

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

December 2024

Karol Kennedy – Library System Director

Jefferson County Contracts

The Jefferson County Board approved the 2025 budget request in November. After the approval, we prepared the 2025 library contracts. They have now been approved by Jefferson County staff and will be sent to the Jefferson County libraries for their approval. These contracts need to be signed by the library and municipal officials and returned to Jefferson County by February 1st.

Jefferson County Library Service

The Jefferson County Library Service Board reviewed a draft of the 2025-2029 Jefferson County Plan for Library Services at their meeting on November 13th. A public hearing and a vote on the plan were held December 3rd. The Jefferson County Board reviewed the plan at their meeting December 10th.

Annual Evaluations

I worked on performance evaluations for staff. Individual meetings are being held with each staff member in December to complete this process. I also met with Bridges Board President Linda Ager to review information from my own evaluation process and will develop goals for 2025 based on feedback received. These goals will be presented to the Bridges Board for approval in December.

Closed Border Meeting

Wisconsin statute 43.17 (11) (e) requires that any library that does not serve residents across a library system boundary meet at least once a year to discuss the situation. A meeting between Menomonee Falls and the Village of Germantown was held on November 19th. The Menomonee Falls Public Library doesn't serve the residents of the Village of Germantown (Monarch Library System) since they don't receive any reimbursement for providing services. Because counties only fund use by residents who live in municipalities without libraries (TNR), this situation is not addressed by cross-county funding requirements. As a result, libraries are allowed to deny service to those residents across a library system border if they don't receive reimbursement.

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

A few projects are kicking off this month:

- **Vega LX Starter:** LX Starter will modernize our email notices from Café, allowing libraries to use their brand and colors. Libraries will also be able to highlight services, events and titles in the notices. This will take a few months to complete and create templates for notices.
- **Cloud Nine Reservation:** 17 of our libraries are moving from local hosted server PC Reservation software to a similar product that is hosted in the cloud by Envisionware. Envisionware is ending development on the product they have and will be enhancing the cloud product in the future. The new model is based on service population of the two counties and all libraries participating will realize a savings with this group purchase.

Laurie Freund – Coordinator of Library Development

Bridges Adult Services Meeting (Nov 13th)

We had representatives from eight of our member libraries meet for our in-person only meeting at Delafield Public Library. Discussion topics included BadgerLink training recordings, the collection assessment tool (available through January 2025), WLA Conference session summaries from those who attended, tech training for the public, and staff safety issues. The 2025 meetings will be in-person only since the online meetings have not been well attended:

- 1:30 – 3:30 pm, January 8th at Waukesha
- 9:30 – 11:30 am, August 13th at Pewaukee
- 1:30 – 3:30 pm, November at Oconomowoc (location will confirm closer to date)

WI Library Buildings & Spaces

Be sure to check out the [Wisconsin Library Buildings & Spaces](#) web page! Emily Heller and I reorganized the page to make it easier for users to find recordings and resources by topic. Working with the project planning team, we also created a survey to help identify recent building projects in our state. Libraries can fill out the [Recent WI Public Library Building Projects survey](#) by December 30th if they have undergone or are currently undergoing renovations, space reconfiguration, or refreshed spaces. We will be taking the information and making it available on the web page so other libraries interested in a building project can view and/or visit libraries with similar projects.

[Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference](#) (Jan 22nd-23rd)

Registration is open for the 2025 online conference. Fourteen sessions will be available in four different tracks: Management, Internal Communications, Reference and Readers Advisory, and Small Libraries. This conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin public library systems and the Department of Public Instruction. There is no cost to attend. The sessions will be recorded.

My CE Activities: I attend the WLA Conference in Green Bay in early November. Sessions included one on middle management and promoting AI literacy.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

Dr. Juliette Sterkens, Audiologist, and I co-hosted the webinar "Is Your Library Hearing Friendly?" for the Public Library Association. Nearly 60 participants attended live, with additional views of the recording.

I participated in a panel discussion titled "Accessibility at Your Library," organized by the Wisconsin Library Association's Outreach Services Roundtable (OSRT), alongside Mark Jochem from South Central Library System. We discussed pre-provided questions and answered live Q&A from the audience.

I joined the Waukesha County Coalition for Social Connectedness, a multi-month initiative to plan next steps. This effort will continue into 2025 as committees are established.

Tonya Runyard, Dementia Care Specialist from Jefferson County's Aging and Disability Resource Center, and I appeared on WSLD 104.5 radio in Whitewater to promote memory cafes.

Youth Services

I attended the Wisconsin Library Association's 2nd Annual Youth Services Performers Showcase, an event previously coordinated by Bridges. I connected with several performers, resulting in the completion of bookings for the Bridges Library System's 2025 family performances.

Professional Development

I participated in Knowb4's Artificial Intelligence Foundations course and the Wisconsin Library Association's webinar, "Engaging and Affirming Neurodivergent Youth in Community Spaces."



