



City Council Annual Report

Red Wing Public Library

Prepared by: Dan Brower, Library Director

Meeting Date: February 21, 2025

2024 Accomplishments

Introduction

The Library Director serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the library. While a Department Head of the City of Red Wing, the Director is responsible to the Library Board on all operational issues. The Director serves as the primary advisor to the City Council and Library Board on library concerns. In addition to supervising all library staff, the Library Director implements and manages all library services provided to the Red Wing community; implements the Library Board's Long Range Plan; manages the Library's budget; and oversees educational and enriching programs, including early literacy programs, for the community. The Red Wing Public Library provides high-quality library and information services to all members of the Red Wing community, respecting patrons' privacy while providing access to information resources without judgment.

In 2024, the Library staff consisted of one Public Services Librarian, one Technical Services Librarian, one Youth Services Librarian, one Administrative Support Specialist, one Library Assistant, one Youth Services Assistant, one Technical Services Assistant, five Library Clerks, and one Shelver. Please refer to the Organizational Chart for more details.

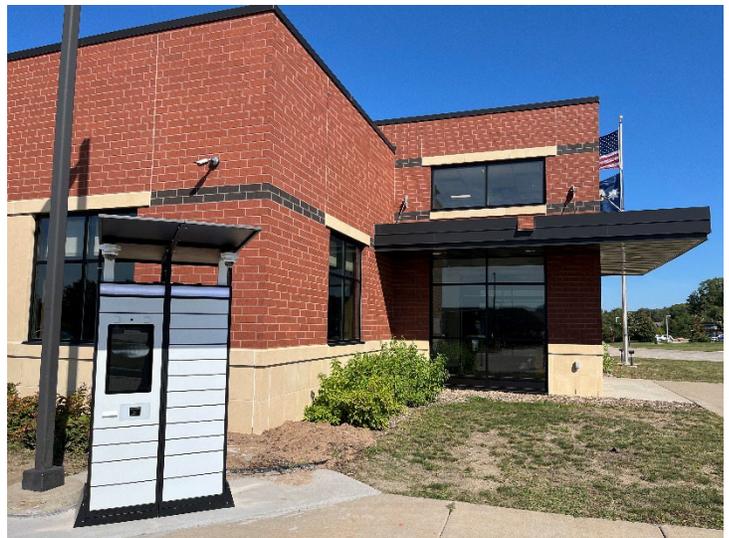
Accomplishments

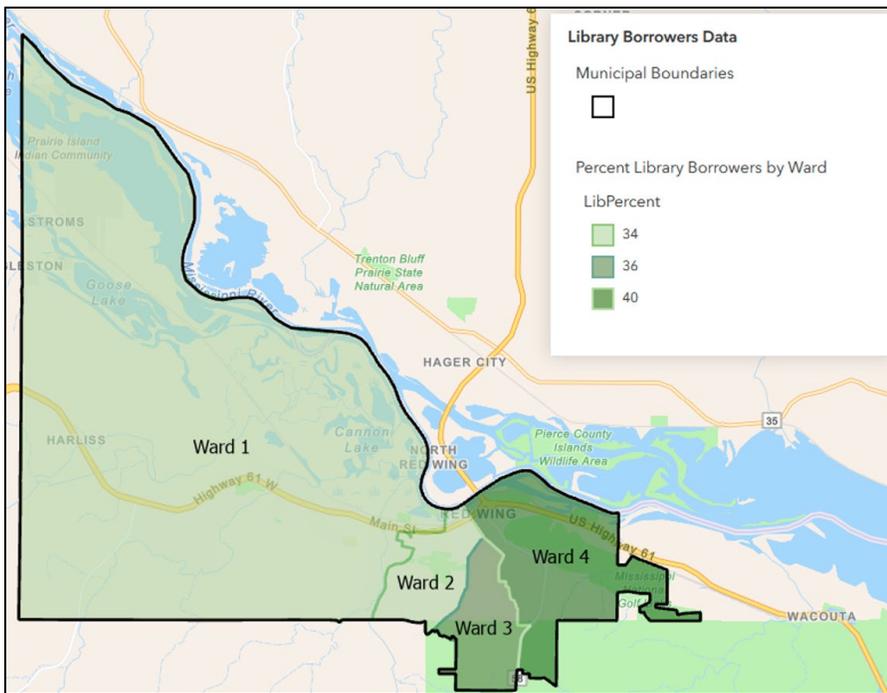
1. Library Lockers

The Library Locker Pilot Program was launched in September 2024. The lockers, specifically identified in the City's Strategic Plan, Equity Plan, and Library's Long Range Plan, provide 24/7 library access to patrons.

