OCPL Director's Report

November 2026

1. Programs and Services: Attendance at programs in September and October was very good. We resumed a lot of the youth programming. Story Times resumed at all locations and have been well received. Programs in September included lots of fall crafts, book clubs, and several stroke prevention education programs. We had many programs in the second week of October for the SDOC fall break period, along with a pumpkin decorating contest and very successful Truck or Treat (touch-a-truck) event at the Walhalla High School (464 attended). See the branch heads' reports for more details.

2. Usage Statistics and Narratives: Usage statistics for September and October 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: All of our positions, both full and part time, are filled at the moment. Abigail White (Walhalla circulation manager) returned from medical leave at the end of October. We had an informative and timely staff training day in October, focusing on AI, summer reading, and staff communication. Three of our staff (Emily Sluder, Brittany Castro, and I) attended the South Carolina Library Association Conference October 27-29 in Columbia. Brittany Castro presented a session on her Jurassic Park escape room from this past summer (how she made it work, lessons learned, and so forth).

5. Building and Grounds: Several of our other HVAC units 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. Longtime staff member Danny Sanders retired in October, and the young staff person they had to replace Danny (who cleaned both the Seneca and Walhalla locations) has had medical issues. The buildings are being cleaned by other staff at the moment. The Walhalla location is also supposed to have a back-flow cut off installed on the water supply (mandated by the City of Walhalla), but the funding source for that has not yet been identified.

6. Technology: The Information Technology department has started converting all county departments to Microsoft Teams. This will become the dashboard/workspace that staff uses for internal communications, file storage, and meetings. It will not replace email, though Outlook might now "live" inside Teams. We will be training staff on that through the fall.

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 been receiving and processing a number of library discards as we shift some collections around.

Book Sales collected September & October 2026:

Basement	$3,157.80
Booth	$1,577.14
Lobby	$ 161.00
2nd Party Sales	$ 650.00
Online Sales	$ 582.44
Total Book Sales Revenue	$6,128.38

8. Oconee County: The county is supposed to soon pave the parking lot for accessibility at the Seneca location. The grants writer for the county, Brittney Martin, has moved on to the City of Walhalla. We have not heard if they are replacing that position.

9. State Library: We actually received slightly less this year in State Aid due to the fact that last year the State Library calculated State Aid to add a little to make the demarcation line between per-capita and minimum counties a little clearer. This year they went with the straight per-capita formula of $2.75 per capita, or $216,169.25. We have received the first payment for this fiscal year.

10. Community Involvement: Since County Council did pass the third reading of Ordinance 2026-27, the Library Resource Associate position was closed out in mid-September, as was the Community Resource Assistant's position. Our hope is to have them rehired by other community partners and be able to work with us again to provide services at some point. As of the first week in November, we missed 23 opportunities to serve users who needed more involved assistance. Brittany Castro "graduated" from Leadership Oconee in September. 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: The Volunteer Appreciation dinner at the Walhalla Depot was a very nice evening. Thanks to all staff who made it happen. We're also grateful Board members who were able to attend, as well State Senator Thomas Alexander, who attended and made remarks on the importance of volunteering.

	Sept 2025	Sept 2026	Change	Oct 2025	Oct 2026	Change
Visits to Library	12,091	12,495	3.3%	12,387	12,680	2.4%
Material Circulation - LOT	105	90	-14.3%	116	89	-23.3%
Material Circulation - Adult	11,565	11,351	-1.9%	11,585	10,886	-6.0%
Material Circulation - Youth	943	1,131	19.9%	687	943	37.3%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	8,901	9,224	3.6%	8,530	9,181	7.6%
Total Material Circulation	21,514	21,796	1.3%	20,918	21,099	0.9%
Internet Uses	717	739	3.1%	825	715	-13.3%
Internet Hours of Use	362	374	3.3%	437	363	-16.9%
New Cards Issued	160	219	36.9%	137	137	0.0%
Programs - Adult	8	12	50.0%	11	8	-27.3%
Programs Attendance - Adult	29	69	137.9%	53	82	54.7%
Programs - Youth 12-18	2	3	50.0%	3	4	33.3%
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	24	8	-66.7%	0	37	
Programs -Juvenile 6-11	5	2	-60.0%	4	7	75.0%
Programs Att -Juv 6-11	80	15	-81.3%	50	285	470.0%
Programs - Children 0-5	18	13	-27.8%	20	18	-10.0%
Programs - Att - Children 0-5	222	246	10.8%	213	436	104.7%
Programs - All Ages	3	6	100.0%	7	7	0.0%
Programs Att - All Ages	23	282	1126.1%	71	570	702.8%
Programs Att - Passive	882	482	-45.4%	526	434	-17.5%
Outreach Activities	5	5	0.0%	6	11	83.3%
Outreach Act. Attendance	904	77	-91.5%	582	4,280	635.4%
Public Training Sessions	0	4		0	4	
Public Training Participants	0	4		0	4	
Public Training Hours	0	4		0	4	
Staff Training Sessions	7	1	-85.7%	12	41	241.7%
Staff Training Participants	2	1	-50.0%	33	39	18.2%
Staff Training Hours	81	26	-67.9%	178	223	25.0%
Number of New Volunteers	0	0		0	0	
Number of Vol Hours	57	25	-57.2%	49	54	11.3%
Meeting Room Use (Staff)	0	33		0	34	
Meeting Room Use (Public)	0	48		0	52	
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	0	0		0	0	
Number of Web Site Hits	10,802	13,123	21.5%	11,319	12,709	12.3%
Wi-Fi Users	310	287	-7.4%	285	265	-7.0%
Wi-Fi Sessions	2,005	1,773	-11.6%	1,971	1,697	-13.9%
Hoopla Checkouts	1,774	1,642	-7.4%	1,717	2,143	24.8%
CloudLibrary Downloads	3,759	3,572	-5.0%	3,960	3,934	-0.7%
Ancestry.com Hits	237	108	-54.4%	380	308	-18.9%
Interlibrary Loans	56	35	-37.5%	37	30	-18.9%
New Material Added	721	1,013	40.5%	701	838	19.5%