Pictured: Angela Meyers (left) and Tonya Runyard (right), guests on 104.5 WSLD Radio

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Meetings & Library Visits

In November's virtual CAFÉ Cats meeting, Bridges catalogers discussed removing unneeded bib record data to make Leap more useful for cataloging, the importance of updating the year in magazine and travel guide catalog records, and how to check for an author's Library of Congress authority record in our catalog.

Shawn Carlson and I continued visits to libraries to talk about cataloging and circulation work, share Polaris information, and offer on-the-spot training. We met with staff in Elm Grove, Muskego, and New Berlin libraries.

In the WLA Technical Services Section online state-wide meeting, the discussion included keeping bootleg media out of library catalogs, awareness of AI generated library materials, and staying current with cataloging standards.

Catalog Maintenance

This month I performed many regular maintenance tasks for the CAFÉ catalog, including:

- Checked to make sure our OverDrive bibs don't show in WISCAT as print materials available for inter-library loan. This month 535 bib records were edited.
- Reviewed audio-enabled book records - Vox and Wonderbooks - to ensure the more than 880 items are cataloged as books rather than audios for the state annual report.
- Audience codes changed to "Juvenile" on 155 children's materials to make them easier to find in the CAFÉ catalog.
- Downloaded 484 improved OverDrive e-book bib records into our catalog.

I sent copies of 6,189 bibliographic records added to CAFÉ in the last quarter to Backstage Library Works for editing – deleting unneeded data, adding reading levels, standardizing subjects, and other enrichments. I submit this data every few months and reload the returned improved bibs and their new authority records during off-peak hours. This year, Backstage improved more than 33,000 new bib records at our request.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Thankful for Libraries: November Stories Gathering Campaign

We gathered some beautiful stories throughout November about the impact libraries have on the community. Here are a few that I loved:

“I’ve been taking my son to the library from when he was 2 years old. It is there that he discovered new worlds and passions. It is there that he attended parties and events. It is there that he met Santa for the first time. Our library’s staff even helped me find the perfect book to help him understand death when his great grandmother passed away. Now 9, he and I still visit the library on a regular basis to check out movies and books, play board games, and just browse. I cannot imagine our lives without the library and all the offerings, support, and love that it supplies.”

– Alex R., Hartland Public Library Patron

“I’m an avid reader but don’t like looking up books on the computer so ordering books for pick up works for me. It’s like Christmas getting a notice that my books are ready and come from all over the library system. I’ve also read books online. All my kids and grandkids got their library cards at a young age because of my focus on the importance of reading. In addition, the New Berlin library has wonderful opportunities to check out like summer concerts, the volunteer store, projects, speakers and a host of all kinds of interesting things to participate. They’re a great community member. I don’t know what I’d do without the library. I save an average of \$3,000.00 dollars per year just reading library books!”

– Marilyn L., New Berlin Public Library Patron

“The library helped me achieve my PMP (Project Management Professional) certification by giving me the opportunity to use and study the PMP UDEMY course!”

– Amber B., Brookfield Public Library Patron

Destination Library Direct Mail Postcard Campaign

Bridges mailed 16,443 postcards out the week of Thanksgiving and member libraries are seeing people visit in-person to get new library cards and enter the Amazon gift card drawing. The unique webpage has had some light traffic as well.

Frost & Found: Virtual Library System Trivia Event Monday, January 13 - Friday, February 14, 2025

Join us for this online trivia quiz event to learn about Bridges Library System member libraries. Find the answers, complete the quizzes, and be entered for a chance to win a prize.

Up to 4 chances to win!

Learn more: bridgeslibrarysystem.org/frost

Google Interior Photo Tours

So far 6 library interiors have been photographed using the 360-degree camera and have the photos available on their Google Profiles (Brookfield, Mukwonago, Muskego, Oconomowoc, Watertown and Waukesha). They are now also editing the interactive tours to add to their websites.

[Mukwonago Community Library](#) has completed theirs and has it featured on their home page.

It had 3,759 visitors in the first month!



Professional Development

I attended the Library Marketing and Communications Conference (LMCC) from Nov. 12-14 in St. Louis. The conference was excellent once again with a lot of great information and ideas. Some of the best sessions were on using short form video well, gaining media coverage, and library outreach ideas.

Consulting

December 10th: I gave a Marketing Workshop presentation at the Library Memory Project's Symposium. It focused on working as a group to identify potential partners to help achieve the 'Awareness & Communications' goal of the Strategic Plan.

December 16th: I'll visit Karl Junginger Memorial Library in Waterloo for a tour and marketing review.

In the News:

- Karl Junginger Memorial Library and Waterloo Fire Department Fired-Up Reading Challenge collaboration: [Courier Article](#)
- Pewaukee Public Library Youth Services Manager Peter Blenski to help select 2026 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award: [Freeman Article](#)

November/December Newsletters:

Marketing Magic:

- December 6: 63.64% Open Rate
- November 15: 61.36% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- December 2: 47.95% Open Rate

Legislators:

- December 16: data to come