BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Trustees Meeting —3:00 pm

Budget & Finance Committee *will not* meet.



Blackwater Regional Library
Franklin Branch

280 N. College Dr.
Franklin, Virginia 23851

blackwater regional library

Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex
www.blackwaterlib.org

Please notify Amy at 757-653-0298 x 304 if you are unable to attend or need directions.

Board Packet Contents

November 18, 2026

- Agenda – November 2026
- Minutes – October 2026
- Library Director's Report
- Budget and Finance Committee Minutes
    - October 21, 2026
- Library Bills
- Monthly Statistics Report – October 2026
- Staffing and Workshop Report

Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
November 18, 2026

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – November 2026

Approval of Minutes – October 2026

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director's Report

Committee Reports
- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Policy
- Search Committee

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business
- Consideration of FY27-28 Budget

New Business
- Acceptance of FY26 Annual Audit

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting
- January 20, 2027

Adjournment

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2026

Present	**Remote (via Zoom)**
MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County	
Jacqueline Carr – Isle of Wight County	
Maggie DeTar-Lavallee – Isle of Wight County	
Evelyn Ellis – Surry County	
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County	
Pam Lease – City of Franklin	
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County	
Karen Richardson – Sussex County	**Absent**
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin	Rhonda Chambliss – City of Franklin
Kisha Watford – Southampton County	Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County	
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director	
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager	

Chair Karen Richardson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:14 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Agenda
Ms. Carr moved, and Ms. Lease seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests
None

Minutes
Ms. Watford moved, and Ms. Lease seconded the minutes be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Public Comment
None

Correspondence
None

Library Director's Report
BRL registered over 290 new borrowers during Library Card Sign-Up Month in September!

Be sure to check out Beanstack reading challenges in October (Hallow-Read) and November (Read Grateful).

America 250/VA250 Events: Founding Fathers and U.S. Constitution Display available for viewing through November 2026 at the Courtland Branch. This display is available courtesy of the Southampton County Clerk of Court.

Committee Reports
Budget & Finance – Ms. Lease – The committee met prior to the Board meeting.
FY2028 Budget - options for FY2028 were distributed to all Trustees. Please review both options and be prepared for discussion and to vote during the November 18, 2026, Board meeting.
Staff Holiday Gift Cards - The committee also recommended purchasing holiday gift cards for all permanent staff. Ms. Herrala moved and Judge Harris seconded gift cards be purchased for all permanent staff. The vote was unanimous.

Personnel & Policy – no report

Search – Ms. Richardson – Two candidates for Director have been interviewed. One was invited back for a second interview/tour of branches.

Accounts Payable
Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. Watford seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business
None

New Business
None

Board Member Comments/Announcements
Ms. Lippard – SM Fall Fiction Festival on Saturday!
Ms. Lease – Franklin's Downtown Trick or Treat is October 22 @ 5:30
Ms. Richardson – Waverly's Trunk or Treat is October 28
Ms. Carr – is impressed with BRL's variety of activities!
Ms. Watford – new local author, Ravynn Stringfield, writes stories geared towards teens and has books in Chicago's Barack Obama Presidential Library
Ms. Herrala – WI FOTL cleaned out book sale shed in September! Book sale for upcoming weekend cancelled
Ms. Blunt – working with displaced families – will involve parents and children in Rawls and Franklin activities
Judge Harris – looking forward to Friday's tour with the Director candidate
Ms. Richardson – please review budget packet and bring recommendations to November meeting

Announcement of Next Meeting
The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on November 18, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment
Ms. Watford moved, and Ms. Lease seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Charlene Herrala, Secretary

Director's Report
October 2026

Submitted by Bonnie L. Lauver
Interim Library Director

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November Beanstack Challenge



October's "HallowRead" Stats:

- 45 readers registered
- 254 badges earned
- 17,919 minutes read



Track your reading with the Beanstack app!

Available for Android and iPhone

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Community Outreach and Service:

Outreach in the community:

- **31 programs - 2,362 participating**

A few special events in October:

- **Nike Park Trick or Treat**
- **Early Childhood Western Tidewater Trunk or Treat**
- **Family Reading Night @ Storehouse Coffee**
- **Children's Center Fall Festivals**





Central Office Admin lending a hand during Historic Courtland Community Clean-up Day



Placing over 1000 books in the hands of children!

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Franklin Highlights:





The City of Franklin Fire Department visited for storytime to discuss the importance of fire safety!



The Franklin and Courtland Branches welcomed new Youth Programmer Ms. Olivia





Thankful for our community crafters!

Learn about the library's ebooks and more available for your phone, tablet or ereader @

eBooks Happy Hour

Fridays 10-11am

Isle of Wight Highlights: Carrollton



Positive/Negative Art



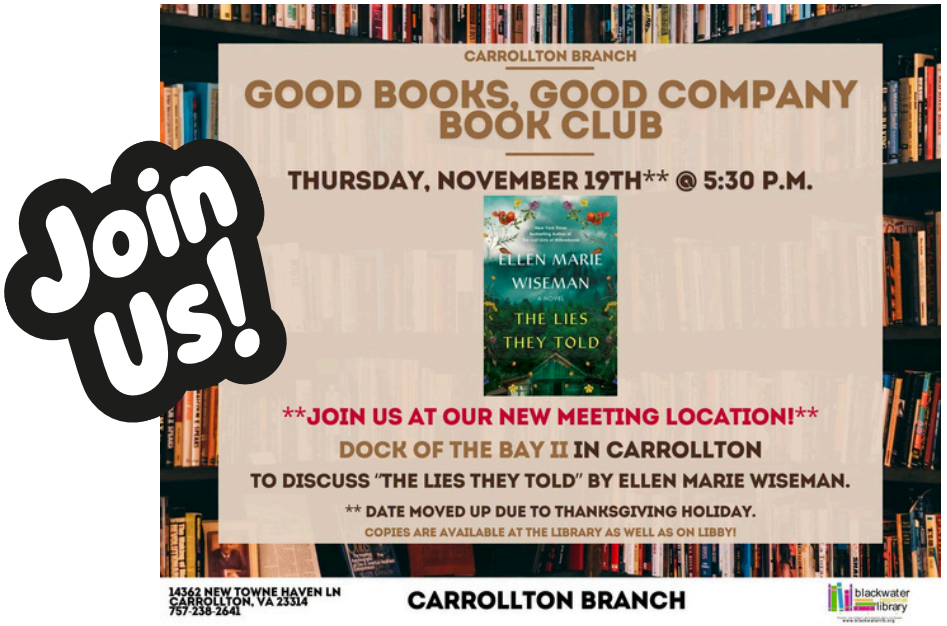


Thinking outside the box youth STEAM programs!