OCPL BUDGET 2026-2027- 11-9-26

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
Local Budget					
010-206-30018-00000	Travel	1,500.00	1500	100%	0
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,700.00	2,650	98%	50
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	130,000.00	51,878	40%	78,122
010-206-30056-00000	Data Processing	31,749.00	31,625	100%	124
010-206-30059-00000	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	11,000.00	3,757	34%	7,243
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750.00	416	55%	334
010-206-30084-00000	School, Training, Sem.	2,500.00	2,437	97%	63
010-206-30090-00000	Honorarium	900.00	900	100%	0
010-206-33022-00207	Bldg Maint - Walhalla	8,000.00	6,628	83%	1,372
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	4,000.00	2,876	72%	1,124
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	3,000.00	1,669	56%	1,331
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,000.00	1,464	73%	536
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	18,000.00	7,526	42%	10,474
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	12,000.00	4,881	41%	7,119
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	9,000.00	3,178	35%	5,822
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000.00	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,800.00	993	55%	807
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	1,800.00	833	46%	967
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	2,200.00	320	15%	1,880
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,800.00		0%	2,800
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000.00	5,982	100%	18
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000.00	745	37%	1,255
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	300.00	195	65%	105
010-206-40034-00000	Food	250.00		0%	250
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	87,000.00	57,198	66%	29,802
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	23,000.00	22,999	100%	1
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,500.00	6,113	53%	5,387
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500.00	506	34%	994
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	3,000.00	1,272	42%	1,728
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	2,500.00	1,175	47%	1,325
TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS		**387,749**	**226,717**	**58%**	**161,032**
MISC. FUNDS					
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	71,146		0%	71,146
013-080-00835-92056	Nettles Trust	60,827		0%	60,827
TOTAL MISC. FUNDS					**131,973**
State Aid Budget - $216814.35					
240-206-30025-00255	Professional - Staffmark	7,706.08	7706.08	100%	0.00
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	24,785.00	15,459.05	62%	9,325.95
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	500.00		0%	500.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	3,000.00	2,439.88	81%	560.12
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital Equip (State)	7,500.00		0%	7,500.00
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	14,500.00	1,807.42	12%	12,692.58
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	1,500.00	115.26	8%	1,384.74
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	111,722.17	29,999.47	27%	81,722.70
240-206-40112-00255	Periodicals (State)	32,356.00	31,046.72	96%	1,309.28
240-206-40113-00255	AV (State)	12,600.00	100.77	1%	12,499.23
Total State Aid Funds		**$216,169.25**	**88,674.65**	**41%**	**127,494.60**

Adult Services
Sept-Oct 2026
Brittany Castro, Adult Services Librarian

Programs

Chess Club and our two book clubs all remain strong. Chess Club had an impressive 29 in attendance in September. Book Buzz at Mountain Mocha saw its highest attendance ever in September with 12. The Little Walhalla Book Club will begin meeting at the Walhalla Library due to the devastating September fire in downtown Walhalla. The group previously met at Alexander's Coffee Shop.

We had several programs led by community organizations in September and October. Prisma Health hosted stroke presentations at Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster. Unfortunately, they were not attended. South Carolina Paranormal Research and Investigations led a ghost hunting presentation at Westminster. The fourteen patrons who attended got to see ghost hunting equipment and hear tales of the investigators' adventures. We hosted a law talk given by the SC Bar at Seneca in September. The topic was Wills, Estates, and Probate.

September and October each had a huge program. In September, I coordinated with Oconee County Humane Society to host a "Cat Café" at the Seneca Branch. They brought six kittens for cuddles and adoptions. We were hoping for 25-30 people over the course of two hours. Instead, we had over 200 people in attendance! Five of the six kittens were adopted. It was successful by any measure. We are interested in having this program two or three times a year. In October, I worked closely with Youth Services to plan a Halloween touch-a-truck event. It was a huge success with 464 in attendance. More details are available in Youth Services' report.

