

LIBRARY DIRECTOR
TERI DUGAN
JULY 2026

Summer is in full swing at our libraries, and more people than ever are stopping by to pick up a great book, attend a program, or connect with library services. Door counts increased across the system in June, led by the Kalispell Library, which welcomed 12,231 visitors—a 14.5% increase over last year. As Flathead County continues to grow, it's exciting to see our libraries growing right alongside it and serving as vibrant community gathering places.

Circulation remains strong with 47,598 items checked out in June, up 3.1% from this time last year. Growth was driven by strong use of juvenile materials and digital collections, especially audiobooks. These numbers show that people are turning to the library for reading, learning, and entertainment in whatever format works best for them.

The City of Columbia Falls has initiated discussions regarding its future space needs within City Hall, which currently houses the Columbia Falls Library. The City Manager has indicated a commitment to maintaining library services and working collaboratively with Flathead County Library to explore long-term facility options. I will continue to monitor developments and keep the Trustees informed as additional information becomes available.

I am continuing to enjoy a productive partnership with BrandRaise as we lay the groundwork for the feasibility study. Together, we are developing campaign messaging and a dedicated webpage that will help tell the story of our community's need for a new library, build awareness, and position the project for successful fundraising.

Flathead County Library will participate in the Northwest Montana Fair Parade on August 7, marking our return to the event after many years! This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase library services, connect with community members, and celebrate reading. Be sure to look for the "Literary Rollers" our spirited book cart drill team as we roll down Main Street!

Communications efforts continue to focus on promoting books and reading through social media. By highlighting titles, staff recommendations and booklists, we are increasing awareness of materials available. By tracking this engagement, alongside circulation trends, we can measure their impact on collection use and reader engagement.

TRAFFIC COUNTS- JUNE 2026

Kalispell- 12,231
Columbia Falls- 4,789
Bigfork- 2,427

TRAFFIC COUNTS- JUNE 2025

Kalispell- 10,694
Columbia Falls- 4,343
Bigfork- 2,550

**HEAD LIBRARIAN
TONY EDMUNDSON
JULY 2026**

FACILITIES

Restoration work from our leak in the Kalispell Library continues. The 1st floor staff restroom has been patched, painted, and is back open for use. This room is also a storage space for janitorial supplies, and as such is centrally located and highly valuable. We are all quite glad to have this room back in operation. There are still two storage rooms left to repair and paint, but as these do not have toilets, sinks, and the like, their restoration should be much faster.

Our fire alarm panel at the Kalispell Library was installed in 1966. We have been working for over a year with the city Fire Department, and Stellar Integration, who handles our system and testing, to determine how and when to replace this outdated piece of equipment. This year, we also included the School District's Facilities Director. With this experienced team on the job, we are on track to have this upgrade taken care of soon.

4TH OF JULY

The local 4th of July parade is one of the best occasions that Kalispell has to offer. This year was one of the biggest and best. Library Director Teri Dugan, Programming Librarian Deidre McMullin, and I, put on a reading of the Declaration of Independence on the front steps of the library. Over three readings we had well over 200 people in attendance. Their response was phenomenal. We also handed out pocket Constitutions of the United States, which we ran out of before the conclusion of the event.

SYSTEMS ADMINSTRATOR
SAM CROMPTON
JULY 2026

Migration of the Azure Backup **MARS agent** from Windows Server 2019 to Windows Server 2025 was completed this month. The new Server 2025 host had to be prepared, registered with the Azure Recovery Services Vault and configured with a backup schedule mirroring the previous environment. The initial backup of roughly 388 GB took about 3.5 days to complete due to upload bandwidth limitations—subsequent incremental backups have been running reliably each evening. Only edited documents are backed up on the incremental runs. Test restores confirmed that the new backup configuration is functioning correctly and monitoring shows consistent job success with no alerts or anomalies. On the legacy side, the Server 2019 backup schedule was deactivated. The final backup data has been deleted but is still retained by Microsoft for 14 days, after that time it is permanently deleted. Only the new Server 2025 environment remains active in Azure Backup. With the migration complete, the focus now shifts to ongoing monitoring, periodic restore validation and reviewing retention policies to ensure long-term performance.

