



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager
FROM: Laura Blaker
DATE OF MEETING: July 7, 2025
ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Library

Summer Reading Program: Level Up at Your Library

The library has been busy with our summer reading program. We met our registration goal and have 961 people participating in the program as of June 29th. This includes: 339 adults, 62 babies, 441 children, and 119 tweens/teens.



We have had a variety of programs like Candy Sushi for Teens, Star Lab, Barnstorming Babe (with author Tim Grover), a Puzzle Contest, Minecraft, Level Up Your Cooking, Outdoor Story Time, and Lego-fy Yourself. As of June 29th, 353,785 minutes have been read by the community. We have a goal of 750,000 minutes.



Funding: The City funds 25% of the Summer Reading Program cost, and the Foundation, and donors/sponsors pay for the other 75% of the project. All prizes are purchased with donated funds.

City Connection:

Promote and encourage community involvement and engagement

Improved quality of life for everyone (open and accessible to all ages/demographics)

New Vision, Mission, Motto, etc

After the City created a new vision, mission, and goals, the library was due to review ours. Our new vision, etc, meshes well with the City's goals and mission. Our vision, mission, motto, and mascot are attached, and I will highlight a few of those here:

Vision: To be the heart of the community, where lives are enriched, lifelong learning is realized, and people of all ages connect, engage, discover, and create.

Motto: Enriching Lives, Inspiring Growth

Mascot: Oaklee the Squirrel

City Connection:

Efficient and effective planning and prioritizing of all available resources.

Promote and encourage community involvement and engagement.



Library of Things

Through IPL Foundation and Friends funding, the library has improved our Library of Things Collection. This has included things like bean bag toss, puzzles, giant Jenga, pickleball rackets, etc. A sampling of new items are: a fort builder, croquet set, Magna-tiles, sand/snow molds, and twenty-five new puzzles for checkout.

City Connection:

Improved quality of life for all.

Promote and encourage community involvement and engagement.

Community Room Usage in 2025

The library's Community Room is a wonderful resource for organizations and businesses. We have many local and regional groups using the room for meetings and trainings. In 2025, it was used 57 times by 955 people from 30 Iowa Counties and 7 States. This resource with AV capabilities, a kitchenette, and friendly assistance brings groups back repeatedly. The USDA, with people from Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard, Jackson, Tama, and Winneshiek Counties used the room nine times over the course of the fiscal year.

The Buchanan County Health Center used the space six times, and people from Buchanan, Black Hawk, Butler, Clayton, and Fayette Counties attended.

When the Ace Hardware Group came to Independence, they represented Buchanan, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Delaware, and Fayette Counties.

The Iowa Rural Water Association Training was held in IPL's Community Room, and residents of Buchanan, Black Hawk, Cerro Gordo, Delaware, Fayette, Grundy, Humboldt, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Lee, Linn, Wapello, Winneshiek Counties attended.

City Connection:

Encourage a supportive environment for businesses, workforce, and economic development.

Support High Quality City services.

Laura Blaker 319-334-2470

lblaker@independenceia.gov

www.independenceia.gov/library