



- The 2020 Michigan State Aid to libraries rate is finally available, after we had already published our budget draft: \$0.397080615 per capita, essentially flat from 2019 (\$0.39689475). This difference of \$0.000185865 will amount to an extra \$16 next year. We will need to modify the draft budget to reflect this change.
- Our annual State Aid Report is submitted. Our early submission should translate to an early payment next spring.
- Library staff held multiple meetings with our accountants at Taylor, Plant, and Watkins during the past month, discussing the 2020 budget and proposed changes for reorganizing the presentation of the monthly financial reports and annual audits to more closely match the budget. TP&W feel we are on the right track.
- Taylor, Plant, and Watkins also did a lot of work to help integrate our payroll system with the new timekeeping system, SwipeClock, which the library selected. We are set to go live with this system on Monday October 21.
- Julia Baratta joined us as the manager of the Union Twp. Branch. She has extensive library experience and a deep community reach from her time as a freelance newspaper writer. We are happy to have her join the team!
- At their meeting on 10/8, the Union Twp. Board agreed to letting us use the anonymous Union City Facilities Trust to replace the exterior lights with LEDs and put them all on a timer. That should take care of our outdoor lighting concerns.
- On 10/14, I was appointed to the Coldwater Downtown Development Authority Board.
- On September 18, we had a brief after-hours downtime on our library catalog for an upgrade that brought bug fixes and incremental improvements for staff and public alike. A new feature the public will love is a feature to automatically renew items once when they are due if there are no holds on them.
- Our annual staff in-service day was a great success! Our guest speaker was Kevin Shepard of the Branch County United Way, and about 12 other staff presented on various topics. All staff were engaged and made me very proud to see what great employees we have at BDL. Thanks to Kimberly for handling all the logistics, and more, that made the day go off without a hitch.
- Our district-wide Family Fright Night event is this Saturday. Looking forward to a great time for all!

John Rucker



The majority of my last month was finalizing the annual Staff Training. Our full agenda for that day included:

- Presentation from United Way where we heard about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the many other programs United Way supports in Branch County.
- Branch show and tell segment where all the six Branch Managers presented an overview of their location. This allowed staff some sneak peeks into other branches and to hear what is going on to better inform the public on what is happening around the district.
- Library specific topics presented included SwipeClock (our new time management software), overdue processes, Consumer Reports, requests from Law Enforcement, Evergreen (our library management software), off-line computer training, service animals, and library privacy.
- Homeless Librarian: Staff members Jessica Tefft and Keeley Briggs presented this nationally recognized training on working with the public and how to reduce problems and conflict while still being inclusive.
- Book repair for at least one staff member at every branch.

Marketing:

- Sent a letter highlighting our Teacher Library Card to all the administrators of all the local schools in Branch County. The letter highlighted the benefits of the card and offered to come to each school and sign up staff. Currently we have 42 teachers and homeschool families signed up and our goal is to double that number in the next year.

Community Engagements:

- Present the Seed Saved Exchange Program to the Coldwater Area Garden Club.
- Attended the Branch County Community Foundation Celebration and learned about recent grant winners, including our library neighbor, Colon Township Library.
- Attended the Branch County Community Network meeting. Information from this monthly event is shared with the full staff at our staff meeting later this month.



- I attending the Achieving Together Conference in Indianapolis on October 4. It was a great conference that served in really encouraging me for our future initiatives with the local schools. One of my favorite presenters said that his mantra has always been that “Impossible needs our permission” and I can think of no greater encouragement than that statement. I intend to take that to heart with our upcoming LibraryOne Cards and future partnerships with the schools.
- The Older American Health Fair was held at the Dearth Center on October 8 and it was a wildly successful event! We handed out programming flyers, and offered our new cool BDL mugs to everyone who signed up for a new library card, renewed their expired library card, or just simply showed us that they were carrying their library card. Over 200 people visited our booth! By the end of the event, we had 12 new library card sign-ups, 7 renewals, and 49 library cards shown to us. It was great and something we’ll definitely continue to do as an active participant in our community.
- Along with Keeley Briggs, I presented on Homelessness (and dealing with troubled patrons) in the library at our staff training day on October 14. The material of the entire day was great, the staff was engaged and really participated. It was a great day!
- On October 19, we’ll be having our first Family Fright Night where all of Branch County is welcome! There will be trick-or-treating, fun crafts, food, and more from 4PM-7PM. The night will take a spookier turn from 8PM-10PM with the help of our local ghost hunters, and a zombie maze! I am so excited about this event and am very hopeful of a great turnout!

Submitted by Jessica Tefft