



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

**Executive Director Report, August 2023**

*Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing*

**Presenting at Secretary Giannoulis Press Conference on August 24**

I was honored to be asked by Illinois State Library Director Greg McCormick to participate in a press conference with Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulis the morning of Thursday, August 24 in Chicago. Secretary Giannoulis will share the impact of the grants that are issued by the Illinois State Library with Illinois legislators. I’ve been asked to participate by sharing a brief overview of how the grant that makes up system funding has an impact on Illinois libraries and residents. I’m looking forward to this opportunity to share the importance of RAILS’ resource sharing in Illinois, and I’ll have more to share about the experience at the Board meeting next week.

**Freedom to Read Event on October 2**

I’ve been asked to participate in the Vernon Area District Library’s program ‘Book Challenges on the Rise: Support Your Freedom to Read’ during Banned Books Week 2024. This Zoom event will feature Secretary Giannoulis and myself as well as area authors who have been affected by book banning and will be moderated by syndicated columnist Heidi Stevens. Many libraries across Illinois are promoting this event to their communities, and I’m looking forward to what is sure to be a robust conversation around intellectual freedom in Illinois.

**July RAILS Member Library Visits**

RAILS Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom visited five of our member libraries in July:

Organization	Type
Cantigny, First Division Museum	Special
Collins Aerospace	Special
Morningstar	Special
Marshall, Gerstein, & Borun LLP	Special
Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Library	Special

**RAILS Minute**

The most recent [RAILS Minute](#) focused on several current topics, including the open Consulting and Continuing Education Director position at RAILS. We also discussed highlights from Directors University and the Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois partnership project. Thanks to Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist Ola Gronski and Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom for all their continued work on this offering.

**Deals & Discounts Webinars/Demos**

RAILS members can find information, trial access, and pricing on all deals and discounts by logging into the [RAILS Deals & Discounts page](#).

Jody Rubel and Leila Heath began preparing for upcoming group purchase renewals for the Fall season, including BiblioBoard Creator, Infobase Credo, Swank movie licensing and BookBrowse. Vendor follow-up meetings from the June

ALA Conference were held with Gale, Proquest, SizeUp, myLIBRO and JSTOR. Jody coordinated early Fall vendor webinars for new and existing group purchasing offers.

Leila Heath met with Consortia Purchasing Managers from Amigos and Califa on August 3. The group discussed issues and procedures related to purchasing across large, multi-type consortia.

Anna Behm, Leila Heath and Jody Rubel attended the ELSUM Networking Meeting on August 7, which discusses topics related to e-resources, including usage, promotion opportunities and purchasing. Leila spoke briefly about RAILS deals and Explore More Illinois.

### Career Online High School (COHS)

[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 July 30.

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
397	174	108	60%/53%

### Explore More Illinois Update

[Explore More Illinois](#) is RAILS' statewide online cultural and recreational pass program. As of July 30, 425 Illinois libraries participate: 333 RAILS public libraries and three community colleges, 88 Illinois Heartland Library System public libraries and Chicago Public Library. There are 65 attractions. New attractions include the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Insect Asylum, Community Players Theatre, and the Haitian American Museum of Chicago.



In July 2023, 2,376 reservations were made in Explore More Illinois. The most popular downstate and suburban attractions in July were Brookfield Zoo (500), Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe (200), DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (53), Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford (34), and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield (25). The most popular Chicago attractions in July were Museum of Science and Industry (390), Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (253), Chicago Children's Museum (195), Art Institute (183), and Field Museum (180).

On June 5, Chicago Public Library joined Explore More Illinois. The launch date went smoothly, with no technical issues. CPL is continuing to work with their staff and patrons to communicate the benefits of Explore More Illinois and how it will help create a more equitable and sustainable museum pass program for the library. Jessica Barnes had several meetings with Lindsay Braddy, Chicago Public Library Assistant Commissioner for Technology, Content, and Innovation. Lindsay will be the contact person for Explore More Illinois at CPL moving forward.

Jessica Barnes met with another community college to participate in the Explore More Illinois community college pilot program for the Fall 2023 semester.

### eRead Illinois Update

eRead Illinois Axis 360 renewal period concluded at the end of June and invoices were sent to public, academic, and special libraries in July. Invoices for school libraries will be sent in August. Libraries that have not renewed their subscription had their Axis 360 sites disabled at the end of July.

Anna Behm co-hosted a webinar with Baker & Taylor on July 27 about Axis 360 for new PrairieCat member libraries. Baker & Taylor trainer, Donna Boecker went over the basic functionality of Axis 360, as well as the features that PrairieCat libraries can take advantage of now while they wait for the switch to Boundless.

