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Agenda Item 8.3.1

Executive Director Report, July 2024

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

RAILS at the ALA Annual Conference

We were excited to be able to connect with some RAILS members at the ALA Annual Conference in San Diego, CA on June 27-July 2. This is always a great opportunity to share with colleagues from across the country, and we heard many compliments about the work of RAILS staff as well as more about the most pressing concerns of libraries of all types.

RAILS Director of Technology, Anne Slaughter, presented about how libraries can position themselves to benefit from the federal Digital Equity Act funding. RAILS Board member Julie Milavec presented (along with other members of the Downers Grove Public Library) on Perspectives and Reflections on Program Challenges and Crisis Management. Kudos to these leaders that are sharing their experience and expertise with a national audience.

RAILS staff spent time connecting with our members, negotiating with vendors, and learning more about the most pressing issues facing libraries today. Thanks to the RAILS Board for their support that allows for this important learning and connection.

Illinois Legislative Updates

The FY2025 Illinois Library Association (ILA) Public Policy Committee (PPC) met on July 17 as part of the ILA Committee Orientation. I serve as ex-officio that committee as the RAILS Executive Director. The FY2025 committee discussed potential legislative priorities from past years, as well as some potential updates in practice as the committee moves forward. There is interest in PPC having more of a presence at the ILA Annual conference, so that individuals can share their own hopes for libraries in the Illinois legislative process directly with committee members. The committee will meet next on August 5 to review legislative submissions as they consider their priorities for the new year.

The ILA Public Policy Committee is interested in hearing ideas regarding potential legislation from ILA members. [Submissions](#) are due August 1.

July ISLAC Meeting Cancelled

The July 25 Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) meeting was cancelled. The next ISLAC meeting will be the regularly scheduled date of Thursday, September 26, 2024.

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

Digital Accessibility Updates

RAILS continues to work with our libraries on best practice for digital accessibility. The following continuing education programs are being offered in July and August:

[RAILS Webinar: Making Your Website More Accessible](#)

Wednesday, July 24, 10–11 a.m.

[RAILS Webinar: Creating Accessible PDFs](#)

Wednesday, August 28, 2–3 p.m.

In addition, you can find links to archived continuing education, the RAILS Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) Repository, and other resources at our [Digital Accessibility](#) Pulse page.

Public Library Technology Survey (2023) Published by the Public Library Association

The Public Library Association (PLA) has published their [national survey](#) that reflects trends around technology capacity, resources for patrons, infrastructure, digital literacy, and staffing in US public libraries. The survey was completed by more than 1500 public libraries nationally, and was first administered in 2020. A [free webinar](#) to learn about these results is available on July 30th at 1pm CDT. I encourage anyone interested in learning more about these trends to explore their findings.

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

Broadband Coalition Meeting

RAILS Director of Technology, Anne Slaughter, and I met with our partners from the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) on July 18 to discuss next steps in our efforts around broadband and digital equity. We are interested in potential legislative support, as well as other solutions to increase digital equity across Illinois.

iLEAD Quarterly

I attended the most recent iLEAD Quarterly meeting for project partners on June 25, focused on updates to the public library trustee training portal. iLEAD, the new learning portal for public library trustees, was created for the public library trustees of Illinois by the Illinois Heartland Library System. If you or the trustees you work with are learning via iLEAD, I would be interested in any feedback to share with the project coordinators.

Statewide E-Resource Package

The Illinois State Library (ISL) has been contacting libraries with news about the statewide e-resource package. The contract for this package has been finalized with EBSCO. This e-resource package, which RAILS has advocated for strongly since 2019, will be available to all Illinois communities without charge. We are grateful to the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias for making these dreams a reality!

To help implement the program, the Illinois State Library is collecting data to share with EBSCO. If your library has not yet completed the survey, you can find more information (including the list of all included EBSCO databases) on the [RAILS website](#). The Illinois State Library has asked libraries to refrain from announcing the program to patrons until it is publicly launched.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Tom Stagg Wins Illinois Library Association Trustee of the Year

Congratulations to Tom Stagg, former RAILS Board President, who is the 2024 recipient of the Illinois Library Association Trustee of the Year Award. This award recognizes library trustees for their notable leadership qualities, years of service, offices, positions, and accomplishments. In addition to his many contributions at the Alpha Park Public Library and the ILA Trustee Forum, Tom has just ended his second three-year term on the RAILS Board this year. Please join me in congratulating Tom!

