

15 March 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – February 2019

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

April meeting with IHLS staff and ISL staff

On April 4, members of the executive team and I will be in Springfield to meet with Greg McCormick, members of his staff, and leadership from IHLS. We will be discussing a variety of topics including statewide database access, delivery and continuing education. We hope to hold these meetings on a regular basis to improve coordination of service delivery and general communication.

Explore More Illinois

We are continuing to add libraries and attractions to the *Explore More Illinois* program and are on track for an April 1 launch. Jessica Barnes will present a report to the board at the April meeting.

Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story

Sparks podcast

My podcast with Kim Caviness, the Executive Vice President for Content, of *Imagination* will be available soon. Kim and her firm provided the *pro bono* work for our video *Dreams Take Flight*.

ILA legislative meetup in Oak Brook

Many thanks to Paul Mills for speaking at the Oak Brook legislative meet up about RAILS services.

Help libraries be the best they can be

System membership standards

Data collection for the system membership standards is moving along, but has been slowed by other surveys and the annual certification process also. I think we are going to need to extend the deadline and ramp up our publicity once the certification process has ended. I will provide more details at the meeting.

Prepare libraries for the future

DPLA Fest

DPLA Fest is coming up in April, in Chicago. This event is sponsored by the Digital Public Library of America and offers programs about what is going on in the digital library arena – everything from e-books to GPS and maps to preservation and cultural heritage. The fest is on April 17 and 18 at the Chicago Public Library. You can register [here](#).

This is a great opportunity for all of us near Chicago to participate in this conference about critical issues for all types of libraries.

I have been part of the planning for a program that you will see entitled “The Indie Tidal Wave.” It is a collaboration among our own *Soon to be Famous* colleagues, Biblioboard – our partner Mitchell Davis - and Minitex, a peer and colleague organization of RAILS in Minnesota.

Aim to be the best library system in the country

We have finished interviewing for our open positions and expect to make decisions very soon. Our new Data Analyst and Research Coordinator, Grant Halter, starts April 8.

This Month at RAILS – March 2019

Promoting/Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

Leading/Working with Libraries to Expand Resource Sharing

Find More Illinois Update

Five more libraries went live on [Find More Illinois](#) after completing training during the week of March 4:

- Genoa Public Library District (PrairieCat)
- Malta Township Public Library (PrairieCat)
- Fulton High School in River Bend Community Unit District #2 (PrairieCat union list)
- Rosary High School (Standalone integrated library system; Atrium from Book Systems)
- Wyoming Public Library District (RSA)

Find More Illinois now includes 37 library agencies and connects 10 catalogs—the consortial catalogs of PrairieCat, RSA, and Rock River Library Consortium, as well as three I-Share library catalogs and four catalogs of libraries with standalone integrated library systems.

Find More Illinois Scavenger Hunt Engages Members

In January and February, RAILS hosted a Find More Illinois Scavenger Hunt on our Facebook page. The contest lasted six weeks. Over 50 people participated.



RAILS Facebook engagement statistics show that during the hunt, nearly twice as many people visited and interacted with our page compared to the same time period in 2018.

Weekly winners received the gift bag pictured. Jennifer Lynn from Three Rivers Public Library District was the grand prize recipient of a \$50 gift certificate.

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

Explore More Illinois Launches April 1

As previously announced, our new online cultural pass program is set to launch on April 1, and this is not a joke! We have approximately 100 confirmed library participants and 18 confirmed attractions. We will resume adding additional libraries after the launch date.

The website for the project, exploremoreillinois.org, is up and running with more information. We also have a new logo for Explore More:



BiblioBoard Update

Last month, we told you about the new educational content added to BiblioBoard, including the Time for Kids module, featuring nonfiction readers and Teacher Created materials, with a focus on science, math, and social studies.

We received the remaining titles in this collection, and BiblioBoard gave us some additional content from Spotted Owl Press to make up for the delay. Both the Time for Kids and Spotted Owl Press modules include Spanish content.

In addition, Andrea Bliss, the LTA student from College of DuPage that has been working at RAILS as part of her practicum, created a curation of content about winter activities which we featured on the BiblioBoard page this month.

eRead Illinois

We are gearing up for [eRead Illinois](#) renewal season. With the help of RAILS IT staff, we have made several improvements that will make the sign up and renewal process less cumbersome for RAILS staff. We will utilize our CRM (customer relationship management) system more and reduce our reliance on Excel spreadsheets for tracking eRead Illinois Axis 360 membership.

