

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

August 2026

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

2027 Bridges Library System Budget

I attended the Waukesha County Executive budget review on July 28th and will present to the County Finance Committee in October. The final version of the budget will be brought to the Board for consideration at the September Bridges Board meeting.

Jefferson County Library Service Board

I attended the Jefferson County Library Service Board on July 29th to present the 2027 Jefferson County Library budget request. It was approved.

2027 Jefferson County Library Budget

The budget approved by the Jefferson County Library Service Board was submitted to the Jefferson County Finance Director. Dwight Foster Public Library Director Minetta Lippert and I will meet with Jefferson County Administrator and Jefferson County Finance Director on August 12th to discuss the budget request. The Finance Committee Budget Hearing is scheduled for September.

System and Resource Library Administrator Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) and other meetings

I will be attending a State System Director meeting on August 20th for state biennial budget planning and the SRLAAW meeting on August 21st in Wausau. I also attended the WPLC State Delivery Workgroup and the WPLC Technology Steering Committee.

Continuing Education

I have attended training on “Understanding Library Authority” by the UW System. I attended the 2026 SEWI director retreat on August 7th, which covered topics on strategic planning, reasonable accommodations, and legal interviewing practices. I attended 2026 Trustee Training Week which covered topics on library law, AI, and more.

Trustee Training Week August 10th – August 13th

Designed specifically for public library boards, friends, and trustees in Wisconsin, Trustee Training Week contains four days of individual virtual learning sessions that run noon-1pm. If you missed any of the webinars the recordings can be found at <https://www.wistrusteetraining.com/archive>.

Database Management Librarian Search Update

I am happy to announce that Matthew Murphy has been hired for the position of Database Management Librarian for the Bridges Library System! Matt's first day will be August 27th. Matt has a strong and varied background in cataloging, having spent time as the Head of Cataloging and Metadata at the New York Historical and as the Library Services Manager for Cataloging and Database Maintenance at the Milwaukee Public Library. He has also worked as a Rare Book Cataloger for the New York Public Library Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and as a Content Engineer at Cengage for metadata standards. Matt comes with extensive experience in original and copy cataloging,

organizing workflows of large cataloging projects, cataloging policy development, and hiring and training staff in technical services.

Strategic Planning Update

I am working with WiLS to schedule key dates for data gathering meetings with stakeholder groups. I am meeting with WiLS on 8/12/26 and will have more details to share at the time of the Bridges Board meeting during my report period.

Personnel Committee

Historically the Personnel Committee was appointed in August. We have since shifted this agenda item to occur at the start of the year (after the appointment of the President, Vice President, and Secretary roles).

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Library Visits – I visited the Delafield Library in July to share what I’ve been doing and ask about potential professional development needs.

WiLS Documentation Lab Pilot Grant – WiLS recently announced a pilot project that seeks to help libraries create robust documentation of their processes. We felt that this was a valuable opportunity and decided to offer a grant for one of our libraries to participate. Two libraries applied and the final grant was awarded to the Muskego Public Library.

Learning Management System Implementation Team – In spring 2026, LSTA funding was awarded to systems for professional learning. It was decided that the systems would pool those funds to sign a 3-year contract with Thinkify for a Learning Management System that will house statewide learning initiatives. This will bring projects such as Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference and Trustee Training Week onto one platform, eliminating confusion about where to find these projects. Additionally, with this software, users will be able to create a log in and keep a record of each webinar they have watched, making tracking certification hours much easier. I will be part of the implementation team, which begins work in August.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **SEWI Libraries Book Doctor Workshop** – August 25, 1 – 4 pm, Waukesha Public Library
- **SEWI Libraries Healing Through Connection Discussion Panel** – September 10, 1:30 – 3:30 pm, Milwaukee Public Library, MLK Branch
- **Tech Days Wisconsin** – September 15 & 16, Virtual Conference
 - **AI with Heart** – Tuesday, September 15, 10 – 11:30 am
 - **AI Book Clubs and Digital Literacy for Seniors** – September 15, 1 – 2:30 pm
 - **Sustainable Tech Help with DigitalLearn and Teen Volunteers** – September 16, 10 – 11:30 am
 - **Generative AI and Library Collections** – September 16, 1 – 2:30 pm

