

Homer Public Library

2025 Annual Report



Halloween is the most important day in any library.

During 2025, dozens of people contributed their efforts toward upgrading the library's infrastructure, including renovating the old copy room into a new study room; installing benches, signage and an informational kiosk on the western lot; replacing the old public computers and laptops with new equipment; debuting a new print-management system; and making progress on installing a security grille at the front entrance.

Library staff compiled a list of every known volunteer, donor, grantor and community partner in the library's 86-year history, and the Homer city council recognized the extraordinary generosity of those supporters with a formal resolution. Staff also prepared a report for the Library Advisory Board (LAB), reviewing nearly 90 years of debates over library funding.

The LAB focused on streamlining its fundraising procedures and growing the endowment, which reached the \$100,000 mark in the fall. The board closed out the year by planning celebrations for 2026, which marks the 20th anniversary of the current library building.

The Friends of the Homer Library (FHL) revised their bylaws and ran many, many events throughout the year—author visits, film showings, activities for kids, a beekeeping workshop, a community poetry reading, a discussion panel, and all their regular events like the Celebration of Lifelong Learning, the book-and-plant sales, Tech Help, Conversations with a Councilmember and a computer skills class.

- Virtual author talks for January: T.J. Klune (*The House in the Cerulean Sea*), Amanda Montell (*The Age of Magical Overthinking*), Seth Fishman on working with a literary agent.
- Jan. 1-Mar. 31: Art in the Library displays landscape paintings by Diane Spence-Chorman.
- Jan. 1: The balance in the library endowment fund stands at \$81,842.
- Jan. 2: The library shows *The Princess Bride* in the meeting room.
- Jan. 23: Local author Hal Shepherd visits the library to talk about his work on water quality and management across Alaska.
- Jan. 29: Renovations begin on study room 6.
- Virtual author talks for February: Sabrina Sholts (*The Human Disease*), Waubgeshig Rice (*Moon of the Turning Leaves*), Lee Hawkins (*I Am Nobody's Slave*).
- Feb. 4: Megan DeCino teaches teens how to make a valentine collage.
- Feb. 5: One of the catalog computers moves to a new location and the record player goes out by the vinyl collection. The library removes the chatbox from its website because of spam.
- Feb. 6: Renovations are complete in study room 6.



City staff spoke with high-school students about AI on January 22.

January

On January 22, Bill Jirsa, Susie Inglis and Dave Berry dropped by the high school to talk about Artificial Intelligence, reprising a presentation previously given at the library in October 2024. Many students already had experience with AI and brought up some highly technical questions.

Renovations in study room 6 began on January 29. Building maintenance personnel removed all the built-in furniture, repaired the carpet, repainted the walls, replaced part of the baseboard, and put up sound-absorbent panels.

February

Library staff shifted one of the catalog computers to the far northeast corner of the building, making space for the record player right next to the vinyl collection.

Building maintenance completed the renovations in study room 6 on February 6. By the end of the year, 439 people had used the room for meetings, videocalls and quiet study.

The FHL board debated the donor recognition policy, specifically as it relates to the Fish Wall, and sent recommended changes to the LAB.

- Feb. 7: Staff from the Pratt Museum visit the library to explore fossils with kids.
- Feb. 18: The Friends of the Homer Library host a beekeeping video and discussion.
- Virtual author talks for March: Dan Heath (*Reset*), Clara Bingham (*The Movement: How Women's Liberation Transformed America 1963-1973*), Jennifer Weiner (*The Griffin Sisters' Greatest Hits* and many others).
- Mar. 4: The Friends of the Homer Library invite the public to read or perform their favorite poems.
- Mar. 14: Executive Order 14238 effectively dismantles the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
- Mar. 18: The library shows the PBS documentary *Free For All: The Public Library*.
- Mar. 24: The Homer City Council passes Resolution 25-024, endorsing the mission of the IMLS and encouraging officials at all levels of government to support its current functions.
- Mar. 29: The Celebration of Lifelong Learning recognizes Carol Comfort and Beatrix McDonough for their dedication to education and community.
- Mar. 31: All IMLS staff are placed on administrative

March

On March 14, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that effectively dismantled the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the main source of federal funds for museums and libraries across the country. In response, the Homer City Council passed Resolution 25-024 on March 24, expressing support for the mission of the agency and urging officials at all levels of government to continue its functions. One week later, all IMLS staff were placed on administrative leave.

On March 18, department heads met at City Hall to discuss preparations for the eruption of Mt. Spurr. Library staff developed a detailed checklist of tasks and reviewed it as a group, wrapped nonessential equipment in plastic or stored it in lidded bins, prepped plastic sheets atop bookshelves for quick deployment, and acquired more N95 masks and cleaning equipment.



