

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the
ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD**

THURSDAY, August 15th 2019
Admiral Room, Blasco Memorial Library

CALL TO ORDER:

Felix Lohitai called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Liz Allen, Heather Canfield, William Conway, Martha Knuth, Felix Lohitai, Mary Ann Tempestini

MEMBERS ABSENT: Julie Boam (excused), Devi Subedi, Trevor Pearson.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Blane Dessy (Executive Director), Sheryl Thomas (Assistant Director), Alyssa Johnson (Administrative Officer II), Deana Cooper (Business Office Manager), Marcus Yuille (Outreach Manager) Peg Shenefelt (President of the Friends).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 18, 2019

Mary Ann moved to approve, Felix seconded. Minutes approved.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None

REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL LIAISON:

None

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY UPDATE (Peg Shenefelt):

- Peg relayed that Fall Book Drive dates are set: September 14, 2019 from 10am to 2pm. Emphasis was made on the Drive-Thru aspect.
- Donations can also be made any day at any of the branches.
- Erie Gives report: the amount donated has increased every year. 2019 results: \$9,413 donated plus the anticipated ECF match.
- Blane pointed out the ERFL's donation trend
- There were no questions from the board.

REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT (Deana Cooper):

See attached Monthly Library Fund Report—August 8, 2019.

Board financials were sent in advance of the meeting for review.

Deana remarked that the first few pages of the report are out-of-sorts. There was a processing error that is being corrected with County Finance. Martha asked whether the budget operates based on calendar year or follows the state's budget year. Blane advised the county's calendar year method of operation and remarked that we will review the budget timeline under staff presentations.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (Blane Dessy):

- Consulting the Bi-Weekly Report emailed 8/14
 - Preparing for 2020: Budgets are tight, but in good conscious we ask for resources
 - Submitted Records Improvement Fund Request to buy new security gates for branches and the heritage room. These areas are in need of new security measures for RFID protected materials. The expected cost is \$54,000; submitted on 8/14.
- Innovation Collaborative
 - Innovation Collaborative has asked the library to assume management of 3 programs (Co-Starters, Ice House, and Collegiate Showcase)
 - Library has agreed to take over the Co-Starters program. It was previously hosted in part by the library, now we will manage it entirely. The program ties in with the library in regards to our entrepreneurial eco system.
- Branch Study
 - Sheryl Completed the Bookmobile study, Blane has now tasked her with starting a Branch study
 - Study will look at the 4 branches and their future. It was strongly stated that there are no plans to close any branches. Administration gets requests from branches, but they can't all be funded. So, we'll study and make recommendations. Example: Millcreek is constantly suggested to get a permanent stand-alone building, but if we move its location does the branch lose its high usage? Questions like that will be considered.
- Heritage Room Digitization
 - Proceeding with digitization initiatives
 - Erie Times News was the original target, after meeting with County Council it was recommended that the library pursue digitization of all newspapers housed in the Heritage Room
 - This recommendation added \$100,000 to the projected cost, bringing the total to roughly \$950,000.
 - The library will be seeking Philanthropic Support for this initiative.
- Master Plan Updating: The Library team will meet with Bostwick on 8/21 along with Friends, the ERLF, and invited a board member from the Library Advisory Board. The meeting will; review Phases III and IV of the Blasco Master Plan with respect to making minor revisions and updating the budget. These phases will require upwards of \$2,000,000.
- Poet Laureate
 - Dr. Chuck Joy has been appointed to his second term as Erie County Poet Laureate
 - He asked the Library to be the host for his September and subsequent events.
- Iroquois Branch Security
 - With the start of the new school year, Iroquois Branch is adding a new security guard for the after-school hours to help mitigate disruptive behavior by adolescents.
 - We often receive incident reports from this branch noting disruptive and disrespectful behavior by teenaged patrons. We wish there was not a need for this step, but a guard may help.
 - Board discussed the location of the library, and its proximity to schools.
 - Liz suggested reaching out to Iroquois SD to see if there is something ISD can provide, and asked how the community can help keep the kids occupied
 - Blane posed: How can we re-channel their energy to something constructive?
 - Liz remarked that (while she was working in the branch as a per-diem) the kids were well behaved and engaged during the *Read to a Therapy Dog* program.

- Blane elaborated that the trouble is caused by several “usual suspects”—he met with the Iroquois SD Administration Team and found that those who misbehave at the library are the same students who misbehave in school.
 - Heather suggested creating a Teen Advisory Board specific to Iroquois. Blane remarked how all branches have expressed interest in housing their own Teen Space.
 - Additional Discussion
 - Digitization
 - Liz looped back to the digitization initiative. She remarked that the ETN is owned by Gatehouse Media, who is in process of merging to G Net, which does have a foundation. She suggested that there may be an opportunity there.
 - Liz is also on the City Council’s Historic Preservation Task Force, perhaps the library can reach to them for additional insight, and offered her services if the library is forming a similar committee.
 - Liz and Blane discussed the matter of rights and ownership, remarking that it gets very complicated.

STATISTICAL AND OTHER REPORTS (Sheryl Thomas):

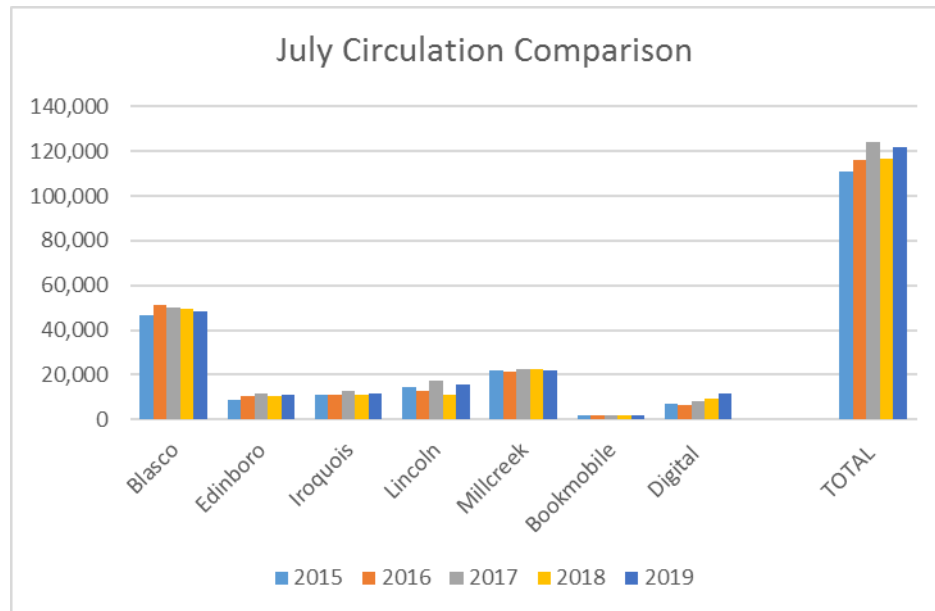
The statistic reports were sent in the advance agenda packet.

