

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

March 2026

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

Annual Reports: All library annual reports were submitted by DPI's February 27th deadline. The system annual report is nearly complete and will be reviewed at the March meeting. The deadline for system annual reports is March 31st. I want to thank Nicole Purifoy and our Waukesha County Budget Analyst Josh Selje for their assistance with the system report. The change to the new county software means that new types of reports had to be built. I have been working with Nicole and the Waukesha County Budget office to identify what reports are needed, and how to apply them to what information the state requires.

Waukesha County Act 150 Update: The proposed Waukesha County 2027-2031 Standards did not pass enough of the Waukesha County Library boards to meet the population threshold per statute. More information is being gathered and then the Committee will meet again on March 16th at 4pm at the Waukesha Public Library.

Policy Discussions: I facilitated two policy discussions at the end of February that discussed library public record policies and state statutes.

Adjacent County Funding: The adjacent county funding process has begun. I notified library directors of the process and organized the reimbursement forms required for the adjacent counties. I have also begun to receive adjacent county requests from libraries and have begun to organize them in preparation for the July 1st State deadline.

2027 Budget: I have sent out the allowable costs worksheets to Waukesha County libraries to start preparing for that portion of the 2027 budget.

Meetings: I have attended a variety of meetings in the last few weeks, including the mobile app technology committee meetings, Act 150 preparation meetings, system director meetings, county software meetings, five director administration consulting meetings, and a state delivery committee meeting.

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

Wide Area Network: On March 11th, AT&T is scheduled to install additional bandwidth to the wide area network, doubling capacity to 2GB. After the network is reconfigured later this year, requests for additional bandwidth for libraries will be placed with TEACH WI.

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Adult Services Meetup – A virtual adult services meetup was held on February 18 with 19 library staff representing 16 libraries in attendance. We discussed collection development and vendor alternatives that libraries have been trying as well as procedures for self-published books and authors.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **SEWI Libraries Maker Meetup, March 19** – Whitewater Public Library
- **SEWI Libraries Social-Emotional Learning Storytimes, March 23** – Franklin Public Library
- **SEWI Libraries Intergenerational & All Ages Programming Meetups**
 - **April 20** – Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson)
 - **April 23** – Cedarburg Public Library

Professional Development

- LiFT: Introduction to the Library Catalog
- Niche Academy: Welcoming All: Inclusivity in Library Spaces Webinar

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

The Oconomowoc Public Library, in partnership with Journey21, is launching the Confidence and Conversation Club, an inclusive program for teens and adults of all abilities that combines light movement, independent reading, and optional group sharing to build confidence, communication, and connection. In 2026, the club will meet every other month on the fourth Tuesday, 3:30–5:00 pm at the library. The first session (February 2026) drew six participants; staff will track attendance and participant feedback to determine whether to increase frequency and/or expand to other Bridges libraries.

I presented on the Library Memory Project at the Waukesha Public Library's Thursday morning (THAM) staff meeting with approximately 20 staff in attendance. Q&A continued until the library opened.

Youth Services

Kids' Choice voting has concluded. The 2025–2026 Kids' Choice Award winner is *Restart* by Gordon Korman, with runners-up *Frizzy* by Claribel A. Ortega and *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander. This year, 2,042 students participated, logging 9,377 books read and submitting 3,824 title nominations for next year's consideration.

I facilitated a Youth Services Meet Up in February at the Town Hall Library and had 11 staff from 10 libraries attend.

Please encourage your staff to attend the following Youth Services opportunities:

The Community Space & Whitewater Library Visit

Thursday, March 19 1:00pm The Community Space (book browsing for Summer Library Program prizes);
2:30pm Whitewater Public Library [Register](#)

Social-Emotional Learning in Storytime: Puppets, Props, and Play

Monday, March 23 1:30-3:30pm Franklin Public Library [Register](#)

Professional Development

I am continuing the Waukesha County Standards of Service Excellence (SOSE) training and have completed three professional development workshops focused on customer service and public-sector ethics.

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings

This month I had opportunities for in-person cataloging consultation with staff in Oconomowoc and Johnson Creek.

At the virtual CAFÉ cataloger meetup, 15 attendees discussed new item record statistical codes, forthcoming changes to Library of Congress subject headings, fields to indicate AI cataloging, and heard an update from a recent CAFÉ Council meeting.