Marble Mazes





Isle of Wight Highlights: Smithfield

Smithfield Staff spent time out in the community in October!
Events - 5/Attendance - 179

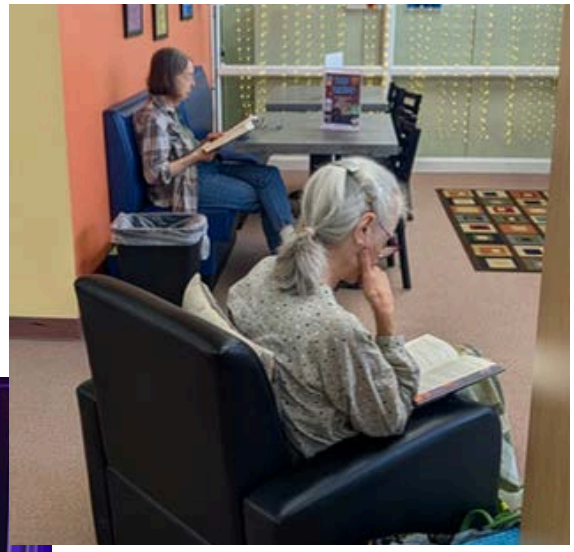


Fiddlin' Pig Outreach Book Club



National Night Out

Banned Books Silent Read-in sponsored by Libro.fm and Silent Book Club







Fall Fiction Fest Fun!



Teen Glow Party



A big thank you to Eagle Scout candidate Kate Bebermeyer for adding a little free patry to the library!

Non-perishable donations are welcome

Isle of Wight Highlights: Windsor

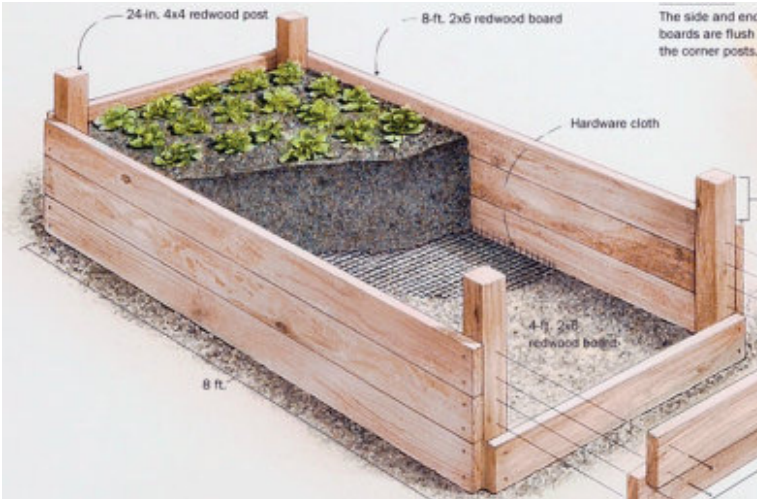


Windsor's Cursive Corner and BRL Threads have joined to create a new multigenerational program offering two great resources, in an effort to learn from each other!

The Windsor Branch is elated to announce they have reinitiated their partnership with Carrsville ES and will be visiting PreK, K and 1st Grade Classes monthly.



The Windsor Branch visits Community Harvest Outreach in the Town of Windsor once a month to meet members of the community and distribute books and library information.



Coming 2027! Isle of Wight Parks and Rec has approved the installation of raised garden beds. Through local partnerships, donated materials will be utilized to build and prepare the beds for spring programming with children and families.

Southampton Highlights:



An amazing 40 people came out
to the Historic Courtland Ghost Walk!

All ages enjoyed programmming
throughout the month
to include the Historic Courtland
Ghost Walk, STEAM pumpkin crafts
and adult Craftsy!



Storytime:







Newsoms Volunteer Fire Department visited the
library to chat with storytime participants about the
importance of fire safety.



Surry Highlights:



The Surry Branch is now offering outreach storytime to local Head Start classes at Surry Elementary School!



Storytime (Surry) and Storytime To Go (Claremont) are the place to be if you're under 5 and looking for friends!



Chippokes State Park Fall Festival was cut short as high winds and rain blew into the area.



Join us at Craftsy monthly - Surry and Claremont!



The library holds a strong place in the community as a "Third Space" for patrons to gather

Sussex Highlights:



The Waverly Branch, in partnership with the Town of Waverly, hosted a Halloween Block Party!







Each month a patron is invited to create a display of their favorite books! A big thank you to Friends of the Library member Charlene Pope for her recommendations.



Halloween fun at Storytime!

The 2026 Farmer's Market season has ended! We hope to see you in 2027 when they resume.



HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

Thanksgiving:

- **All branches close at 5pm Wednesday, November 25, 2026**
- **Closed Thursday, November 26, 2026**
- **Closed Friday, November 27, 2026**

Christmas:

- **Closed Thursday, December 24, 2026**
- **Closed Friday, December 25, 2026**
- **Closed Saturday, December 26, 2026**

New Year's:

- **Closed Thursday, December 31, 2026**
- **Closed Friday, January 1, 2027**

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BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES
October 21, 2026

Present	**Remote (via Zoom)**
Jackie Carr – Isle of Wight County	
Evelyn Ellis – Surry County	
Pam Lease – City of Franklin	
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County	**Absent**
Karen Richardson (Ex officio) – Sussex County	Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Bonnie Lauver – Interim Library Director	
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager	

Committee Chair Pam Lease called the Budget & Finance Committee to order at 1:55 p.m. at the Franklin branch.

Proposed FY2028 Budget

Ms. Lauver and Ms. Carter gave an overview of tentative suggested adjustments to operational lines for FY2028.

- 5% increase in the health insurance line. State plans are claim based, so premiums could increase or decrease for the upcoming year, based on claims processed in our group.
- Salary scale adjustment to $15.00/hour minimum to meet the minimum wage of $15.00/hour that becomes law on January 1, 2028.
- Possibly increasing the annual draw from the Rawls Trust by $18,000 to a total of $124,500 to take pressure off our localities.
- The consensus was to present the FY2028 budget options to the Board at the meeting immediately following in preparation for the Board to vote at the November 18, 2026 meeting.

Holiday Gift Cards for Staff

After discussion, the consensus of the committee was to recommend a $30 holiday gift card for all permanent staff.