Library Card Signup Month

September is National Library Card Signup Month. This year we decided to partner with local businesses from across the county to offer special discounts or freebies to customers who showed their library card. The participating businesses were: Alexander's Coffee House, Stumphaus Taproom, Chattooga Belle Farm Store, Sister's, Choc's on the Green, Mountain Mocha, Park Place Drive-In, and First Chapter Bookshop. While we did see a bump in community members signing up for new cards, that didn't seem to translate into people claiming their discounts at the businesses. We are open to trying again next year.

Staff In-Service & Volunteer Dinner

I planned our annual fall staff in-service, which took place at Tri-County Tech (Oconee Campus) on October 12. We welcomed Dr. Anne Grant, AI Literacy Librarian, from Clemson University. She gave the staff a lot to think about regarding how artificial intelligence can be used. Leah Price, branch manager at Westminster, relayed everything she and Kayla Rucker learned at the Association for Rural and Small Libraries conference they attended. Staff also participated in several communication and problem-solving activities involving kits from the South Carolina State Library.

Adult Winter Reading

I am currently planning this year's adult winter reading challenge. The challenge will take place from December 1 through February 27. Adults who complete the challenge will earn an umbrella with the library's logo.

Adult Services
Sept-Oct 2026
Brittany Castro, Adult Services Librarian

Professional Development

In October, I had the opportunity to attend the South Carolina State Library's workshop on circulating kits. The kits are materials purchased by the State Library that librarians across the state can borrow. The workshop was a way to see some of the kits in action and gain ideas for how to use them. It took place at Anderson County Library. I was also able to attend the South Carolina Library Association conference in Columbia. The sessions I attended were predominantly focused on programs and staff engagement. I also presented at the conference. My presentation, "Puzzles, Props, and Panic: The Making of a Jurassic Park Escape Room", was focused on the challenges of planning an escape room as part of our summer reading program. It was well attended despite its odd time slot and last-minute room change.

Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, September & October 2026

Angie Clark-Bookmobile Manager

Special Outreach

September:

Hispanic Heritage Festival, Main St, Walhalla

I was set up with the bookmobile. I gave out free books and bookmarks.

October:

Salem Fall Festival:

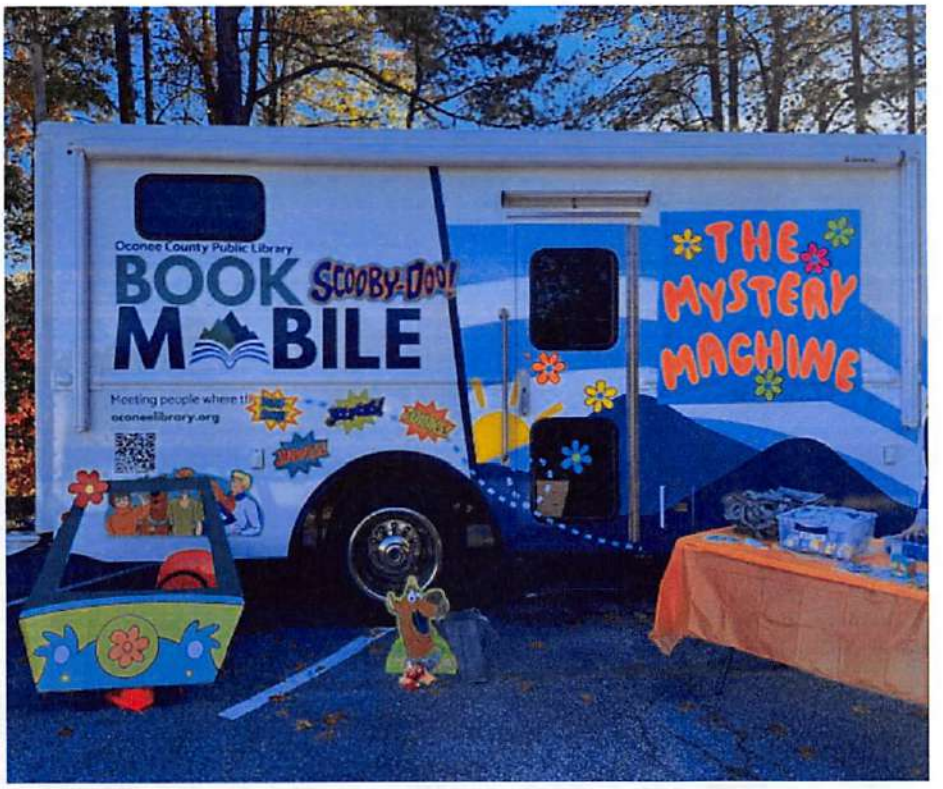
The Salem Branch invited the bookmobile to participate with them at Salem's Fall Festival. We decorated the bookmobile and had candy, crafts, bookmarks, stickers and activity books to hand out. We had a photo booth and a game the kids could play to win an extra prize. We saw around 850 people.

Trick-or-Truck: Hosted by OCPL at Walhalla High School

The bookmobile was setup and decorated for the event. We gave out candy and snacks. The bookmobile was open for everyone to look around. I had bookmarks and stickers inside.
We saw around 464 people.

