

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

July 2025

Brittany Larson – Library System Director
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Leadership Transition

June and early July have been very busy. The budget process and adjacent county reimbursements are annual and would make this time of year busy enough, but layered over that were time sensitive tasks that only come around every 5 five years or so (lease renewal, delivery contract RFP, and Act 150 committee work). Now that the budget draft is submitted and adjacent county funds have been received, I am shifting focus to the budget presentation portion of this process for both counties which will run from now through the early Fall. I will also be preparing for the start of the Waukesha County Act 150 Committee, which will include research of past committees, handout development, gaining a deeper understanding of current plan nuances, and working with directors to start assessing how the current plan components are holding up. I have been meeting weekly with the other State System Directors, reaching out to the Division of Library and Technologies (soon to be called the Bureau of Libraries) and meeting County staff and officials. I have also been working on holding one-on-one meetings with each Bridges staff member to learn more about staff and system needs. By the next meeting I hope to discuss the establishment of my annual goals with the Board so that there is something to have applied to my end of year evaluation process.

State Updates

There is a reorganization at the state level within the DPI. The Division of Libraries and Technologies will be renamed the Bureau of Libraries. At present there should be no obvious changes to the level of service provided.

Federal Updates

The current iteration of the Federal Budget includes a minimal amount of funds (around \$6 million) to close the IMLS agency. Now Federal subcommittees will begin working on portions of the budget and we will monitor if anything changes. As a reminder, the IMLS agency would need to both be funded and reauthorized to continue its function as we have known it in years past.

Delivery RFP Process

Mellanie and I met with a purchasing analyst for Waukesha County to finish the RFP for the delivery service. It was posted the second week in July and now contractors can submit proposals.

Hoopla Update

Member libraries have been discussing the viability of Hoopla as an econtent provider (ebooks and eaudiobooks primarily). The product allows for instant access and a nice variety of materials, but the pay-per-use model does not integrate well with the public library service model. Most libraries have seen budgets they cannot predict. At this time, the plan is for all member libraries to discontinue

service. Timelines are being established at the July APL meeting. Investments into Overdrive Advantage and a Lucky Day Advantage collection continue to be the new focus.

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

SEWI Partners Meeting & Budget

The Bridges Library System facilitates continuing education opportunities for SEWI, the 5 library systems that comprise the Southeastern Wisconsin region. I held a SEWI Partners meeting in early June, attended by all SEWI partner system directors. We discussed future offerings, communication preferences, remaining LSTA grant funds from the 2024-2025 cycle, and the SEWI budget for 2026.

SEWI LSTA Grant Funds & Scholarships

LSTA Conference Scholarships for the 2024-2025 LSTA grant cycle are ending in July. There will be funds remaining after the close of these scholarships and the SEWI partners made the decision to purchase DiSC Profile Assessments and offer them as scholarships to SEWI Libraries. These assessments are designed to improve teamwork, communication, and productivity in the workplace. The purchase will be made by Prairie Lakes Library System, who is the fiscal agent for this grant.

Upcoming Events

- **SEWI Directors Retreat, August 22nd** – Registration is now open for this daylong event for SEWI Library Directors.
- **SEWI Book Repair Workshops, September 23rd** – Two identical workshops will be offered to help SEWI staff learn book damage prevention tools and simple repairs.

Professional Development

I viewed the *Introducing the New Novelist Experience!* webinar. This tool is used by library staff in recommending book titles to the public and creating readers advisory marketing materials. I plan to demonstrate the platform's new look at the next Bridges Adult Services meeting.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Youth Services

Summertime in libraries is the busiest time. I am making the rounds to libraries hosting the various Bridges' sponsored summer library performers. To date, I have visited: Lake Mills for Cookie Decorating with Baby Blues Bakery; Waterloo for J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue; Menomonee Falls for Zack Percell with TNZ Magic; Johnson Creek for Snake Discovery; and Whitewater for Science Heroes. In July,



I'll visit libraries to check on canvas painting with Set Apart Art, James the Magician, and Nerf Games. Libraries are sharing that their program numbers are similar to pre-covid figures and people are enjoying the shows and workshops Bridges has booked for the libraries.

Inclusive Services

Alice Baker Memorial Library in Eagle held the 4th Annual Hug a Horse Memory Cafe at Horse Power Healing Center on June 12th. This was a special memory cafe since it was the first Library Memory Project cafe to be offered in both English and Spanish. In collaboration with the Hispanic Health Resource Center (HHRC) in Waukesha, and utilizing grant funding from Bader Philanthropies, Inc., Bridges Library System provided transportation to 17 participants and 3 staff from the HHRC to Horse Power Healing Center in Eagle. We were also joined by more than 20 Library Memory Project participants and three ADRC Dementia Care Specialists from Waukesha and Jefferson Counties.

