

Director's Report August 26, 2026

Welcome! Thank you for joining us at Rawson Memorial Library! And thank you to Pam and her staff for hosting. If you get a chance, take a look around before you go, as the library has been renovated and looks amazing!

Welcome New Directors!

Welcome Nathan Hepworth, the new Director of the West Branch District Library, and Ammanda Malloy, the new Director at Deckerville Public Library!

Congratulations!

I know President Nicole sent an email to our listserv, but I wanted to formally congratulate Christian Dunham on becoming the next White Pine Library Cooperative Director! The Bullard Sanford Memorial Library will be having a Goodbye Party for Christian on September 9 from 5-7 pm. He will start at the Coop on September 14.

State Aid

The State Budget has state aid increasing by \$350,000 this year as a one-time increase. This roughly translates to 8/10 of a penny, or about 1 cent per capita. So not a great increase, but an increase, nonetheless. Joe Hamlin shared that it should take the amount to \$.276143 per payment or \$.552286.

E-Rate Funding for Schools and Libraries Faces Termination

The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) is urging broadband stakeholders and community members who depend on E-Rate funding to publicly comment on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposal to terminate the program.

Stakeholders can [make their voice heard through the Save Our E-Rate portal hosted by SHLB](#). Filing an official comment through the portal ensures that the FCC understands how E-Rate supports connectivity in schools, libraries, and communities around Michigan.

Marketing Questions for Katie Rothley

Katie Rothley is a familiar name on the Mich-Lib listserv, and she will be sharing all things marketing at our Annual Meeting. Katie has asked me to have our members submit questions about marketing, social media, and analytics so she can address them during her presentation. Feel free to email me with any questions you have, and I will keep a running list to share with her. Thank you for helping us make her presentation as useful as possible for you!

Ambient RLA

Is a go! OverDrive's Ambient RLA is LIVE!!!

If you haven't heard, you no longer need to add libraries (content groups) individually to your Libby account! This will be done for you after you log in with your library card. Check out the blog here for more information! Very excited about this for all our patrons!

MLA Annual Conference and Pre-Conference 2026

Registration is OPEN for the MLA 2026 Annual Conference: Beyond Buzzwords: An Enduring Public Good, AND the MLA 2026 Pre-Conference: A Beginner's Guide to Human-Centered AI and Libraries. Register now to reserve your spot! This October 28-30, you're invited to join the Michigan library community in Novi for the **MLA 2026 Annual Conference: Beyond Buzzwords: An Enduring Public Good**. Plus, don't miss the pre-conference on Tuesday, October 27: **A Beginner's Guide to Human-Centered AI and Libraries**. Our conference theme this year is all about celebrating the enduring power of libraries. We're moving beyond buzzwords, looking beyond the latest fads and passing trends to focus on the ideas, programs, and practices that demonstrate the lasting value of libraries and the essential role they play in our communities. From breakout sessions offering practical ideas, fresh perspectives, and opportunities to learn from colleagues across the state, to an exciting lineup of keynote speakers and special events, get ready for three days of big-picture thinking and actionable insights that can move the needle! Full conference Early Bird Registration is only \$365 for MLA members. Early Bird Rates are valid through Friday, September 4.

Consumers Energy Foundation 2026 Community Impact Awards!

We are pleased to share that the Consumers Energy Foundation is now accepting applications for the new 2026 Community Impact Awards. The Community Impact Award Program will provide grants of **up to \$20,000** per project, with a total of \$500,000 available for funding. The program supports community-led projects that address a demonstrated need and deliver clear community benefit, measurable outcomes, and local collaboration.