Statistics

Category	September 2026	October 2026
Regular Scheduled Stops	22	20
Hours Open	18	17.5
Total Attendance	481	527
Volunteers/Hours	8/21.5 hrs	8/32 hrs
Outreach Stops	1	2
Outreach Visitors	150	1314
Outreach Hours	6	5
New Cards	2	4
Programs-Passive	0	39



SALEM FALL FESTIVAL



Trick-or-Truck

Salem Library

Kayla Rucker

Branch Manager

Sep/Oct 2026

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

September and October were full of great programming, outreach, and training at the Salem branch. In September, I was able to attend the Association for Rural and Small Libraries in Montgomery, Alabama. While the Oconee County schools were out for fall break for the first week of October, the Salem branch provided events for children and families. We were also able to participate in the Town of Salem Fall Festival at the end of October to provide literary materials, candy, and more.

- In September, we welcomed story time back. I led story time on September the 8th and Tabitha took over during the next session. Storytime is held every 2 weeks at Salem. There were 4 in attendance on the 8th and 4 in attendance on the 22nd.
- We also hosted our bimonthly event, Coffee and Crafts, in September. Each attendees brought or was provided a book to decorate with rhinestones while enjoying camaraderie and coffee. There were 9 in attendance.
- I also hosted a craft for elementary ages on September 23rd. To welcome fall, each child painted a pumpkin-shaped duck. We also read a few fall stories to get into the holiday spirit.
- In October, we celebrated fall break with a week full of fun programming for kids and families. On October 5-8, we held a LEGO club challenge (7 in attendance), ghost portrait painting (14 in attendance), Family Fall BINGO (23 in attendance), and a Pumpkin Bracelet DIY (9 in attendance).
- We welcomed a new program, Diamond Art Painting, to the Salem branch in October. Every other month, an attendee will complete and take home a different diamond art craft. For October, they made pumpkin magnets. Our Diamond Painting enthusiasts at the Salem branch were quite delighted with this program addition.
- The Salem branch continues to host Page Turners, our virtual book club. In September, we read Cursed Daughters by Oyinkan Braithwaite. There were 3 in attendance. For October, we read Wait for Me by Amy Jo Burns. There were 3 in attendance.

- For children that are unable to attend our events, we provide take and make kits to distribute. In September, we gave out 20 fall-theme kits In October, we gave out 24 scarecrow kits.
- On September 16th-19th, I, along with Leah Price, attended the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) conference in Montgomery, Alabama. I took advantage of insightful info sessions that were offered, networked with lots of fellow small library system staff members, and met with vendors that specialize in convenient, useful library-related devices and services. Some of the info sessions that I attended included: Let's Play I Spy with AI, Hello School! Your Friendly Public Library Here, Library of Things in the 21st Century, Reaching Rural Teens, and The Quiet Power of Rural Libraries: Advocacy Rooted in Trust. This conference was a great opportunity for professional development and I hope to be attendance again in 2027.



ARSL SC Library Meet-Up

- On October 30th, Mandolyn and I attended the Town of Salem Fall Festival, along with the Angie and the Bookmobile. We went with a Scooby Doo theme, dressed as Velma and Daphne, and turned the Bookmobile into The Mystery Machine. We provided bookmarks, activity books, games, prizes, a photo prop, and, of course, lots of candy. There were approximately 850 in attendance.



Kayla and Mandolyn – Salem Fall Festival 2026

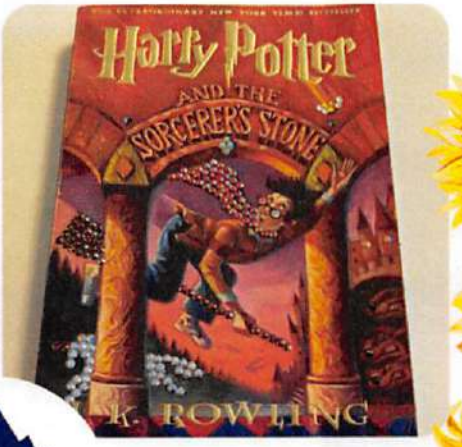
- In mid-September, Mandolyn and I completed inventory of all processed materials in the library.

Stats	Sep	Oct
Visits	1540	1706
New Cards	10	4
ILLs	7	2

SEPTEMBER EVENTS at the Salem Library

COFFEE AND CRAFTS: BOOK BEDAZZLING









DIY PUMPKIN DUCK PAINTING

Fall Break at the Salem Library



October 5th - LEGO Club Challenge: Pumpkin Patch Mazes



October 6th - Fall Family BINGO



October 7th - Mini Wooden Ghost Portaits



October 8th - DIY Fall Pumpkin Bracelets

Ann Rogers Memorial Room
September/October 2026
Quientell Walker, Local History Associate

Narrative

Oconee SC 250 Outreach:

September and October were busy months for Oconee SC 250!

We attended the Heritage Festival at the F.A.R.M Center, and maintained a booth and shared information about SC 250 as well as Oconee County's part in the American Revolution. We received a lot of compliments on our exhibits, and the Oconee County during the American Revolution Map. In particular, we had a few teachers stop by asking about the map and other Oconee SC 250 activities. Before the end of my shift, Representative Adam Dunch stopped by and we discussed Oconee SC 250 and history in general.

