

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | May 2025

1. State Updates:

- a. Given the pace of events, a report on the status of the State Budget will be provided at the meeting to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.
- b. We understand that the determination about our Community Resiliency, Economic Stability and Technology (CREST) grant through the Dormitory Authority of NYS to help underwrite MHLS capital projects will be made after the State budget has passed.
- c. We once again partnered with Assemblymember Didi Barret to distribute the 2025 volume of Women's History in the Hudson Valley: Ten Stories from Columbia and Dutchess Counties.

2. Federal Updates:

- a. Given the pace of events, a report on the status of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Grants to States Program funds for the New York State Library will be provided at the meeting to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.
- b. The Columbia County Board of Supervisors, as well as the town boards of Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale, and the Philmont Village Board have all passed [resolutions](#) expressing strong support for area libraries, calling on the New York State and federal leadership to prioritize funding for libraries.
- c. We have applied for the Energy Credit through the IRS as allowed for by the Inflation Reduction Act to reimburse part of the cost of the rooftop solar project. The timeline to hear back about the success of our application is unclear.

3. New Business Item Explained: Each year, member libraries may report that they have not met the NYS Minimum Standards for Association and Public Libraries. When this happens, they must file a variance request with the MHLS Board of Trustees, which is included in your board packet this month. These forms include a description of a compliance path they have worked out with MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, Laura Crisci, to ensure that we can recommend that you approve the variance request.

4. Personnel:

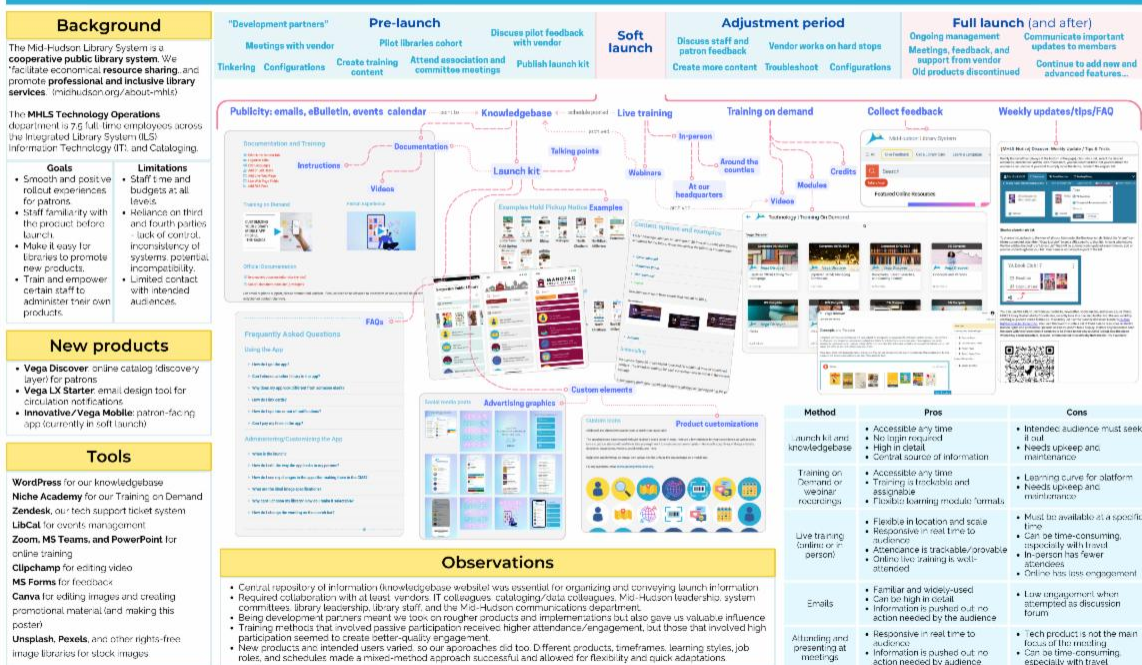
- a. AED/CPR Training: Ten MHLS staff people volunteered to participate in the MHLS-sponsored training on the automated external defibrillator (AED) and on cardiopulmonary resuscitation(CPR)

- b. **Earth Month:** Staff had a mini-Clean-up/Clean Out Day on Earth Day and we had a Earth Month Potluck Lunch on April 29 where staff brought food to share from local farms and local businesses. Chris and Dave reviewed our recycling opportunities in the workplace; and then Stephanie and Kathryn prepared tips for recycling various items at home to share with their co-workers.

