

CONNECTIONS: YOUR LINK TO THE
State Library of Oregon



Volume 31, Issue 11 - November 2021

In this issue:

- [Reaching Rural Communities While Fighting Fire](#)
- [Getting to Know the Library Support and Development Services](#)
[Division: Buzzy Nielsen](#)
- [Edge Cohort Programs for Public Libraries](#)
- [CARES Act Funding Reaches Widely Across Oregon](#)
- [Deschutes Public Library and Meals on Wheels Work Together to Distribute a Little TLC](#)
- [Taking Our Fundraising in New Directions](#)
- [Talking Book and Braille Library TRIVIA TIME!](#)
- [Remotely Available Services](#)

AGENCY NEWS

Reaching Rural Communities While Fighting Fire

One wouldn't normally associate library staff with fighting wildland fire, but our Volunteer and Operations Coordinator, Cam Amabile, switches gears when the fire bell rings. Through a collaborative partnership between the State Library and Oregon Department of Forestry, she deploys with a type one Incident Management Team as a Food Unit Leader intermittently throughout the summer. In this partnership, the State Library supports critical-need positions in the fire world while also seizing the opportunity to send a staff member into hard-to-reach and distant rural communities.



This summer, Cam spent 42 days in rural towns across Oregon coordinating the feeding of over 2,500 firefighters. Her assignments took her to places like Mitchell, Wallowa, and Lakeview, where for brief periods she was able to change into her library hat and conduct in-person

outreach. With the two-year pandemic keeping most State Library staff from traveling, it was a welcome opportunity to have a team member temporarily stationed in these communities and be able to visit both school and public libraries.

As conversations unfolded, common themes were apparent across these communities. Challenges like connectivity, technology access, staffing, and COVID-19's impact were shared across the board. By being physically present and having these conversations, Cam was able to hear the concerns of these communities, remind them about opportunities for funding and consultation, and ultimately offer that we are always there to help.

There were also elements of positivity that came of these conversations in the form of feedback. It was apparent that the work the State Library was doing

was having a healthy impact on rural libraries. In the simple act of sharing relevant pandemic-related information, guidance on policy, and opportunities for funding, we were providing a critical service.

Ultimately, time spent fighting fire served two critical roles: uplifting the morale of hungry firefighters to keep Oregon's communities safe and strengthening relationships with library partners to keep communities connected.

LIBRARY SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Getting to Know the Library Support and Development Services Division

Featured staff: Buzzy Nielsen (he/him)



Buzzy, who serves as Program Manager for the [Library Support and Development Services division](#), is also one of its newest members. He joined the State Library in September 2020 to serve as Library Support's first full-time manager since 2012. Prior to his current position,

Buzzy worked at public, school, and academic libraries in Michigan and Oregon, including in Coos, Crook, Curry, and Hood River Counties.

As manager, Buzzy is fortunate to work with [the excellent Library Support](#)

[staff](#) and the services they provide to libraries, including grants, expert consulting, online resources, learning opportunities for library staff, and much more. One of Buzzy's favorite parts of his job is also getting to work with library staff and supporters from all types of libraries throughout Oregon.

Buzzy's first year was not idle! Among other things, he helped create a spending plan for the additional \$3 million the State Library received as part of the [American Rescue Plan Act](#), reconfigured job duties in the division to allow for more work on digital collections projects such as [Northwest Digital Heritage](#), and started working with consultants to evaluate the State Library's \$2.4 million annual [Library Services and Technology Act](#) spending and determine how those funds can best meet the current needs of Oregon libraries.

When he's not busy at work, Buzzy enjoys hiking around the many wonderful parts of Oregon, from the beautiful southern coast where he grew up to the Strawberry Mountains on the east side. He lives in Bend with his partner, stepson, critters, and the occasional foster kitten.

Edge Cohort Programs for Public Libraries

Last year, 11 public libraries participated in Oregon's first Edge cohort with a focus on data fluency.

Edge is a subscription service that enables libraries to harness the power of data to make informed decisions, better serve their communities, and clearly demonstrate their community



leadership role.

