

21 June 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – June, 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

Simply-E and access to e-books

Interest in this project continues to grow. SHARE, the IHLS consortium has expressed interest. I will be meeting with people at ALA about Simply E and I will report to the board on progress at the board meeting.

Speaking of ALA, the timing of the conference with our board meeting is a little tricky; the board meeting is directly after ALA and I will be away so my written report will be somewhat skimpy, but I will update it at the meeting.

Explore More Illinois

SHARE has also expressed interest in Explore More Illinois. Jessica will begin working with them when the SWAN libraries have been added. We will ask the SHARE libraries to assist us with identifying and adding attractions in their geographic area.

Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story

My Library Is.... Campaign

Work continues on our campaign to help libraries tell their stories. We are getting ready to launch the campaign website “My Library Is...” and we are promoting the campaign in our *E-News*.

We will be meeting with members of the ILA marketing committee to discuss how we can collaborate, and not duplicate, on efforts to assist libraries with telling their stories. ILA has a similar goal to ours in their strategic plan.

Copying this report from the ILA newsletter. I added the highlighting.

Legislative Update: Close of the Spring Session in Springfield

The spring 2019 legislative session in Springfield came to a close at the end of May, with qualified successes for libraries. Some pieces of legislation ILA supported were passed or remain in progress; while many other bills we opposed did not pass. The state budget, which passed, contains appropriations and re-appropriations of \$66,141,234 for libraries, including \$875,000 from the Capital Development Fund and \$2,892,634 from the Build Illinois Bond Fund. There is good news on the federal level as well; the House Appropriations Committee approved its fiscal year 2020 recommendations, including a \$25 million increase for IMLS for a total of \$267 million (including potentially \$6 million for Illinois via LSTA's Grants-to-States program, a dramatic increase over 2019's \$4.2 million); and a \$2 million increase for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program that provides grants for school libraries, for a total of \$29 million.

Here in Illinois, legislative successes include the passing of HB 1637 Immigration Status, which keeps the responsibility for federal immigration status enforcement under its appropriate jurisdiction, not local units of government; and the defeat of all proposed property tax freeze bills. A bill ILA supported to make consistent qualifications for serving as a library trustee across district or municipal libraries, SB 1149, passed the Senate unanimously and had an amendment added in the House to exempt Chicago Public Library; we expect it to advance in the fall veto session. HB 2993, a bill ILA

opposed that would require a front-door referendum when library districts seek to annex unserved areas passed, but a provision allowing for disconnecting annexed territory was removed. Bills prohibiting the use of public funds for conference attendance, requiring additional burdensome public notice requirements, prohibiting units of government from opposing unit consolidation and elimination bills, and regulating the amount of reserves a library district may maintain, were all defeated. SB 910, a bill to allow a referendum to change the board of the Aurora Public Library, a city library, from appointed to elected, passed. For a complete list of legislation followed and advocated for or against this year, please visit the [Legislative Issues page](#) on the ILA web site.

Help libraries be the best they can be

Harvey Public Library

We have been providing some consulting assistance to the Harvey Public Library District. The library has had some severe financial problems mostly related to the low level of property tax collections (approximately 70% over the last few years). Jamie Rachlin, a financial consultant, has been working with their director and board to develop a financial plan that will reduce their deficits and still allow them to provide good service to residents.

Directors University

I attended Directors University in Springfield for a day. As in the previous two years, the attendees, from both RAILS and IHLS, literally seemed to soak up the information provided to them about budgeting, human resources, strategic planning, safety and security, policies and all of the other fun topics that library directors deal with day in and day out. It is such a great opportunity to train new directors all at once, to provide them with great networking time with their colleagues and to show all of them the incredible diversity of public libraries in Illinois. A total of 51 new directors attended, 30 of them from RAILS.

Prepare libraries for the future

Unserved residents

We are working on a survey that will be sent to all public libraries in RAILS, asking them about the various ways in which they serve the unserved. Hopefully, this survey will provide a full

picture of all the ways that libraries are working to provide services to untaxed residents. This is one of the tasks that the Universal Service Committee asked us to undertake.

We are also working on some additions and changes to the Library District Law, as I reported previously. Scott Pointon and Paul Mills are assisting in the development of language that I hope we can bring to ILA and the Public Policy Committee later this summer.

