

19 October 2020

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – September, 2020

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

Election Day closing –

back in the summer a law was passed by the GA to close government offices that are not polling places on November 3, Election Day. This law elicited general confusion because of the lack of clarity on what constitutes a government office. The Illinois Municipal League filed a lawsuit and we have been waiting to hear about the resolution, although RAILS did ultimately decide to close “in the spirit” of the law. On Friday, we learned that the Municipal League “won” the lawsuit.

From Julie Tappendorf on Friday, October 16: IML won their lawsuit:

<https://legal.iml.org/file.cfm?key=20043>

The Sangamon County Circuit Court held the Election Code amendments are ambiguous, so the requirement that "all government offices" close on Election Day 2020 "does not apply to local governments such as municipalities . . ."

The Attorney General would have to act quickly to appeal, since the election day holiday is a little over two weeks away.

It isn't clear whether the decision would be binding outside of Will or Sangamon Counties, although the reasoning of the court seemed equally applicable to local governments throughout the state.

It is also not clear to me what RAILS should do as we are not a municipality.

REALM Update

The latest literature review and test results were released on October 14. They do not provide any concrete recommendations, but the literature review does say this:

The new findings highlight the growing evidence that the virus is most commonly spread between people in close contact and through virus-containing respiratory droplets, and that aerosols may be a contributor to infection. Additional details regarding the effectiveness of social distancing, masks, fresh air, UV light, and hand washing are provided as well. The findings underscore the fact that there remain some critical “known unknowns” about COVID-19, including (1) how much virus is needed to infect someone, (2) how much virus an infected person sheds, and (3) whether people are getting infected by touching objects and surfaces.

Other studies/reports continue to appear that recommend different quarantine times – the state of Oregon has put out guidance recommending 24 hours maximum:

We considered the testing results, the commentary in The Lancet, and some of the studies cited therein and came to the conclusion that an overnight quarantine period of materials is likely sufficient and 24 hours is even more precautionary. This would be ideally combined with advice to library workers to wash hands with soap and water regularly especially if they are prone to touching their faces.

The full letter is in this packet.

[Another study from Australia](#) reported that the virus can live as long as 28 days.

The findings from Australia's national science agency suggest SARS-Cov-2 can survive for far longer than thought. Previous laboratory tests have found that SARS-Cov-2 can survive for **two to three days on bank notes and glass, and up to six days on plastic and stainless steel**, although results vary.

However, the research from **Australian agency CSIRO found the virus was "extremely robust," surviving for 28 days** on smooth surfaces such as glass found on mobile phone screens and both plastic and paper banknotes, when kept at 20C (68F), which is about room temperature, and in the dark.

In comparison, the flu virus can survive in the same circumstances for 17 days.

The study, published in Virology Journal, also found SARS-Cov-2 survived for less time at hotter temperatures than cooler temperatures; it stopped being infectious within 24 hours at 40C on some surfaces.

It also stayed longer on smooth, non-porous surfaces than on porous materials such as cloth, which was found not to carry any infectious virus past 14 days.

On Wednesday, we met with Greg McCormick, Leslie Bednar, Anne Craig and Dianne Foote to discuss moving back from 7 days statewide. There is a strong desire that we all – IHLS, RAILS and CARLI – have the same process and policy. We asked Greg to reach out to IDPH to see if he can get solid guidance for libraries. Of course, we want to be team players, but I made it clear that our members are impatient with the 7 days and that we believe that, based on all of the evidence, 3 days is abundantly cautious. We cannot eliminate risk, but we must make the best decisions we can to manage risk. I suggested a deadline of October 21 to hear from IDPH and all agreed.

Census 2020

Amy de la Fuente will give the service of the month report on the Census. As I am sure you have been following the saga of the Census, I will only say that Amy and her colleagues at the other Regional Intermediaries, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the team at RAILS that assisted her, and all the subrecipients have done amazing work, pivoting time and again, having end-dates and extensions appearing and disappearing daily (and even more often!).

I want to call out in particular the Administrative Team especially Karen Goyer and Jody Rubel, Grant Halter, Nicole Zimmerman and the Finance Team, especially Jean Johansen, Bill Goetz, Debby Michener and Jim Kregor for managing many budget revisions, paying lots of bills in a very timely fashion and searches for mysteriously missing cents in the budget, and more.

Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story

Update on ILA PPC and Advocacy Committee meetings

PPC and the Advocacy Committee met on October 5. At PPC, we discussed the ILA Executive Board decisions about which legislative proposals to move forward. There was a lot of discussion, again, about our proposal give local public library boards the ability to waive fees for non-residents under 18. This is not a mandate, as the Cards for Kids act is. There are still, apparently, many questions about our proposal to eliminate some barriers when public libraries want to merge with other public libraries. Again, not a mandate, local choice and vote.

Help libraries be the best they can be

ILA conference in October

I presented a program with Catherine Yanikoski Adamowski, Deputy Director at Joliet Public Library, on our efforts to expand library services to the unserved. Greg McCormick joined us to answer questions about the pending changes to the administrative rules.

I also moderated a program with board members Michael Campbell and Jenna Nemec-Loise, Amy Walsh, school librarian in Joliet Township High School and Christy Semande, current president of AISLE on the importance of school librarians and the need for all of us to collaborate to advocate for school libraries and librarians.

Prepare libraries for the future

RAILS, social justice and EDI

EDI committee – call for member participants

We have almost 40 applicants from member library staff in RAILS to serve on the EDI committee. Dianne and I met on Friday to discuss the applicants and I will be talking to the executive team also. We received multiple applicants from all types and sizes of libraries and from a range of staff – director to new librarian and non librarians. I am very pleased to have had this robust response. The geographic response is not as varied as we could have wished. We hope to nail down the membership this week and find a first meeting date in November.

Aim to be the best library system in the country

Looking ahead to November

Board development topic – Halle Cox – special libraries: trends and challenges



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Document 7.3.1



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October 5, 2020

Updated Advice on Handling Library Materials during COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to questions received from local libraries, the State Library of Oregon sought the advice of experts from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on how to handle and circulate library materials safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those questions arose as libraries independently interpreted the results of the REOpening Archives, Libraries, and Museums (REALM) project, which studied the viability of the novel coronavirus on surfaces typically found on circulating library materials. The REALM project's intent is to provide information, not to give specific recommendations on materials handling.

OHA staff reviewed the results of tests 1-4 of the REALM project, together with studies and commentary from other experts analyzing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Staff reviewing the information included Deputy State Epidemiologist Ali Hamade, PhD, DABT; Public Health Physician Claire Poche, PhD; Public Health Physician Ann Thomas, PhD; and other analysts from the Oregon Health Authority. Below is Dr. Hamade's response to the State Library's inquiry. Italics added.

“We considered the testing results, the commentary in The Lancet, and some of the studies cited therein and came to the conclusion that an overnight quarantine period of materials is likely sufficient and 24 hours is even more precautionary. This would be ideally combined with advice to library workers to wash hands with soap and water regularly especially if they are prone to touching their faces.

For this conclusion, we accounted for almost complete virus loss of viability within 1-6 days in the REALM studies despite the high amounts of viable virus used that are not reflective of most real-life scenarios.

With that in mind, when considering the relatively low amount of virus transferred to a surface, how much virus becomes nonviable within a day, how much the next person picks up, and how often they touch eye/nose/mouth, our conclusion of quarantine between overnight and 24 hours is reasonable.”

The State Library of Oregon cultivates, preserves, and delivers library and information services to foster lifelong learning and community engagement.

This advice may differ from libraries' current practices, which are informed by individual interpretations of the REALM results, analysis of other research, and consultation with local public health professionals. OHA's recommendations are intended to assist libraries in making local decisions about handling and circulating materials safely. As such, the State Library recommends that libraries do the following:

- Compare above OHA's advice to current practice. Note how implementing the recommendations may change workflows, if at all.
- Share this information with library staff, decision makers, local health departments, and anyone else involved in establishing the library's pandemic protocols.
- Discuss the recommendations and determine if any changes to current practice are warranted, based on local situations and needs.

As Dr. Hamade noted, libraries can continue helping mitigate the spread of novel coronavirus by adopting policies and procedures to encourage pandemic best practices:

- Wearing masks/face coverings,
- Washing or sanitizing hands frequently,
- Avoiding touching one's eyes/nose/mouth, and
- Maintaining at least 6 feet of physical distance from others.

