

11 January 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – December, January 2019

Our Strategic Plan

First of all, I have yet another objective to add to the plan related to universal service. It is not specifically stated and it certainly should be. This addition is an agenda item for our board meeting.

A progress report on the goals and objectives in the plan is included in this packet.

Finally, related to the plan, this report will organized according to the goals of the strategic plan.

Promote, support, and expand resource sharing to optimize use of tax dollars and other funding and help libraries share resources to the fullest extent possible

Explore More Illinois update

As we have reported previously, *Explore More Illinois* is a new online program to allow cardholders from participating RAILS libraries to reserve free passes, discount admission, and other incentives from cultural attractions in Illinois, such as museums, cultural centers, zoos, aquariums, gardens, historical societies, etc.

We are looking at a soft launch on April 1: This is not a joke, this program is for real!!

Where we are: we expect to have approximately 25 attractions by April 1. Libraries are continuing to confirm their participation, and at this point we have 115 confirmed libraries. We will be beta testing a solution for libraries that are not automated. Also, we have extended the program to Springfield museums and to nearby libraries because we thought it important to include the state capital. This is definitely a program that will build through word of mouth when it is live.

Open Educational Resources

I attended a conference on Open Educational Resources (OERs) on November 30 at the College of DuPage. OERs are used in higher education as alternatives to traditional textbooks. They can be online textbooks or journal articles. CARLI provides this definition of an open textbook: “a textbook becomes open when its copyright holder grants usage rights to the public through an open license, which typically includes the right to access, reformat, and customize it at no additional cost.” Open textbooks, or OERs in general, are much more affordable than traditional resources and have had a great positive effect on student success because they are more affordable. I discussed with Anne Craig of CARLI how RAILS might collaborate with CARLI to provide more OERs to academic libraries in Illinois. Possibilities include a joint application for a federal grant to develop more OERs and for RAILS to purchase access to them for member libraries. I will keep the board informed as our discussions proceed. This is an opportunity for us to provide more shareable resources for libraries in higher education.

Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story

We have begun our campaign to help libraries tell their story. The complete plan is included in this packet and is an agenda item for the board meeting. The following are some events that I hope board members can attend that will help tell the library story:

ILA legislative meetups

<p>Friday, 1 February 2019 South Suburban Library Legislative Breakfast Tinley Park Public Library 7851 Timber Dr. Tinley Park, IL 60477 7:45 a.m. doors open and breakfast is available 8:30 a.m. program begins 10:00 a.m. program concludes Price: \$25</p>	<p>Friday, 8 February 2019 Metro East Library Legislative Breakfast Sunset Hills Country Club 2525 Illinois 157 Edwardsville, IL 62025 8:00 a.m. doors open and breakfast is available 8:30 a.m. program begins 10:00 a.m. program concludes Price: \$25</p>
<p>Friday, 1 February 2019 Chicago Library Legislative Lunch Harold Washington Library Center Winter Garden 400 S State Street Chicago, IL 60605 11:30 a.m. doors open and lunch is available 12:00 noon program begins 1:30 p.m. program concludes Price: \$45</p>	<p>Friday, 8 February 2019 Southern Illinois Library Legislative Lunch Effingham Public Library 200 N. Third Street Effingham, IL 62401 11:30 a.m. doors open and lunch is available 12:00 noon program begins 1:30 p.m. program concludes Price: \$25</p>
<p>Monday, 4 February 2019</p>	<p>Monday, 18 February 2019</p>

<p>Central Illinois Library Legislative Breakfast Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel 201 Broadway Ave. Normal, IL 61761 8:00 a.m. doors open and breakfast is available 8:30 a.m. program begins 10:00 a.m. program concludes Price: \$30</p>	<p>Presidents' Day Library Legislative Breakfast Arboretum Club 401 Half Day Rd. Buffalo Grove, IL 60089 7:45 a.m. doors open and breakfast is available 8:30 a.m. program begins 10:00 a.m. program concludes Price: \$30</p>
<p>Monday, 4 February 2019 Western Illinois Library Legislative Lunch Galesburg Public Library 40 E. Simmons Street Galesburg, IL 61401 11:30 a.m. doors open and lunch is available 12:00 noon program begins 1:30 p.m. program concludes Price: \$25</p>	<p>Friday, 1 March 2019 <i>new date</i> West Suburban Library Legislative Lunch Chicago Marriott Oak Brook 1401 W. 22nd St. Oak Brook, IL 60523 11:30 a.m. doors open and lunch is available 12:30 noon program begins 2:00 p.m. program concludes Price: \$45</p>

I will be attending the meetups in Tinley Park, Chicago, Bloomington, and Galesburg. These events are important opportunities to connect with legislators and explain why libraries and library systems are vital institutions that need legislative support.