Beatrix McDonough received the Youth Lifelong Learner award on March 29.

Congratulations to Carol Comfort and Beatrix McDonough, the honorees for the Celebration of Lifelong Learning! The party ran all evening and the last guests stayed until past 10 pm.

The Homer Foundation Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) gave the library \$1,000 for sports equipment.

leave.

- Virtual author talks for April: Jodi Picoult (29 novels), Matthew Fleming (*The Tree Book*), Gregg Hurwitz (24 thrillers, including the *Orphan X* series).
- Apr. 1-June 30: Art in the Library displays wood-and-seashell sculptures by Rika Mouw.
- Apr. 1: New story trail posts installed.
- Apr. 8: The library hosts a fireside chat with Kachemak Bay Recovery Connection.
- Apr. 11: Library staff collaborate with the Pratt Museum to have fun with bears.
- Apr. 24: The library receives a visit by Lily Tuzrolyuke, author of *Sivulliq*, featured in the 2024 Lit Lineup and the 2025 Alaska Reads. This event also includes a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Lit Lineup.
- Apr. 29: In conjunction with Kenai Peninsula Votes, the library hosts a community conversation exploring areas of political disagreement.
- Virtual author talks for May: David H. Rosmarin (*Thriving with Anxiety*), Liann Zhang (*Julie Chan is Dead*), Rachelle Bergstein (*The Genius of Judy*).
- May 9-10: The spring book-and-plant sale takes over

In 2024, the library partnered with Newspapers.com to digitize the microfilm reels of the *Homer News* from 1954-2021. Building on that partnership, the library shipped all its remaining microfilm to the company, including the complete publication history of the *Homer Tribune* from 1991-2019, the *Cook Inlet Courier* from the 1950s and 60s, and miscellaneous issues of the *Daily Sitka Sentinel* and *Arrowhead Press*, *Great Lander Shopping News* and *Kenai Peninsula Pioneer*.

The LAB debated several small revisions to the *Library Policy Manual* and added an appendix of case law related to the process for reconsideration of materials. 2026 marks the 20th anniversary of the library moving into its current building, 2027 marks a half-century as a City department, and 2028 is the 90th anniversary of the library's founding, so the LAB began planning celebrations for these milestones.

April

In partnership with the Porcupine Theater, the library began distributing five free movie tickets each week. Patrons can check out tickets at the front desk with a limit of one ticket per library card.

The City Parks and Trails Division installed the last of the new posts for the story trail.

The federal government continued dramatically cutting funding, and libraries around the nation grappled with severe impacts on services and collections. The City government also confronted a budget shortfall. Homer made extensive operating reductions but managed to avoid layoffs.

Alaska Reads author Lily Tuzrolyuke gave a talk on her book *Sivulliq*, which featured in the 2024 Lit Lineup. Since this event coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Lineup, Teresa Sundmark and Matt Smith presented a brief history of the program.

Following comments from the city attorney, the LAB reconsidered some revisions to the *Library Policy Manual* and sent them to the City Council, which adopted them on April 28.

the library.

- May 10: The story trail features *Working Boats*, by Tom Crestodina.
- May 13: Linda Fritz, author of *Answering Alaska's Call*, visits the library to talk about her family history in Alaska.
- May 20: The library hosts a discussion about the future of the HERC building.
- May 21: Volunteers install the newly-refurbished railing outside the library.
- May 22: Aurora Hardy, author of *Windswept* and *Ghost of the Kenai*, visits the library.
- May 27: Workers install an informational kiosk at the end of the library's western lot.
- May 29: The State fire marshal approves the design for a security grille at the library entrance. By public demand, the library hosts a second showing of *Free For All: The Public Library*.
- Virtual author talks for June: Brian Gratwicke and Gina Della Togna (*Extinctopedia*), Lisa Jewell (*Don't Let Him In*), Katherine Applegate (many children's titles).
- June 10: The story trail features *Mr. Fox's Game of No*, by David LaRochelle. Clark Fair gives a presentation on historic cabins of the Kenai



Paul Hueper and Larry Martin refurbished the railing outside the library on May 21.

May

The bookmobile visited the Safe and Healthy Kids Fair, where the youth services librarian and teen volunteers signed up 170 kids for the summer reading program. Summer readers threw themselves into a collectable-card game, claiming a different card for every 30 minutes of reading, and so many participants wanted to collect them all that library staff spent much of the season making more cards.