Libraries seeking further information and support to respond to the pandemic may access the State Library's page on COVID-19 information for Oregon libraries at <https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/coronavirus>. Questions may also be directed to Buzzy Nielsen, Program Manager for Library Support and Development Services, at buzzy.nielsen@state.or.us or 971-375-3486.

This Month at RAILS – October 2020

Promoting/Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

Leading/Working with Libraries to Expand Resource Sharing

RAILS Resource Sharing Committee Update

The RAILS [Resource Sharing Committee](#) met in September. The committee includes two RAILS Board members and eight member library representatives. Its charge is to “investigate and recommend ways to improve and increase resource sharing in Illinois, particularly among RAILS member libraries; to provide the best library services to Illinois residents; and to optimize the use of tax dollars.

In September, the group reaffirmed their commitment to these priorities set in March:

- Increase a statewide culture of resource sharing
- Improve awareness of resource sharing
- Provide services for the unserved

They will meet again in December to discuss next steps towards meeting these goals.

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

RAILS Submits E-Resources Grant Application to Illinois State Library

RAILS submitted a \$125,000 grant application to the Illinois State Library in late September. We intend to use grant funds to purchase e-books and audiobooks for K-12 users to add to the [eRead Illinois](#) collection. We will add both recreational and educational materials to supplement the high-demand titles that are the focus of the collection.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply increased demand for e-books at RAILS libraries and this demand continues to grow. At area schools, new remote and hybrid learning models have created an urgent need for reading materials that can be accessed remotely. Over 50 schools have joined eRead Illinois since mid-April 2020, bringing total participation to 196 school libraries as of September 22. If the grant application is successful, the grant award will be paid as a reimbursement with activities beginning in November 2020.

eRead Illinois Update

We continue to support and onboard libraries to [eRead Illinois Axis 360](#), although fewer libraries are signing up now than were joining in late August and early September. This has given us time to do some necessary housekeeping, including updating each library’s eRead Illinois status in the [new L2](#).

BiblioBoard Update

BiblioBoard's [Recovering the Classics](#) (RTC) collection includes new book covers created by contemporary artists for public domain titles. As previously reported, we have been adding new titles from Plympton to this collection. We recently received the last shipment of these titles and now have 180 RTC titles available via the BiblioBoard Library. Staff from member libraries can download the cover images from the RAILS website to use for programs, promotions, and more. All BiblioBoard collections are freely available to anyone in Illinois through RAILS' partnership with BiblioBoard.



Explore More Illinois Update

Although the [Explore More Illinois](#) cultural pass program is still suspended due to COVID-19, Jessica Barnes, RAILS Special Projects Librarian, presented a webinar for RAILS and IHLS member libraries on October 1 to help them learn more about implementation, how to make a reservation using our easy-to-use software, and how to promote the program. The webinar was recorded and we will share it with other libraries as well. Currently, 276 RAILS libraries and 34 IHLS libraries participate in Explore More Illinois.



Collaboration on Statewide Initiatives

RAILS staff met with IHLS staff in October to talk about several statewide initiatives, including BiblioBoard and [inkie.org](#). We updated IHLS on the BiblioBoard statistics dashboard, as well as the new Recovering the Classics titles (see above). These meetings will continue in the future.

Providing Greater Purchasing Power

RAILS Deals and Discounts Update

RAILS recently announced deals for our member libraries with more favorable terms for established vendors Swank and Communico. The Swank annual license will allow unlimited showings of thousands of movies in the public library, from classics to new releases. Communico helps public libraries manage their events, room bookings, website, curbside service, self-check, patron app, staff app, and digital signage from one unified platform.

More information on all RAILS deals and discounts is [available on our website](#).

Building Collaborative Relationships & Fostering Networking

RAILS Partnership Celebrating 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote Continues

As announced last month, RAILS is partnering with the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Arlington Heights Memorial Library, Aurora Public Library, Gail Borden Public Library District,

and Schaumburg Township District Library to help celebrate the centennial anniversary of women's right to vote by planning a virtual suite of exhibits and programs.