Dreams Take Flight video project

The content strategy marketing firm [Imagination](#) has created a marvelous short video for us that you can watch [here](#). **Please note: password to watch the video** is dreams. The official premier of this video will be on January 31 at 6 pm at the Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin. I hope that board members will attend. We have already shown the video to some library director and received rave reviews. It will be used at some of the legislative meetups.

I also recorded a podcast at Imagination with the Chief Content Officer and EVP, Kim Caviness, about the video. This was pro bono work done for RAILS by Imagination. Kim is a friend and huge library lover. She wanted to do something to help libraries so we brainstormed and agreed that a video to help tell the library story was a great place to start. We will be able to share this video with all member libraries to use for their own marketing and storytelling. There is also a Spanish version. An advertising campaign is also underway.

AISLE board meeting

I will be attending the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) board meeting on Saturday, January 12. I want to talk with the board about how RAILS can help advocate for school libraries as well as other services that we offer for school libraries.

Sparks podcast

Our latest *Sparks* broadcast featured Justin Williams, Adult Services Librarian at Westmont Public Library, talking about the Library of Things at their *Makery* space.

Help libraries be the best they can be

Data collection for the system membership standards is going well. As of the end of day, Wednesday, January 9, 177 libraries have submitted their information.

I have made a number of member visits since our November meeting. I met with the new Executive Director of the Arlington Heights Public Library District, Mike Driskell. He is interested in our Simply-e project and also Find More Illinois.

Jane and I visited Mary Case, the director, and Gwen Gregory at the Daley Library at UIC to discuss Find More Illinois and Open Educational Resources.

I had an excellent visit with Michael Campbell and Nicole Steeves at the Fox River Grove Valley Library.

I also traveled to a meeting of the Rock River Library Consortium in Sterling. Thanks to the new LLSAP funding methodology, we gave them a grant of almost \$60,000 this year. They will be able to make some important service enhancements for member libraries – and their users.

Prepare libraries for the future

I have worked extensively on getting our board Universal Service Committee populated and ready to meet. I forwarded to all board members some historical documents related to the unserved issue in Illinois. I thought these would be helpful to all of you, as well as providing important background for board members serving on the committee. Carole Medal of Gail Borden Library District in Elgin and Larissa Good of the Warren County Library District have agreed to serve on the committee. I am also seeking a library director from a city library that has unserved residents.

I am also working on the advocacy committee. There is a separate memo in the packet.

Aim to be the best library system in the country

We are asking for the appointment of a board election Nominating Committee earlier than usual this year. In light of our discussions about diversity and representation, we want to give ourselves plenty of time to recruit a strong committee that will in turn assist in the recruitment of diverse candidates.

Promoting/Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

Leading/Working with Libraries to Expand Resource Sharing

Find More Illinois Recruitment Efforts Continue

Seven more libraries will go live on [Find More Illinois](#) in early February, and two more in early March. Recruitment for additional participants continues. In addition to the informational webinars and in-person presentations held across our area between September and December 2018, three more webinars have been scheduled between January and March 2019; see <https://www.librarylearning.info/tags/?FMIdemo> for details.



The Communications and Find More Illinois teams are also working on communication and marketing plans, including a fun scavenger hunt game on Facebook to help build awareness and enthusiasm for using Find More Illinois.

The hunt will launch on Monday, January 28, and we will post a new challenge on our [Facebook page](#) each week. Participants can post a screenshot of a record from the Find More Illinois catalog or send an email that corresponds to the weekly challenge. Weekly winners will receive a Find More Illinois bag and flashlight, and one lucky grand prize winner will receive a \$50 gift certificate.

Plan for Lender-Only Participation in Find More Illinois

In response to discussion at the August 2018 RAILS Board meeting, RAILS staff have developed a plan for lender-only participation in Find More Illinois to encourage participation by libraries with large collections that would significantly enhance resource sharing.

Requirements for lender-only participation include:

- Demonstrating how the library's participation will expand resource sharing in Illinois
- Having annual collection expenditures of \$1,000,000 or more
- Committing to checking for and responding to requests at least five days/week and to fill requests whenever possible
- Being willing to pay the one-time implementation fee and to sign a participation agreement. (Implementation fees vary depending on the library's integrated library system.)

Lender-only participants will not pay an annual fee. Because Find More Illinois is still small, RAILS will accept no more than three initially. RAILS reserves the right to select lender-only participants. An application form and membership agreement are currently being developed.

FY2019 RAILS Catalog Membership Grants

RAILS offers grants to increase membership in RAILS Local Library System Automation Program (LLSAP) consortia by funding startup costs for any member library that isn't currently an LLSAP member. RAILS LLSAPs are: CCS, Pinnacle, PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA, and SWAN.

The second and final application deadline for [FY2019 grants](#) is April 17. RAILS awarded funding for two projects in the fall 2018 application period: Morton Grove Public Library received \$31,195 to join CCS, and SWAN received \$38,480 to add Green Hills Public Library District.

