



Library Board Certification Program

by Tammi Thiem

One of the twelve minimum requirements for library accreditation is the successful certification of the library board. For a library board to become certified, the board members must, collectively, participate in at least twenty hours of continuing education in a three-year period. You can find information about this on the Nebraska Library Commission's website: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/trustees/pubcert.aspx>. There is no cost for certification.

Some reasons for this certification, as listed on the Nebraska Library Commission's website, are:

- Improve board effectiveness
- Increase board involvement
- Improve library service
- Fulfill library accreditation requirements

You can review the status of your library board's certification by checking this link:

<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/trustees/CertStatus.asp>. One helpful tip I have seen is to include this information at the end of the board agenda, such as:

- Current CEUs: 16
- Units Needed: 4
- Date due: January 31, 2026

Doing this allows all the board members to keep track of the progress, and it prevents that due date from sneaking up on them. Perhaps you have another way to regularly share this with your board members. The important thing is that they are always aware of this information.

There are many ways library board members can earn these Continuing Education Credits. They can attend conferences. They can watch approved webinars. They can view and discuss the Short Takes for Trustees videos that are designed for Library Board Training.

At the Three Rivers Library System, I have designed a couple of Breakout Box Challenges specifically for Library Board Trainings. The first one features the United for Libraries Tools for Trustees handouts along with the sample accreditation materials that Library Board Members get to keep. The content for the hour-long training includes a variety of puzzles and challenges that were created around the accompanying literature. For example, crossword puzzle answers can be found in the United for Libraries content, and I have never had it completed without the board members reading through the material. The second challenge is designed the same way, but the accompanying material is the 73-page Nebraska Library Board Manual.

I have plans to create a couple more of these by using Nebraska State Statutes and Nebraska Open Meetings Act. If you are interested in having me do a board training at your library, please contact me at tammi.thiem.trls@gmail.com | 402-910-7005. I am always happy to help however I can!



Complete the Pigpen Cipher and send the name of the person who said this quote to Chelsea at trls.assistant@gmail.com by December 20th to be entered in a drawing for a prize.

"LNFΓV>ΞJV ΓV ΞΞΓΘΓ J

ΛΓ>>ΛΘ VΞΞΘ>ΠΓΘΓ Θ>>ΓJ

CEΓ VΞΞΘΞΘΘ."

- LNJJΓΛΘV Ξ. VLN<ΛA

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R

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At the TRails Office

Record Lending Stat: The Sequel

by Chelsea Morlan

Hello all, just a quick communiqué from your friendly neighborhood office gremlin! 2025 has been a fabulous year for book lending and keeping me busy. We've barely started December and we've already hit the highest book lending record to date. For **2025**, we've lent **1,462** copies of books, which beat our last highest record in **2024** of **1,268**. Before that we hadn't even cracked 900! It's so great to know that book clubs are happening all over the system and that we can help.

If you have any questions (or want to start borrowing) just email me at trls.assistant@gmail.com and I'll get you all set up. Thank you all for supporting our [Book Kit Program](#), and I hope I'll be sending you books in the new year!

Basic Skills

(* Required Class)

[Library Services to Children & Teens](#)

Registration Dates: 20 October - 21 November 2025
Class Dates: 1 - 12 December 2025

Upcoming NCompass Live

[Social Media Show & Tell!](#)

Date: 3 December 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

[Return of the Canvaholic](#)

Date: 10 December 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

[Best New Children's Books of 2025](#)

Date: 17 December 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

[Pretty Sweet Tech](#)

Date: 31 December 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

NLC Book Club Spotlight

Book Club Spotlight:
[The Sentence](#)
by Louise Erdrich

Mackenzie Marrow is the librarian in charge of book clubs at the Nebraska Library Commission and wants to share with everyone the hidden gems in the [NLC's Book Club Collection](#). Below is an excerpt, but to read the full details go to [Mackenzie's blog post](#).

The Sentence, like Erdrich's previous novels, explores contemporary life as an Indigenous person in the upper Midwest, with all its heartache and laughter intertwined. As we continue to observe [Native American Heritage Month](#) and reflect on our country's history, this novel is a thoughtful way to open up the discussion around America's disposition of its Indigenous people. Their removal still haunts us today in the land, the culture, and the resilient survivors, much like the haunting of The Sentence's bookstore is a colonization in itself. For Adult Book Clubs, they will find a novel that celebrates the humanism and community optimism unique to a flash in the pan moment during the COVID pandemic as a way to digest the more difficult moments. Erdrich wrote through the pandemic with Tookie as her guide. A messy, witty, and loveable protagonist to work through the continuing loss and uncertainty.