Baker & Taylor is hosting several training webinars about Boundless for eRead Illinois member libraries. The first one took place August 2, with 125 people registered. A webinar specifically for school libraries was held on August 8 with 17

people attending. Several school librarians had valuable feedback about Boundless which Baker & Taylor will be incorporating into continued development of the platform.

From July 6-10 Anna Behm and the team from Baker & Taylor met with the staff from SWAN, PrairieCat, RSA, CCS, Pinnacle to discuss the technical specifications of the transition from Axis 360 and Boundless. Anna, Pat Moore from Baker & Taylor, and Michael Bills from Baker & Taylor also met with Lee Ann Lavender from Backstage on July 25 to discuss enhancement of the MARC records for the eRead Illinois collection after the transition to the Boundless platform.

Anna Behm met with the marketing team at Baker & Taylor on July 20 to discuss library access to marketing and support materials to help libraries during the transition from Axis 360 to the Boundless platform. Anna Behm also met with Curt Leppert from Baker & Taylor to discuss B&T's ordering platform, TS360 on July 27. Curt helped to identify some efficiencies RAILS can take advantage of while ordering items for the eRead Illinois collection.

### Use of RAILS E-Resources

#### eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
July 2023	14,940	15,170	30,110
FY 2024 (July 2023 – June 2024)	14,940	15,170	30,110

#### Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
July 2023	1,388
FY 2024	1,388

### Find More Illinois

Find More Illinois is growing quickly, which makes it an even better resource for all participating libraries to expand the materials available to their patrons. It's an especially good time to join [Find More Illinois](#). For libraries that join before December 31, all one-time setup fees are waived.

### RAILS Social Media Engagement

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

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

### RAILS EDI Learning Cohort Article for the ILA Reporter

RAILS Consulting and Continuing Education Specialist Diana Rusch and Gail Borden Public Library's Katie Clausen have co-authored an article about the RAILS EDI Learning Cohort for the September issue of the ILA Reporter. In the article

they share the experience (through an interview with Katie) of this focused learning cohort of nearly 40 staff from RAILS member libraries who participated in the program from October 2022 through May 2023.

### **RAILS Collaborates with Northbrook Public Library on Bystander Intervention Training**

Approximately 150 staff attended the August 4<sup>th</sup> online training “Bystander Intervention In Public Spaces” presented by Angela Locarno of [Right To Be](#). This session focused on giving participants tools to intervene when witnessing harassment in public spaces. Originally scheduled as a staff training for Northbrook Public Library staff, RAILS was grateful for the opportunity to partner and make available a number of seats in this training to RAILS member library staff. RAILS will continue working with Right To Be in the months ahead to offer additional trainings such as conflict de-escalation and building resiliency.

## *Assist member libraries in preparing for the future*

### **Directors University 2023**

A total of thirty new public library directors from RAILS member libraries successfully completed Directors University on August 3 in Springfield. After participating in several virtual sessions during the summer months, participants from RAILS and IHLS came together in Springfield August 1-3 for three full days featuring sessions on library law, HR, finances, Illinois State Library services, and more. In addition to learning, Directors University provides an excellent opportunity for networking between participants as well as with library leaders from across the state. Congratulations to all our 2023 Directors University graduates!

### **PrairieCat Delegates Assembly in New Lenox**

Anna Behm and I attended the PrairieCat Delegates meeting on July 26 in New Lenox. Anna gave a brief presentation about eRead Illinois, including an overview of the program as well as some of the upcoming changes to the platform. I gave a general overview of RAILS priorities for FY2024 and answered general questions about RAILS programs and services. Thanks to PrairieCat Director Carolyn Coulter for the invitation!

### **RAILS Member Meetup – Milledgeville on July 20**

On Thursday, July 20, RAILS held a RAILS Member Meetup event at the Milledgeville Public Library. Six people attended the event. This event included a library tour and an opportunity to connect/network with colleagues.

### **RAILS Member Event – General George S. Patton School**

On Thursday, August 3, RAILS held hosted an all-day networking event at General George S. Patton School in Riverdale. Eight volunteers participated, helping to weed 1,623 pounds of books! Participants also helped organize the collection and transform the library into an exciting place for readers.

Thank you to the following volunteers:

- Rebecca Bourne
- Debbie Griggs
- Katherine Holt
- Susan Leyva
- Jenny McNamara
- Gail Meyer
- Barb Miller
- Aimee Miller

## *Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community*

### **Joint Meeting with IHLS in Springfield on August 29**

We are looking forward to our leadership meeting with our sister library system, Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), on Tuesday, August 29 at the Illinois State Library in Springfield. We will discuss the operational plans for FY2024 for both systems, discuss developments in statewide programs, have time for one-on-ones with staff with similar job descriptions, and finish the day with a discussion of opportunities for collaboration.

