

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

June 2025

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

Leadership Transition

As I write this report, I am on day six of my position! I appreciate the three days of overlap Karol provided. I am prioritizing working on the 2026 budget and monitoring adjacent county funding requests, as well as connecting with various state committees, the DPI, State System Directors, and County stakeholders. I am connecting with Bridges staff, and they have been a very supportive group in these first days! There is much to familiarize myself with, both the practical (software access and network file organization) and the larger concept ideas (funding formulas). If there are ever any questions you have (or something you think I forgot), please let me know! I like to lead with curiosity (asking questions) and as a librarian I love questions back.

Butler Library Director

I would like to welcome Suzanna Schroeder as the new Library Director for the Butler Public Library! Suzanna's first day is June 23rd. I have reached out to Suzanna to set up her New Director Orientation.

Budget 2026

The budget season has officially commenced. I am working with the Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson (resource library for the Jefferson County Library Services) to ensure I am at the appropriate meeting(s) for Jefferson County's budget process. I attended the Waukesha County Budget Kickoff Meeting on 6/11/25, and met with the financial analyst from Waukesha County for Bridges to familiarize myself with their process. I will also be meeting with Bridges Staff to continue to refine the 2026 budget draft from their consultant areas. Preliminary information on member library charges was presented at the June APL meeting. APL and the Bridges Board will see a draft of the Bridges 2026 budget in July.

Adjacent County Funding

This update was in Karol's May report, but it never hurts to have a reminder that adjacent county library funding requests for Waukesha and Jefferson County) are due by July 1st.

Delivery RFP Process

Mellanie and I met with a purchasing analyst for Waukesha County to work on a draft of the RFP for the delivery service. We tentatively are planning to post it in July.

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Library Visits & Meetings

One of my goals for my first year in this position is to visit all the Bridges Libraries to meet with the library directors and adult services staff. I want to get a sense of each library, the community they serve, and their individual library needs in the areas of professional development and adult services. I was able to schedule and visit 6 libraries in May, all in Jefferson County. I decided to start there since I am less familiar with those libraries. So far, I have visited Fort Atkinson, Jefferson, Johnson Creek, Waterloo,

Watertown, and Whitewater. They were productive visits and I'm excited to visit more! I will resume scheduling these visits when summer reading has died down a little as I know that can be a very busy time.

Karol Kennedy and I visited the Prairie Lakes Library System and met with some of their staff. Prairie Lakes acts as the fiscal agent for the LSTA grant conference scholarships that we offer to SEWI libraries' staff so we wanted to do an in person meet and greet with them. It was a productive meeting and we talked about ways that we can better serve their library system through this partnership.

Outreach

I had the opportunity to represent the Bridges Library System at the Waukesha Job Center Open House. This open house was designed for employers in the area to visit and learn about the services offered by partnering agencies. I connected with a few employers, but more importantly, made some organizational connections, including a job coaching organization in Waukesha who was happy to take some of our promotional materials to distribute to their clients.

Professional Development

I am part of the Wisconsin Library Association's (WLA) Outreach Services Roundtable. We meet monthly to discuss pertinent topics related to library outreach and plan quarterly webinars that are available to WLA members. In May, I led a panel discussion about home delivery services with several librarians from around the state. It was a lively discussion that prompted much food for thought around providing library materials to people who are homebound.

New SEWI Email Newsletter

After receiving feedback about the process for distributing continuing education information, I decided that it would be beneficial to create a weekly email using Library Aware that can be sent to library staff in Bridges and the SEWI distribution list. This email condenses upcoming opportunities into one email that is more visually pleasing. Emails began going out in late May and I've received positive feedback so far.

Upcoming Events

Planning is underway for the annual SEWI Directors Retreat in August. Three speakers have been booked around the topics of library advocacy, sustainability, and working with the Wisconsin DPI. Promotion and registration will begin later in June.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Youth Services

Starting in June, Bridges Library System is sponsoring 96 family and teen programs at the member this summer. See a science show, learn about reptiles, or see some magic. Libraries have selected cooking decorating, canvas painting, or nerf games for their teens or tweens to enjoy. Check out the [schedule](#).

The Community Space in Whitewater invited Bridges libraries to select books to be used as giveaways for their summer reading programs. Over 1,000 fantastic children's books are ready for summertime. [The Community Space](#) is open to all.

Inclusive Services

I represented the Library Memory Project at the Senior Care Fair in Watertown. I shared a resource table with Jamie H. from the Watertown Public Library. We talked with about 40 people about library programs and services, including memory cafes.



I am scheduled to meet with the six project groups within the Library Memory Project over the summer months. We will discuss what is working well, what we need to work on, and what's next including tentative schedules for 2026.

Professional Development

Teambuilding (Standards of Service Excellence (SOSE) through Waukesha County); Mindful Moments Parts 1 & 2 (SOSE through Waukesha County); Simple Ways to Research Target Audiences (LibraryWorks).

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings

At the CAFÉ Cats virtual meetup this month we talked about looking out for incorrectly repeated ISBNs in OCLC bibliographic records, removing labels from library materials, the forthcoming Vega Discover catalog, and cataloging books marketed as “larger print” but not truly large print.

The Bibliographic Standards Committee is a subcommittee of the statewide LSTA Cooperative Cataloging partners group. In mid-May, we met to finalize sections of the WICATALOG best practices cataloging document and go over final steps for the group as the grant cycle ends. We met in June to discuss state-wide cataloging recommendations for local subjects and genre headings, a special MCFLS project of the LSTA cataloging grant.

This month I had a virtual cataloging consultation with a staff member at Town Hall Library about that library's new collection of Vox audio-enabled children's books. I also worked with catalogers at both Town Hall and Mukwonago as those libraries develop in-house best practices for creating call numbers.

Catalog Updates and Maintenance

Item codes have been added for two new collections held at some of our libraries:

- Audio enabled books for adults – Oconomowoc will be adding audio-enabled large print Wonderbooks.
- Light novels for young adults -- Pewaukee will be separating their illustrated light novels from young adult fiction and instead shelving them nearer graphic books.

Based on a request from the Vega committee, I made changes to the way we catalog book club kits so they now group together in Vega Discover with the other versions of the same titles. I updated the cataloging manual and templates, then edited the books club kit records in our catalog. Our libraries have an impressive 450+ book club kits in circulation!

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

“Speak Up for Libraries” Postcard Campaign

The campaign is going very well throughout the state. Many libraries from all systems have already requested more postcards after the first week. The initial statewide order was 49,775 postcards (3,000 for Bridges). I placed another order for Bridges to replenish quantities to last for the duration of the campaign through July 25th.

Journey of Dragons: A Library Challenge

The systemwide summer event is off to another great start! From the libraries:

- Brookfield: stamped 49 Dragons maps the first week of the program this year. This is a 122% increase from participation in the first week of last year (22 stamps). Love that strong start!
- Sussex: we handed out all our maps in the first week and had to order more! Patrons are SO excited about the challenge!
- Menomonee Falls: 62 interactions for Week 1 here, and we filled out our first prize slip this morning!

LibraryAware Meetings

I spoke with some other library system marketing staff looking into new products for email marketing. We spoke about LibraryAware as a beneficial tool for libraries and systems.

- June 3rd: I spoke with Jamie at Wisconsin Valley Library Service
- June 4th: I spoke with Angela at Winnefox Library System

Resource Sharing

On June 3rd, I spoke with Marylyn Batory, a Senior Mental Health Counselor with Waukesha County Health & Human Services. She is an outreach worker for the intensive case management programs that focus on people with mental illness. I highlighted some library resources, programs and services that could be shared through HHS programs.

Waukesha County Media Day

On June 24th, I will be attending a Waukesha County Employee Media Day event for a panel discussion

with members of our local media from Fox6, TMJ4, WISN12 and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Western Suburbs Reporter.

Google Interior Photo Tours

More 360 photos for Google Profiles are coming up this month.

- Johnson Creek – June 10th
- Lake Mills – June 17th
- Waterloo – June 23rd
- Big Bend – June 25th (TBD)

In the News:

- American Library Association, NYPL The New York Public Library, and Carnegie Corporation of New York feature winners of the "I Love My Librarian Award": [Facebook Post](#)
- Brittany Larson named director of Bridges Library System:
 - o [Freeman Article](#) and [Daily Union Article](#)
- Jefferson library kicks off summer reading program: [Daily Union Article](#)
- State Representative Cindi Duchow highlighted Alice Baker Library in her 'District Day' Video and linked to it in her newsletter: [YouTube Video](#)
- Menomonee Falls diverts \$300k from library to police budget: [Wisconsin Examiner Article](#)
- Menomonee Falls votes to move \$300,000 from library budget to police: [Freeman Article](#)
- Bridges Library System to offer summer library challenge: [Freeman Article](#)

May/June Newsletters:

Marketing Magic:

- June 6: 51.72% Open Rate
- May 23: 62.64% Open Rate
- May 9: 61.54% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- June 6: 51.72% Open Rate
- May 19: 44.95% Open Rate

Monthly Legislators:

- May 19: 29.41% Open Rate
 - o Legislators Staff: 31.71% Open Rate