Currently, Oconee SC 250's Historical Research Subcommittee has been working on producing a map depicting the burials of Oconee County Patriots. Similarly, they are working on a multi-volume biography of each of these Patriots. Before this work there were multiple lists of names from the 1920s, 1960s, and 1980s. These lists provided a starting point; however, more research was needed to verify those named. In essence, there are two specific goals for this project. First, it seeks to provide a well documented starting point for future researchers. Also, it is to show that these Patriots are more than just names; they were people, and their stories should be told.

SC 250 requested volunteers to assist with the SC 250 exhibit hall at the SC State Fair. In particular, they requested groups to volunteer during the period that their region would be the main focus. It was not required, but it would be good to do so. I attended to represent the Upcountry and Oconee SC 250. I did not have an assigned display, so I floated between the various ones. For example, I provided some assistance with the genealogy display and later ended up at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History display, for they had material that pertained to the Cherokee War of 1776. This war falls directly into present-day Oconee County, and I was able to provide county specific information to the display. Lastly, our Oconee County during the American Revolution Map was a success! SC 250 requested more for their exhibit hall, and we supplied them with 150 copies.

Lastly, Jennifer, Vice President of Oconee SC 250, and I, President of the Oconee SC 250, were contacted by the School District of Oconee County, SDOC, to provide a presentation about SC 250 and Oconee SC 250. This presentation was held during the SDOC In-Service, and Jennifer and I spoke with the Social Studies teachers. We provided a timeline of events, displayed one of the Oconee History Museum Teaching Trunks, and provided copies of the Oconee County during the American Revolution Maps. We left our extra material for the History teachers, for

they were attending a different presentation. It is our hope that this presentation provided the teachers with information of what is available to aid in teaching the American Revolution.

OLLI Genealogy Basics Series:

A few months ago, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, OLLI, at Clemson University reached out to me to present a Genealogy Basics Series. The classes began in October and were taught every Monday. Here is a list of the classes taught at OLLI:



Monday, October 5th Genealogy Basics: Genealogy Overview
Monday, October 5th Genealogy Basics: Getting Started with Genealogy
Monday, October 12th Genealogy Basics: Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition
Monday, October 19th Genealogy Basics: Travel Genealogy
Monday, October 26th Genealogy Basics: Roadblocks to African American Genealogy

These classes are essentially the ones I teach for the library system. Due to this I did not have to create new material; however, after each taught class I realized that the next presentation had to be revised. For example, the first two classes were an introduction to genealogy and an overview of what is provided at OCPL. During the course of instruction, I was asked various questions. For example, after completing the second class, I taught two classes on the first day, I was asked various questions about Ancestry Library Edition. In particular, what type of resources it provided. I stated that Ancestry Library Edition is similar to Ancestry—but that it was limited to what had been added to it. So, for the actual Genealogy Basics: Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition I provided several books, and a photocopy example of material not available on Ancestry Library Edition. For example, in the 1970s there was fire that destroyed a large amount of military service records. At this time, the only resource that helps to fill in some of the gaps are two SC Roster Books for servicemen and servicewomen that served in World War I and World War II. Moreover, I pointed out that Ancestry Library Edition does not have to local researchers. It these local resources and researchers that add depth to genealogy research. At the conclusion of the series, I taught five classes, and had a total of 68 attendees. This was a new and rewarding experience for me, and has further encouraged me to continue updating my classes on a semi-annual basis.

Genealogy Basics Series

4 Mondays, October 5 to 26 | 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. | Cheezem Education Center

Join Quientell Walker, Local History Associate at the Walhalla Headquarters Library, for a four-part introduction to discovering your family history. This beginner-friendly series covers the fundamentals of genealogy, including an overview of genealogical research, tips for getting started, an introduction to Ancestry Library Edition, and how travel can enhance your genealogy journey through on-site research and historical exploration. Whether you're just beginning your family history search or looking to build a stronger research foundation, this series will provide practical tools and resources to help you trace your roots with confidence.

4

Rogers Room Statistics:

Statistics Recorded	September 2025	September 2026	October 2025	October 2026
Walk-In	1	3	2	5
Phone Call	0	6	0	3
Mail	0	0	0	6
Email/Online	1	1	1	17
Books	2	4	3	2
Microfilm	4	8	10	0
Map	4	0	0	0
SC Room Presentations	0	0	0	6
SC Room Presentation Attendance	0	0	0	73
Questions Completed	5	6	1	8
Outstanding Questions	0	-	11	-
Volunteer Hours	27	27.5	33.5	22
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	0	0	0	2

Seneca Branch Narrative, Sept/Oct 2026 **Emily Whitmire Sluder, Branch Manager**

Facilities:

- Kyle from Roads and Bridges put flags in the front yard to designate where to build a road.
- We have a new custodian who is working out well.
- I am contacting someone about re-attaching a window shade that fell.

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.

- We are ahead in our programming plans for the fall/winter and are getting ready for the new year.
- Our staff made displays and take-and-make items to advertise our programs.
- Susan created a poll for choosing your favorite kind of apples.

Staffing: We are currently fully staffed at 4 full time and 4 part time employees. Our talented staff has become more involved in programming and our numbers have increased. I am very proud of their work.