Participants in the cohort used Edge and additional data sources to build their capacity to access, analyze, and leverage data; develop goals and action plans; and use data to form or strengthen partnerships with local leaders. Participants met online numerous times to learn, discuss, and share how to become “data leaders” in their library. They increased their capacity to answer questions, identify opportunities, inform decisions, and communicate with stakeholders by leveraging the information at their disposal from circulation and patron management systems to web page analytics to demographic data.

For the upcoming year, the State Library will be sponsoring two programs: a second Data Fluency cohort and a new Digital Inclusion Action cohort. The latter program has been created expressly to:

- Enable public library staff to grow an evaluation culture, build capacity, and advance outcome measurements
- Empower public libraries to expand their reach of technology services that they deliver to their communities, including expanding digital networks and purchasing hotspots, computers, and digital content
- Assist public libraries in demonstrating their vital role in bridging the digital divide and advancing digital inclusion and equity in their communities

Participants will meet online from January through June of 2022 and complete several activities throughout the course of both programs.

One member from last year’s cohort noted there were “great groups and conversations, and it was very helpful to see what other libraries around the state were doing,” while a second participant shared, “I believe the Edge

platform, toolkits, webinars, and staff are valuable in assisting libraries to assess their needs and put plans into action to benefit the communities served.”

Applications to participate in these cohorts will open on November 15, 2021; please feel free to contact Darci Hanning (darci.hanning@slo.oregon.gov or 971-375-3491) in the meantime for more information.

CARES Act Funding Reaches Widely Across Oregon

This summer, staff in our Library Support and Development Services division helped dozens of public libraries, community colleges, and tribes put the finishing touches on local and regional projects. These projects were funded through one-time Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding the State Library received via the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act enacted by Congress on March 27, 2020, the State Library of Oregon was awarded \$381,108, all of which was in turn offered as smaller, non-competitive subgrants to the nine federally recognized tribes associated with Oregon, as well as to 40 public libraries and six community college libraries in 14 Oregon counties. The focus of these grants was to enhance digital inclusion for individuals and communities, and many grantees used their funds locally to purchase and circulate Wi-Fi hotspots, expand their library’s Wi-Fi networks, and to provide training and resources to meet the growing digital literacy needs of patrons.



One such project in Southern Oregon we touched on [previously](#) will have lasting impacts for years to come. Jackson County Library Services (JCLS) used their CARES Act subgrant to help purchase a new, technology-focused outreach vehicle – the Direct Access to Resources & Technology (DART) van. With mobile Wi-Fi access and a collection of laptops and tablets, JCLS DART has already proven to be a critical tool in providing safe (i.e., outdoor) Internet access for patrons throughout their large system during COVID-related library closures, as well as reaching patrons displaced by the disastrous wildfires last year.

Not every library offered a CARES Act subgrant was able to make immediate use of these funds. With the approximately \$48,000 that was left on the table, the State Library of Oregon started pilot projects that will assess two different online training resources. Five libraries will be using a suite of tools from [Northstar Digital Literacy](#) to support digital skills assessment and training. Additionally, members of the Libraries of Eastern Oregon consortium will have access to [BrainFuse products HelpNow and JobNow](#) to supplement patron services in the areas of homework help, tutoring, career exploration, and job seeking.

Please [visit this page](#) to find more information about the State Library's CARES Act activities, including our distribution formula and methodology for the subgrants. Questions? Please contact Buzzy Nielsen, Program Manager, Library Support and Development Services at buzzy.nielsen@slo.oregon.gov.

TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE LIBRARY

Deschutes Public Library and Meals on Wheels Work Together to Distribute a Little *TLC*

A little more than a month ago, the Talking Book and Braille Library received a call from a man in Bend requesting an application so he could register with our library. We get calls like his all the time, but when he mentioned he found out about us from the Meals on Wheels people in his area, that piqued our interest. Looking further into this uncommon referral source helped us learn about an awesome connection between the Deschutes Public Library and the Council on Aging in Central Oregon (CACO).

