

OCPL Director's Report

September 2026

1. Programs and Services: Attendance at programs in July was very good. We finished Summer Reading strong, although our attendance numbers for the End of Summer Bash were smaller than previous summers due to rain. There were fewer children's programs in August due to the transition between Youth Services Librarians (plus the fact that Youth Services traditionally takes a bit of break in August to regroup from Summer Reading, file end-of-grant reports, and so on). We did conduct some great programming in August, however, including Bingo, Vision Screening by the Salem Lion's Club, and a Saturday puzzle swap. See the branch heads' reports for more details.

2. Usage Statistics and Narratives: Usage statistics for July and August as well as individual branch/department narratives are attached.

3. Finance and Budget: OCPL budget figures for FY27 to date are attached.

4. Personnel and Training: Emily Johnson, our Youth Services Librarian, left the library at the end of July. Tabitha Johnson was hired as her replacement, and started on August 25. Tabitha has an MLIS degree from Syracuse and has experience in youth librarianship at several different libraries in South Carolina and North Carolina. DJ Wharton, the Youth Services Assistant, also left the library at the end of July. We have promoted Ashtyn Zavala from circulation assistant in Walhalla to the Youth Services assistant position. She will start after Labor Day. Ashtyn has a Master's in English from Clemson with a specialty in Young Adult literature.

5. Building and Grounds: Facilities Maintenance was able to install a mini split HVAC unit in the staff area of the Seneca Library. This will hopefully alleviate some of the issues they have been having there. We are considering that for the HVAC in the Macaulay Room in the rear of the Walhalla Library. Several of our other HVAC unit at the Walhalla Library are in need of repairs. It was suggested by Jason Neal, head of Facilities Maintenance, that we include a request for new HVAC units for Walhalla and Westminster in the FY28 budget request to County Council. The existing units were installed in 2011 and are requiring more repair each season.

6. Technology: We will need to replace our aging telescopes and microscopes as part of the Library of Things. Most of that equipment came from a STEM camp grant in 2012. We will research the best models for public use and purchase new equipment in this fiscal year if possible.

7. Friends of the Library: Used book sales have continued each Thursday from 10:00 to 3:30 p.m. Their Books on the Alley location in M. Tannery and Sons on Ram Cat Alley also does very well, as did the lobby sales in Walhalla and Seneca. The Friends have received several large donations recently, and have processed them fairly quickly.

Book Sales collected July & August 2026:

Basement \$6,129.16

Booth \$4,365.00

Lobby \$ 771.00

Seneca \$ 150.00

2nd Party Sales \$ 203.00

Online Sales \$ 552.01

Total Book Sales Revenue \$12,170.17

8. Oconee County: Ordinance 2026-27 was introduced on August 18, 2026. It constrains any county department from using any monies, whether state, Federal, or donated/grant/foundation, to fund a position without that position being approved as part of the classification schedule of county positions. Since the library has, at least in the time of this director, never received a new position from the county, the effect of this ordinance will be that the library will no longer be able to apply for grants that might include personnel. Further, we believe this will end our Library Resource position.

9. State Library: The state finally passed a budget in August 2026. We will be receiving the same amount as last year, \$215,814.35, in State Aid.

10. Community Involvement: If Ordinance 2026-27 has the effect of ending our Library Resource position, a sizeable portion of our community involvement will have to end. We will attempt to maintain partnerships that have been formed in this four-year period, and try to serve users of these services the best that we can. Taking staff time away from other duties and library programming will still not have the same impact as having a trained and dedicated resource expert to guide users through getting what they need. Brittany Castro is participating in the 2026 class of Leadership Oconee. We also continue to work with the Healthy Oconee Coalition, are on the board of Oconee County First Steps, and work with the Oconee County Chamber.

11. Other: Story Times will resume in September as well as other youth programming. Again, please mark your calendars for Thursday, October 15 from 6 PM to 8 PM. This will be the evening of the Volunteer Appreciation dinner at the Walhalla Depot.