I attended the South Carolina Library Association conference with Blair and Brittany which was informative and enjoyable.

Attendance for programs run by Seneca staff:

Bingo – Sept: 20, Oct: 26 Origami – 10 Football wreath – 8

Puzzle night – 4

Come out and craft – 11

We also hosted programs from outside presenters. Kerry, our former library resources associate, organized them due to popular demand.

They included a second presentation about dementia, a vision screening with the Salem Lions Club members, and information about strokes.

Amy, our former library resources assistant, offered and attended the vision screening as a volunteer, due to the large number of Spanish-speaking patrons who attended the previous time.

Notable Statistics	Sept 2026	Oct 2026
Visits to library	4997	4698
New Borrowers	90	58

Wall Street Journal Uses: 14

Walhalla Library

September – October 2026

Abigail White, Circulation Manager

Meeting Room:

September: WHS class reunion planning, Baby Read, labor licensing meeting, FOL board meeting, volunteer dinner, tutoring, professional development book club.

October: Bingo group, tutoring, WHS class reunion planning, zoom meeting, Laurel Ridge HOA meeting, Keowee Anglers Club, volunteer dinner planning, Baby Read, interviews.

Study Room:

- September – 26 uses
- October – 39 uses

Statistics:

Category	September 2026	October 2026
Visitors	3801	4085
New Cards Issued	92	55
ILL	11	14
Hours Open	192	209

Programs

- In September, we hosted our first Inner Circle Book Club that focuses on the *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series. We had 6 attend and make tea bag bookmarks or custom book pockets while discussing the first book in the series. It went very well with lots of thought and ideas shared. Our second meeting in October only had 3, but it still went very well. One attendee said that she looks forward to this meeting for weeks because it allows her to give herself her own time to do something away from the house.
- For September, we hosted a Library Card scavenger hunt that was also offered to all the other branches. We had 59 find all the clues.
- For International Talk Like a Pirate Day we had a kid's Pirate Party with 4 attendees.
- October's scavenger hunt had everyone searching the library to solve the cryptogram to find the answer to, "How do you fix a broken pumpkin?" Answer: With a pumpkin patch. We had 74 participants.
- There were 4 adults who came to the library to make lace webs with embroidered spiders for our Maker Monday in October.
- **Public School Fall Break**—Since the county schools were taking a week break in October, several programs were scheduled to give families something to do (coordinating with Salem who also planned events specifically for this week). Monday, we hosted a tween and teen Halloween ceramic dish painting with 14 attendees. On Tuesday we hosted our first ever interactive movie with 6 attendees. In this interactive movie, watchers got to yell at the movie, bark when Zero (ghost dog) appeared, eat candy when Sally made a potion, throw cotton balls, shake jingle bells, and throw confetti. Wednesday was story time with Ashtyn. Thursday, we offered a kids ceramic painting program with 8 attendees. Friday, we hosted Halloween themed bingo where we had 27 attendees.
- Our Nightmare Before Christmas Party was a success with 27 attendees.
- We hosted our 3rd annual pumpkin coloring contest. We only marketed it in-house so focus could be on the pumpkin decorating contest for all branches. We are always delighted by the creativity of our users.



Staff

- Displays included the Magic School Bus to go along with our Ms. Frizzle window display. A display of R.L. Stine books took centerstage during October, along with scary books under a spiderweb and bat display that read, "You can't spell books without boo!"
- Everyone enjoyed attending in-service in October. The presentation about AI was very informative and useful. I presented highlights from some of the sessions Kayla and I attended at ARSL. The show and tell was a great way to get to know other staff members.
- Weeks of planning came to fruition during the volunteer appreciation dinner. It is a lot of work and tired feet at the end of the night, but our volunteers are worth it and deserve to be recognized each year for all they do. During the event I waitressed, entertained with rounds of bingo, photographed many pictures, and spoke about our wonderful Friends group.



- **Boo On Main**—The city of Westminster decided to make their annual downtown trick-or-treat more than just a candy giveaway. Officer Ike Lewis was in charge and invited the library to be part of the party. It was a huge success! Cindi and I gave out over 750 pieces of candy/goody bags/coloring activities. Estimates are there were between 1,500 and 2,000 people there. It was packed from start to finish. All the staff and YS dept. pitched in to help prepare.
- **Bookmobile Collaboration**—On two separate occasions I was able to go with Angie on the Bookmobile to visit stops in Fair Play and Long Creek. It was nice to visit areas that my branch also serves distantly.

Facilities

Our window decoration by Kayla Browning was entered into the Apple Festival window display contest where we received 2nd place. We had not planned to enter the contest but one of our patrons insisted with the committee we be included because they wanted to vote for our window. It is a social media contest and unfortunately, Pioneer Water just has a bigger reach than we do. This is the second time we have lost to them. Kayla changed our window display at the end of October to fall geese with the saying, "Take a gander at the library!"

A work order to sand and paint the handrails was requested in October and completed.