July 2019 Statistics

Numbers Snapshot

- **188** programs offered for all ages, up 8.7% from last year
- **55,392** visits, up 7% over last year and 11% over last month
- **121,736** total circulation, up 4.5% over last year and 22.7% over last month
- **754,594** total circulation YTD, up .25% from last year

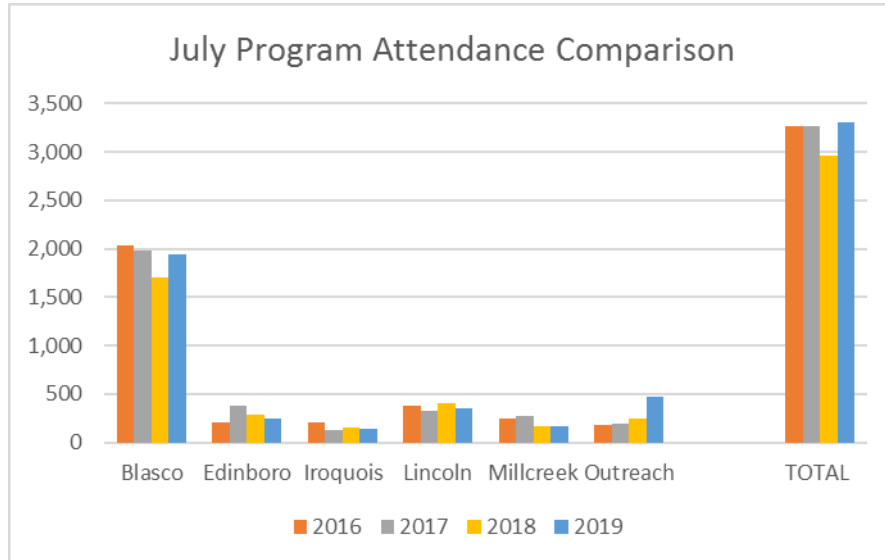
Circulation



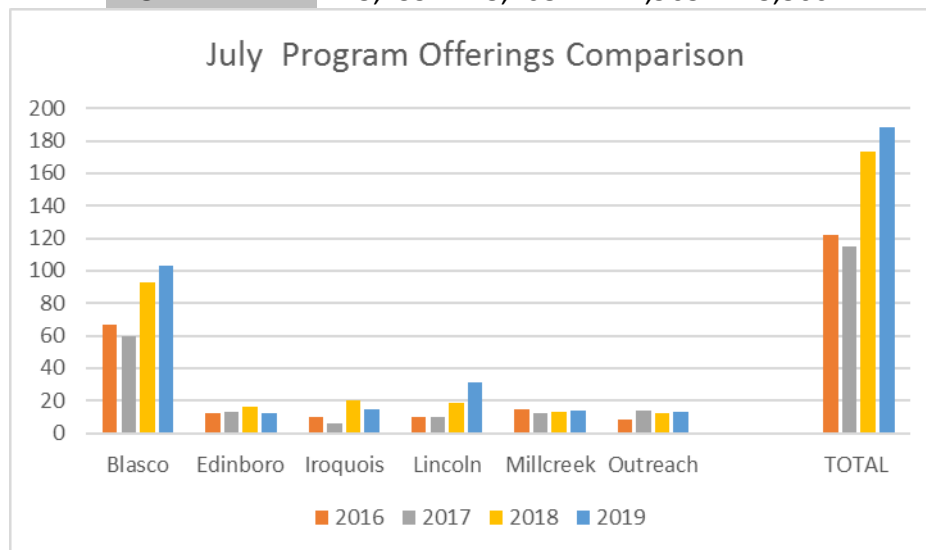
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Blasco	46,639	51440	50219	49,660	48,218
Edinboro	8,587	10,196	11690	10,442	10,981
Iroquois	11,246	11,164	12530	11,216	11,659
Lincoln	14,239	12,982	17268	11,327	15,887

Millcreek	21,704	21,590	22,475	22,268	21,797
Bookmobile	1,619	1,754	2,014	1,976	1,713
Digital	6,765	6,721	8,010	9,562	11,481
TOTAL	110,799	115,847	124,206	116,451	121,736

Programs



	2016	2017	2018	2019
Blasco	2,030	1,979	1,707	1,945
Edinboro	212	373	287	241
Iroquois	204	126	152	136
Lincoln	380	330	404	353
Millcreek	251	270	168	160
Outreach	182	190	245	465
TOTAL	3,259	3,268	2,963	3,300



	2016	2017	2018	2019
Blasco	67	60	93	103

Edinboro	12	13	16	12
Iroquois	10	6	20	15
Lincoln	10	10	19	31
Millcreek	15	12	13	14
Outreach	8	14	12	13
TOTAL	122	115	173	188

- Sheryl remarked that many factors are up compared to previous month/ year and that July is all around a big month. The Library typically has a large number of Programs, and that our staff does a lot of booktalking and displays.
- No questions from the Board.

10. REPORT OF THE DISTRICT CONSULTANT (Marcia Wilking):

Marcia on vacation, report provided in advance

- District Library Consultant
 - The annual district report is due to the state on August 26th
 - The district is also receiving a 9% increase in district aid – we will be meeting soon to determine how to spend these funds
- State
 - The increase in library funding will be given out at approximately 9% to all libraries. The formula that governs the total aid to each library is not being re-run this year. The increase is simply being added to the current amounts based off of when the last formula was run in 2003
 - Later this month a survey will be coming out from the state for library directors, staff and board members asking what types of training and topics would be most beneficial to you. If you have ideas and suggestions, please email Marcia at mwilking@eriecountypa.gov the board president will also be receiving a copy of the survey.
- District Library News
 - Saegertown has a new director
 - The Titusville library director has been named the director of the Wellington Public Library in New Zealand, he will be leaving soon
 - Cochranon is celebrating 50 years

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

None

STAFF PRESENTATIONS:

Blane Dessy prefaced the staff presentations by announcing that all 3 staff presentations today are important to “you” being representatives of a county council district. He asked that the board consider these matters as they will affect the board member’s district. He encouraged members to share thoughts on representation, and collect feedback from your district, answer the question “Are we being equitable?” in the county.

- Budget 2020—Blane Dessy and Deana Cooper
 - For the upcoming Budget we are asking for a 5% increase in the acquisitions budget, which equates to about \$40,000.

