

Director's Report

WVLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

August 17, 2024

WVLS Loses a Family Member

HEATHER ANN (ELSMO) ELDRED, WVLS DIRECTOR EMERITA

Former WVLS Director Heather Eldred passed away on August 4 following a brief illness.

She was born September 4, 1942, in Racine, WI to the late Sverre and Fern (Fulton) Elsmo. She graduated from Washington Park High School and received a Bachelor of Arts degree and master's in library science degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Heather's professional library career included positions at Cudahy (WI) Public Library, Marquette University Law School Library (Milwaukee), Holy Redeemer College (Waterford, WI), and the Wisconsin Valley Library Service, a seven-county library system.

While at WVLS, Heather served as a consultant for 8 years and as its Director for 27 years. At the time of her retirement in September 2007, the WVLS Board of Trustees granted Heather the honorary title of WVLS Director emerita for 35 years of system leadership.

During her career, Heather served on many state-level committees and was active in the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) for over 30 years. She served as WLA President in 1988 and served on the WLA Foundation Board for two terms, one as its Vice-President. Heather received the Muriel Fuller Award for outstanding accomplishments which have significantly improved and benefited library services.

A donation to the WVLS Carol Ruth Wessler Scholarship fund will be made in her memory.



Heather Eldred; WVLS Board of Trustees meeting, August 13, 2022

Correspondence

NOTES OF GRATITUDE

WVLS Summer Library Program Performer Grants

We had a beautiful morning and a great crowd for Tom Pease today. There were around 170 adults and kids in attendance. Our thanks for helping us to bring Tom's joyful performance to Tomahawk!

-- **Annette Miller**; Children's Librarian, Tomahawk Public Library

I've attached a few photos from the performance by Christian Strutz (Wesley Waffles) at our library last week. We used our performer grant to sponsor him. He always puts on a fantastic show! He's one of my favorites. 😊 Thank you to WVLS for the performer grants each summer! They really do make a difference to us! -- **Erica Dischinger**, Youth Services Coordinator, Minocqua Public Library

LEANWI Website Support

*We are very excited about the website, and **Brendan** was an absolute pleasure to work with! So far, I have been able to go in and make any changes I have needed to. I did a Zoom meeting with Brendan the other day and he showed me a few things that I wanted to do, and because he's so super awesome, I was able to learn those things, and remembered how to do them on my own the next day when I needed to create yet another carousel! This has been a great experience to work with [**Brendan and Erica**].* –

Cortney Williams, Youth Services Coordinator/Assistant Librarian, New Lisbon Memorial Library

*I was able to make the changes needed. Thanks for sending the training! Extremely helpful. –**Robin Kruse***, Assistant Librarian, Ellsworth Public Library

People / Libraries / Systems in the News

STAFFING CHANGES

Theresa Schmidt has been hired as the new Public Library Administration Consultant for DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology Team. Her first day on the job was Monday, July 15. Theresa previously served as the Mercer Public Library Director. She replaces **Shannon Schultz** who resigned from the position on March 1 to become the new Director of the South Central Library System.

The Antigo Public Library Board of Trustees has hired **Toni Edge** as the library's Acting Director. She replaces Director **Ada Demlow** who resigned from the position on April 27.

On May 12, **Tana Elias** became the new Director of the Madison Public Library. Before this new roll, Tana had 30 years of work experience at the Madison Public Library, most recently as its Digital Services and Marketing Manager. She replaces **Greg Mickells**, who retired from the position on February 2.

The Portage County Public Library Board of Trustees announced that **Alexander Johnson** has been hired as library director. He will replace **Larry Oathout**, who will retire on September 6. Alexander worked at

Marathon County Public Library since 2021 as library support services manager where he supervised technical and circulation staff. He has experience on the library's Strategic Plan Leadership Team and served on committees of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service.

MATCZAK TEACHES ISCHOOL COURSE

WVLS Continuing Education Consultant **Jamie Matczak** is teaching a new continuing education course on *Tackling Tough Work Conversations* for UW-Madison's Information School. This 4-week course assists librarians in developing skills to navigate tough conversations by focusing on trust, active listening, how to stay calm, and more. While tough conversations are not enjoyable, this course shares tools and best practices to apply when having them to ensure a positive result and stronger workplace. The 18 learners enrolled in the course are from public and academic libraries from across the U.S.

WALENTON IS MEMBER OF DPI'S FINANCIAL DATA WORKGROUP

In July, WVLS Business Manager **Brenda Walenton** volunteered to participate in a Financial Data Workgroup on behalf of the WI Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries and Technology. The workgroup will review proposed updates and clarifications to multiple sections of the Public Library Annual Report including sections on local appropriations, other funds, trust funds, funds carried forward, operational versus capital funds, and funds flowing through systems to libraries. The workgroup is anticipated to meet first in August to discuss expectations and 2 to 3 times in late August to October to finalize annual report proposals.

AREA LIBRARIANS ATTEND FOUNDATIONS OF WISCONSIN LIBRARIANSHIP WORKSHOP

Area colleagues Antigo Public Library Community Engagement Specialist **Kristie Heistad** and Greenwood Public Library Director **Amber Brill** attended a workshop sponsored by the WI Department of Public Instruction called *Foundations of Wisconsin Librarianship: Essential Skills for Library Media Specialists and Public Library Staff Serving Youth*. 21 people from 11 systems participated in the three-day event, held August 6-8 at Hotel Marshfield. The goal of the workshop was to support public library staff who are new to youth services work in Wisconsin. Participants were provided opportunities to network and develop genuine connections with their peers while learning about early literacy, programming, collection development, library services for all ages, intellectual freedom, digital media, compassion resilience, BadgerLink resources for public libraries, and the importance of gaming and libraries.

Grant Projects and Scholarship Opportunities

2024 SUMMER LIBRARY PROGRAM GRANTS

Through WVLS Summer Library Program (SLP) grants, financial support was provided for 30 performances hosted by area libraries throughout the summer months. Each library that participated in the SLP grant program was awarded up to \$300 for a performance. Those who attended the events

enjoyed a variety of performances that included musicians, raptor education, magicians, juggling, storytellers, a dragon training academy, animal and nature education, and theater shows.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FUNDS

WVLS will receive LSTA funding in FY 2024-2025 specifically to support our efforts to provide continuing education and professional development for our member libraries. These funds will help to offset costs for continuing education courses and participation at statewide and national conferences. More information will be shared at future meetings.

LSTA FY 2024-2025 GRANT AWARD SUPPORTS LEANWI INITIATIVES

\$77,028 was awarded in aggregate to LEANWI Partners under the newly named LSTA Core Services channel. While it is nice to think that DPI adopted naming based on the LEANWI “Core Services” terminology, it is a common concept and naming convention and makes sense. **\$10,784** of this is already committed to the continuation support for Kajeet Hotspots through the end of 2024. **\$49,200** is expressly designated within the LEANWI 2025 proposed budget plan to support LEANWI tenancy for rack 1, through WiscNet, at the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Regional Datacenter (RDC), to support a potentially significant increase above planned 5-year Faronics licensing renewal expenses, and to help offset Pharos and Splashtop licensing/subscription expenses. Approximately **\$17,044** remains undesignated in the budget.

GRANTS AVAILABLE THROUGH CYBERSECURITY PILOT PROGRAM

The LEANWI partnership is reviewing the federal [Cybersecurity Pilot Program](#) (CPP), available to schools and libraries that meet the E-Rate program’s eligibility requirements. This pilot “... will evaluate the effectiveness of using Universal Service funding to support cybersecurity services and equipment to protect school and library broadband networks and data in order to determine whether to fund them on a permanent basis.” Questions remain regarding applicability of Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) certification, required for certain use of federal funding support through the E-Rate and LSTA programs, and whether it will be more meaningful for individual libraries to apply for specific needs, or for broader consortial efforts to be made at system or multi-system partnership levels.

WVLS Services

COLLABORATIONS

WPLC News

The WPLC (Wisconsin Public Library Consortium) board held meetings on June 10 and August 5. During these meetings they approved the 2025 budget, ***discussed the possibility of an increase to the Digital Library Buying Pool 2026 and 2027 budgets***, approved the budget for Statewide delivery, appointed a

Collection Development Committee, discussed possible mission and vision statements, and formed a Nominating Committee.

With regard to the Digital Library Buying Pool budgets, there was general agreement that there should be an increase, but not more than 5%. Highlights from the WPLC Board discussion will be shared with the WPLC Collection Development Committee to consider as part of its Digital Library recommendation process.

LEANWI Partnership, Collaborative Projects, and Core Infrastructure Support

LEANWI Core Infrastructure: Our colleagues at South Central Library System (SCLS), hosting partners with the LEANWI partnership for collocated Backup and Digital Archiving appliances and services, began the quoting process with Dell in July 2024 to renew maintenance for a final period mid 2025 – mid 2026. Under the governance of WPLS, efforts will begin to investigate and prepare for the next lifecycle(s) of these two multi-system collaborations.

The TEACH division of the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has a new contract for statewide networking. The previous network and services, labeled “BadgerNet Service,” is still in the process of being replaced by a new network, labeled “TEACH Network Service.” AT&T will continue to be the Managed Service Provider (MSP) for the statewide networking fabric for schools and libraries and is still in the process of completing the migration of service connections. The end of the “current” BadgerNet contract was originally January 31, 2024, but after AT&T struggled to meet that deadline an extension of contract through June 2024 was put into effect. Circuit migrations were paused until management access migrations and handoff from WIN to GLS (the new network management and support provider) were/are completed. Schedule invites for circuit migration test and turn-up (TTU) events began being sent again in late July for August and are expected to continue until all sites are on TEACH Network.

In June, TEACH announced that all sites that currently receive service less than 100 Mbps will be upgraded to 100Mbps synchronous service, pending complete migration. This will likely need to correspond to adjustments on the LEANWI WAN fabric to WVLS head-end circuit speeds or to finally implementing the merger of the WVLS head-end with primary “LEANWI” head-end circuit IFLS and NWLS are currently merged into.

LEANWI Service Explorations: Last fall, LEANWI partners began exploring a relationship with a new Microsoft Licensing vendor due to struggles with responsiveness from our current vendor, to better understand program renewal and new procurement options. After much back and forth, and another change up of our primary account rep, we were able to work with our current MS licensing vendor to renew existing licensing for another 36-month period before the end of the previous term (June 30-2024). Before attempting to procure new licensing, we will review our vendor relationship again and will continue to investigate and prepare for the inevitable program migration. We also continue to

monitor our Microsoft 365 tenancy, also currently under an academic program, for indications of the initiation of a mandatory migration to the charity program (e.g. for non-profits).

WPLC Technology Community of Practice. During its meeting in mid-June, participants discussed challenges with large-scale email sending, namely from ILS applications for patron notices, related to recent mass-email related security initiatives by global providers Google and Yahoo. The LEANWI Partnership announced in April that it has begun reviewing Faronics Deep Freeze licensing and intended to be engaging with Faronics reps during late Spring or the Summer of 2024, and reminded the group of that effort and the opportunity for a broader multi-system collaboration. The LEANWI five-year maintenance term with Faronics expires in November 2025. Given other systems' past indications of significantly increased costs, we want to get in front of our own renewal early enough to have time to review alternative options and potentially migrate away from Faronics Deep Freeze if cost increases prove prohibitive. We also want to increase awareness of our project among our peers and maximize the window of opportunity for additional licensing pool mergers with other systems to reduce duplications of effort and increase our collective economy of scale.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

WVLS Adds Items to Makerspace Collection

In recent months, several new items have been added to the WVLS Makerspace Collection to support member library programming. New items include: two murder mystery kits, three puzzle competition kits, geoboards, straw connectors, building plans, and four math-themed kits. Each puzzle competition kit contains 9-10 copies of the same puzzle for teams to complete simultaneously. Each of the themed math kits contain five or six resources that support such topics as counting and numbers; sorting and patterns; addition and subtraction; and shapes.

In collaboration with the IFLS Library System and Northern Waters Library Service, WVLS is able to offer our member libraries a unique collection of makerspace kits, equipment, story time kits, and memory kits through a Lend Items booking program. More information about this service may be found on the [WVLS website](#).

Gale Presents: Udemy

Following months of research and with input from member libraries, *Gale Presents: Udemy* was selected in late spring to replace *Gale Courses*. With *Gale Presents: Udemy*, library users can connect to thousands of video-based courses in business, technology, leadership, and personal development – and more than 15,000 courses are taught by instructors in their native language. This top collection, curated from over 210,000 courses from Udemy.com and powered by Udemy Business, gives users access to relevant skills training, helping them achieve success at work and in life. As part of a soft rollout of the product, virtual training was offered to member libraries in July.

Visit the [WVLS website](#) to access *Gale Presents: Udemy* and other online resources available to library users.

COMMUNICATIONS

SCAA Form Focusing on Service

Part of the mission of WVLS is to *ensure the ultimate level of library service to residents throughout its seven county system area*. A way for WVLS to assess the service it provides is by capturing data and information from its member libraries, other systems and partner organizations.

WVLS Education Consultant Jamie Matczak created an online form called a “SCCA” to record **S**uggestions, **C**omplaints, and **C**ompliments/**A**ccolades on WVLS services. The form is currently being piloted by Jamie and Public Services Consultant, **Kristie Hauer**. Eventually, all WVLS staff members will be using it. The idea for the form originated from ZingTrain’s *The Art of Giving Great Service* training that Jamie completed in April.

WVLS Newsletter Highlights

Published during the first week of each month, the WVLS newsletter highlights ways that member libraries are providing service and support to their communities, national library news, WVLS updates and more. Recent issues include:

- [June 2024](#) - “New Makerspace Items Available for Checkout,” “Zimmermann Talks About V-Cat and ILS Management,” “Rhinelanders Hosts First After-Hours Event,” “Clark County Starts ‘Passport Adventures’ Program,” “Guest Feature: River Falls and Junior Librarians,” “Unlocking Efficiency for the 2024 Annual Report,” “WVLS Members Receive WAPL Conference Scholarships.”
- [July 2024](#) - “Registration Open for Trustee Training Week,” “Gale Presents: Udemy Coming to WVLS,” “Hodag on the Roof Helps Kick Off Rhinelanders Campaign,” “Three Lakes Features Library of Things,” “Guest Feature: Middleton Creates New ‘Paw-Licy’,” “Marketing Support Grant Pilot Project Underway.”
- [August 2024](#) - “Three WVLS Libraries Receive ALA Grant,” “Library Card Sign-Up Month is Almost Here,” “Medford ‘End of Summer’ Party a Success,” “Rib Lake Hosts Island Adventure,” “10 Things to Know About Kari Sweeney,” “Granton Partners on Story Hour in the Park,” “Registration Open for Tech Days 2024.”

Thank you to colleagues and friends for sharing news from their libraries!

Inclusive Services News

Inclusive Services Updates are published monthly by the Northern Waters Library Service Director and WVLS Inclusive Services Consultant **Sherry Anderson**, emailed to all member libraries in WVLS and NWLS, announced in Monday Mentions and archived on the [WVLS website](#).

The [August 2024 Update](#) announced color blind glasses to give away, information from a webinar recording of *More than Welcome: Libraries Serving Families of You Children with Disabilities*, and three

IMLS Discretionary Grant projects the WI Dept. of Public Instruction plans to work on in upcoming grant cycles. It also shared resources for an upcoming webinar on “New Title II ADA Regulations for Websites and Mobile Apps: What Libraries Need to Know.”

The [July 2024 Update](#) encouraged readers to give themselves permission to step back when feeling overwhelmed and to take time for themselves. The update also announced two upcoming webinars, “Telehealth 101: What libraries need to know” and “Wellness in the Library Workplace,” and shared a toolkit from Mental Health American to use to bring awareness to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Mental Health Month in July.

The [June 2024 Update](#) offered resources to celebrate Immigrant Heritage Month in June, invited libraries to apply for a 2024 DEI Consultant Funding Opportunity, provided a resource guide from DPI on Juneteenth, and shared a link to a resource that addresses the ways that Libby supports readers and users with a range of accessibility needs.

DELIVERY SERVICES

On April 30, WVLS assumed the responsibility of sorting all materials running through the inter- and intra-system delivery at Waltco’s Wausau hub on behalf of our member libraries. During the month of May, WVLS in-office staff and a volunteer pitched in to complete the daily sort of all incoming materials and re-binning of all outgoing materials. Since then, **Amelia Zimmermann** and **Belanna Werner** were hired to assist with the sort over the summer months.

Since taking on the sort, WVLS has been tracking the number of incoming and outgoing bins, and the amount of time required to complete the sort each day. This data has helped to assess hours needed to complete the work and to determine work schedules for sorters. In late June, WVLS announced our plan to hire three sorters on a part-time basis, and a job description was posted to the Wisconsin Job site and through various communication channels used by WVLS. In July, following several interviews, WVLS hired 4 people. Thus far in August, **Bennet Sweeney** and **Gracie Engebrecht** have gone through orientation and training.

Data from the daily sort during May and June indicated significant variance in courier volume on Tuesdays and Wednesday, with the former being almost double that of the latter. To alleviate the pressure to get courier done on Tuesdays, WVLS added a fourth stop to the Rothschild Branch Library and to the Minocqua Public Library. Early data in August indicates a slight increase in volume on Mondays along with a slight decrease on Tuesdays. The week of August 5-August 9 saw a record number of 359 outgoing bins. It will be interesting to see how/if the courier volume is impacted once schools open in September.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Results of the primary election were not known at the time this report was written. A report will be shared as [Exhibit 16a](#).

MEMBER LIBRARY / WVLS GATHERINGS

WVLS Listening Session

The second WVLS listening session of 2024 will take place on September 23 at the Frances L. Simek Memorial Library in Medford. Held twice annually, listening sessions are opportunities for area library staff and WVLS staff to come together to have informal discussions on current challenges and successes, and to hear the latest library-related news. More information about this event will be shared in an upcoming *Monday Mentions*.

Youth Services Meetup

Several times throughout the year WVLS hosts Youth Services Information Exchanges (YSIEs). Planned and hosted by Kristie Hauer, YSIEs are opportunities for area library staff to gather virtually or in-person for informal discussions on issues relevant to youth services.

On August 12, a YSIE get-together took place at the Granton Community Library. Those who attended toured the library, discussed early literacy text services and explored the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in program planning.

The next YSIE will be held virtually on September 10 and in collaboration with member library youth services staff from the IFLS Library System. During this event, youth staff will be divided into smaller groups to participate in different topic-focused session, before regrouping to share and recap.

WVLS Library Advisory Committee Meeting

The second meeting of the WVLS Library Advisory Committee (LAC), a multi-type advisory group of the WVLS Board of Trustees, was held on August 15 at the WVLS office. During the meeting, LAC members discussed how their libraries prepare for materials challenges, reviewed drafts of the 2025 WVLS Plan and WVLS Budget, and received service updates from WVLS staff in attendance. LAC meeting highlights and recommendations will be shared with the WVLS Board at their meeting on August 17.

PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSULTANT SERVICES

Data Analysis and Reporting

WVLS Data and Technology Services Consultant **Erica Brewster** completed a library service and funding infographic template for WVLS-member counties using data presented in the **2023 WVLS Statistics Booklet**. She worked with representatives from each county to further customize the template to support local library advocacy and marketing efforts, and in preparation for libraries' 2025 budget planning processes.

Public Library Services Support

Assistance was provided to the **Rhineland District Library** by reviewing and providing feedback on their Flexible Facilities Program (FFP) grant application. These grants support important capital projects

that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program focuses on constructing new or renovating existing libraries, community centers, and multipurpose community facilities with a focus on offering reliable, affordable high-speed internet and other digital connectivity technology, including remote options. The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration has been awarded \$107 million for this initiative, which aims to address the needs of residents disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Each awarded project can receive a maximum of \$4,250,000. The **T.B. Scott Library** (Merrill) and **Tomahawk Public Library** also submitted grant applications.

Assistance was provided to the **Antigo Public Library** regarding considerations for creating a Parenting Collection. A list of topics and themes typically included in Parenting Collections was provided along with reliable collection development sources.

TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS OVERVIEW

Communication and Training

Erica continues to do site visits to member libraries to deploy new computer equipment. As new equipment is installed, she trains local staff on the use of Deep Freeze, Pharos, Princh, and offers an orientation on library network equipment.

Erica also continues to add technology tips to <https://wvls.org/services/technology/technology-faqs/>.

Procurement and Asset Inventory

New computers were deployed at libraries in Antigo, Crandon, Granton, Loyal, Medford, Rib Lake, and Rhinelander, with more being staged for Minocqua, Medford, Neillsville, Rhinelander and Three Lakes. A few libraries have requested that computer installation be done after the busy summer season, so installation timelines are being adjusted accordingly.

Work continues on the inventory of assets with two entities, Marathon County Public Library and WVLS, yet to be completed. All inventories still need to be uploaded to the shared LEANWI asset-tracking system.

Erica began network inventories this summer. Thus far, network equipment inventories have been completed for Crandon, Merrill, Rib Lake, Three Lakes, Westboro and White Lake, and an inventory at Antigo is underway. As part of this project, Erica is assessing which sites have router equipment (EdgeRouter Lite) that are on the list of equipment to be replaced.

Assistance was provided to libraries in Antigo, Crandon, Elcho, Granton, Loyal and White Lake to migrate to a central Deep Freeze Console so WVLS IT staff can monitor the status of public computers remotely and better address issues directly. Local library staff still have access to a console for local computer management.

Project tracking:

Member site	Asset Inventory	Network inventory	Replace EdgeRouter Lite	Deep Freeze Central Console	TTU
a1 Antigo	in progress	in progress	complete	complete	pending
a2 Elcho	in progress	pending	pending	complete	1/18/2024
a4 White Lake	in progress	complete	complete	complete	2/29/2024
ab Abbotsford	complete	pending	complete	pending	3/4/2024
co Colby	complete	pending	complete	pending	pending
cr Crandon	in progress	complete	pending	complete	2/29/2024
do Dorchester	complete	pending	pending	complete	pending
ga Granton	in progress	pending	complete	complete	pending
ge Greenwood	complete	pending	complete	pending	pending
gi Gilman	complete	pending	complete	complete	pending
la Laona	complete	pending	pending	pending	pending
lo Loyal	in progress	pending	pending	complete	pending
m1 Wausau	pending	pending	n/a	complete	pending
me Medford	in progress	pending	complete	pending	pending
mi Minocqua	in progress	pending	pending	pending	pending
mr Merrill	in progress	complete	complete	complete	1/16/2024
ne Neillsville	in progress	pending	complete	pending	pending
ow Owen	complete	pending	pending	pending	pending
rh Rhinelander	in progress	pending	complete	in progress	pending
rl Rib Lake	in progress	complete	pending	complete	pending
st Stetsonville	complete	pending	pending	complete	pending
th Thorp	complete	pending	pending	pending	pending
tl Three Lakes	in progress	complete	complete	pending	1/25/2024
to Tomahawk	complete	pending	complete	pending	pending
wa Wabeno	complete	pending	pending	in progress	pending
we Westboro	complete	complete	pending	pending	pending
wi Withee	complete	pending	pending	pending	pending

Member Library Services

Hotspots Update: LEANWI Partners NWLS and WVLS are continuing support for currently provisioned mobile hotspots and data plans with Kajeet through the end of 2024 before discontinuing system-level direct service management and support. We are working to collect information and to be able to provide guidance to libraries currently hosting Kajeet hotspots so they may gracefully discontinue their own programs by the end of 2024, budget and plan for the continuation of services directly with Kajeet or migrate from Kajeet to work directly with other services and service providers (e.g. Mobile Beacon via Tech Soup).

Ongoing Projects: WVLS worked with MCPL IT staff to test deploy new PC imaging system with Deep Freeze public PC management, Pharos public PC timing software, and Princh print management in live testing situation in the Wausau location. The pilot has thus far been successful and expanded from 6 “Internet” PCs on the ground floor in Wausau to include “Teen” PCs. New public PCs will eventually be deployed at all MCPL locations, replacing older units.

V-CAT AND ILS ADMINISTRATION

V-Cat Council Meeting Highlights

The V-Cat Council had meetings on June 6 and August 1.

During its **June 6 meeting**, the V-Cat Council approved the [March-April 2024](#) financial reports and [2025 V-Cat Budget](#) and briefly reviewed guidelines for [Damaged and Missing Pieces](#), [Damaged and Missing Pieces Flowcharts – PDF](#) and [Billable Noted Missing Pieces Form](#).

The Council received an update on the Northern Wisconsin ILS Exploration (NICE) project and were briefed on several new documents including [Key Takaways from 2023](#), the [NICE Decision Making Principles](#), and new/updated information for the [NICE Record Standards Recommendation](#), [NICE Holds Fulfillment Recommendation](#), [NICE Cataloging Recommendation](#), and [Updated NICE ILS Vendor Selection Recommendation](#). Additional NICE Project informational documents shared included [Information about NWLS and WVLS registered borrowers, extended service population, library collections, and circulation](#) and a preliminary [draft of NICE budget information](#).

A discussion occurred regarding the new/updated recommendations and the additional shared documents. It was noted that additional information and responses to questions and comments would be shared with individuals and on the NICE Project FAQs page in the near future and that a full 2024 NICE report would be available by the end of June.

Library staff and directors were invited to participate in a NICE Town Hall on Tuesday, June 11, which was also recorded for library staff who were unable to attend. All library staff were invited to share questions and feedback through the NICE Project Feedback Form.

At the **August 1 meeting**, the Council met to discuss an ILS merger. As part of the discussion, they reviewed [NICE Key Takeaways](#) and [Report](#) (June 2024), [NICE Why Merge?](#) (June 2024), [NICE Benefits and Common Questions](#), [V-Cat NICE 2025 DRAFT Budget Estimates](#) and [Letter from Wisconsin Department of Instruction](#).

The discussion also included a brief update about NWLS’s recent decision on an ILS merger. During a meeting on July 18, the directors of the Northern Waters Library Network (NWLN) discussed the NICE Project Recommendations and Report and an ILS merger. The discussion highlighted benefits of an ILS for patrons, DPI support of an ILS merger, concerns about the NICE Holds Recommendation, satisfaction within NWLN services and resource sharing, and whether the financial savings were enough of a benefit to justify the change. The directors voted against merging the ILS with V-Cat. The NWLS Board of Trustees supported the NWLN vote and voted against an ILS merger during its meeting on July 20.

It was noted that WVLS will take time to carefully process the information provided and to have follow-up conversations with NWLS staff, WiLS and DPI. It was unclear whether there was room to keep talking about a potential ILS merger in the near future. It was anticipated that more information would be available to share with the Council during its meeting in September. Regardless, WVLS and NWLS staff will continue to collaborate, and we anticipate future planning will include discussions about potential ILS mergers.

Each V-Cat member library representative had an opportunity to share their thoughts about a potential ILS merger including benefits, sticking points, and other comments. When asked if Council members were ready to vote on an ILS merger, a handful requested additional time to communicate NICE information with their boards. A vote about the NICE project was then tabled until the next V-Cat Council meeting slated for September 5.

V-Cat Bibliographic and Interface Committee Activity

The V-Cat Bibliographic / Interface Committee met on August 6 to discuss cataloging practices and procedures, and Aspen Discovery updates. An update will be provided to the WVLS Board of Trustees in September.

V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee Activity

During its meeting on June 12, the V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee discussed draft guidelines for Book Clubs, Teacher/Institutional Library Card Applications, and Short Term/Temporary Library Card Application.

Other Projects

Cataloging Work Completed: WVLS ILS Administrator **Katie Zimmermann** and Database and ILS Support Specialist **Rachel Metzler** worked closely with Maria Pregler (Merrill) and Elisha Sheffer (Rhineland) to enhance bibliographic records in the V-Cat database for matching in the event of an ILS merger.

Backstage Work Completed: Records were sent to Backstage to improve them for matching in the event of an ILS merger. 4,230 records were sent for the insertion of the physical description. 4047 records were able to be improved in this way by Backstage. 7669 records were sent to Backstage for OCLC numbers and overall updating to the current OCLC record. 7453 were able to be improved.

The regular quarterly Backstage work was also completed in July. This work is to assist with maintaining subject, author, and genre authorities, convert to RDA style cataloging, and add Lexile and AR information were available.

Training: [Fall V-Cat Training sessions](#) are scheduled, and a survey has been shared with V-Cat member libraries to identify interest areas to determine training topics for sessions in November 2024 and Spring 2025.

Rachel provided cataloging training for Antigo Public Library staff, a cataloging refresher for T.B. Scott Public Library (Merrill) staff, a training on using Sierra for WISCAT lending and receiving for Antigo and Wabeno public library staffs, and a Web Management Reports and circulation statistics overview for Antigo Public Library staff.

WEBSITE SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Website Support Help Desk

A Help Desk ticketing system, launched exclusively for website-related support earlier in the year, is working well. Libraries across the four library systems in the LEANWI Website Service – Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS), IFLS Library System, Winding Rivers Library System and WVLS - are able to submit website-specific questions to a single email, websitehelp@librarieswin.org. Tickets can be transferred seamlessly between each system’s helpdesk if an incoming question or need would be better addressed through a system-specific helpdesk. **Erica Brewster** and LEAN WI Technology Support Consultant **Brendan Tuckey** comprise the LEANWI technology team’s primary website services staff.

Winding Rivers Library System Websites

Brendan and Erica continue to work on WRLS member library websites. Due to the nature of their builds, the status of websites varies from needing complete rebuilds to updating the current site and training staff to manage their sites effectively. Systematic review is ongoing.

WRLS and member libraries are currently undergoing an ILS Migration to Polaris. As part of the migration, WRLS purchased “Vega Programs” for their ILS member libraries. This product integrates online calendars and booking tools into the discovery layer and ILS functions. LEANWI website services is working with WRLS libraries using Vega programs to add calendar and booking links as appropriate to their websites.

Website Development

Brendan Tuckey is actively **developing and designing new websites**. Four new websites have been deployed, one website rebuilt, and four additional sites are under development and one more will be rebuilt. One new request has come in from a NWLS library. All websites are designed in collaboration with the individual library and with website accessibility and Divi best practices. **List of current new builds:** Grantsburg (NWLS, deployed), New Lisbon (WRLS, deployed), Winter (NWLS, waiting library feedback), Wonewoc (NWLS, waiting library feedback), Viroqua/McIntosh (in development), LaFarge/Lawton (in development), Hurley (NWLS, on deck). **Rebuilds:** Menomonee (IFLS, complete), Hammond (IFLS, in development).

A new centrally managed **Online Resources page was released** (examples: simple - <https://dorchesterpubliclibrary.org/online-resources/>, with local resources added - <https://spoonerlibrary.org/online-resources/>) for the four library systems in July. Deployment for IFLS,

NWLS, and WVLS libraries is complete; additional requested resources were added, and several trainings were provided on the project in general and on adding local resources to the page. We are planning more generalized training for promoting the use of this page with all library staff and the public soon. WRLS libraries will receive their pages as appropriate. **A method for tracking “clicks” on online resources has also been developed** – we are beginning to see which resources are most frequently accessed by those accessing the shared Online Resources page!

Brendan researched new options for **website calendars**. There are now three (four) viable options for libraries:

- **Tockify** – either free or paid version; allows updating through tockify.com website rather than needing to log into library website; paid version also allows for syncing with Google Calendar.
- **Google Calendar with plugins** to enhance appearance on website.
- **The Events Calendar** (yearly unlimited use license purchased by LEANWI) plus Pee-aye plugin enhancements – managed within library website.
- **WRLS libraries: Vega Programs** for events calendar and room booking.

The LEANWI Website team completed several website improvement projects, including:

- Moving standard global footers to Divi Builder global footer section and remove footer from individual pages.
- Installing Supreme Pro Plugin on all IFLS/NWLS/WVLS sites. WRLS sites will be installed as they are built or consulted with. Training on use of these new plugin features will begin in the fall.

Website Training

The following website training topics were covered in May/June/July: creating website images and text with online tools and AI, website accessibility, understanding Divi, journey mapping and understanding website users, introduction to the new Online Resources page.

Additional training and reference materials are regularly added to <https://training.librarieswin.org/>. A minimum of four trainings are offered per month; recordings are uploaded to YouTube and posted with the topic on the training blog.

Continuing Education and Training

NEW DIGITAL BYTES

WVLS staff have produced several new *Digital Bytes*, short training videos, that area library staff might find helpful.

- [Scheduling Emails in Gmail](#) In this *Digital Byte*, Kristie talks about why and how to schedule an email in a Gmail account.
- [Tips for Packing Delivery Items](#) In this *Digital Byte*, Jamie provides tips and best practices to packing delivery items.
- [DPI Program Tracker](#) In this *Digital Byte*, Kristie explains how to use the DPI Activity and Program Tracker Spreadsheet that can be used to track annual report information.

- [Analyzing Your Collection \(Part 2\)](#) In Part 2 of this Digital Byte, Kristie discusses three tools that can be used to audit your library's children's collection, from a diversity standpoint.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week

Registration is open for [Wisconsin Trustee Training Week](#), an annual event that offers a week-long series of one-hour webinars on topics of interest to system, public library and county library board members, and library staff. This year's Wisconsin Trustee Training Week will be held from August 19-23. Topics covered include:

- Monday, August 19: [Everything You Want to Know About Book Challenges...and a Bit You Probably Don't](#)
- Tuesday, August 20: [Wisconsin Library Law](#)
- Wednesday, August 21: [Making Each Other Look Good: The Library Board and the Library Director](#)
- Thursday, August 22: [Organization and Governance Best Practices for Boards](#)
- Friday, August 23: [Robert's Rules Refresher](#)

All webinars will be recorded and archived for later viewing at the [Wisconsin Trustee Training Week](#) website.

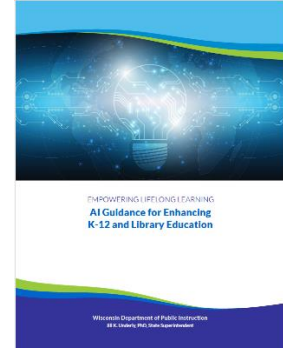
Tech Days 2024

Tech Days is an annual collaboration between all 15 public library systems and the WI Department of Public Instruction to provide webinars to the library community on technology-related topics. Tech Days 2024, this year's 2-day event, will be held September 17-18 and will offer the following 90-minute webinars:

- Tuesday, September 17, 10:00-11:30 a.m.: [From Basics to Breakthroughs: AI Strategies for Library](#)
- Tuesday, September 17, 1:00-2:30 p.m.: [Navigating Artificial Intelligence Through a Public Librarian's Lens](#)
- Wednesday, September 18, 10:00-11:30 a.m.: [Virtual Reality for Career Readiness](#)
- Wednesday, September 18, 1:00-2:30 p.m.: [Trends in Emerging Tech with Laura Solomon](#)

Visit the [2024 Tech Days](#) website to find descriptions of the webinar sessions, read about the presenters, and to register for the sessions. Each webinar is worth 1.5 technology hours toward Wisconsin public library director certification. All webinars will be recorded and posted to the [2024 Tech Days](#) website.

In addition to the above webinars, on Tuesday, September 17, from 3:00-4:00 p.m., **Monica Treptow** and **Chris Baker** of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction will offer an introduction and overview of "[Empowering Lifelong Learning: AI Guidance for Enhancing K12 and Library Education](#)." They will also offer insights about using the guidance in practice and share future AI plans at the state level.



2025 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference

WVLS continues to work with the South Central Library System and IFLS Library System on planning speakers for this annual state conference scheduled for January 22-23, 2025. The session tracks for the conference will be Management, Internal Communications, Small Libraries, and Reference and Reader's Advisory (R&RA). Registration for the conference will open in early December.

INFO TO GO

CHECK OUT JUNE 2024 ISSUE OF *THE MUNICIPALITY*

The [June 2024 issue](#) of *The Municipality* includes several articles that may be of interest to library staff and trustees. This issue includes articles on advocacy (p. 11) and Wisconsin transparency laws (p. 19-22), as well as a legal FAQ on the relationship between municipal governments and library boards (p. 25 - 26). *The Municipality* is the digital publication of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

Upcoming Events / Meetings

- August 1 – **WVLS V-Cat Council meeting**
- August 2 – SRLAAW (System and Resource Library Administrators of Wisconsin) meeting
- August 5 – WPLC (Wisconsin Public Library Consortium) Board meeting
- August 6 – **WVLS V-Cat Bibliographic Control / Interface Committee meeting**
- August 12 – **WVLS YSIE (Youth Services Information Exchange); Granton Community Library**
- August 12 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Marketing Online Resources**
- August 13 – DPI-hosted meeting of System Directors
- August 13 - WPLC Technology Steering Committee meeting
- August 14 - Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee meeting
- August 15 – **WVLS Library Advisory Committee meeting**
- August 15 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- August 15 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Managing Menus**
- August 17 – **WVLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**
- August 19-23 – **"Wisconsin Trustee Training Week"**
- August 20 - **Website Accessibility Learning Group meeting**
- August 20 – DPI-hosted meeting of System Youth Services Consultants

- August 20 – WLA Conference Planning Committee meeting
- August 20 – DPI-hosted meeting of ILL/ILS Coordinators
- August 21 – Annual Teck Talk Gathering, Kilbourne Public Library
- August 27 – DPI-hosted Financial Data Workgroup meeting
- August 27 - Library Workforce Connection meeting
- August 28 – DPI-hosted meeting of System Continuing Education Consultants
- September 2 – **WVLS OFFICE closed**
- September 9 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour**
- September 10 – **WVLS Youth Services Information Exchange (YSIE)**
- September 11 - Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee meeting
- September 11 – 14 – ARLS (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) Conference; Springfield, Massachusetts
- September 12 – **V-Cat Training: Item Attachment**
- September 12 – WPLC Steering Committee meeting
- September 13 - COLAND (Council on Library and Network Development) meeting
- September 16 – WPLC Digital Archives Backup Workgroup meeting
- September 17 - **Website Accessibility Learning Group meeting**
- September 17 – WLA Conference Planning Committee meeting
- September 17 - NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY; learn more [here](#)
- September 17-18 – **Tech Days 2024**
- September 18 – DPI hosted meeting of Library Services Data Workgroup
- September 18 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- September 19 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- September 19 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour**
- September 19 – 21 – ALSC National Institute; Denver, Colorado
- September 21 - **WVLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**
- September 23 – **WVLS Listening Session**; Francis L. Simek Memorial Library, Medford
- September 24 - Library Workforce Connection meeting
- September 25 – DPI-hosted meeting of System Continuing Education Consultants
- September 26 - Connecting WI Libraries meeting
- September 26 - DPI-hosted Financial Data Workgroup meeting
- September 26 - **V-Cat Training: MARC Alerts**
- September 27 – WLA Library Development and Legislation Committee meeting
- October 1 – DPI-hosted meeting of System Inclusive Services Consultants
- October 2 – **WVLS Youth Services Workshop**; T.B. Scott Library, Merrill

Thank you for reading!

Marla