In other eRead news, we continue to work closely with Baker & Taylor on reporting feedback to incorporate into future platform improvements. An update of the app will be released in late March or early April.

Building Collaborative Relationships & Fostering Networking

RAILS Online Round Table: Programming & Collections for Those with Dementia/Alzheimer's

RAILS is hosting our [first online networking event](#) on Friday, April 5, from 10-11 a.m. The [Serving Patrons with Dementia Networking Group](#) will lead a discussion and there will be a short presentation by Tina Williams from White Oak Library District and David Kelsey from St. Charles Public Library District.

RAILS Online Round Tables are hour-long forums hosted by networking groups on a specific topic. These forums are held via GoToWebinar and any library staff member from any Illinois library is invited to attend. RAILS Board members are also welcome!

RAILS and IACRL Planning Two Networking Opportunities for Academic Libraries

As mentioned last month, RAILS and the Illinois Association of College & Research Libraries (IACRL) are planning two networking events, similar to the two events held last November at Northwestern University and Prairie State College. We now have more details!

The [first event](#) will be held on Thursday, April 25, at Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove, and will focus on tips, ideas, and best practices relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in academic libraries. The [second event](#) will be held on Monday, April 29, at Methodist College in Peoria, and will focus on how academic libraries can more effectively tell their stories. (This coincides with our year-long campaign mentioned in the next section.)

Registration is open for both events and RAILS Board members are welcome to attend.

RAILS Member Meetup in Darien

On March 18, RAILS hosted a Member Meetup at Hinsdale South High School in Darien. This event also included a presentation about Hinsdale South's partnership with Indian Prairie Public Library. Attendees were invited to tour both libraries.

Telling the Library Story

Helping Members Tell Their Story

Telling Your Story Campaign Survey

RAILS received over 380 responses to our survey asking members for more specific feedback on how we could best help them tell their stories and prove their value to their various stakeholders during our [year-long My Library Is... campaign](#). We are currently analyzing the survey results and will use them to develop specific campaign activities in the year ahead. We will keep the board informed of our progress.

Helping Libraries Be the Best They Can Be

Ensuring Ongoing Library Staff Development

“Paying Attention to Pay Equity” Webinar

This March 21 webinar, presented by HR Source, gave a comprehensive update on pay equity laws and discussed issues that could trigger pay gaps and other equity problems in a library.

Upcoming RAILS CE Highlights

RAILS Board members are welcome to attend these (and any) upcoming CE events. [Register on L2](#) (librarylearning.info):

- “Booktalks and Beyond: The Best New Diverse Children’s Books for Storytimes, Programs, and Booklists,” April 5
- “Stop Talking and Start Testing: How to Improve Your Website with Usability Testing,” April 10
- “Top Employment Law Issues,” April 16

Helping All Libraries Provide the Best Possible Service

Certification Update

The annual online certification process runs through March 31, so it’s crunch time! RAILS staff, especially our administrative assistants, are contacting member libraries that have not already certified to remind them of the deadline and to assist them as needed.

All library system members *must* complete both the annual ILLINET Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Traffic Survey and the certification process to qualify for continuing system services and grant programs from the Illinois State Library. If any RAILS libraries fail to certify successfully, we will ask at the April board meeting that the RAILS Board recommend to the Illinois State Library that their system membership be suspended.

As of March 11, 1,001 RAILS members of 1,283 total had completed their ILL Traffic Survey, for an overall completion rate of 78.02%. As of March 11, 951 RAILS members had completed certification, for an overall completion rate of 74.12%.

Developing Library Leaders

Elevate & Directors University

The [Elevate Illinois Libraries Leadership Program](#) will be held on April 27, at the Illinois State Library. Elevate is a statewide initiative to recruit and nurture future Illinois library leaders. This year's program will focus on how to build effective teams. The third annual [Directors University](#)

will be held June 3-7, also at the State Library. This event provides training and networking opportunities for new public library directors.

