



125 Tower Drive
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
630.734.5000
railslibraries.org

Agenda Item 7.3.1

Executive Director Report, May 2024

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

RAILS Board President Alex Vancina named 2024 Library Journal Mover & Shaker

We were thrilled to see that RAILS Board President Alex Vancina was recognized this year as a Library Journal 2024 Mover & Shaker. I encourage you to read about Alex's many accomplishments in his [profile](#). Congratulations Alex! You can check out all of this year's winners (including Illinois' [Heather McCarthy](#) and [Becky Keane](#)) at [Library Journal](#).

Illinois Legislative Updates

I attended the most recent Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee meeting on May 6th. Lobbyist Derek Blaida highlighted important deadlines for the state legislature. Blaida also highlighted additional bills for the committee that ILA is watching closely:

- [HB4224](#): Seeks parity between libraries and other governmental units to require library treasurers to hold a bond of 10% of total revenue collection (as opposed to the current level of 50%). Passed the House on April 15th (90-17), moved to the Senate on April 16th, and currently has eighteen bipartisan co-sponsors. It's been scheduled for its third reading in the Senate on May 17th.
- [SB2787](#): Amends the Illinois Local Library Act and the Public Library District Act of 1991. Requires competitive bidding for contracts in excess of \$35,000 (rather than \$25,000) for specified improvements and equipment purchases. This bill was re-referred to Assignments on April 19th and had its third reading deadline established as May 3rd.
- [HB4258](#): Amends the License to Read Act to include provisions regulating contracts between libraries and publishers, including the provision that no contract will restrict libraries from operational functions, restrict disclosure of the terms of its license to other libraries, or enable violation of the Library Records Confidentiality Act. This bill has been re-referred to the Rules Committee on April 5th and it has two co-sponsors. No changes since our April meeting.
- [HB4567](#): Amends the criminal code to include library employees as protected in relation to threats and disorderly conduct. This bill was sponsored by Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias as an additional support for libraries facing threats and other conduct challenges. Has had its Second Reading in the House and has nineteen co-sponsors. Its third reading deadline was extended until May 24th and it has been referred to the Rules Committee.

ILA has published a list of the bills they are [monitoring](#) if you have an interest in following these changes.

RAILS also helped ILA's Public Policy Committee to compile information from around the state about public bid notices in their local newspapers. The compiled information was presented at the April PPC meeting, and the group discussed further action in May. This will be considered for the FY2025 legislative session.

ILA Leadership and Public Policy Committee is currently soliciting potential legislative proposals from ILA members for FY2025. Proposals are due on August 1st, 2024. More on the legislative [proposal process](#) can be found on the ILA website.

FY2025 System Area and Per Capita Grant

As we discussed last month, we received instructions from the Illinois State Library for the FY2025 System Area and Per Capita Grant application. The Secretary of State's budget request for FY2025 would fund RAILS operations and services at an estimated \$11,870,000. There is a memo and a draft version of the FY2025 Operational Plan and System Budget in your packet for your review, and I'll look forward to discussing it in more detail at the meeting.

RAILS Board Candidate Election Videos

To enhance voter transparency this year, we asked all RAILS Board candidates to participate in the creation of a short campaign video. Sixteen (16) candidates scheduled Zoom recording sessions with Ola Gronski to talk about their qualifications, motivation, and vision for the RAILS Board. The completed videos ranged from one to four minutes long. All candidate videos are available to watch on a YouTube playlist as well as embedded within each respective candidate's profile on the RAILS website. We are hoping that these videos will allow members to get to know their candidates for the RAILS Board and feel more informed when casting their votes. Huge thanks to RAILS Marketing and Communications staff for making this happen this year.

RAILS Board Election

The votes for the RAILS Board election are coming in strong! As of this writing we have received 207 member libraries voting. We hope to ultimately surpass our 2023 vote count of 319. We've also seen engagement with the social media campaigns around the election, including the new 'I Voted' sticker. The RAILS Board Election ends on May 24th and we encourage all RAILS Member Libraries to engage with our robust candidate profiles and vote.

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

EDI Training for RAILS Staff

RAILS has offered two opportunities for all staff to continue their EDI learning with a two-hour training session led by RAILS' EDI Consultant, Elisabeth 'Biz' Lindsay-Ryan. These sessions were held on May 9 and May 16, offered a review of previous training led by Biz as well as taking staff through the next step of considering what actions they need to take in their roles at RAILS. In addition, all RAILS supervisors will take part in managerial training led by Biz on May 29 that will help them consider their role as leaders and what part they play in operationalizing EDI at RAILS.

Digital Accessibility Pulse Page

Hopefully you have had a chance to look at the new Pulse page on [Digital Accessibility](#). This page will receive frequent updates with more information on digital accessibility issues, federal laws and guidance, resources for libraries, continuing education, and related learning opportunities. Included on the Pulse page is a new memo from Ancel Glink regarding Office for Civil Rights' Digital Access Discrimination complaints.

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

RAILS Member Update – NEW DATE June 6th, 10am

Unfortunately, our RAILS Member Update for May had to be postponed because of a cancellation. The focus of this update was eAccessibility, a topic of interest for many RAILS members. We know any postponement is unfortunate, and we are pleased that this meeting has been rescheduled for **June 6th at 10am**. We will discuss eAccessibility including the new Title II rules and our upcoming continuing education program (June 12) on the Modern eAccessibility Landscape. We also hope to share any available details on the Statewide Database program. More information on registering for the Member Update will be available soon.

Partnership Advocacy Working Group for Library Partners

The first meeting of the working group for the Partnership focused on talking points in support of a certified school librarian in every school met on Friday, May 3rd. The group is working together on talking points for two audiences: library partners who'd like to support their school colleagues and community members who would like to support school libraries. [SLATE project](#) data will be incorporated. We expect to have a first draft to review in June and documents ready by late summer.

ILA Annual Presentation on the Value of Libraries Accepted

Our conference proposal featuring a panel discussion on the value of libraries was accepted for the 2024 ILA Conference Session. The panel will feature RAILS Data Research Specialist Janette Derucki sharing information about the upcoming data piece, Agencies of Impact, RAILS Delivery and Facilities Director Mark Hatch (and his counterpart at IHLS) discussing the value of delivery, as well as speakers on the Statewide Database Package and the value of going fine free. I am slated to facilitate. We are excited for the opportunity to share the incredible value that Illinois libraries bring to their communities.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) Meeting on May 30

I will attend the ISLAC meeting in Springfield on May 30. I'll report back to the Board on agenda items and updates at our June meeting.

RAILS Partners with CARLI, IHLS, and ATLA on ICOLC Submission

RAILS has partnered with library support agencies CARLI, IHLS, and ATLA to post a submission as the host of the 2025 International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) Conference in April 2025. ICOLC will evaluate all submissions and choose a host city this summer.

Looking Ahead to June

- **Honoring outgoing RAILS Board members**
- **June Service of the Month and Board Development topics – RAILS Member Engagement Strategies and Update on World Cataloging Services Program**
- **Report on Board election**
- **Organizational chart and compensation structure FY2025**
- **Draft FY2025 Board Meeting Calendar discussion**



This Month at RAILS – May 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:

RAILS Exhibits at Two Reaching Forward Conferences

RAILS had a presence at both of the Illinois Library Association's Reaching Forward conferences this spring. Brian Smith represented RAILS at the Reaching Forward South conference on Friday, April 19 in Collinsville, IL. More than 60 people visited the RAILS booth. Brian was also invited to give a short presentation on RAILS' statewide services.



RAILS also participated in the Reaching Forward North conference on Friday, May 10 in Rosemont, IL. More than 300 people visited the RAILS booth (pictured above) and over 100 people participated in our online giveaway. Congratulations to our winners who each receive a \$50 Bookshop.org gift card:

- Catherine Garcia from Warren Newport Public Library
- Kathia Gorostieta Reyes from Gail Borden Public Library

The RAILS booth also featured an opportunity for attendees to sign a thank you poster to Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. RAILS will be mailing that poster to the Secretary's office soon!

It's always a lot of fun to see staff from our member libraries at these events. Thank you to all of the board members who came by the booth to say hello!

Public Web Browser Annual Registration Key Available for RAILS Libraries

As a benefit of RAILS membership, all RAILS libraries have access to Team Software Solutions' [Public Web Browser \(PWB\)](#) free of charge for in-library use only. PWB allows libraries to lock down the web browser on computers and customize workstations for specific uses (e.g., a dedicated catalog computer). The RAILS annual subscription has been renewed through June 8, 2025. The new annual registration key must be entered before June 7, 2024. Libraries can enter this number at any time - no need to wait until the 2023 key expires. For further information, including installation instructions and registration key, log in to the RAILS Deals and Discounts web page.

2024 RAILS Board Elections Open

The RAILS board election opened on May 8. [Voting is open until May 24](#). Each RAILS member library may cast only one ballot on behalf of the library agency. This year, RAILS has provided candidate statements, videos, and a map to show where each candidate is located.

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Enhance sharing of knowledge and best practices

April RAILS Site Visits

RAILS Member Engagement Specialist Jessica Silva conducted site visits at member libraries in April, including several schools. She visited:

- West Leyden High School, Northlake, IL
- St. Charles North High School, St. Charles, IL
- F.E. Peacock Middle School, Itasca, IL
- Mundelein High School, Mundelein, IL (pictured, right)

Several member libraries have reached out for a site visit, and Jessica is planning out more this summer.



RAILS Social Media Engagement

See the report at the end for info on our April 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](#).

During April, RAILS Library Resource Specialist Jody Rubel worked with several vendors to streamline the renewal processes. She finalized renewals for two cataloging resources saving libraries \$5,100. Twelve libraries reached out for individualized quotes for e-resources.

Deals & Discounts Webinars/Demos

In April, RAILS Library Resource Specialist Jody Rubel coordinated four informational webinars attracting 53 registrants. Topics included an online high school diploma program, digital newspapers & magazines, upskilling, and an update on a popular world language resource for kids. Vendors highlighted success rates and benefits for patrons.

Career Online High School Update

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

COHS Stats as of April 30, 2024

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
437	204	83	60%/53%

Seek greater efficiencies, innovations, and enhancements to delivery services

RAILS Receives Additional Replacement Delivery Vehicles

During April, RAILS received two new box trucks for our high-volume Bolingbrook delivery routes. This is in addition to the new transit vans received earlier in the year and represent two of the five replacement box trucks we hope to receive before the end of the fiscal year. These new box trucks replace aging vehicles in our fleet and will allow us to reduce truck rental expenses.

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

Find More Illinois Update

The first CCS libraries, Algonquin Area Public Library District and Morton Grove Public Library, are going live in May.



Three new public libraries just signed participation agreements:

- Oglesby Public Library District
- Stockton Township Public Library
- Gail Borden Public Library District

Barb Miller, Consortial Services Supervisor, attended the 22nd annual Information Literacy Summit at College of DuPage. The Summit is presented by College of DuPage Library and DePaul University Library, with support from a RAILS Continuing Education Event Grant.

eRead Illinois Update

The eRead Illinois renewal period continued through April. As of May 6, the following libraries have renewed their membership in eRead Illinois:



- 85 public libraries
- 24 academic libraires
- 2 special libraries
- 333 school buildings

This is in addition to the PrairieCat and RSA libraries, which have renewed eRead Illinois as a complete consortium.

RAILS's Baker & Taylor Customer Success Manager, Jesse Wilson hosted two webinars for eRead Illinois member libraries. The April 23rd webinar covered the user side of Boundless, and the April 25th webinar discussed the Boundless admin portal. Approximately fifteen people attended each webinar. Members who signed up but could not attend were sent a recording of the webinar.

Use of RAILS E-Resources

eRead Illinois Boundless Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
April 2024	20,589	18,036	38,625
FY 2024 To Date	197,415	166,371	363,786

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
April 2024	2,128
FY 2024	17,615

Explore More Illinois Update

In April 2024, 2,139 reservations were made in Explore More Illinois. The most popular downstate and suburban attractions in April were:

- Brookfield Zoo (331)
- Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe (331)
- DuPage Children’s Museum in Naperville (47)
- Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie (34)
- Volo Museum (22)



The most popular Chicago attractions in April 2024 were:

- Art Institute of Chicago (375)
- Museum of Science and Industry (324)
- Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (316)
- Field Museum (220)
- Museum of Contemporary Art (54)

Explore More Illinois is currently accepting new libraries through May 15. The next enrollment period will start November 1.

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

RAILS Libraries	IHLS Libraries	Chicago Public Library	Community Colleges	Total
343	92	1	4	440

Attractions in Explore More Illinois as of April 30, 2024

Attractions	64
Total Attractions in 2024	68

Reservations Made in Explore More Illinois in April 2024

Organization	April 2024
RAILS/IHLS	320
CPL	1,819
Total	2,139

Model best practices in equity, diversity, and inclusion

Examine all aspects of RAILS policies, procedures, and core services through an equity lens and make needed improvements.

RAILS Staff EDI Training

On May 9 and May 16, RAILS staff attended a two-hour EDI training session with Biz Lindsay-Ryan. Biz reviewed content from past RAILS training sessions, and staff met within their departments to talk about how they can apply these lessons to the work they do for RAILS.

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

Future-focused professional development and member engagement efforts

HR Source Renewal Period Open

Existing subscribers to RAILS' discounted membership program with HR Source can opt to renew for another year, and new subscribers can opt in at any time. Fees for libraries will remain the same in 2024. Public libraries with an annual operating budget under \$1,000,000 receive a discounted rate to get access to HR Source benefits like expert advice on HR practices, access to sample forms and policies, an HR hotline, and more.

Nonresident Card Program Participation

RAILS offered to help over 90 member libraries that hadn't updated their information in over a year with instructions on how to report their Nonresident Card Program Participation on the RAILS website. The board of each public library in RAILS is required by Illinois law to decide annually whether their library will participate in the state's nonresident fee program, and to inform RAILS about the board's action within 30 days using the L2 directory.

Recent CE Events

- **"EDI Trustee Training: Navigating Difference in Library Boards"**, meeting, April 26
RAILS EDI Consultant Biz Lindsay-Ryan gave a general overview of current trends and research about handling diversity topics like race, gender, ability, and family structure to library board members.
- **"Using Digitized Historical Newspaper Collections for Reference Work"**, webinar, May 9
Staff from Evanston Public Library demonstrated several of the most important areas of reference and research that can be supported by a new tool from NewsBank that allows libraries to digitize historical local newspapers.

Upcoming CE Events

- **“Race, Human Development, and the Anatomy of an Apology”**, webinar, May 23 & May 30
Join DEI Director Tony Bradburn as he leads us through an interactive, two-session experience that will help us explore race, human development, the psychology of race consciousness, and how organizations can address racism.
- **“Working in the ‘Gray Area’: Boundaries for Library Staff”**, webinar, June 11
Beth Wahler of Beth Wahler Consulting will lead a discussion on common boundary-related challenges for library staff. Participants will leave understanding how to resolve situations that don't have a clear right or wrong outcome.
- **“The Modern eAccessibility Landscape,”** webinar, June 12
Sonya Schryer Norris will provide information on processes and outcomes for eAccessibility complaints made through the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, and how to make their libraries less vulnerable to eAccessibility complaints.
- **“Media Literacy in the Age of AI”**, webinar, June 13
Nick Tanzi will give us strategies for identifying AI-generated content and reducing AI hallucinations.
- **“Dungeons and Dragons for Teens and Adults”**, webinar, June 18
Details and registration for this member-led event will be in L2 soon.
- **“Employee Onboarding: Don’t Lose Them at Hello”**, webinar, June 20
Back for the second time this year by popular demand, HR Source will talk about the importance of developing employee onboarding and orientation programs, what should be included in them, and effective techniques to engage new employees before they even get in the door.

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Strengthen collaborative relationships with partner library organizations

SLATE Project Update

RAILS Data Research Specialist Janette Derucki met with a small group of school librarians from RAILS and IHLS, as well as RAILS Member Engagement Specialist Jessica Silva and IHLS Membership Coordinator Schools Liaison Leah Gregory, to discuss revisions to the school library data collection process. Topics discussed include potential platforms, delivery, and times for conducting a school library census, as well as additional data that would be beneficial to gather. The group will meet again in late May/early June to continue collaborating.



May 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.

May 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 on the Illinois State Library Statewide Database Purchase

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

RAILS Staff & Service Center News

RAILS Participates in Meetings with Illinois Department of Public Health

On April 30, RAILS Associate Executive Director Joe Filapek attended an introductory meeting with representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health as well as the Illinois State Library and ILA. The purpose of this meeting was to begin exploring how IDPH could leverage libraries as vital channels for disseminating public health information directly to their community members. We will be including IHLS in future conversations, and hope to circle back for a follow-up meeting during the summer months.



New Galesburg Public Library Opening

Joe Filapek attended the grand opening of the Galesburg Public Library on May 11. The 68,000 square foot facility is located just minutes from the previous library and was helped made possible by a \$15.3 million Public Library Construction Act Grant from the Illinois State Library in 2021. Joe and Galesburg Public Library Director Noelle Thompson are pictured here to the left.

RAILS Presents at Northbrook Public Library In-Service Day

RAILS Director of Marketing & Communications Dan Bostrom and RAILS Consulting and Continuing Education Specialist Diana Rusch presented at the Northbrook Public Library In-Service Day on Friday, May 11. Their presentation was entitled RAILS 101 and gave attendees an opportunity to learn more about RAILS programs and services. Approximately 30 people attended.

APRIL 2024: analytics

● Facebook

● Instagram

● Twitter

● LinkedIn

followers



March 2024

April 2024

2,465

2,484

1,381

1,404

1,435

1,437

1,412

1,487

reach



March 2024

April 2024

8,930

12,238

1,021

1,303

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

impressions



March 2024

April 2024

N/A

N/A

4,663

6,408

2,000

2,000

4,325

7,133

engagement



March 2024

April 2024

1,948

2,400

234

527

N/A

N/A

104

193

APRIL 2024: top posts