Volunteers with the Church of Homer refurbished the red-oak railing outside the front door of the building.

Doug Baily, Taz Tally and Ed Berg met with library staff and Friends of the Library to mark the location for the future geology display, at the far end of the western lot beside the Poopdeck Trail. Local carpenter Brad Caesar constructed a display kiosk, which he and Parks and Trails Division Head Chad Felice installed nearby on May 27.

Library staff delivered a 160-page report to the LAB about the history and funding of the library, complete with a 300-page annotated bibliography. The report surveys past debates over library funding and analyzes the practicality of the many different proposals over the years.

Peninsula.

- June 12-July 3: ASL Club.
- June 17: Make your own game for teens and tweens.
- June 18: The City Parks and Trails Division installs the reading bench around the tree beside the story trail.
- June 19: Ted Carter gives a presentation on Juneteenth.
- June 24: The Friends of the Homer Library put up posters for wild plants and the “Welcome to the Homer Public Library Greenway and Story Trail” sign at the western end of the Story Trail.
- June 30: Newspapers.com finishes digitizing the last of the library’s microfilm. All local newspapers are now available online going back to the 1950s.
- Virtual author talks for July: Raúl the Third (*;Vamos! Let’s Go Read!*), Marie Lu (the *Legend* trilogy and the *Young Elites* trilogy), Rex Ogle (*Free Lunch*), Pria Anand (*The Mind Electric*).
- July 1-Sept. 30: Art in the Library displays paintings and collaborative works by RJ Nelson, Artability and Homer high-school students.
- July 4: The bookmobile cruises in the Independence Day parade.
- July 9: The Book Scavengers Book Club meets in the



Parks and Trails staff installed the new reading bench on June 18.

June

The City Parks and Trails Division installed the reading bench around a spruce tree next to the story trail. On June 24, the welcome sign and the guide to native plants went up in the kiosk at the western end of the trail.

Clark Fair gave a talk about his book *A Vanishing Past: Historic Cabins of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge*, and Ted Carter followed a week later with a talk about Juneteenth.

Newspapers.com finished digitizing the library’s entire collection of microfilm and made all the records available online.

July

As always, the bookmobile made a splash at the Fourth of July parade. Volunteers dressed as chess pieces, all in black or all in white, and staged a brief game for the judges.

The summer reading program wrapped up in spectacular fashion on July 26, with an estimated 170 partiers enjoying music from Shamwari, food from Global Credit Union and Udder Delights, and prizes from many local businesses.

meeting room.

- July 10: The story trail features *Alaska's 12 Days of Summer*, by Pat Chamberlin-Calamar.
- July 17: The library hosts a teen mystery party.
- July 18: The library hosts an escape room for elementary kids.
- July 24: Kids explore making mosaic art with Sharlene.
- July 25-26: Artist Lee Post teaches comic drawing for kids.
- July 26: The summer reading program ends with a massive party.
- Virtual author talks for August: Jay Falk (*The Bird Book*), Casey McQuiston (*The Pairing*), Tascha Eurich (*Shatterproof*).
- Aug. 10: The story trail features *The Odd One Out*, by Britta Teckentrup.
- Aug. 14: Naomi Klouda, author of *Anna's Whale*, visits the library to talk about her new book, *The Alaska Glacier Dictionary*.
- Virtual author talks for September: Hannah Nicole Maehrer (*Assistant to the Villain*), Jefferson Fisher (*The Next Conversation*), Gabe Henry (*Enough is Enuf: Our Failed Attempts to Make English Easier to Spell*).
- Sept. 10: The story trail features *The Book Without a*



Young mosaicists demonstrated their artworks on July 24.

Thanks to all the organizations and individuals who supported the summer reading program

The Willow Fund at the Homer Foundation • Global Federal Credit Union • "Sponsor a Reader" donors • Homer Bookstore • Alaska State Library • Homer Emblem Club #350 • Ulmer's Drug & Hardware • Homer's Jeans • Two Sisters Bakery • Captain's Toy Chest • Cycle Logical • Homer Shores • Sustainable Wares • Bubble's Soda Parlor • NOMAR • Homer Art and Frame Co. • Salty Girls • Udder Delights Ice Cream • Shamwari • Save-U-More • City of Homer Community Recreation • Zen Den Café • Karol Miller • The Gilded Table • SalmonFest Alaska • And most of all: library staff and the Friends of Homer Library, particularly Youth Services Librarian Cinda Nofziger and FHL Coordinator Cheryl Illg.