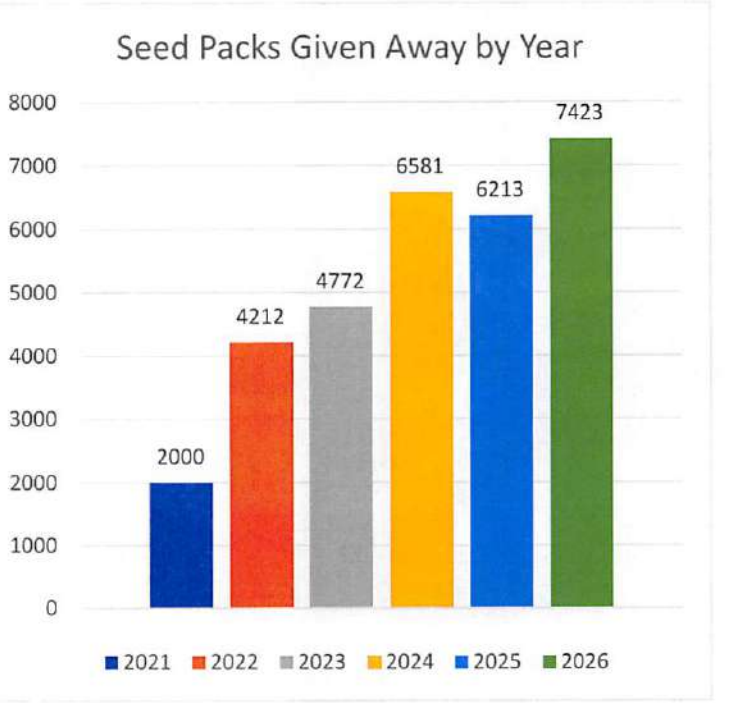
ARSL Attendance

In October I received an LSTA grant to help pay for my attendance at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries conference in Montgomery, Alabama. This is a wonderful conference because all the presentation are geared for small libraries. The OCPL is actually quite large compared to many of the libraries who have only one branch or are solo librarians.

One session I attended was about an online program where people can volunteer to help people who are applying to American citizenship. You communicate with the person online to help them practice their English skills as well as study for the tests. Another session was on using storytelling to spread information about the library. The presenter had examples of interviewing patrons at various libraries through Alabama where the spoke about how the library has impacted their lives or why they use the library. I think the last few months have shown us that maybe OCPL is not getting our true stories out there to the public. If we can show the community the impact we have, they would understand why and how we do certain things.

The other sessions I attended were based on seed libraries or food literacy at the libraries. It is amazing to see how libraries across the US are helping fight food insecurity in their community. Many spoke on the small changes they made or new services they started offering. One thing that was interesting to me is the concept of adding a Freedge to the library. A Freedge, a free refrigerator, allows perishable items to be available. It serves as a food/blessing box for cold foods. Most of these are used in collaboration with their own or community gardens.

I recently met with Tessa Moxley who is the executive chair of the Oconee Food Council. They have taken over the Westminster community garden that is just a short walk from the library. They have wonderful plans and I hope to collaborate with them for the BBW Seed Library as well as potentially being a location for extra veggies to give away. We have seen the popularity of the free bread we have been giving away weekly (many people stop by just to get a loaf) plus many other indicators over the years, so we know there is a need in our community.



BBW Seed Library

We gave out 168 packs of seeds in September. We gave out our last 141 seeds in October so the display will be taken down and this season will come to an end. This year's total packs given away is 7, 423, the most we have ever given away. We aim to open February/March for the 2027 growing season.

Period Project—125 items were given out during September and October.

Youth Services Department

September – October 2026

Tabitha Johnson, Youth Services Librarian

Programs

Youth Services interacted with 1,220 children during programs in September and October. Storytime has been our most frequent program so far, maintaining the pattern of weekly Storytimes at Walhalla, Westminster, and Seneca with visits to Salem on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Attendance is still low at Salem's Storytime but the people who do come have expressed how much they enjoy and appreciate it, so we feel it is worth it to continue going there on our current schedule for now. We've started incorporating a bi-weekly craft, which families have really been enjoying so far. We would love to offer this regularly but a lot of time does go into prepping enough materials for each branch, so bi-weekly has been a good starting point while we explore additional options (such as enlisting volunteer assistance for craft prep in the future). Our themes for September were Libraries, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Fall Leaves. Our themes for October were Fall Harvest, Owls, Bats, and Halloween.

Our new Youth Services Assistant, Ashtyn Zavala, has been a tremendous asset to the team so far. Our skillsets balance well, and we have found our groove with Tabitha primarily handling infant and toddler programs and Ashtyn focusing on teens and tweens. She has resumed Homeschool Hangout and Lego Club and is trialing several new programs including an upcoming Fandom Club and Cinephile Club. The plan as it stands is to rotate these programs and others around the system so that each branch is able to host one or more larger reoccurring programs every month.

Her first Homeschool Hangout was a very popular STEM-oriented lesson on building 3D plant and animal cell models out of recyclable materials. Registration for this session was completely full, we had a waiting list, and we were able to connect with some teen volunteers through that program as well. Those volunteers ultimately ended up participating in our Trick or Truck event on October 31st. This first HH was hosted in Walhalla and will move to Seneca in November.

