

The biggest news in Michigan library land in the past month is that the state passed a budget that funded MeLCat using the federal money on the table! For the next year, then, MeLCat will be fully funded.

Personnel

We received a large number of application for the open position at the Coldwater Branch. Interviews have been scheduled for next week.

Facilities

Our policy allowing for weddings at the library was finally exercised, at the Bronson Branch! Everything went smoothly, and Lynnell assures me it was just as adorable as you are probably imagining it was right now. Also at the Bronson Branch, we had to repair the call buttons on the accessible door and we got the windows cleaned.

At the soon-to-be new Algansee Branch, the electrical is in and passed inspection. The walls should be fully insulated by the end of the week. Swick's will be delivering a refrigerator for the kitchen Friday!

We had the bookmobile in for service to Stoops in Fremont for a recall and to fix a small oil leak.

IT Department

We had a largely easy time of the annual upgrade to our Evergreen library system. We did have about 8 staff terminals that exhibited some strange behavior (I think we might have found a new bug for the developers, actually), but consulting with our support team at Equinox we got things back to normal in just a few hours.

At the upcoming new Algansee Branch, we got all the network wiring in place for the main room that's being renovated, mounted our new networking hardware in the wiring closet (no more tech mess under the service desk!!!), and began working in the rear office area.

Meetings Attended

Woodlands Library Cooperative, Library of Michigan Directors.

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Submitted by John Rucker

Baker & Taylor

Baker & Taylor, a longtime vendor of BDL, has announced it will be closing by the end of the year. This news has had a significant impact on the library community, as Baker & Taylor has been one of the primary suppliers of library materials.

Fortunately, several years ago, following earlier issues with Baker & Taylor, we added a secondary vendor, Ingram, to help supply materials. We also use Midwest Tape for audiovisual items and several smaller vendors for children's materials.

This change should not significantly affect our patrons' access to new items. However, Ingram is seeing a surge in new customers, which could lead to some delays as they adjust to the increased demand. Several other vendors will be explored to have backups but that will be a 2026 project.

Materials Recovery Services

At the end of September, BDL resumed its partnership with Indiana-based Unique Management Inc. This company assists libraries in recovering long-overdue materials and reengaging users who have become inactive.

Once our internal efforts have been exhausted, patrons with long-overdue items will be referred to Unique. They will contact the patron by phone, letter, and email to notify them of the overdue materials and encourage them to return the items or submit payment to the library.

One of the biggest challenges for our staff is keeping accurate contact information for patrons. Unique helps address this issue by using national databases to verify and update addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. This information is then shared with us to update our system. Another perk of this great partnership!

Digital Services

After reviewing the changes made to our digital service, Hoopla, in August, we've slightly increased the price cap for audiobooks. As a result, an additional 60,000 titles are now available to our library users.

I'm closely monitoring our monthly budget, as this change may cause us to reach our daily spending limit more often. So far, on the few days the cap has been reached, it has typically happened later in the evening.

Meetings

- Kiwanis Club of Coldwater
- Apsen Discovery Vendor
- Woodlands E-resource committee
- New Library Solutions with Amazon Business

Submitted:

Kimberly Feltner

- Staff Training Day was a massive success. Joe Renshaw from BHS Tactics and Consulting (also a Sergeant at the Sheriff's Department) led us through a 4 hour security and active assailant training, alongside Asst. Chief Frank Barker from Bronson PD. BHS' slogan is "Prepared, not Paranoid" and that is exactly what Joe achieved. I have recommended Joe and his training to Kate Pohjola-Andrade, our Woodlands Cooperative Director. In the afternoon, Meagan Marsh, our resident marketing genius presented on Libby and taught all of us something! I presented on BDL quality standards for customer service, which will be completed at the staff meeting on 10/27, due to running out of time on 10/13.
- Family Fright Night will be happening on 10/17. We have an entire building filled with ship-like decorations and \$900 worth of candy purchased that was graciously sponsored by "Royal Chevrolet and Your West Michigan Chevy Dealers" and UCT.
- It's almost November, which means the reviewing of several books in preparation of choosing the 2026 One Book One County book!