	July 2025	July 2026	Change	Aug 2025	Aug 2026	Change
Visits to Library	14,620	13,974	-4.4%	12,367	12,579	1.7%
Material Circulation - LOT	161	167	3.7%	119	124	4.2%
Material Circulation - Adult	12,580	11,484	-8.7%	11,560	11,451	-0.9%
Material Circulation - Youth	1,986	1,080	-45.6%	983	945	-3.9%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	11,033	11,762	6.6%	8,711	10,268	17.9%
Total Material Circulation	25,760	24,493	-4.9%	21,373	22,788	6.6%
Internet Uses	934	765	-18.1%	832	671	-19.4%
Internet Hours of Use	451	362	-19.7%	429	327	-23.8%
New Cards Issued	202	166	-17.8%	156	148	-5.1%
Programs - Adult	6	14	133.3%	4	8	100.0%
Programs Attendance - Adult	54	111	105.6%	25	60	140.0%
Programs - Youth 12-18	3	2	-33.3%	1	2	100.0%
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	14	38	171.4%	4	6	50.0%
Programs - Juvenile 6-11	9	8	-11.1%	3	3	0.0%
Programs Att -Juv 6-11	179	135	-24.6%	39	25	-35.9%
Programs - Children 0-5	6	10	66.7%	5	0	-100.0%
Programs - Att - Children 0-5	266	285	7.1%	141	0	-100.0%
Programs - All Ages	8	6	-25.0%	5	4	-20.0%
Programs Att - All Ages	529	434	-18.0%	97	73	-24.7%
Programs Att - Passive	597	1,175	96.8%	339	423	24.8%
Outreach Activities	5	4	-20.0%	3	0	-100.0%
Outreach Act. Attendance	383	432	12.8%	231	0	-100.0%
Public Training Sessions	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Participants	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Hours	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Staff Training Sessions	0	0		0	1	
Staff Training Participants	0	0		0	1	
Staff Training Hours	0	0		0	5	
Number of New Volunteers	2	6	200.0%	1	4	300.0%
Number of Vol Hours	40	202	403.8%	39	56	44.2%
Meeting Room Use (Staff)	0	19		0	14	
Meeting Room Use (Public)	0	20		0	39	
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	1	0	-100.0%	0	0	
Number of Web Site Hits	13,420	15,293	14.0%	10,780	13,460	24.9%
Wi-Fi Users	253	208	-17.8%	228	198	-13.2%
Wi-Fi Sessions	1,756	1,569	-10.6%	1,568	1,456	-7.1%
Hoopla Checkouts	1,244	1,572	26.4%	1,433	1,880	
CloudLibrary Downloads	3,751	4,053	8.1%	3,980	3,759	-5.6%
Ancestry.com Hits	173	491	183.8%	123	81	-34.1%
Interlibrary Loans	41	30	-26.8%	59	37	-37.3%
New Material Added	526	479	-8.9%	862	987	14.5%

OCPL BUDGET 2026-2027- 9-11--26

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
Local Budget					
010-206-30018-00000	Travel	1,500.00	663.48	44%	837
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,700.00	2,650	98%	50
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	130,000.00	25,187	19%	104,813
010-206-30056-00000	Data Processing	31,749.00	31,489	99%	260
010-206-30059-00000	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	11,000.00	1,720	16%	9,280
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750.00	115	15%	635
010-206-30084-00000	School, Training, Sem.	2,500.00	1,449	58%	1,051
010-206-30090-00000	Honorarium	900.00	900	100%	0
010-206-33022-00207	Bldg Maint - Walhalla	8,000.00	2,869	36%	5,131
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	4,000.00	2,276	57%	1,724
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	3,000.00	1,584	53%	1,416
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,000.00	1,464	73%	536
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	18,000.00	4,170	23%	13,830
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	12,000.00	2,508	21%	9,492
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	9,000.00	1,204	13%	7,796
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000.00	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,800.00	485	27%	1,315
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	1,800.00	381	21%	1,419
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	2,200.00	138	6%	2,062
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,800.00		0%	2,800
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000.00	3,397	57%	2,603
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000.00	61	3%	1,939
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	300.00	171	57%	129
010-206-40034-00000	Food	250.00		0%	250
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	87,000.00	31,901	37%	55,099
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	23,000.00	22,569	98%	431
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,500.00	3,120	27%	8,380
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500.00	355	24%	1,145
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	3,000.00	557	19%	2,443
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	2,500.00	682	27%	1,818
TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS		387,749	149,066	38%	238,683
MISC. FUNDS					
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	74,205		0%	74,205
013-080-00835-92056	Nettles Trust	60,827		0%	60,827
TOTAL MISC. FUNDS					135,032
State Aid Budget - \$216814.35					
240-206-30025-00255	Professional - Staffmark	39,573.35	3702.42	9%	35,870.93
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	24,785.00	14,377.97	58%	10,407.03
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	500.00		0%	500.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	3,000.00		0%	3,000.00
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital Equip (State)	7,500.00		0%	7,500.00
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	12,500.00	693.37	6%	11,806.63
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	1,500.00	115.26	8%	1,384.74
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	82,500.00		0%	82,500.00
240-206-40112-00255	Periodicals (State)	32,356.00	30,876.73	95%	1,479.27
240-206-40113-00255	AV (State)	12,600.00		0%	12,600.00
Total State Aid Funds		\$216,814.35	49,765.75	23%	167,048.60

