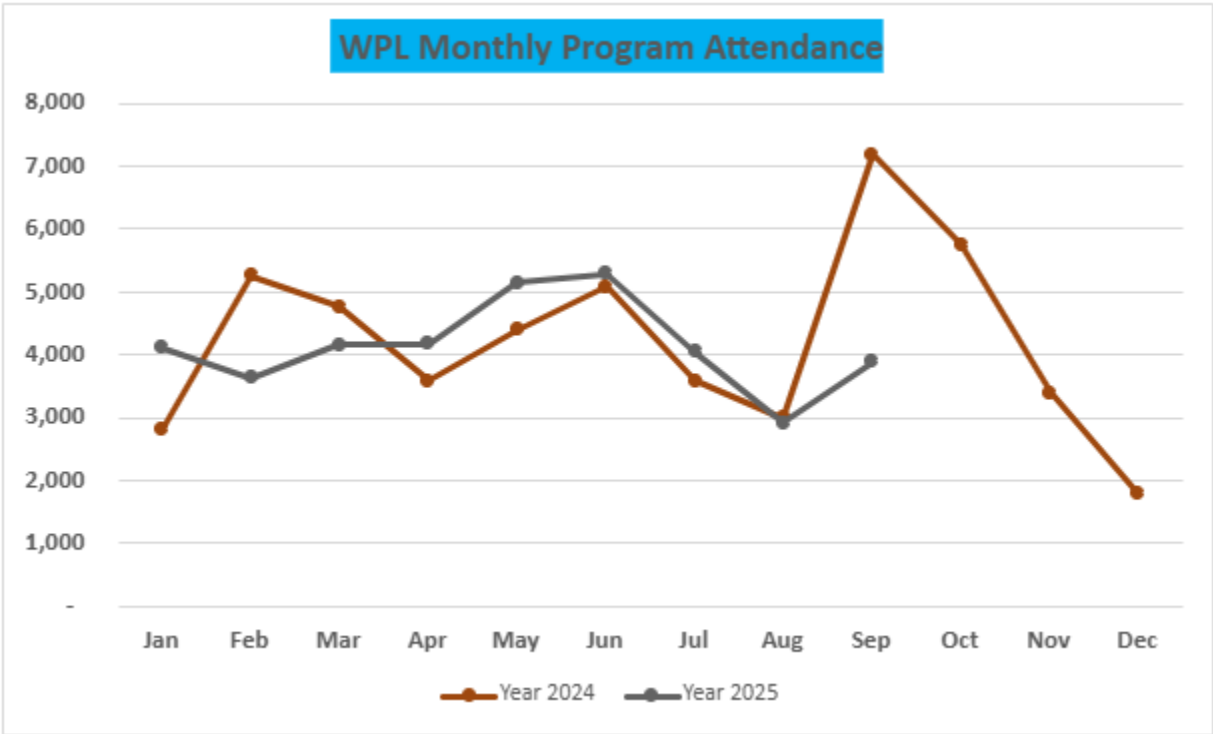
- Waukesha County Act 150 Committee:** The committee met September 9 and will meet again October 14. The main issues the committee is working through are the formulas for distributing county funding and the set of standards known as the "Minimums to exempt."
- Administrative Area Redesign:** Managers met with representatives from the architecture firm ISG on September 7 to continue planning on the renovation of the administration section of the library. ISG had prepared four different plans for the administration area. All included a renovation of the staff bathrooms and addition of a "wellness room" for staff, to be used for nursing mothers and other staff. Another goal for the plans has been to bring the marketing department into the administration area. The discussion was lively!
- Library Development and Legislation (LD&L) committee:** LD&L met on September 26 at the Middleton Public Library. The new WLA executive director, Kara Sullivan, attended the meeting. Ms. Sullivan had led the Appleton Public Library's capital campaign that helped pay for their new building. Of note: Library Legislative Day 2026 will be on Tuesday, February 10.

Waukesha Public Library Service Standards	
	WE ARE PEOPLE-CENTERED Purpose over task • Respect for privacy • High regard for all
	WE CELEBRATE OUR SPACE Shared ownership • Proactive helpfulness
	WE ARE CONSISTENT IN OUR SERVICE Unified experience • Timely responses Effective referrals • Fair enforcement
	WE RESPECT EACH OTHER Positive library culture • Presence matters • Self-awareness

WPL By the Numbers:







ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, THERESE LYONS

Human Resources

- All JDQs have been submitted to city HR for their review. We hope to receive feedback from the city on the grades of the library positions by the end of the year.
- One of our 10-hour shelvers handed in her resignation. That position remains open.

