

19 September 2018

**TO: RAILS Board of Directors**

**FROM: Deirdre Brennan**

**SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – September 2018**

### Soft rollout of new logo on October 1

Our new logo will have a “soft” rollout on October 1. There will be a new look to our website and the RAILS e-news. Over time, of course, we will align our brand across everything we produce. We will be giving the board members nametags as well.

### Member engagement activities

It has been a busy month for member engagement activities.

Anne Slaughter and I traveled to the Indian Trails Public Library District board meeting in Wheeling on September 5. Executive Director Brian Shepard asked us to meet with the board to describe the benefits of resource sharing and consortial membership.

Several RAILS staff – Veronda Pitchford, Dan Bostrom, Nicole Zimmerman, Brian Smith and I – attended the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) in Springfield September 12 through 15. The traffic on the exhibit floor and at the RAILS booth was very heavy. It was a great opportunity to connect with members and to learn about concerns, priorities and projects of small and rural libraries in other states.

Mary Witt, Nicole and I also traveled to Rockford to record a podcast with Executive Director Lynn Stainbrook. This was also a great opportunity to learn about the progress of the new building construction and other exciting changes that Rockford is making.

I have met twice with board members from the Calumet Park Public Library. We are helping to train their brand new board and assisting them with bylaws, policies and other needs.

### Illinois Library Association

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) annual conference is coming up fast. It starts on October 8 with a preconference on leadership, and runs through October 11. Trustee Day is Thursday,

October 11. Check out the schedule at [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org) for great training and networking opportunities.

RAILS is happy to financially support board member attendance at ILA.

#### Committees, task forces and board engagement

We will be continuing our conversation at the board meeting about board committees and engagement in general. I have included two draft charges for board committees in the packet and also the board member job description (very slightly revised) as this also speaks to how board members can be engaged and knowledgeable about RAILS.

There is no specific board development topics on this month's agenda because we are having two reports on delivery services.

#### Looking ahead to October

ILA conference reports from staff and board will be on the agenda.

The October board meeting will be held at our Coal Valley service center. All members are encouraged to attend in person. There will be a networking event and lunch before the meeting.

## Latest RAILS Project News

### E-Resources

#### New Popup Picks

Through RAILS' partnership with [BiblioBoard](#), any Illinois resident has free access to [Popup Picks](#), a mobile e-book service. Collections are curated by librarians and change quarterly. You don't need a login or library card, and there are no hold queues or waiting for titles – ever!

The new Popup Picks features something for readers of all ages and interest levels, including biographical comics and graphic novels, e-books with diverse perspectives from Publishers Weekly, family-focused titles from the Chicago Children's Museum, beautifully illustrated early learning titles, powerful stories on social/personal issues by young writers, a variety of adult niche nonfiction titles, and more. Explore all offerings at [popuppicks.com](http://popuppicks.com).

#### RAILS Helps School Libraries Provide E-Resources to Students

RAILS staff presented a breakout session, "All (Free) E-Books, Available All the Time," at the Chicago Public Schools library staff in-service day, to make them aware of the many e-resources available to school-age children and their families through RAILS' partnership with BiblioBoard.

School libraries are a perfect candidate to take advantage of RAILS' BiblioBoard offerings since their budgets, resources and staffing are often greatly diminished due to lack of funding and budget cuts. This demonstrates how RAILS' resource sharing initiatives can help school libraries offer many additional e-resources to their students.

#### National E-Book Summit Influences Major Publisher to Offer New E-Book Model

Recently, Penguin Random House (PRH), one of the leading leisure reading publishers supplying print, e-book and e-audio to public libraries, announced new purchase terms for library e-book lending. PRH is moving from a perpetual access model (where libraries pay a higher price but retain access to the e-book forever) to a metered model (with slightly lower prices on e-books that expire after two years). These new terms are favorable to libraries because for the majority of public libraries, interest in many titles drops off dramatically six to eight months after the initial release.