- For a library of this size, given the cost of the materials and the increasing cost of database licensing, the standard budget does not leave much discretionary spending.
 - Anitra Gates (Tech Services Manager) did some data digging into our collection and revealed that we are too old in STEM materials for both adults and children. This is truly a disservice to users.
 - The library has not previously asked for increases in acquisitions budget. We truly want much more, but feel that a 5% increase is what the market will bear
 - Deana added that the increase will also cover rising database costs—the launch of the ecard has already increased spending and will require a larger budget. The biggest database expense is Hoopla, driving the costs. We currently have to limit patrons to 6 checkouts per month on this platform; library budget could not sustain an unlimited checkout policy.
 - Also requesting 1 new technical services staff member
 - Requesting budget increase to purchase additional wifi hotspots.
 - We currently have 26 units, and there is a 90 unit long waitlist. This is typical of the item, they are very popular and we are not able to meet demand. The budget asks for money to purchase 40 additional units.
 - Library has asked for an increase in funding to purchase new patron-used computers
 - We received 150 gently used, but better than our current, monitors donated through Erie Insurance. They were replacing their own equipment and offered the old monitors to us. It was remarked that they are a very good partner.
 - Staff computers are paid for by the county IT budget, but patron computers are paid by library budget.
 - Our staff computers are roughly 6 years old, most operating still on Windows 7.
 - We have worked with Library IT to institute a 4 year cycle, so that every year we will replace 25% of the public computers
 - The older computers, not being replaced this year will require new Windows 10 licenses at the start of the new year
 - Asking for Bookmobile replacement, will be a capital expenditure
 - Library will keep board posted on budget updates, Blane noted that library budget advocacy is never a bad idea.
- Bookmobile Study Recap—Sheryl Thomas
 - Bookmobile study attached as Appendix A
 - Sheryl summarized the bookmobile study in the previous meeting, presenting updates
 - The New York Public Library is adding bookmobiles to its service, for the 1st time in decades. This speaks to their usefulness. Sprinter Shuttles tend to be the most popular format.
 - Library will ask for \$400,000 to finance new bookmobiles.
 - The amount granted will inform our approach. Receiving the full amount will allow us to purchase 1 traditional bookmobile, and one smaller specialized bookmobile—used with more of a programming purpose. As found in the study, libraries with multiple bookmobiles tend to have vehicles with split purposes.
 - Sheryl is working with Marcus assess the bookmobile routes and strategic use. We want to be efficient in the use of bookmobiles, and effective in matching the types of services needed at particular stops (delivery service vs. browsing ability vs. programming).
 - There will need to be a degree of publicity regarding any route changes. We’ll need to strategize how we communicate with the communities.
 - Blane suggested that each of the Board members collect thoughts on bookmobile service in their district, and reach out to Sheryl—we want feedback. There is a map of the stops

in the attached study, assess it based on your district point of view. Sheryl will reach out if we don't hear from the board first.

- Liz discussed the importance of collection formats, specifically audiobooks. She suggested having a county council tour on the bookmobile and at branches—invite them out on the road for a tour, to show where the money goes.
- Blane asked if any board members would like to view the bookmobile or schedule a ride-along
- Peg asked about the staff needed to operate the bookmobile. Sheryl replied there are 2 full time staff, and discussed potential future needs.
- Blane affirmed that the library is committed to this type of service.
- **Marcus Yuille, Outreach Services**
 - Blane introduced Marcus, noting that he replaced Chanel Cook and has been employed for almost 1 month. At hire, Blane challenged Marcus to completely rethink Outreach Services, make it structured, substantive, and strategic.
 - Marcus shared his vision and where we are to date, distributing the new outreach statement (attached as Appendix B). Marcus remarked that he sees the library as an outstretched hand. He is working to create a framework of partners to make an impact in the community. We are using the PA Forward as a framework.
 - Marcus reviewed his timeline. In month 1, he is working JFK Center to bridge the gap with “New Americans”, and to establish a “Beyond our Walls” initiative with the Erie County Prison.
 - Blane asked the board to send Marcus their district’s needs, we need to hear from each area
- Blane recapped the 3 budget initiatives and asked for the board’s feedback as it pertains to their respective districts on 1)Bookmobile and 2) Outreach.
- Liz asked for the status on literacy in Erie County, and recounted an encounter with an illiterate patron. Discussion on availability of basic literacy skills development for adults.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

There are several news releases included.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES:

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

The next Advisory Board meeting is September 19th.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:01 pm.

NEWS ARTICLES

Erie Reader, July 31st, “Erie is Giving More”

<https://www.eriereader.com/article/erie-is-giving-more>

Who: Brian Graham, Editor-in-Chief

Giving to: [Friends of the Erie County Public Library](#).

Who they are: Friends of the [Erie County Public Library](#) is an organization dedicated to helping support the numerous activities and programs for adults and children offered by the Erie County Public Library.

Why I am giving: Since before she was even able to sit up on her own, my daughter has been a regular at the Blasco Library. She absolutely loves the staff in the Children's Library and is a regular at the Tuesday Toddler Time program. She's always eager to share the crafts she makes and new songs she learns from the instructor. And she usually leaves with a big bag of books to read at home. The Blasco Library is a community treasure and I'm happy to support it this Erie Gives Day.

Bonus: My daughter feels very comfortable in the Children's Library and will often go to the front of the class and stand next to the instructor like she's the assistant during story time and songs.

STOP

*Times News
7-26-19*

GOOD MORNING

Rediscovering fishing at Presque Isle



Dana Massing

My late father and maternal grandfather liked to fish and I occasionally tagged along when I was a kid.

We'd drive to Presque Isle State Park and go out on Presque Isle Bay in winter when it was frozen or head to the park's North Pier in summer.

I still remember, and feel guilty about, the "big one that got away."

We were on the pier and I was using one of my grandfather's new fishing poles. I set it down for a few seconds to get a pop out of the cooler and as I went to pick the pole back up, it went flying off the pier and into the water of the channel, pulled by the fish that had taken the bait and everything attached to it.

I'd like to take my 4-year-old daughter

fishing, but it's been a long time since I've put a worm on a hook or taken a fish off one. So I was excited to see that one of the activities at this weekend's Discover Presque Isle is Family Fishing.

The S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie will be at the Waterworks floating dock near the Rotary Pavilion on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. They'll provide equipment and, I'm sure, their expertise on how to use it.

Save Our Native Species of Lake Erie is a fishing club "dedicated to the improvement of fishing on Lake Erie and its Pennsylvania tributaries," according to its website. The S.O.N.S. have a hatchery and stock local waterways. They also offer numerous programs like Family Fishing.

While I'm pretty certain I can still get bait on a hook, I'm no longer as confident about my ability to remove a fish and would welcome help from the S.O.N.S.

In addition, according to the website for

the Presque Isle Partnership, which puts on Discover Presque Isle, "a fishing license is not required when participating" in the Saturday Family Fishing program. That's good news for DPI visitors who don't have a fishing license or can't afford one. A one-day license for a Pennsylvania resident age 16 and up is \$11.90, according to the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's website. An annual license for ages 16-64 is \$22.90.

So I plan to rediscover fishing this weekend at Presque Isle and introduce Rose to it. It's one of several activities we plan to experience over the three-day celebration of the state park that runs Friday through Sunday.

To see the full DPI schedule, visit www.discoverpi.com.

Erie Times-News staff writers share their views from behind the scenes, stories and bylines. Dana Massing can be reached at 870-1729. Send email to dana.massing@timesnews.com.



Find more events and add your own for free at www.GoErie.com/thingstodo.

S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie Present:

Go Fish: 10 a.m. to noon. Iroquois Avenue Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. Presenters will provide a bucketful of information about fishing with activities for all ages. The group is passionate about responsible fishing and the public's right to access local waterways. Free. For more information, call 451-7082.

Hazard Con 2019: Noon to 5 p.m., Friday through Sunday. Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. Delve into manga, anime, gaming and Japanese pop culture. \$40 at the door, good for all three days. \$15 for Sunday only at the door. For more information, visit www.hazardcon.org.