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

October 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
AFLAC				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		OCPZ4684593102220260	-776.69
10/31/2026	Bill		684593	776.69
Amazon Capital Services				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11994	-533.57
10/31/2026	Bill		1GTJ-F3FD-DRFW	219.91
10/31/2026	Bill		1D6N-T1C6-WQFH	313.66
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		20204104	-14,908.00
10/21/2026	Bill		000968089F	14,908.00
Balloon Creatures By Susan				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11982	-225.00
10/21/2026	Bill		10676 WV 10.28.2026	225.00
Cengage Learning, Inc.				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11995	-24.00
10/31/2026	Bill		999103717127	24.00
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		12a19o9uxt4s	-190.40
10/21/2026	Bill		999103658335	26.40
10/21/2026	Bill		999103662951	32.80
10/21/2026	Bill		999103679579	131.20
Dataprise LLC				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4428350242	-401.25
10/21/2026	Bill		CW110033	401.25
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4437143256	-7,327.03
10/31/2026	Bill		MSP111545	1,039.75
10/31/2026	Bill		MSP111440	6,287.28
Dominion Energy Virginia				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		5274648950	-2,107.10
10/31/2026	Bill		3233130008 10.31.2026	2,107.10
EnvisionWare, Inc.				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11983	-5,705.46
10/21/2026	Bill		INV-US-84139	5,705.46
Ingram Library Services				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0162262010	-9,978.13
10/21/2026	Bill		20AZ032 10.21.2026	5,311.48

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

October 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
10/21/2026	Bill		20BB962 10.21.2026	4,666.65
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0099260311	-2,802.20
10/31/2026	Bill		20AZ032 10.31.2026	2,802.20
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0102260311	-2,439.86
10/31/2026	Bill		20BB962 10.31.2026	2,439.86
MidAmerica Books				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11984	-497.10
10/21/2026	Bill		0106075	497.10
Midwest Tape				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11996	-1,495.54
10/31/2026	Bill		509591159	1,495.54
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		16a13o9ux24a	-2,063.05
10/21/2026	Bill		509489697	2,063.05
Nancy Naigle				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11985	-300.00
10/21/2026	Bill		20261006	300.00
OCLC Inc				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		13a19o9uv23m	-3,013.90
10/21/2026	Bill		1000526028	3,013.90
Overdrive, Inc				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		mhh7mh6a	-3,578.53
10/21/2026	Bill		03100CO26340372	1,444.76
10/21/2026	Bill		03100DA26353336	722.48
10/21/2026	Bill		03100DA26357420	17.99
10/21/2026	Bill		03100DA26350620	74.99
10/21/2026	Bill		03100DA26346238	1,318.31
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		phy7j19a	-2,307.50
10/31/2026	Bill		03100DA26363601	84.99
10/31/2026	Bill		03100DA26358610	91.99
10/31/2026	Bill		03100DA26361011	543.86
10/31/2026	Bill		03100DA26362425	89.99
10/31/2026	Bill		03100DA26368427	966.69
10/31/2026	Bill		03100CO26370938	529.98
PEAC Solutions				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		200729733416	-1,488.92
10/21/2026	Bill		42857809	1,488.92

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

October 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
Petty Cash				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11986	-259.97
10/21/2026	Bill		10.21.2026 petty cash	259.97
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11997	-929.87
10/31/2026	Bill		10.31.2026 petty cash	929.87
Quadient Postage				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		BH3825174086	-308.29
10/31/2026	Bill		8140 0461 10.31.2026	308.29
Queen B’s Cleaning Service				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11998	-877.20
10/31/2026	Bill		2139	877.20
Quill Corporation				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		371468636	-693.10
10/31/2026	Bill		50725325	693.10
Selective Insurance Company				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11987	-697.00
10/21/2026	Bill		0000101941 12.3.2026	697.00
Sentara Health Plans				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		3153396691	-12,079.00
10/31/2026	Bill		12021569	12,079.00
Sheena Graham				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11988	-225.00
10/21/2026	Bill		RL 11.13.2026	225.00
Southampton County				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		50559	-65.00
10/21/2026	Bill		Acct 46 10.14.2026	65.00
Southside Gas Service, Inc.				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11999	-1,147.73
10/31/2026	Bill		28563	1,147.73
Spectrum Enterprise				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		O624211073	-28.61
10/21/2026	Bill		089740301100126	28.61
Stacey Gifford, dba Little People’s Cove				

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

October 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
10/07/2026	Bill Payment (Check)			-6,975.00
10/07/2026	Bill		28744	6,975.00
T & A Repairs, LLC.				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11989	-20.00
10/21/2026	Bill		42986	20.00
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		12000	-106.08
10/31/2026	Bill		43208	106.08
The Library Corporation				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11990	-35,754.02
10/21/2026	Bill		INV11006148	234.00
10/21/2026	Bill		INV11006219	1,041.32
10/21/2026	Bill		INV11006037	34,478.70
TowneBank/Card Services				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		C6070E912F	-13,814.16
10/21/2026	Bill		6457 0001 10.21.2026	13,814.16
Unique Management Services, Inc.				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11a11o9uz41g	-884.70
10/21/2026	Bill		6165152	209.70
10/21/2026	Bill		6165983	675.00
Verizon Wireless				
10/21/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4337244133	-2,840.73
10/21/2026	Bill		6155384945	2,800.72
10/21/2026	Bill		6155384944	40.01
Womack Publishing Company, Inc.				
10/31/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		12001	-56.00
10/31/2026	Bill			56.00



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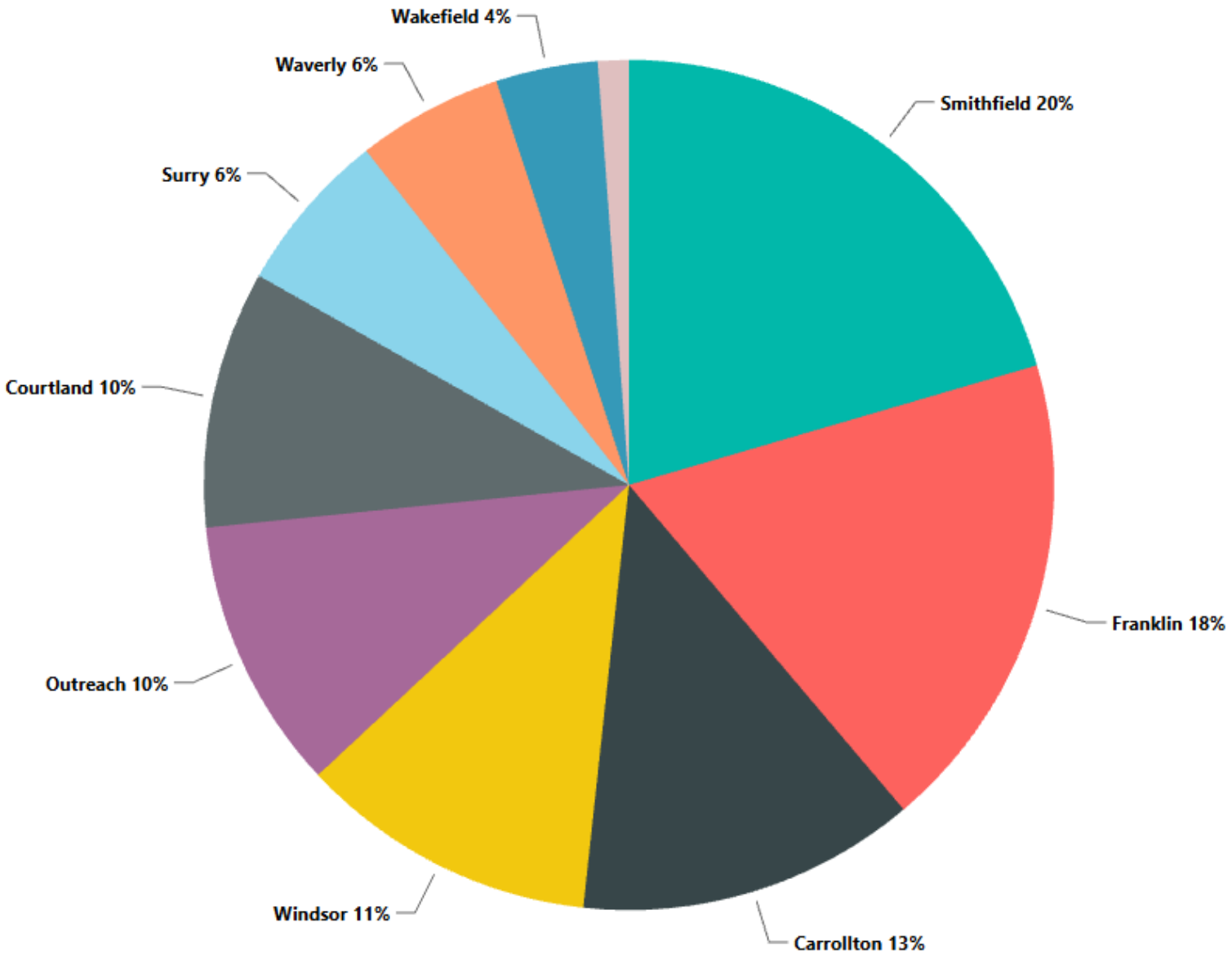
October 2026 Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count



Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	2193
Claremont	200
Courtland	1665
Franklin	3123
Outreach	1760
Smithfield	3479
Surry	1056
Wakefield	659
Waverly	944
Windsor	1928
Total	17007

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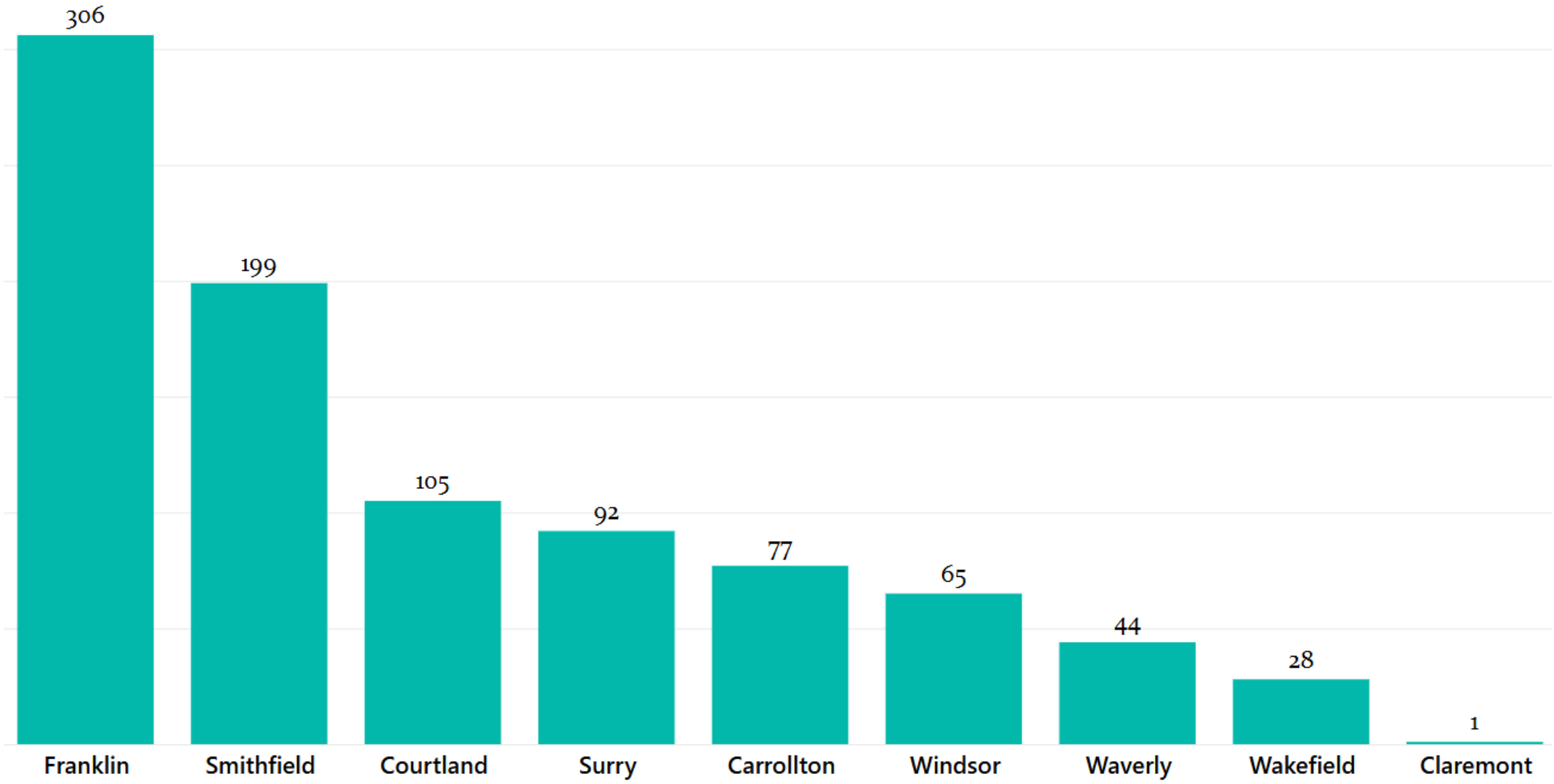
Monthly Report: In-House Internet



