

# SDSL's Cornerstone Newsletter

South Dakota State Library's e-newsletter

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## Book Bike Provides Outreach Opportunities

Earlier this summer the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library added a valuable new addition to their outreach efforts – a book bike. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the library was looking to find new ways to engage with community members outside of the library. “A book bike offered a visible outreach tool that was easy to move around and use in multiple locations,” said Director Daniel Burniston. “Our Youth Services Librarian uses it for our Tuesday morning storytime in the park, so it’s easy for people to see where we are at. We also plan to use it for some of the upcoming community events. With our logo and name already all over it, it’s easier than other signage, tables, and tablecloths.”

The focus of the bike is on marketing library services and outreach across Vermillion. “Outreach enables us to stay connected with our community, especially those who tend to forget about us or don’t come to the library in person regularly,” said Burniston. “When new community members see it, it reminds them to check out the library. This can be in person or just by visiting our website. Those who haven’t used the library in a while but now have kids or grandkids, or more free time than they did in the past are often reminded we’re here and about all the things we offer.”



Burniston also shared that the book bike has already gotten a positive response from community members: "The first time we used it was at one of our weekly storytime at the park in June. At that first storytime people were walking over to check it out and ask about it. This included people from around the park, as well as some who were just doing yard work nearby. People were making comments about not having been to the library for a while, but they should stop in and renew their cards and check on what was going on."

Burniston shared that while they don't use the bike to check out materials yet, it has been a good way to give out promotional materials and to let community members know what's going on at the library. "Anywhere the bike goes it puts a very visible library stamp and presence," shared Burniston.

For other libraries looking to add a book bike to their library, Burniston had some advice. "It's worth considering the terrain and weather in your area and the timing of its use," he stated. "If it's a 100-degree day and a staff member may have to ride it a long way, they could get hot, sweaty, and dehydrated. It is worth investing some thought ahead of time to ensure you have some great ideas for easily accessible and easy to get to events and locations you could use the bike. Also, remember storage! Where are you going to keep the bike in the winter? There are also a few different vendors with different designs. It's worth looking at a few different vendors to help get something that will work for your ideas."





The book bike was made possible through Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library Foundation. "Our Library Foundation covered the cost of the bike for us," shared Burniston. "We're very grateful for the extra projects they have supported each year that help us take our services and resources to another level."



## About SDSL

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The South Dakota State Library provides leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries and services to state government.

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