Sounds Around Town: 7 p.m. WQLN Public Media, 8425 Peach St. East Ave will play its unique Americana-style music. Free. Concessions include free food and beverage samples from Smith's Provisions, Erie Beer and Mill Creek Coffee. Bring a chair or blanket. For more information, call 864-3001.

Libraries Blazing Star-Aligned Trails Throughout Pennsylvania

July 22, 2019 [Compendium News Staff](#) In [Academic Libraries](#), [Library News](#), [PA Forward](#), [Resources of Interest](#), [Rural and Small Libraries](#)

Pennsylvania Library Association recognizes libraries for PA Forward™ Star achievements earned between April 1 and June 30, 2019

Mechanicsburg, PA (July 22, 2019) – The Pennsylvania Library Association just announced the 2019 second quarter PA Forward™ Star Library awardees. More than 30 libraries from throughout the state earned their *star status* and are being recognized by the Association for their efforts to provide patrons with educational resources and opportunities. “The PA Forward Star Library program spotlights libraries’ efforts to continue making intentional investments in literacy-aligned programs,” said **Christi Buker**, Pennsylvania Library Association Executive Director. “Our libraries continue to be community pillars, meeting citizen needs, helping businesses, government organizations and others connect with local residents, sharing resources and information which have the potential to positively impact multiple lives.

“Yes, you can go to your local library and check out books, but these agile institutions demonstrate day in and day out they offer more than books,” Buker added. “Libraries offer the world to those who enter their doors. It is an honor to highlight those efforts with the PA Forward Star Library designation. Congratulations to all of our participating Star Libraries.”

PA Forward, which launched statewide in 2012, works through five key literacies – Basic, Information, Civic & Social, Health and Financial – to assist individuals in enhancing their overall quality of life. To continue helping libraries use PA Forward to demonstrate all their libraries offer, in January 2017, the Association kicked off the Star Library program statewide. The Star Library recognition offers support to libraries who participate and integrate PA Forward’s literacies in their programming activities. Program topics can include information such as retirement planning (financial literacy) to more physically active programs such as walking book club discussions (civic and social literacy and health literacy).

Libraries are recognized for meeting benchmarks within the bronze, silver and gold star levels of the program. While one star is awarded for both the bronze and gold levels, a total of five stars are awarded in the silver category – one silver star for each of the five literacies of PA Forward. For each silver star award, a number appears denoting the number of silver stars obtained to date.

Stars are awarded on a quarterly basis in the calendar year and the recognition is for the highest level attained in the program at the time of the award. The libraries noted below are those that earned a first-time star or a new star level **between April 1 and June 30, 2019**. For a full listing of PA Forward Star Libraries, visit <http://paforwardstarlibraries.org/star-status/>. The next round of awards will be announced after Sept. 30, 2019.

The list of awardees, by county, follows:

Allegheny County

Carnegie Free of Swissvale – Bronze
Bronze

Community Library of Allegheny Valley –

Cooper-Siegel Community Library – Silver, 1

Wilksburg Public Library – Silver, 3

Armstrong County

Apollo Memorial Library – Gold

Ford City Public Library – Silver, 5

Berks County

Exeter Community Library – Silver, 5

Kutztown Community Library – Gold

Schuylkill Valley Community Library – Bronze

Butler County

Butler Area Public Library – Silver, 5

Chester County

Chester County Library – Gold

Honey Brook Community Library – Silver, 2

Paoli Library – Gold

Tredyffrin Public Library – Silver, 5

Clarion County

Knox Public Library – Gold

Crawford County

Springboro Library – Gold

Cumberland County

Bosler Memorial Library – Bronze

Shippensburg University Library – Gold

Dauphin County

Penn State Harrisburg Library – Gold

Delaware County

Haverford Township Free Library – Silver, 3

Marple Public Library – Gold

Erie County

Erie County Public Library – Silver, 4

Lancaster County

Ephrata High School Library – Bronze

Manheim Community Library – Silver, 1

Luzerne County

Wyoming Free Library – Bronze

Montgomery County

Ardmore Library – Gold

Horsham Township Library – Silver, 2

Indian Valley Public Library – Silver, 5

Somerset County

Somerset County Library – Silver, 2

Warren County

Warren Library Association – Silver, 5

Washington County

Chartiers-Houston Community Library, Silver 5

Citizens Library – Gold

York County

Collinsville Community Library – Gold
Silver, 5

Red Land Community Library –

Beginning January 2020, once a library achieves the Gold level of the PA Forward Star Library program, libraries will be able to take steps to maintain their PA Forward Gold Star status. More information about that process, can be found at www.paforwardstarlibraries.org under the Getting Started tab.

###

This project is made possible, in part, by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Tom Wolf, Governor.

<https://compendium.ocl-pa.org/libraries-blazing-star-aligned-trails-throughout-pennsylvania/>

8/12/2019

Let's make old smokestack proud new symbol for Erie: Letters to the editor - Opinion - GoErie.com - Erie, PA



Opinion

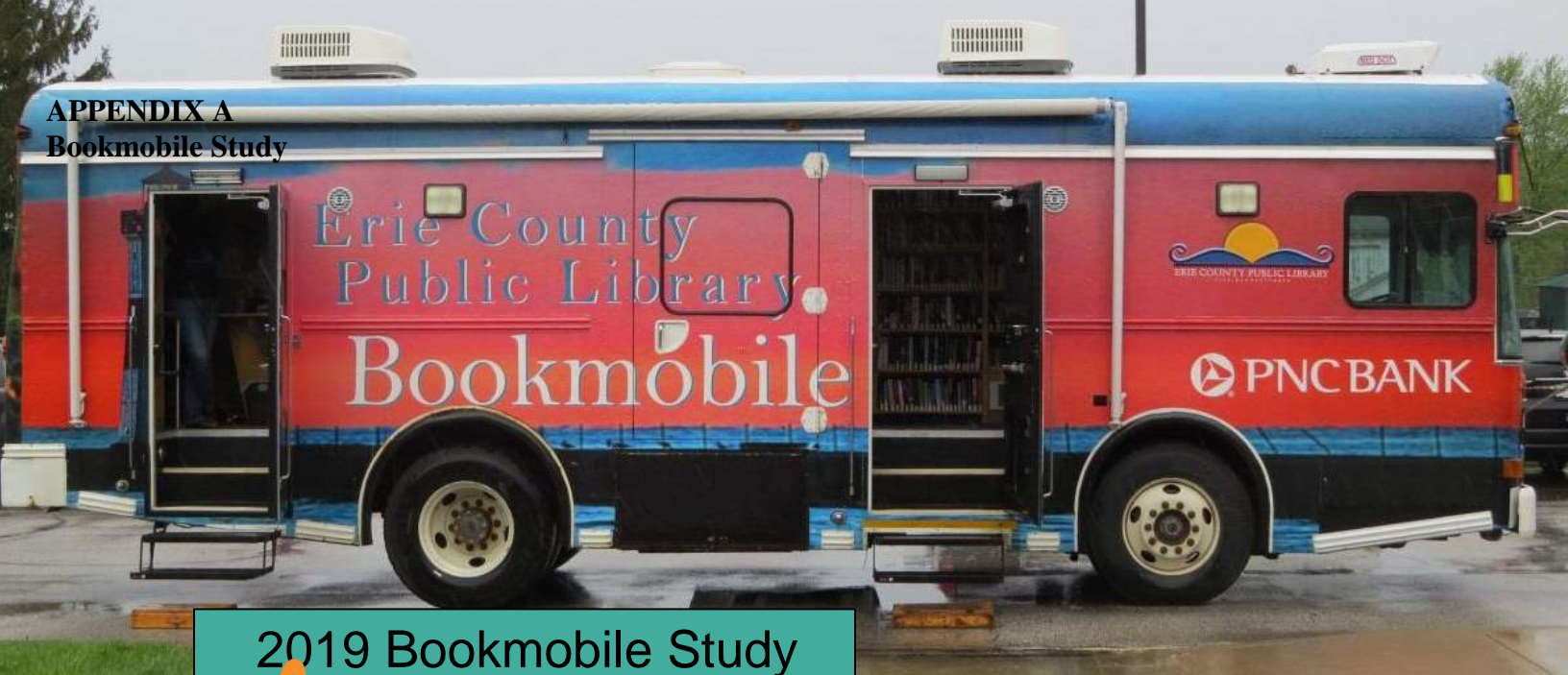
Let's make old smokestack proud new symbol for Erie: Letters to the editor