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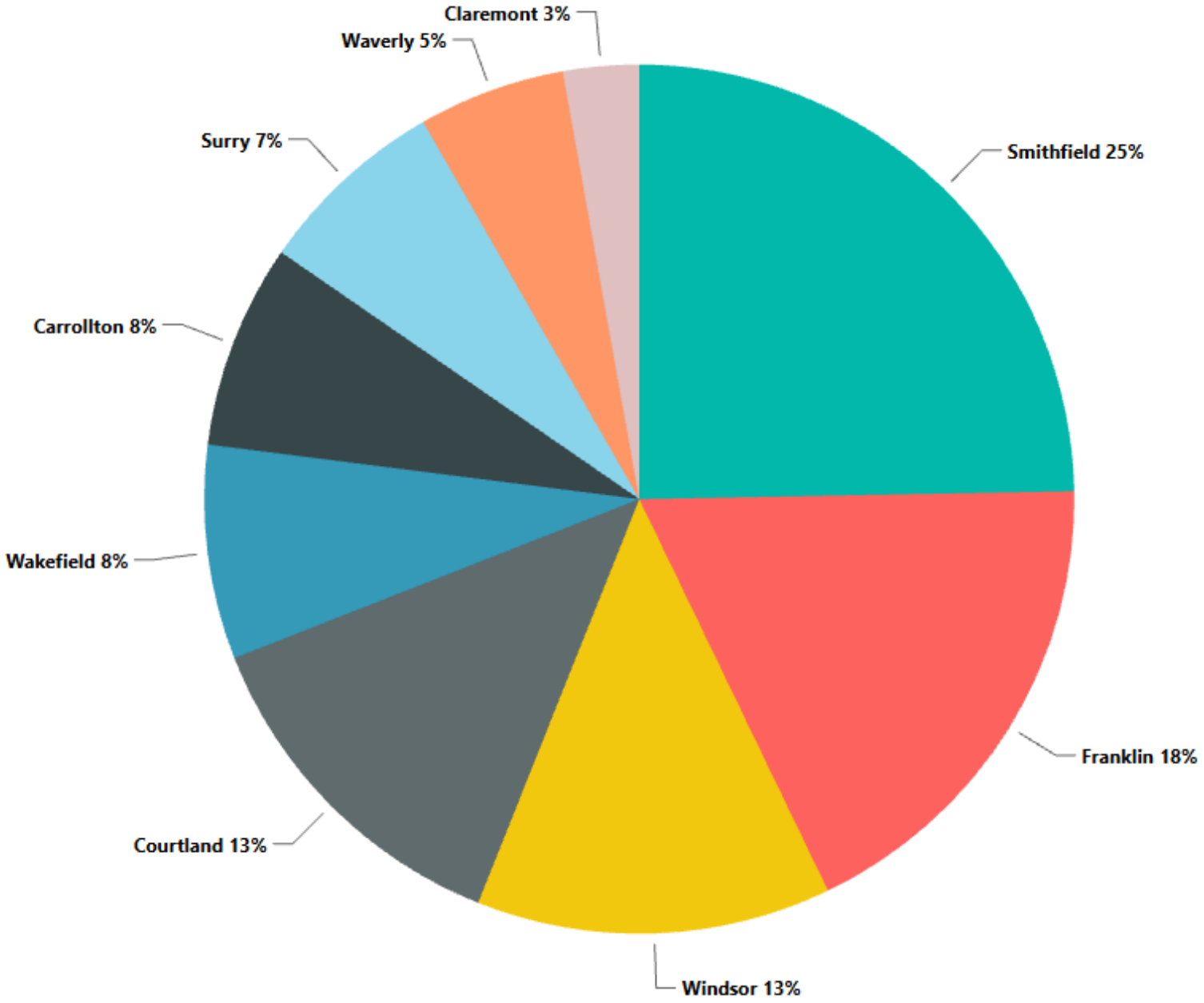
Monthly Report: WiFi Use



Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	124
Claremont	46
Courtland	212
Franklin	296
Smithfield	403
Surry	116
Wakefield	130
Waverly	89
Windsor	215
Total	1631

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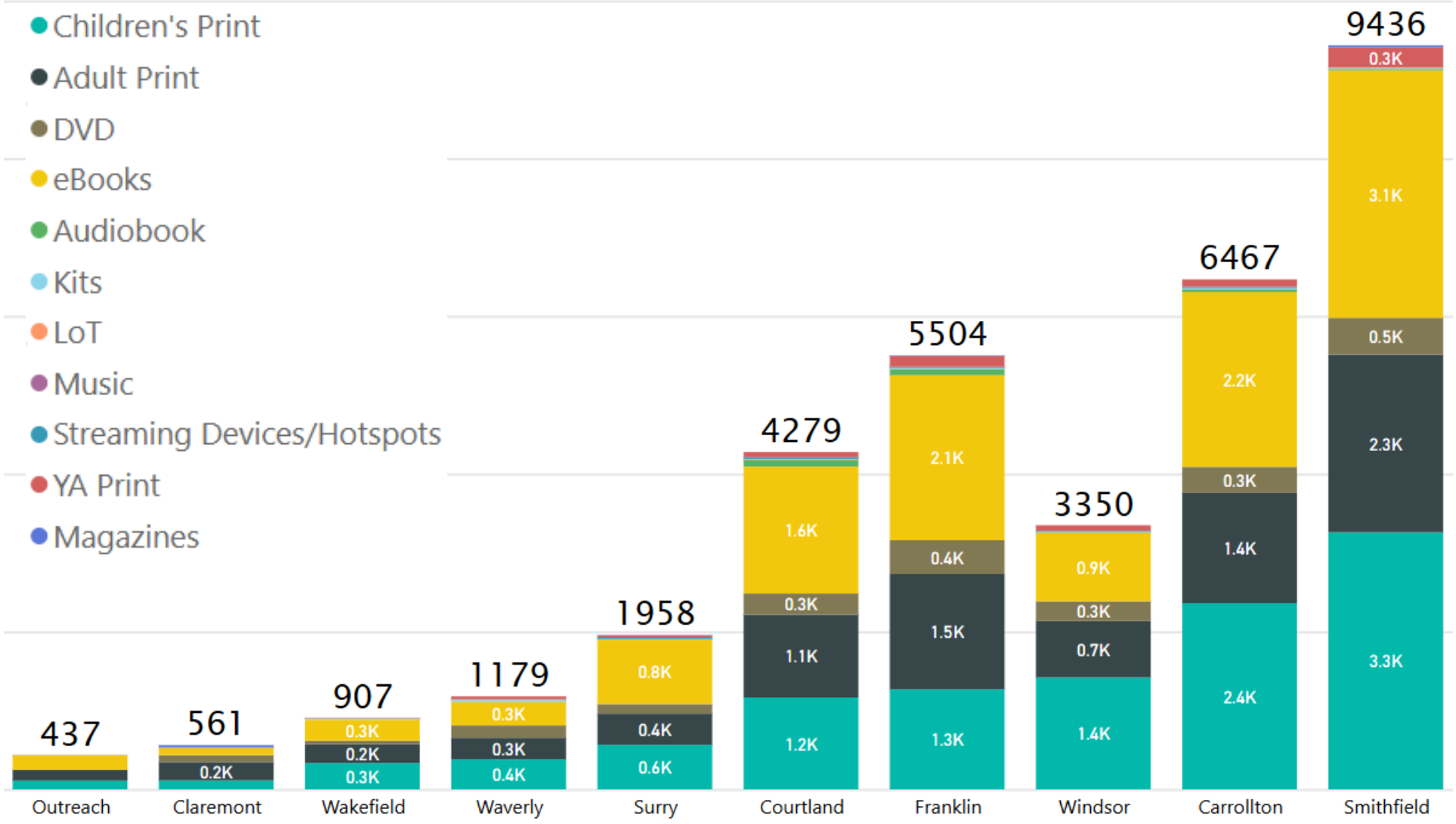
Circulation Report: By Branch