Building

- On September 23, we met with Chris Seitz from Focus of Energy. We are in the process of setting up an EnergyStar Portfolio to give the library the opportunity to receive rebates and refunds for energy-efficient changes. We will do benchmarking to see where we are and identify projects that qualify for refunds or rebates. For instance, changing lights to LED would qualify for a monetary rebate per light.
- On September 29, I attended the city quarterly safety meeting. The focus of this committee is to lessen city employee accidents or injuries to reduce workers' compensation claims.
- On September 29, Lee Mechanical started the HVAC project in the building. Initially, all heating systems will be down. Then all cooling systems will be down. This should take a few weeks, so we're hoping the weather cooperates.

Staff Training, Engagement and Continuing Education

- Staff Ed Day preparations for Friday, December 5 are in full swing. Kelly and I worked together on a Libraryreads grant application to help fund our Staff Ed Day speaker, Becky Spratford. Becky specializes in Readers Advisory and in training library staff worldwide on how to match materials with readers through the local public library. We are happy to report that we received the entire grant of \$1500!
- Bridges offered a limited number of DISC personality assessments for library staff. All managers and a few other staff completed the assessment, including the entire Marketing team. The completed assessments prompted managers to consider how to work most effectively with different personality types.
- This month we had staff development/THAM sessions on: Waukesha Reads, the "We Respect Each Other" Service Standard, Rebecca Pederson from the City of Waukesha, and an IT Quarterly Update.
- We hosted **Wisconsin Tech Days** in our Board Room. Sessions included: What Does AI mean for our Future?, Ancient Worlds, New Tech: Bringing History to Life, and Truth in the Age of Deepfakes: Spotting Misinformation in a Synthetic World.
- We also hosted part three of a three-part series by **Ryan Dowd** about working with teens in groups and also by Ryan Dowd, Substance Abuse 101.
- The IDEA Committee showed a webinar called Welcoming Neurodivergent Teens to Your Public Library.
- Kelly attended a Niche Academy training course to understand more about their report's functionality.
- I attended webinars on "Quit Quitting," Gossip in the Workplace, and Strategies on How to get your Team Working Together Better.

Public Art

The Public Art Committee's 20th Anniversary celebration was very successful! Sixty-four people attended. Here's a picture of all the artists in attendance:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, ALYSSA PISARSKI

In September, the Library hosted 113 programs with 3,886 attendees

- Children's Programs: 26 programs, 2,072 attendees
- Teen Programs: 22 programs, 532 attendees
- Adult Programs: 22 programs, 845 attendees
- General Interest: 43 programs, 437 attendees

Program Highlights

- **Books for Babies and Titles for Tots:** Three hundred and thirty-six patrons learned about literacy tips and popular new books for our youngest readers. Families loved the mini-story times followed with developmental play groups.
- **Homeschool Hangout:** Waukesha firefighters visited the homeschool group on September 8. They demonstrated equipment and discussed fire safety in the library. 67 kids and families attended.
- **Chess Club:** Patron Services Associate Charlie Carerros led 17 excited youths in the initial Chess Club meeting on September 18. Players reviewed chess etiquette, learned basic chess moves and faced each other in two games, once with the light pieces and then with the dark. After two games, we switched opponents so everyone could meet their fellow players. This program is also supported by a library volunteer, Michael Willkommen.
- **Kids in the Kitchen:** Thirty-nine kids and family members enjoyed helping create fall treats at September's Kids in the Kitchen program. Kids completed a "Pop" corn Quiz featuring fun facts about popcorn, and those who answered the most questions correctly took on sous chef duties making stovetop popcorn. Michele also demonstrated a fall smoothie recipe, using apples fresh from an orchard. Everyone enjoyed taking home new recipes to try out and learning lots about the science and history of popcorn!