Patrons can request items and pick them up at the Library Lockers, located at Fire Station 2. This project has been in development over the past 2 years, and, with the help of anonymous GIS mapping of patrons, the library was able to identify a need to expand library access to the west

side of town. Fire Station 2 was selected as an appropriate location due to being a city-owned property, its centralized location, and the safety and security of the location. The Friends of the Library were able to fund the project. 89 patrons used the Library Lockers in 2024, and there have already been requests to expand the program. No expansion is planned yet, but the library will continue monitoring activity levels.





The GIS map of Library Borrowers as a percentage of population by ward is provided here. The average “market penetration” for libraries is 37%. Compared to that average, Ward 4 is above average; Ward 3 is about average; Wards 1 and 2 are below that average. Multiple factors may contribute to this, including transportation accessibility, work schedules versus the library’s operating hours, and awareness of the library. Having lockers with 24/7 availability can relieve the first two barriers to service, and may influence these numbers in the future.

2. Activity Returns to pre-COVID levels

Library activity levels returned to pre-COVID levels. While maintaining the same number of staff as previous years, and offering approximately the same number of events, the library saw increases from 2023 in every measurable activity.

- Circulation increased 12%
- Computer Usage increased 12%
- WiFi Usage increased 2%
- Use of Online Resources (Mango Languages, Ancestry, Kanopy) increased 58%
- Visits increased 9%
- Summer Reading participation increase 52%
- Summer event attendance increased 60%
- Total event attendance in 2024 increased 22%
- Meeting & Study room usage increased and the rooms were used nearly 1,400 times in 2024.

3. Staff Development

In 2024, the library was fortunate to be able to promote several staff to career positions.

Due to the retirement of Randy Decker, Matt Thornton was promoted to Public Services Librarian. His promotion vacated the Youth Services Assistant position, which was then filled by Helen Korbel.

With the retirement of Kari Gadiant, Olivia Olson moved into the Technical Services Librarian position, and Derek Braend was subsequently promoted into her former position of Technical Services Assistant.

Two of those promotions would not have been possible without the City’s tuition reimbursement program, which allowed staff to attend school and receive financial assistance in acquiring degrees for their positions.

4. Summer Reading 2024

Summer Reading at the Red Wing Public Library was extremely popular in 2024.

Children ages 0-12 logged minutes of reading through the Beanstack app. To complete the program, children needed to log 30 hours of reading in the summer. New in 2024, children could record up to 45 extra hours of reading, for a total of 75 possible hours of reading.

- In 2024, 447 children registered for the program (a 49% increase from 2023) and 336 read at least one hour (a 42% increase).
- 160 children completed the program and read at least 30 hours, which is a 63% increase from 2023.

Similarly, teens recorded their time and had the opportunity to read up to 300 hours.

- 94 teens registered for the program (a 68% increase) and 66 read at least one hour (a 38% increase).
- 36 teens read at least 30 hours to complete the program, which is an 80% increase from 2023.

While the teen numbers may appear small, teens have so many extra-curricular activities throughout the school year and summer. These are the highest participation numbers the library has had.

Summer Reading event attendance was incredibly high in 2024. Even with essentially the same number of events offered, the library saw 60% more children and teens at events over the summer than in 2023.

5. Community Outreach Highlights

The Library serves everyone in the community, and therefore made efforts to reach more patrons and residents in 2024.

- The library attended multiple community meetings, including the Chamber of Commerce and Community Education. Library presentations were given to 16 groups and organizations. KCUE hosted the library four times in 2024. The library also had three utility bill inserts to boost visibility to all residents.
- The library hosted the Testify Exhibit throughout the month of June. This unique photo gallery exhibit tells the story of slavery in Minnesota through artifacts in the Diane and Alan Page Collection. On the last day of the exhibit, the library also hosted Dr. Christopher Lehman for a special engagement.
- The library hosted an event, in partnership with Hispanic Outreach of Goodhue County, for Hispanic families in the Red Wing area. This special event involved a tour of the library, explanation of resources, and an opportunity for residents to get library cards.
- The library's Spanish language collection was refreshed and expanded, allowing for a larger collection and more display space for items and information.
- The library hosted Back to School nights, in partnership with Red Wing Schools, to familiarize children and families with the library.



Public Library Department

