

**Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative
Director's Report
August and September 2025**

State Budget/State Aid:

- We are waiting for the Governor to sign the 2025-2026 State Budget, which she has said she will be signing. From what we can tell, the budget has the LSTA grant for Mel/Melcat meaning we will have it for at least one more year of funding. State Aid will be the same as it was for last year.

Cooperative Services:

- We are having the Advisory Council meeting on Tuesday, October 7th at BCLS at the Wirt Branch (500 Center Ave. Bay City 48708) starting at 10am. We will be having guest speakers, Andrea Vernola, Continuing Education Coordinator and Shauna Quick, Library Technology Access Consultant, both new members of Library of Michigan. We will also discuss the MMLC Budget for FY 2025-2026, the MMLC Plan of Service updates and the MMLC Strategic Plan (May 2023-September 2025).

Library Cooperatives of Michigan (LCM):

- We are working on the Marketing for the GIS Mapping Project, which we intend to introduce at the MLA Annual Conference. If you are planning on attending the conference, check out the LCM Booth for a demo.
- We have a committee (which I am on) to review and update the LCM Bylaws.

Library of Michigan (LM): Randy Riley, State Librarian

- Starting October 1st, you can start your State Aid Report, Joe Hamlin has it all set to go.
- Randy did speak that if the state didn't pass the budget then everyone at the LM would be laid off until the budget was passed.
- [Wi-Fly Lending Launch Kit](#), is an initiative from Mobile Beacon geared toward organizations that have never had a hotspot lending program before. Mobile Beacon, a nationwide 5G mobile internet company, is offering a pilot grant to assist libraries with creating a digital inclusion program. The grant will include 25 laptop computers and free, unlimited Mobile Beacon service. The application for the pilot grant should have a clear focus on how mobile, high-speed internet will make a tangible change for the people you serve. Provide as much detail as you need to explain what you plan to do and how you will measure your impact. The application deadline is October 31, 2025 at 5 PM EST.

Michigan Library Association (MLA): Dillon Geshel, Interim Executive Director

- Libraries are where curiosity meets opportunity, where questions turn into discoveries, and where every Michigander can explore, learn, and connect with their community. This October, during Michigan Library Appreciation Month and MI Right to Read Week (October 5–11), we are excited to honor Michigan libraries and library staff with the 2025 theme: "Find Out."
- The Call for Nominations for candidates for the 2025 Board of Directors is now open! The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) is seeking nominations/self-nominations for four member-at-large directors as well as the President-elect position, with terms beginning in July 2026 and ending in June 2029. Do you know someone who would be a great addition to the MLA Board of Directors? Submit a nomination! We also encourage you to self-nominate if you are interested in serving on the MLA Board. [Learn more about MLA Officer Positions \(pdf\)](#). [Learn more about Board Member Responsibilities \(pdf\)](#).

- Notice is hereby given to MLA members that the Annual Meeting will take place during [MLA 2025 Annual Conference](#) at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing on **Thursday, October 30, 2025, from 3:00 – 4:00 PM**. MLA 2025 Annual Conference registration is not required to attend the annual meeting and all members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS): Scott Garrison, Executive Director

- The MCLS management team has created a new MCLS Staff AI Use Policy that we will begin implementing in October, and I'm sharing information about it so our community is aware and can ask questions.
- Ann Kaskinen, former Mel Engagement Specialist, K-12, is now our new TALK Program Coordinator and Laura Warren-Gross, former Mel Engagement Specialist, Public, is stepping into the role of Engagement Strategist. Due to federal funding uncertainties, the Library of Michigan made the decision not to renew its contract with MCLS for Mel eResources training. Fortunately, MCLS was preparing to expand our team in 2025, and the timing aligned perfectly to have Ann and Laura step into these new roles.

MMLC Administration:

- Eric attended both LCM DEI meetings which we have changed to Circulations of Ideas meetings, with discussion on DEI issues.
- Eric participated in a Succussing Planning meeting before the LCM Retreat with Kate Pohjola Andrade from Woodlands and Jennifer Balcom from Mid-Michigan Library League.
- Eric and Jennifer planned and attended a two-day LCM Retreat in Mt. Pleasant. We stayed at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, and the meetings were held at the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College. Both facilities were fantastic, and everyone enjoyed the retreat. Thanks again to Anne Heidemann, Tribal Librarian for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe for all your help in suggestions and whom to contact to set the retreat up.
- Eric met with Sara Pettit, Vice-Chair of MMLC Board, to review his Annual Evaluation at SDL Owosso Branch.
- Eric attended the quarterly RLA Group meeting with Katie Strong from Overdrive.
- Eric met with Ruth Helwig, newest Trustee on the MMLC Board. Ruth will be representing CRDL, and this will be her second time on our board.
- Eric attended LM Monthly Updates meetings.
- Eric attended the Call meeting.
- Eric participated in the LCM monthly meeting.
- Eric attended the MLA Connect Advocacy Hour: State Budget Update.
- Irene attended the Upper Peninsula Region of Library Cooperation (UPRLC) annual conference in Iron Mountain in mid-September. Keynote speakers Kristin Fontichiaro and Cathy Russ gave excellent presentations.
- Irene attended the Laingsburg Public Library Board meeting in late September, discussing State Aid 16(4) trust account funds held by MMLC.

**Respectfully submitted,
Eric Palmer
MMLC Director**