Aim to be the best library system in the country

Orientation and end of year, beginning of year, logistics

The board orientation will be the morning of July 26. All board members are welcome and encouraged to attend in Burr Ridge. The board meeting will begin at 1 pm, as usual. Lunch will be served and the orientation will include a tour.

We will provide an overview of RAILS services, finances, strategic plan, board roles and board committees. If the board has specific suggestions, we would love to hear them.

Staff in service day is July 25 so it's a busy week!

This Month at RAILS – June 2019

Promoting/Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

Leading/Working with Libraries to Expand Resource Sharing

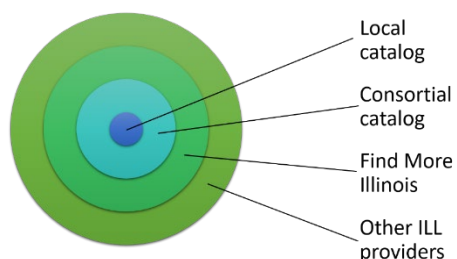


How Libraries Can Expand Resource Sharing with Find More Illinois

Library staff often ask how [Find More Illinois](#) fits into the overall resource sharing picture. It is not intended to replace a library's local catalog or shared catalog system. Rather, it connects existing catalogs and provides the next place to look for and request materials when they are not available locally. Library patrons can quickly search all of the catalogs in Find More Illinois in a single search with no need to re-enter search terms.

For libraries with a standalone integrated library system (ILS), Find More Illinois is the second place to look. For libraries in a shared catalog consortium, Find More Illinois is the third place to look. Other interlibrary loan systems, such as OCLC's WorldShare Interlibrary Loan, can still be used after that when necessary. (See diagram below.)

Anyone can search Find More Illinois, whether or not their library is a participant, so please encourage others to give it a try! Here's a simple talking point to explain it: You can use Find More Illinois to search multiple Illinois library catalogs at once. If your library participates, you can log in to place requests, and pick up items at your local library.



New Find More Illinois Software Brings Additional Benefits to Users

The SHAREit software that powers [Find More Illinois](#) was upgraded to version 6 in late May. RAILS was the first SHAREit customer to upgrade to the version and we are working with our vendor, Auto-Graphics, to provide feedback and to tweak the new version.

Benefits include greater security, the ability to open multiple sessions in different tabs of the same browser, and improved display of search results. The new version also provides more flexibility in modifying displays. For example, we have moved the display of holdings locations to the top of the full record display and have added reviews from [Goodreads](#) for titles that have them.

Catalog Membership Grants

RAILS offers grants to increase membership in RAILS-supported shared catalog consortia or LLSAPs (Local Library System Automation Programs) by funding startup costs for any RAILS member library that isn't currently an LLSAP member. RAILS LLSAPs are CCS (Cooperative Computer Services), Pinnacle, PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA-NFP, and SWAN.

We have awarded four [Catalog Membership Grants](#) since the April deadline for applications:

- Rock Falls Elementary School District - \$17,939 to join Rock River Library Consortium
- Indian Trails Public Library - \$51,465 to join CCS
- Milledgeville Public Library - \$8,409 to join Rock River Library Consortium
- Astoria Public Library - \$6,458.95 to join RSA

FY 2021 LLSAP Support Grants

Under RAILS' new annual LLSAP support grant program, we will provide a mix of financial support and in-kind services to our six LLSAPs. Applications have been distributed to all six and we anticipate making award decisions in October.

Other Consortia News

The eight libraries formerly in the Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC) are now part of [PrairieCat](#). They went live on May 22. RAILS supported the merger through our [catalog membership grant program](#) with a total award of \$187,955.10. The eight libraries are:

- Cherry Valley Public Library District
- Harvard Diggins Library (Harvard)
- Ida Public Library (Belvidere)
- Nippersink Public Library District (Richmond)
- North Suburban Library District (Loves Park and Roscoe)
- Rockford University
- Talcott Free Library District (Rockton)
- Woodstock Public Library

The resource-sharing impact of adding these libraries to PrairieCat is already apparent in search results from the PrairieCat catalog and in changes in delivery volume at the RAILS Rockford facility.

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

BiblioBoard Update

A new collection of Pop-up Picks arrived late last month. (Visit popuppicks.com and click on Start Reading.) This round of content includes a celebration of Pride Month, books and comics that follow this year's summer reading theme, "A Universe of Stories," and the winners of statewide Indie Author Project competitions.

