

Director's Report October 2025

Respectfully Presented by Nikki Ericksen, Library Director

Programming

Fall programming is back in full swing. The last to return will be Ladies' Tea and Talk on November 5. We had moderate success with this program last spring so we will continue to offer this program and see how it goes.

We are still eager to offer some form of adult education. I am working with Cyber MT, a coalition out of the University of Montana using legislated funds to teach rural Montanans about cyber safety and security. We will hopefully be offering workshops to the community.

We are looking for additional resources as well as community-member teachers to bring educational opportunities to the library schedule.

Education and Meetings

Brandon and I attended the fall Tamarack Federation meeting on October 16th. The meeting began with the usual joys and concerns shared from each library. Our joys that I shared were our new Friends of the Plains Library and also my fantastic, hard-working board of trustees. Our concern was our facility and the future challenges we will be facing.

Cara Orben shared with the group how the MSL has been getting by with the federal government shutdown as most operations at the state library are federally funded. Fortunately, they had saved enough the last time when they thought they would lose a considerable amount of their funding that they have enough funding to continue for now.

Cara gave an update on the MSL commission. The Commission will hold a public hearing on November 3 on two topics that, if passed, will result in a change to the Administrative Rules of Montana.

1. The first topic will take place at 9 a.m. regarding a reduction to the average required number of hours a library must be open each week based on library size. This would change the Public Library Standard related to this topic. It would not affect Plains Library as we already exceed the required minimum and do not wish to reduce hours.
2. The second hearing will take place at 10 a.m. regarding a change to the certification process and eligibility of continuing education credits for the MSL certification. The key changes are that there will only be one track (rather than trustee, staff and director) and it will be director focused only. Only MSL Course Catalog courses will be eligible for CE credits.

Lastly, Cara shared that MSL is looking for ideas for retreat trainings in the Spring 2026. Ideas include information about AI and how librarians and trustees can use it in their roles;

more on Roberts Rules of Order from Morgan Ray, Director of Library Services at FVCC; and Mark Wetherington's presentation on social media and libraries.

Fundraising

This year's fall silent auction fundraiser is going well. At the time of this writing, there are \$1,147 in bids. There are a total of 32 items donated by local businesses and artists. There was about \$165 in overhead costs.

The additional support from our new Friends of the Plains Library made a huge difference in this fundraiser. This is the first time that members contributed to a library fundraiser. Members took on the role of reaching out to previous donors and facilitating their donations. This reduced the number of staff hours required to put the fundraiser together. Altogether, staff hours totaled 20 hours.

Staff and Volunteers

Melissa Rowland is leaving us. We wish her a fond farewell and wish her happy days in her new role as "mom".

We welcomed a new volunteer this week. Cheyenne is a high school student and she will be earning community service hours toward her graduation requirement.

That brings us to a total of 4 regular volunteers at the library and we are averaging between 25 and 30 volunteer hours per month. Every hour they donate pushes the library a little higher and our reach a little farther. As a token of our appreciation, I have designed and purchased shirts for them. The shirts will help them be recognized for their contribution and show off their library support. If you see one of these ladies, please thank them.

Monica Martin
Nora Verpoorten
Denise Montgomery
Cheyenne Little Whirlwind



Facility

Automatic Door Project: We are on Matt Field's schedule for December 1. We will hopefully have this project completed by the end of the year.

Easy Shelf Modification: We contacted Mike Taylor about the approval of his bid. He had some projects come up in the meantime so we will be shooting for December or January.

I am still seeking bids for a building inspection and to replace the office door.

The city has been doing some work on our shed door that has days that it won't open. It is an ongoing problem.

Brad (city maintenance) used a grinder this morning (10/22) to reduce friction on the southwest-facing door that was getting stuck.

September Statistics

CD	9
CHAPTER	5
DISPLAY	70
DVD	136
EASY	135
EASY-NF	11
FICTION	89
JUV-BIO	8
JUV-FICT	63
JUV-NF	23
MONTANA	19
MYSTERY	58
NEW-BOOK	79
NON FICTION	41
SCI-FI	10
STACKS	120
WESTERN	8
YA	21
Total	922

New Patrons	13
Computer Users	60
Volunteer Hours	25
Crates to Missoula	19
Crates from Missoula	18

Programming Attendance

Ages 0-5	43
General Interest	54