Calendar of Events

[SKILLS Meeting](#)

Lied Winside Public Library
2 December 2025
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

[SKILLS Meeting](#)

Online
18 December 2025
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Scholarship Experiences

ARSL Conference Reflections

by Natalie Hartley

Thanks to a generous grant from the Three Rivers Library System, I was able to attend the ARSL Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, this September. ARSL stands for the Association for Rural and Small Libraries and is an incredible organization dedicated to supporting smaller public libraries across the country. The annual conference brings together library professionals from communities of all sizes to learn, share ideas, and celebrate the vital role that small libraries play.

The sessions covered a wide range of topics. There were big-picture issues like intellectual freedom and collection development to practical discussions tailored to small and rural libraries. Workshops addressed everything from managing volunteer programs and improving social media engagement to building strong relationships with community stakeholders.

One of the highlights for me was a session on staffing challenges in small libraries, which explored strategies for training, preventing burnout, and improving employee retention. Part of the discussion focused on leadership, and one piece of advice that stuck with me was the reminder for directors and managers to “be present, be patient, be approachable.” It was a simple but powerful message about leading staff with empathy and awareness.

Another memorable experience was the Roundabout Lunch, a fun networking event where each table was assigned a theme; some professional, like “Children’s Librarians” or “Library Directors,” and others just for fun, like “Sports Fans” or regional groupings. These informal conversations gave everyone a chance to meet new people, share what they’d learned, and trade stories about life in their libraries.

I left the ARSL Conference with a deep sense of appreciation for small libraries and the dedicated staff who keep them thriving. While we face unique challenges, working in a small, rural library is truly rewarding. We have the privilege of seeing firsthand the difference we make in our communities every day.

A heartfelt thank-you to the Three Rivers Library System for making this opportunity possible. It was an inspiring and energizing experience that will continue to shape my work for years to come.

Nebraska Library Association Conference

by Lisa Macke

Thanks to a scholarship from the Three Rivers Library System, I was able to attend the Nebraska Library Association Conference in York. It had been several years since I last attended, and I’m so grateful for the opportunity to go. It’s always inspiring to step away from my own library and hear what others across the state are doing.

One of the sessions I attended, Tweens and Teens, was full of fresh ideas that I’m excited to try in our library. Another session, Growing Readers, explored ways to connect Nebraska agriculture with literacy—so many great resources and curriculum options to bring back!

A highlight of the conference was hearing keynote speaker Allen Eskens, whose presentation was both engaging and motivating.