Posted Aug 8, 2019 at 2:01 AM

I am writing to make a suggestion for the old Penelec smokestack that has been left along the east side of State Street. It would be a novel idea to convert it into a lighthouse, even though an actual lighthouse is not needed. It could pass as a lighthouse for aesthetic reasons and add to the nautical ambiance of our seaport. This transition would be better than having it remain as a reminder of Erie's lost industry while serving as a beacon for a new commercial era.

If this idea is not approved, we could propose the stack be turned into a windmill. This would be a symbol of how the once coal-burning plant is now replaced with a cleaner source of energy, plus that location would get a breeze off the waterfront, especially in the winter.

— **Tim Brennan, Brooklyn, New York**



2019 Bookmobile Study



ERIE COUNTY **PUBLIC LIBRARY**

ignite · excite · inspire

Summary

Bookmobile services have changed rapidly within the last five years. On both a national and a state level, libraries are moving towards smaller, more versatile vehicles and outreach services. They are selecting vehicles sometimes half the size of a traditional bookmobile bus. Services are being added to the traditional material collections—services such as job assistance, wifi, and STEM programming. In addition to bookmobiles, libraries are also utilizing other tools to bring services to underserved areas—such as vending kiosks and Little Free Libraries. The Erie County Public Library bookmobile is ready for updates and a reimagining of services. This study provides a look at national trends, state trends, the current state of the ECPL Bookmobile, and three recommendations for improving service.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl Thomas on July 31, 2019

Contents

National Trends.....	15
PA State Trends.....	16
Current State of the Bookmobile	17
Recommendations	20
Vehicle.....	20
Routes	21
Publicity	21
End Notes	22

National Trends

Bookmobiles continue to be as vital to library services as ever, though the number of vehicles on U.S. roads have shrunk by about a third in the last 25 years, according to a Pew Trust article¹. However, with a newly energetic view to equity and ensuring equal access to services to individuals throughout a service area, the remaining mobile services have experienced something of a renaissance. Sometimes this shows as a traditional vehicle and other times in more non-traditional modes of service. Regardless, the emphasis is on the connections made between the library and the community by bringing services to underserved or hard to reach area.²

¹ Fifield, J. (2018, March 28). *Yes, Bookmobiles Are Still a Thing. (We Checked.)*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/03/28/yes-bookmobiles-are-still-a-thing-we-checked>

² Woltjer, G. (2018, June 20). *The Relevance of Bookmobiles and Mobile Libraries in 2018*. Retrieved from <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/07/the-relevance-of-bookmobiles-and-mobile-libraries-in-2018/>

Bicycle libraries are becoming more common sights, though still usually limited either to summertime or mild climates. Both American Libraries³ and Good Project Literacy⁴ highlighted the power and versatility of bicycle libraries. On the other hand, there are also examples of truly unique and inventive mobile services, such as Ebook Friendly's⁵ profile of book 'tank' in Argentina, a converted trolley in the Netherlands, and the biblioburro in Columbia, among others.

Mobile and outreach services are not, of course, limited to bicycles, burros, and boats. There has been an increasing response to the need for more locations within communities and these responses have been, generally, smaller than a traditional bus or branch. These can be considered to include the Little Free Libraries, which celebrate their 10th anniversary this year and currently have over 90,000 locations worldwide.⁶ These mini libraries are outreach efforts that provide literature to areas not served by a traditional library, just as bookmobiles do. These are simply examples of how library mobile services are becoming more responsive to the individual needs of communities and often moving away from the traditional book bus. Book vending machines, also, deserve a mention in that they are expanding into areas without easy access to a traditional library. Whether run by public libraries, such as the Anaheim Public Library's Books on the Go! vending machine in the ARTIC bus and train depot⁷, or by private entities, such as JetBlue's Soar with Reading machines in New York City,⁸ the machines serve a need in book 'desert' areas.

Whereas ALA's *A Snapshot of Our Nation's Bookmobiles*⁹ in 2013 showed larger, 40' bus-sized vehicles as the norm, a sampling of bookmobile vendors indicates that the most popular units in the last two years are 20' to 28" vehicles. The New York Public Library system is introducing three bookmobiles in 2019 to the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island for the first time since the 1980s. All three will be smaller 20' Sprinter vans.¹⁰

Increasingly, the national trend has been moving towards small, versatile, and innovative delivery systems. While many libraries maintain a traditional bookmobile and find success in doing so, newly established programs and newly reinvented programs are opting away from that model.

PA State Trends

As of 2016, there are 20 bookmobiles serving Pennsylvania, with some traditional buses and others, mostly newer ones, smaller and serving multipurpose functions. As a comparison, there are approximately 650 bookmobiles in the United States and Kentucky has the most, with a whopping 75.¹¹ The 20 bookmobiles belong to 17 libraries, with Montgomery County-Norristown Public Library owning four. Of the 20 bookmobiles, 14 meet the hourly standards

³ Smith, C. (2017, September 1). *Pedal Power*. Retrieved from

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/09/01/pedal-power-book-bikes/>

⁴ Taylor, S.J. (2015, August 19). *Librarians on Bikes Are Delivering Books and WiFi to Kids in "Book Deserts"*.

Retrieved from <https://www.good.is/articles/bike-libraries>

⁵ Kowalczyk, P. (2018, March 18). *10 most extraordinary mobile libraries*. Retrieved from

<https://ebookfriendly.com/extraordinary-mobile-libraries/>

⁶ Little Free Library FAQs. (2009-2019). Retrieved from <https://littlefreelibrary.org/faqs/>

⁷ Haire, C. (2016, January 13). *Want a book? Try a vending machine from O.C. libraries*. Retrieved from

<https://www.ocregister.com/2016/01/13/want-a-book-try-a-vending-machine-from-oc-libraries/>

⁸ Book Vending Machines. (2019). Retrieved from <https://soarwithreading.com/book-vending-machines/>

⁹ Buckner, M. (2013, April 16). *A Snapshot of Our Nation's Bookmobiles*. Retrieved from

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2013/04/16/a-snapshot-of-our-nations-bookmobiles/>

¹⁰ Beltran, L. (2019, April 16). *Public library to deploy fleet of bookmobiles for the first time since the '80s*.