RAILS and Illinois Library Partners Win Illinois Library Association Hugh C. Atkinson Award

I'm thrilled to share that RAILS, along with our partners the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), the Illinois Library Association (ILA), the Illinois State Library (ISL), and the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), has won this year's Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award for Interlibrary Cooperation for creating the 2023 Illinois School Library Workers Symposium (ISLWS). This full day of virtual training for school library workers had sessions about intellectual freedom, Illinois standards, collection management, career paths in school librarianship, and more. The award will be presented at the Illinois Library Association's Annual Conference in October. The 2nd Annual Illinois School Library Workers Symposium is scheduled for September 25, 2024.

ICOLC Conference Host in Spring 2025

A joint application (CARLI, IHLS, ATLA, and RAILS) to host the ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia) Annual Conference in the Chicagoland area in Spring 2025 was accepted. More details on location and dates should be emerging soon. RAILS will work with our Illinois area partners to ensure a successful learning experience for all.

Public Act 103-0100 FAQ for School Libraries

RAILS is working with members of the Partnership for School Libraries to share a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document about how school libraries can ensure their compliance with Public Act 103-0100, the ban on book bans. The FAQ should be available as the fall semester begins for Illinois schools.

Looking Ahead to August

- **August Service of the Month and Board Development topics – LLSAP Support Overview and Broadband Activity with Anne Slaughter and Agencies of Impact Report with Janette Derucki**



This Month at RAILS – July 2024

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:

RSA Transitions to Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality

As part of the [RSA Independence Project](#), the organization has successfully transitioned to an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality as of July 1, 2024. This transition will allow RSA to have a similar governance type as other RAILS consortia. It will also help position RSA for better staff retention and ongoing alignment with models and LLSAP funding and support for RAILS. There are currently 142 RSA members who submitted the required IGA to remain within RSA, with a total of six school members representing 12 library branches who have decided to withdraw. During FY 2025, RSA staff and board will work on the design and procurement of staff benefits, HR support, revised job descriptions and other necessary steps towards directly employing RSA staff by June 30, 2025.

New Group Purchase Resource for ComicsPlus

On June 26, RAILS Deals & Discounts announced a new group purchase resource, [ComicsPlus from LibraryPass](#). The deal is open to RAILS academic, public, and school libraries. On July 17, there was a webinar for public libraries. A school webinar will be scheduled for the fall.

Batavia Public Library Features RAILS Delivery Driver in Video

Batavia Public Library featured RAILS delivery driver Alan Schnelle in a short video explaining how our RAILS processes interlibrary loan items. Batavia Public Library [tagged us in this post](#) and we shared the video with our audience, adding gratitude for the hard work of our delivery staff.

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Enhance sharing of knowledge and best practices

May RAILS Site Visits

RAILS Member Engagement Specialist Jessica Silva conducted site visits at member libraries in June. She visited:

- Field Museum, Chicago, IL
- Fox River Grove Memorial Library, Fox River Grove, IL
- Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute, Chicago, IL
- American Hospital Association, Chicago, IL
- Sandwich Public Library, Sandwich, IL (pictured, right)
- Dominican University, River Forest, IL
- American Academy of Art, Chicago, IL



New Networking Groups Launch

Jessica Silva has been working to help launch two new RAILS networking groups:

- Digital Equity Networking Group
- Affordable Programming Networking Group

The Digital Equity Networking Group is having their kickoff event on Monday, July 15. The Affordable Programming Networking Group is still in the planning phase for their first meeting.

Member Site Visit Series

Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist Ola Gronski joined Member Engagement Specialist Jessica Silva on a handful of site visits to take photos of our member libraries and promote them on social media. In June, we published social media posts featuring the [Field Museum](#), [Fox River Grove Memorial Library](#), and the [Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute](#).

RAILS Social Media Engagement

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

Leverage economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power

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

Deals & Discounts Webinars/Demos

The heavy July 1 subscription renewal and new orders wrapped up at the end of June. RAILS received orders totaling over \$820,000 from 145 public and school libraries for additional EBSCO resources not covered by the

statewide database program. Three additional group purchase renewals were finalized in June, with 100 library subscriptions totaling over \$215,000.

In June, RAILS Library Resource Specialist Jody Rubel began the planning process for fall and winter renewals. Jody met with RAILS staff on preparing the webforms and data uploads.

Career Online High School Update

[Career Online High School](#) is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program.