The Consumers Energy Foundation is seeking applications from eligible nonprofits, municipalities, and federally recognized Tribal Governments for projects that:

- Address a demonstrated community need
- Align with one or more Foundation focus areas: People, Planet, or Prosperity
- Address a demonstrated community need with a clearly defined project plan
- Create visible and meaningful improvements that benefit the community
- Engage residents and promote community involvement
- Collaborate with other local organizations to enhance project impact

Please share this grant opportunity with organizations in your area that may be interested in applying. Attached is the Community Impact Awards public handout, which can be shared directly with community partners and applicants. Applications are available here: **[2026 Community Impact Award Application Link](#)**.

The deadline to apply is **5:00 PM on September 15, 2026**. Eligible nonprofit applicants must have annual revenue of \$500,000 or less based on their most recently completed fiscal year. We appreciate your partnership as we continue investing in projects that strengthen local communities and improve quality of life throughout the Consumers Energy service territory. Applicants may request an invitation to participate in a **virtual office hour** session to ask questions about the program on **Wednesday, Aug. 19 or Sept. 2 from 2:00-3:00 PM** by sending an email to Sheril.S.Tarrant@cmsenergy.com. Please contact Madison Jarmon, Senior Community Affairs Manager | Consumers Energy, 4141 Wilder Rd. | Bay City, MI 48706 C: 989-274-5343

Info from the office hours...

This is a pilot program, so the organization is looking for unique projects that align with its three objectives: **People, Planet, and Prosperity**. One of my main questions was whether libraries were eligible since they were not specifically listed in the eligibility information. That was actually the primary reason I attended the office hours. After some discussion, I learned that **libraries can be eligible**:

- **501(c)(3) libraries** are eligible.
- **Village, city, and township libraries** are eligible when their municipality serves as their governing body.
- **District libraries** are also eligible. Once I raised the question, it was clarified that district libraries are treated similarly to nonprofits and are considered governmental entities.
- If you can partner with a **501(c)(3) organization**, it's even better! Potential partners could include your Friends of the Library group, a historical society, or your local municipality.
- You do have to create an account to access the application. [**2026 Community Impact Award Application Link.**](#)

Projects must be **community-led** and result in visible improvements in the local community. This is a competitive grant process, and projects must focus on **recreational, educational, or environmental purposes**. Capital construction and infrastructure projects are not eligible.

Important Dates:

- Grant window opened: **August 10**
- Applications due: **5:00 p.m. on September 15**
- Awards announced: **By October 31**, following a full review
- Projects must be completed by: **December 31, 2027**

Consumers also offers other grant opportunities that are **not funded through the Foundation**, so be sure to explore those opportunities as well. This could be a great opportunity for libraries to think creatively about projects that make a meaningful, visible difference in their communities! [Grant Seekers: Click Here.](#)

Fall County Community Grants

Does your county have a Community Foundation? Check them out and see if they have a fall grant cycle.

Speaking of money...

[Reimbursable Support Services](#)

Each member library has **\$900 available through September 18** for programming, tech support, and legal expenses. Not sure whether your project or purchase fits into one of these categories? **Please email me!** This reimbursable program is designed to support you and your library, and the eligible categories are flexible. If you aren't sure if you have submitted receipts, let me know, and I will report back to you!

[Library Association Reimbursement](#)

Have you paid dues to a library association, such as MLA? **Send me your receipts!** We can reimburse you for eligible association dues up to a specified dollar amount.

Don't leave money on the table; take advantage of these available funds! 😊

[Google Doc Programming Listing](#)

Please add performers and contact information. The list has about 40 so far!

Your Library Policies

Reviewing and updating policies is important. Check out these resources if you need guidance.

LOM: [Niche Academy Library Policies](#). If this link does not work, go to the [Continuing Ed](#) page, click on Niche Staff Skills, and then search library policies. [Administrative Resources](#)

ALA: [Library Policy Guidelines](#)

Kent District: [KDL Policies](#)

MI Right to Read: [MLA's Intellectual Freedom Tool Kit](#)

Housekeeping Reminders...

Member Directory: Just a quick reminder that if your information has changed, like email, hours, etc., please let Alison know. [Member Directory](#)