Fourteen years ago, the network that was inherited had been built around vendor-managed routers that required specialized training to operate and offered limited functionality. These devices were configured and maintained by a company in Bozeman and were quickly replaced with the modern, in-house managed networking equipment we use today. That old routing equipment remained in storage all this time but during July I cleared their remaining configurations and recycled the hardware. Next the LAN switches from that same era need to be reset to their default factory configuration and then recycled. These devices are all dated from early 2001.

As part of the library Tech Support service available through our website, I met with a patron who needed help getting reacclimated to her computer functions after experiencing health issues. She was genuinely grateful that we could sit with her, take our time and walk through every question she had. She told me this session was incredibly important to her recovery and would help her regain confidence for day-to-day use of the computer.

Everyday items addressed immediately:

- Resolved a very unusual problem where desktop Teams wouldn't open at one computer. Teams couldn't discover the network path it needed for authentication because Automatic Detection wasn't enabled through Control Panel
- Provided technical support to a homeless patron unable to access his email due to an automated lockout. The situation was especially important because the patron had a deep distrust of technology and was experiencing significant anxiety about what he thought was a permanent loss of his email. By the end of our session, his access was restored and he left the library feeling reassured.
- Updated the designated computer and Meeting Owl system used by the public for web conferencing in Bigfork. Additionally, updated and tested the photo transfer station to confirm reliable wireless connectivity.
- Completed library new hire document submission to County IT. Configured library MS365, Atrium door system, Envisionware and TCP for new hire
- Meet with new employees to review library IT systems and procedures
- Managed data allow/block adjustments with vendor for hotspots
- Cleared all data with KillDisk software from older SSD's that were removed from recycled computers. They're placed in storage for possible re-use in the future
- Repaired a staff printer that was requiring manual intervention before every print job
- Search and export requested security camera footage/screenshots as requested.

COMMUNICATION LIBRARIAN
LUNE AXELSEN
JULY 2026

Summer Reading Experience is well underway and I'm pleased with the results of our marketing this spring. Kids and teens program attendance has picked up at all locations. My team and I have been taking lots of photos and posting exciting educational moments on social media to help remind the community that the library is valuable of resource for learning. In addition, we've partnered with Lone Pine State Park to offer summer movie nights. Our marketing efforts were so good, each movie night has already reached full capacity with sign-ups. I have been capturing photos and videos at the Kalispell and Bigfork libraries, and this week I travel to the Columbia Falls library to capture moments there.

So far, our America 250 adult programming has also been well attended. I sent out a press release announcing our events and it seems to have paid off. *The Good Times Chorus* made a visit to the Columbia Falls library on July 3rd and a good crowd showed up for the event. The photo I took of Tony dressed in patriotic attire on the front porch of the library was featured in the Daily Interlake to announce the reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Kalispell library after the Kalispell Fourth of July parade. The event gathered three different crowds eager to hear Tony read, which placed the library in a positive spotlight.

In an effort to encourage literacy and increase checkouts at the library, we came up with a blog series that offers book recommendations from Deidre (a librarian known as an avid reader and valued for her book recommendations). The series features her monthly To-Be-Read List featuring new books she is excited to read. In June, we launched a second series to accompany this called Read-alikes, which features reads similar to some of our top holds placed for the month. It is a bit early to see how those books are circulating, but we are keeping an eye on them. We will report back with any findings.

Lastly, my team and I have been working on a new adult program called the Reading Road Trip, designed by Deidre. My new hire, Morgan, has been laying out the design for the reading challenge while I have been designing prizes for completing the challenges - new FCL tees and tote bags. The new merch will feature the text "read more books" with the FCL logo underneath, and will be suitable to sell or giveaway at library events. We are excited for a refresh that advertises our brand.