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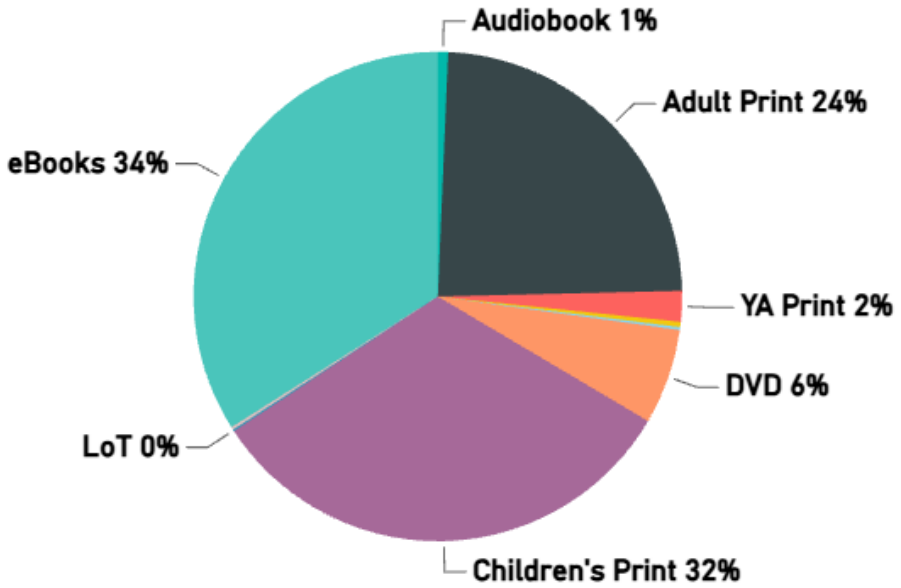
Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1399	2362	330	34	10	92	5	0	2216	19
Claremont	234	113	87	1	1	5	1	27	89	3
Courtland	1051	1166	267	86	1	64	7	0	1610	27
Franklin	1462	1269	430	79	10	139	3	7	2091	14
Outreach	137	111	1	1	0	2	1	0	183	1
Smithfield	2255	3260	465	19	7	253	9	26	3139	3
Surry	398	565	119	3	1	21	2	4	818	27
Wakefield	236	334	47	1	7	7	4	0	267	4
Waverly	276	380	155	2	21	35	6	0	297	7
Windsor	715	1420	250	4	6	71	2	0	868	14
Total	**8163**	**10980**	**2151**	**230**	**64**	**689**	**40**	**64**	**11578**	**119**



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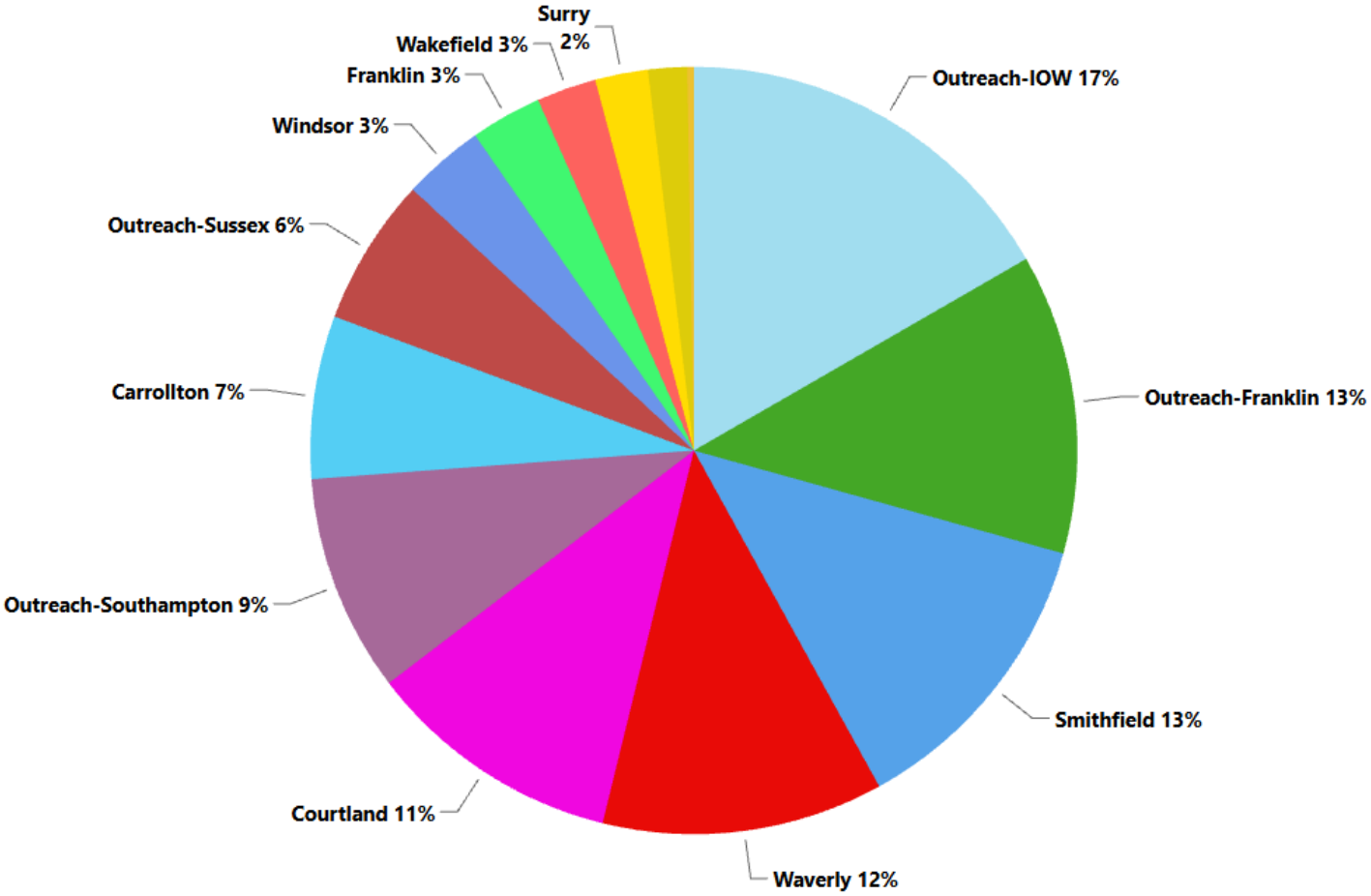
Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	366
Claremont	87
Courtland	576
Franklin	160
Outreach–Franklin	674
Outreach–IOW	889
Outreach–Southampton	489
Outreach–Surry	15
Outreach–Sussex	332
Smithfield	674
Surry	119
Wakefield	134
Waverly	632
Windsor	183
Total	5330