In other news, RAILS plans to make BiblioBoard's e-book self-publishing module available statewide later this year. Powered by Pressbooks, the module is currently available to libraries for purchase. Pressbooks allows writers to format and publish their books. Authors will also have the option to submit their e-books for inclusion in the Indie Illinois e-book collection on BiblioBoard, for consideration for inclusion in Library Journal's curated Self-E Select collection, and/or to enter the [Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project](#) contest.

BiblioBoard Facebook Ad Campaign Progress Report



RAILS continues to boost [BiblioBoard](#) ads on our [Facebook page](#). The campaign began in early April and will conclude in late June/early July. The 8th ad is running at the time of this writing (mid-June).

Each ad promotes a specific title that is available without cost to anyone in Illinois via RAILS' partnership with BiblioBoard. We will

present a full report on the ad campaign in the July 2019 RAILS Board meeting report.

eRead Illinois Update

Staff from over 40 member libraries attended our recent "What's New with eRead Illinois Axis 360?" webinar. We received several fantastic questions from attendees.

We will be meeting with the team from Baker & Taylor at the ALA annual conference in Washington D.C. this month to discuss plans for the platform and our partnership.

CARLI E-Resources Brokering Service

CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) has created an advisory group of Illinois public, school, and special librarians for the purpose of shaping an e-resources brokering service for [ILLINET](#) member libraries that do not belong to CARLI. (Any library that is a member of a library system, including RAILS, is an ILLINET library.)

Representatives from RAILS are Leila Heath, RAILS Library Resources and Programs Manager; Katie Kraushaar, Manager of Information Services at Quincy Public Library; and Eric Pasteur, Digital & Audiovisual Collections librarian at Oak Park Public Library. The advisory group will

also include representatives from the Illinois Heartland Library System and the Illinois State Library. The group's first meeting will be July 10.

Providing Greater Purchasing Power

New Bindery Pickup Service

RAILS has worked with HF Group to create a consolidated bindery pickup service. Libraries can put bindery shipments to HF Group into RAILS delivery, and HF Group will pick them up from the RAILS Bolingbrook facility when there are four or more orders. This will allow libraries to send smaller shipments without incurring delivery charges, as HF Group requires a \$500 minimum order for pickup and delivery. [Procedures, the 2019 schedule, and HF Group information](#) are posted on the RAILS website.

Building Collaborative Relationships & Fostering Networking

RAILS to Hold Meetup in Princeville on August 6

The next [RAILS Member Meetup](#) will be on Tuesday, August 6, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., at Lillie M. Evans Public Library District in Princeville. Staff from all types of libraries are invited to network with each other. There will also be a short presentation on the Bike the Trails Library to Library project. This project was awarded a RAILS Partnership Grant in January 2019.

RAILS Partners with SLA Illinois and SLA Iowa for Networking Event

On Friday, July 19, noon-3:30 p.m., RAILS and the Illinois and Iowa chapters of the Special Libraries Association will offer [a networking event](#) at the Deere & Company Administrative Center in Moline. This event is open to all library staff from any type of library, especially special libraries. It will include a presentation by Deere & Company library staff, news and updates from RAILS and SLA Illinois, an opportunity for networking, and a tour of the center.

RAILS Awards Four Partnership Grants

Four projects were selected to receive [RAILS Partnership grants](#) in June. These grants encourage member libraries to work with external partners on innovative programs and services. (As mentioned elsewhere in this report, RAILS is changing these grants in FY 2020 to focus on projects that coincide with our *My Library Is...* campaign.)

The four awardees are:

- McHenry County Historical Newspaper Digitization Project - McHenry Public Library, McHenry County Historical Society, Woodstock Public Library
- Skokie Cares SEED Initiative - Skokie Public Library, Village of Skokie, Skokie Park District, Skokie School District 73.5

- Count Me In Illinois 2020 - Be Counted Waukegan! - Waukegan Public Library, City of Waukegan, Waukegan Park District
- Nature Discovery Challenge - Westchester Public Library, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and Save the Prairie Society

Telling the Library Story

Helping Members Tell Their Story



Campaign Website Launches

RAILS' *My Library Is...* campaign is designed to help libraries of all types and sizes to tell their stories and articulate their value to different library stakeholders, including current and potential customers, boards, library administration, colleagues, legislators, and others. We are pleased to announce the debut of the new campaign website (by June 28) at www.mylibraryis.org.

The site includes toolkits, talking points, videos, continuing education opportunities and more to help libraries tell their stories. We are also strongly encouraging staff from all types of libraries to share what has worked for them in telling their stories. Please spread the word about the new website to anyone you know who works for a library, including other library trustees.