Providing Access to Digital Content/E-Resources/Other Innovative Projects

BiblioBoard & eRead Illinois News

2018 was a year of growth for both [BiblioBoard](#) and [eRead Illinois](#). (RAILS members access eRead via Baker & Taylor's Axis 360 platform.) Just over 373,640 items were checked out via eRead Illinois (up from 331,313 in 2017). And 8,685 items were accessed via BiblioBoard (up from 5,534 in 2017).

In November, Baker & Taylor launched a redesign of the Axis 360 website. The site is now fully mobile-responsive and can be viewed on any size screen. Axis 360 did experience some expected and unexpected downtime during the transition. The site has since been stabilized. The Axis 360 app was not affected by the downtime, nor by the redesign.

On January 2, we changed the eRead Illinois Axis 360 item loan period from 21 to 14 days and the hold pick up period from three to two days. Reducing checkout and hold periods allows us to maintain a low holds ratio (we purchase an additional copy for every four holds on an item), while continuing to add new content to the platform for users to enjoy. Patrons will get their holds faster, libraries can provide more popular content to users, and RAILS can maximize the use of eRead Illinois collection development funds.

A new batch of BiblioBoard [Popup Picks](#) launched in January. This new set of hand-curated, front-list e-books includes winners of statewide indie author contests (including the [Soon To Be Famous Illinois Author project](#)), new graphic novels and comic books, a "new year, new you" self-help collection, and a "girls rock" collection of titles by, for, and about strong female role models.

Soon To Be Famous Illinois Author Manuscript Project

The [Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project](#) (STBF) opened another cutting-edge chapter recently with its new [manuscript contest](#). (RAILS has been a partner and supporter of STBF since its beginnings in 2013.)

Self-published authors were invited to submit a completed manuscript through their public library. The contest closed on January 3 with 35 entries. There will be three rounds of judging by Illinois librarians, and a single winner will be announced in April. The winner will receive professional editing and cover art, courtesy of BiblioBoard, another STBF (and RAILS) partner. The winner will also be automatically entered into the 2019 STBF contest.

Providing Greater Purchasing Power

RAILS offers Public Web Browser (PWB) to our libraries free of charge and has renewed the license through December 28, 2019. PWB allows you to lock down the web browser on computers and customize workstations for specific uses (for example, a dedicated catalog computer).

The RAILS contract with Auto-Graphics for SHAREit (the software supporting Find More Illinois) also includes discounted pricing for libraries for VERSO (an integrated library system) and MONTAGEdc (a digital collection management solution). The VERSO software comes in several versions designed for very small to midsize libraries. Auto-Graphics is also working with Baker & Taylor to support Axis 360 integration with VERSO; software development on this is nearing the testing stage.

Log into the [Deals and Discounts page](#) on the RAILS website to see details on these and other discounts.

Building Collaborative Relationships & Fostering Networking

December/January RAILS Member Meetups

RAILS Member Meetups are in-person, multitype library events for all levels of library staff. On December 4, RAILS held a meetup at Franklin Elementary School in Moline. This was the first meetup to take place at a school library and nine RAILS library staff members attended. In September 2017, the school was [hit by a devastating fire](#) which caused \$400K in damages. The school re-opened in August 2018 with a brand-new library.

There was also a meetup at Fondulac Public Library District in East Peoria on January 16. At the time of this writing, 17 people were registered to attend.

Upcoming RAILS Member Meetups

RAILS Board members are invited to attend the following meetups. You can find more information and register on L2 ([librarylearning.info](#)) using the links below.

- [Tuesday, February 12](#), 10:00-11:30 a.m., Hewes Library at Monmouth College
- [Monday, March 18](#), 2-4 p.m., Hinsdale South High School

RAILS and IACRL Host Two Networking Events

In November, RAILS partnered with the Illinois Association for College & Research Libraries (IACRL) to hold two networking events. One event was held at Northwestern University in Evanston; 40 people registered and 23 attended. The other event was held at Prairie State College in Chicago Heights; 15 people registered and 13 attended.

Discussion topics were chosen by participants and included open educational resources (OER); diversity, equity, and inclusion; library instruction; services for first-generation students; personal librarians; promotion of library services; and library collaboration centers.



Northwestern University Event



Prairie State College Event

A survey was sent to all attendees and 14 people responded. Overall 70% found the events to be either excellent or very good. Most said the most beneficial aspect was connecting with other libraries. IACRL and RAILS are discussing holding similar events in the future.

RAILS and SLA Illinois Host Special Library Event at Caterpillar

On Thursday, November 15, RAILS and the Illinois Chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) held a special library networking event at Caterpillar in Mossville. This was the first collaboration between these two organizations and 13 people attended.