- **Job Fair:** WPL's first Job Fair was a success. Of the total 105 participants, we hosted 14 local employers from various industries such as Wildeck, First Student Bus Services, St. Vincent Du Paul, Waukesha Free Clinic, Mad Science, and more. These employers met with over 90 eager job seekers who were ready to connect. Many attendees walked away with useful information, and some were even hired, as reported later.
- **Mental Wellness: Breaking Shame and Building Strength with Author Meg Kissinger and CU's Behavioral Health Department:** We welcomed acclaimed local author and journalist Meg Kissinger together with Dr. Shannon Skaistis, a psychologist and Clinical Assistant Professor of Behavioral Health Psychology (BHP) at Carroll University, along with two Master's level BHP students, Ellie Heiman and Taylor-Nicole Rawski. Together, they held a deep and meaningful conversation about sensitive topics related to mental health, including challenging diagnoses, suicide and grief. Among the 38 attendees, many shared their own struggles themselves or within their families and offered resources and hope to one another. This program was made possible with a programming grant from Bridges Library System.

The following week, we welcomed 13 participants to our monthly book discussion of *While You Were Out*, which was chosen in honor of National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Many had attended the program with Meg Kissinger and Carroll University the week prior and were eager to continue discussing her book and topics related to mental health, suicide, grief, and more.



- **Craft Supply Swap:** WPL's first annual Craft Supply Swap was a hit! Patrons were able to donate unused craft supplies for two weeks leading up to the swap. Those who donated received a ticket for early access to all of the donated items. We had 8 library carts full of donations for patrons to pick through. In total, 54 people donated supplies and 103 people came to the event.



Outreach Highlights

801 items were delivered to and borrowed by Waukesha Outreach Patrons in September. The Outreach Services team had 83 in person interactions with outreach patrons this month, and received 79 phone, text, and email requests.

Library & School Collaboration

- Michele and Patron Services Associate Charlie facilitated Library field trips for six 6th grade literacy classes from Les Paul Middle School on September 29 and 30. 150 students learned about Library resources, programming, services and spaces, and listened to a talk about behavior guidelines in the Library. Students also had the opportunity to hear book talks featuring this year's Kids' Choice titles, and more than 50 students signed up for Library cards.

- Michele and Kristine attended the Bridges-sponsored School and Library Partnership meeting at Oconomowoc September 25. Michele shared her Lead the Way conference presentation focusing on creating sustainable long-term partnerships, and she and Kristine enjoyed hearing about partnerships and programming at other public and school libraries.

Community Engagement Highlights

- **September Early Literacy Tips** – Library Associate Rachel Brown shares “Early Literacy Tips” every week with our patrons and staff through a display at the Children’s Reference desk. Library staff then share and model these tips at our weekly programming. Here are a few of the tips we shared in September:
 - Did you know that children can be considered “readers” at all ages, not just when they learn to decode words? Ask your child to retell a story or “read” the pictures to you!
 - Encourage scribbling! This is the way children learn to write. Draw outside with sidewalk chalk and build those finger muscles!
- Rhymes help children see that words are made of smaller parts. Nursery rhymes are short and easy to remember. Sing, read, or say rhymes at any time – while you are playing, bathtime or before bedtime.
- **Waukesha Reads Book Distribution:** Alyssa Pisarski and Library Associate Carley Rymkus hosted a Waukesha Reads Book Distribution at the Waukesha Farmer’s Market on Saturday, September 13. Alyssa and Carley connected with 204 market attendees on the rainy Saturday morning and promoted the upcoming Waukesha Reads season.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, JOHN KLIMA

Studio 321

- 365 patron touch points.
- 41 makers were trained on makerspace equipment.
- Equipment is being reserved out into December.

Activities

- **Book Sorter** – The book sorter continues to have errors stemming from failing terminals. MK is scheduling a technician to come and replace terminals.
- **Revize Web Hosting** – We are working with the City to determine next steps in moving the Library’s website to Revize, the City’s website host. This will provide us with an opportunity to refresh the site and get ready for the Federal accessibility mandates that go into effect April 2026.
- **VEGA** – I updated all our catalog computers to use the new VEGA interface. I also updated links on the website to go to the VEGA interface.
- **Webinars** – I attended several webinars in September: Upgrading Your Library Website Parts 1 & 2, Making Your Website More Accessible, and Welcome to The Library of the Future: Health, Wellbeing, & Sustainability!
 - The Upgrading Your Library Website webinars had a lot of great information which will help as we prepare to redo our website. They included tips like remove image carousels, make



sure your website uses breadcrumbs (see image below for example), make link text information (i.e., do not say 'click here'), avoid 'mystery meat' headers like 'resources' 'links' 'info' etc., the search on the website should search both the website and the catalog, and more.