Skip Dye, Vice-President of Library Marketing and Digital Sales/Vice-President of Sales Operations for PRH, attended the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) e-book summit at the American Library Association conference this past summer. The goal of the summit was to begin to create a national agenda for e-books in libraries. RAILS was a

key organizer, along with Califa, a nonprofit representing 230 libraries in California, and the Massachusetts Library System. There were 70 attendees including publishers, distributors, librarians, library consortia, and other stakeholders. Dye said that his attendance at the summit was influential in PRH's consideration of new e-book models outside of the perpetual access one book, one user model.

## Find More Illinois

### Recent and Upcoming Opportunities to Learn More About Find More Illinois

Nineteen people, including staff from nine RSA libraries, two RAILS board members (Liza Hickey and Tom Stagg), and several RAILS staff, attended the first in-depth presentation on Find More Illinois, held at RAILS East Peoria on September 5. In-person demonstrations and webinars will continue through the fall; the full schedule is available on L2 (Library Learning) at [librarylearning.info/tags/?FMIdemo](http://librarylearning.info/tags/?FMIdemo).

RAILS staff will also speak about Find More Illinois at PrairieCat's User Group meeting (PUG Day) on September 28, and RAILS will feature Find More Illinois at its exhibits during the ILA (Illinois Library Association) and AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) conferences this fall.

### Attend RAILS Networking/Find More Illinois Reception at ILA Conference

All RAILS Board members attending the ILA conference are invited to a reception, sponsored by Auto-Graphics, our software vendor for Find More Illinois, on Tuesday, October 9, from 5:00-6:30 p.m., at the LaSalle Room at the Pere Marquette Hotel in Peoria. [Register on L2](#). This is a perfect opportunity to meet with RAILS members in a relaxing setting.

There will be a few introductory remarks, but no formal program. There will be a computer set up for those wishing to learn more about Find More Illinois at any point during the reception. Appetizers and beverages (including beer and wine) will be available. Please spread the word about this reception to all library colleagues attending the conference. Everyone is invited!

## Other Highlights

### Continuing Education (CE)

#### RAILS Awards CE Event Grants Totaling \$2,500

RAILS offers grants to RAILS libraries, networking groups, and consortia to support CE made available to staff at our member libraries. We recently awarded two grants totaling \$2,500 to:

- Frankfort Public Library—for an event to be held this fall on systems thinking for librarians. A professor at DePaul University will present the program.
- LACONI (Library Administrators Conference of Northern Illinois) Circulation Services Section—for an event scheduled for November 2018, featuring performers from the iO Theater in Chicago and focusing on using improvisation and humor as an approach to delivering great customer service.

#### Recent RAILS CE Program Highlight

In August, JJ's List Awareness Players presented a workshop on disability awareness. The program was offered in part to support this year's public library per capita grant training requirement. A team of disability experts – people who have disabilities themselves – engaged attendees in a fun, interactive workshop to help build comfort and confidence interacting and communicating with people with disabilities. The program was recorded and can be found in the [CE Archives](#) on the RAILS website or at <https://youtu.be/YpSpUgCYr3c>.

#### Upcoming RAILS Continuing Education (CE) Highlights

Upcoming CE programs in October include:

- Library security assessment webinar with security expert Dr. Steve Albrecht, [October 24](#)
- Succession Planning workshop, [October 30](#), at RAILS Burr Ridge service center and select videoconference locations

### Member Engagement

#### RAILS Member Update October 18

RAILS holds quarterly sessions to update our members about the latest RAILS news and to give members a chance to share news from their libraries as well. The next member update is

scheduled for Thursday, October 18, from 10 a.m.-noon. Members (and RAILS Board members) can attend at one of several available videoconference locations or via one-way streaming video (RAILS Live).

Topics include our revised strategic plan, membership standards, partnership grants available to member libraries, Find More Illinois, services available through the Illinois State Library's Talking Book and Braille Service, and a school/public library partnership to implement a Walking Classroom. More [information/registration](#) is available via L2 ([librarylearning.info](#)).