Retrieved from <https://www.crainsnewyork.com/education/public-library-deploy-fleet-bookmobiles-first-time-80s>

¹¹ Dankowski, T. (2018, March 1). *By the Numbers: Bookmobiles*. Retrieved from <https://compendium.oclp.org/montgomery-countys-words-on-wheels-program-a-40-year-success>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/03/01/by-the-numbers-bookmobiles/>

from the Library Code and one, Adams Memorial Library's bookmobile, exceeds the minimum standard for a total of 30 hours per week at stops.¹²

Montgomery County-Norristown Public Library provides traditional library services with two of its bookmobiles and uses the other for specialized visits. Its Words on Wheels (WOW) vehicle travels to senior homes, assisted living facilities, and retirement communities.¹³ It has a specialized collection focusing on audio books and large print. The library's Books-Go-Round vehicle, on the other hand, visits preschools, daycares, and Head Start locations and has a collection that focuses on material for children ages 3 to 5; it also provides programming.¹⁴ All of the vehicles are smaller than our current 40' bus, ranging from 22' to about 28'.

The Library System of Lancaster County recently celebrated the launch of two new bookmobiles. The first vehicle, is an approximately 22' long vehicle featuring removable carts which allow staff to bring their collection outside of the vehicle to enable better patron browsing and less crowding on the vehicle itself. While still featuring a wheelchair lift, the ability to bring material easily off the bus has made an immediate impact on accessibility and circulation.¹⁵ While this vehicle serves as a traditional bookmobile, Lancaster's second bookmobile, the "Be READY Rover" is a smaller van dedicated to younger children's activities and materials. It visits in-home childcare providers on a monthly basis and includes material check out and storytimes. This service is provided in partnership with Systems Aligned in Learning (SAILS), through the United Way.¹⁶

The Reading Public Library launched its Mobile Technology Van in 2018 as a reimagining of mobile library services. This vehicle visits parks, remote areas within Reading, and organizations such as Family Promises, Salvation Army, and the Hispanic Center. While it does not provide traditional material check out services, it does offer resources including wifi, laptops, job search assistance, printing, job search and resume classes, app and technology assistance, and STEM programming.¹⁷ While the van always functions as a wifi hotspot, its contents vary depending on visit location. Rather than invite patrons onboard the bus, staff use carts to offload materials to bring them inside locations or other stops.¹⁸

Clearfield County Public Library is another example of a reimagining of service in Pennsylvania. Still in process, their plan is to "focus on community delivery rather than traditional 'stops'". The library has purchased a Sprinter van (20'-24') and will offload carts of materials for patron perusal, rather than inviting patrons onboard. They will also be offering outreach programming to nursing come, daycares, and to other locations. It will further serve the purpose of a delivery van and move items between library locations.¹⁹

Overall, libraries in Pennsylvania are following the national trend of moving toward smaller, more mobile and versatile bookmobile vehicles.

Current State of the Bookmobile

The current Bookmobile is about twelve years old and is staffed by two full-time clerks. Both clerks have worked on the Bookmobile for well over a decade and have driven previous buses,

¹² Office of Commonwealth Libraries. *2016 Pennsylvania Library Statistics*. Retrieved from <https://www.statelibrary.pa.gov/Documents/For%20Libraries/Library%20Statistics/2016%20PA%20Library%20Statistics.pdf>

¹³ Fluharty, T. (2019, March 6). *Montgomery County's Words on Wheels Program A 40 Year Success*. Retrieved from

¹⁴ Bookmobile and Outreach Services. (2019, April 22). Retrieved from <http://mnl.mclinc.org/bookmobile-and-branches/bookmobile-2/>

¹⁵ Negley, E. (2018, April 9). *Lancaster County's new bookmobile hits the road; Take a look inside*. Retrieved from https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/lancaster-county-s-new-bookmobile-hits-the-road-take-a/article_29d49cfc-3b89-11e8-8eb4-0ff893305d0b.html

¹⁶ Be READY Rover. (2019). Retrieved from <https://lancasterlibraries.org/be-ready-rover/>

¹⁷ Mobile Technology Van. (2018). Retrieved from <http://readingpubliclibrary.org/mobile-technology-van/>

¹⁸ Gamble, B. (2019, May 23). Personal communication.

¹⁹ Clemens, B. (2019, May 20). Personal communication.

on which the current bus is an improvement. Prior to budget cuts in the 2000s, the Bookmobile had a staff of four full-time clerks who alternated driving responsibilities and office time. The Bookmobile has also previously been served by a librarian—Amy Daugherty, currently a children’s librarian, had driven and worked on the bus.

The Bookmobile is on the road four days per week, alternating Fridays and Saturdays, and is always off the road on Thursdays. It is usually on the road between 9am and 10am and returns around 4:45pm. It does not currently have any evening hours, though this is allowable within the current bargaining contract. Staff related that the service had previously had evening hours before budget cuts in the 2000s.

The Bookmobile typically sees an average of 350 individuals per month. The service sees the most visitors in the summer, stretching from May through September. Winter months are the least used, with the lowest months typically being December and January for foot traffic. However, these months also include several holidays that could contribute to lower usage.

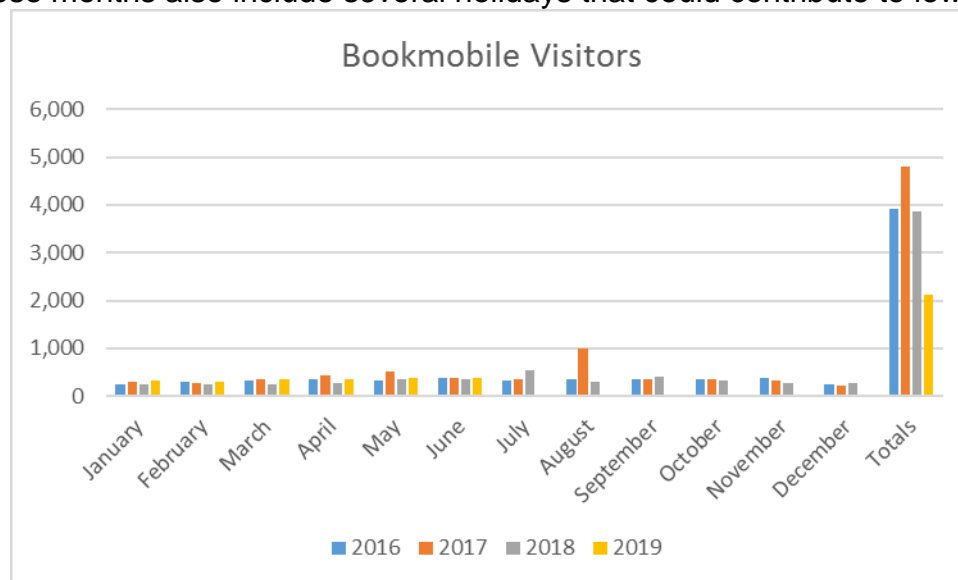


Figure 1. Bookmobile Visitors January 2016-June 2019.