All programs are accessible on Facebook Live from the pages of Hull-House Museum, RAILS, and participating libraries. These exhibits and programs are supplemented with a virtual map detailing the multitude of stories and exhibits throughout Illinois, particularly within libraries and open to all individuals and organizations, that illuminate the fight for suffrage and women's activism in general. People across Illinois, as well as library staff, are invited to share their stories about the history of women's voting in their community and/or the current impact of current women activists.

RAILS Creates Two New Email Lists Based on Member Feedback

RAILS hosts a variety of email lists to help our members to communicate with each other and share best practices. At the request of staff from member libraries, we recently created two new email lists for Business Services and Passport Services. These are open to staff from any RAILS library. Members can subscribe to these and other lists by logging into the RAILS website and visiting the [Email Lists page](#).

October Online Roundtables on the 2020 Election and Streaming Services for Libraries

RAILS holds regular online roundtables via Zoom to help members share best practices on topics of interest. Each roundtable features a brief presentation by one or more presenters followed by an online chat discussion. Roundtables are also archived for later viewing. RAILS held an online roundtable on October 9 for members to discuss methods for educating voters and the role libraries can play in the upcoming elections. Over 40 people attended live. A [recording is available](#) on the RAILS website.

RAILS will hold an online roundtable on Thursday, October 29, from 2–3 p.m., to discuss different streaming services (beyond Zoom) that libraries can use, including StreamYard. [Register on L2](#).

Telling the Library Story

Helping Members Tell Their Story



RAILS My Library Is... Advisory Group

RAILS recruited 11 members from all four library types (academic, public, school, and special) to help us publicize our [My Library Is... campaign](#) to other libraries. The group's first meeting was on October 19. Thanks to the following volunteers!

- Janine Asmus, Leyden High Schools District # 212, West Leyden High School

- Victoria Blackmer, Robert R. Jones Public Library District
- Kirstin Finneran, Fox River Valley Public Library District
- Donna Forbis, Illinois Prairie District Public Library
- Gwen Gregory, Northern Illinois University
- Gail Graziani, Lisle Library District
- Nora Jimenez, Warrenville Public Library
- Hilaree Lombardo, Oregon Public Library District
- Jessica Parker, Kaneland High School
- Charlene Snelling, Gwendolyn Brooks Library, Chicago State University
- Laura Turner, Technical Information Center, Caterpillar, Inc.

New My Library Is... Blog Posts

Recent posts to the [My Library Is... blog](#) include:

- A [video interview](#) between RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom and Sasha Vasilic, Public Relations and Marketing Supervisor, Nilas-Maine District Library, about the library's "Best. Deal. Ever!" campaign, which won a John Cotton Dana Award for excellence in library public relations and strategic communication.
- A [post](#) by Anna Behm, RAILS E-Content Specialist, detailing how e-content bridged the gap during library building closures caused by the pandemic. Read [RAILS' report](#) on "The Impact of COVID-19 Related Closures on Library E-Content Usage."
- A [guest post](#) by Maria Fonseca, Digital Information Services Librarian at Matteson Area Public Library, about the library's transition from a very successful in-person Comic Con Fan Fest in 2019, to an equally successful virtual event in August 2020.
- A [video interview](#) between RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom and Dr. Mary Moen from the School Librarians of Rhode Island, about the group's video: [Overdue: The Value of School Librarians](#).

Advocating for and Helping Members Advocate for Libraries

RAILS Resumes Monthly Meetings with AISLE Board and IHLS

In FY 2020, RAILS met regularly with IHLS staff and Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) Board members to collaborate on activities to help advocate for school libraries and to help schools advocate for themselves. We will resume these monthly meetings beginning in early November.

Helping Libraries Be the Best They Can Be

Ensuring Ongoing Library Staff Development

Upcoming RAILS Continuing Education Webinars

RAILS will offer two online workshops focused on running effective online meetings October 29 and November 19, the final session in our “Directors Essentials” series focusing on facility management on November 13, and a webinar on winning grants on November 17. More details are available [on L2](#).

Developing Library Leaders

Directors University Update

Directors University is a joint project of the Illinois Heartland Library System, Illinois Library Association, Illinois State Library, and RAILS. This traditionally in-person, annual event provides training and networking opportunities for first-time or new-to-Illinois public library directors. Due to the pandemic, the event transitioned online for 2020.