### **IMLS Project to Investigate Role Libraries Play in Community Safety and Well Being**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership Grants for Libraries awarded the Illinois Fire Service Institute Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [a grant for \\$150,000](#) for an investigation into partnerships between libraries of all types and community emergency response partners during crises. This two-year project is named *Libraries as Partners for Emergency Preparedness and Response in Times of Crisis*. I will participate as a state project advisor.

This project will also serve as the conversation starter for future discussions, collaborations, and research on library-community partnerships. Watch for ways you and your library can participate in live information sessions and take a survey as one of the first steps in gathering information for this project. Project partners include the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI), the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), and the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois (iSchool).

### **August 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), the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) and the Illinois State Library (ISL) to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries.

August meeting topics included an update on RAILS' school library data project, materials challenges and developments with the launch of Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois, an update on Illinois legislation that affects libraries, and the September 20 Illinois School Library Workers Symposium. The next meeting of the group is September 5 at 4 p.m.

### **Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois**

With censorship efforts surging at unprecedented levels across the country, staff and committee members from [ILA](#), [AISLE](#), [IHLS](#), [CARLI](#), and [RAILS](#) have launched the opportunity to create a network of regional response teams to support libraries and their staff. These [volunteer-led teams](#) will be available as a resource for libraries experiencing a challenge to library materials and may provide support in a variety of ways: letter writing to a governing body; attending board meetings; connecting with a library staff member experiencing a materials challenge for advice, consultation and/or moral support; or researching and providing specific information/resources around a particular challenged book or resource. RAILS staff members Joe Filapek and Janette Derucki are part of the planning team for this statewide initiative. [The volunteer form can be found here.](#)

### **2023 Midwest Symposium**

On Friday, August 11, the Midwest communities of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) hosted a half-day conference called the SLA Midwest Symposium. This event is an annual professional development conference for specialized libraries. RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom served as chair of the 2023 Symposium Planning Team.

This is the fourth year of the event. 84 people registered and over 60 people participated live. The keynote speakers included 2022 SLA President Seema Rampersad and Michelle Roell, Taxonomy Strategist, Netflix.

## **Cole, Bostrom Running for SLA Board of Directors**

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) Nominating Committee announced the candidates for the 2023 SLA election. The slate contains two representatives from Illinois: Rachel Cole and Dan Bostrom are two of the eight candidates for the SLA Board of Directors. There are four open board seats available. Each board seat is a three-year term, beginning in January 2024. Voting will be open to SLA members in September 2023. [More information on this voting process and candidate bios.](#)

## ***RAILS Staff & Service Center News***

### **Staff Institute Day**

As we have discussed in recent Board meetings, we would like to get back to offering an in person staff day to bring together the RAILS staff from across our locations for one day of focused learning and networking. We are targeting October 11 at NIU in Rockford for this day of continuing education, and we will discuss further with the Board at the August meeting.

### **Updates from Delivery**

RAILS latest Delivery count was completed on Monday, August 14 through Friday, August 18. This physical count of materials moving through delivery is important to our ongoing commitment to efficiency and innovation in delivery. Thanks to RAILS members libraries for their ongoing participation.

For the first time since the pandemic, we have been able to confirm pricing on two delivery vehicles through the state contract. We are hopeful that additional pricing may be available soon on the Ford Transit vehicles we use most frequently in delivery. Our aging fleet will benefit from the availability of these vehicles, as reflected in the priorities of our FY2024 budget.

### **Consortia Manager**

Jody Rubel and Leila Heath continue to update content/data in Consortia Manager and set up renewals for FY2024. They met with Grant Halter and Janette Derucki to discuss the annual data uploads to Consortia Manager, which will take place in August for relevant IPLAR and ISBE stats. The team is working to improve accuracy, consistency, and efficiency both internally and with Consortia Manager.

## ***Looking Ahead to September***

- **September Service of the Month and Board Development topics – RAILS Data Analysis Manager**  
Grant Halter will offer a summary of the RAILS data program and Illinois State Library Director Greg McCormick will provide an overview of the work of the ISL and how it relates to the Systems.

# JULY 2023: analytics

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Twitter ● LinkedIn

## followers



	June 2023	July 2023
	2,315	2,324
	1,269	1,284
	1,421	1,407
	998	1,022

## reach



	June 2023	July 2023
	7,754	6,940
	1,941	1,993
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A

## impressions



	June 2023	July 2023
	N/A	N/A
	6,961	8,059
	8,646	8,201
	3,666	5,010

## engagement



	June 2023	July 2023
	2,585	2,201
	530	341
	N/A	N/A
	193	265

# JULY 2023: top posts