Alli from the Eagle library kicked off the event with an introduction and Blanca from HHRC provided the Spanish translation. As each animal was brought out for guests to pet or take pictures with, the animals were introduced in English and Spanish. You could hear people saying something like, "What is the Spanish word for turtle?" and someone would eagerly jump in with "tortuga!" If I had to summarize this event in one word, it would be *joyful*. Many thanks to Alli at Eagle library and Wendy from Horse Power for coordinating this meaningful event.



Pictured are guests from the Hispanic Health Resource Center's memory cafe in Waukesha. Also in the photo is Angela (Bridges), Alli (Eagle library), and Wendy (Horse Power).

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings

A Mukwonago Community Library cataloger and I met virtually to discuss that library's options for item codes and standardization of call numbers in adult and children's collections. At the Town Hall Library, I met in person with two cataloging staff and helped as that library begins to add collection codes to their catalog items for the first time. Collection codes help catalog users find materials more easily and provide staff with a better variety of statistics and reports. I visited L.D.Fargo Public Library in Lake Mills to work with staff members who are now using the Leap interface for cataloging instead of the Polaris staff client.

At the CAFÉ Cats virtual meetup this month we talked about ongoing catalog clean-up projects, cataloging AI-generated books, new MARC Fields in some OCLC bib records, and new CAFÉ item codes for adult large print Wonderbooks (print books with built-in audio players).

The Wisconsin Library Association's Technical Services Section meets virtually about five times per year. I attended this month's meeting where topics included preparation for the fall WLA Annual Conference and best practices when cataloging AI-generated materials.

Catalog Updates and Maintenance

In preparation for the Vega Discover catalog, I have been removing from the CAFÉ catalog OverDrive titles that do not offer any holdings. Many of the unused OverDrive records are a result of licenses no longer held for those titles.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Update: "Speak Up for Libraries" Postcard Campaign

Over 2,500 Postcards were returned to MCFLS from across the state for the first wave of mailings! Bridges had the most returned (688 total). We will keep promoting this through July 25th!

MCFLS also sent traffic analytics for the campaign's website: mywisconsinlibrary.org. It is great to see the numbers increasing, meaning we are doing a good job of getting the word out!

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Mar-25	23	31	267	884	35.44 MB
Apr-25	3553	6035	18761	107472	5.82 GB
May-25	4869	7846	20762	128336	7.24 GB
Jun-25	5184	7952	24253	138763	7.64 GB
Total	13629	21864	64043	375455	20.73 GB

On July 8th, we sent a news release to our media list that we collaborated with MCFLS on. I am also working on coordinating a news story with Bret Lemoine from Fox 6 for July 15th.

Statewide Marketing Cohort

We met on July 8 to discuss the current postcard campaign and potential outcomes and next steps for the fall.

We will also be doing the state promotional stickers for outreach and to help promote Library Card Sign-up Month in September again.



Journey of Dragons: A Library Challenge

We have received 246 prize entry forms so far from participants on the Journey of Dragons quest that solved passwords in June. Winners will be selected and notified soon. All entry forms submitted in June will roll over for July's drawing.

Johnson Creek Public Library had a family complete the full Journey of Dragons Library Challenge on June 24! They visited 22 libraries in 22 days – wow!



Outreach

June 11th: I staffed our table at the Waukesha County Employee Wellness Fair. I shared information on the many services libraries provide with a special focus on Café App, Libby, Udemy courses, Morningstar database and Consumer Reports. There was great attendance this year. I gave away almost all the swag (stickers, magnets, bookmarks, notebooks, pens).



In the News:

- Menomonee Falls Library reduces hours for 2026: [Freeman Article](#)
- Jefferson library debuts space for small groups, individuals: [Daily Union Article](#)
- New Bridges Library System director talks confidence from knowledge: [Freeman Article](#)
- For the Love of Librarians: feature winners of the "I Love My Librarian Award": [Carnegie Libraries Unstacked Newsletter](#)

[News Archives](#)

Google Interior Photo Tours

More 360 photos for Google Profiles are coming up next month and looking to wrap them up in fall.

- Jefferson – August 11
- Delafield – August 14
- Sussex – August 27 (To be confirmed)

June/July Newsletters: Industry standard/goal is 44% Open Rate

Marketing Magic:

- July 3: 62.07% Open Rate
- June 20: 61.36% Open Rate
- June 6: 64.37% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- July: to come
- June 6: 52.19% Open Rate

Monthly Legislators:

- July: to come
- Legislators June 17: 16.67% Open Rate
- Legislators Staff June 17: 34.15% Open Rate