New Focus for Continuing Education and Partnership Grants for FY 2020

RAILS offers [CE Event Grants](#) to RAILS libraries, networking groups, and consortia to fund CE events that are made available to all RAILS member libraries and are of interest to a wide range of library staff. We have also been offering [Partnership Grants](#) for RAILS libraries to collaborate on cooperative projects.

Because of our focus on helping libraries to tell their stories, we are changing the focus of the two grants as well. Members will be asked to focus their grant applications on events and projects that help promote libraries and tell the library story. More information and grant application dates for FY 2020 will be available on the RAILS website soon.

Using Data to Tell the Library Story

RAILS' latest offering in our [Getting the Most from Your Library Data](#) series is the daylong workshop, "Introduction to Statistics for Librarians." The course will explain the purpose of simple statistical functions, and demonstrate in everyday language how they can be easily applied to survey and other data. It will be held on [July 10 at Peoria Public Library](#) or [July 11 at RAILS' Burr Ridge service center](#). Content will be the same each day.

Working with Illinois Library Association (ILA) on Telling the Library Story

RAILS staff met with representatives of the ILA Marketing Group in June to discuss ways we could work together to help all libraries tell their stories. RAILS has the goal of helping members to tell their story in our strategic plan. ILA has a similar goal in their strategic plan: to “develop education and tools for library leaders and staff to establish clear understanding of libraries’ worth among the people served...”

We will continue to work with the marketing group and other stakeholders with similar interests because there is power in numbers and to avoid a duplication of efforts.

Helping Libraries Be the Best They Can Be

Ensuring Ongoing Library Staff Development

Recent RAILS CE Highlight

Nearly 60 library staff members attended the “Reinventing Your Library Space” workshop at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin in May. The daylong workshop was led by marketing professional and branding expert David Vinjamuri. Participants learned how to adapt the principles of retail space planning to libraries. With guidance from Vinjamuri, attendees worked in groups to analyze their current library spaces, and come up with new space usage strategies designed to increase discovery and provide a better patron experience.

Preparing Libraries for the Future

Helping Libraries Respond to Change

Helping Libraries Meet the New Illinois Minimum Wage Challenge

The increase in the Illinois minimum wage presents a variety of opportunities and challenges for libraries. RAILS wants to help our members to take full advantage of the opportunities and to find ways to meet the challenges successfully. As a first step, we offered a webinar presenting “Strategies for Minimum Wage Compliance” on June 26. Experts from HR Source discussed short and long-term strategies, and presented other helpful information.

RAILS will develop other ways to help members with this very timely and important issue. Stay tuned for much more information to come!

Aiming to Be the Best Library System

Member Communication/Engagement

July 18 RAILS Member Update Has Something for Everyone

The next RAILS member update will be Thursday, July 18, from 10 a.m.-noon. Staff from all types of libraries (and RAILS Board members) are invited to attend at one of several RAILS videoconference locations or via one-way streaming (RAILS Live). [Register on L2](#).

A major topic for discussion will be RAILS' *My Library Is...* campaign, including our new website, the new focus for our CE Event and Partnership grants, and more. (See above for further details on the latest campaign news.)

We will also discuss our grant to recreate the L2 member database and CE events calendar ([librarylearning.info](#)), revised membership standards, efforts to help with the unserved challenge in Illinois, [Find More Illinois](#), [Explore More Illinois](#), and more. There will also be reports on RAILS member activities, including collaborative efforts to plan for the 2020 Census and an effort to create a community dementia resource center with the help of a RAILS partnership grant.

RAILS Visits to Joliet, Northbrook, and Bloomington Regions

Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, recently visited 10 member libraries in our Joliet, Northbrook, and Bloomington regions, including five public libraries, three at school libraries, one academic, and one special library. Highlights included hearing more about the recent book club discussion of *Crazy Rich Asians* at Lake Forest High School, learning about the history of Atlanta Public Library's 1908 building, and discussing a recent \$2k anonymous donation received by H.A. Peine Public Library District in Minier.

RAILS Staff News

ALA/AvramCamp

Anne Slaughter, RAILS Director of Technology Services, attended the American Library Association (ALA) conference in Washington, D.C., and presented at LITA's (Library and Information Technology Association) AvramCamp, a one-day preconference for women and non-binary individuals working in library technology.