

11 June 2018

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – June 2018

Board communication evaluation project and recommended engagement strategies

There is a detailed report in your packet about the results of our board communication evaluation project and recommendations for next steps and ongoing changes. I look forward to discussing this with the board at the meeting.

Directors University and other events

I spent the week of June 4 through 8 with 55 new public library directors from across Illinois. It was a great opportunity to establish relationships with these new leaders in the library community and talk to them about RAILS services. It was a terrifically successful week; intense, long days but very rewarding and fun also. Kate Hall played an important role in the week as well. Most of the speakers were experienced library directors who trained attendees in the joys and mysteries of budgets, policies, building management, fundraising, grants and other topics. Staff from the Management Association and Ancel Glink also shared – at no cost – their expertise in legal issues, human resources, and management in general.

As I reported briefly at the last meeting, a delegation from the Capital Library District in Beijing, China visited us on Thursday May 24. See the photo on the next page.

It was a wonderful opportunity to speak with fellow librarians from a very different landscape. It made us realize how much we take for granted in the open access of our libraries and the amazing resources and services we can make available to our users.



Strategic plan update

We will continue to work on the strategic plan vision and goals over the next few months. As we will also be continuing to work on rebranding for RAILS, there should be good alignment between our new plan and our new brand.

RAILS staff professional development and leadership activities

Here is just a taste of some of the important leadership and development activities RAILS staff is involved with over the next few weeks or months.

Several RAILS staff members will be very busy at the American Library Association (ALA) conference coming up June 22 through 26 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Veronda has been selected for the 2018 Cathleen Bourdon Service Award administered by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). She will receive the award on Saturday, June 23 at the ASCLA awards meeting.

She is also moderating a panel on Sunday, June 24 entitled, "SimplyE and the Library-Developed Solution to EBook Discovery and Patron Privacy." The panel will focus on the impact and experience of libraries and consortia who are using SimplyE to promote the discovery and reading of library e-books.

And, Veronda is co-chair of the National EBook Summit which will take place all day on Friday, June 22 right before the ALA conference. There are 65 attendees from the publishing, distribution, and library world coming together to begin the conversation and building of a collaborative national agenda for e-books. The event is being sponsored by the ALA Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) Consortial e-book interest group which Deirdre Brennan and Veronda Pitchford co-founded.

Jane Plass will be part of the joint presentation for the NISO FASTEN program (Sunday, June 24, 2018, 10:30-11:30 am Central time at the Morial Convention Center Room 214). FASTEN stands for Flexible API Standard for E-content NISO. I'll focus on the complex RAILS ILS and e-book environments to show why greater standardization in how e-content information is exchanged between vendors and libraries will be beneficial. Jane will also participate in the e-book summit.

Amanda Musacchio will be attending ALA for committee meetings on June 23 and 24 as she is a member of the Committee on Organization, and the incoming Chair of the RUSA STARS Rethinking Resource Sharing Policies Committee.

Anne Slaughter will be attending ALA and her service on the LITA Top Tech Trends committee begins after the conference.

Mark Hatch attended the Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference in Perrysburg, OH, June 7 and 8 with Susan Palmer from the Illinois Heartland Library System. They delivered a very successful, well attended program "The Silent Partner in Resource Sharing...Delivery." They showcased the work being done in Illinois to produce statewide delivery and highlighted the processes necessary to make it happen.

In response to feedback received during our strategic plan listening sessions, Dan Bostrom, Member Engagement Manager, is going to focus on special library outreach in the coming months. He will attend the 2018 Special Library Association Conference in Baltimore, Maryland on June 10-12 to learn more about how RAILS can better serve special libraries and librarians in their roles. He will also write a session recap and tweet a breakout session for the Leadership and Management Division on Monday, June 11 and will attend the 2018 Midwest Chapters Meetup on the Monday, June 11.

As for me, I will also be attending the e-book summit and facilitating a small group discussion focused on new or alternative licensing models for e-books. I expect to also have meetings with vendors, including BiblioLabs and Baker and Taylor.

Looking ahead to July:

All board members are encouraged to attend in person at Burr Ridge. New officers will be sworn in, and board orientation will be a major topic at the meeting.

Latest RAILS Project News

BiblioBoard

Through RAILS partnership with BiblioLabs, any Illinois resident has access to thousands of e-resources on the BiblioBoard platform free of charge and without needing a login or library card. RAILS wants our members and others in Illinois to know about these resources and we invite RAILS Board members to help spread the word!

The following are recent RAILS/BiblioBoard activities designed to educate our members about available offerings and to expand library patron use of the platform:

- BiblioBoard Bingo and Pizza Party –11 RAILS members attended an interactive hands-on session to learn more about BiblioBoard features and share ways to integrate the platform into current library programming and services. Two lucky participants won an e-reader donated by BiblioBoard.



- Meeting with University of Illinois at Chicago library leadership to explore use of open educational resources for Illinois academic libraries
- Recording a podcast with Deirdre Brennan and Veronda Pitchford from RAILS and Mitchell Davis, BiblioBoard CEO, to discuss the history of the RAILS/BiblioBoard partnership and future initiatives. Listen at railslibraries.info/news/150221.