COHS Stats as of June 30, 2024

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
438	204	97	60%/53%

Seek greater efficiencies, innovations, and enhancements to delivery services

Vehicle Decal Project

The delivery department is working with the communications team to replace all vehicle decals on the RAILS fleet. There's a total of 44 decals to be ordered from a local supplier and shipped to the delivery hubs for their local installation. Each vehicle will receive 3 decals, two for the sides and one for the rear. The decals currently on the vehicles will be removed by the delivery staff to reduce cost and expedite the process. The installation time ranges from 1 to 2 hours per vehicle.

RAILS Meets with CTL Representatives

RAILS staff met with representatives from Continental Transportation (CTL) on July 3 from our Bolingbrook Service Center. CTL is the delivery contractor who services several of our routes across RAILS. The primary purpose of this meeting was to provide a demonstration of the RAILS delivery application used by all RAILS delivery drivers on dedicated staff iPads. We are currently investigating the feasibility of CTL staff utilizing the same delivery app to standardize our data gathering methods across the entire delivery operation. RAILS also provided a tour of the facility for attending CTL staff.

GeoTab Tracking Software Installed

Vehicle tracking devices are now installed in all RAILS fleet vehicles. GeoTab software is used to track a vehicle's current location as well as the route driven. Currently, there are 40 vehicles in our fleet that utilize the service. As new vehicles are received, the tracker is removed from the old vehicle and installed in the new vehicle. Other added benefits of the software include receiving engine fault codes, reports on excessive idling and possible collision notifications. Reports can be generated daily or weekly and emailed to the perspective manager for review. The vehicles are grouped by service center so the manager will receive information only on the vehicles assigned to that hub.

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

Find More Illinois Update

One more CCS libraries, Zion-Benton Public Library District went live in June 2024.



With the recent growth of Find More Illinois, the FMI catalog has gone from 4.9 million bibliographic records in December 2023 to 6.1 million bib records in June 2024.

eRead Illinois Update

The eRead Illinois renewal period concluded June 30, 2024. The following libraries renewed their membership for 2024-2025:



- 286 public libraries
- 30 academic libraires
- 5 special libraries
- 630 school buildings

Use of RAILS E-Resources

eRead Illinois Boundless Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
June 2024	15,981	17,987	33,968
FY 2025 To Date	234,603	203,334	437,937

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
June 2024	1,691
FY 2025	20,827

Explore More Illinois Update

In June 2024, 3,104 reservations were made in Explore More Illinois. The most popular downstate and suburban attractions in June were:



- Brookfield Zoo (500)
- Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe (200)
- DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (52)
- Peoria Riverfront Museum (45)
- Volo Museum (10)

The most popular Chicago attractions in June 2024 were:

- Museum of Science and Industry (440)

- Art Institute of Chicago (411)
- Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (346)
- Field Museum (298)
- Chicago Children’s Museum (296)

Libraries Enrolled in Explore More Illinois as of June 30, 2024

RAILS Libraries	IHLS Libraries	Chicago Public Library	Community Colleges	Total
347	93	1	4	445

Attractions in Explore More Illinois as of June 30, 2024

Attractions	63
Total Attractions in 2024	70

Reservations Made in Explore More Illinois in June 2024

Organization	June 2024
RAILS/IHLS	635
CPL	2,469
Total	3,104

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

Future-focused professional development and member engagement efforts

Recent CE Events

- **“Create a Culture Where Everyone Matters with Simon Sinek’s The Optimism Company”**, webinar, June 24
Zach Mercurio from Simon Sinek's The Optimism Company presented on creating a culture where everyone matters. Enabling meaningful work is a skillset that leaders can learn. With changing modes of work, job insecurity, and heightened awareness of social injustice, enabling the experience of meaningfulness is a vital skill for next-generation leaders.
- **“The Facts About Prevailing Wage”**, webinar, July 10
Ancel Glink helped members understand their libraries’ obligations under the Prevailing Wage Act, including when it applies, what their libraries must do and when, how to handle past issues with unions, and what to do when the Illinois Department of Labor calls.
- **“Digital Equity Grant Co-Design for Libraries,”** online meeting, July 11
Library staff with experience facilitating or participating in community programs that serve vulnerable residents were invited to contribute to the Illinois Office of Broadband’s Digital Equity Grant Program. Illinois will receive over \$30 million to fund technology programs like device distribution, digital skill

building, digital navigation, digital equity coalition building, and more! Members helped the Office of Broadband learn how they can build the grant program to best serve libraries and their communities.