Recurring Programs

All of our recurring programs still met in July and August. Our volunteer-led book club, "The Little Walhalla Book Club," continues to average 15 people per month. The book club meets at Alexander's Coffee Shop on the first Wednesday of each month. Our all-ages Chess Club averages 8-10 in attendance. After running Chess Club for two years, I felt it was time to step away. A volunteer quickly agreed to take over so that Chess Club can continue. Book Buzz, which meets at Mountain Mocha on the third Friday of every month, continues to average 8 per month. In July, we met virtually with Chuck Walsh, an author from Columbia, to hear about his latest book. We held our quarterly puzzle swap in August. Twice as many people attended as the last puzzle swap.

Other Programs

July was as busy as June with adult programs. In addition to recurring programs, we had several crafts, like diamond art, shark tooth art, and resin jewelry making. The resin class was very popular. One of the attendees mentioned at another program that she had already worn the earrings she made and was eager to make more. Liz Boles-Johnson, the park ranger at High Falls County Park, visited the Westminster branch to give a lesson on botanical dyes. Participants were able to dye their own sack at the end of the lesson.

Our biggest adult program in June was an author event with Deeanne Gist. Ms. Gist is a best-selling, award-winning historical fiction author. We have several of her books in our collection. More recently, she has independently published romance novels under the pen name Dakota Lacoy. Her presentation was titled "8 Things I Wish I Knew Before I Started Writing". It was very informative. We had eighteen in attendance, and the program received excellent feedback.

August was a light month for programming as we reset from Summer Reading. In addition to recurring programs, we hosted Freda Merck from The Soulful Collective for a sound bath. This program filled quickly and was well received.

Professional Development

I have continued with the Leadership Oconee Program. July's class focused on health with a visit to Oconee Memorial. August's class highlighted the county's arts and history groups. It included visits to BRAC and Foothills Farmstead. It has been a great insight into the broader workings of Oconee County and a fabulous networking opportunity.

Additional Projects

Much of August was spent planning and securing partnerships for "Save in September". This is an initiative we're launching to celebrate National Library Card Signup Month in September. We're partnering with local businesses who will offer special discounts to customers who show their library cards.

Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, July & August 2026

Angie Clark-Bookmobile Manager

Special Outreach

July:

Westminster Branch Visit: The bookmobile was set up for patrons to look around or check out books.

End of Summer Reading Bash-South Cove: Even though we had rain, we had 127 patrons come by and visit the bookmobile. 22 items were checked out and we signed up one new patron for a library card.

Westminster Elementary: I was asked to come to back to school night. Leah, the manager from Westminster assisted. We signed up 28 new patrons for a library card.

August:

No special outreach

Statistics

Category	July 2026	August 2026
Regular Scheduled Stops	16	20
Hours Open	13	15.25
Total Attendance	274	367
Volunteers/Hours	4/26hrs	8/28.25 hrs
Outreach Stops	3	0
Outreach Visitors	282	0
Outreach Hours	5.5	0
New Cards	33	3
Programs-Passive	0	30

Salem Library
Kayla Rucker
Branch Manager
Jul/Aug 2026

Programming, Operations, Staff Development, etc....

July was a busy month for the Salem Library. We provided several events for different ages groups. Although children returned to school in August, we had a steady influx of patrons in the library and at special events. July also welcomed a new staff member that has adapted well to the Salem branch.

- ☞ In July, we had three Cliffs Residents Outreach-sponsored events: Tie-Dye Time, Prehistoric Pockets, and Harry Potter Birthday Celebration: The Golden Snitch. At the end of each program, along with their completed craft, each child received a Summer Reading-themed book to take home. The CRO also provided volunteers for each event, which was a huge help to me. We had 122 in attendance for CRO-sponsored events during the summer.
- ☞ We also had a new year-round volunteer begin assisting in the summer. Her name is Kristin Zima. We are looking forward to having her help with more programming in the future.
- ☞ Our most attended program in July was the Harry Potter Birthday Celebration: The Golden Snitch with 23 attendees. Each child made their own Golden Snitch to celebrate Harry Potter's upcoming birthday.
- ☞ In addition to the CRO-sponsored programs, we also hosted Coffee and Crafts in July. Each attendee made a trinket dish using napkins, mod podge, and oysters. There were 10 adults in attendance for this event.
- ☞ In August, our most attended program was Family BINGO. There were 24 in attendance that received books and other fun prizes.
- ☞ Salem also hosted a diamond art program in anticipation of National Book Lover's Day. There were 19 in attendance, which has prompted a new program series called Diamond Painting Club. This series of programming will begin in October and be held every other month.
- ☞ On National Dog Day (August 26th), we held a special LEGO Club Challenge. Each child received a LEGO dog kit to build and take home. There were 12 in attendance.
- ☞ Our monthly book club, Page Turners, brought in 3 attendees for both July and August. In July, we read The Fossil Hunter by Tea Cooper. We discussed Skylark by Paula McLain in August.