Other Highlights

RAILS Auction

RAILS periodically holds online auctions of items no longer needed at our service centers. The most recent auction was held from May 25– June 10.

At the time of this writing, over 2,000 people had viewed the auction page and the items with the most bids were laptop computers and a tape dispenser. Many bidders use the strategy of waiting until the final hour of the auction to place their bids.

Successful bidders will need to make arrangements to pick up their items at the Burr Ridge service center June 11–15.

Continuing Education (CE)

Customer Service Workshops

When asked about possible topics for RAILS continuing education workshops, members often mention customer service. During the week of May 7, Andrew Sanderbeck, owner of PCI Webinars, took a road trip through Illinois to present three day-long customer service workshops, “Welcome to Our Library! Delivering Customer Service That Builds Loyal Patron Relationships,” at Peoria Public Library, North Branch; Moline Public Library; and Palatine Public Library.

The sessions covered basic customer service skills, handling angry customers, and mindfulness techniques to manage stress. Local actors hired to role-play common library interactions were a highlight at each workshop. The role-plays led to a bit of laughter and good discussions among participants. In one evaluation of the session, a member commented: *“I was expecting a boring training about customer service like the ones I have been to before, but this was fun, enlightening, and entertaining.”*

July CE Offerings

Upcoming CE events include:

- Do You Know Dewey? Exploring the Dewey Decimal System
 - July 16, Warrenville Public Library
 - July 19, RAILS East Peoria service center
- Copyright and Standardized Rights Statements for Digital Collections webinar, July 17
- Conducting an Effective Workplace Investigation webinar, July 24

Delivery News

LASA Delivery Study Update

RAILS has been working with the Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis (LASA) at Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville on a delivery study. RAILS and LASA staff met on May 30 to review visualizations of current delivery stops and various “what-if” scenarios. Further review is needed, but this study is expected to assist with increasing delivery efficiency and with planning for RAILS facility needs, which are closely tied to delivery needs.

Resource Sharing Success Story

The 19 libraries in the LINC and MAGIC consortia went live in SWAN on May 1, bringing the total SWAN membership to 97 libraries. Since that time, we have noticed a significant increase in materials being delivered by RAILS vans to and from these libraries for interlibrary loan purposes, which is exactly what we had hoped to see! This helps prove the value of consortia in increasing resource sharing and in making more materials available to more library patrons.

We will continue to monitor developments moving forward to see if this pattern continues or changes.

New RAILS Delivery Vehicles

In FY2017 (July 2016–June 2017), RAILS delivery vehicles were driven an average of 17,188 miles/week. The wear and tear on vehicles adds up quickly at that rate. RAILS plans for vehicle replacements to ensure reliable delivery service to libraries. In May 2018, RAILS acquired three new Ford Transit cargo vans to replace high-mileage vehicles. Additional replacement vehicles are planned for FY2019.



The new vans will be branded with the RAILS logo soon.

Another Benefit to Find More Illinois

RAILS members must use a RAILS delivery label to send items to libraries in their delivery service area or to libraries using the same shared catalog. Members use an Illinois Library Delivery Service (ILDS) label for libraries outside their delivery service area. Many libraries write out these labels by hand.

The shipping labels automatically generated by the Find More Illinois software are acceptable substitutes for the standard RAILS delivery label and for ILDS labels. This saves library staff time and also increases sorting accuracy, as handwritten labels are not always legible and thus can result in delivery errors.

Member Engagement

Upcoming RAILS Networking/Member Meetups

RAILS Member Meetups are in-person, multitype library events for all levels of library professionals. RAILS Board members are welcome at these meetups!

Upcoming meetups include:

- [Thursday, June 21, 10:00-11:30 a.m., RAILS Coal Valley Service Center](#)
- [Thursday, June 28, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Lake Bluff Public Library](#)
- [Thursday, July 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Chillicothe Public Library District](#)

RAILS Member Meetup in Quincy

On Thursday, May 31, RAILS and Quincy University hosted a member meetup. Approximately 15 librarians from public, school, and academic libraries across the region attended. The event included a discussion of professional topics, a presentation on e-books, and a tour of the Brenner Library at Quincy University.

RAILS Member Visits to Peoria, LaSalle, Chicago, and Quincy Regions

Since mid-May, RAILS has conducted a number of member visits to libraries in the Peoria, LaSalle, Chicago, and Quincy regions. [A map of these visits](#) can be viewed on the RAILS website. Visit highlights include learning about a newspaper digitization program at Alliance Française de Chicago, a Star Wars laser tag program at Streator Public Library, and a passport application service at Round Lake Area Public Library.

RAILS Staff News

Amanda Musacchio, RAILS Resource Sharing Specialist, has been appointed 2018-2019 chairperson of the Rethinking Resource Sharing Committee, a division of the Reference and User Services Association of the American Library Association. The committee's goal is to develop a policy framework for a new and expanded resource sharing ideal and Amanda's involvement supports RAILS' strong commitment to resource sharing.

Read the [Manifesto for Rethinking Resource Sharing](#).