- **"How to Hug a Porcupine: Dealing with Difficult Patrons and Co-Workers"**, webinar, July 16
Dr. Debbie Joffe Ellis, adjunct professor at Columbia University, highlighted main lessons from *How to Hug a Porcupine*. Attention was given to the importance of developing and maintaining unconditional acceptance of ourselves, others, and life, and the "how-to's" of doing so.
- **"Leading Through Crisis: Communications Training,"** RAILS Burr Ridge, July 18
RAILS members received guidance on immediate steps to be taken when a crisis happens; how to craft messaging and when and where to share it; and how to deal with the news media when they inevitably come calling. They also participated in a mock crisis, including a press conference and the subsequent communications that must follow to keep the public informed, while learning how to maintain order and process through the chaos that crisis can create.

Upcoming CE Events

- **"Making Your Website More Accessible"**, webinar, July 24
In this introductory webinar, Laura Solomon will briefly discuss the legal landscape, and then break down some concrete actions and changes you can make to your website's content now to make it more accessible in the short term. In this webinar you'll learn what "web accessibility" covers, understand which legal standards apply to library websites, and take away at least three changes that can be made to make a website more accessible to people with disabilities.
- **"A Day in the Life of a Special Librarian"**, webinar, July 30
Colby Maddox, Resource Center Manager at Old Town School of Folk Music, will give us a brief history of Old Town School of Folk Music and its Resource Center, the Resource Center's catalog conversion, approaches to shelf arrangement, balancing archival needs with the needs of the library, revenue streams that fit a special library, and more.
- **"Increasing Digital Health & Equity Through Telehealth,"** webinar series, August 1
In this two-part series, Heartland Forward will use their experience collaborating with The Public Library Association to create [Getting Started with Telehealth](#), a new training module available on [DigitalLearn.org](#), to give an overview of telehealth services and teach you how to use the training module to help your patrons.
- **"Budgeting in Tough Times for Small Libraries,"** webinar, August 6
Join us for an exclusive webinar designed for small library directors and board members seeking to enhance their financial strategies. Delve into crucial topics such as budget optimization, maximizing levy revenue, effective cost management, and more. This is an excellent opportunity to gain valuable insights and practical knowledge to strengthen your library's financial health.
- **"Project Management for the Rest of Us,"** Mount Prospect Public Library, August 7
Early- to mid-level library professionals will learn the key components of project management including how to start, planning essentials, execution, and closure, and how to communicate with management and stakeholders throughout the process.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Strengthen collaborative relationships with partner library organizations

June Partnership Meeting

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:

- Collaborative work on an FAQ for school libraries for Public Act 103-0100
- Updates on the AISLE Task Force for Certified School Librarians in Every School
- Updates from AISLE and ILA on their upcoming fall conference
- A discussion of creating a new website for the Illinois School Library Workers Symposium
- Creating a document on how to hire a school librarian for school administrators

And much more! We will continue to keep the board updated on these meetings.

RAILS Staff & Service Center News

Derucki and Silva Attend Salesforce Government Trailblazers Summit

RAILS Data Research Analyst Janette Derucki and RAILS Member Engagement Specialist Jessica Silva both attended the recent Salesforce Government Trailblazers Summit. This free event was put on by Salesforce. The focus was on showcasing new trends and different ways that government employees can serve their constituents.

RAILS Staff Participate in 2024 ALA Annual Conference

RAILS Director of Library Resources and Programs Leila Heath and RAILS Library Resource Specialist Jody Rubel attended the American Library Association's Annual Conference in San Diego, CA, June 27 - July 1. Leila attended the annual e-Books Interest Group Day, which highlights related issues and initiatives across the nation. Jody and Leila explored library services and resources in the Exhibits Hall and connected with vendors. Vendor meetings included ALA RDA Toolkit, Baker & Taylor, BiblioBoard, Examine, Gale (Public Libraries), Library Journal/School Library Journal, LOTE/Era Books, PressReader, READsquared, and more. A gathering was held on Monday morning for members of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC). About a dozen counterparts from other states and consortia attended.

RAILS IT Update

RAILS IT recently purchased a new VPN for staff. Testing on the product - called NetGate - is underway. This upgrade will provide a more secure connection for staff as well as being considerably cheaper. Our previous vendor raised prices on both the hardware and the yearly maintenance. Full transition will take place in July. RAILS IT will also be replacing TVs in the Flex Rooms at the Burr Ridge Service Center.