5. **Technology Operations:**

- a. **Priority Monitoring Pilot Program:** MHLS has been participating in a pilot program through our ILS vendor, Innovative Interfaces Inc. to monitor slowdowns to the software and catalog that are caused by bots overwhelming their systems with external searches. This is a user experience issue for our members that we had asked the vendor to address. Since joining the pilot, we have not had the slowdown issues we were experiencing in the early part of the first quarter.
- b. **New Mobile App Launches May 1!** The Technology Operations Team has done a great job helping get the new mobile app ready for launch, working with each of our member libraries to customize their landing page and ensuring all of their local resources/eResources are accessible through the app. A [Launch Kit](#) was created to help members spread the word about this new service point.
 - **Related:** Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Assistant Director & Technology Operations Manager and Kathryn Brew, MHLS ILS and Technology Operations Specialist, participated in the poster session at the recent “SENYCON” event held at the Southeastern Library Resource Council. They presented on how our team launches new products and helps our member libraries be on board and ready to promote the new products, for example, the new catalog and mobile app.

LAUNCHING NEW PRODUCTS TO STAFF ACROSS 66 PUBLIC LIBRARIES



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- a. **Authority Control:** Backstage Library Works has now completed the initial import and updates to our shared catalog records for authority control processing. In addition to keeping our name and subject authorities up-to-date, enhancements including Accelerated Reader and Lexile

scores have been added to many of our records. This Knowledge Base [article](#) shows how library staff can use these fields to find materials in create lists:

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the equity, diversity and inclusion of our shared catalog, many alternate subject headings have been appended to our records, in addition to the established terms used by the Library of Congress. These added terms offer more ways for users to connect with relevant material.

- Indigenous subject headings (these can be identified by the field "|2indig" at the end of the heading) Ex: Alaska Natives |vJuvenile fiction. |2indig
- Homosaurus crosswalk to for LGBTQ+ terminology (these can be identified by the field "|2homoit" at the end of the heading) Ex: LGBTQ+ comics. |2homoit

The MHLS cataloging department has also built a local list of over 1,100 other subject headings (these can be identified by the field "|2local" at the end of the heading) Ex: Video recordings with descriptive audio tracks. |2local

Ongoing maintenance will consist of quarterly deliveries of any changes that occur with our existing authorities, and monthly submissions of any newly added records to be processed.

c. **Phone Notification and Texting Upgrades coming this summer**

- Innovative Phone Alerts (IPA) will replace our Itiva phone system for outgoing circulation notifications. The new system will move the telephone notifications into a cloud environment, eliminating equipment maintenance and replacement. We are in the early stages of the project, working with Innovative on configuration and parameters. The transition should be seamless for members, with a transition from one system to the other in an overnight process. Patrons may notice a change in the incoming phone number as we will not be porting our number in order to have both systems in place for testing and a transition without downtime.
- This summer we will begin work with Innovative to roll out their latest text messaging service which is part of the Vega Interact product Line. Once installed we will be able to include the patron Opt. In within our Discover catalog.

