

Sonoma County Library News

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Libraries are the cornerstone of our democracy.”

— Carla Hayden

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Advocacy, Investment, and the Power of Community Voices



Sonoma County Library Director, Erika Thibault

As a library director, I see every day how essential federal support through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is to our ability to serve Sonoma County. That's why the events of 2025 were so concerning, and ultimately, so affirming.

Last year, IMLS faced an unprecedented threat when an executive order sought to dismantle the agency and halt grant funding relied upon by libraries and museums nationwide. The response was swift and resolute. Library advocates, state attorneys general, and members of Congress pushed back, underscoring a fundamental principle: funding appropriated by Congress cannot be unilaterally rescinded. In late 2025, a federal court blocked efforts to eliminate IMLS, and the agency reinstated all previously terminated grants. The decision was widely celebrated as a major victory for libraries, museums, and the communities they serve.

That momentum has continued into 2026. For the upcoming fiscal year, both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees approved a proposed IMLS budget of approximately \$291.8 million, underscoring bipartisan support for federal investment in library and museum services. These actions highlight the power of

collective advocacy, and the vital role federal appropriations play in supporting learning, access to technology, cultural preservation, and community connection.

Speaking of community connection, I am truly astounded by the response to our recent community survey for Sonoma County Library's new strategic plan. When the survey closed, our consultants tallied a **record-breaking 7,011 responses**, the highest level of participation the Library has ever received. Over the coming month, this feedback will be carefully analyzed to help shape the goals and priorities of our next five-year strategic plan. We are deeply grateful to everyone who shared their voice, and we look forward to building the future of Sonoma County Library together.

—Erika Thibault, Library Director



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Modernization in Motion

Change is good! And it's coming to two of our locations as we continue investing in welcoming, functional, and future-ready library spaces.

History & Genealogy Library Temporary Closure: February 17-21

The H&G Library will be closed briefly for modernization work.

- Last day of in-person service: Saturday, February 14
- Reopening: Wednesday, February 25

During this closure, phone and email service will remain available during the library's regular business hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11 am–5 pm.

Rincon Valley Regional Library Temporary Closure: March 16–Mid-June

Rincon Valley Regional Library is getting a top-to-bottom remodel to better serve the community. To make these upgrades possible, the branch will close starting March 16 and is expected to reopen in late-June.

Beginning March 23, the BiblioBus will be available in the library parking lot so you can return materials and pick up holds:

- Mondays: 10 am–1 pm
- Wednesdays & Sundays: 1–4 pm



FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR

For the love of libraries



Library Commissioner,
Sarah Laggos

February may be best known for Valentine's Day, but our Sonoma County libraries are full of love stories all year long.

There's the spark that ignites when a child checks out

their very first book. The devotion of lifelong learners who return week after week. The care shown by library staff who take the time to connect people with exactly what they need.

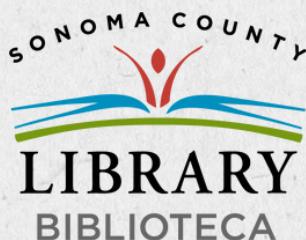
Libraries are, at their heart, an act of love from the community to itself. They are places where curiosity is nurtured, creativity is encouraged, and everyone is welcome—no strings attached. Whether you're discovering a new romance novel (my favorite!), researching family history, or simply enjoying a quiet moment among the stacks, the library meets you where you are.

This February, I invite you to share the love: bring a friend to the library, recommend a favorite book, or fall in love with your local branch all over again.

—Sarah Laggos, Library Commissioner

SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

Sarah Laggos, Chair, City of Santa Rosa/County of Sonoma
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Barbara Mackenzie, City of Rohnert Park
Tina Poles, City of Cotati
Kimberly Taylor, City of Sonoma
Erika Thibault, Library Director



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It is so awesome that the library offers such a wide range of services—so much more than just books! Thanks for all you do.

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