Anecdotally, the Bookmobile staff report that they had seen much higher numbers prior to an approximately 9 month stretch when the Bookmobile was off the road due to needed repairs coinciding with budgetary cuts. This occurred from March 3, 2014 through December 29, 2014. However, I do not have circulation or visitor statistics dating back that far to provide a hard count of a decline. They feel that there was not a comprehensive effort on the library’s part to explain the break in service and believe that many former Bookmobile patrons failed to return when the bus began its route again primarily due to a lack of awareness.

The Bookmobile currently makes 32 stops on a two-week rotation, for a total of 29 hours. The stops are divided into 15 stops one week for 15.5 hours and 17 the next with 13.5 hours. The Bookmobile average slightly less than one hour per stop, however this is slanted due to multiple .25 hour stops and a few 1.5 to 3 hour stops.

Pennsylvania Code § 141.28. Basic standards for bookmobiles²⁰, calls for the Bookmobile to be at stops for at least 20 hours per week. We are currently under a waiver for failing to meet this standard. A contributing factor is our current route, which mixes urban stops with rural

²⁰ Basic standards for bookmobiles, PA Stat. §§ 141.28 (1981). Retrieved from <https://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter141/s141.28.html>

county stops and creates some days when the bus stops at only two or three stops for the whole day.

While the Bookmobile does currently stop at parks, senior homes, churches, and other community places, it does not visit any public school, charter school, or after school program (with the JFK Center being the one exception).

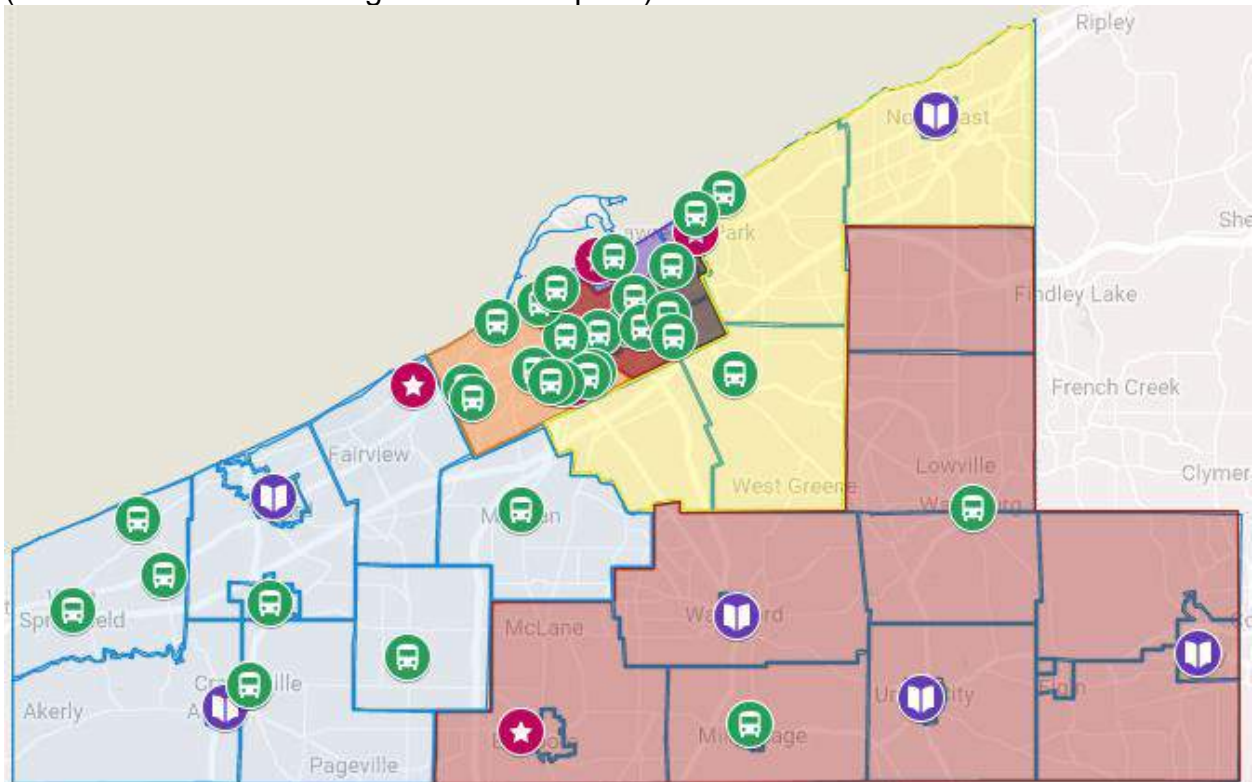


Figure 2. Bookmobile Stops as of July 2019.

The Bookmobile's circulation has held fairly steady over the last five years, with a significant bump in 2017. The current year's circulation is on trend with past years' and, as of June 2019 numbers, has exceeded circulation for the first half of the year in 2015, 2016, and 2018.

The Bookmobile's circulation comes from three types of transactions: patron selection, holds, and drop offs. Patron selection occurs at stops during which patrons board the bus, browse or search for items and check out items on individual cards. Holds, which are a popular feature of the Bookmobile, are generally placed by Bookmobile staff and checked out to individual patrons. Drop offs make up the majority of the shorter (15-minute) stops and often occur at senior centers or homes. These are made up of bins of books selected by the Bookmobile staff based on preferences voiced by stop patrons. The Bookmobile staff pre-check out these items, drop off a bin, and patrons browse communally from the bin. As these drop offs do not allow for patrons boarding the bus, they are prime candidates for an alternative service, such as a delivery van, rather than full Bookmobile service.