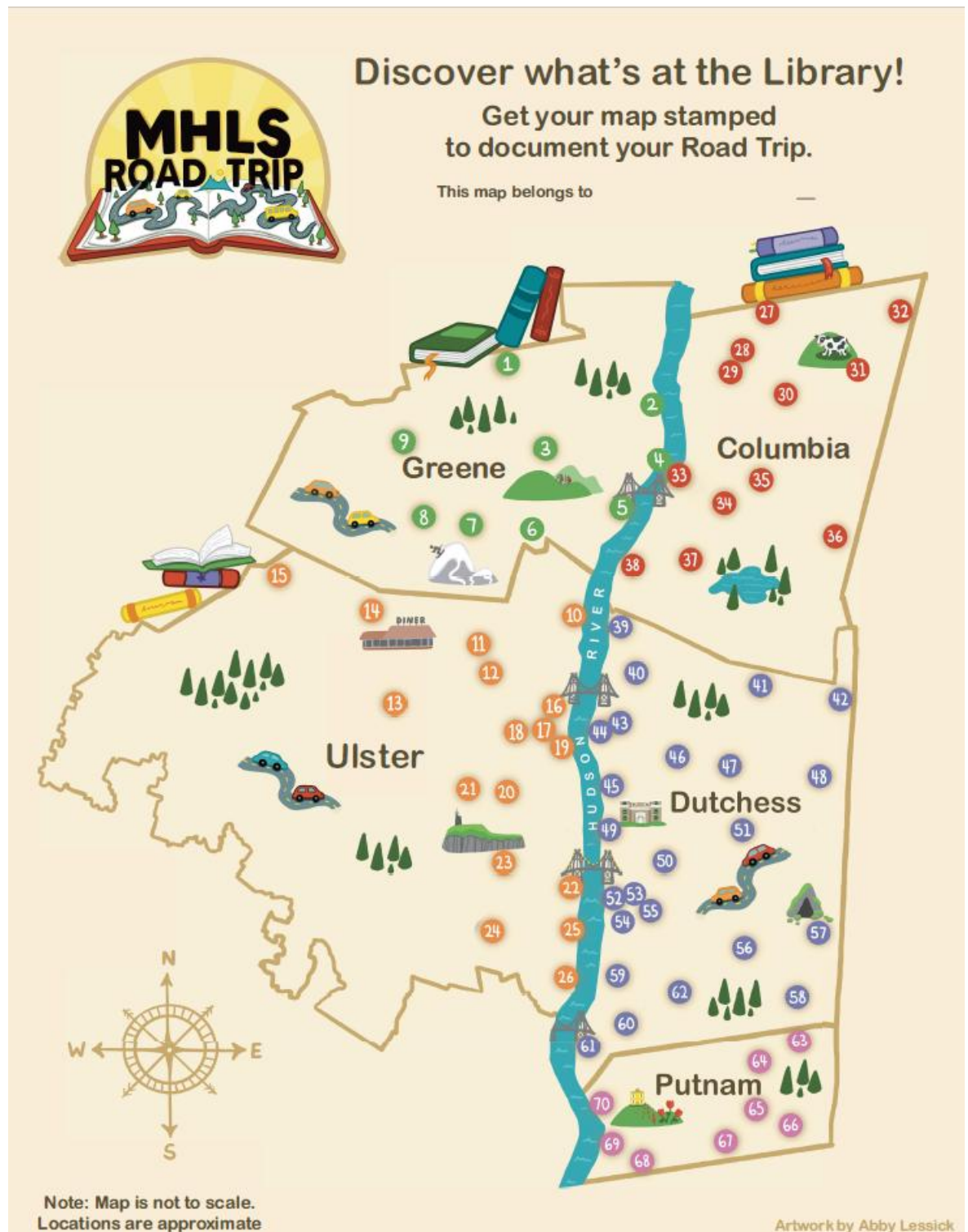
6. Library Sustainability

- a. We will proceed with the administration of the **State Aid for Library Construction Program** as usual until told otherwise by the State Librarian.
- b. Kerstin Cruger, MHLS Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist, has been coordinating with each of our five counties' Offices of the Aging to ensure residents of the Hudson Valley have **the support they need to access their Social Security benefits** in light of the move to have more American's use the Social Security Administration's web site.
- c. **Trustee Education Series & Trustee Handbook Book Club Dates:**

