



125 Tower Drive
Burr Ridge, IL 60513
630.734.5000
railslibraries.info

Executive Director Report, June 2023

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Quincy Meet and Greet with RAILS Executive Director

Our last scheduled Meet & Greet was at the Quincy Public Library on Thursday, May 25. Huge thanks to Quincy Public Library Executive Director Kathleen Helsabeck for hosting the event and for the warm welcome to Quincy. About 17 RAILS members attended the Meet and Greet, which also was attended by myself, Dan Bostrom, and Emily Fister. The group mentioned the challenges of cost inflation related to planned building and construction projects, serving the unserved, and the lack of school library programs and how that snowballs into lack of library use as adults. They are proud of the work they have done in trying to serve nonresidents through the Cards for Kids expansion efforts. They were appreciative of the L2 innovations, CE and training, sample policies and job descriptions, and delivery.

Thanks to all who have attended these Meet & Greets, as well to the RAILS staff who have organized them. It was so valuable to have the opportunity to get to see people face to face, and I'm looking forward to more opportunities to hear directly from members moving forward.

RAILS Minute

The newest [RAILS Minute](#), hosted by Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom and myself, was released on May 31. Topics included the next steps in the RAILS Board election, highlights from the Meet & Greet tour, and upcoming opportunities for training around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We also discussed updates on library related legislation, including HB2789, the License to Read Act, and the \$5 million budget ask from the Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias that would provide funding for a statewide electronic resources program.

SPARKS Podcast about Open Educational Resources (OER)

Episode 44 of the [RAILS Sparks Podcast](#) (released June 6) is all about Open Educational Resources (OER). I had the opportunity to interview Dan Matthews, the Cataloging and Digital Services Librarian at Moraine Valley Community College about the value and benefit of the important resources for academic libraries, faculty, and students. Dan has a refreshing excitement about the future of academic libraries and it's a great primer for anyone wanting to learn more about the value of investing in OER.

Assists Members in Planning for the Future

ILA PPC Meeting

The Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee met on June 5 to discuss current legislative issues. House Bill 2789, which intends to withhold state funding from libraries that ban books, has passed the Illinois House and Senate and is expected to be signed by the Governor next week. Similarly, the License to Read Act (SB2419) has been passed by both the House and Senate and awaits a signature from the Governor. Also mentioned at PPC was the passage of SB2243, which requires that the State Board of Education develop and adopt a comprehensive literacy plan for the state on or before January 31, 2024. The secondary bill focused on book bans, SB0689, has not progressed.

In addition to these legislative updates, Chair Ryan Livengood reminded the group that legislative proposals for next year are due August 1st: <https://www.ila.org/about/committees/ila-public-policy-committee-legislative>

Statewide Access to Electronic Resources Funded

As you have likely seen by now, we are so thrilled that the Illinois Secretary of State's FY2024 budget has passed, and it includes \$5 million for statewide access to online resources. Under this proposal selected databases will be available without charge to everyone in the state of Illinois, including the one million residents who do not currently receive library service. We are so grateful to Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias and the Illinois State Library for their support in moving this process forward, as well as to the Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee for maintaining this as a legislative priority for FY2023.

RAILS will continue to update the Board and members on next steps through this process. Greg McCormick has informed me that he will be in contact in July with the systems and CARLI to discuss next steps, and that this will be a topic of some discussion at the July ISLAC meeting in Springfield.

Decennial Efficiency Talking Points

One suggestion we have received recently from members is a desire to include talking points about the efficiencies that their membership in RAILS provides them, so that they can include them in the development of their Decennial Efficiency reports being submitted to their counties. We have been working internally on these talking points and expect to have them posted on our website and ready to share with members next week.

Associate Executive Director Update

We have completed our first round of interviews for this process and are looking forward to next steps, including interviews with finalists with our executive team and a Meet & Greet with the RAILS staff. Because of schedule conflicts for those integral to the process moving forward, we need to delay our final steps in the process until after the ALA Annual conference meeting and expect to have extended an offer by early July. More to share at the July board meeting.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Regular Meetings with Illinois State Library's Greg McCormick

I am meeting monthly with Director of the Illinois State Library, Greg McCormick to keep him abreast of what's happening in RAILS as well as reach out with questions and clarifications about ongoing issues for RAILS member libraries. Thanks so much to Greg for taking the time for these meetings – I am grateful for his mentorship and wisdom. This month we discussed paper libraries, the statewide access to online resources, appointments of trustee vacancies process, and awareness of the Regional Response Team effort, a joint project supporting Illinois libraries around challenges and book bans with partnership from the Illinois Library Association, Illinois Heartland Library System, and AISLE.