Discussion topics were chosen by attendees and included special library marketing and advocacy (including increasing the visibility of the special library), and collaborations and events with other types of libraries.



Five attendees responded to a post-event survey and all found the event to be excellent or good. Respondents also indicated interest in attending more networking events in the future.

RAILS Multitype Collaborative Grant Winners Highlighted on ALA Blog

In 2018, RAILS offered grants for different types of libraries to collaborate on cooperative projects. Lisle Library District and the Ann Reid Early Childhood Center (Naperville School District #203) received a grant for their [Families Together: Reading Enrichment for Social/Emotional Learning](#) project. In November, the project was featured on the American Library Association's *Intersections* blog.

19 Libraries Apply for RAILS Partnership Grants

RAILS changed our multitype collaborative grants to [RAILS Partnership Grants](#) to give more libraries an opportunity to apply. Members now have the option of partnering with another library, business, nonprofit, or governmental agency. We received 19 applications in the first round of these grants.

RAILS is currently making final decisions on grant awards and will announce recipients soon. We were very fortunate to have four former multitype collaborative grant recipients help with the review process:

- Jason Erber, Riverwood Elementary School, District #15

- Roberta Koscielski, Peoria Public Library
- Jody Olivieri, Homer Township Public Library
- Kylie Peters, Geneva Public Library

RAILS Community Email Lists

The Communications Team worked with RAILS IT to upgrade our email list software (Mailman) in December. The newer version of Mailman makes our lists compatible with current email security protocols, and fixes a problem we had with list messages being blocked by some member libraries' email systems.

Telling the Library Story

Helping Members Tell Their Story

Campaign to Help Libraries Tell Their Stories

Board members will receive more information in January about our year-long campaign to help members tell their stories more effectively and to articulate their value to patrons and potential patrons, administrators, funders, legislators, and other stakeholders. The campaign is in direct response to many requests for this type of assistance during our 2018 strategic planning process.

Marketing for Librarians Online Course

RAILS is offering a two-week online course in January to help libraries develop better strategies for promoting their programs and services.

Advocating for Libraries

RAILS Board members will learn more about the upcoming [Illinois Library Association Legislative Meetups](#) and the importance of attending these meetups at the January board meeting.

Helping Libraries Be the Best They Can Be

Ensuring Ongoing Library Staff Development

Recent RAILS Continuing Education (CE) Highlights

RAILS offered numerous webinars during November and December, two of which received particularly positive feedback:

- Betsy Bird, Evanston Public Library Collection Development Manager, presented “Developing Diverse Children’s and YA Collections: What They Don’t Teach You in Library School.” This webinar focused on demonstrated needs for diverse collections and resources to find quality titles.
- Jessica MacFarlene, Senior Research Associate at Perception Institute, presented on implicit bias and stereotype threat. She highlighted research-based strategies to override these mechanisms in the interest of fair and equitable service to all.

A total of 375 members registered for these two webinars, which were both recorded and are now available on the [RAILS CE Archives page](#).

Other RAILS webinars held during the time period covered by this report include:

- Library Accessibility for Public Library Trustees, December 10
- Compensation Conversations, December 12
- Building Online Learning Environments, January 10
- Goal Setting and Measurement, January 17
- Best Children’s Books of 2018, January 22

CE Event Grants

RAILS offers [grants](#) to RAILS libraries, networking groups, and consortia, to expand the number of CE offerings available to staff at our member libraries. To qualify, events must be made available to all RAILS libraries and be of interest to a wide variety of library staff.

We awarded three grants during the third grant period of FY2019 for these events:

- RSA Day, which will feature a series of reader’s advisory sessions
- Indian Trails Public Library will host nationally recognized speaker Andrew Sanderbeck for a full-day workshop to help library staff deal with harassment from patrons, vendors, and others.
- The Library Early Literacy Advocates networking group will host an event at the Niles-Maine Public Library focused on early screening intervention.

Helping All Libraries Provide the Best Possible Service

Certification

The annual online certification process began Wednesday, January 2 and runs through March 31. All library system members *must* complete this process to qualify for continuing system services and grant programs from the Illinois State Library. Certification will be featured as the service of the month at the January board meeting.

Replacing L2 Grant

RAILS has been awarded special grant funding from the Illinois Secretary of State, through the Illinois State Library, to replace L2. Originally conceived as a continuing education calendar and membership directory, Library Learning (L2) has evolved into a critical tool for library staff and library systems across Illinois, and the platform can no longer support our evolving needs.

RAILS anticipates the project will take the full 18 months of the grant period. We will kick it off internally in January 2019 and will engage all stakeholders across Illinois as the project develops. Stay tuned for opportunities to weigh in on the future of this platform.

Preparing Libraries for the Future

Helping the Unserved/Underserved

The latest developments in our work with the Imagination content marketing firm in Chicago to produce a video to help promote library service to the unserved (and others) are included in the Executive Director's report portion of this document.