Staff Documents > Technology > Inventory

- The Making Your Website More Accessible webinar provided invaluable information on how to get your website ready for the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA April 2026 Federal requirement.
- The Library of the Future webinar featured three architects from the MSR group based out of Minneapolis. They talked about their planning process for libraries with regards to environmental impact.
- **CORE Forum** – I am on the planning committee for the CORE Forum conference. The committee met several times in September. I am on the web development team, which means I help make updates to the CORE Forum website and online schedule.
- **ALA Emerging Tech Trends** – I am on the ALA committee for emerging tech trends. The output of the committee is a panel discussion at ALA Annual. We had our first meeting in September. We brainstormed what tech trends other than AI could be discussed at the panel at ALA Annual. We also decided to hold a bi-monthly online tech trend webinar to generate interest in the panel and give library colleagues an opportunity to discuss tech trends with others around the country.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, KORI HALL

Marketing Meetup

Waukesha Public Library hosted the Bridges Marketing Meetup on September 22, bringing together marketing staff from 15 libraries across Waukesha and Jefferson counties. After enjoying a lunch provided by the Bridges Library System, attendees broke into small groups to brainstorm strategies for increasing social media engagement and preventing creative burnout. The group also explored the possibility of collaborating on future video projects to be shared across the library system.



Waukesha Reads

- The Waukesha Reads books are flying out the door! As of September 30, the Library has given away 1,695 paperback copies of *The Seed Keeper*. On Libby, 121 copies of the digital audiobook and 58 copies of the ebook have been checked out.

- Check out our new merch! Waukesha Reads t-shirts, sweatshirts, and mugs have been added to the Library's Bonfire store. All proceeds go to the Friends of Waukesha Public Library to support Library events and services. Get yours now before they're gone! The designs were created by the Library's graphic designer, Maddy Buchta. Buy them here: [Waukesha Public Library | Official Merchandise | Bonfire](#)



- Due to unforeseen changes, the digital Waukesha Reads brochure has been revised. No events were cancelled, but some details have been updated. See the most current version of the brochure [HERE](#).
- The Marketing team has been working hard to promote Waukesha Reads, producing approximately 95 promotional pieces for the 18 Waukesha Reads events and five book discussions scheduled for October. Materials include display slides, social media and website graphics, flyers, signs, newsletter images, and more. During Waukesha Reads, the Library Marketing team supports events for both the Library and its partner organizations.
- Facebook advertising was purchased to promote the following three events: A Conversation with Dan Egan and Dr. Todd Levine; A Brief History of the First Nations of Wisconsin with Aaron Bird Bear; and Seeds and Stories: A Night with Diane Wilson.
- Marketing filled the Library's display cases with a Waukesha Reads exhibit for September and October. The left-hand case highlights this year's book, *The Seed Keeper*, with details about the plot and author, promotional materials for upcoming events, and a preview of the new merchandise. The right-hand display case features the previous 18 titles with small pieces of memorabilia from over the years. It will be available for people to view through the end of October. Be sure to check it out!
- The first Waukesha Reads newsletter was sent out on September 24. Waukesha Reads newsletters will go out 1 or 2 times per week through the end of October to promote Waukesha Reads events.



Other Marketing Projects:

- The August "Welcome" email was sent to 124 new cardholders on September 14. It was opened by 75 people, and nobody unsubscribed.
- September social media statistics:
Adult Facebook and Instagram=27 posts (including 8 reels) and 19 stories
Children's Facebook=29 posts (including 8 reels)
- Sale signs at the Public Services Desk were updated to reflect that bike locks are now available for purchase.
- Newsletter blasts were sent out in September on the following topics: the mental wellness event with Meg Kissinger; limited-edition library cards; the job fair; Waukesha Public Library programs

(September 23-26); Waukesha Reads books and merchandise; and Waukesha Reads events (October 1-6).

- A press release was issued to the *Waukesha Freeman* for the 20th Anniversary Public Art Reception.
 - The Staff Picks showcase was updated in the Vega Catalog and the *Staff Picks* newsletter was sent out.
 - A new booklist, *Spooky Season*, was created and added to the Library's website.
 - Eleven book display signs were created for the month of October.
 - September event information was submitted to the City of Waukesha calendar, the Downtown Waukesha calendar, and the Eras event calendar.
 - September event information was submitted to Peachjar.
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MATERIALS COLLECTION, CAROLYN PEIL

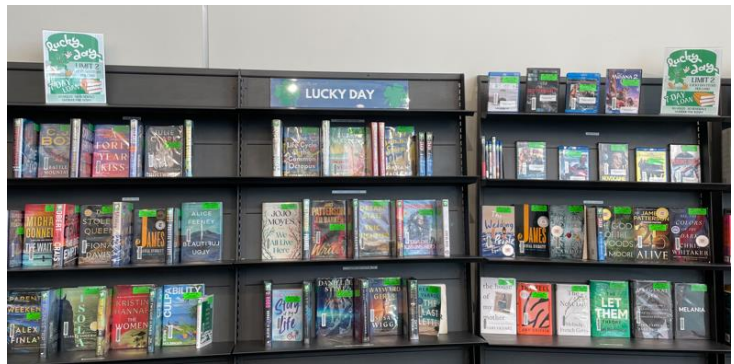
Activities

Lucky Day Update

As of late September, Lucky Day titles have circulated over 3,350 times.

Meetings & Workshops

- Children's Librarian Caitlin Schaffer attended a selection committee meeting for the MCFLS/Bridges Mock Children's Awards on September 17th.
- LA Anne Klug and Library Page Tracy Esser attended a SEWI sponsored book repair workshop on September 23rd at the Wauwatosa Public Library. They returned with a few good tips to help extend the life of some of our materials.



Baker & Taylor

- We experienced some supply chain problems with our primary book vendor, Baker & Taylor, this year. We are actively working to place material orders with other vendors to ensure our customers continue to enjoy the broad selection of books and A/V they've come to expect at WPL.
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PUBLIC SERVICES, JUSTIN STEVENSON

Activities

- The management team continues the implementation of the WPL Service Standards. At the September 11 THAM, Library Director Bruce Gay presented on the standard "We Respect Each Other." Technology Manager John Klima added the standards to the front page of SHARE, the Library staff intranet. Special Projects Coordinator Kelly Davis created a phone etiquette and training document which is currently being reviewed by staff. Additionally, Library Assistant Stacy Hillmer has created an updated phone directory for staff which will display the Service Standards.

- Waukesha launched the new catalog, Vega Discover, on September 2. The new catalog has a fresh user interface as well as new features aimed at improving browsability. The new system is not without its quirks, but the team at Bridges has been working hard on fixing things and communicating issues when they arise.
- The 2025-2026 school year has begun, and it has been an active one so far. A lot of new faces and great energy. This uptick in traffic has meant an increase in behavior issues, but our security apparatus (policies, technology, staff) and partnership with the Les Paul School Resource Officer has been handling things well.
- The Public Services team brainstormed and implemented ways to increase efficiency in the workroom. There are now two main workflow “configurations” that allow staff to reprioritize tasks and responsibilities when staffing levels are low. This gives the team a chance to more quickly work through reshelving carts and get items back on the shelves for patrons.
- New library card designs for Library Card Sign-up Month created by Marketing staff began going out to patrons on September 2, and they were a big hit. **A total of 463 of the new cards went out in the month of September, 191 of the books design, 182 cards with the fox design, and 90 of the yellow retro cards.**
- Materials Collection Manager Carolyn Peil and Public Services Manager Justin Stevenson are testing out a password manager software called 1Password as part of a pilot group through City IT.
- The Alameda County Library in Albany, California contacted Justin to request a Waukesha Public Library card. It will be displayed in their library on a large map of the United States with cards representing each state.
- Sarah Thompson, the Adult Services Librarian at Town Hall Library, visited the Waukesha Public Library on September 24 to shadow Librarian Paula Mason and Justin during a reference desk shift. This was a combination of professional curiosity—Sarah wanted to see how a large library does reference—and an assignment from her Master of Library Science program.
- Charlie Carerros and Librarian Michele Gagner led tours for Les Paul 6th graders the week of September 29. These tours give us the chance to show new Les Paul students the building, communicate our behavior expectations, and introduce them to potential reads through book talks.
- The Library has begun selling bike locks at the circ desk. This is an attempt to cut down on a recent increase in bike thefts at the Library.

