



OUTRIDER



WYOMING STATE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 55 | ISSUE 2 | FEBRUARY 2026

Wyoming State Library Hosts Members of Leadership Wyoming Class of 2026



Left to right-Abby Beaver, Wyoming State Librarian; Andrew Rossi and Toni Bell, Leadership Wyoming 2026 members; and Travis Pollok, WSL Information Services Manager

The Wyoming State Library (WSL) hosted two members of the Leadership Wyoming Class of 2026, Toni Bell and Andrew Rossi, on Wednesday, February 11. Toni and Andrew were taken on a short tour of the WSL by Abby, Wyoming State Librarian, and Travis, WSL

Information Services Manager, and learned more about the WSL's role within the State of Wyoming, along with its mission and recent initiatives.

Leadership Wyoming is a nine-month program with the mission of "inspiring Wyoming's leaders through exploration and connection." The program is offered annually to a selected group of forty participants from across the state who meet in a different Wyoming community each month to learn about the state's industries, challenges, and opportunities.

During their tour, Toni and Andrew's classmates visited other State of Wyoming agencies, including the Department of Administration and Information, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Agriculture, and many others.

Upcoming Celebrations/ Events

Check out this list of celebrations in March pertaining to libraries and literacy:

March 1-31- [Women's History Month](#)

March 2- [Read Across America Day](#)

March 14- [Pi Day](#)

March 16- [National Freedom of Information Day](#)

School Libraries

SCHOOL LIBRARIES SPOTLIGHT: MELISSA SNIDER



This month, we are thrilled to feature an educator who brings a wealth of experience, a passion for bilingual education, and a deep commitment to information literacy to our state's library community.

Meet Melissa Snider

Title: Library Media Specialist

School: Munger Mountain Elementary School (K-5 Dual Language)

District: Teton County School District, Jackson, WY

The Path to the Library

Melissa is a veteran of the library world, currently celebrating her 17th year as a school librarian. Her journey began in public library youth services before transitioning to schools. She earned her MLIS in 2007 at Simmons College in Boston. Her career has seen her manage everything from alternative high school libraries to her current home at Munger Mountain, where her expertise supports a unique dual-language environment.

A Fun Fact: Cultural Connections

Melissa's love for language and culture extends far beyond the classroom! She is bilingual and has spent time living in Oaxaca, Mexico, as well as in northern Mexico. These experiences allow her to connect deeply with the diverse student body at her dual-language school.

Insights From the Library: The "Why" Behind the Work

For Melissa, the magic of being a school librarian is found in the variety of the day-to-day work.

Famous Quotes

"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."

-Andrew Carnegie



She treasures:

1. **The Connection:** Seeing every student in the school every single week and building relationships across all grade levels.
2. **Creative Freedom:** The ability to weave literature into every lesson plan and watch the progression of skills as students grow from Kindergarten through 5th grade.

What Parents and Students Should Know

"School libraries are active teaching and learning spaces." Melissa wishes more people understood that school librarians are held to the same high standards as classroom teachers.

The library is a hub for:

- **Academic Content:** Lessons are a sophisticated blend of language acquisition and core content.
- **Information Literacy:** A constant thread in every lesson, ensuring students learn to navigate information responsibly.
- **Professional Practice:** Librarians participate in ongoing professional development and evaluation just like their classroom peers.

Success in the Stacks

Melissa’s library is a center for community engagement and collaboration:

- **Winter Book Giveaway:** Now in its fourth year, this event distributed over 1,500 donated books this past December to encourage reading and parent engagement.
- **Collaborative Inquiry:** She is currently partnering with the Science Specialist for Science Fest, helping 4th and 5th graders master the research phase of their projects.
- **Diverse Perspectives:** She is leading 2nd graders through a specialized unit highlighting Indigenous authors and illustrators.

The Power of Partnership

Melissa’s final word of advice? Librarians make great partners. Whether you are a parent or a fellow educator, she encourages you to connect with your school librarian to help bridge roles and better serve our families.

Library Jobs

[Library Development Manager](#)

Wyoming State Library
Cheyenne, WY

Open until filled

Posted January 29, 2026

[Senior Library Assistant, Youth Services](#)

Teton County Library
Jackson, WY

Posted February 19, 2026

Closes March 2, 2026

[Circulation Services Supervisor](#)

Teton County Library
Jackson, WY

Posted February 19, 2026

Closes March 2, 2026

[Coordinator, Archival Services](#)

University of Wyoming
American Heritage Center
Laramie, WY

Posted February 17, 2026

Open until filled

Subscribe Today!

If you're not getting the Outrider in your email inbox every month, [sign up now](#) so you never miss an issue!

A Bit of Library Humor

If you don't watch out for falling books, you can only blame your shelf.



Virginia Sytsma



Amber Lotspeich

People News

Virginia Sytsma is the new Academic Success Librarian at UW Libraries. She has a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Western Ontario, and a Master of Arts in History of Medicine from McGill University.

Her previous experience includes providing support and programming within a university innovation center, adult services in a public library, and in project management for a national organization that creates and distributes library materials for individuals with print disabilities.

Her research interests include experiences of library employees with disabilities, and simplified search techniques for STEM students. Outside of work, she is a lifelong equestrian, avid gym rat, and lover of cats.

Amber Lotspeich is the Electronic Resources Librarian at the University of Wyoming Libraries. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Washington and received a Bachelor of Arts in English from Saint Mary's College of California.

Her research interests include critical cataloging and 19th-century Britain. Prior to joining UW, Amber worked at Southern Oregon University Hannon Library, Jackson County Library Services, and the Getty Research Institute.

Outside of work, Amber enjoys reading, attending concerts, and spending time with her family dog.

Natrona County Library (NCL) has had several recent staff changes:

Megan Bratton will be leaving the Natrona County Library after nearly seven years as the Marketing and Public Relations Manager. Her last day will be February 20.

Megan has worked on everything from developing and refining the website to all-encompassing campaigns celebrating the library's history. Ever present in the public eye, she has excelled at managing numerous avenues through which she could engage with the entire community and state.

"She will be missed," said NCL Executive Director Lisa Scroggins, "but I am happy that she will continue to impact the Natrona County community in her new role in the nonprofit sector."

Lauren Heili is the new Library Assistant at the Natrona County Library. She has replaced the NCL's recent retiree, Linda Helzer, as of February 6.

Lauren joined the library just over two-and-a-half years ago, and she has been a valuable asset to the Children's Department during her time there, as well as a welcoming face for everyone throughout the building. "I'm excited to see Lauren continue to grow in her library experience and take on new opportunities," said Executive Director Lisa Scroggins. "We're excited for what's ahead."

Kasen Urhammer will be taking over as the Natrona County Library Marketing and Public Relations Manager following Megan Bratton's departure. Kasen joined the library team as a Circulation Assistant almost three years ago, and he will be entering his new position at the beginning of March.

"I'm confident that his background in journalism and his marketing experience with a local agency will serve him very well in this role," said Executive Director Lisa Scroggins. Read more in the [full blog post](#).



Megan Bratton



Lauren Heili



Kasen Urhammer



Washakie County Library staff, board members, and patrons celebrated the library's new additions together with food, swag, and fun conversation.



The new addition to the children's area provides more room for books and resources, children's programming, and for young patrons and their families to enjoy the library together.



Washakie County Library's new telehealth booth

Around the State

WASHAKIE COUNTY LIBRARY CELEBRATES NEW SPACES

An ambience of enthusiasm, pride, and accomplishment was palpable throughout the Washakie County Library (WCL) in Worland, Wyoming, on Friday, January 30 during their open house event celebrating new additions to their facility. Over 100 people, including library staff, board members, and patrons, attended. Everyone enjoyed tasty treats, including special cookies decorated to look like books, and fun library swag, as well as each other's company from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. to commemorate the culmination of many months of hard work. The adults chatted and introduced themselves to fellow attendees, while the youth enjoyed video games, building with Lego bricks, and hanging out in the spacious new room that added much-needed square footage to the library's children's section.

The Washakie County Library was a subrecipient of the Wyoming Library Multi-Purpose Community Facility Program (WLMCF), which awarded subgrants totaling just over 20 million dollars of federal funding through the U.S. Department of the Treasury Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF). The CPF fund was created through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). The WCL's project has been completed, and its impact to the community is already evident; there's more space for more stories!

Along with the library's expansion to its children's section, the library also has a new telehealth booth, which was purchased by a USDA grant provided by the partnership of the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Institute of Disabilities. This ADA compliant modular office has access to wi-fi, computer, hydraulic desk, headset, and other tools to aid in patrons' sessions with medical professionals. Washakie County patrons can reserve time in the booth at the library's front desk.

