

**MEMORANDUM:**

**To:** Winnefox Library System Trustees  
**From:** Clairellyn Sommersmith, Director  
**Subject:** Report of System Activities  
**Date:** 15 September 2025

**Postcard and Advocacy Update:** The statewide “Speak Up for Libraries” postcard campaign wrapped up in August. Wisconsin library champions sent over 11,000 postcards to federal legislators. The state is cautiously optimistic about IMLS funding and authorization following favorable subcommittee votes in both the Senate and the House, which recommend that IMLS be appropriated \$291.8M for federal fiscal year 2026. The Grants to States program is allotted \$180,400,000, an increase of \$400K from 2025 enacted. We await a final Congressional vote later this fall.

**Director Activities:** I will be sitting on two panels at the WLA Conference in October in Middleton. The first is called “Care Less: Change the Way You Work, Not the Work You Love.” Angela Schneider, Winnefox Public Library Development Consultant, Nancy Bell, Ripon Public Library Director, and I will be talking about the ways in which small library staff can reprioritize and refocus their work to avoid burnout. My second panel is with other system staff and Bureau of Libraries staff highlighting the Policy of the Month Club. Early registration for the conference closes on September 22.

**Staff News:** We held our annual staff retreat last week. This was a chance to work together, brainstorm, discuss the strategic plan, and start the process of updating the Winnefox Extranet website. Plus, we used the makerspace at the library in Menasha, SmithWorks, to make one-of-a-kind mugs.

**Library News:** The Winnefox passport program concluded in August. We had over 3,555 visits by people collecting stamps in their passports. 228 people visited every library in their home county. 66 of those people visited all 30 Winnefox member libraries. 15 Winnefox member staff took on the Passport Adventure challenge.

Fond du Lac Public Library is currently hiring a new director; Jon Mark Bolthouse left the library to take the position of director at North Suburban Library District in Illinois. Leon-Saxeville Library in Pine River has hired a new library director. Carly Terry had previously interned and clerked at the library before taking the role of director in late August.

Oshkosh Public Library celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Fox 11 featured the anniversary on September 3, interviewing library employees Michael McArthur, Joan Kaeding, and Laura McDonald.

Princeton Public Library was one of the 40 libraries to receive a PBS/WETA grant to celebrate America’s 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. They will be screening parts of Ken Burns’ upcoming PBS documentary series The American Revolution, hosting a New Year’s Revolution volunteer fair, holding a lecture series, giving away pocket-sized Constitutions on Constitution Day, participating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations, and having a special reading challenge/book club.