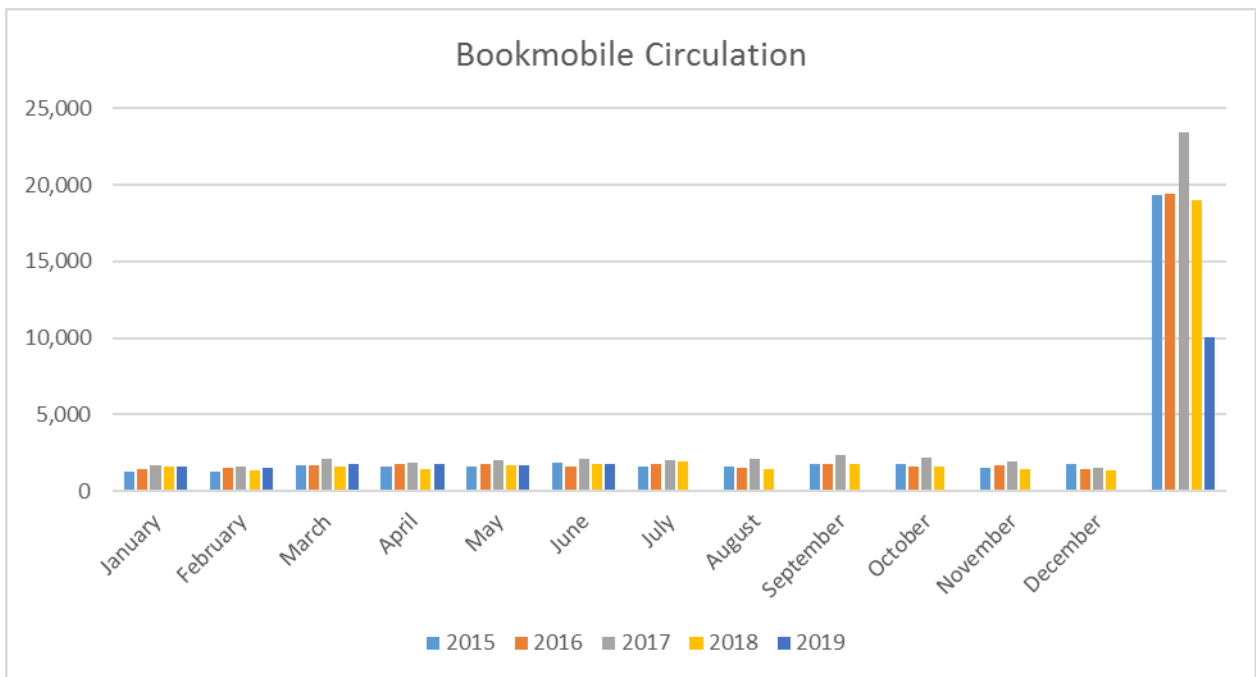


Figure 3. Bookmobile Circulation January 2015 through June 2019.

Recommendations

Vehicle

I respectfully recommend the Library move to acquiring two (or more) vehicles with a specific eye towards versatility and expansion of services. Not only are there additional stops that can be added as regular stops, but library staff fairly frequently field questions about the attendance of the Bookmobile at special events, open houses, fairs, classes, and other events. Multiple vehicles would allow the library to attend partner and community events while still fulfilling baseline route services.

To size the vehicle, I recommend that the library look to acquire vehicles smaller and more maneuverable than the current bus. The 22'10" Sprinter Shuttle, for instance, allows for much more maneuverability than the current bus and would still allow individuals to come on board, including individuals using wheelchairs. With a smaller size to contend with, we may also see an uptick in the number of staff members interested in working on the Bookmobile and driving it, as it would, hopefully, no longer appear quite so daunting. This would further open opportunities to have multiple vehicles on the road at once, with multiple drivers covering different routes.

More specific recommendations from the Bookmobile staff was to include: a generator to allow for A/C, heat, and lights while at stops; rear wheel drive; to be under the weight limits for requiring a CDL; and a diesel Cummings engine, this was recommended for its long life and power through all weather conditions.

While there may be local or governmental channels through which we can purchase a bookmobile, a search of specialized vendors brings up several options with a variety of vehicles and models available. Some vendors include [LDV Custom Specialty Vehicles](#) (Wisconsin), [Farber Specialty Vehicles](#) (Ohio), [Matthews Specialty Vehicles](#) (North Carolina), [Moroney Monolite Bookmobiles](#) (Massachusetts), and [Blue Bird Bus Sales](#) (Pittsburgh, buses, would need to customize).

Prices range from around \$60,000 for an older used vehicle to upwards of \$195,000 for a new vehicle. Additional costs would need to be included for a custom wrap and any needed updates to the interior.

Routes

The current Bookmobile route is a compromise between routes formerly served by two bookmobiles: a rural bus and an urban bus. The current route also stops at areas at or near former branch library locations, such as in the Liberty Plaza. While Chanel had begun auditing and reviewing current stops, I recommend that the new outreach manager thoroughly review current stops to ascertain effectiveness and the possibility of designating some as drop-offs while adding additional full stops. The route will also be affected by the number of vehicles acquired in 2020 and it is anticipated that they will expand accordingly.

Publicity

My third recommendation is to launch a comprehensive publicity and outreach campaign to make Erie County residents aware of the Bookmobile services available to them and to ensure the new vehicle or vehicles are a success upon launch.

An outreach campaign should cover meeting or speaking with individuals or representatives at all current stops and at organizations, such as youth clubs, senior housing, veterans' services, and commercial entities, near each of the stops to inform them of the remodeled services.

Additionally, if route capacity is increased to allow for more stops and/or additional services, individuals and organizations, particularly sometimes hard to reach groups such as homeschoolers, should be made aware of these changes. A review of the current routes will indicate gaps in service and new potential stops can be discussed and promoted.

End Notes

Table for Figure 1. Bookmobile Visitors

Bookmobile Visitors

	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	247	299	240	324
February	297	270	255	300
March	324	342	240	359
April	353	439	284	362
May	333	510	362	386
June	377	384	363	386
July	331	342	533	
August	344	988	292	
September	345	354	397	
October	352	349	323	
November	368	318	284	
December	250	212	280	
Totals	3,921	4,807	3,853	2,117

Table for Figure 2. Bookmobile Circulation

Bookmobile Circulation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	1,264	1,445	1,683	1,627	1,595
February	1,264	1,508	1,632	1,345	1,495
March	1,688	1,673	2,083	1,638	1782
April	1,619	1,754	1,891	1,444	1,731
May	1,608	1,754	2,058	1,709	1,722
June	1,864	1,641	2,108	1,743	1,733
July	1,619	1,754	2014	1,976	
August	1,606	1,538	2,099	1,452	
September	1,790	1,731	2,327	1,799	
October	1,740	1,568	2,152	1,578	
November	1,534	1,670	1,901	1391	
December	1,745	1,391	1,502	1,315	
	19,341	19,427	23,450	19,017	10,058

APPENDIX B

Outreach Services Statement

Erie County Public Library Outreach Statement

Erie County Public Library (ECPL) is committed to the growth and development of Erie County. As a pro-active institution, ECPL seeks to serve the needs of Erie County residents. Through Outreach Services, we support progress and advancement for patrons by providing information and resources in partnership with others. The key component of our Outreach Services is partnering with external agencies and organizations to provide a variety of programs and tools that will improve outcomes for the people we serve.

The Outreach Services office will develop a network of strategic and sustainable relationships with county departments, other municipalities, and non-government organizations. It is our goal to be strategic in creating long-term partnerships that facilitate improvement and growth throughout Erie County. We believe that through strategic partnerships, we will expand the possibilities of achievement for all county residents. The Outreach Services office will also engage in short-term collaborations with other agencies as opportunities arise, but the focus of the Outreach Services office is not on special events or one-off activities.

ECPL Outreach Services will also continue to engage Erie County through exceptional services that unlock the potential and passions of our users. Our Bookmobile will continue to enhance mobile library services to all residents of Erie County, regardless of location. Embracing PA Forward, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Library Association, Outreach Services will focus on the topics of basic literacy and understanding, information literacy, civic and social engagement, health education and financial wellness.

Through Outreach Services, ECPL will also be unwavering in promoting dialogue essential to the community's development. As we serve all of Erie County, we affirm ECPL and Outreach Services will remain dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness.