

Oelwein Public Library

2025 Annual Report

Library Board of Trustees

Brett Ingersoll, President

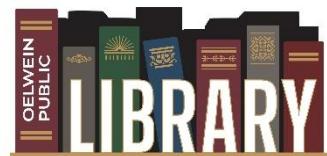
Cortney VanDenHul, Vice President

Melissa Franzen, Secretary

Anita Mars

Blake Kerns

Submitted by Susan Macken
January 3, 2026



Year in Review

- Staff executed 193 passport applications in 2025, an increase of 72 applications from the previous year.
- The Annual Charging Station Report was submitted to the Iowa DOT. There were 185 charging events with 40 unique users.
- After reviewing the statistics for program attendance, the Library Board decided to discontinue weekly Story Time at the library during the school year since many children are in preschool or daycare. Instead, “Pop-Up Programs” will be offered on different times and days with an emphasis on programs offered during holiday breaks.
- The library was a place to cool off, relax, charge devices, refill water bottles, use computers and Wi-Fi, use the restrooms, and do some reading during RAGBRAI. Over 500 people (and a few bike-riding librarians) visited the library that day and were appreciative of the services. The Iowa Geocache Club has a “book” on the library shelves. Several bike riders found the book, registered their name, and shared a trinket. We ended up having around 50 tents set up on the grounds for tired bikers.



- Due to budget cuts at the federal level to the Institute of Museum and Library Services which affects the Grants to States program, adjustments were made to services provided to Iowa libraries. The Inter-library loan delivery system was discontinued through STAT. An agreement was made with the AEA's to deliver items through the van system. In addition, several databases were eliminated. Brainfuse, a test prep database, was replaced with Momentrix.
- The Library Board of Trustees worked through the impending cuts to the library at the local level. For the upcoming fiscal year, a full-time position will be reduced to part-time, library hours will be reduced, and passport acceptance will be by appointment only.
- Baker and Taylor book seller and the mainstay book jobber for libraries around the United States declared bankruptcy. Our library staff immediately cancelled all orders, back-ordered items, and standing orders. Book jobbers were flooded with new client requests and did not have enough staff or inventory to meet the overwhelming demand. Eventually, our library was able to get an account with Ingram.
- New library cards were ordered using the new logo inspired by the new library sign.

Programs and Events

- Staff presented an AI and ChatGPT class for beginners.
- Staff set up a library info booth at the Decodable Books Literacy Night at Wings Park School.
- An info booth on challenged books was set up at the High School HEARTS Club Diversity Night.
- The Little Husky Learning Center students, and the kindergarten classes visited the library in honor of “Love Our Library Week.”
- Staff attended the Farmer’s Market and used the Iowa PBS program activities, games, and recipes.
- Staff had an activity table at the summer Party in the Park events. Making Spin Art was a hit!
- The Summer Reading Program theme was *Level Up at Your Library* with a kick-off event for decorating and personalizing a book bag. Fifty-seven children and adults registered to participate. A variety of programs were offered such as the Stuffed Animal Sleepover, PokéMon Club, the annual Art Show, a visit from IDITAROD Racing Dog: Noggin, Mini Book Necklace and Puzzle Art Tree workshops, and a live Butterfly Display Tent. Casey’s sponsored Pizzas during the final event of drawing for prizes.



- The Oelwein Police Department organized a series of reading events with local officials.
- Fontana Naturalists brought in toads, salamanders, and Monarchs for the summer Creature Feature.
- Discarded books were used to make Hedgehog Book Art.
- The library hosted the Holocaust Virtual Reality Traveling Trunk from the Illinois Holocaust Museum. Participants could see and hear the stories of Holocaust survivors. In addition, Brad Wilkening presented a program on *Lessons of the Holocaust*. This program was sponsored by the Oelwein Genealogical Society.
- Local author, Dale Price, shared supernatural stories from his book, *What the Hell was That?*
- Fayette County Conservation joined us for a Halloween Party. Families enjoyed treats, games, and crafts.
- End-of-the-year activities included Pumpkin Book Art, making holiday Bath Fizzies and designing Ugly Sweater Ornaments during Olde Tyme Christmas.



