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Director's Report

WVLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
March 16, 2024

CORRESPONDENCE

2024 WVLS Board of Trustees Appointments

In February, following the WVLS Board of Trustees meeting, a press release announcing the 2024 WVLS Board Appointments was submitted to all the newspapers in the WVLS seven-county service area. The announcement also included the names of the newly elected officers and WVLS Executive Committee members.

Notes of Thanks

Advocacy Support

"Marla and WVLS Staff, I would like to thank you for your physical, mental, and emotional support as we worked on the county reimbursement for our budget the past few months. As we have tried to educate the Clark County Board on the importance of the programs and services we offer to our communities, you have played a key role in providing information. We are thrilled that we were able to increase our reimbursement from 75% to 85% despite a challenge at the very end. We know in trying to achieve 100%, we will be able to rely on your help and resources. Please know that you are appreciated. " – **Teresa Hall, Loyal Public Library Director**

Collection Development Support

"Hi Leah [Langby] and Kristie, Just wanted to say a huge thanks for doing the starred review lists and sharing them. It is a big help to me personally and I really appreciate your efforts." – **Andrea Bisordi, Head of Youth Services, Delafield Public Library**

Library Legislative Day Support

"Hi Kris, While I will be sending handwritten thank-yous to the legislators I met with Tuesday, I wanted to send YOU a thank you as well. The work you've done behind the scenes to keep us on schedule and organized looks like a huge undertaking. Thank you for making it so easy on our end to follow your instructions and know where were supposed to be … it really made the trip painless and genuinely enjoyable!" – **Leah Giordano, Marathon County Public Library Director**

"Kris, thank you for making yesterday go so smoothly. I was very nervous but it went so well. I will definitely try to come next year." – Joan Denis, Nicolet Federated Library System Trustee

"Thank you Kris for the presentation; I SO appreciated watching it here at the Best Western Park hotel, very informative! I feel much more relaxed about the entire day tomorrow (being a newbie and also meeting a representative on my own." – **Krister Paakkonen, Information Services Coordinator, Chippewa Falls Public Library**

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"I'd like to extend a thank you to the WVLS staff for making Library Legislative Day a positive experience for everyone who attends. The decision to provide a scholarship for attendees is an excellent way to encourage participation. Not only do we need to be thankful for the legislators that we met with, but for the partnerships between our system and our libraries. We could not do what we do without your help." Thank you! -- Teresa Hall, Loyal Public Library Director

Public Library Annual Report Support
Sue Hafemeister and other members of the WVLS Annual Report Team received thanks from several colleagues for the support provided during this year's member library annual report project.

"Dear WVLS Staff, Thank you to everyone involved in helping member libraries, such as Colby Community Library, complete the DPI Annual Report. Your concern and assistance is greatly appreciated." – **Vicky Calmes, Colby Community Library Director**

"When I think of WVLS, I think of the support of a team. Each of you doing your little part to make our lives easier. Annual report time is no exception. I am thankful for each of you that played a part in making the annual report easier to accomplish." **-- Teresa Hall, Loyal Public Library Director**

PEOPLE / LIBRARIES / SYSTEMS IN THE NEWS

Treptow Named WEMTA 2024 Professional of the Year
Monica Treptow, WI Dept. of Public Instruction School Library Media Consultant, has been named the Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association's 2024 Professional of the Year. The award, which was presented to Treptow during the WEMTA 2024 Conference in early March, recognizes a member of the association for their leadership and professionalism in the library, media, or educational technology profession in service to K-12 students, teachers and community.

Congratulations, Monica!

Staffing Changes at DPI
Public Library Administration Consultant **Shannon Schultz** resigned from her position on DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology Team on March 1 to become the new Director of the South Central Library System. Schultz served as director of the Portage Public Library before joining DLT in April 2016. She replaces former SCLS Director Martha Van Pelt, who retired from that position on March 8.

Bruce Smith retired as Project Coordinator for DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology Team on March 1. Hired in April 2020, Smith coordinated activities associated with the Public Library System Redesign Project (PLSR), and to manage and coordinate projects across the library team, including those associated with the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program. Prior to joining DLT, Smith worked at WiLS to assist members with strategic plan development and to provide project management for a number of multi-system and statewide projects. He also coordinated the South Central Library System delivery service for 16 years.

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New Director at Southwest Wisconsin Library System

In February, Angela Noel became the new Director of the Southwest Wisconsin Library System (SWLS). Angela was the former Director of the Dodgeville Public Library and Brodhead Memorial Library, and replaces former SWLS Director David Kranz, who resigned the position to become the ILS/ILL Consultant at the Winding Rivers Library System. The SWLS is headquartered in Fennimore, and serves 28 public libraries (and 2 branches) across five counties.

Demmer Library Hires New Director

Earlier this year, the Edward U. Demmer Memorial Library Board of Trustees hired Acting Director **Jill Roth** to be the new director for the library. She replaces **Peter Kotarba** who resigned from the position on January 8 to take the position of Adult Services and Engagement Librarian at the Appleton Public Library.

Matczak Completes Disney Institute Training

WVLS Continuing Education Consultant Jamie Matczak completed *Disney's Approach to Quality Service* through the Disney Institute in Anaheim, California on February 13. This was an 8-hour training that focused on learning and discussing Disney insights, sharing best practices, and participating in discussions with fellow participants. Matczak shared highlights of the training at Hoot Con, a conference for OWLS and NFLS libraries on March 7 in Green Bay and March 12 in Little Chute and will provide a brief during today's WVLS Board meeting later in the agenda. See **Exhibit 18.**

WVLS Libraries Receive "Libraries Transforming Communities" Grants

The American Library Association (ALA) recently announced a second round of recipients of its Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant, an initiative to help small and rural libraries increase the accessibility of facilities, services and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

The applications of the 310 libraries that were awarded grants identified a primary audience they wish to serve (e.g., people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities). Library staff will conduct community input-gathering sessions with the identified primary audience to discuss accessibility in the community and library to collaboratively identify existing resources, needs/gaps and priorities. The libraries will then use the funds to create services or improve their facilities, services or program offerings based on the needs identified by their audience.

WVLS libraries receiving 2024 grants include the **Owen Public Library**, **Rib Lake Public Library** and **Tomahawk Public Library**. The **Greenwood Area Library** received a LTC Grant in 2023.

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Previously funded LTC projects have included the installation of chair lifts and hearing loops, hosting arts and crafts programs for community members living with Alzheimer's and memory loss, and the creation of accessible outdoor spaces like community gardens.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

WPLC's Data Dashboard Workgroup Shares Recommendation

In 2023, WPLC's (Wisconsin Public Library Consortium) Technology Collaborative initiated a "Data Dashboard Workgroup" in response to a recognized need for a statewide analytics dashboard that aggregated library data and metrics for public library staff and boards across Wisconsin to use. The project aimed to create a standardized dashboard to libraries with interpreting and showcasing organizational data for reporting and advocacy purposes.

The Workgroup included WVLS Data and Technology Services Consultant **Erica Brewster** and CIO **Joshua Klingbeil** and other public library and system staff having subject matter expertise. The Workgroup's exploration, conducted from October 2023 to January 2024, included a review of existing library data dashboards in Wisconsin, an evaluation of external dashboards from other states, the creation of a comparative scoring rubric, and attendance at demonstrations of selected platforms. In its *Finding and Recommendations Report*, the WPLC Data Dashboard Workgroup recommended a pilot of WiLS' Looker Studio dashboard from September-December 2024.

WPLC Takes on Governance of Statewide Delivery

During its February meeting, the WPLC Board officially approved taking on governance of statewide delivery. This new governance structure, which includes the formation of a delivery workgroup, will provide expanded oversight of delivery funds by the statewide partners serviced by delivery. No operational changes are expected to result from this change.

During this meeting, the WPLC Board also approved a plan for the 2023 budget carryover, discussed and updated the collection development policy regarding requests for reconsideration and discussed an agenda for the annual membership meeting. WVLS ILS and Database Support Specialist **Rachel Metzler** is a member of the WPLC Board.

Summer Reading

Many member libraries are already planning for next year's summer reading program. In December, the Collaborative Summer Reading Program (CSLP) organized its annual virtual summer symposium, which featured several speakers and a walk-through of the planning manual and resources available to libraries for the theme "Adventure Begins at Your Library." Additionally, the Youth Services Section of the Wisconsin Library Association conducted a one-day virtual Performers Showcase, where over 30 performers from the Midwest presented their program offerings in 10-minute slots. Materials and

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resources from both events have been shared with member library staff. Various summer reading log templates and promotional templates have been created and are available to member library staff. These templates are editable and can be adapted to suit each library's needs. WVLS is offering a $300 grant per library to help cover the costs of hiring a performer during the summer.

WLA Conference 2024

Planning is well underway for the 2024 Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference that will be held Tuesday, November 5 – Friday, November 8 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. The theme for this year's conference is "All In: Include and Innovate."

Jamie Matczak is serving as the 2024 Conference Local Arrangements Chair, and Business Manager **Brenda Walenton** is serving as Exhibit Hall Chair. Both have been attending monthly meetings with other members of the Conference Planning Committee since January.

GRANT and SCHOLARSHIP PROJECTS

WVLS To Offer WAPL and WLA Conference Scholarships

WVLS will award scholarships to area library staff and trustees to attend two statewide conferences in 2024.

WVLS is offering scholarships to attend the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference that will be held May 1-3 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point. Up to $900 is available to cover some/all of the costs for conference registration, mileage, and 2 nights of conference lodging. Details about the conference may be found here.

Scholarships will also be available to attend the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference held November 5-8 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. Themed *"All In: Include and Innovate,"* the WLA 2024 Fall Conference will offer keynote speakers, breakout sessions, special events, and an Exhibit Hall featuring more than 50 vendors.

WVLS scholarship opportunities are announced in *Monday Mentions*.

WVLS Marketing Support Grant

Three libraries are participating in the 2024 WVLS Marketing Support Grant, a pilot project and opportunity for WVLS libraries to evaluate their library's marketing efforts and to work toward a library marketing plan or marketing campaign. Participants include **Loralee Petersen**, Owen Public Library; **Laurie Ollhoff** and **Chris Sprague**, T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill); and **Brandon Hardin**, Withee Public Library.

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Grant participants met with Jamie Matczak in December 2023 to clarify the goal of the marketing grant and each library's project goals and timeline. During the month of January 2024, recipients were asked to:

- Watch videos or read blog posts weekly from Angela Hursh, Manager of Engagement and Marketing for NoveList, and creator of Super Library Marketing website.
- Watch the live webinars or recordings in the Marketing track, as part of the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference.
- Maintain a marketing diary for the month of January.

The cohort met in February to discuss their marketing diaries and upcoming goals. The cohort was requested to complete diaries for February and March.

WVLS Summer Math Adventure Grants

The 2024 WVLS Summer Math Adventure Grant is a new initiative that enables WVLS libraries to provide math-based activities during summer. Libraries that participate in the pilot project will receive $500 funding to offer the Wisconsin Mathematics Council's Summer Math Adventure program. This grant can be utilized to cover the costs associated with implementing the program. The application for the grant was available from February 8 to March 8, 2024 with a grant announcement expected in mid-March.

WVLS Summer Library Program Performer Grants

WVLS is again offering a $300 grant to each library location for summer programming. This grant will help offset the costs of hosting a performer during the summer library program.

2023-2024 LSTA Sparsity Aid Grant

$77,087 was awarded in aggregate to the LEAN WI Partners under the LSTA Sparsity Aids channel. **$50,400** was expressly designated within the LEAN WI 2024 budget plan to support LEAN WI tenancy for rack 1, through WiscNet, at the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Regional Datacenter (RDC) and for Microsoft Licensing renewals and/or new license procurements due to the uncertainty of vendor support and Microsoft Licensing program changes. $26,687.00 remained undesignated in the budget.

From the undesignated balance, LEAN WI partners utilized **$10,784.18** in January 2024 to renew services with our mobile hotspots services vendor to support a minimum level of services continuity support for mobile hotspots through June 2024. Libraries utilizing the minimum level continuity of service will have the option to expand service levels or device capacity or extend service subscriptions beyond June 2024 at their own expense.

LEAN WI Partners utilized **$3,754.80** of the undesignated balance to procure a small order of network transport equipment (15 routers, 5 per system) in December 2023 when a new production batch became available through vendors. Though these were procured during the

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2023 year, the financial actions related to the grant (reimbursement, account transfers, etc) will be reflected in the 2024 accounting cycle (see Jan, Feb, and future LEAN WI expense reports).

Approximately half (**$36,000**) of the joint pool of LSTA support for the 2023-2024 season is currently designated to supplement local funding appropriations to Microsoft licensing renewals and additional services in the 2024 LEANWI budget. Actual use of these LSTA funds for this purpose are pending final decisions on renewal of current licensing and supporting vendor.

$14,400 is designated to support the LEANWI partnership's tenancy (rack 1) at the CVTC RDC via our partnership with WiscNet. Note that rack 2 tenancy is supported by a combination of previous LSTA awards for statewide backup and archiving collaboration projects in partnership with SCLS and other library systems.

WVLS SERVICES

Collaborations

Collaboration on Hoot-Con, WAPL Conference Presentations

WVLS Public Library Services Consultant **Kristie Hauer** and Nicolet Federated Library System Outreach Coordinator **Hannah Good Zima** have developed a presentation titled *"Analyzing Your Collection: Tools to Diversify Your Children's Collection".* The presentation focuses on the importance of creating a diverse and balanced children's collection, and shares resources for building a diverse collection and tools for analyzing the collection. Kristie and Hanna will present on this topic in March at Hoot-Con, an annual one-day conference held by the Outagamie Waupaca Library System and Nicolet Federated Library System.

Additionally, a remix of this session will be presented at the WAPL (Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries) Conference in May with Kristie, Hannah and Kenosha Public Library Youth Collection Development Librarian **Amy Rae Weaver** serving as co-presenters.

LEAN WI Partnership, Collaborative Projects, and Core Infrastructure Support

LEAN WI Core Infrastructure: In parallel with our colleagues at South Central Library System (SCLS), the LEANWI partnership procured our primary storage appliance replacement in January 2024. We included new core switching in our RFQ and were able to procure those with deep discounts by pairing them with the large cap storage appliance. Engineering Lead, **Kris Schwartz** will be planning out and coordinating with the LEANWI team and with Dell to affect those replacements in production.

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"

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BadgerNet contract was originally January 31, 2024, but after AT&T struggled to meet that deadline an extension of contract through June 2024 was affected. AT&T has expressed a goal to complete TTUs prior to June, targeting the end of April 2024 for completion. We are still anticipating a highly compressed flurry of scheduling activity, just sliding that anticipation from December and January now to March and April. Details about the WVLS members libraries' progress are included in the WVLS internal projects reporting below.

LEAN WI Service Explorations: Last fall, LEAN WI partners began exploring a relationship with a new Microsoft Licensing vendor and continue working with its team of licensing experts to better understand program renewal and new procurement options. There are two major tracks of licensing management: maintenance of current licensing and procurement of new licensing. Current licensing maintenance supporting core infrastructure and core services for member libraries is active through June 2024. A renewal of such licensing within our current program is preferred but will likely require remaining with our current vendor to achieve. Our current vendor has found it challenging to support our RFIs and RFQs regarding new licensing, leading to our exploration of a new relationship with a different vendor. However, moving to the new vendor will require us to abandon our current legacy Microsoft licensing program and there are still unknowns with program options and differences in costs for renewals of existing licensing.

Collection Development

At the beginning of the year, there are many youth literature award announcements and "best of" lists. In late January, the American Library Association announced the youth media award winners, which include the Newbery Award for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children, and the Caldecott Award for the most distinguished American picture book for children, among others.

In February, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) released their *CCBC Choices 2024*, which recommends 238 books published in 2023 for children and teens. These tools are especially helpful to librarians who handle youth collection development or readers' advisory. They have been added to the WVLS website for easy access and shared with member library staff through various methods.

The CCBC is holding in-person workshops across the state this spring to discuss great new books for children and teens. The workshops will highlight selected titles from the **CCBC Choices 2024** list and will include a session on intellectual freedom training. The workshop will be held in Green Bay on April 11-12, in Superior on May 13-14, and in Eau Claire on May 15-16.

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Communications

WVLS Newsletter Highlights

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

- **March 2024** – "Library Legislative Day Fosters Relationships," "MCPL Installs Lactation Pod," Guest Feature: Gillett Holds "Souper Bowl," "Medford Hosts Mario at Weekend Storytimes," "Rib Lake Represented at Child Development Day," "Unite Against Book Bans Introduces Free Tool for Defending Intellectual Freedom," "WAPL Conference Announces Keynote Speakers."
- **February 2024** – **"**Tomahawk Aims to Light Up Your Winter," "MCPL Partners with Community Outreach Specialist," "Merrill Serves as Warming Center," "Abbotsford Creates Blind Date with a Book," "Loyal Starts Golden Agers Gab and Gobble," and "Crandon Asks Community to Spread the Love."
- **January 2024** – "Scholarships Available for Library Legislative Day," "YSIE Get-Togethers Continue in 2024," "MCPL Starts Two New Teen Groups," "Don't Forget to Register for "Wild Wisconsin" Sessions," and "Colby Hosts Victorian Tea Event."

WVLS thanks area library staff for taking the time to share their library's news with the WVLS community!

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 March Update offered a short article on a quick way to help cope with stress, and highlighted toolkits to use when working with teen interns and when serving youth who may have experienced trauma. This edition also shared a link to a digital copy of *CCBC Choices 2024* and announced the availability of another round of Libraries Transforming Communities grants. (Information about the LTC grant and the list of member libraries awarded this grant 2023 and 2024 is shared in another article in this report.)

The February Update showcased the Queer Liberation Library, 2024-award winning titles in American Indian Youth Literature, and several lists of award-winning titles announced during ALA's 2024 LibLearn X Conference in January. It also shared a timely article from Bookriot.com, *"Trauma, Book Bans, and Libraries: A Resource Guide for Library Workers, Library Supporters, and Beyond."*

The January Update highlighted interesting facts about Braille, how Wisconsin libraries are helping people experiencing homelessness, and a reminder about allowing service animals in libraries. It also shared an ALSC (Association on Library Services for Children) blog post *on "Nontraditional Times for*

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Traditional Programs," several continuing education opportunities, and list of diverse holidays in January.

Listening Session Scheduled

The first member library listening session of 2024 will take place on April 17, at the Colby Community Library. Another session is scheduled for September 23, at the Francis L. Simek Memorial Library in Medford. During these listening sessions, member library staff and WVLS staff gather informally to discuss relevant news, current challenges, opportunities, and successes.

Public Library Consultant Services

Data Analysis and Reporting

WVLS hosted a hybrid virtual and in-person annual report workshop for member libraries on December 14, 2023. Division for Libraries and Technology State Data Coordinator **Melissa Aro** presented a large portion of the training along with the AR team. Participants were able to ask questions about the AR, and in the afternoon, many stayed to discuss specific aspects or workshop parts of their report.

January was spent supporting libraries and WVLS staff in completing the annual reports. With the help of Susie and Brenda, Erica is preparing the *2023 Statistics Booklet*. There are several additional tables and charts this year. A draft of the booklet is being discussed later in the agenda. See **Exhibit 17**.

Erica continues to gather information on the types of library data metrics and sources library decision-makers are using for her **WiLS Data Classroom project**. She has reviewed focus group questions and reports from the Data Landscape Survey and is beginning conversations with library decision makers.

Several documents specific to member libraries have also been prepared:
- a report analyzing a user survey by TB Scott Library
- charts and analysis specific to Antigo Public Library funding and performance
- **WVLS 2023 Staff Report,** Appendices I, II, II

Public Library Services Support

Assistance was provided to **Owen Public Library** for their grant application to the "Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities" program. The library sought the grant to install an automatic door opener in their public entrance. In February, the library was awarded a grant of $10,000 to complete this project.

Similarly, assistance was provided to **Antigo Public Library** for space planning and layout support. The library recently completed a significant weeding of materials and is now seeking to rearrange its layout to improve the flow of materials, especially when transitioning from one collection to another.

Additionally, assistance was provided to **Granton Community Library** on research related to homebound delivery service using volunteers. This service is often provided by public libraries to members in their

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service area who have difficulty visiting the library. The library is exploring the possibility of utilizing community volunteers to implement the service, including delivery to local organizations or individuals.

Finally, assistance was provided to the **Jean M. Thomsen Library** in Stetsonville on re-designing summer programs, activities, and challenges.

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.
Participants in the first YSIE of the year, held virtually on January 18, discussed and shared experiences, resources, and information on STEAM activities and self-directed activities. STEAM activities focus on science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Self-directed activities are interactive opportunities where patrons create their experience with little staff direction.

In-person YSIEs will be held later this year at the Minocqua Public Library on March 21 and Granton Community Library on August 12.

Technology Projects and Support

Procurement and Depreciation of Equipment

New equipment procurement report, 2023

Total libraries	Total computers	Total Monitors	Total Accessories*
15	87**	21	85**

*Accessories include barcode scanners, receipt printers, adjustable height monitor stands

**Total computers and accessories includes 68 computers and monitor stands for MCPL

Procurement report, 2024 to date

Total libraries	Total computers	Total Monitors	Total Accessories*
4	9	10	4

*Accessories include barcode scanners, receipt printers, adjustable height monitor stands

The average turn-around from request/order to full deployment is approximately 3 weeks, including weekends/holidays.

Exhibit 14

Asset Inventory

Inventories of computer assets for 23 of 25 member libraries (25 of 25 locations) have been compiled. Work is underway to gather this information into a spreadsheet that can be uploaded to a shared LEAN WI inventory management software when it becomes available.

WVLS IT staff currently supports end user 285 devices (laptops, PCs) at these locations (average of 11.4 per location).

154 of 285 (54%) of devices are past their end of warranty date. 106 of the 285 devices were purchased 5 or more years ago (prior to this).

158 of 285 devices are running Windows 10 or older operating systems. Windows 10 will not be supported after October 2025; most of these devices can't be upgraded to Windows 11 and will present a potential security risk after Windows 10 support ceases.

23 libraries with completed inventories have received a 5-year recommended replacement plan for library computer assets. The plans attempt to prioritize and balance replacement needs by spreading out costs and equipment replacements over the longest feasible timeframe.

Asset inventories for TB Scott and MCPL locations will be addressed in partnership with these libraries 2024.

2024 activities include updating network equipment asset inventory for all library locations.

Member Library Services

Print management: Granton Community Library and Neillsville Public Library added Princh print management services since the previous report.

TEACH internet migration: 5 of 25 library locations have successfully been migrated to the new TEACH internet network as of March 1, 2024. The remainder needs to be migrated before June 30, 2024.

Ongoing projects: review internet/service outage response plan and documentation (including reviewing new communications tools options); Pharos timing software server update/migration (Antigo, Abbotsford, Rib Lake, Westboro); DeepFreeze console migration; Princh managed printing and hotspot circulation documentation; SharePoint and general Microsoft products administration training; continue working with Taylor County libraries to complete network config updates supporting the use of the new Taylor County Fiber Network services available at each library.

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V-Cat and ILS Administration

V-Cat Council Meeting Highlights

During its meeting on February 1, the V-Cat Council:

- reviewed the **2024 V-Cat Weighted Voted Calculations** and **2023 V-Cat Top Ten List** of consortium accomplishments.
- approved financial reports for October – December 2023, and **a revised 2024 Appropriations Plan**.
- selected Western Taylor County Public Library Director **Rita Ludvigsen** as the 2024 V-Cat Chair Elect / 2025 V-Cat Chair.
- received an update on the **NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) project**, that included an explanation of the decision-making process, targeted workgroup activities and current recommendations.
- approved revised **V-Cat Library Card Applications and Patron Record Guidelines**.

V-Cat Bibliographic and Interface Committee Activity

At its March 5 meeting the Committee decided to change how titles are treated in Big Book formats to increase discoverability of these items in Aspen. The Committee also decided to investigate the removal of OCLC FAST subject headings from Backstage records. Removing OCLC FAST headings will decrease duplication of subject headings and may influence the accuracy of the "More Like This" suggestions in Aspen. The Committee is also considering changes in the Aspen Record View pages that will increase the attention to NoveList suggestions over "More Like This" suggestions.

Dates Set for V-Cat Spring Training

The dates have been set for V-Cat related trainings:
- February 29 – "V-Cat Sierra Tools for Weeding and Collection Development"
- March 14 – "V-Cat Aspen Record Grouping Training"
- April 11 – "V-Cat Sierra Cataloging Training"
- April 18 – "V-Cat Sierra MARC Alert Cataloging Training"
- April 23 – "V-Cat Sierra Z39.50 Cataloging Training"

Other Projects

WVLS Seeks a Cataloger. Using funds available through a 2023-2024 LSTA Grant, WVLS and the Northern Waters Library System are looking for short-term, project-based help with cleaning up bibliographic records in their respective ILS catalogs. A job description for the WVLS position is shared as **Exhibit 11**.

NICE Project Update. An update on the NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) Project will be shared later in today's meeting. See **Exhibit 15**.

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Website Services and Support

Erica Brewster and LEAN WI Technology Support Consultant **Brendan Tuckey** now comprise the LEAN WI technology team's primary website services staff interfacing with member libraries across the LEAN WI partnership and for our new external website services partner, Winding Rivers Library System (WRLS). Brendan's onboarding began the first full week in January, and he has since fully taken on responsibility for backend support (website backups, liaising with LEAN WI tech staff for domain and infrastructure support) and has begun design and development for new websites.

Winding Rivers Library Service Websites

A meeting was held with WRLS staff on February 21 to discuss and begin handoff of WRLS website management to the LEAN WI platform. WRLS has 26 actively hosted and managed websites; another eight library websites may join the LEAN WI website service in the future.

Erica and Brendan held two "Town Hall" meetings for WRLS libraries to introduce them to the LEAN WI website service and a recording of the session was posted. The next steps are to continue to review status of WRLS websites and to work with the library website managers to make the necessary changes/upgrades to be able to mainstream WRLS library staff into the standard LEAN WI website management training.

With the WRLS websites, LEAN WI now hosts and manages 130 websites.

Website Development

Brendan is learning how to fully utilize the robust toolsets offered by the Divi theme. New websites will be designed using all Divi tools. Priority now is to hone Brendan's skills in website fundamentals so new websites can be developed fully and efficiently. Once we are confident with a base product, Northern Waters libraries will be invited to request new websites, followed by WRLS libraries that need website rebuilds.

Website Training

Training and reference materials are regularly added to https://training.librarieswin.org/. At least four virtual training opportunities are offered each month, and each training session has an average of 4-5 participants. All website training webinars are recorded and posted for later viewing.

The **Website Accessibility Learning Group** continues to meet with the goal of better understanding how to make websites accessible to all users, including those who use adaptive technologies. Current learning is impacting philosophy and approach to website design ("good design is accessible design, and accessible websites are well-designed websites").

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CONTINUING EDUCATION and TRAINING

NEW *Digital Bytes*

Book Resumes Tool. In this *Digital Byte,* Kristie talks about how the Book Résumés tool can help librarians defend books from censorship.

Sticky Notes. In this *Digital Byte*, Kristie talks about the advantages of using digital Sticky Notes.

Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library. In this *Digital Byte*, Kristie covers the services and resources provided by the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library and how public libraries can be a connecting point for their local patrons that encounter temporary or permanent visual or physical limitations.

Collaborative Children's Book Center. In this *Digital Byte*, Kristie covers the resources offered at the Collaborative Children's Book Center (CCBC).

Spring Webinar Series

WVLS is working on a Spring Webinar Series on behalf of the Public Library System CE Consultants. Registration will open soon for these opportunities:

- Thursday, April 18 - "Workplace Experiences of Neurodivergent Library Workers"
- Tuesday, May 7 – "Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff"

2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference Recap

The Wild Wisconsin Winter WVLS Web Conference on January 24-25, 2024 was a big success!

The 14 webinars presented over the two-day conference focused on marketing, library management, programming, and internal communications. Total attendance for the conference was 1,237, with an average of 88 attendees per session. Feedback for the conference was positive. Some comments from participants were:

- *Thank you for sharing your wisdom with us- I appreciate you stating that these coping mechanisms came with age/experience.*
- *This has been a very helpful session. Thank you for sharing!*
- *Thank you so much, Ben! This was such a fun way to end the conference!*
- *This session provided some excellent food for thought, especially going into Library Legislative Day.*

Conference presenters gave kudos to the conference planning team of education consultants **Jamie Matczak**, Leah Langby (IFLS Library System) and **Jean Anderson** (South Central Library System).

Exhibit 14

- *Thanks for a great conference! It was wonderful to meet you and a delight to chat with so many enthusiastic librarians. I'll definitely keep this conference on my radar for next year, it looks awesome. Feel free to reach out any time games & libraries come up.*
- *I don't often send a thank you for a thank you, but I want you to know how much I really appreciate the Amazon gift card. It was unexpected and unnecessary, but most certainly appreciated! It was great to work with you all and I hope we can do it again in the future.*
- *Thank you so much for a well-run event, and thanks, too, for passing along this feedback. It is SO INTERESTING to see what folks took away.*

Slides and videos of the 14 one-hour sessions may be found on the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference website under "Post Conference Resources."

Next year's Wild Wisconsin Winter Web conference will be held on January 22-23, 2025.

INFO TO GO

- **"WLA Intellectual Freedom (IF) Toolkit"** – Developed by the Wisconsin Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee, this toolkit was developed to aid community members, librarians, and trustees with attaining a deeper understanding of intellectual freedom as it relates to libraries in Wisconsin, and to provide those in need with resources to navigate these issues while protecting the rights of individual readers.
- **"Media literacy is more than spotting fake news. How one librarian gives teens the tools to decide what to trust,"** a feature from CNN news.

UPCOMING EVENTS / MEETINGS

- March 19 – **NICE Team meeting**
- March 19 – **System/Public Library Website Accessibility Learning Group meeting**
- March 19 – WLA Conference Committee meeting
- March 19 - DPI-hosted meeting of System Inclusive Services Consultants
- March 19 – LJ (Library Journal) webcast "Designing a Website Your Patrons Will Love"
- March 19 – Statewide Cooperative Cataloging Workgroup meeting
- March 20 – DPI-hosted meeting of the Library Services Data Workgroup
- March 20 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- March 21 – **WVLS Youth Services Information Exchange (YSIE): Minocqua**
- March 21 – **WVLS/V-Cat Steering Committee meeting**
- March 21 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- March 21 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website Analytics**
- March 24 – 27 – Innovative User Group Conference; Detroit, Michigan

Exhibit 14

- March 25 – Collaboration meeting of NFLS, OWLS and WVLS Public Library Services Consultants
- March 26 – Library Workforce Connection meeting
- March 29 – **WVLS Office closed**
- **April - National School Library Month**
- April 3 – Public Library Association Conference; Columbus, Ohio
- April 4 **– WVLS V-Cat Council meeting**
- **April 7 – 13 – National Library Week 2024**: theme is "Ready, Set, Library!"
- April 8 - March 21 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour**
- **April 8 –Total Solar Eclipse**
- **April 9 – National Library Workers Day**; a day to recognize the valuable contributions made by library and system workers
- April 9 – WECCP (Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners) meeting
- April 10 - Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee meeting
- April 11 – **V-Cat Sierra Cataloging Training**
- April 11-12 – Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) workshop; Brown County Library, Green Bay
- April 16-17 – WVLS Audit
- April 17 – **WVLS Listening Session; Colby Community Library**
- April 18 - **"Workplace Experiences of Neurodivergent Library Workers"** webinar; Spring 2024 Learning Series
- April 18 – **V-Cat Sierra MARC Alert Cataloging Training**
- April 18 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- April 18 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Analytics**
- April 23 – **V-Cat Sierra Z39.50 Cataloging Training**
- April 25 – **WVLS Library Advisory Committee meeting**
- May 1–3 – **WAPL (Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries) Conference; Stevens Point**
- May 7 – **"Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff"** webinar; Spring 2024 Learning Series)
- May 7 – **WVLS V-Cat Bibliographic Control / Interface Committee meeting**
- May 10 - COLAND (Council on Library and Network Development) meeting
- May 10 – **WVLS V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee meeting**
- May 13 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour**
- May 15 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- May 16 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Website 201 [Just] Beyond the Basics**
- May 16 - **WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Website Office Hour: Analytics**
- May 18 – **WVLS Board of Trustees meeting**

Thank you for reading!

Marla