In the WLA Technical Services Section virtual bi-monthly meeting, the state-wide group discussed potential training topics for future meetings and Library of Congress' decision to make change to subject heading formats.

I participated in WLA's Library Legislative Day in Madison. Once again, it was a pleasure to talk with my representatives about the great services provided by our libraries.

CAFÉ Catalog Maintenance

I worked with Backstage Library Works for our quarterly update of bibliographic and authority records. Almost 8,000 bib records were edited and improved, and more than 3,400 new authority records were added to the catalog. These ongoing improvements make searching in the CAFÉ catalog function better and improve search results, especially for materials newly added to our libraries' collections.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Tracks in the Stacks Bigfoot Hunt

The systemwide summer library hunt event is returning this summer for people to visit libraries around the system to hunt for bigfoots! At each library location, visitors will learn something unique about the member library from a "Did You Know?" Bigfoot display sign. This is a great chance to promote and market something special at each library! Participants can enter to win at each library they visit. The event will run Monday, June 1 – Friday, August 21, 2026.



Tracks in the Stacks
BIGFOOT HUNT



Summer Library Program

I have created templates in Canva for member libraries to customize and use to promote their Bridges sponsored library performers and programs. Thank you posters for sponsors with their logos will also be available to share.

I am also working on creating an accessible performance schedule to host on our website for patrons to locate performers throughout the library system.

AM 620 - "What's on Tap" Radio Interview

The What's on Tap Spotlight Interview with Waukesha Public Library went fantastic with Sandy Maxx. It aired on February 27. [Listen to the interview.](#) [Check out the YouTube Short.](#) Our next interview will be on March 24 with Angela Meyers to talk about the Library Memory Project.

Fox 6 News - Wisconsin Live Desk

Watertown Public Library joined Fox 6's Wisconsin Live Desk show on March 5 to share about their 2nd Annual WPL Film Festival, book clubs, and books to screen for the upcoming Oscars. Jamie and Noah did a great job! I am waiting on the clipped segment to be shared with me.

Retzer Nature Center Partnership Continues in 2026

- **Story Hike** - Bridges is continuing our partnership with Retzer Nature Center the Spring Story Hike. The book is "What Matters" by Alison Hughes and Holly Hatam. I will assist with installation of the signs on March 31 and the story will be at Retzer from April 1-30. <http://events.waukeshacounty.gov/default/Detail/2026-04-01-0600-Spring-Story-Hike-Retzer>
- **Earth Day Celebration** – Bridges will host an outreach table at Retzer's Annual Earth Day event on Saturday, April 25. <https://events.waukeshacounty.gov/default/Detail/2026-04-25-1000-Earth-Day-Celebration-Earth-Week>

Web Accessibility Project

I will be hosting a Spring Marketing Meetup in May (date to be determined) to talk about digital accessibility for social media platforms for the Digital ADA Compliance deadline in April 2026/2027.

I am working through DYNO Mapper scan reports for member libraries that requested them. I am also making edits on Bridges website. Greenleaf Media currently has our scan report to determine an estimate for remediation of the items we cannot edit ourselves.

Google Interior Photo Tours

Whitewater is scheduled for the final photoshoot on March 20. Links to the tours will be added to the [Find Your Library](#) webpage once completed.

Midwest Pano will be changing their interactive tour software to comply with the updated accessibility regulations. We will migrate 12 tours to the new software system for minimal cost throughout 2026. More information to follow from Midwest Pano.

In the news:

- Dwight Foster Public Library receives 2026 Heart of the City award: [Daily Union Article](#)
- Pewaukee librarian helps select national award for 'Best Kids Book': [Waukesha Freeman Article](#)
- Menomonee Falls Library launches capital improvement plan for first-floor renovation: [Waukesha Freeman Article](#)
- Readers rejoice: Whitewater celebrates new chapter with expanded library: [TMJ4 TV Segment](#)
- 2nd WPL Film Festival set to be bigger, better: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)

News Archives

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

- Marketing Magic:
 - March 6: 55.42% Open Rate
 - February 20: 62.65% Open Rate
 - February 6: 55.42% Open Rate
- Monthly Bridges:
 - March: TBD
 - February 13: 46.88%
- Monthly Legislators:
 - March: TBD
 - February 12:
 - Legislators: 22.22% Open Rate
 - Staff: 35% Open Rate