

MEMORANDUM:

To: Winnefox Library System Trustees
From: Clairelyn Sommersmith, Director
Subject: Report of System Activities
Date: January 22, 2026

Director Activities: In late December, Karla Smith and I posted the ILS Specialist vacancy. We have begun the interview process and hope to make an offer in mid-February. I am supporting library directors as they begin work on their Annual Reports; I will be hosting a new director's Annual Report Training on January 30. I will also be attending Library Legislative Day between now and the next board meeting.

System News: We are hosting the Winnefox Annual Meeting on Tuesday January 27 at the Caestecker Library in Green Lake. All 30 library directors are registered to attend, along with the 13 current full-time Winnefox staff. We have invited Kara Sullivan, Wisconsin Library Association Executive Director, and Ben Miller, Wisconsin State Librarian, to attend the Annual Meeting to hear directly from library directors about the successes and challenges of public librarianship in the state.

Library News: Oshkosh Public Library launched its JobPod earlier in January. The JobPod was created in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, the Nicolet Federated Library System and the Brown County library system and will offer onsite services and equipment to jobseekers.

Neenah Public Library is launching their new brand and website on Saturday, January 24 with an open house at the library. Jeremiah Harland has been hard at work creating their new site, with significant improvements to allow staff to more easily change the layout of individual pages and integration of the calendar events.

The Plainfield Library has been selected as the recipient of a Visionary Grant from the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin, which will provide \$45,000 over the next five years. They celebrated this award and the recently completed carpeting project with an open house on January 17.

Hancock Public Library will be hosting an open house celebration on February 14th in honor of their new community meeting room.

2025 in Review: This is a chance to look back at the past year and highlight just some of the accomplishments and successes from the system and Winnefox libraries.

- Winnefox launched a new five-year strategic plan.

- Six new library directors started: Rachel Fuller, Fond du Lac; Carly Terry, Pine River; Merra Albosta, Plainfield; Nancy Bell, Ripon; Marsha Schneider, Poy Sippi; Stephanie Addison, Westfield
- In February, Elisha D. Smith Library opened their remodeled building. Their visits and program attendance has increased significantly since then.
- In October, Brandon Public Library opened in their remodeled and expanded library. This project was decades in the making and the new library is a charming, inviting space.
- Hancock Public Library and Ripon Public Library began their flexible facilities expansion/remodel projects. Ripon hopes to open their new facility in November of this year.
- Plainfield and Endeavor Public Library received infrastructure grants from Winnefox to assist in their carpeting projects.
- Patterson Memorial Library in Wild Rose opened their JobPod in April.
- Neenah and Oshkosh Public Library opened new meeting rooms to their second floors.
- Ripon and Berlin Public Library received \$10,000 from the Carnegie Foundation. Berlin intends to revitalize the library façade on the Carnegie side of the building.
- Wisconsin library patrons sent over 11,000 postcards to federal legislators speaking to the importance of library service in the wake of the pulled IMLS funding. IMLS funding was restored in December. Angela Schneider played a crucial role in disseminating this campaign to our member libraries.
- With LSTA funding, Oshkosh Public Library hosted a teen intern last summer. Winnefox handles the financial administration for this state grant.
- Libby/Overdrive circulation increased by 3.3% between 2024 and 2025