- **May**
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Trustee Essentials** Thursday, May 15 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
- **June**
 - **Finance for Trustees**
 - a. IN PERSON: Tuesday, June 3 | 5:00 – 7:00pm | MHLS Auditorium | [Register here](#)
 - b. ONLINE: Tuesday, June 17 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | [Register here](#)
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Legal Basics (intermediate-level)** Monday, June 16 | 6:00 – 8:00 | IN PERSON: Town of Esopus Library | [Register here](#)
 - **Multi-Year Financial Planning** Tuesday, June 24 | 5:00-6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
 - **Strengthening the Future of Your Library by Investing in Your Staff** (Salaries & Benefits) with Guest Speaker: Brian Hildreth, Executive Director, Southern Tier Library System Wednesday, June 25 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)
- **July**
 - **Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting & Retaining Quality Staff** Tuesday, July 15 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Policies 101 (essentials level)** Thursday, July 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
- **August**
 - **Multi-Year Financial Planning** Wednesday, August 13 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | Roeliff Jansen Community Library | [Register here](#)
 - **Facilities for the Future: Evaluation, Planning, Operations and Renovation/Construction** Friday, August 15 | 10:00 – 11:30am | Online | [Register here](#)
- **September**
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (advanced level)** Tuesday, September 16 | 6:00-8:00pm | IN PERSON: Mahopac Library | [Register Here](#)
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Trustee Essentials (essentials level)** Wednesday, September 24 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Board Development – Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation (advanced level)** Thursday, September 25 | 6:00 – 8:00pm | IN PERSON: Beekman Library | [Register here](#)
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Policies 101 (essentials level)** Tuesday, September 30 | 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

- **October**
 - **MHLS Trustee Education Series: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (advanced level)** Thursday, October 9 | 5:30 – 7:30pm | IN PERSON: Philmont Public Library | [Register here](#)

- d. **MHLS Road Trip to Launch June 6:** We are on the eve of launching the first MHLS Road Trip!
- This will run from June 6-October 18
 - In May all member libraries will receive a share of the maps, souvenirs, posters, and an “artifact” for visitors to find in each member library building and bookmobile.
 - Once a Road Tripper visits a certain number of libraries they will earn a souvenir:
 - 10 libraries: a water bottle sticker
 - All in a county: car magnet
 - Half of our member library buildings: a tote bag
 - All of our member library buildings: a special edition library card
 - We are grateful to Central Hudson for underwriting the printing of the maps that Road Trippers will have stamped at each library:



- e. **MHLS Book Haven Collection is Up-to-Date:** ALA Announced the [Top Ten Most Challenged Titles in 2024](#) during National Library Week. All titles are available through the [MHLS Debra Wilcox Klein Book Haven Collection](#) via the [Discover Catalog](#) in both print and eBook format.

7. Delivery Operations

- a. MHLS will be sending out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to allow for a structured comparison of delivery vendor offerings and solutions based on cost, experience, and capabilities to best fit the needs of MHLS, member libraries, and correctional facilities. The working schedule of this RFP is as follows:
 - April/May 2025; Review past three-year (2022,2023,2024) average member circulation data and make adjustments to stops that are determined necessary
 - May/June 2025; Notify libraries of any adjustments to stops
 - June/July 2025; Generate RFP
 - July/August 2025; Send out RFP
 - August/September 2025; Review RFP responses
 - September 2025; Select vendor in the best interest of MHLS
 - December 31, 2025; Current MHLS & Valley Courier Agreement ends
 - January 1, 2026; New Agreement begins
- b. MHLS will be re-signing a one-year contract with Empire State Library Network (ESLN) for Empire Library Delivery (ELD) for the period of July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. Delivery and pickup of ELD materials to MHLS will continue to be Tuesday and Friday. Empire Library Delivery improves statewide delivery, making resource sharing connections among all types of libraries affordable and streamlined. ELD provides return on investment for libraries by providing a convenient, affordable, and tailored delivery service to institutions, thereby supporting increased statewide resource sharing among ELD participants. By bundling shipments of library materials, ELD assists libraries in quickly getting items into the hands of users. The ELD Advisory Council includes representatives from the IDS project, SUNY and CUNY Libraries and other institutions to ensure an efficient, cost-effective exchange of materials among participating libraries. ELD is overseen by the Executive Directors of ESLN's nine Reference and Research Library Resource Councils.

8. Strategic Partnerships

- a. The State Librarian has suspended the project for 2026 to align The Great Give Back with the [America Gives program](#) as part of the [America250 celebration](#) due to the uncertainties surrounding IMLS Grants to State Program funding to the State Library at this time.
- b. Central Hudson:
 - Central Hudson has donated \$6,000 toward our MHLS Road Trip program.
 - We expect to launch the lending of digital thermal cameras supplied by Central Hudson through our libraries in June.

- c. On Earth Day we have launched the [collaboration with The Tempestry Project](#) to recruit knitters across the Hudson Valley to help with a community art project to knit scarves representing 129 years of climate data in the Hudson Valley. In less than a week, 40 knitters signed up. The goal is to complete the project by the end of the year and launch a traveling exhibit in 2026. We have had good press coverage of this already in [The Daily Freeman](#) and [Chronogram](#).
- d. Assemblymember Didi Barrett introduced me to members of the staff of the New York Power Authority to explore the possibility of a pilot program in the Mid-Hudson Library System to co-locate more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at our member library locations.

9. Board Operations:

- a. **Administrative Assistant Search:** Ashley Teal has resigned. We commenced a search for a new Administrative Assistant on April 28. For all items you previously reached out to her for, please refer them to me for now.
- b. **Board-to-Board Visits**
 - Please designate a point person from your team of three representatives from your county to ensure requests are met with a timely response that at least acknowledges the receipt of the request and an estimate of when the contingent will respond.
 - Reminder: Please coordinate response to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county before individually responding and, as always, please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings or with follow-up information.
 - Please review the [Board-to-Board Visits Program Information Sheet](#).
 - Please let me know when you have completed a visit so we can track our outreach to members as per the request from the Board Development Committee.
 - Suggested Talking Points:
 - Please urge all member library boards to participate in state and federal level funding advocacy. The best advice you can give them is to share stories with state and federal legislators about:
 - a. How MHLS supports their library
 - b. How important libraries are to our communities in an era of disinformation and misinformation.
 - Ensure MHLS has updated emails for member library trustees so they will receive our new trustee enewsletter.

10. Executive Director's Event Participation: March 4 – April 30, 2025

- a. MHLS Board Development Committee
- b. ALA Strategic Plan, Focus Group Participant
- c. Presenter, LIU/Palmer Course, Public Library Administration Post-Graduate Certificate Program (3)
- d. Consultation: Howland Public Library (Beacon) Trustees

- e. MHLS Board Committee Chairs
- f. New Director Orientation: Alison O'Meara, Town of Ulster Public Library
- g. MHLS Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- h. Public Library System Directors Organization of NYS (PULISDO) (2)
- i. Meeting with Assemblymember Didi Barrett and staff from the New York Power Authority
- j. Dutchess County Library Association
- k. Columbia County Library Association
- l. Advisory Board meeting, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)
- m. Ulster County Library Association
- n. NYLA Legislative Committee meeting
- o. Facilitator, Amazon Business Prime Membership Benefit introductory webinar for member libraries
- p. Meeting with Assemblymember Carrie Woerner and Assemblymember Didi Barret & staff from the State Education Department to discuss back-up funding plan for the Division of Library Development
- q. MHLS Audit Committee
- r. Putnam County Library Association (2)
- s. Facilitator, Visions HR member benefit Introductory webinar for member libraries
- t. Facilitator, MHLS County Funding Advocacy Group
- u. AED/CPR Training
- v. MHLS Core Values Advisory Group
- w. Central Hudson Energy Efficiency & Electrification Summit, Rifton, NY
- x. Facilitator, The Tempest Project introductory webinar
- y. Presenter, Annual Meeting, Sustainable Libraries Initiative
- z. Clinton Community Library's 60th Birthday Party
- aa. MHLS Facilities Committee
- bb. New Director Orientation: Lindsay Jankovitz, Marlboro Free Library
- cc. Presentation, Introduction to the National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries, for the Public Library Association
- dd. Presentation, Change Management, NYLA Developing Leaders Program
- ee. MHLS Directors Association
- ff. Facilitator, New Directors Forum
- gg. Presentation, AAUW Luncheon to honor Lorraine Rothman, Director, Staatsburg Library
- hh. MHLS Nominations & Elections Committee
- ii. John Diefenderfer, Archival Advisory Services, NYS Archives
- jj. Presentation: 414 Votes – Step-by-Step
- kk. Presentation: Libraries as Social Infrastructure, NYS Adaptation Practitioners Network, [Rebuild by Design](#)
- ll. Presentation: Getting Started with Climate Action Planning, for the Public Library Association
- mm. Presentation: Board Development: Evaluation, Education, Recruitment, and Orientation, part of the Trustee Handbook Book Club series

11. The theme of the April issue of *Library Journal* was the climate crisis. I was honored to write a column for this issue: [Why Sustainability?](#)