Professional Development

- Libraries Supporting Small Business (Webinar)

- Reaching out to Residents Who Are Not (Yet) Users (Webinar)
- What If Everything Was Shareable? (Webinar)
- What's New in Polaris 8.1 (Webinar)

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Youth Services

In July, I visited several libraries to observe and evaluate performances and workshops coordinated through Bridges. These included Wildlife in Need Center at Jefferson Public Library and Bollywood Groove at Brookfield Public Library. I also attended Circus Spark at Dwight Foster Public Library and magician Jeff McCullen's program at Brookfield Public Library. The final Bridges coordinated program of the summer will be Nerf Games on August 22 at Pauline Haass Public Library.



Library staff engage with guests at Old World Wisconsin's Teacher Day



Deana (Whitewater), Angela (Bridges), Michelle (Eagle), Andrea (Delafield), Jamie (Hartland), and Katelyn (Mukwonago)

The Summer

Celebration/Summer Library Program Wrap-Up is scheduled

for August 19, 2026, at noon at Oconomowoc Public Library. This gathering provides an opportunity for staff to reflect on summer library programs, hear from colleagues across the system, and consider potential changes for next year. All library staff involved in youth and teen services are strongly encouraged to attend.

On Friday, July 31, four member libraries and I participated in an outreach event for teachers at Old World Wisconsin. We spoke with both teachers and other attendees about library services and signed one person up for a library card.

Inclusive Services

The Annual Fall Family Day for the Library Memory Project will take place on Sunday, September 27, at Retzer Nature Center in Waukesha.

Professional Development

Completed Quarter 3 Security Training through Waukesha County.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Tracks in the Stacks Bigfoot Hunt

We are in the final month of the Bigfoot Hunt! I have received many prize entry forms from all over the system and it appears that the event was very popular this summer! I am excited to have a total count soon. The hunt ends Friday, August 21.

Waukesha Public Library shared:

A patron asked staff to pass along a compliment for the program to “the folks in charge of it”: She said that she is disabled and has a hard time finding things to do to get out of the house and out into the world as often as she would like and she has really loved exploring all of the Bridges libraries for the past few summers. She said you guys were wonderful and creative and she would like us to “continue the program forever”.



Community Outreach

Apple Harvest Festival: Sat., September 19

Bridges will be hosting an outreach table at Retzer’s annual event. We will be promoting library perks in “The Pines” activity area with the “Fill Our Bookshelf” activity. [Event details](#)

Story Hike Partnership at Retzer Nature Center

We have new signs and displays for the Story Hike to make the experience even better for our readers. We are featuring “The Acorn and the Oak” by Rhonda Accardo along the White Trail at Retzer Nature Center. Readers will learn more about oak trees and their fascinating ecosystem as they hike! The Story Hike runs September 19 – October 31! [Event details](#)

WLA Annual Conference Committee

As the Publicity Chair for the WLA Conference, I have been preparing promotions and graphics for the event and meeting with committee. I completed the vendor booklet, registration materials, and all the keynote speaker highlights. Registration for the conference opens on August 31.



In the news:

- Palmyra celebrates Independence Day: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)
- Pewaukee librarian presents 2026 Geisel Award to winner: [Waukesha Freeman Article](#)
- Former library director opening new chapter: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)

[News Archives](#)

Newsletter Data: Industry standard/goal is 44% Open Rate

- Marketing Magic:
 - Aug. 7: 48.19% Open Rate
 - July 24: 59.04% Open Rate
 - July 10: 63.86% Open Rate
- Monthly Bridges:
 - July 5: 42.62% Open Rate
 - June 5: 50.23% Open Rate
- Monthly Legislators:
 - July 16: Legislators – 27.78% Open Rate / Staff – 38.89% Open Rate
 - June 12: Legislators – 16.67% Open Rate / Staff - 33.33% Open Rate