Registration for both events is underway, with over 90 applicants from across the state for Elevate and 40 applicants for Directors University at the time of this writing. RAILS staff serve on the planning committee for both events.

Preparing Libraries for the Future

Helping Libraries Respond to Change

RAILS Helps Members Respond to Opiate Overdose Epidemic

The opiate abuse epidemic has exploded in the past few years, and libraries across the country, including libraries in the RAILS area, are becoming sites of overdoses.

To help our libraries feel more prepared to deal with this growing issue, RAILS offered a webinar in March, “Opiate Users in Your Library: From Behavior Management to Overdoses,” presented by library security expert Dr. Steve Albrecht. In addition to providing an overview of the opiate epidemic, the webinar also included a discussion of Narcan use and the safety hazards related to opiate use within library facilities.

Aiming to Be the Best Library System

Member Communication/Engagement

RAILS Member Update, April 11

RAILS holds quarterly update sessions to inform members about the latest RAILS news and to give them an opportunity to share their library news. The next update is Thursday, April 11, from 10 a.m.-noon. All RAILS Board members are invited to attend at an available RAILS videoconference location or via one-way video streaming (RAILS Live). View a list of locations and [register on L2](#) (librarylearning.info). Over 100 RAILS members typically register for the update sessions.

April 11 topics include:

- A discussion of the increase in the minimum wage in Illinois and options for libraries moving forward. Diane Foote, Executive Director of the Illinois Library Association, will join us for this discussion.
- An update on system membership standards and how it will benefit all RAILS libraries to complete our [data collection form](#).
- How libraries can get involved with [SimplyE](#), an open source e-reader app that makes it possible for patrons to access all of a library’s different e-book collections in one place.

Matt Hammermeister from the Pinnacle Library Cooperative will also talk about Pinnacle's participation as a beta-tester in the [SimplyE for Consortia](#) project.

- Latest news about [our campaign](#) to help all RAILS libraries to tell their stories and promote their value to their different stakeholders
- An update on [Explore More Illinois](#), our new online cultural attractions pass program

There will also be reports from three RAILS multitype collaborative grant awardees. These reports are always very popular with our members as they give them ideas for projects they might implement at their own libraries.

RAILS Member Visits in Galesburg and Burr Ridge Regions

Since our last report, RAILS visited Blandinsville-Hire Public Library District, where the library is installing new shelving.

RAILS practicum student Andrea Bliss joined us for visits to two special libraries in the Burr Ridge area, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Joint Commission; an academic library, Concordia University Chicago; and a public library, Itasca Community Library. Highlights include seeing the collection of original Rembrandt drawings at the Concordia University library, as well as hearing about a business community book club run by Itasca Community Library staff.

RAILS Presentations at Kane County Institute Day on March 1

Anna Behm, RAILS E-Content Specialist, and Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, presented at the Kane County Regional Office of Education's Institute Day in Batavia. Anna presented "E-Books and More!: E-Content Services from RAILS." Dan presented "10 Ways RAILS Can Enhance Your School Library." Over 100 school librarians participated.

RAILS at Illinois Youth Services Institute

RAILS is a sponsor and will exhibit at the 2019 Illinois Youth Services Institute on March 21-22, at the Marriott Bloomington-Normal Hotel & Conference Center. This conference is held every other year and approximately 300 Illinois youth services staff members are expected to attend.

Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, will be on hand to talk with booth visitors about RAILS' many offerings for library staff serving youth, including our new [Dreams Take Flight video](#), which depicts children discovering the library and all it has to offer; continuing education opportunities, BiblioBoard and eRead Illinois, Explore More Illinois, networking opportunities, and more.

RAILS Facebook Engagement Statistics, January/February 2018 vs. 2019

Month	Daily New Likes	Daily Page Engaged Users	Weekly Total Reach
Jan-18	15	26	1215
Jan-19	24	53	2488
<i>Change</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>104%</i>	<i>105%</i>
Feb-18	11	22	874
Jan-19	25	52	1854
<i>Change</i>	<i>127%</i>	<i>136%</i>	<i>112%</i>

RAILS Staff News

Annual RAILS Staff In-Service Day

RAILS has scheduled our annual staff in-service for July 25, at Illinois Central College in East Peoria. All RAILS offices will be closed and RAILS delivery service will not operate. Watch for further details closer to the date.