As it turns out, the man who called for an application got our information out of an activity packet called The Library Corner (TLC for short) put together by the Deschutes Public Library and distributed by the CACO's Meals on Wheels delivery drivers. The packet was the brainchild of Graham Fox, who was hearing from activity directors at local care communities that their residents needed something to occupy their minds during COVID lockdowns. His solution was a packet specifically curated for local residents filled with brain games and coloring pages.



The packet was an instant hit, and the content grew to include poetry, book reviews, recipes, and other items of interest. Content creators were more than willing to allow their materials to be published in TLC, many of them excited to be a part of this creative solution to a community need. The one problem Deschutes Public Library faced was how to print and distribute TLC on their very limited budget.

That's when Deschutes Public Library received a message from CACO offering to partner with them. Deschutes Public Library would continue to build each bi-weekly TLC issue. CACO would then pay to have it printed and distribute it through Meals on Wheels. The partnership has been thriving, with 600+ copies going out to people across Central Oregon. And as seen by the man calling our library for an application, its benefit and impact are extending even further. Just another great example of a well-designed organic solution to a real community need.

Taking Our Fundraising in New Directions

While repetition, reputation, and routine can be great for business when it comes to services, these same tactics aren't terribly inspiring when it comes to fundraising. With a staffing change in 2020, the Talking Book and Braille Library sought to shake up the routine to energize donors and inspire new ones to emerge. Jazzing things up was the perfect challenge for new Fund

Development Coordinator, Cam Amabile. Having come from a background in heritage interpretation, she knows how important it is to tell a story, to personally connect, and to make our work relevant to those we serve. She hoped that some simple methodological tweaks would help inspire folks to invest in the evolution of future services of the Talking Book and Braille Library.

Our primary area of focus is greater personalization of the communications that donors receive, regardless of whether those communications come via snail mail, e-mail, or video. We're also looking to offer other ways to consume information including virtual town halls, video chats, and better plugging of our existing e-newsletters. Additionally, we have started to engage our donors in targeted funding challenges by asking for specific amounts and tailoring solicitations to only certain subgroups of donors.

Within a year and a half, this tactic has already benefited the Talking Book and Braille Library by increasing average donation amounts, while simultaneously cutting mailer costs by narrowing the scope of our solicitations. Patrons have also noticed the change in the nature of our letters, which are now more personable, casual, heartfelt, and addressed from the program manager herself. All of these changes, with more to come, will support the Talking Book and Braille Library for years to come.

Talking Book and Braille Library TRIVIA TIME!

We're back with another Talking Book and Braille Library Trivia Time! But before we get to this month's question, here are last month's answers:

- Which other State Library is including Oregon Braille readers in the National Library Service's Braille e-reader pilot program? **UTAH**

Thank you to everyone who submitted their answers, and feel free to keep participating each month. [Here is this month's question:](#)

Q: Before becoming the new Director of the National Library Service, Jason Broughton was the State Librarian of...?

- New Mexico
- Georgia
- Vermont
- Oklahoma



Hint: you can find the answer in a [previous issue of Connections.](#)

Click the button above to submit your answer to the trivia question. If you provide your name and contact information and answer the question correctly, **you may win a fun prize!**

Check back next month to see the answer, and we'll be back with more trivia in future *Connections* issues.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION & LIBRARY SERVICES

Remotely Available Services

The State Library's collection has remained accessible throughout the pandemic, both online and via Interlibrary Loan.

However, given that the library building has remained physically closed since March 2020, we wanted to take a few moments to provide brief descriptions of the various collections, services, resources, and products that are available to you online. Links included in the resource title will take you directly to pages which will provide you with further information or to a relevant email address.

[State Library Catalog](#) – Explore and identify both physical and electronic items held in our collection. Main collection areas include Oregon state publications, federal documents, Oregoniana, and library science material.

[Interlibrary Loan/Circulation](#) – Much of our material does circulate and can be requested via our Interlibrary Loan services, including our **[Library and Information Science \(LIS\) collection](#)**. When the building reopens, any Oregonian with a current photo ID may also check out circulating materials by coming to the State Library in person. Available hours will be announced later.