JUNE 2024: analytics



FOLLOWERS

May 2024

June 2024





 Facebook	2,494	2,504
 Instagram	1,420	1,426
 Twitter/X	1,440	1,451
 LinkedIn	1,534	1,573



REACH

May 2024

June 2024





 Facebook	8,529	6,676
 Instagram	1,108	1,702
 Twitter/X	N/A	N/A
 LinkedIn	N/A	N/A



IMPRESSIONS

May 2024

June 2024





 Facebook	N/A	N/A
 Instagram	5,298	5,423
 Twitter/X	2,449	1,725
 LinkedIn	9,074	6,860



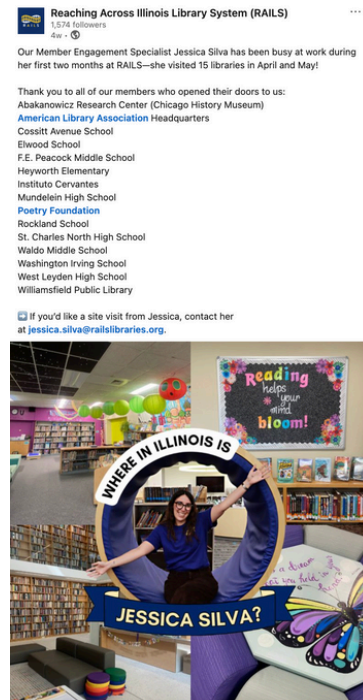
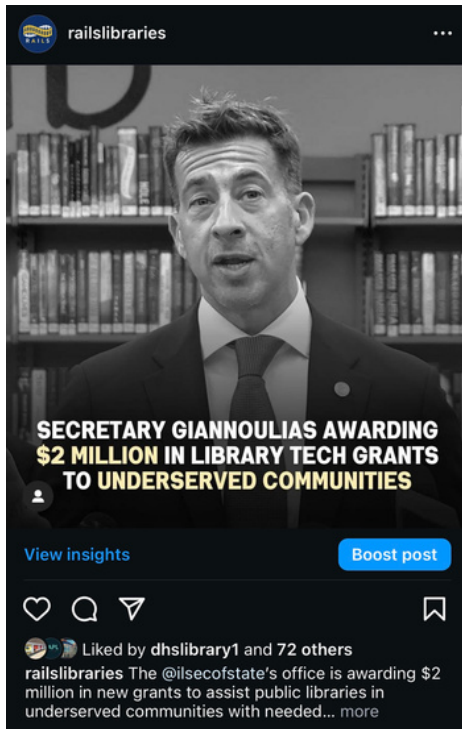
ENGAGEMENT

May 2024

June 2024

 Facebook	1,945	1,424
 Instagram	355	413
 Twitter/X	N/A	N/A
 LinkedIn	184	323

JUNE 2024: top posts



Consortial Reports

July 15, 2024

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI/I-Share)

CARLI Governance Board

CARLI Governance Board meetings for the upcoming year are September 13, 2024, December 6, 2024, March 7, 2025, and June 13, 2025. Pattie Piotrowski (University of Illinois Springfield) is the Governance Board chair for July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025. New CARLI Governance Board Members include:

- Term: July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027
 - Stefanie Bluemle (Augustana College)
 - Dallas Long (Illinois State University)
 - Rachele Stivers (Heartland Community College)
- Term: July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025
 - Brian Keith (Eastern Illinois University)
 - Sarah McHone-Chase (Aurora University)
 - Frances Whaley (Kishwaukee College)

I-Share

CARLI successfully migrated five libraries into I-Share on June 26, 2024. Those libraries are Chicago Theological Seminary, City Colleges of Chicago, College of Lake County, Elgin Community College, and Prairie State College. These institutions are live for local operations and will be live for Resource Sharing at the end of July. CARLI now has 94 libraries using I-Share. CARLI is working with Chicago History Museum to migrate to I-Share starting in February 2026.

CARLI will implement [Alma Anonymization](#) within I-Share in July 2025. CARLI held three webinars (recordings available) to prepare members for this implementation. Webinars include Alma: Overview of Alma Anonymization, Alma How-To: Anonymization and Analytics, and Alma How-To: Reporting and Anonymization.

Member Closures

Lincoln Christian University and Oak Point University have closed. The Pritzker Military Museum & Library will close its Illinois location in July. The Pritzker Military Museum & Library has moved their library collection to Wisconsin.

Staff

With an upcoming retirement, CARLI will be hiring an electronic services coordinator. This position was posted in June 2024.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The CARLI Governance Board created a standing committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Previously, CARLI had a task force that worked on this topic. With financial support from the UI System Office, CARLI is pleased to continue to offer its Building Diversity Graduate Assistantships.