Scholarship Experiences

Iowa Library Association's Annual Conference

by Rose Barcal

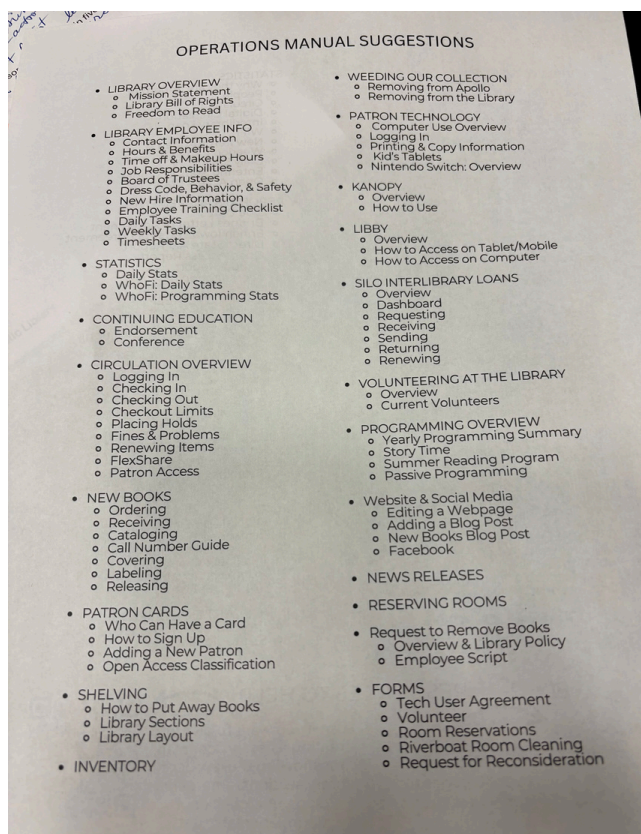
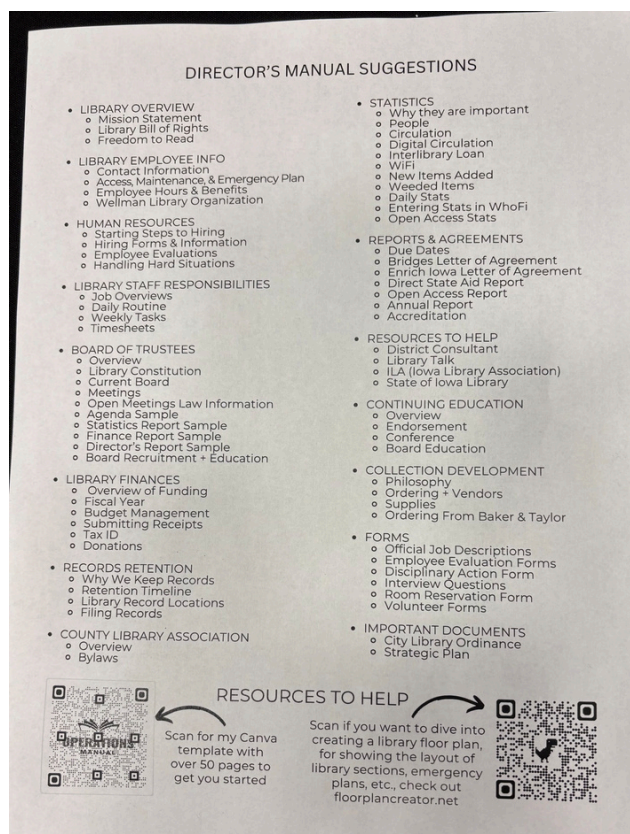
My appreciation to the Three Rivers Library System for continuing education moneys for registration so I could attend the Iowa Library Association's annual conference.

After attending the 2024 IA Library Association conference, I wanted to attend again.

Two key points and a highlight: The highlight was seeing the documentary "The Librarians" by Kim A. Snyder "librarians emerge as first responders in the fight for democracy and our First Amendment Rights." The film includes the story from the book "That Librarian" by Amanda Jones. <https://thelibrariansfilm.com/>

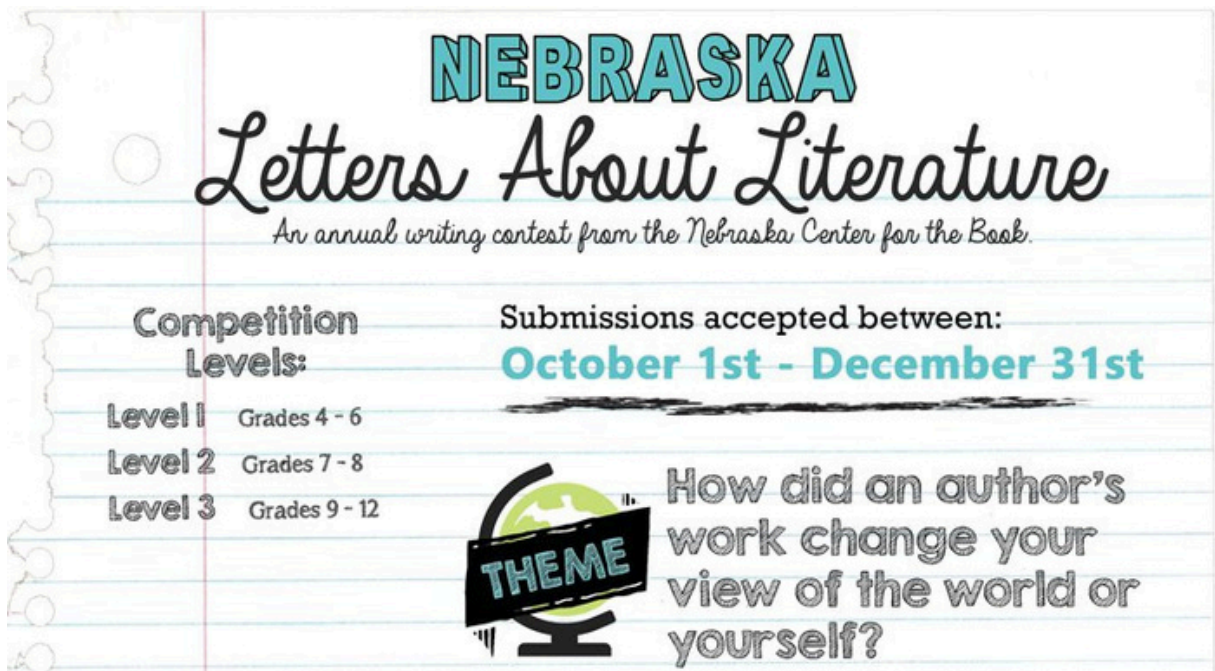
Key point #1: AI is not so much "intelligent" but a computer program that isn't all it claims to be. As librarians, our mantra of "verifying information/facts" is alive and well. Unfortunate examples were given; one from the director of Sioux City's Libraries: her boss did an AI inquiry and it said they could cut their library budget in half because they "didn't need all that."