Social Media Snap Shot

Reach and engagement are up significantly this period on both Facebook and Instagram. This is due to summer activity and an increase in program photos and videos. We are also very close to reaching 10K followers on Facebook! This is something I plan to celebrate with a thank you post.

Social Media Stats:

- **Facebook:**
 - 133 New Followers this period (1% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Facebook Interactions:**
 - 3.8K interactions this period (41% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Facebook Views:**
 - 280K views this period (44% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Instagram Followers:**
 - 43 new followers this period (2% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Instagram Reels Reach:**
 - 2751 accounts reached this period (104% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Website top 5 viewed pages in the last 28 days:**
 - **Kids, Teens Events for June, Summer Experience, Locations and hours**

**COLLECTION SERVICES LIBRARIAN
KAT WILSON
JULY 2026**

June 2026 Circulation Statistics

	June 2026	June 2025	June 2024	June 2023
Juvenile	19155	19012	18028	17096
Young Adult	1254	1363	1220	1340
Adult	11816	11554	11867	12988
Overdrive ebooks	4126	4185	4424	4385
Overdrive audiobooks	8935	7968	7362	6672
Overdrive magazines	2312	2074	1162	463
Total	47598	46156	44063	42944
ILLs Borrowed	51	68	54	58
ILLs Loaned	50	30	48	34
Outgoing Partners Crates	301	294	293	285
Incoming Partners Crates	319	297	282	283

Lakeside and Marion FY26 Circulation Statistics

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Lakeside	140	166	133	128	123	114	219	152	186	234	134	253
Marion	N/A*	N/A*	4	9	7	4	8	3	20	8	1	N/A*

*Marion closed first week of June through August.

CHILDRENS LIBRARIAN
BECCA JOHNSON
JULY 2026

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT UPDATES

We are half way through the summer and are happy to see so many kids and families at the library but also out in the community. In Kalispell, baby & toddler storytime at Depot Park on Wednesday mornings is hopping! Pool storytimes in Columbia Falls and Kalispell continue to be very popular, so much in Kalispell that an attendance cap of 90 people will be implemented for the last three sessions. Families in Bigfork can enjoy strolling along the Harry Horn trail at Wayfarer's Park while reading a story spread out on signs along the trail. July's book is One Dog Canoe by Mary Casanova, featuring a girl, a dog and various other animals on a canoe adventure. Summertime in the Flathead is full of fun!

SUMMER READING EXPERIENCE

At our half way point, we are excited to report just over 1,000 kids have picked up their Summer BINGO gameboards. Quite a few kids have completed at least one BINGO and a few have proudly shown their "blackout" cards!

So many kids and families are visiting the library on Summer Reading Experience workshop days. There is something for every age in the children's department. A grandmother reported that her favorite day of the week is library day because she looks forward to the fun activities as much as her grandkids! Children flood in for fun playful experiences and they leave with a stack of books to keep them busy at home.

TEEN SERVICES LIBRARIAN
JACKIE CARLL
JULY 2026

JUNE STATS:

Here is a recap of our programming:

Fandom- *Summer Break*

LVL-UP- *Summer Break*

LVL-UP Bigfork- *Summer Break*

Challenge Accepted- *Summer Break*

CFJH Outreach: *Summer Break*

School Visits: *Summer Break*

LEGO MASTERS Workshop: *35 kiddos*

Scene- *Pipe Cleaner Sea Bugs (All locations)*

Gem Wall Theme: *Which book genres should we beef up?*

TEEN UPDATES

SUMMER READING EXPERIENCE INTRO

We kicked off Summer Experience 2026 with our *Underwater Theme Gameboard*. It includes outdoor challenges, a fun bingo reading challenge, as well as a lineup of our summer workshops. Teens can bring their finished Gameboard into any Flathead County Library location & receive a ticket to attend our **End of Summer After-Hours Glow Party** event in August. Teens picking up a Gameboard will also receive a free bookmark from our two Spring Teen Contest winners. It provides an opportunity to showcase the remarkable art from local teens as well as exposure for next year's bookmark contest!