This project was supported by, in whole or in part, by federal award number CPFFN0188 awarded to the State of Wyoming by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, along with other sources.

There are so many great things happening at the Washakie County Libraries! Find out more about all of the exciting programs and events at their locations in Worland and Ten Sleep on the [Washakie County Library website](#). Read full blog post [here](#).

A FULL HOUSE AT THE TEN SLEEP LIBRARY



The Washakie County Library's Ten Sleep branch recently hosted the entire K-12 student body of the Ten Sleep School. Library staff said although they don't normally see all the students in the library at once, the time spent in the library was "a great time with many opportunities to read, be read to, or explore with no time limits!" The library serves as both a school library for the students as well as a public library for the Ten Sleep community. The Washakie County Library includes the branch in Ten Sleep, and the main library located in Worland. The library's two locations provide resources and services to a population of over 7,500 people in the area.

Library Jobs

[Youth Library Assistant](#)

Sheridan County
Library System
Sheridan, WY

Posted February 12, 2026

Open until filled

[Substitute Library Assistant](#)

Laramie County
Library System
Cheyenne, WY

Posted February 3, 2026

Open until filled

[Office Support Specialist- Law Librarian](#)

State of Wyoming-
Department of Corrections
Rawlins, WY

Posted January 9, 2026

[Executive Director](#)

Carbon County
Library System
Rawlins, WY

Open until filled

Posted October 24, 2025

Training Opportunities

[How to Use Wyoming Book Awards in Your School Library](#)

The Wyoming State Literacy Association will host a free webinar **Wednesday, April 8** from **4:30-5:00 p.m.**, featuring librarians from Lincoln County School District #2. Use this [link](#) to access the webinar on Google Meet.



Did you know that you can find recordings of all past episodes of the PB&J Show on the [Wyoming State Library's webinars page](#)? Explore informative content in a fun format with episodes that cover a variety of topics and resources. Every day can be a good day for PB&J!

Grant and Award Opportunities

[Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program-](#) **Deadline-March 13, 2026**

Supports the training and professional development of library and archives professionals to meet the information needs of their communities.

[National Leadership Grants for Libraries-](#) **Deadline: March 13, 2026**

Supports projects that develop, enhance, or disseminate replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen library and archival services for the American public.

[Native American Library Services: Basic Grants](#) **Deadline: March 13, 2026**

Assists eligible Native Communities in establishing, sustaining, and improving library services and operations with their communities.

[McMurry Library Endowment Grants](#) **Deadline: March 15, 2026**

The Carol McMurry Library Endowment was established in 2000 within the Wyoming Community Foundation to provide support to Wyoming library staff and volunteers and to publicly accessible Wyoming libraries in three areas: Education and Training (Library and individual), Library Resources, and Library Foundation Development.

[Lois Lenski Covey Foundation Bookmobile Grants](#) **Application Window: February 15-August 15, 2026**

The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation awards grants to organizations that operate a lending bookmobile that travels into neighborhoods populated by underserved youth. Grants are for purchasing books published for young people preschool through grade 8. Grants range from \$500 to \$3000 and are specifically for book purchases, and cannot be used for administrative or operational expenses.

[The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Donation Grant](#)

Deadline: Rolling

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Donation Grant from the American Library Association provides donated collections of Coretta Scott King Award-winning and honor books to organizations serving children and youth. The grant supports libraries, schools, and community organizations that need high-quality, culturally relevant books by African American authors and illustrators. These titles celebrate Black voices and experiences while supporting literacy, representation, and engagement for young readers.

[Believe in Reading – Grants for Literacy Program](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Grants are made to organizations with 501(c)(3) status or its equivalent for educational institutions, including public libraries. Currently, the maximum grant amount is \$10,000; however, the vast majority of grants are for \$3,000 or less. First-time applicants will not be funded for more than \$3,000.

[Rural Technology Education & Assistive Technology \(AT\) Grants](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Grants are typically \$500 - \$2,500 for staff and student-led projects in public schools and libraries. The projects funded are designed to help spark student interest in technology-based careers like computer science, computer engineering, information technology, programming, cyber security, robotics, or similar areas.