August

With many months of effort, library staff assembled a list of every known volunteer, donor and community partner in the library's history, going all the way back to 1938—about 3,700 entries in all. On August 11, the Homer City Council passed Resolution 25-074, thanking the public for their unfailing support through nearly nine decades.

Naomi Klouda gave an author talk on August 14 about her new book, *The Alaska Glacier Dictionary*.

Story, by Carolina Rabei.

- Sept. 11: The Origami Queen teaches origami in the meeting room.
- Sept. 18: The library hosts a candidate forum for KPB School Board.
- Sept. 24: The library hosts a candidate forum for Homer City Council.
- Sept. 26-27: The fall book-and-plant sale features amazing deals.
- Virtual author talks for October: Adrián Aldaba and Emily Key (*Nuestra América*), Leigh Bardugo (*Six of Crows*), Malala Yousafzai (*Finding My Way*), Philippa Gregory (*The Other Boleyn Girl*).

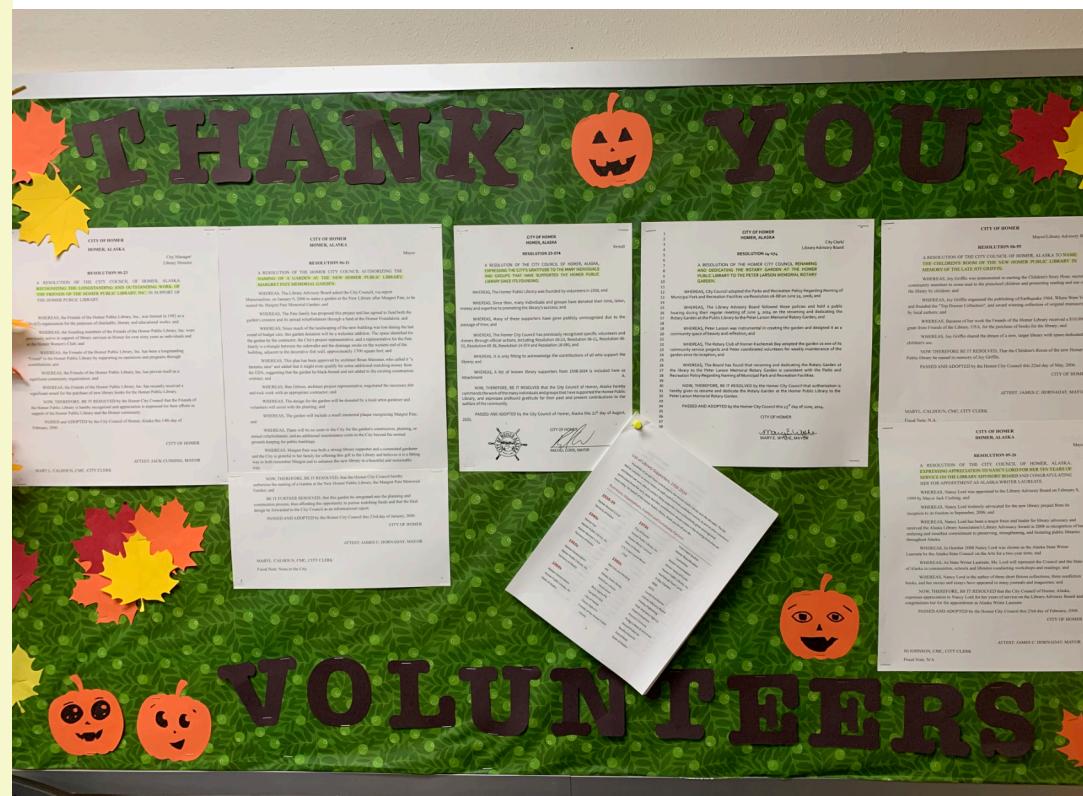
- Oct. 1-Dec. 31: Art in the Library displays driftwood landscapes and acrylic paintings by June Denver.
- Oct. 1: The federal government shuts down because of budget disputes. Existing IMLS grants continue, though new grant applications are suspended.
- Oct. 7-30: The library hosts several events for Teentober.
- Oct. 17: Staff from the library and the Pratt Museum once again have fun with bears.
- Oct. 25: The library hosts a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.
- Virtual author talks for

September

The library hosted two candidate fora in partnership with the League of Women Voters, KBBI and the *Peninsula Clarion*.

On September 16, the LAB held a special worksession to discuss ideas for the 20th anniversary celebrations. During this quarter, the balance in the library endowment climbed above \$100,000, reaching a milestone the LAB set for itself in 2020.