Looking Ahead to July

- **Don't forget that Board Orientation begins at 9:30am on Friday, July 28. All Board members are invited to attend the orientation meeting in addition to the regular business meeting at 1pm.**
- **All board members are encouraged to attend the July meeting in person at Burr Ridge. Its very helpful to have everyone in the same room for our first meeting of FY2024. RAILS Administrative staff is available to help with arrangements and more information about that meeting is forthcoming.**
- **Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist Ola Gronski will take headshots of board members for the RAILS website at the July meeting. We'll also send a reminder closer to the date!**
- **July Board Development topic – Budget Overview with Sharon Swanson**



This Month at RAILS – June 2023

THE TOP THREE

In response to board member feedback, each month we provide brief talking points to help you spread the word about specific RAILS programs/services. Here are this month's top three:

Visit RAILS Booth #3414 at American Library Association Conference in Chicago

Make sure to visit RAILS at exhibit booth #3414 during the June ALA conference. You'll find out what RAILS has to offer all levels of staff at all types of member libraries, as well as services available statewide. We'll also have a special gift for RAILS members (and trustees from member libraries) who stop by to chat with us!

Save on ALA Exhibits-Only Passes through RAILS

Members can purchase [\\$40 exhibits-only passes](#) for the upcoming American Library Association conference in Chicago through RAILS' exhibitor portal. Prices without this discount are \$100 for advance registration passes and \$125 for standard registration. Passes can be purchased through the RAILS portal up to the beginning of the conference and are good for every day exhibits are open.

Join Find More Illinois and Take Advantage of Special Offer

[Find More Illinois](#) connects participating libraries' standalone and shared online catalogs. All Illinois libraries are eligible to participate, regardless of their size, type, or library software.

There's still time to join Find More Illinois to take advantage of our special offer. The one-time implementation fee will be waived for libraries that join before the end of 2023. No annual fees will be billed until July 1, 2023.

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Enhance sharing of knowledge and best practices

RAILS at American Library Association Conference in Chicago

Members can purchase [\\$40 exhibits-only guest passes](#) through RAILS' ALA exhibitor portal right up the beginning of the 2023 ALA Annual Conference. There is no limit on the number of passes. Each attendee needs to register/pay for passes individually; there is no way to register/purchase in bulk. Passes are good for all days of the exhibits.

Make sure to visit RAILS at our ALA exhibit booth #3414! We'll have a special gift for RAILS members (and trustees from member libraries) who stop by to chat with us!

May RAILS Member Library Visits

RAILS Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom visited two of our member libraries in May.

On May 24, Dan visited Linde, a chemical company located in Burr Ridge.

On May 30, he visited Edward Chipman Public Library (pictured) in Momence.



RAILS Social Media Engagement

See the report at the end for info on our May social media engagement efforts.

Leverage economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power

Deals & Discounts Webinars/Demos

In May, Jody Rubel, Library Resource Specialist, organized and hosted three vendor webinars - Gale Adult Education and Business Solutions, Hiveclass, and Patron Point for public libraries. The sessions had a combined attendance of 35 registrants. Recordings of the webinars are available on the [Deals & Discounts page](#).

Career Online High School Update

[Career Online High School](#) is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program. The following table provides the latest information on the use of the program as of May 30.

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
373	166	94	60%/53%

Work collaboratively to identify and support shared catalog solutions and expand resource sharing

Find More Illinois Update

[Find More Illinois](#) connects participating libraries' standalone and shared online catalogs. All Illinois libraries are eligible to participate, regardless of their size, type, or library software.



Aurora Public Library District is the newest Find More Illinois member. Three libraries are currently going through the onboarding process: Marseilles Public Library, Princeton Public Library, and West Chicago Community High School District 94.

On June 2, representatives from the Find More Illinois team, the Pinnacle Library Cooperative (one of the [six shared catalog consortia](#) RAILS supports), and Helen M. Plum Memorial Library District, presented "Simplifying ILL with Find More Illinois" at the Wisconsin-Illinois Innovative Users Group. Topics included optional NCIP ([NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol](#)) integration, Find More Illinois implementation, and workflow improvements.

eRead Illinois Update

The [eRead Illinois Axis 360](#) renewal period continued in May, and by the end of the month, 854 libraries renewed their eRead Illinois subscription, including 539 school libraries.

Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist, and Leila Heath, Director of Library Resources & Programs, met with PrairieCat to discuss onboarding and outreach for PrairieCat libraries not already enrolled in eRead Illinois. PrairieCat is one of the [six shared catalog consortia](#) that RAILS supports. The PrairieCat consortium elected to join eRead Illinois as a complete consortium.

Use of RAILS E-Resources

eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
May 2023	21,354	17,262	38,616
FY 2023 (July 2022 – June 2023)	232,347	177,609	409,956

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
May 2023	1,376
FY 2023	18,449

Palace Project Discussions with Lyrasis

On May 24, Anna Behm and Leila Heath met with staff from [Lyrasis](#) to discuss the [Palace Project](#), an app and marketplace for digital library content that offers e-books with a wider variety of licensing and loan options than traditional library e-book lending platforms. Discussions will continue at the ALA conference in Chicago.

Explore More Illinois Update

[Explore More Illinois](#) is RAILS' statewide online cultural and recreational pass program. As of May 30, 422 Illinois libraries participate: 331 RAILS public libraries and two community colleges, and 88 Illinois Heartland Library System public libraries and one community college. There are [60 attractions](#).



Patrons from participating libraries made 208 reservations in May. The most popular attractions (by number of reservations) were Chicago Children's Museum (26), Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago (23), Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford (22), DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (16), and the Peoria Riverfront Museum (13).

Chicago Public Library (CPL) joined Explore More Illinois on June 5. This addition will transform Explore More Illinois into a true statewide pass program, as it is now available to all Illinois public libraries. Jessica Barnes, Special Projects Librarian, co-led training for CPL staff in May. Approximately 160 people attended the May 18 training and 140 people attended the May 19 training.

Chicago attractions recently added to Explore More include DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center, Lincoln Park Zoo, and Normal Theater.

Jessica Barnes attended the Chicago Red Stars' Family Literacy Night on May 27 (pictured). More than 50 people stopped by the RAILS booth to learn about Explore More Illinois. Bridgeview Public Library and Summit Public Library also had booths at the inaugural event.

Jessica was also a guest host on the Playgrounds and Parks of Chicagoland Facebook group on May 31. She answered questions mostly about Explore More Illinois, but also concerning the difference between SWAN and RAILS, homeschooling services in libraries, graphic novels, and funny library stories. More than 110 people liked the post and 78 left comments.



Models best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion

RAILS EDI Learning Cohort Report

The RAILS EDI Learning Cohort ended in May. We are currently gathering feedback from the 36 RAILS members who participated in the eight monthly sessions which began in October 2022. We hope to highlight this cohort as part of a 2023 Illinois Library Association (ILA) conference panel, and in a future article in the ILA newsletter.

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

Future-focused professional development and member engagement efforts

Update on Directors University 2023



[Directors University 2023](#) kicked off on June 1 with the first in a series of virtual sessions. Directors University is a joint project of RAILS, the Illinois Heartland Library System, the Illinois Library Association, and the Illinois State Library. The event is aimed at first-time public library directors and directors new to Illinois. A total of 45 directors are participating, including 33 from RAILS libraries.

Over the next two months, participants will view recorded sessions focused on facilities and maintenance, emergency preparedness, library policy, and strategic planning. Four live Zoom sessions will be held in June and July to allow for discussion, questions, and further exploration of these topics.

In-person sessions will take place in Springfield, August 1-3, focused on HR, budgeting, legal issues, and board relations. There will also be an opportunity to learn about the various Illinois library support organizations.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Strengthen collaborative relationships with partner library organizations

June Meeting with AISLE, CPS, IHLS, ILA, and ISL

RAILS has monthly meetings with representatives from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the Illinois State Library (ISL) to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries.

June meeting topics included an update on RAILS' school library data project, materials challenges and developments with the formation of a Regional Response Team, an update on Illinois legislation, and the September 20 Illinois School Library Workers Symposium. The next meeting of the group is July 11 at 4 p.m.

MAY 2023: analytics

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Twitter ● LinkedIn

followers



	April 2023	May 2023
	2,271	2,281
	1,247	1,258
	1,412	1,416
	962	977

reach



	April 2023	May 2023
	9,807	8,332
	1,641	1,867
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A

impressions



	April 2023	May 2023
	N/A	N/A
	7,826	7,380
	3,392	7,062
	2,158	1,801

engagement



	April 2023	May 2023
	2,281	2,060
	537	394
	N/A	N/A
	69	57

MAY 2023: top posts