Approximately 50 participants completed Directors University on September 25. A total of seven half-day sessions were offered during the summer months on a wide range of topics of interest to library directors, and the training topics were explored in greater depth during weekly breakout discussions between participants and their assigned director mentors. This year’s program was conducted using a combination of Zoom and Google Classroom. With the current uncertainty around the pandemic, the planning committee will discuss the viability of providing an online experience again in 2021.

Aiming to Be the Best Library System

Member Communication/Engagement

RAILS at Virtual ILA Conference, October, 20-22

RAILS activities at the Illinois Library Association’s (ILA) virtual conference included hosting a virtual exhibit booth each day of the conference, with information about RAILS programs/services, and opportunities to talk with RAILS staff via chat. Anyone who scanned their conference badge at our booth was entered into a drawing for one of two \$50 gift cards and was also sent some of our famous RAILS swag. (At the time of this writing, the conference had not yet taken place.)

RAILS staff and board members also presented these conference programs:

- “Service for All” – Deirdre Brennan and Joliet Public Library Assistant Director Catherine Yanikoski Adamowski
- “Many Illinois Libraries, One BIG Project” (L2) – RAILS Director of Technology Services

Anne Slaughter and RAILS Applications & Web Developer Brian Smith

- “The Library Ecosystem: Essential Collaboration Between Public and School Libraries and How to Do It” – RAILS Board Advocacy Committee members Michael Campbell and Jenna Nemec-Loise; Deirdre Brennan; Christy Semande, Canton Union SD #66; and Amy Walsh, Joliet West High School
- “Effective Library Marketing Campaigns” – RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom; Burgundy Hill, Quincy Public Library; and Ann Reeves, Eureka Public Library District
- “Make Your Data Useful: Telling Your Story and Advocating for Your Organization with Data” – RAILS Data Analysis Manager Grant Halter and Devan Parkison, Skokie Public Library

RAILS also sponsored the President’s Program, one of two general sessions at ILA.

RAILS at AISLE Conference, November 5 - 14

RAILS will host a virtual booth at the [2020 AISLE Conference](#) with information about RAILS programs/services especially for schools. Booth visitors will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$50 gift cards and can also receive some RAILS swag.

RAILS E-content Specialist Anna Behm and Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom will host a vendor demo presentation on Monday, November 9, 6:05–6:15 p.m. Topics covered will include RAILS resources for schools, including continuing education, deals & discounts, support for e-books, grants, and more. The session will be recorded and archived on the AISLE website for one year and shared on AISLE social media accounts.

RAILS is a Silver Sponsor of the 2020 AISLE Conference.

Modeling Best Practices & Innovation

RAILS EDI Staff Initiative Update

Approximately 50 RAILS staff from across our service centers participated in our first staff EDI training on October 7. This half-day online training was led by RAILS’ EDI consultant Elizabeth Lindsay-Ray, and provided context as to why equity, diversity and inclusion are important. It also helped staff explore what they were bringing to different situations so they can begin to think critically about language, messages, behavior, practices, and structures that might be altered to create an inclusive environment for all.

The training featured a number of breakout rooms to allow staff to discuss concepts and participate in different exercises. This same training will be offered on November 18 for the remaining RAILS staff.

RAILS CE Event Grants to Focus on EDI Training in FY 2021

RAILS offers CE Event grants to networking groups, consortia, and individual libraries across RAILS to offer CE events that are made available to all RAILS member libraries and are of interest to a wide range of library staff. EDI training will be the focus of these grants for FY 2021. This focus will align with the RAILS priority of supporting members in their EDI efforts, as training can be one of the most important and achievable first steps for libraries looking to get started in this work. We will share further details later this year, with the expectation that the first round of applications will be due in early 2021.

RAILS Staff News

Margae Schmidt, RAILS Consulting and Continuing Education Specialist, completed her MLIS from Dominican University in August 2020. Margae began working at RAILS in April 2014, and has worked with the Illinois Talking Books and Braille Services, Administrative Support, and now CE/Consulting. Margae received support to complete her degree from RAILS' educational benefits program.