- ☞ Our take and make craft kits stay in demand for families unable to attend in-person events. In July and August, we distributed 36 kits.
- ☞ On July 6th, our new Circulation Assistant, Mandolyn Harkness, started at the Salem branch. Mandolyn has adjusted well at Salem and will begin to host events this fall.
- ☞ In early August, the Salem branch experienced a severe storm that knocked out our AWE (early literacy workstation) computer. Fortunately, we were able to send it off for repair and get it back up and running quickly.
- ☞ In late August, the Salem staff started to inventory all materials in the library. This project should be finished by mid to late September.
- ☞ The Salem branch has lots of fall plans in the works. We will have a booth at the Fall Festival in Salem and provide events each day for children in Oconee during their fall break week.

Stats	Jul	Aug
Visits	1701	1596
New Cards	10	4
ILLs	3	4

PREHISTORIC POCKETS SALEM LIBRARY JULY 2026



DIAMOND ART BOOK COASTERS AUGUST 2026 SALEM LIBRARY



Ann Rogers Memorial Room

July/August 2026

Quientell Walker, Local History Associate

Narrative

Carolina Days Wrap-up:

Carolina Days was a success! We had several active programs from Youth Services and Adult Services. Youth Services hosted Tasting the Revolution in which the library was able to provide Colonial Period tea for participants to taste. Also, Adult Services hosted South Carolina Bingo, and prizes were related to South Carolina and the American Revolution.

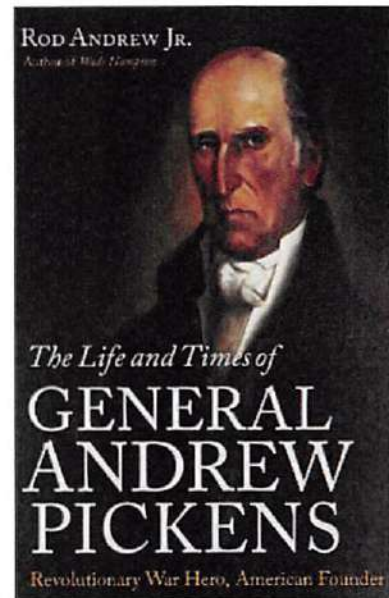
I prepared the materials for the Carolina Days passive programs. These programs consisted of the following: 250 Hiking Kits, 250 Children's Craft Kits, and 20 Reading Kits. I could not have done this without the help of Jahzuby and Lillie from the Circulation Department. I was also able to provide Hiking and Children's Craft Kits to High Falls for event they were having, and I was informed that all provided kits were distributed. In short, the library distributed 520 kits within July! Lastly, I assisted the Oconee History Museum with its Revolutionary Reads book discussion series. On July 21st the book for discussion was *The life and times of General Andrew Pickens: Revolutionary War Hero, American Father* by Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr. With the funding from the Carolina Days Grant, the library provided 20 reading kits that included a copy of the book. We had several people in attendance, and we had a delightful time discussing Andrew Pickens.

Oconee SC 250 Committee:

As President of the Oconee SC 250 Committee, I can attest to how active we have been throughout July and August.

Oconee SC 250 received a grant to publish the new Oconee During the American Revolution Map! The map depicts the Cherokee Lower Towns, Williamson Campaign route, and much more. This map was created with the aid of the Oconee County GIS Department, Cherokee Lower Town coordinates from the Margaret Mills Seaborn Map, and my research on the Williamson Campaign. We have noted and informed people that both the coordinates are off, and that the sites are either under the lakes or on private property. The maps are free and will be distributed at the Walhalla and Seneca Libraries, and the various museums in the county. Also, the maps will be distributed to interested South Carolina and national institutions.