- Steve Russell led a woodcarving class. Attendees made a Christmas Ornament.
- The Winter Reading Challenge participants were entered into the drawing for the latest Dog Man book.

Condition of the Building and Grounds

- Midwest Janitorial was hired to clean the library three days per week.
- Randy Kaune was hired to remove snow from library property sidewalks. For the 2025-26 season, the city Parks Department is doing the job.
- The auto door opener at the main entrance was replaced.
- A chair rail was installed in the meeting room. The room was repainted, the drapes were removed, and a dozen Scott Jans pen and ink drawings of Oelwein landmark buildings were hung.
- The building is treated with pest control, monthly.
- Northeast Iowa Community Foundation gave a grant to the library for updating the AV equipment. A Smart TV was installed.
- The wallcovering in the public restrooms was removed. The rooms were painted and new vanities and faucets were installed. In addition, water damaged areas of the library were repaired and repainted.
- The security camera in the New Books Room was replaced.
- Another segment of the roof was repaired. The columns and curbs were fully enclosed with metal which will eliminate relying on caulk to keep things watertight.
- Patron computers were upgraded to Windows 11. An upgraded version of DeepFreeze was installed due to compatibility issues.
- Scheels applied Weed and Feed to the lawn.
- The HVAC belts were replaced, and new thermostats were installed in the main library.
- A charging end was damaged on the EV Charging Station. Since replacement parts were not available, a new charger was sent under warranty.
- A proper sill was installed under the west windows.
- The Parks Department trimmed rogue trees from the landscaping.
- Streak Free Window Clean cleaned all the exterior and interior glass plus the entryway canopy.

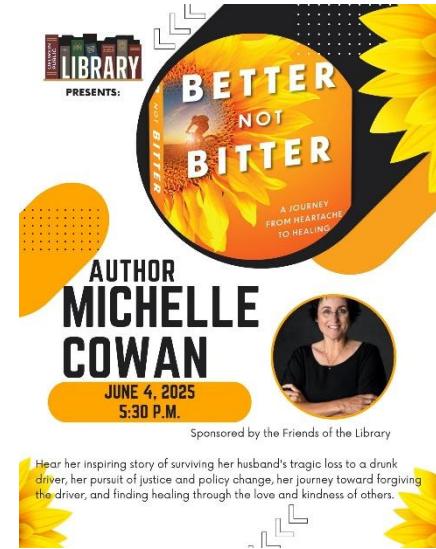
Library Statistics

	2024	2025
Attendance	28,827	26,989
Program Attendance	2,118	2,049
Circulation of materials	44,845	49,109

Friends of the Library Contributions to the Library

Speakers and Programs

- ✓ Chocolate Festival in February
- ✓ Sponsored the Butterfly Tent for the Summer Reading Program
- ✓ Book and Bake Sales twice-a-year
- ✓ Sponsored Michelle Cowan, author of *Better Not Bitter*



Library Enhancements

- ✓ Purchased two 4' pre-lit holiday "porch" trees
- ✓ Donated \$2500 towards the new library sign
- ✓ Provided Poinsettias at Christmas Time



Community Outreach

- ✓ Sponsored the *BookPage* book review magazine
- ✓ Memorial books in honor of Friend's Members who have passed away
- ✓ Keychains for new library patron's library card
- ✓ Served popcorn and water at the Oakdale Cemetery Walk

Oelwein Public Library Foundation

- The Robert and Ruth Walker Charitable Foundation will be funding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program for Oelwein. Currently, 186 children from age 0-5 are registered. One hundred forty-four(144) children have graduated from the program. Each month, the children receive their own, age-appropriate book mailed directly to their home.
- Contributed \$1000 towards the library painting project.
- Sponsored a Virtual Reality Game Truck that accommodated 18 multiplayer game consoles and 6 VR stations.