Key point #2 was from Carrie Geno's presentation: "Setting Your Library Up for Success: Creating Tools to Empower Yourself and Your Staff" where she shared a table of contents for her Operations Manual and her Director's Manual. I get the Operations Manual: documenting what you do. She said to delegate to staff members and get them involved. I never considered an Operation's Manual for the director's position. This stemmed from her walking into a director's position with a stack of articles but nothing else. She proceeded to start documenting so the next director would not experience or guess or learn how she had to. Not only what you do but a rational/"why" behind it. She suggested taking 30 minutes each week to dedicate to this. When she's ready to retire and/or leave, she will print a copy for the next director.



Young Readers Invited to Write to Favorite Authors

Young readers in grades 4-12 are invited to write a personal letter to an author for the Nebraska Letters about Literature (LAL) contest, a state reading and writing promotion program. The letter can be to any author (living or dead) from any genre: fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic - explaining how that author's work changed the student's view of the world. Submissions must be completed online October 1 - December 31, 2025. Nebraska Letters About Literature is coordinated and sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Library Commission, with support from Lincoln City Libraries, Francie & Finch Bookshop, and Humanities Nebraska. The Nebraska Center for the Book's panel of judges will select a winner and an honorable mention per competition level (Level I for grades 4-6, Level II for grades 7-8, and Level III for grades 9-12) to be honored in a proclamation-signing ceremony at the state capitol during National Library Week in April 2026. Their winning letters will be placed in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln. Nebraska winners and honorable mentions will receive state prizes. Teachers, librarians, and parents can download the contest guidelines, free teaching materials, information on the online entry system, and past winning letters on the [Nebraska Center for the Book website](#). An informational [NCompass Live](#) webinar aired on October 1st, discussing this year's contest, the submission process, and judging criteria, with a recorded session soon available. For more information contact [Nebraska Center for the Book](#) at CenterForBook@nlc.state.ne.us.



NEBRASKA
Letters About Literature
An annual writing contest from the Nebraska Center for the Book.

Competition Levels:

Level I	Grades 4 - 6
Level 2	Grades 7 - 8
Level 3	Grades 9 - 12

Submissions accepted between:
October 1st - December 31st

THEME
How did an author's work change your view of the world or yourself?

Library and Information Services

Spring 2026 Online Course Offerings

January 12, 2026 – May 7, 2026

Enrollment for Spring Semester 2026 opens

Monday, Nov. 17, 2025



LIBR 2100 Reference Resources and Services

Marty Magee, Instructor

- Professional competencies including legal and ethical responsibilities
- Reference interview process
- The Reference collection
- Evaluation and use of digital resources, including databases, and websites

LIBR 2150 Develop and Organize Collections

Patty Birch, Instructor

- Basics of collection management including terminology and models
- Community and collection analysis
- Selection, acquisition, deselection/weeding
- Intellectual Freedom and Copyright
- Cataloging instruction including classification systems, subject headings, MARC records, and RDA

<i>Spring 2026</i>	<i>Fall 2026</i>
Libr 2100 Reference Resources and Services	Libr 1010 Foundations of Library and Information Services
Libr 2150 Develop and Organize Collections	Libr 2250 Leadership and Management in Library and Information Agencies
	Libr 2940 Library Science Capstone Practicum



For more information on the Library and Information Services program, see: <https://www.cccneb.edu/lis/>