[Wyoming Humanities' Indian Education for All Program](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Wyoming Humanities is offering funds for K-12 educators in Wyoming to bring an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper into their school, classroom, or field trip. All requests for support should help fulfill Indian Education for All standards and requirements. Wyoming Humanities will offer one-time compensation to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Keeper in the classroom, including a \$350 honorarium and \$200 in travel funds (if 100+ miles roundtrip.)

News in Brief

[The Importance of Evaluation: How to Check In on New Services](#)-At any given time, many of us who are children's librarians are experts in multi-tasking, from implementing weekly programs to adding new services to address patron requests for more. Evaluation can help staff members get to the "why" something is important and help with our balancing act.

[Library of Congress Offers U.S. Law Webinars](#)-Next month, the Library of Congress will be offering an Orientation to Legal Research Webinar, focusing on federal legislative history. In addition, they will be hosting another entry into their Introduction to Congress.gov series.

[Deep Reading Can Boost Your Critical Thinking and Help You Resist Misinformation](#)-Simply being aware of how digital reading practices shape your brain can encourage new attitudes and habits toward how you consume information. Just pausing can reduce susceptibility to misinformation. Taking a few extra seconds to consciously judge information can counteract illusory truth, indicating that intentionally slowing down even just a bit can be beneficial.

[Tips and Tricks for New Children's Librarians](#)- If you're a new Children's Librarian, here are some tips and tricks to get you started!

WYOMING BOOK AWARDS

Nominations:

Teachers and school librarians are invited to obtain nominations from your students for the **2026-2027 Wyoming Book Awards!** The submission deadline is **March 1, 2026.** This [blog post](#) explains each award category's guidelines. Click each category's logo for its nomination form:



[Wish You Well Foundation](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Wish You Well Foundation supports adult and family literacy in the United States by fostering the development and expansion of new and existing adult literacy and educational programs. Grants amounts range from \$200 to \$10,000.

[Scholastic Possible Fund](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Scholastic Possible Fund was established to provide a single repository of quality children’s books to be donated to charity partners that share the Scholastic’s mission to improve global literacy and put books into the hands of children who might otherwise have none.

[Jan Stauber-Sherlock Holmes Literacy Grant](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The mission of the Jan Stauber Grant is to provide needed financial assistance to persons and organizations developing literacy programs and other educational experiences that will introduce young people to Sherlock Holmes. Educators or librarians can be awarded up to \$1,000 for a project that encourages young people to read and introduces them to Sherlock Holmes.

[T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program](#)

DEADLINE: Ongoing

T-Mobile is investing \$25M in 500 rural towns over 5 years to jumpstart projects and build stronger communities. These grants can be used to help upgrade tech at your local library, build new hiking trails, revitalize historic buildings, and more.

Art Resources Transfer’s Library Program

Deadline: Ongoing

This program provides free books on contemporary art to public institutions nationwide. Public libraries, public schools, prisons, and reading centers that self-define as under-served are eligible to order free books through their Library Program. Institutions can order anytime throughout the year. Books are entirely free and shipped free of charge.

The Pilcrow Foundations Children's Book Project Program Grant

DEADLINE: Rolling

The Pilcrow Foundation, a national non-profit public charity, provides a 2-to-1 match to rural public libraries that receive a grant through its Children’s Book Project and contribute \$200-\$400 through a local sponsors for the purchase of up to \$1,200 worth (at retail value) of new, quality, hardcover children’s books.

Black Hills Corporation Community Giving

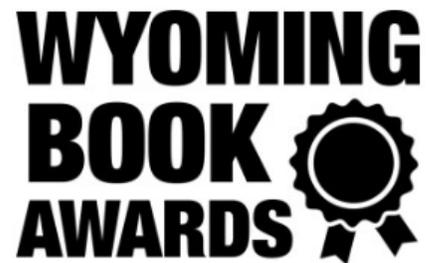
DEADLINE: Ongoing

Areas of focus are arts and culture, civic and community development, education, environment, human services, and youth development. Giving limited to Black Hills Energy service areas.

BNSF Railway Foundation Grants

DEADLINE: Ongoing

These grants are given to organizations and programs that support and improve the general welfare and quality of life in the communities in which BNSF Railway Company operates. See their website for qualifying categories.



Voting is now open for the **2025-2026 Wyoming Book Awards!**

Submit votes until **March 22, 2026.**

Access voting forms for each award category by clicking on each category's logo:

