

# Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | September 2025

## 1. State Updates:

- a. All state funds necessary for MHLS operations have been received. The only aid we are waiting on is the last 10% of the Local Library Service Aid for member libraries.
- b. We have submitted our preliminary application for the Community Resiliency, Economic Stability and Technology (CREST) grant through the Dormitory Authority of NYS **to help underwrite MHLS capital projects**. This is thanks to the work of Assemblymember Jonathan G. Jacobson.

## 2. Federal Updates:

- a. Our advocacy work over the summer has resulted in the inclusion of funding for the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** in both house appropriation bills in preparation for the federal budget process.
- b. As reported previously, our application for the **Energy Credit through the IRS was denied without explanation**. We have learned there is no appeal process.

## 3. Personnel:

- a. Tom Finnigan, MHLS Delivery Operations Manager, has officially retired as of September 2. In celebration, **four of our state legislators issued proclamations recognizing his impact on the Hudson Valley**: Senators Hinchey and Rolison and Assemblymembers Barrett and Jacobson.
- b. Elizabeth Garcia, MHLS Finance Assistant has resigned. We will be advertising this as a part-time position for now.

## 4. Delivery Operations: ACTION ITEM – As per our Purchasing Policy we engaged in public bidding process for delivery services this year. We received eight responses to our request for proposal (RFP) for delivery services ranging in cost from \$344,988 to \$1.9 million annually. Our current delivery vendor, Valley Courier, was our lowest, qualified bidder, coming in at \$344,988 per year for three years with the option to renew on a yearly basis after that – the same arrangement we have now. Increases from year to year will not exceed the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA).

## 5. Technology Operations:

- a. Upcoming programs for library workers:
  - **Customize Your Library's Hoopla Collection**, Monday, September 8 at 10am
  - **Mobile Worklist**, Wednesday, September 24 at 10am

- **Introduction to Weeding Your Collection**, Tuesday, October 7 at 10am
- **Cybersecurity Checklist Review**, Thursday, October 9 at 1pm
- **Comprehensive Sierra Circulation**, Tuesday, October 14 at 10am
- **Sierra Data Entry: Items and Bibliographic Records**, Thursday, October 23 at 2pm
- **Sierra Data Entry: Serials and Order Records**, Thursday, October 30 at 2pm
- **SEAL 101**, Wednesday, November 12 at 10pm
- **Introduction to Create Lists**, Thursday, November 20 at 10am
- **Introduction to Sierra Circulation**, Wednesday, December 3 at 2pm
- **Create Lists – Advanced**: Thursday, December 11 at 10am

## 6. Library Sustainability

### a. **Advocacy Push:**

- Our pre-Labor Day campaign for federal funds for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was successful with both the House and Senate appropriations committees adding in funding for IMLS at approximately pre-2025 levels.
- Postcard Campaign Launched, more than a dozen “Postcard Parties” held and more than 5,000 postcards distributed to state legislators to deliver the message that libraries and MHLS are essential to New Yorkers.
- If you have ideas for folks who should be on our Advocates email list, please let me know. We are seeking people who were formerly affiliated with MHLS and member libraries in roles such as directors, trustees, library workers, and Friends, who are no longer actively serving but are still looking to be engaged as library advocates.