On August 6th Oconee SC 250 hosted a book discussion on *The life and times of General Andrew Pickens: Revolutionary War Hero, American Father* with the author Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr at South Cove County Park. Dr. Andrew is a History Professor at Clemson University, and he provided insight into his research on Andrew Pickens, and how these various resources were used to write the biography. Unlike his contemporaries, Andrew Pickens neither created nor left a full account of his life and military service. He did respond to an inquiry from a friend, but the information was limited and did not provide a full scope of his life and military service.



Lastly, Oconee SC 250 served as the host for the South Carolina SC 250 Commission as well as other SC 250 Committee members throughout the state. The decision for Oconee to host was due it also being the 250th Anniversary of the Ring Fight, which occurred near Tamasee Town. This event entailed multiple planning sessions with the staff SC 250, and the Oconee SC 250 Marketing Subcommittee. These planning sessions included hotel, tours, and space to hold the Commission Meeting. On Sunday, August 23rd attendees were given a tour of historic sites in Oconee County. One site of particular interest is South Cove County Park, for it contains the burial of Patriot Jesse Hall. On Monday, August 24th the State Commission meeting was held at South Cove County Park. The Walhalla DAR Chapter, we have two members on our committee, presented a restored copy of the Treaty of DeWitt's Corner, and I presented a copy of the aforesaid map and provided copies for the attendees. The SC 250 staff were also given copies for distribute at the State Fairgrounds.

OCPL Digitization Projects:

It is my goal to work towards resuming the various digitization projects I have had lined up for the past few months. SC 250 has taken a lot of my time, and I have been more focused on providing immediate patron service over being engaged with the digitization of selected materials.

To ensure that OCPL remains in compliance with the South Carolina Digital Library I took the step of scheduling a meeting with our representative at the University of South Carolina. In short, the majority of our processes will not change. However, there is a move to work towards making the resources more ADA complainant. Although, our material falls within a gray area Blair and I have decided to take the step to make our upcoming digitized material ADA complainant. USC has offered to provide additional instruction and assistance.

Outside the Library:

The State Library hosted the SC250 Idea Exchange. There were multiple libraries discussing what they did to observe SC 250. I did present on what OCPL did for Carolina Days as well as my involvement with the Oconee SC 250 Committee. Likewise, I learned a great deal from the other presenters. In particular, I enjoyed learning more about 3D Printing from the AHL Library Director and I look forward to a potential grant writing presentation from the Georgetown Library Director. At this time, I believe I could be the only librarian that is the President of their county SC 250 Committee.



Rogers Room Statistics:

*Due to activity with SC 250, I been in and out the library most of July and August. However, I did have members of a Family Reunion stop by in July.

Statistics Recorded	July 2025	July 2026	August 2025	August 2026
Walk-In	8	20	3	-
Phone Call	0	-	2	
Mail	0	-	0	-
Email/Online	0	-	3	
Books	36	-	25	-
Microfilm	13	6	3	-
Map	4	-	0	-
SC Room Presentations	0	-	1	-
SC Room Presentation Attendance	0	-	14	-
Questions Completed	0	-	19	-
Outstanding Questions	0	-	0	-
Volunteer Hours	52.25	20.5	19.75	26
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	1	0	1	0

Facilities:

- Some previous facilities requests are pending. A lot got accomplished this past month and I am very appreciative.
- Half of the replacement book cart ramp was completed, which will be fine as the broken pieces were removed and the angle is still correct.
- The broken tile in the women's restroom was replaced.
- Jonathan cleaned out the other sink pipes in the shipping room to remove the sludge.
- Someone weeded the rest of the garden bed which was extremely helpful, so whether it was maintenance or a volunteer it is appreciated.
- Sean from maintenance pressure washed our sidewalks and windows. It all looks much better.
- Jason, the maintenance director, and Michael, the electrician, installed a split AC unit for us so that we can keep the staff room temperature more regulated.
- The county administrator Stewart Jones and the county council chair Matthew Durham were updated on the status of the road that was going to be built in the yard for new parking.

Operations:

Everything is operating normally. Due to lack of space and amount of workflow, we cannot weed as quickly as we need to. The staff is keeping up with shelf reading well.

- I am going through the Juvenile series to determine what needs replacing. I have sent Leah Kelley a list of the juvenile graphic novels that we should continue ordering and the ones we no longer need. We are ahead in our programming plans for the fall.
- Our staff made 80 take-and-make crafts (crayon people and friendship bracelets) to promote our activities.
- Susan spearheaded a coloring contest and Abigail L. drew the sheet for Pet Appreciation Month. We had 82 entries from three children's age groups.

Staffing: We are currently fully staffed at 4 full time and 4 part time employees. I attended the virtual conference for the Southeastern Library Association. Emily Johnson, our former youth services librarian, has been volunteering on Wednesday mornings.

Attendance for programs run by Seneca staff:

Bingo – July:19; Aug: 12 Come out and craft: July: 2, Aug: 5

Notable Statistics	July 2026	August 2026
Visits to library	5572	5033
New Borrowers	95	119

Friendship bracelets- 0 (next time we will have it at a different time of day)

Wall Street Journal Uses: 24

Programs

Summer Reading

- We gave out 24 foam dinosaur make and takes.
- We hosted our second playground playdate and had 10 join us for bubbles and playing.
- We had kids become archeologists and dig for gems, fossils, dinosaurs, and more with our Dig-it program in July. We had 36 attendees.
- There were 20 teens who were able to experience the fun of finding the fun crystal formations inside geodes, an experience many of us do not get, during our Geode Bashing program. We also hosted a geode cookie decorating program but no one showed despite having registrations.
- We had 17 participants cruise on down to the library to make cardboard cars and watch *The Land Before Time*.
- Our annual summer bingo program, a tradition started 15 plus years ago, had 37 attendees (limited due to space). They had a great time playing rounds of bingo to win books and other prizes.
- Our July scavenger hunts included a search and find of patriotic symbols with 130 participants. We then had a second scavenger hunt where participants searched the library to find pieces of pre-cut construction paper to assemble their own paper Betsy Ross flag. We had 62 participants.

August

- In August we hosted a blind bag craft night for adults . We took leftovers from previous crafts and put them in a paper bag allowing attendees to blindly pick a craft to do. We had 6 attend.
- Princess story time saw a mix of 14 boys and girls come to listen to stories about princesses and to paint a wooden castle.
- August's scavenger hunt was school themed with 81 participants.
- Our community librarian, Kerry, coordinated with the Salem Lions Club to see 22 individuals, from young children to seniors, to help them with their vision. Many of these were referred to the eye doctor where they can get their free glasses. Kerry has helped over 100 Oconeans to see better.

Tiny Art Show

Our big event for the summer was the Tiny Art Show. At the beginning of June, we gave out 48 art kits complete with paint and brushes. Then an additional 50 canvases with no accessories were also given out. All ages could participate and were encouraged to use the theme of "summer in the South" as their inspiration. Artists were not limited to using paint and we had several take advantage of that by using sand or jewels to create their tiny masterpiece. We received 43 artworks back (which is sad but a good return) with artists ranging in age from 2 to

70. We had many visitors who came to the library just to see and vote on the contest. We had over 300 votes (one vote per person per day). Using a scoring sheet and the public votes, we selected first, second, and third place, and popular vote winners. The ages were 2-5, 6-8, 9-11, 11-17, and adult. The winners were announced at our reception where we had several people attend who were there just to support (meaning they did not know any of the artists). We even had our first video call winner notification during the program because the winner's grandma was there but the child was not. We had 18 attend and it was a really nice time of awards and celebration.

Staffing

Displays included back-to-school, dinosaurs, rocks and minerals, and many more. When Dolly Parton passed, we pulled all of our books and DVDs and put them on display. The items were quickly picked by patrons as everyone mourns her passing. She was a very strong advocate of reading and libraries so this one hit close to home for us.

Bookmobile Collaboration

We appreciate Angie bringing the bookmobile to the library on several occasions this summer. It was a great way for our patrons to explore what a library on wheels is like. She also invited me along to a meet the teach night at Westminster Elementary School. We were able to set up a table in the school's library and signed up many families for library cards.

Facilities

The torrential rains created a pile of mud in the parking lot. Maintenance came, cleaned up the mud, and pressure washed the curbs and sides of the building while they were here. The bushes at the entry to the library were trimmed back below the sign and quilt.

BBW Seed Library

We continue to receive calls weekly asking if we still have seeds in the library. The answer is, yes! While we do not have anywhere near what we had the beginning of the year, we still have several fall seeds available. We gave out 422 and 18 seeds in July and August.

Period Project

The Salem, Seneca, and Walhalla libraries gave out 39 period products in July and 167 in August. The Walhalla Library still offers period products but is now under a different non-profit led by a volunteer.

Staffing Updates

Emily Johnson and DJ Roach departed OCPL on July 31st. Tabitha Johnson came on board as Youth Services Librarian on August 24th. We also promoted one of our circulation part-timers, Ashtyn Zavala, to Youth Services Assistant beginning on September 8th. Both are very excited to get started working with and offering programs to our community.