Aiming to Be the Best Library System

Member Communication/Engagement

December Member Visits

In December, RAILS visited five members in the Moline, LaSalle, and Chicago regions, including two schools. Highlights include hearing more about Rock Island High School's partnership with Rock Island Public Library to host author Jason Reynolds and visiting the Selby Township Public Library in DePue, which is housed in a renovated train depot. RAILS also visited one academic library, the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and one special library, the National Association for REALTORS.

Also in December, Deirdre Brennan and Jane Plass met with Mary Case (University Librarian and Dean of Libraries), Gwen Gregory (Resource Acquisition and Management Head Librarian, as well as a RAILS Board member), and Elena Carrillo (Access Services Librarian) at University of Illinois at Chicago's Daley Library. Discussion topics included UIC's participation in Find More Illinois and other ways RAILS and UIC might work together.

School Library Tune-ups

RAILS conducted nine School Library Tune-ups in November and December. These are 30-minute, one-on-one discussions about issues/trends in school libraries. Topics include continuing education, interlibrary loan, support for e-books, policies/procedures, and more.

RAILS Member Update

The latest RAILS member update is scheduled for January 17. Topics include revised [system membership standards](#), RAILS staffing, [Find More Illinois](#), plans to help all types of libraries tell their stories more effectively, RAILS e-resources, and [Explore More Illinois](#), our upcoming museum/cultural pass program.

Joe Natale, the Illinois State Library's representative with the Complete Count Commission, will discuss the importance of Illinois libraries helping to maximize participation in the census. There will be updates from members on Highland Middle School's award-winning "Highland Reads" program, the College of DuPage Library's Use of OER (open educational resources), Evanston Public Library's Pop-up Library project, and Princeton Public Library's Sensory Kits to help patrons with special needs.

RAILS Staff News

Dan Bostrom Chosen for SLA Leadership Symposium Award

Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, received a grant from the Special Libraries Association (SLA) to help cover travel expenses and registration for the SLA Leadership Symposium in New Orleans, January 20-22. As part of this grant, Dan will provide live updates while at the symposium via SLA's Connect platform so others can learn from his experience.

RAILS to Host LTA Practicum Student

In summer 2017, RAILS hosted a practicum for Dianne Carroll, then a Library Technical Assistant (LTA) student at Joliet Junior College. This winter, we've agreed to host a practicum for Andrea Bliss, an LTA student at College of DuPage. The COD LTA practicum requires that the student complete 75 hours. Andrea will rotate through various RAILS departments at our Burr Ridge and Bolingbrook facilities to give her a good understanding of system work and RAILS services.

Jane Plass Serving on ICOLC Committee

Jane Plass is serving on the program planning committee for the ICOLC spring meeting, which will be held April 7-10, in Vancouver. ICOLC is the International Coalition of Library Consortia. It is focused on, though not exclusive to, academic library consortia. Participation in ICOLC helps RAILS better understand the issues facing academic libraries and also raises awareness among other ICOLC members of issues facing other types of libraries.

Consortial Reports

CARLI/I-Share

- Ex Libris Alma has been chosen for our next I-Share platform! Alma will replace Voyager and SFX in 2020 for the 91 institutions that are part of CARLI's I-Share resource sharing system. We look forward to Alma helping CARLI extend and expand the resource sharing and collaborative programs that our consortium has offered our members for almost 40 years.
- On November 6, 2018, CARLI held its annual meeting. The presentations from that meeting can be found at <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/carli-annual-meeting-presentations-and-pdfs-now-online>.
 - Highlights include a report on I-Share Next; the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant, "CARLI Counts"; and Committee and Task Force Reports for the year.
 - At the meeting, key reports were distributed:
 - The updated "Value Graphics" <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/sites/files/files/FY2018ValueGraphics.pdf>
 - The Strategic Priorities and Annual Report <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/sites/files/governance/2018CARLIAnnualReport.pdf>
- Cohort 1 of "CARLI Counts: Analytics and Advocacy for Service Development," a grant project funded by IMLS, will hold their first in-person session at the I-Hotel in Champaign in February. Forty-eight CARLI institutions will be participating in Cohort 1.
- CARLI will hold a New Directors Institute on May 15–16, 2019 at the CARLI office in Champaign. The CARLI Program Planning Committee is currently working on the agenda for the institute.
- Don't miss any CARLI news! You don't need to be a CARLI member to sign up for our Announce email list; it's open to all: <https://carli.illinois.edu/mailman/listinfo/announce/>

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)

- Morton Grove Public Library will go live with CCS the week of January 14. Offline for all CCS libraries will begin on January 11. Data will be loaded and indexed, followed by a bibliographic deduplication and reindex. The bibliographic deduplication process could take up to 24 hours. CCS has worked with Innovative Interfaces to provide ongoing, but limited, access to the public catalog and SIP authentication during downtime.
- The Governing Board will vote on Indian Trails Public Library District's request for membership on January 23.
- The Long Range Planning Committee will interview consultants on January 23 as part of our evaluation of our governance structure. Our goal is to recommend a structure to the Governing Board in September 2019 for implementation by July 1, 2020.