CARLI Scholarship

CARLI is pleased to announce recipients of the CARLI 2024–2025 Academic Year Scholarship that helps support the education of the dedicated staff of CARLI member libraries. The recipients are Amanda Helm, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Grace Kraus, Prairie State College; Quinn Sluzenski, Newberry Library; Michelle Thole, Greenville University; and Alexandria Vlahos, Lewis & Clark Community College. The scholarship is funded by donors who have generously supported this important program, helping CARLI to grow the profession.

Programming

CARLI and the University of Illinois Press have worked together at the request of the University of Illinois System President Tim Killeen to create a free symposium to celebrate of scholarship and the role of education in our democracy. The free symposium "[Free People Read Freely: Literacy, Inclusion, and Democracy](#)" will be held August 20-21 at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and the I Hotel and Illinois Conference Center, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The program is open to anyone, but registration is required. There is a small fee if attendees wish to order a box lunch.

CARLI Annual Meeting will be October 22, 2024, in Champaign.

Collections

The CARLI Member funded Ebook Program will include in its FY25 Access Collection titles from Wiley, Oxford University Press, and the University of Illinois Press. At the end of the Access Period, July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, CARLI selects titles for perpetual access for all CARLI Governing Members. CARLI now has an agreement with the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST). Members may opt-in to participate in this shared serials storage program. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Library is suspending indefinitely the Shared Institutional Repository project with CARLI.

Open Educational Resources

CARLI will be asking for a No Cost Extension of its U.S. Department of Education grant Illinois SCOERs (Support for Creation of Open Educational Resources) this summer. CARLI is working with the Illinois State Library on its implementation of its OER Grants Program. CARLI will hold workshops on How to be an OER Project Director; Accessibility and OER; Instructional Design; Creative Commons, Copyright and Fair Use; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in OER creation.

EResources

With the Secretary of State / Illinois State Library providing statewide databases for fiscal year 2025, CARLI has worked with EBSCO to offer these databases to our members: Business Source Premier, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, Family & Society Studies Worldwide, Family Studies Abstracts, Humanities Source Ultimate, Left Index, Medline Ultimate, Novelist+, Time Magazine Archive, Urban Studies Abstracts, Violence & Abuse Abstracts, and Women's Studies International.

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)

New Staff at CCS

Kiara Lyons and Gayatri Shah are new to CCS as our Member Services Associate and User Experience Specialist, respectively. Lyons began work in March and Shah in June. Lyons has been working closely with Debra Wischmeyer on the Find More Illinois implementation and library staff training. Shah will conduct comparative analysis of discovery tools over the next months. She is also reaching out to UX staff at other consortia to set up informational meetings.

Find More Illinois Implementation

D. Wischmeyer is working with Eric Bain (RAILS) on Find More Illinois implementation. 10 CCS libraries are live on FMI as of June 30. Wischmeyer and Bain continue to troubleshoot NCIP settings to ensure a smooth workflow for consortium members.

New Members

CCS is onboarding Mount Prospect Public Library and Waukegan Public Library. Library staff training and data testing begins in earnest in July, with an October 1 planned go live.

Colocation Decommissioned

CCS has decommissioned our colocation site. All services are now hosted or managed locally from our Lincolnshire office.

FY 2024-2025 Budget and Billings Approved

The CCS budget has been approved by Governing Board. Our total member billings will remain flat from last year, with most libraries seeing a decrease with the addition of new members Mount Prospect and Waukegan. CCS is changing our metric used to distribute OCLC billing from a self-reported number to an IPLAR figure. Previously, CCS collected collection spending for the previous fiscal year for any materials cataloged at the title level. Moving forward, CCS will use IPLAR collection expenditures (Total Collection Expenditures – eContent Expenditures). This will result in increases for several libraries—CCS is providing easement on those increases using Development funds.

FY 2024-2025 Strategic Goals Set

Governing Board approved the goals drafted by CCS and Long Range Planning Committee. They are available at: [2024-2025 Goals.pdf](#)

Bylaws to be Updated

Governing Board will vote in August on updated Bylaws and Policy related to CCS authority.

[Summary of Suggested Bylaws and Policy Changes.pdf](#)

Proposed changes have been reviewed by Klein, Thorpe, Jenkins.