For information concerning Admissions or Registration, contact: Michelle Setlik msetlik@cccneb.edu, 402-461-2538 or Toll Free at 308-398-7341

Central Community College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

*Congratulations
to these
Carnegie libraries,
receiving
\$10,000 gifts!*

Albion	Madison	Ponca
Blair	Neligh	Randolph
Bloomfield	Norfolk	Schuyler
Columbus	North Bend	South Omaha
Fremont	Pierce	Stanton
Fullerton	Plainview	Tekamah
Hartington	Plattsmouth	Wayne

THREE RIVERS LIBRARY
SYSTEM PRESENTS:



Get together with librarians near you to Share Knowledge, Ideas, Learning, and Library Solutions! You are welcome to join any or all of the meetings for networking and discussions. They will be worth 3 Continuing Education Credits each. If your plans allow, stick around for lunch afterwards.

Research has shown that networking with fellow librarians is beneficial professional development that improves professional practice, promotes shared leadership, and helps people remain in the profession. Do NOT feel guilty when you leave your library for these meetings because isolation is unproductive.

Register at: <http://bit.ly/SKILLSMeeting>

15 August 2025 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at La Vista Public Library

2 December 2025 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at Lied Winside Public Library



This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

THREE RIVERS LIBRARY
SYSTEM PRESENTS:



Get together virtually with librarians to Share Knowledge, Ideas, Learning, and Library Solutions! You are welcome to join any or all of the meetings for networking and discussions. They will be worth 1 Continuing Education Credits each.

Research has shown that networking with fellow librarians is beneficial professional development that improves professional practice, promotes shared leadership, and helps people remain in the profession. To attend, please use [this Zoom Link](#).

29 July 2025 from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

27 August 2025 from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

25 September 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

28 October 2025 from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

26 November 2025 from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

18 December 2025 from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm



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THREE RIVERS LIBRARY
SYSTEM PRESENTS:



Get together virtually with librarians to Share Knowledge, Ideas, Learning, and Library Solutions! You are welcome to join any or all of the meetings for networking and discussions. They will be worth 1 Continuing Education Credits each.

Research has shown that networking with fellow librarians is beneficial professional development that improves professional practice, promotes shared leadership, and helps people remain in the profession. To attend, please use [this Zoom Link](#).

27 January 2026 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

25 February 2026 from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

26 March 2026 from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

28 April 2026 from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

27 May 2026 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

25 June 2026 from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm



This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

Three Rivers Library System Presents:

2026 SUMMER READING PROGRAM WORKSHOP

Register Online:
<https://bit.ly/trlsSRP>

3 Locations:

- 11 February 2026
 - Tilden Public Library
 - 9:30 am - 3:30 pm
- 12 February 2026
 - Gardner Public Library (Wakefield)
 - 9:30 am - 3:30 pm
- 13 February 2026
 - Bennington Public Library
 - 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Featuring Presenters:

- Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission
- Nebraska Public Media
- Nebraska Extension Office
- Nebraska Game & Parks
- Participant Idea Share
 - Bring your ideas or samples to share with others!

\$5 per person
5 CE Available
Lunch is provided

"This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission."

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from Chelsea and Tammi at the
Three Rivers Library System!





Three Rivers Library System uses current technologies and professional relationships to help public, school, and special libraries meet the diverse needs of their patrons.

Three Rivers Library System Staff

Executive Director: Tammi Thiem

Tammi.Thiem.TRLS@gmail.com

Phone: 402.910.7005

Library Services Assistant: Chelsea Morlan

Trls.Assistant@gmail.com

Phone: 402.330.7884

Three Rivers Library System Board Members

- Mary Jo Mack
- Jessica Chamberlain
- Kathy Stender
- Brad Hruska
- Shannon McDonald
- Julie Osnes
- Sami Stewart
- Lara Lanphear
- Beth Kabes

Connect with Us:

- Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/netrls/>
- Facebook Group for Public Librarians:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/242360243603189>
- Facebook Group for School Librarians:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/782459329180478>

Counties Served:

- Antelope
- Boone
- Burt
- Cass
- Cedar
- Colfax
- Cuming
- Dakota
- Dixon
- Dodge
- Douglas
- Knox
- Madison
- Nance
- Pierce
- Platte
- Sarpy
- Stanton
- Thurston
- Washington
- Wayne

Newsletter Archives:

<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/systems/newsarchives.aspx>