Patrons crowded into the building for the FHL book and plant sale on September 26-27, and there wasn't much left by the end of Saturday. On September 29, more than a fifth of FHL's membership met at the library to revise the organization's bylaws, and the vote passed 55-0.



The City showed its gratitude to its supporters at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on October 25.

October

The library received two grants in October, including \$19,000 from the Rasmuson Foundation for installing a security grille and \$6,462 from the Alaska State Library for internet costs.

On October 25, about 35 volunteers came to enjoy an excellent lunch and socialize. Library volunteers perform all kinds of different tasks—shelving, cleaning, book repair, driving the

- November: Joseph Lee (*Nothing More of This Land*), Amanda Peters (*The Berry Pickers*), Charles Duhigg (*Supercommunicators*).
- Nov. 10: City Council approves revisions to the library privacy policy.
- Nov. 12: The federal government reopens.
- Nov. 13: New laptops are available for checkout. The biweekly computer-skills class meets for the first time.
- Nov. 25: The library begins replacing aging public computers with new Google Chromeboxes. The new print-management system goes live, enabling patrons to print from phones or laptops.
- Nov. 29: The giving tree goes up in the front lobby of the library.
- Virtual author talk for December: Sue Hincenberg (*The Retirement Plan*).
- Dec. 1: The library implements a new text-messaging system. Patrons can sign up to receive text notifications about holds, overdue items and expiring library cards.
- Dec. 3: Homer Public Library is featured on *Reading Road Trip: Alaska*, on PBS. The IMLS completes its review of grant operations and fully restores all existing grant awards, including ones that

bookmobile, reviewing materials and programs on the radio, organizing programs, and much more. Many thanks to the thousands of people who have contributed their labor to the library over the years, and particularly the 100+ who do so currently.

The LAB voted to amend the library's privacy policy by adding a section on library communications with patrons.



Staff replaced the old public computers in November and December.

November

On November 10, City Council accepted \$19,000 from the Rasmuson Foundation for the security grille and approved the new privacy policy.

Library staff put the first new public computers out on the main floor and replaced the aging public laptops with new Chromebooks. A new print-management system deployed, finally allowing patrons to print from personal devices and library-owned laptops.

On November 29, volunteers from the Friends of the Library set up the giving tree near the front entrance, and by the end of December patrons took every single tag off the tree.

had been terminated in March.

- Dec. 7: The Porcupine Theater hosts a screening of *The Librarians*, followed by a discussion panel sponsored by the Friends of Homer Library. A second showing takes place the next day.
- Dec. 9: Crafternoon makes gift boxes for teens and tweens.
- Dec. 11: Brian Smith visits the library to talk about his memoir and the trilogy of books in the *Ida Mae Joy* series.
- Dec. 12: The library and the Pratt Museum examine bird feet.
- Dec. 13: The Friends of the Homer Library host a pop-up sale for plants and gifts.
- Dec. 29: Rich Chiappone teaches a fly-tying class.
- Dec. 30: All public computers are replaced with new Google Chromeboxes.
- Dec. 31: The official balance in the library endowment fund stands at \$118,685.



On December 18, Youth Services Librarian Cinda Nofziger introduced a special guest for Radio Storytime.

December

The City issued a call for bids to install the new security grille. Potential contractors visited the site on December 15.

The Porcupine Theater hosted a showing of *The Librarians*, a documentary about book challenges in the Lower 48, followed by a panel discussion featuring Andy Haas, Deb Curtis and Dave Berry, moderated by Shellie Worsfold of the Friends of the Homer Library.

Local author Brian Smith visited the library to talk about his trilogy of novels in the *Ida Mae Joy* series and his memoir, *Golden Boy*.

The library's new text-messaging system went live on December 1. On December 30, the library retired the last of the old public computers.

Thank You!



Our deepest thanks to all those who supported the library over the past year. Many members of the public contributed their time, energy and money to the success of the institution. We here recognize those who donated to the library's long-term sustainability during 2025.

Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous (2)

Kathryn J. Anderson

Doug and Landa Baily

Nelson and Lilia Co

Brenda and James Dolma

Shirley Jean Evans

Marcia Kuszmaul

Annie Lowe

Ann Oberlitner

Marilyn Sigman

Glen Williams

Friends of Homer Public Library Endowment Fund

Esther Ashment

Dave Berry

Joy Steward

2025 by the numbers at Homer Public Library



105,613

Visits to the library

168,926

Items checked out

14,406

Patrons attended programs

2,571

attended
Summer Reading events

639

New library cards issued

3,930

sessions
Study Rooms + Meeting Room

28,565

sessions
Public computers + library WiFi

2,764

Volunteer hours logged



www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library