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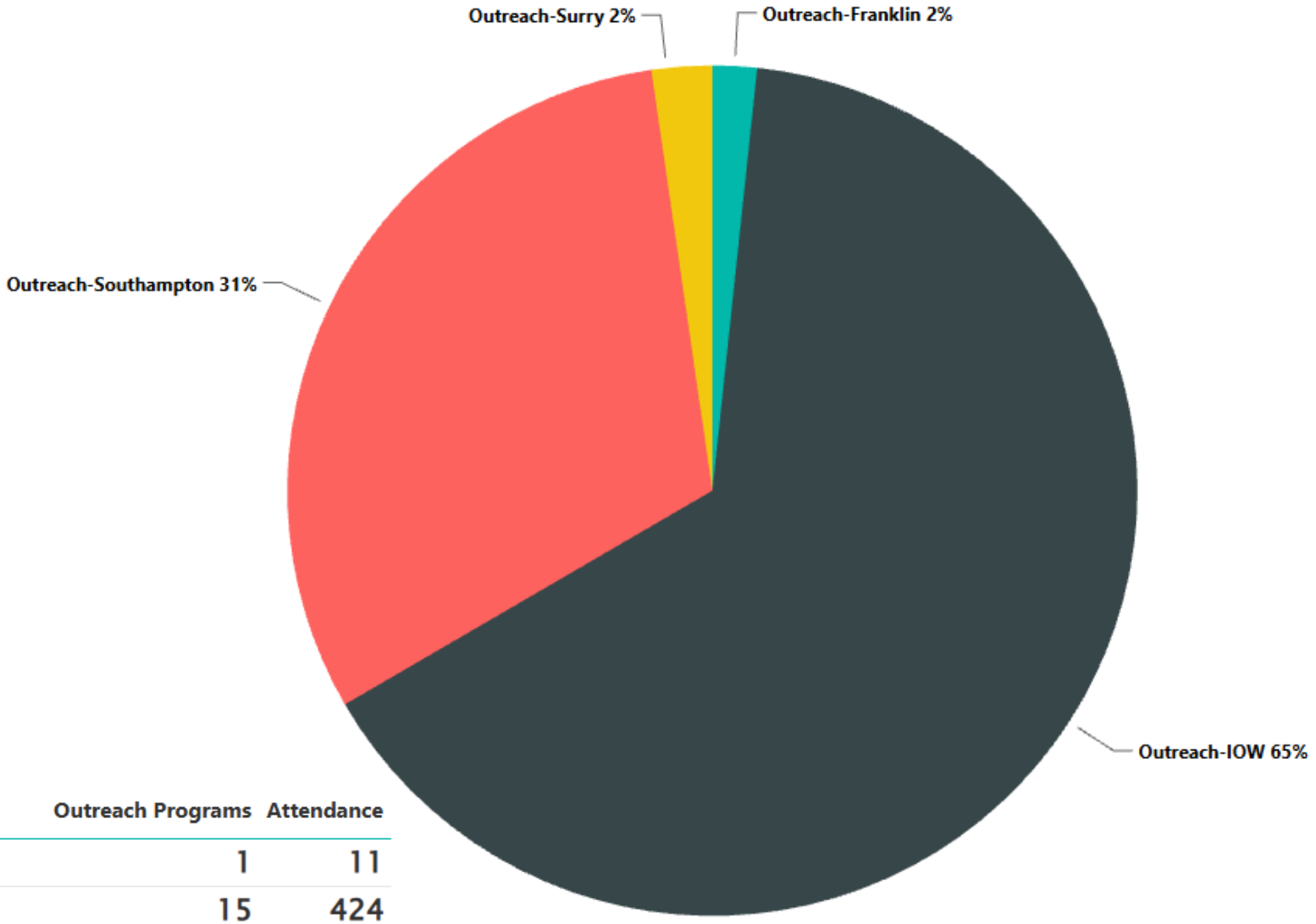
Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach–Franklin	1	11
Outreach–IOW	15	424
Outreach–Southampton	2	203
Outreach–Surry	1	15
Total	19	653

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Staffing Update
November 2026
Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

- Olivia Pulley – Youth Services Programmer, Courtland and Franklin branches

Promotions

Transfers

Separations

- Loretta Bruning – Sr. Library Assistant, Windsor

Vacancies

- Library Director

Training Sessions – September 2026

Isle of Wight County staff completed a total of 11 trainings
Southampton County staff completed a total of 7 trainings
Surry County staff completed a total of 3 trainings
Sussex County staff completed a total of 3 trainings
Central staff completed a total of 8 trainings

10/15/2026 – VA Libraries Annual E-rate Overview for Funding Year 2027 – E-Rate Central staff reviewed the E-Rate application/filing process/deadlines for the upcoming E-Rate funding year.

10/16/2026 – Essential Competencies for Branch Managers – In this webinar, we learned about the GROW coaching model to be a more effective manager. (G- Goals, R- Reality, O- Options/ Obstacles, W- Way & Will, end with a wrap up for the biggest takeaway.) Goals: The employee sets the goal in the GROW model, but the manager would help with the process by asking questions to turn the goal into a SMART goal. Reality: In this step, the manager is asking the staff member to discuss the bigger pictures of experience, time, and how they can support the goal. (This is really the phase to determine *if* this would be a good project for the staff member based on their current workload, experience level in this area, and the needs of the library.) O: In this phase, the manager will work with the staff member to explore the possible solutions and determine the best solution to reach the goal. W- In this phase, you pick a logical path forward, including determining a timeline and check-in points. (Key takeaway- The coach's job is to probe, not problem solve.)
We also learned about a 1-on-1 form from another library system that is more focused on department goals. This form would work well for committee/ teams within the system, but was less applicable to the branch manager roll as it currently is.

In addition to coaching, there was a great deal of information about biases, including confirmation bias, ageism, and gender bias. This part was interesting, especially a look at ageism. This was applied to patrons, library staff, and managers. In particular, Andrew pointed out not assuming that seniors do not know technology and instead allow them to lead the conversation of what they need. Conversely, younger managers should be trusted to the same degree that more senior managers are- their age does not necessarily mean their experience level is not high.

Next up was a discussion about delegation, including why we do or do not delegate. One of the attachments from the webinar was the 10 Levels of Delegation. Each level evaluates the task, the individual/ team to delegate to, ability of the individual/ team, explain reasons, state results, resources required, and feedback on results. (Feedback is not just from the manager, but also from the individual/ team the task was delegated to.)

10/17/2026 – Intentional AI Conversations at your Library – This Webinar felt like it was just to get our library to do their library's "AI Safety Awareness Project"
There just wasn't enough content on AI.

The final topic of the webinar was developing and implementing staff training programs. This portion would have been more effective if I would have taken the webinar live. There was a larger discussion that the audience contributed to, which was a missed opportunity for those of us who watched the recording. The one aspect I did find very interesting was about evaluating your existing training program with the newly onboarding staff. Andrew suggested regular check-ins during the onboarding process, as well as additional check-ins after the training is finished to ensure it has been implemented fully. I think this feedback would be very helpful during 1-on-1s with staff, especially during the six months after the coaching period has concluded.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference - Keynote Speaker – Kaetrena Davis Kendrick – Kaetrena Davis Kendrick is the leader in collective care practice for library workers, workplaces, and organizations. She earned her MSLS from the historic Clark Atlanta University School of Library and Information Studies. Known for her groundbreaking studies on library workplace place, Kendrick is committed to centering self-preservation, creativity, and empathy in the workplace and promoting career clarity and rejuvenation to workers. Kendrick is the Founder of Kendrick Consulting and Communications, LLC, and she is the 2024 2025 Follett Chair with the Dominican University School of Information Studies. In 2019, she was named the Association of College and Research Libraries' Academic/Research Librarian of the Year.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference - Many Pathways, Real Careers: Professional Growth in Libraries Without the MLIS – Explore how library staff can achieve meaningful professional growth and long-term success through experience, skills, and specialization—without holding an MLIS.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Not Just Another Paint Night: The Importance of Play in Adult Programming – Using Get Creative as a case study, we'll examine the social-emotional learning that can be introduced to adult programming, how to make that happen, and why you should let your adults have fun too

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Library Night Out: Designing Fun, Adult-Friendly Programming – If you want your library to be THE place for fun in your community, come learn about successful, entertaining adult programs, and brainstorm your own!

