

Library Director Report

November 2025

Prepared by Tana Elias, December 1, 2025



Changes Coming for LINKcat

Of the 65 South Central Library System members, all but three share LINKcat, the online database that manages all aspects of our library collection and patron database. In the last few years, it became clear that our current system needed to be improved and was no longer a good fit for our system. Representative committees from LINK libraries conducted extensive research on currently available integrated library systems (ILS), thoroughly testing them to be sure they'd provide most or all of the same functionality that we provide currently, and an improved patron experience. While many Madison staff participated in this selection process, Borrower Services Manager Margie Navarre Saaf and Library Collection Manager Molly Warren led the effort for Madison Public Library.

In September, SirsiDynix announced SCLS's selection of their Symphony platform for its new integrated library system (ILS). This migration will have a significant effect on nearly every aspect of our operations and will require extensive staff retraining, a public promotion effort, and a three-day downtime while our data is migrated to the new platform. We've already begun the transition work behind the scenes and will begin updating the public in February or early March in advance of the transition. Key dates to note are: April 3-15, freeze on adding new items to the catalog, April 13-15 LINKcat down, and April 16 GoLive with SirsiDynix Symphony. This is both an exciting change and a huge stress, but once we're through the change we expect to see an improved experience for LINKcat users.

Read the full announcement at https://www.sirsidynix.com/press_release/the-south-central-library-system-selects-sirsidynixs-saas-hosted-symphony-ils/

150th Anniversary Update - and a Surprise Gift from the Carnegie Corporation!

December marks the final month of Madison Public Library's 150th anniversary celebration, and we're celebrating with [150 Artists x 150 Years](#), an art exhibit drawing on The Bubbler's extensive network of local and national artists we've worked for more than a decade, starting with Bookless, our historic event on the eve of remodeling the Central Library in 2011. 150 artists were selected and assigned a year between 1875 and 2025 and a word first recorded or revised in the dictionary that year. Their task: to transform that word into an original artwork. The exhibition is spread across seven libraries (excepting Lakeview and Monroe Street) through February 28. We'll be officially kicking off the exhibit and wrapping up our 150th anniversary celebration with back-to-back events, one for grownups on Friday evening, December 5, 7-9pm, followed by a family-friendly event on Saturday, December 6, 10am-noon, both at the Central Library. Learn more and find a list of all participating artists and their words at

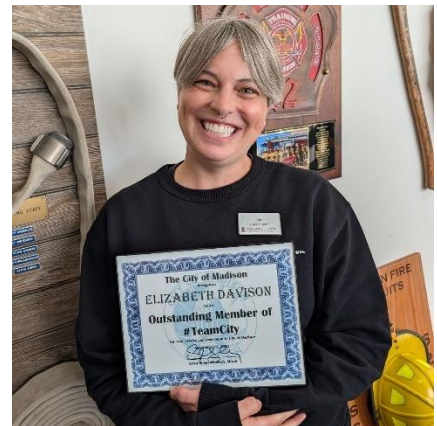
<https://www.madisonbubbler.org/projects/150x150>

And if you're feeling ambitious, you can complete the 150 Artists [scavenger hunt](#)! Pick up a map at each participating library and visit them all, get stamped, and turn it in for some 150th anniversary swag!

And in honor of the nation's upcoming 250th Anniversary, the [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#) is celebrating public libraries across the nation by awarding a \$10,000 gift to each community who originally received a Carnegie gift to build one or more public libraries, nearly 1700 in all. Madison received two gifts from Andrew Carnegie, one for the original downtown library and another for the sixth ward library which eventually became Hawthorne. Recipient libraries will receive funds in January 2026 and you'll see the approval of acceptance of this gift on our board agenda for December.

Staff Highlight: Liz Davison

Liz Davison is the most recent recipient of a #TeamCity Award and a standout member of the Pinney Library team! Liz has worked at the library for just over three years, recently transitioning from Desk Page to Shelving Page (though no matter the role, she consistently shines). Her colleagues describe her as someone who goes above and beyond in every interaction, whether helping a patron find materials or sharing her vast knowledge on topics ranging from K-POP to Lord of the rings.



1 Liz Davison holding #TeamCity Award

Liz has a remarkable talent for turning routine moments into meaningful experiences. She often transforms simple checkout interactions into personalized recommendations, guiding patrons to displays or staff-selected titles based on their interests. Her intuition for connecting people with books, movies, and information is one of the many reasons she elevates the work we do every day.

Beyond her customer service skills, Liz brings a joyful, engaging presence to the library, especially with children. She has been known to captivate infants and toddlers while caregivers fill out library card applications, ensuring every visitor feels valued, no matter their age. With her "top shelf" dedication, cool hair, and amazing outfits, we are incredibly lucky to have Liz as part of the Pinney team!

Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update

From the most recent [engineering progress report](#):

The project has reached new milestones with the delivery and start of installation of structural steel, marking a significant step in the building's vertical development. Recent completed work includes phase 1 of the concrete masonry unit (CMU) blocking, which has established foundational wall systems within the facility. Crews have now advanced into phase 2 of CMU blocking, further defining interior spaces and structural support.



2 Library Board members visit the Imagination Center on November 21

Current construction focuses on exterior wall systems and building envelope work. Framing, sheathing, and air barrier installation planning and preliminary installation have begun and will be completed in two phases, ensuring the building is properly sealed and weather protected. The site is also being prepared for roof delivery and installation, a major milestone that will transition the project toward enclosure.

Monthly construction updates are available on the [Engineering Department's project page](#) and shared out through the [Library's email newsletter](#), too.

Library Budget Update

With our 2026 Capital and Operating Budgets approved, we get a several-month break from discussing the larger budget picture. At this point, we're focused on year-end spending and reconciliation. You can see the entire budget timeline and the library's capital and operating requests at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget>, and before we know it we'll have next year's City budget dates on the calendar.

Library Metrics

All monthly key metrics, by month and library, from 2015 to the previous month, are available on our interactive dashboard: [MPL Monthly Metrics | Tableau Public](#).

For your calendar

Here are some dates you may want to save on your calendar:

- 150x150 Art Opening – Friday, December 5, 7-9pm and Saturday, December 6, 10am-noon, Central Library
- Libraries closed December 24, 25, 28, 31, January 1, 4 for the holidays and January 19 for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Library Board meeting – Thursday, January 8, 5pm, Central Library

Press Releases & News Stories

Library Press Releases

- [Madison Public Library's 150th Anniversary Celebration Wrap Up with 150 Artists x 150 Years Exhibition Events](#) (*posted November 4, 2025*)
- [Madison Public Libraries to Close at 1pm on Saturday, November 29](#) (*posted November 29, 2025*)

News Coverage

- [Conectando con tu Ciudad](#) (*La Movida, November 4, 2025*)
- [151 Artists 150 Years](#) (*WORT FM, November 5, 2025*)
- [Madison's Black Film Festival Highlights Local Stories, History and Resistance](#) (*WKOW, November 15, 2025*)
- [150 Years X 150 Artists at Madison Public Library](#) (*WORT FM, November 5, 2025*)