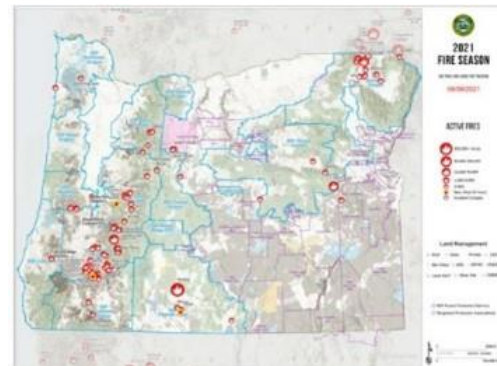
Oregon Documents – The **Oregon Government Documents Depository Program** collects,

preserves, and provides access to physical and digital Oregon government publications and distributes physical publications to designated depository libraries.

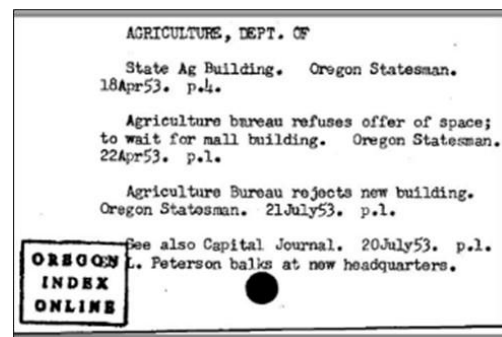


Federal Documents – As the Regional Federal Depository Library for Oregon, the State Library coordinates with other federal depository libraries to provide citizens with access to documents distributed by the U.S. Government Printing Office, as well as any federal government information made freely available on the Internet.

Digital Collections – Contains publications on all aspects of Oregon history and culture, with an emphasis on Oregon state government publications. More information about our holdings can be found on our **“About”** page. Digital Collections do not include digital copies of all print publications in the State Library’s collection.



Oregon Index – Compiled by State Library staff and volunteers starting in the early 20th century and continuing to the mid-1980s. It contains over 700,000 cards with citations to articles published in Oregon newspapers, magazines, book chapters, and more. Topics cover events



and issues important to Oregon history and state government. An [online guide](#) is available for more searching and background information.

[Photograph Collection](#) – An important historical resource for state government and the citizens of Oregon. There are nearly 20,000 prints, negatives, and slides in the collection, more than 7,000 of which have been digitized. The collection contains images covering a wide range of Oregon-related subjects. Most photographs are dated before 1950.



[Special Collections](#) – Contains materials that need special handling and storage because of their fragility, rarity, or age. A notable component of our collection includes [Oregon Writers Project](#) material from the WPA era.

[eClips](#) – Provides a scan of news pertaining to the business and operation of Oregon state government each business day from a selected set of Oregon and national news sources. Anyone may [subscribe to receive eClips by email](#). You will receive an edition each business day that contains the top 30 stories. All stories are available via our eClips blog.

[eClips Extra](#) – A service of the Oregon Documents Depository Program. Provides easy access to Oregon state government documents that are in the news or relevant to current news topics.

[Reference Services](#) – Still need assistance? Please contact us at 503-378-8800, or send us an email at LibraryHelp.SLO@slo.oregon.gov. We also staff [“Ask a Librarian”](#) live chat during business hours.

CONTACTS

Library Support & Development Services Program Manager

[Buzzy Nielsen](#), 971-375-3486

Talking Book & Braille Library Manager

[Elke Bruton](#), 971-375-3509

Government Information & Library Services Manager

[Caren Agata](#), 971-375-3483

Chief Operating Officer

[Susan Westin](#), 503-378-5435

Acting State Librarian

[Nancy Hoover](#), 503-378-4367

Connections is published monthly by the State Library of Oregon, and was formerly known as *Letters to Libraries Online*.

Mission

The State Library of Oregon cultivates, preserves, and delivers library and information services to foster lifelong learning and community engagement.



Our mailing address is:

State Library of Oregon, 250 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Copyright ©2021, All rights reserved.