LINKin

- No report

Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC)

- Preparation for NIC's migration into PrairieCat is continuing smoothly. The implementation team of staff members from the libraries, PrairieCat, and Innovative continue to meet monthly. PrairieCat's name for the NIC library group is Northern8. Training sessions for staff are planned for late winter/early spring of 2019 with a planned go-live date in mid-May.

Pinnacle Library Cooperative (PLC)

- No report

PrairieCat

- PrairieCat continues to grow. We recently added holdings for Byron CUSD #226, which has rejoined PrairieCat as a Union List member. Training is currently underway for Byron staff.
- We are also in full swing with our Northern8 project. All eight NIC member libraries will join PrairieCat, with a go-live date slated for the week of May 20, 2019. Work is proceeding with the Northern 8 implementation team, PrairieCat staff, and Innovative migrations staff.
- In addition, PrairieCat has filled our open Senior Systems Specialist position. William Wilson joined us on December 3, 2018 at the Coal Valley office. Another new staff member, Melissa Landis, will join the Bolingbrook staff on January 7. Melissa will fill the Library Systems and Data Coordinator position that was vacated by Gail Lien's retirement at the end of December. Melissa is a long-time PrairieCat member and has been very active on several committees. We are happy to welcome both new staff members to the PrairieCat team.
- Our website redesign is nearly complete, and our migration of documents is ongoing. Look for a launch announcement, complete with our new logo, in the near future.
- PrairieCat recently signed a contract to implement ProQuest's new Syndetics Unbound enhanced content in our Encore catalog. The new features will roll out soon.

Resource Sharing Alliance NFP (RSA-NFP)

- RSA finished the migration of two more libraries. We continue to work with three more libraries who are still in the process of joining RSA.
 - Prairie Creek Public Library District in Dwight is fully integrated.
 - Neponset Public Library is fully integrated.
 - Flanagan Public Library District is mostly finished with cataloging.
 - Ransom Memorial Public Library in Altona is cataloging.
 - Williamsfield Public Library District is cataloging.
- RSA's new Member Services Supervisor, Anna Hutson, started at RSA on October 15, 2018 and officially took over on January 1, 2019. The previous Member Services Supervisor, Martha Troxell, retired at the end of December. Martha had been with RSA since 1999 and was the last person with institutional memory prior to 2005, when Kendal Orrison became Executive Director.
- We have finally filled, after a couple rounds of interviews, our Senior Cataloging and Database Specialist position. Jane Bradbury will start on January 9. This will bring RSA back to the full current FTE. RSA has several new staff members who are currently in training and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
- In July 2019, RSA will add another full-time cataloger position and a user experience position to our Member Services department. We have begun revising all RSA's job descriptions to make them more accurately reflect what staff currently do and offer a better indicator of what they will be doing in the future.
- RSA's FY2020 budget received a clean-sheet rework and redesign to better allow member libraries to understand the true costs of running the consortium. It also allows the RSA board to make better decisions as they understand the data better. Our efforts to rework our membership levels and fee structure required a better base document to work from. Member libraries will receive additional information about their per-library support grant amounts in FY2020 to better inform their boards and school administrators of the true overall cost of their RSA membership.
- RSA staff continue working on several large projects, two of major note for this quarter. We are currently configuring the new BLUEcloud Mobile app for all our libraries. This project has required a lot of work, as each of our 145 members have many separate bits to configure. We could have the

app just search the entire catalog by default, but this doesn't serve our patrons' needs due to our size and makeup. We're having to manually set up a lot of new policies and search limits.

- The other major project revolves around a long-term circulation map revision. The circ map is being completely reworked, library by library, and we expect another six to nine months of work on it. We've already removed about 20% of the over 4,000 lines of circ map policies. We expect to remove an additional 50% or so over the next year, with a target of about 1,900 circ map lines in total at the end of the project. The new capabilities in Symphony allow item type, library, and user profile grouping for a single circ rule. This change has the additional upside of fixing per-item-type checkout limit issues we've encountered over the years. After libraries have their circ maps reworked, patrons will have to learn to live with DVD/Blu-ray checkout limits that actually limit correctly across multiple item types instead of separate limits per item type (we have over 30 item types for DVD/Blu-rays).
- RSA's cataloging team continues to work through a major backlog due to staffing shortages for the past eight months. They have slowly reduced the overall backlog and have most cataloging request queues under two weeks again. They are looking forward to the new staff members in 2019 to help them get fully back on track. Fixing the backlog allows additional services like brief record visits, catalog training visits, and more to restart as staff time frees up.
- Finally, RSA staff are starting to move our help desk and customer relationship management (CRM) functions into Salesforce. This will allow us to build a single place to store our institutional knowledge, site visits, library and staff member questions, tickets, and more. This type of information is not easily accessible at the moment and mostly lives in the heads or individual email accounts of RSA staff.

Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)

- At our December meeting, the members approved the following agenda items:
 - Membership requests from Milledgeville Public Library and Rock Falls Elementary School District #13 (Dillon Elementary School, Merrill Elementary School, and Rock Falls Middle School)
 - RDA conversion to the database in December
 - Using the RAILS FY2020 grant to offset 10% of the consortium members' portions of the TLC invoice
 - Using the RAILS FY2020 grant to purchase Enhanced Content for the OPAC, which will provide reviews, summaries, author notes, table of contents, forewords, and first chapters of books

System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)

- Support Tickets

The slight upward trend of new tickets and slight decrease in closed tickets is due to projects underway requiring member interaction and verification (OCLC WorldCat/ILL configuration and patron cleanup prior to processing long-overdue items). We saw our first post-migration increase in monthly tickets in October. SWAN staff have been diligent in reviewing open tickets and responding in a timely fashion to new requests. Through this process we are also strengthening our cross-team communication and depth of expertise/coverage. We have returned to our pre-migration target of open tickets below 100; as of November 30, 2018, there are 73 open tickets somewhere in the process of resolution.
- Server Infrastructure Migration: Azure Project

The SWAN server migration is our top priority. SWAN IT, along with SirsiDynix support personnel, have found the solution to slow-running maintenance reports in our Azure test environment that

has thus far prevented us from completing this project. We resumed work on the server migration in June.

- On November 6, 2018, SWAN successfully completed the second of three upgrades on the road to Azure. The operating system upgrade went more smoothly than we could have hoped and resulted in no library downtime and very few post-upgrade issues. The final jump to the Azure cloud is being coordinated with SirsiDynix and the IT team and is set for January 13, 2019 with the go-live Monday, January 14.
- Support Site Redesign
The upgraded support site was launched on December 11, 2018. Various SWAN user groups reviewed the site prior to launch and a beta link was sent to the membership on November 26. SWAN staff is collecting membership feedback on the site, and we will provide more information as available. While the new site will have most documentation from the current support site, it will not be a one-to-one copy. SWAN staff will continue to work on content rewrites and updates into the new year.
- Brian Smith at RAILS completed the initial set up of our development site, and SWAN staff has been learning the editing functions of the site and adding content. We have been testing the functionality of the content management system and exploring the available configuration options, and we are working with Brian to make tweaks as needed.
- SWAN wants to pass along our thanks to Brian Smith for all his work in developing our Drupal infrastructure, integrating new features that work with L2 and authentication, and his constant assistance in answering questions and building features as we throw them at him. He has been responsive, creative, and we greatly appreciate having him as a core member of this Support Site team.
- Brian helped us at each step in the process and worked with us in analyzing user feedback to make site usability our priority. We have received much positive feedback already in the first day since launch. <https://support.swanlibraries.net>
- Green Hills Public Library District: Joining SWAN
Now that the SWAN membership vote is complete, this project is in full swing. RAILS has unsuspended the LLSAP grant, which was used to migrate the New 19, and we completed this grant application. RAILS approved the funding that will cover most of the migration costs for Green Hills (as discussed at the September SWAN Quarterly meeting). As of now, our go-live date is set for January 29, 2019, though there is a chance that date may change.
- Automated Delivery Label
Outside of the Azure project, SWAN has made a breakthrough in the custom development for a delivery label printing app, having now created an interface that runs from the SWAN support site rather than through WorkFlows. The interface is still in an early beta stage, with an expected launch alongside the new SWAN support site. Steven Schlewitt and Ian Nosek have also continued work on documentation updates for the new support site.
- Bibliographic Database Deduplication
 - The addition of 19 new libraries to SWAN in May 2018 resulted in a large number of duplicate bibliographic records that the automated de-duplication process was unable to merge. The SWAN Bibliographic Services team has made significant progress on the deduplication cleanup. They have completed the first phase of the project—“known duplicates”—and are now evaluating record pairs that were flagged but that the automated process could not confidently combine. So far, about 90% of these pairs have resulted in merges. We have been evaluating about 1,000 records per week.