Programs

Outside of summer programs in July, and with the exception of a Novel Study Emily Johnson has continued with as a volunteer, Youth Services has not offered programs in this last bimonthly period because of the staffing transition. However, storytimes are scheduled to resume the week of September 14th at all branches. We will be keeping the existing schedule for Walhalla, Seneca, and Westminster and also resuming our efforts to host a bi-monthly storytime at the Salem branch. Ashtyn is eager to get tween and teen programs going as soon as possible and is currently reviewing what's worked in the past and brainstorming new ideas for future programs.

Adult Services and Youth Services are working together to plan a "Touch-a-Truck" event on Halloween. We have contacted the city to see if Sertoma field might be available for us to host this.

Though we were not present for Summer Reading ourselves, it is our understanding that it was a fantastic program this year. We are including the SRP report for your consideration.

Community Outreach/Collaboration

Tabitha has re-established a monthly storytime schedule with the three preschools the library partnered with last school year: The Learning Center, Golden Corner Preschool and Trinity Baptist preschool. Tabitha and Ashtyn will go to the Learning Center for an initial introductory storytime in September, after which they will continue visiting the library as they have done in the past. Visits to Golden Corner will resume in September with visits to Trinity Baptist resuming in October.

An email was sent to all media specialists and reading coaches in the school district to introduce the new staff and make ourselves available to help with upcoming programs and literacy events. No one has responded yet but we'll give them some time and reach out again soon if need be.

Tabitha met with Anna Brannin, the State Library's Youth Services Consultant, virtually on August 28th. This meeting went very well and Anna was able to provide many resources to help us get established.

Professional Development

Both Tabitha and Ashtyn have primarily focused on learning the specific responsibilities of their new positions but have also already begun looking ahead to professional development opportunities. Tabitha attended a virtual Youth Services workshop on August 31st called "Littles in the Library" which was hosted by the State Library. Ashtyn has registered for two upcoming State Library webinars, "Planning a Teen/Tween Lock-In" and "Post-crossing 101".

UNEARTH A STORY

Summer Reading
2026

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

996

REGISTRATIONS

People who signed up for the program

546

COMPLETIONS

People who read for at least 600 minutes

55%

COMPLETION PERCENTAGE

Percentage of registrants who completed the program



REGISTRATIONS

PEOPLE WHO SIGNED UP FOR
THE PROGRAM

BOOKMOBILE	SALEM	SENECA	WALHALLA	WESTMINSTER
4	63	351	340	238
AGES 0-5	AGES 6-11	AGES 12-17	AGES 18+	
212	381	120	283	

996
REGISTRATIONS

PARTICIPATIONS

PEOPLE WHO LOGGED AT LEAST
1 MINUTE OF READING

BOOKMOBILE	SALEM	SENECA	WALHALLA	WESTMINSTER
0	36	280	227	164

707
PARTICIPATIONS

COMPLETIONS

PERCENTAGE OF REGISTRANTS
WHO COMPLETED THE PROGRAM

BOOKMOBILE	SALEM	SENECA	WALHALLA	WESTMINSTER
0	30	213	165	138
AGES 0-5	AGES 6-11	AGES 12-17	AGES 18+	
99	196	72	179	

546
COMPLETIONS



LOGGING

ONE COMPLETED READING LOG = 600 MINUTES OF READING

KIDS (UNDER 18)



TOTAL (KIDS AND ADULTS)



BRANCH LEADERBOARD

1	SENECA LIBRARY	354,440 MINUTES
2	WALHALLA LIBRARY	251,991 MINUTES
3	WESTMINSTER LIBRARY	234,676 MINUTES
4	SALEM LIBRARY	42,228 MINUTES

SCHOOL STATS



WE ASK THE REGISTRANTS TO REPORT WHAT SCHOOL THEY ATTEND, IF APPLICABLE.
THESE ARE THE STATISTICS FOR ALL OF THE OCONEE COUNTY GRADE SCHOOLS.

SCHOOL	REGISTRATIONS	COMPLETIONS	MINUTES LOGGED
BLUE RIDGE ELEMENTARY	14	8	6,847
FAIR-OAK ELEMENTARY	21	16	13,398
FOOTHILLS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	30	24	38,844
HOMESCHOOL	164	97	157,763
JAMES M. BROWN ELEMENTARY	33	15	11,125
KEOWEE ELEMENTARY	28	11	11,257
NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY	36	13	16,179
OCONEE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	8	5	8,007
ORCHARD PARK ELEMENTARY	11	5	3,811
RAVENEL ELEMENTARY	25	12	12,577
SENECA HIGH SCHOOL	6	2	2,049
SENECA MIDDLE SCHOOL	22	15	17,757
TAMASSEE-SALEM ELEMENTARY	22	5	3,412
WALHALLA ELEMENTARY	38	14	15,779
WALHALLA HIGH SCHOOL	9	4	3,500
WALHALLA MIDDLE SCHOOL	19	10	12,740
WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY	28	6	6,688
WEST-OAK HIGH SCHOOL	5	1	3,060
WEST-OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL	15	11	25,741

MOST REGISTRATIONS

**WALHALLA
ELEMENTARY**

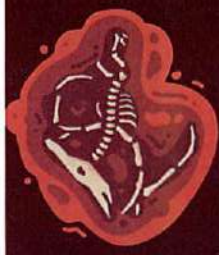
MOST COMPLETIONS

**FOOTHILLS
CHRISTIAN**

MOST MINUTES LOGGED

**FOOTHILLS
CHRISTIAN**

EVENTS

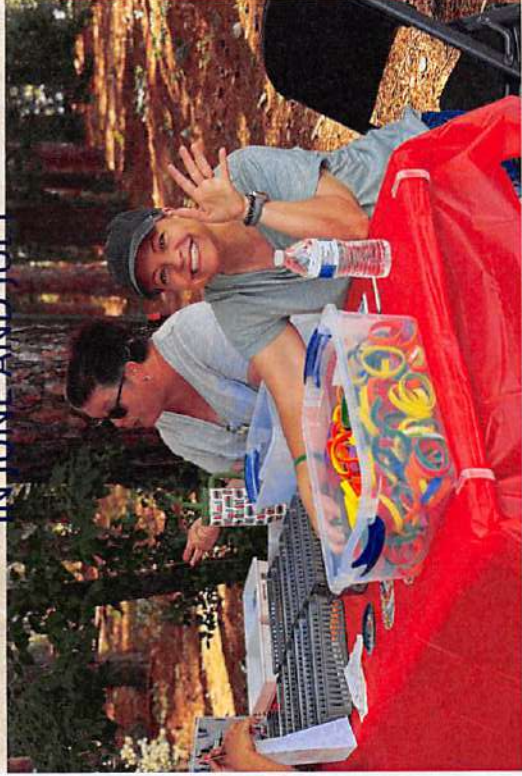


88

SUMMER READING EVENTS
IN JUNE AND JULY

2,433

EVENT ATTENDEES





2025 VS 2026

1,166

REGISTRATIONS

996

534

COMPLETIONS

546

358

KIDS (UNDER
18)
COMPLETIONS

367

797,706

MINUTES
READ

886,561

65

EVENTS

88

2,681

EVENT
ATTENDEES

2,433

SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS



OCONEE COUNTY
FRIENDS OF THE
LIBRARY



south carolina
STATE LIBRARY



Head-Lee
Nursery



OCONEE COUNTY LIBRARY

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 11, 2026, 5:30PM, Walhalla Library

Chair: Kim Jackson

Attendees: Paul Holcombe, Mandy Ellison, Director Blair Hinson, Kerry Leeper Brock, and library branch heads from Seneca, Westminster, and Walhalla. There were a total of 41 in attendance.

Absent: Kay Knapp

Invocation

Kim Jackson

New Business

Resource Librarian Position – State Aid Funding

The Committee discussed a motion from the August Library Board meeting to deny the use of State Aid to cover additional Staffmark costs for the Resource Librarian position. The Board tabled the matter pending a committee review of the position's benefits and costs.

The Resource Librarian salary is approximately **\$39,000**. The Committee reviewed the position's reported benefits, including:

- Providing a central resource for community information and services.
- Assisting patrons with complex needs, including disability services, veterans' benefits, food insecurity, employment, mental health, and homelessness.
- Reducing the workload of branch staff and allowing librarians to focus on core services.
- Maintaining community resource directories and agency partnerships at no local cost.

Branch managers and **9 public speakers**, including representatives from Prisma Health, DHHS, homeless ministries, nonprofits, and former clients, spoke in support of the position and described its significant value to patrons and staff. Howard Gutenstein, of the Gutenstein Heritage Foundation, offered to fully fund the position for one year if necessary.

The Committee also reviewed potential State Aid budget adjustments, including reduced spending on national training, delayed computer replacements, Audio/Visual expenditures, operating and program supplies, dues and memberships, small capital purchases, data processing, and copier costs. No reductions to print collections or e-books were proposed.

Recommendation

The Committee determined that reallocating State Aid funds is legal, temporary, and would not create hardship for library branches while additional grant funding is pursued.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends using State Aid to fund the Resource Librarian position.