

# RAILS Report

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## RAILS Strategic Plan: Strategic Goal 1

RAILS provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing for all member libraries.

**Objective 1: Enhance the sharing of knowledge and best practices through member networking and communications between all types of libraries.**

### RAILS Involved with AISLE Annual Conference and ILA Annual Conference

RAILS had a double booth at the October Illinois Library Association (ILA) conference. The booth featured live demos of different RAILS programs/services, including Find More Illinois, Explore More Illinois, inkie.org, eRead Illinois, Career Online High School, and L2 (Library Directory & Learning Calendar); a whiteboard where booth visitors could practice talking about their libraries by completing a sentence beginning with My Library Is...; opportunities to win four Barnes & Noble gift cards; and much more.

In addition, RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom presented at a panel session, “Crisis in Specialized Libraries”, RAILS Research Specialist Janette Derucki presented a poster session on the RAILS school library data project, and RAILS received the 2022 Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award. RAILS Board member Becky Spratford presented “Actively Anti-Racist Service to Leisure Readers: Foundations” and “Get On Board: Encouraging Library Workers to Run for Local Library and School Boards.” There was also a special reception to honor RAILS Executive Director Deirdre Brennan on her retirement.

RAILS was a Platinum Sponsor for the AISLE Conference, November 3 – 5, at the Tinley Park Convention Center and had a booth at the event. RAILS Data Research Specialist Janette Derucki and RAILS Data Analysis Manager Grant Halter presented a session on our school library data project: “By the Numbers: School Library Advocacy through Data.” They presented information about the project, including an overview, findings, advocacy efforts, and data tools, all in a fun Jeopardy format.

### RAILS at Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference

Leila Heath, Director of Library Resources & Programs, and Diana Rusch, Consulting & Continuing Education Specialist, attended the ARSL (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) annual conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee in September. Leila met with vendors and

attended several interesting programs and networking events. The conference was well-organized and provided many opportunities to connect with and learn from other libraries. Since RAILS has 219 member libraries who provide services to populations under 10,000, attending the conference helped us stay attune to the issues facing these libraries.

### **RAILS on the Road**

Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom has a goal to visit 20 RAILS member libraries by the end of the year. He's particularly interested in visiting libraries that have not had a RAILS staff member visit in the past two years (including virtual visits), and/or libraries that:

- Do not participate in Find More Illinois
- Do not participate in eRead Illinois
- Do not participate in Explore More Illinois
- Do not participate in a shared catalog
- Do not have a staff member on the RAILS Board or a board subcommittee

Any library type (academic, public, school, or special) can request a visit via the RAILS website. Dan is looking forward to speaking with directors, managers, and/or front-line staff about L2, continuing education, grants, RAILS e-resources, and more, and to hearing about what is happening at our member libraries.

### **RAILS September 29 Member Update Recording Available**

The recording from the September 29 RAILS Member Update is now available on the RAILS YouTube page. Topics include updates on new and proposed legislation, including filling public library trustee vacancies, RAILS' Statewide Access to Online Resources proposal, the Cards for Kids Act, and the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act. We also gave updates on our strategic plan and RAILS services and activities, and shared information about our School Library Data Project.

### ***Decennial Committees on Local Government Consolidation and Efficiency Act Guidance***

Public Act 102-1088 requires governmental units such as public library districts to establish a committee to study local efficiencies and report recommendations to their county board. The Ancel Glink law firm provided RAILS with an [FAQ to answer initial questions](#)

### **RAILS Participates in REALM Symposium**

Monica Harris, RAILS Associate Executive Director, recently attended the virtual REALM (Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums) Symposium. The two-day event focused on community resilience, health equity, the importance of trustworthiness, and the REALM Crisis

Management Toolkit. About 150 representatives from a variety of cultural heritage institutions, public health, and other organizations were invited to participate and contribute.

### **AISLE Partnership**

RAILS had our monthly meeting with representatives from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Illinois Library Association (ILA), and Illinois State Library (ISL) on October 4 to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries. Topics included an update on RAILS' school library data project, the upcoming ILA and AISLE conferences, materials challenges, and the possibility of holding a virtual Directors University type event for school libraries in 2023.

***Objective 2: Leverage economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power for member libraries so they can offer more resources to their users than libraries would be able to afford on their own.***

### **Swank Group Purchase Sign-Up and Renewal**

Swank Movie Licensing USA offers RAILS public libraries a special, discounted rate for their annual public performance license. RAILS public libraries currently participating in the RAILS group purchase or libraries not covered by a Swank license must renew/sign up for the group purchase by November 30, 2022. Library staff can visit the RAILS Deals & Discounts page and log in using their L2 email and password to view pricing for their library and to opt-in to the deal. The license is valid from January 1 - December 31, 2023.