This year, we introduced a Life-Sized Coral Reef Zone in the teen department. Teens helped design and decorate a human-sized coral reef made entirely from craft materials. This drop-in, self-led program was a unique opportunity to launch a soft opening to our underwater theme taking place all summer.

LEGO MASTER WORKSHOP

Becca and I introduced a *NEW* workshop aimed at middle-grade kiddos entering 5th-8th grade called: **LEGO MASTERS Workshop**. This workshop provides creative challenges and opportunities to imagine, build, and engineer with LEGOS. It is geared towards kids who are confident and ready to master their LEGO skills. This weekly program will run from June through August.

**ADULT SERVICES LIBRARIAN
BIGFORK BRANCH MANAGER
DEIDRE MCMULLIN
JULY 2026**

Late June and July have been such fun months for adult programming! We kicked off our Montana Voices series with Louise Fischer, who came to the Bigfork Library to speak about Anishinaabe culture to an audience of around 50 people. Elizabeth Barrs joined a small group in Kalispell to talk about military culture and the veteran experience in America. I learned that 1 in 10 Montanans are veterans, and when you include their family members and friends, that's a lot of people with connections to military culture. I especially enjoyed what she had to say about being civically minded and the impact veterans have—and continue to have—through their service after their time in the military is over. Philip Page, cowboy singer and storyteller, is up next in Columbia Falls on the 24th.

The first outdoor film at Lone Pine will be Friday the 17th. All four planned films filled to capacity with people wanting to attend. I'm looking forward to this event and anticipate it will be a fun community gathering.

The Bigfork Youth Services team has been rocking summer programming for kids. The opportunity to hold some activities outdoors this summer has been amazing. So many people have commented on how pleased they are with our space.

COLUMBIA FALL BRANCH LIBRARIAN
LIZ CAMARILLO
JULY 2026

Happy Summer!

In June, we hired Lisa Melnick for our 24-hour Library Advisor position, with a special focus on Youth Services. Lisa started in early July and has spent the past two weeks training in Kalispell. She will begin working full-time in Columbia Falls on Tuesday, July 21. We are thrilled to have Lisa on board. Staff have already shared how much they enjoy working with her and what a great addition she has been to the team.

Summer programs are running well! Although road construction conditions remain mostly unchanged, we are happy to see that our patrons are successfully navigating the challenge and continue to attend programs in good numbers. Pool story time attendance has also been good, despite the occasional threat of thunder and lightning.

Liza was invited to host a booth at River Fest's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Her booth attracted more than 100 children and adults, and she noted that some children stayed engaged at her booth for nearly the entire event. In addition to offering interactive activities, Liza distributed a variety of promotional materials, including program flyers, library location information, and stickers, helping to raise awareness of library services and upcoming programs.

About 36 community members of all ages joined us for our Patriotic Sing-Along event on July 3rd! Our host, The Good Times Chorus, shared historical stories behind each song, and patrons were enthusiastically participating throughout the program.

The Flower Frog Zone we set out this month was a bit tricky with the clay we used, but we got over 100 people to try it out, and they got to take home a personal trinket that will enhance their flower arrangements!

We still have one more event to host this month. On July 24th, cowboy singer, songwriter, and storyteller Philip Page of the Humanities Montana Speakers Bureau will be putting on a presentation. To accommodate both this event and the library's Teen Buttered Noodle Program, Philip Page's presentation will be held in the City of Columbia Falls Council Chambers.

Tony arranged for CENTRAL to permanently disconnect power to an outlet located beneath our sink after we discovered it was directly below the faucet hose, where a leak had developed from the broken faucet. A CENTRAL plumber then replaced the broken faucet, and we have running water again!