Westminster hosted us for Lego Club's return. This will travel to Walhalla next month. We were able to welcome some of the same faces and some new folks. We offered a free play hour this month, but we are considering transitioning the club to have a free-play and a challenge option. Attendance was a bit lower for this one than we anticipated, but we do feel like it will become more popular the more word spreads about it being offered again.

Community Outreach / Collaboration

Our three biggest success stories for outreach and collaboration this month were a Sensory Storytime in partnership with High Falls County Park (43 attendees), a full day of presenting at Ravenel Elementary for their Career Day (216 attendees), and our Halloween Trick-or-Truck (464 attendees), which was a fantastic multi-department effort with some really stellar community support. We weren't able to attend the Fall Festivals in Salem or Westminster, but we did send along about 650 activity books and take-and-make craft kits to be distributed by library staff at those as well. We also delivered five Storytimes to Preschools in September and October and have added Seneca Baptist to our lineup which means we will now do monthly Preschool Storytimes with Trinity Baptist, The Learning Center, Golden Corner, and Seneca Baptist. Ashtyn typically leads these as they often conflict with Storytime's scheduled at our branches. She has been very well received with these so far.

We did not receive any responses to our initial email to the SDOC librarians and reading coaches but have reached out to them again and are starting to see responses coming through. We will be in continuing conversations with the schools to make ourselves available for collaboration opportunities.

Displays

In October we started counting how many books circulate from our YS displays and are exploring more ways to track and analyze this data. The juvenile Halloween display circulated approximately 17 titles and the teen display circulated 10. The juvenile display was a display of spooky books. The teen display was "if you liked this movie, read this book," based on scary, spooky, or mystery movies. The juvenile display was interactive in that it had flip-up pumpkins on the side including facts about Halloween and fall, from origins of the holiday to what the best-selling candy in October is. Kids were very excited about these flip-up pumpkins and the pumpkin garlands that hung on the display—we heard quite a few "pumpkins!" shouted in the library. The teen display was interactive in that it had accompanying bookmarks which Ashtyn did have to refill once throughout the month.

We also did a display for ALA's Banned Books Week which fell on October 4-10th this year. Our teen display circulated 7 titles and our JUV display circulated 4. Each display featured 12 books initially, and we refilled the teen books twice. These displays included educational materials that described what Banned Books Week is, why each title has been challenged, and what makes those titles worthwhile. These displays sparked several good questions from (and discussions with) patrons about intellectual freedom.

Professional Development

Ashtyn attended four webinars hosted by Anna Brannin with the State Library in September and October about teen and tween programming. Tabitha completed a Teams training given by the Oconee County IT department and we both attended the system wide In-Service Day led by Brittany Castro.

Looking Ahead

We are already deep in Summer Reading planning. We are very excited to report that the City of Seneca has agreed to allow us use of the Gignilliant Center for our larger Summer Reading programs, which we have already booked. We are still determining how we'd like to approach prizes and retention strategies this year as well as brainstorming smaller programs to supplement the big performances and keep readers engaged all Summer long.

Both Tabitha and Ashtyn are still evaluating which programs have been successful in the past and where there is room and interest for new ones that would excite our patrons. Tabitha would like to get more reoccurring infant and toddler programs started up in the coming months but has been focusing her efforts on rebuilding a strong Storytime following and fostering community partnerships while offering additional one-off programs as time allows. Ashtyn, likewise, is exploring ways to reinforce existing and build new relationships with teens and tweens to get them interested in coming to the library and will be developing new programs and adjusting current ones based on attendance in November and December.

Pictures

Below we have included some pictures from various Storytimes, our first Homeschool Hangout, and Tabitha and Ashtyn handing out books at Trick-or-Truck on Halloween. We have also shared some of these images on Facebook but have been more careful about what gets posted on social media as opposed to what we share in this report as we have many families who would prefer we keep their children's faces out of frame.

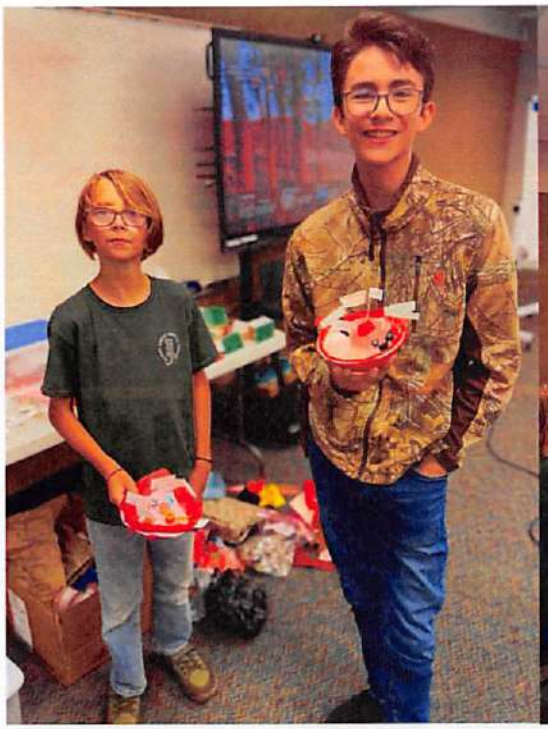















nucleus
cell membrane