### **BookBrowse for Libraries Sign-Up and Renewal**

BookBrowse for Libraries is an award-winning readers' advisory resource for library staff and patrons. Libraries must renew/sign up for the group purchase by December. For further information and pricing, libraries can visit the RAILS Deals & Discounts page. The RAILS group annual subscription begins on January 1, 2023.

### **Creativebug Discounted Pricing Announced**

Creativebug is a craft education hub for every skill level. Patrons have an all-access, no-boundaries pass to explore thousands of classes. People of all skill levels can work alongside instructors to learn craft techniques. RAILS members can find information and pricing on all our deals and discounts by logging into the RAILS Deals & Discounts page.

### Explore More Illinois Update

Explore More Illinois is RAILS' statewide online cultural and recreational pass program. As of October 11, 410 Illinois libraries participate (325 RAILS and 85 Illinois Heartland Library System libraries) and there are 48 attractions.

In September and early October, Explore More Illinois added the DuPage Symphony Orchestra in Naperville and the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

A total of 41 reservations were made in September. The most popular attractions in September measured by number of reservations were the Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford (8), Peoria Riverfront Museum (6), Chicago Children's Museum (6), Fox River Grove Memorial Public Library (4) and Wheels O' Time Museum in Dunlap (3).

Lincoln Land Community College is the second community college to join Explore More Illinois through our pilot program (Illinois Central College was the first). They are beginning to promote the program to students and staff.

### Career Online High School (COHS) Update

[Career Online High School](#) is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program. RAILS coordinates and administers the program for libraries statewide and negotiates lower fees for the scholarships that participating libraries award to students.

The following table provides the latest information on the program as of October 1.

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
350	157	95	62%/53%

### Sharing Best Practices on Consortial Group Purchasing

Leila Heath, RAILS Director of Library Resources and Programs, had several recent meetings with other

system/consortia staff involved with discounts/group purchasing, including:

- July meeting with Califa (California), Florida Virtual Campus, Midwest Collaborative for Library Services, and OhioNet. This group meets bi-monthly.
- August meeting with Jenny Taylor, Associate Director of E-Resources, at the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)
- August meeting with Cassandra Thompson, Director of the Illinois Heartland Library System's SHARE (Sharing Heartland's Available Resources Equally) automation consortium

### Latest eRead Illinois News

RAILS' [eRead Illinois Axis 360](#) collection includes e-books and e-audiobooks for adults and children with very reasonable pricing. Baker & Taylor, our eRead vendor, continues to work through residual issues from the ransomware attack they experienced in August (see last month's RAILS Board report). RAILS staff can add items to the eRead Illinois Axis 360 collection, however, there have been delays acquiring titles before their publish date as well as accessing interactive dashboard reports. Baker & Taylor continues to work on resolving these issues.

### Use of RAILS E-Resources

#### eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
September 2022	24,396	16,651	41,047
FY 2023 (July 2022 – June 2023)	61,353	47,834	109,187

#### Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
September 2022	1,733
FY 2023	4,730

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**Objective 3: RAILS will continue to seek greater efficiencies, innovations, and enhancements to delivery services**

**Tour of RAILS Bolingbrook Delivery Hub**

The LACONI (Library Administrators Conference of Northern Illinois) Circulation Services section contacted RAILS about a tour of our Bolingbrook delivery hub for interested library circulation staff. Delivery and Facilities Director Mark Hatch met with a LACONI representative to discuss specifics and a possible tour in the fall. RAILS Delivery is always excited to show off what they do for interested members. For more information (including behind the scenes videos of a RAILS Delivery hub), check out the RAILS website.

**Objective 4: Work collaboratively with members, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and the Illinois State Library to identify and support appropriate and affordable shared catalog solutions and expand resource sharing to all libraries and residents.**

**New Find More Illinois Video with User Testimonials**

Find More Illinois is an interlibrary loan platform that provides access to a growing number of library holdings in one seamless interface. Anyone can search the holdings, and users from participating libraries can locate and request materials from libraries across Illinois to be delivered directly to their home library. Libraries of all types and sizes can join, no matter what kind of catalog software they use.

Nicole Zimmermann, RAILS Marketing & Public Relations Specialist, produced a second video highlighting the benefits of the Find More Illinois software, including ease of use and time-saving features. It's a great time for libraries to join Find More Illinois. Setup fees will be waived for those joining before March 2023, and no annual fees will be billed until July 1, 2023.