Pinnacle Library Cooperative

Pinnacle Swag Shop

Pinnacle has launched an online store where library staff can purchase Pinnacle-branded clothing items. The store, hosted through SpreadShop allows customization with the Pinnacle logo on various apparel

such as t-shirts, long sleeve shirts, hoodies, jackets. With this platform, there's no need to maintain a physical inventory - once an order is placed, Spreadshop handles all the printing and shipping. In the first 6 weeks, we received 13 orders.

Accessibility Audits

With the recent uptick in accessibility audits for library websites, we began evaluating our digital presence, especially the third-party vendors we utilize. Our ILS vendor, Innovative, reported that they have experience working with the Office of Civil Rights for similar tests. Generally, they have found that the OCR's focus is on the use and functionality of screen readers and keyboards, such as tabbing through content and labeling elements. Polaris services, including our current PAC meet this threshold. The Vega suite of products regularly checks for accessibility and currently meets WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

We also ran our minimal website through an automated accessibility checker and made all the recommended updates.

Statewide Databases

With the new statewide database package, we've reworked the consortium's group purchase of EBSCO databases. We have decided to supplement the statewide package with group purchases of Novelist Plus and [ConsumerReports.org](https://www.consumerreports.org).

PrairieCat

PrairieCat recently added a new staff member. We welcomed Shelby O'Hara to the team as our UX Specialist in late June. Shelby previously worked at the Midlothian Public Library. She will be helping us move forward with the numerous Vega module projects that are now in progress or coming soon.

In that vein, we continue to work with Innovative to refine and configure our Vega Discovery interface. Currently we are testing member login credentials in a consortium environment. This new feature allows member libraries much more independence to configure their homepages as they would like them, make changes as they need as well as add their events or other library-specific materials as they see fit. It will also move configuration changes such as hours and dates closed from PrairieCat staff to the members themselves.

PrairieCat has also signed on to work as a beta partner with Innovative on the LX Starter product for consortiums. LX Starter is a new notification system that will allow libraries to customize overdue, holds, and billing email notices using their logos, book covers, graphics, event reminders, and other enhancements. This system is already in place in multiple stand-alone libraries; however it is just being rolled out for consortiums, and we will be one of the first to test it. We also continue to partner with Innovative to develop their Promote (marketing) software for consortiums.

In late June, we will be moving to the new Innovative phone notification system. This system replaces the current third-party system we are using (iTiva) and will be hosted by Innovative. This is one of the final things that we house in the RAILS datacenter. After we complete the move of our last server to the cloud (should be occurring shortly if not completed already by the time this is read), we will only have our firewall remaining in the RAILS location. This completes our strategic goal of moving off the RAILS IT infrastructure.

In July, I will be working with RAILS accounting staff as well as members of our Finance Committee to review and potentially update the way our budget and fees are structured. We will be examining current rules around capital reserves spending, among other things.

In June, we worked with HR Source to develop a survey of consortia nationwide to gather information on director compensation and benefits. I would like to thank my colleagues in Illinois for their responses. The results should be made available to participants in August. Although the response rate so far is less than I would have hoped, we will have a large enough sample to make the survey worthwhile. Submissions will be taken until June 21st.

Work continues to onboard our upgrading member, Mills and Petrie Memorial Library. They are a current Union Listing member, upgrading to a Basic Online circulating level of membership.

Planning for this year's online PUG Day is well underway, and a schedule of sessions will be released soon. PUG day will be held this year on September 26 and 27. More information can be found on our support site at <https://support.prairiecat.info/pug-day-conference>.

Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)

Equipment Grant

RRLC closed out the fiscal year providing our members with an opportunity to receive a grant for \$3,000 to purchase new equipment and if necessary, asset tags. Asset tags could only be purchased by the schools if they had convinced their administration the circulation system to be a great way to keep track of the school's equipment loaned to students and faculty.

Database Renewals

We renewed the subscription to the Gale databases for another year for the schools along with the new Statewide databases the State Library is providing will be great help to students. The public libraries in the consortium will be providing Brainfuse database (HelpNow/JobNow/VetNow/CollegeNow) bundle to their patrons. We decided to drop PressReader due to lack of use by our patrons.

Staff Training

In late July, RRLC will once again hold training for staff in person at a local grade school. Recently, we have had a turnover of librarians (Milledgeville, Rock Falls High School and publics) that we felt it was important to having training again this year.

Software Upgrade

The Library Corporation (TLC) released an update in software, and we chose to upgrade. The consortium is now version 5.7.5. TLC will be holding their annual users group meeting in October virtually again this year. They discovered that more people are able to attend virtually than in person.

Resource Sharing Alliance (RSA)

RSA Independence Project and Membership Updates

Phase 1 of the RSA Independence Project (RIP) will conclude on 1 July with the conversion of RSA NFP, a 501c3, to RSA, an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality (III). July is also when we implement our new fee structure's fixed-price 5-year phase-in. Some libraries are seeing as high as 400% price increases.

RSA has flattened membership to one level; everybody gets everything, assuming they are trained to use it and need it.

As of 24 June, we have official notification from 6 school libraries, consisting of 12 total system branches, of their withdrawal on 1 July. In all cases it was due to the increase in membership pricing. We have 1 additional small Catholic school that is in limbo with no Administration or Librarians right now whom we expect to withdraw. Up to 5 more schools may withdraw next year due to pricing, after they figure out what to move to. We do not expect any public libraries to leave as none of them want to live without system holds.

Board of Directors and Policy Development

Our new governing status required a new Board of Directors. We have 5 returning members from the current Board and 7 new Board members. Five of whom have never held RSA leadership positions and come from small libraries. We're looking forward to learning new thoughts and ideas on the best way RSA can serve our members!

We are developing, borrowing, and adapting Board and operational policies needed as an III. Not for profits have a very low bar on written policy, and we're working quickly to create all the policies we need moving forward. A big 'Thank You' to those consortia who have policies posted on your sites. Very helpful indeed.

Support Site and Library Visits

Our Support Site has been updated, and will continue to be updated, to reflect our new governing status. We have many pages of committees and governance to modify into an archive. We're creating all new Board and governance pages. We expect this to be a multi-month project. We continue to update our new RSA Document Index page. We tweak this page to list all of RSA's policies, standards, procedures, guides, cheat sheets, and other information documents as well as YouTube videos and other library information. We're about a week away from posting a generalized Operations Manual to help our newer library staff understand the basics of running their library in our software. Both the Document Index and Operations Manual are intended to be the go-to information sources for libraries who experience sudden staff changes. That happens more than we'd like.

Library visits continue by Operations and Cataloging staff. We're getting great feedback during these visits and starting to confirm/teach libraries about their system settings. Turns out, our libraries have missed seeing us.

System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)

New Ticketing Platform & CRM

SWAN selected HaloITSM as our next ticketing and customer relations management platform. We are looking to start the implementation process this summer, with a contract starting July 1st. The onboarding process with Halo involves extensive one-on-one time with their consultants to create our workspace. Aside from ticketing capabilities, HaloITSM has modules for FAQs, a CRM, a user portal, and asset/inventory management.

The current project is to analyze incoming support tickets in order to create categories and common workflows. This will help us to determine HaloITSM's initial configuration and streamline the tool to best

serve our needs. Our goals are the ability to route tickets with increased automation without requiring libraries to pre-categorize their requests. After this information gathering phase, we will then meet with all SWAN staff to get an idea of how they would like an ideal ticketing workflow to behave and provide further insight into specific support workflows they commonly see.

[OpenAthens Database Link Audit](#)

OpenAthens is SWAN's proxy authentication system and provides single sign-on for databases and electronic resources and protects patron privacy. SWAN has integrated keyword searching of research databases from providers such as EBSCO into our Aspen Discovery, and OpenAthens is key in providing a smooth user experience when accessing integrated e-resources. OpenAthens authentication works with many outside resources, and we are conducting an audit of libraries' database links over the next year to ensure that libraries are using the best authentication methods.

[Illinois State Library E-Resource Program and EBSCO Database Group Purchase](#)

EBSCO was awarded the contract for the Illinois statewide e-resource program, which impacted our current EBSCO group-purchase contract, now in its 5th year, as there is some overlap between the SWAN EBSCO database package set to renew July 1st and resources included in the statewide deal. SWAN discussed the new available EBSCO package options with our members and has moved forward with 50 public libraries opting into the RAILS EBSCO flagship package deal. EBSCO has offered an additional 25% off the flagship package for those 50 member libraries.

[Enhanced Online Patron Registration](#)

SWAN is seeking to enhance online patron registration to include identity verification and residency against library service boundaries. We have obtained estimates from third-party online registration providers, some of which have transaction fees based on the identity verification solution. We have estimates of annual card registrations to calculate per-transaction fees for patron verification tools. We are still analyzing this material and will share our findings at the July board meeting. We believe providing a robust patron registration solution for all 100 libraries in SWAN will help resolve many complications through verifying precisely which home library is the residence of an online user seeking a library card.