- Bibliographic Services merged about 2,000 matched pairs in October 2018, and this process has included record cleanup and overlays along the way. The team prioritized records with one or more active holds and have fully processed this portion of the matched pairs. The project will take SWAN past the first of the year, but the highest demand items are now complete.
- For the Green Hills migration, Scott Brandwein developed a method to extract unique bibliographic fields (OCLC numbers, ISBNs, Library of Congress Control Numbers, ISSNs, and UPCs) from the Green Hills bibliographic catalog to compare with our own. This was used to generate a list of matching records that SirsiDynix can use during the data load to attach Green Hills' items directly to SWAN records and avoid a deduplication process entirely. We generated nearly 59,000 matching records out of their full bibliographic count of 62,000 records. This should be an enormous time saver when the migration takes place. Some manual work will still be required, but it should be minimal and easy to complete before they go live. We will retain a copy of the Green Hills extract for reference in case of any errors.
- OCLC Holdings Reclamation
 - The OCLC holdings reclamation project is complete. Our representative at OCLC informed us that the added holdings are completely processed, so libraries' complete collections as of the August 2018 extract should be currently represented in OCLC. Deletes were processed and finished in October. This will place us back on our regular holdings maintenance schedule with the MARC of Quality.
 - The reclamation will also provide us with information we can use to coordinate a cleanup project once deduplication is finished. This project will involve evaluating approximately 100,000 SWAN records that do not have OCLC numbers. Many of these records represent special collections and records for devices and equipment for which OCLC numbers don't apply, but the reclamation should provide us guidance in determining which of those 100,000 can be updated with OCLC numbers. They will likely require updated cataloging as well. The data should help us complete this project swiftly and allow us to employ a simpler process for updating OCLC holdings once The MARC of Quality company/staff retires.
- National Change of Address (NCOA) Project

SWAN staff completed the NCOA project in December 2018 with the goal of providing this as an annual, ongoing service. We are incorporating consolidation and cleanup of user data, as patron records imported from LINC and MAGIC created some duplication within SWAN's Symphony ILS.
- WorldCat Discovery and WorldShare ILL Configuration

SWAN libraries now have all OpenAthens patron authentication links for each member's WorldCat Discovery instances, and OCLC has set up groups for SWAN and Illinois libraries. Completing the configuration settings for our 97 member libraries was no small feat. On October 17, 2018, Dawne Tortorella conducted a workshop for libraries to learn more about configuration settings and using these services. Another workshop will be announced.
- Enterprise Usability Test

The Fall 2018 Enterprise catalog usability testing is complete. Tara Wood, SWAN User Experience Manager, tested with a total of six participants at Tinley Park, Oak Lawn, and St. Charles. The usability testing report with a summary of our findings and recommended next steps for Enterprise was shared with the SWAN Board at its November 16 meeting, and the SWAN membership at the December 2018 SWAN Quarterly meeting.
- Article Search and OpenAthens
 - Robin Hofstetter, SWAN Electronic Resources Consultant, is developing an inventory of libraries' Article Search and OpenAthens settings. She is working on a set of best practices

and an improved process to onboard the remaining libraries that are not set up with Article Search.

- Robin worked with EBSCO to get a dedicated customer service representative for EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS). She will work with this person to improve our EDS integration in Enterprise (what we call Article Search) for all our 97 libraries and identify a good baseline setup for libraries that they can customize if they chose. In addition, she met with EBSCO to talk about potential group purchases for EBSCO databases, and she is conducting an overlap analysis to see which purchases would be most beneficial for members.

11 January 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Memo on school libraries and funding

Board members, as a follow up to Christine’s presentation in November, I have been researching funding in school libraries in other states. I received this email from Sylvia Norton, the Executive Director of the American Association of School Libraries (AASL), a division of ALA.

“Funding for school libraries is always a complicated story and varies widely from state to state. If fortunate, like a state such as NY, you get to point to direct support in statute or there will be nothing specific but you can make the argument to an administrator that the school library get funds that were designated for something like literacy or technology. In Illinois there is the following legislation passed in August 2017, popularly known as the evidence-based school funding formula, or [SB 1947](#), and now incorporated into Illinois School Code that says:

(I) Librarian investments. Each Organizational Unit shall receive the funding needed to cover one FTE librarian for each prototypical elementary school, middle school, and high school and one FTE aide or media technician for every 300 combined ASE of pre-kindergarten children with disabilities and all kindergarten through grade 12 students.

However, as Megan Cusick in the Office of Library Advocacy informed me, the state formula is underfunded by about \$6 billion. The legislature is slowly increasing school funding, but that gap will only be closed by a significant increase in state revenue—one of the issues driving the call for a progressive income tax. Overall, Illinois has local control, which means that the state cannot require the district to spend the money as allocated by the formula and is a scenario very familiar to me. In a series of choices, it is also too easy to overlook the school library unless you have a supportive administrator who chooses to allocate funds in the budget they present to the school board. All too often that takes a school librarian who was not only an advocate but also visible as making a difference in the school community.”

On Saturday, January 12, I am attending the AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) board meeting to tell them about RAILS’s interest in advocacy for school libraries, and to find out how we can help them. I will report at the board meeting.