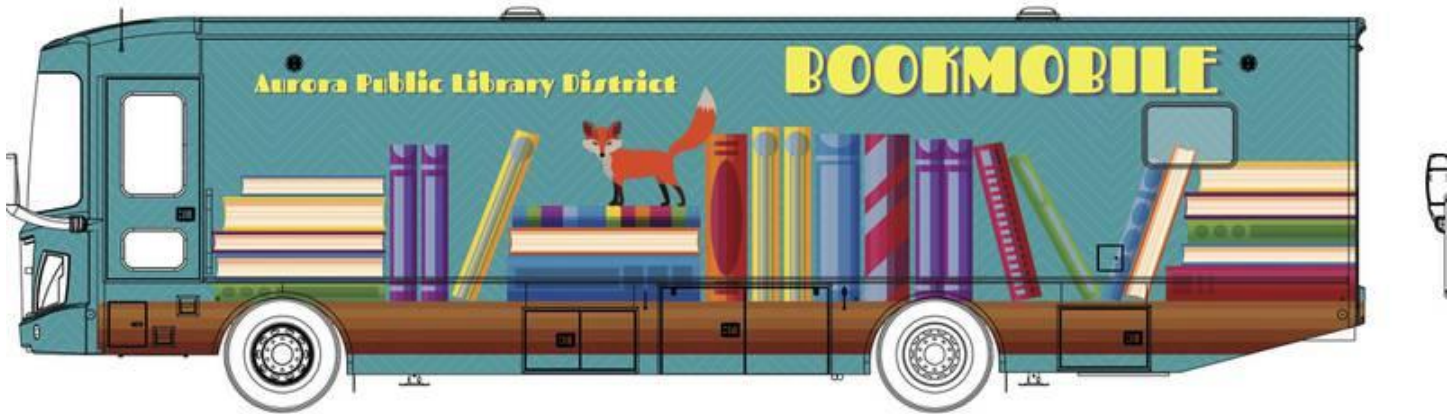


Aurora Public Library unveils look for new bookmobile

By Steve Lord

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This rendering shows the design, known as Bookshelf Buddies, that won the public vote for the outside of the new Aurora Public Library bookmobile. (Aurora Public Library / HANDOUT)

The coronavirus pandemic and supply chain issues have wreaked havoc on the Aurora Public Library's efforts to get its new bookmobile.

But throughout, the Library Foundation, library officials and the public have steadily raised money, and forged ahead. A big step took place Friday with the unveiling of the new design for the bookmobile when it arrives, now expected next spring.

And just in case people have forgotten the importance of the bookmobile, Library Foundation President Christina Campos reminded everyone during the unveiling of the new design.

"For many of our most vulnerable children, the bookmobile is the library," she said. "We deliver literacy materials."

In fact, the bookmobile is the primary library for about 20% of the Aurora Public Library District's most vulnerable students, officials said. A bookmobile of some kind has served Aurora since 1953, this most recent version having been used for almost 20 years.

"But it is coming," Heather Sturm, the library's director of Neighborhood Services, promised of the new bookmobile. "We expected to have it sooner, but it should be here by the spring."

The bookmobile's final cost is expected at about \$450,000, and the foundation, with help from a seed grant from the Dunham Fund, has raised most of that.

Library officials chose Aurora's First Fridays celebration in downtown Aurora Friday evening to announce the winning design, voted for by the public from three choices submitted by library personnel.

Miriam Meza-Gotto, the library's communications manager, was one of the staff members that created the winning design, named Bookshelf Buddies. She said she and other staff were "so excited" to be part of the process.

The design, known as the Juvenile Concept, works in elements of books on a shelf with symbols of literacy and the Aurora area. The colors are bold.

"This will be traveling around the Aurora community," Campos said.

Campos said the Library Foundation also will be raising funds for a mini-bookmobile also.