### **RAILS at Association for Rural & Small Libraries Conference (ARSL), September 13-15**

RAILS had an exhibit booth at the ARSL conference and approximately 179 people stopped by to hear more about what RAILS can do for small and rural libraries. We also experimented with offering members the opportunity to schedule a 30-minute, one-on-one discussion to discuss RAILS programs/services targeted to their library. Henderson County Public Library District scheduled a one-on-one session. The director and a board member participated and reported learning a lot about RAILS that they didn't know before. We will offer this option at other upcoming conferences as well.

RAILS also offered a member meetup at the Brewhaus Bar in Springfield the evening before the conference. Approximately 25 people attended and gave RAILS staff an opportunity to interact with our members from the Peoria area.



Brian Smith, Deirdre Brennan, Nicole Zimmermann, and Dan Bostrom don their Lincoln hats and prepare to greet visitors to the RAILS booth at ARSL in Springfield, Illinois.

## **RAILS Continues New Director Welcome Calls**

Since July, RAILS has held eight one-on-one new director phone calls through our New Director Welcome program. The 30-minute discussions about RAILS programs and services are designed to help new directors make the most of their RAILS membership. Directors also receive a summary of the discussion. Thus far, new directors seem to be more interested in scheduling a welcome call rather than an in-person visit by a RAILS staff member.

## **RAILS Member Meetups**

In addition to the meetup before the ARSL conference (see above), RAILS also scheduled a meetup on August 23 at Robert W. Rowe Public Library District in Sheridan, IL. Eight people attended this meetup, which included a discussion of serving patrons with disabilities. This was the seventh member meetup held since May.

RAILS Board members are invited to an upcoming meetup at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin on [October 16](#).

## **RAILS Member Visits to LaSalle, Northbrook, Freeport, and Peoria Regions**

[A map of RAILS member visits](#) from August and early September can be viewed on the RAILS website. Highlights included speaking at McHenry Public Library District's in-service day about RAILS programs/services, hearing more about an Adulting 101 series of programs at Mount Morris Public Library District, and talking about the bookmobile at Cook Memorial Public Library District in Libertyville.

## **RAILS to Co-Host Academic and Special Library Networking Sessions**

On Tuesday, [November 6](#), RAILS will co-host a networking event with the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL) at Northwestern University in Evanston. This will be an opportunity for academic library staff to meet and discuss common issues and best practices. As of this writing, 24 people are already registered to attend.

On Thursday, [November 15](#), RAILS will co-host a special library networking event at Caterpillar, Inc., in Mossville, Illinois. The event will include a tour of the Caterpillar facilities, followed by an opportunity for attendees to discuss issues facing special libraries.

Both events are open for registration on L2 and RAILS Board members are welcome to attend.

## Community Colleges and the Unserved

On September 10, Ashtin Trimble (Director of Library Services at Black Hawk College) and Terra Jacobson (Dean, Learning Resource Center/Library at Moraine Valley Community College) attended the RAILS Resource Sharing Committee meeting for an interesting discussion on community college services to reciprocal borrowers and the unserved. Different colleges offer different services. We identified the need to gather more specific information from community college libraries and to work with NILRC (Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges).

## RAILS Staff News

On September 7, eleven staff members from RAILS and WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) met at North Suburban Library District in Loves Park to share ideas and information about serving our members.

Participating RAILS staff included Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist; Dan Bostrom, Member Engagement Manager; Joe Filapek, Director of Consulting and Continuing Education; Mark Hatch, Delivery and Facilities Director, Veronda Pitchford, Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing; and Jane Plass, Associate Executive Director.

Discussion topics included member engagement, delivery, e-books, group resources, consulting, and grants to members.



Back row (left to right): Mark Hatch (RAILS), Joe Filapek (RAILS), Melody Clark (WiLS), Stef Morrill (WiLS), Anna Behm (RAILS), and Veronda Pitchford (RAILS)

Front row: Dan Bostrom (RAILS), Melissa McLimans (WiLS), Bruce Smith (WiLS), Jane Plass (RAILS), and Sara Gold (WiLS)