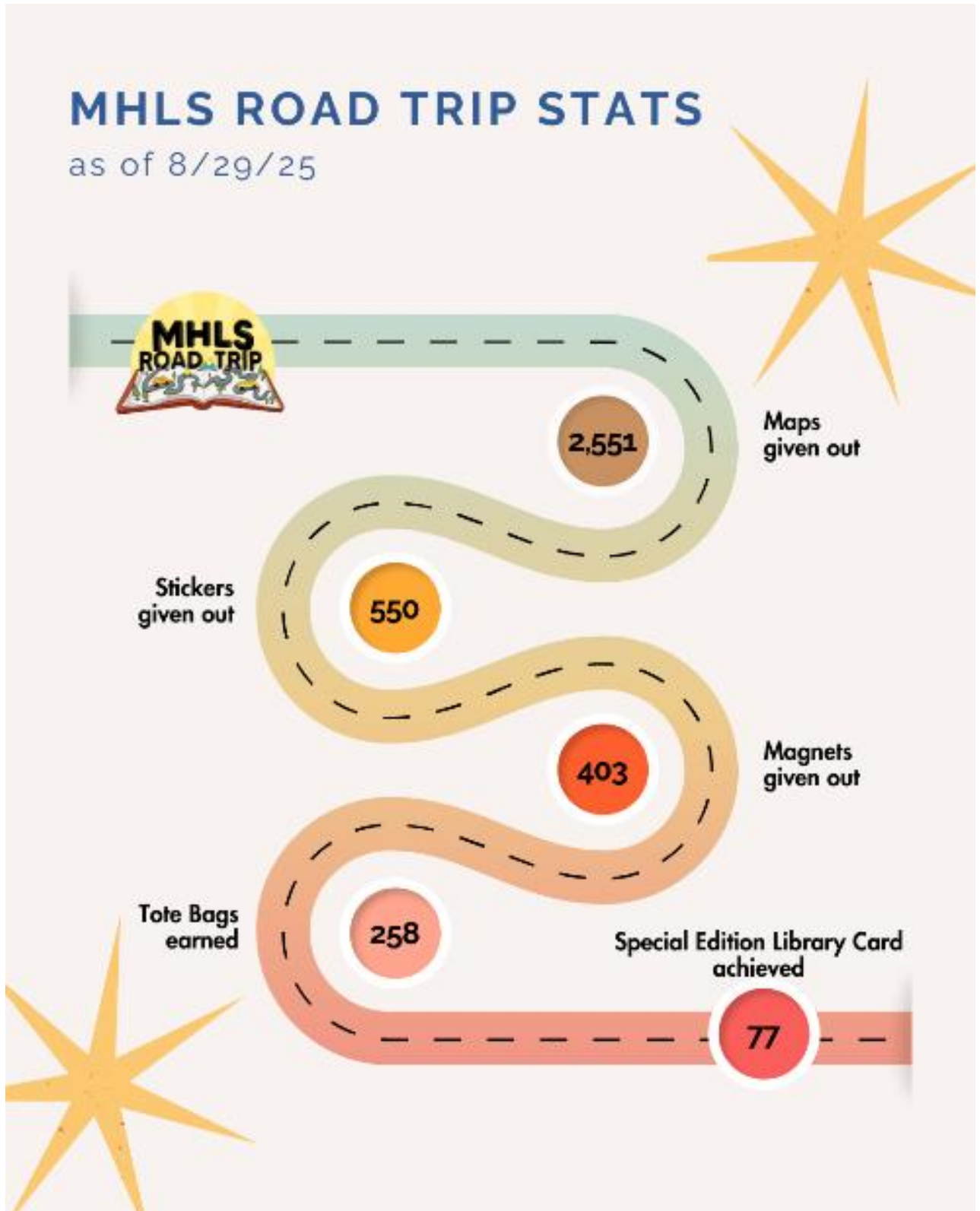
- b. On August 1 we launched our new partnership with Central Hudson.** Central Hudson customers can borrow a HomeBoost kit from participating libraries. Each kit includes a smartphone-compatible thermal imaging camera and step-by-step instructions to help users identify areas in their homes where energy efficiency can be improved. Within days of completing the assessment, customers will receive a free personalized report via email that highlights available rebates and provides recommendations to improve efficiency and reduce monthly bills and, upon providing proof of receiving the report, receive a free weatherization kit. To learn more,



*Aisha Kutter, Residential Energy Efficiency Program Manager for Central Hudson (left), and Rebekkah at the Adriance Memorial Library of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District.*

click [here](#).

c. MHLS Road Trip



**d. Upcoming Trustee Education Opportunities:**

- 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](#)
- 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](#)
- November
  - Trustee Handbook Book Club: Next Level Trusteeship – Building an Effective and Impactful Board Culture with Dr. Terry Kirchner | Tuesday, November 18 from 5:00 – 6:30pm | Online | [Register here](#)

**e. Upcoming programs for library workers:**

- **Path-to-Belonging**, Wednesday, September 17 at 2pm: Libraries have long enjoyed being popular third places and trusted community anchors. But how can library professionals take the next step, and create places of belonging, where everyone is not only welcome, but invested in the organization's success? Join us for a one-hour interactive webinar about the Path-to-Belonging initiative, designed for small and rural libraries to work with their communities to create a resilient, healthy future. Participants will learn about the Path-to-Belonging, have a chance to try one of its tools, and learn about an upcoming cohort.
- **Records Retention and LGS-1 for Libraries**, Thursday, September 18 at 10am
- **Web Accessibility Overview: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines & ADA Title II**, Thursday, September 18 at 10am
- **Safe Zone Training**, Thursday, September 25 at 9:30am: Safe Zone trainings are opportunities to learn about LGBTQIA+ identities and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege to help create inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their allies by promoting understanding, raising awareness, and providing resources.
- **MHLS Member Library Friends Group Forum**, Friday, September 26 at 2pm at the Mahopac Library
- **MHLS Programmers Forum**, Tuesday, September 30 at 9:30am in the MHLS Auditorium
- **The Collection Life Cycle: Collection Management in Action**, Friday, October 3 at 2pm

- **Budgeting for the Future of Physical & Digital Collections**, Friday, October 10 at 10am
- **Creating Accessible Documents and PDFs**, Thursday, October 16 at 10am
- **So you want to apply for State Aid for Library Construction?**, Monday, October 27 at 1:30pm
- **Web Accessibility for Social Media and Multimedia Content**, Thursday, November 13 at 10am

f. **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall into Books Conference, Thursday, October 23 at The Venue Uptown in Kingston:** Held annually, Fall Into Books brings together school and public librarians from eight counties within the Hudson Valley for a day of literacy, discussion, networking, and insight. This collaborative event features book discussion sessions (ranging from picture books to young adult), a morning speaker, a keynote author presentation, a book sale, and catered breakfast and lunch. This conference provides an excellent opportunity for attendees to engage in collaborative discussions on children's and teen literature. Library workers and educators of all types are welcome.

g. The **Mexican Consulate** will once again be holding office hours in the MHLS Auditorium the week of September 15.