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Book & Look: How to Tailor Your Programming to Your Library's Unique Identity – Learn how the Chrysler Museum revived its book club with a twist and how you can use your library's unique identity to create programming.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Graphic Novels and Comics Forum – The Graphic Novel and Comic Former was Hosted by Mr. David Titus of Ohef Shalom Temple Library, Ms. Kaitlyn Dwyer of Roanoke County Public Libraries, Mrs. Janice Hummel of Loudon County Library and Mr. Evan Miller of Prince William Public Library. The Forum was about empowering staff to defend challenges and censorship towards Graphic novels and comics. The session also focused on intellectual freedom and advocacy for graphic novels and stating the importance that graphic novels have with educating children and graphic novel readers with not only conveying messages but illustrating all the key points the book is trying to convey. The session was very informative and very interactive with a lot fo great comic illustrations and art. Lastly Mr. Titus left a link to get involved with the Graphic Novel initiative he and the other panelist developed for all libraries across the state to participate in to encourage readers of all ages.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – CaTS Meet-up – Vent Session and Networking for the Cataloging and Technical Services Forum – This was basically just a sit around where we discuss what we do in technical services, and where we're at in our departments. As CaTS chair, I guided the conversation. Some libraries are still having trouble recovering from the loss of Baker & Taylor last year and are still on waitlists with BroDart and Ingram.
Someone asked how I "web catalog" so I pulled up my laptop to the projector and showed them how I made a record, in this case the newest Louise Penny book.
Vanessa at VLA has told me that they're moving away from the Basecamp website for forum group discussion, and they might lean back into the mailing lists. I hope this is the case because I'm having trouble hearding my CaTS together!

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Nobody Warned Me About the Cardboard Boxes: Real Talk on Rural Library Leadership – What did library school leave out? Turns out, plenty. From cardboard box crises to community trauma, one rural library director shares the unfiltered realities of small-town library leadership — and the hard-won strategies that actually work.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Academic Library Mentorship as Professional Development and Collective Care – By investing in mutual professional development through mentoring, we can build a resilient library profession.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – From Idea to Impact: Publishing with the Virginia Libraries Journal – Join members of the Virginia Libraries editorial board during this session for a brief overview of the journal's publication process, followed by an interactive workshop to meet

potential collaborators, share thoughts and perspectives, and turn your article idea into a published piece.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – The Power of (dis)Engaging with AI: Practicing Purposeful Use and Resistance – Discover strategies to both use & resist AI tools as a part of a critical approach to the use of technology supported by instructional materials, learning assessments, and a more informed pedagogy.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Reclaim your Spark of Joy: Supervising Through Burnout – Join us for a realistic discussion about public facing supervisor/manager difficulties and burnout.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Let's Talk About Sustainability – Discover practical, cost-effective strategies libraries can use to strengthen services, use resources wisely, and support local priorities through the experience of Virginia librarians who participated in ALA's Resilient Communities initiative and Sustainable Libraries Certification Program.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Libraries That Build Communities: Lessons in Partnership, Place, and Equity from Baltimore – What happens when a library is co-located with a workforce housing project? A powerful model for neighborhood renewal is created.

10/19/2026 – VLA Conference – Read to a Librarian: How a Low Stakes Library Program Can Boost Kids' Reading Confidence – Attendees will leave with a plan and tools for implementing a reading skills program to help combat the "summer slide" and build a community of young readers.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – …Are Things Weird Yet? You Said They Would Be!: AI Futures, the Evolving Information Landscape, and Libraries – Is AI changing the information landscape forever, as the internet did? If so, how should libraries react?

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – Caring About the Process: Bridging the Gap between County and Library Processes – Is AI changing the information landscape forever, as the internet did? If so, how should libraries Administrators are people, too; learn direct conversation points, strategies, and plans for fostering essential dialogue and success with supervisors.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – When Teens Run the Library: A Case Study – Go beyond busywork and give your teen volunteers career prep and high-level community service with a

teen leadership council! Using one library's example, explore how you can enlist responsible teens, shape their ideas, and equip them to run programs. When you give responsible teens responsibility, their creativity will amaze you!

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – Bringing Zine Fest to the Library – Learn tips and tricks for creating a festival at your library.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – Draw the Eye, Drive Circulation: Visual Tricks to Make Displays Move – It's not judging a book by its cover, just visual design! Draw the eyes with simple tweaks to create cohesive book displays.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – We're Still Standing, What's Next? Stewardship in Technical Services – Discover how Technical Services staff and stewardship can contribute to community dialogues and support library priorities.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – Reading Buddies: Big Readers, Little Readers, Lasting Impact – Books, buddies, and a big impact! Learn how to create a teen mentorship program with a lasting impact in your community.

10/20/2026 – VLA Conference – Science Sense: Helping Students Navigate Information Like Scientist – When General Education Assessments revealed students were scoring low on the information literacy components of Scientific Literacy, the librarians developed a targeted tutorial on the subject. In this session we'll walk you through our process of determining what students need to know and tailoring tutorial content to their information needs.

10/26/2026 – Mental Fitness for Librarians: Tools for Emotional Resilience – Library work in 2026 requires more emotional agility than ever. From navigating challenging patron interactions to managing digital overload and constant role shifting, librarians are carrying a heavy cognitive and emotional load. This interactive workshop introduces the concept of mental fitness - the daily practices that strengthen focus, emotional regulation, and resilience. Participants will explore the science behind stress, learn practical tools for staying grounded during difficult moments, and build personalized strategies they can use on the job.

10/27/2026 – Science Fiction 101: Refresh your Genre Knowledge – Understanding genres is a crucial readers advisory skill. Knowing the key genre appeals can help you connect with readers, even in genres that you don't find appealing yourself. Get up to speed with science fiction in this session from LVA's Reagen Thalacker. Topics covered include:

- Defining the genre, including subgenres

- Why readers enjoy it
- Key authors to know
- Up-and-coming writers to be aware of
- How to connect with readers in this genre
- Science fiction to science fact

10/27/2026 – RA training series: Historical Fiction – Jennifer Rothschild gave a more in-depth explanation of the historical fiction genre. She also gave a summary of many new historical books available, by sub-category including mystery, romance, fictional biography, horror, WW2, etc. Barry Trott answered questions at the end from participants. There were library book display ideas. It was a very interesting and informative look at my personal favorite genre!