

## Northwoods library directors share stories with lawmakers

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Area library directors recently met with Rep. Calvin Callahan. From left, are Virginia Roberts, Rhinelander District Library; Kris Adams Wendt, Wisconsin Valley Library Service; Laurie Ollhoff, T.B. Scott Library, Merrill; Callahan; Heidi O'Hare, Tomahawk Public Library; and Ada Demlow, Antigo Public Library.

Several area public library directors with the Wisconsin Valley Library Service recently ventured to Madison to talk with their legislators about the importance of libraries in their communities.

Ada Demlow, director of the Antigo Public Library, said the trip for her was about building relationships.

"It has been my goal since coming on board to build strong relationships with our city and county, and this trip expanded this to the regional and state levels," she said.

Demlow said she shared a story with lawmakers about the library's new youth engagement specialist forming a partnership with White Lake School.

"They don't have staff in their school library, so Kristie (Heistad) does weekly outreach at the school where she tells stories, brings the children to the school library to check out books and brings resources from the public library to support the teachers," Demlow said. "I heard similar stories from other directors about ways they have helped birth new businesses with the resources they offer, or the ways they have been able to touch the lives of seniors by connecting them to the library. Through these stories, we not only built connections to our legislators but also to each other."

Among those legislators who met with the library directors was Rep. Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk).

"I was glad to hear their stories and perspectives on issues," Callahan said. "Our libraries in the district are great resources for the communities."

Demlow said that overall, the day was beneficial for her and the other library directors.

"Spending time with directors from our region and with the Wisconsin Valley Library Service staff who provide that all important operating support gave me a new appreciation for the value of our cooperative relationships," she said.