7. The **Olive Free Library** is opening a branch in the American Legion Hall in the Town of Olive. This will be called the Shokan Branch. The grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, September 27.

8. **Union Vale Library:** As last reported, the Board of the Union Vale Library submitted an application for registration that was returned to them with recommendations for corrections on July 3. A second submission was also returned to them after consulting with the NYS Division of Library Development. Our response to the second submission included further recommendations to help them create a successful registration application and a message DLD asked to be conveyed to them, which is that DLD cannot rule on their registration package once submitted by MHLS until the lawsuit brought against the Town of Union Vale by the library board, is settled.

9. **Town of Prattsville:** A resident of the Town of Prattsville, in Greene County, has reached out to inquire how to charter their own library. I am working to book a meeting with them to explain this process. The Greene County Library Association and MHLS Board members representing Greene County have been notified.

10. **The Southeastern Library Resources Council (SENYLRC)** has notified us that our annual membership fee will more than double next year from \$732 to \$1,500 and increase 10% each year thereafter. Currently we rely on SENYLRC for SEAL, the regional catalog and interlibrary loan system that connects MHLS patrons with the content within the catalogs from academic, special, public and school libraries

in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, and Ulster counties. SENYLRC also subsidizes half of the yearly fee for our participation in the Empire Delivery System, the statewide, physical delivery service, a value of \$1,950. SENYLRC is our partner in the [Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley](#) project, administering grant funds which enable our members to participate.

## **11. Board Operations:**

### **a. Deadline Reminders:**

- The annual **Sexual Harassment Prevention training forms are due to MHLS by September 30**. Please provide these to Elinor by the deadline. This deadline is set by both MHLS policy and NYS law. This was emailed to you again on July 3.
- The annual **board self-evaluation survey is due by September 19**. This was emailed to you on August 18.

### **b. Board-to-Board Visits**

- We have created an online form to help you with reporting completed Board-to-Board Visits to ensure these are captured as per the request of the MHLS Board Development Committee. This will be sent to all trustees via email.
- Suggested Talking Points:
  - You're Invited: MHLS Annual Membership Meeting, Friday, October 24 at The Wallace Center of the FDR Presidential Library & Museum.
  - Promote the MHLS Training on Demand service, they can watch recorded trustee education webinars that help them meet their annual two-hours a year of trustee education content. They can get their log-in info from their director.

## **12. Executive Director's Event Participation: July 7 – September 4, 2025**

- a. Consultation: Red Hook & Tivoli Libraries
- b. Ulster County Library Association (2)
- c. Presentation, Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting & Retaining Quality Staff
- d. Launch Events, Central Hudson DIY Home Energy Assessment Partnership
- e. Facilitator, 414 Meet-up (2)
- f. NYLA Legislative Committee
- g. Presentation, Westchester Library System Directors' Retreat
- h. NYS Division of Library Development monthly meeting with Public Library System Directors
- i. Consultation, Town of Ulster Public Library
- j. Consultation, Howland Public Library (Beacon)
- k. Putnam County Library Association (2)
- l. Advisory Board, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)
- m. NYS eBook Working Group (4)
- n. Presentation, Policies 101, MHLS Trustee Education Series
- o. MHLS Finance Committee

- p. Bid Opening, HVAC Project
- q. Podcast Recording, [GovLove](#)
- r. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO) Conference, Utica, NY
- s. Consultation, Hudson Area Association Library
- t. Bid Opening, Delivery Services
- u. Columbia County Library Association
- v. Consultation, Phoenicia & Pine Hill Libraries
- w. Site Visit, The Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library & Museum
- x. Meeting, Tessa Killian, Executive Director, Southeastern Library Resources Council
- y. MHLS Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- z. Presentation, Multi-Year Financial Planning, MHLS Trustee Education Series/Sustainable Funding Series
- aa. Presentation, Facilities for the Future, MHLS Sustainable Funding Series
- bb. Consultation, Phoenicia Library
- cc. Greene County Library Association
- dd. MHLS Community & Government Relations Working Group
- ee. Meeting, League of Women Voters re: civic engagement work across the Hudson Valley
- ff. MHLS Incentives Committee
- gg. Meeting, Rob Calouri, Westchester Library System Finance Manager re: modernizing business office procedures