

Happy New Year, and welcome to our new BDL Trustee: Union Twp. Representative Stephanie Calhoun!

I hope all are rejuvenated from time with loved ones and are looking forward to the days getting longer as much as I am. I got the State Aid report completely and turned in before the end of the year, and well before the February deadline. I managed to get my year-end list done by the end of day on 12/31!

I join my library colleagues around the state in mourning the sudden passing of State Librarian Randy Riley. He will be missed.

Freedom of Information Act Request

On December 23, we received a FOIA request from a new requestor, asking for information that didn't apply to us (county "pavement marking"). I promptly responded that we did not have the information requested and closed the request.

Facilities

The biggest activity with respect to facilities is, of course, the move of the Algansee library. Please see the Teresa's report as well as the update in the discussion section for much more on that.

The cameras approved at the December meeting arrived, and our contractor installed the exterior cameras at Quincy and Coldwater on January 12. Curtis and I installed the exterior camera at Bronson and all the interior cameras at the non-Coldwater branches, and everything is working as expected. Additional staff training and coordination/testing with local emergency responders is coming soon.

Our security service with Teachout started on Monday, January 5 as expected. They have been responsive to our needs and our current officer is fitting in well. We will be purchasing some sort of small desk so the officer has a place to sit and charge his mobile camera station.

The pricing on the competitive bid that Christina and I entertained for the Coldwater Branch ended up not being competitive after all. I'm positive from their packet and couple of meetings that they would be a good service provider, but they are significantly more expensive than our current provider and there is not room in the budget to even consider them as an option at this time.

On New Year's Eve, Aker came out to the Coldwater Branch to install HVAC to the branch manager's office, and a supplemental heating unit for the basement break room. Both additions are greatly appreciated!

Meetings

Woodlands Library Cooperative, Algansee Twp., Branch County Literacy Council.

Submitted by John Rucker

Technical Services

Technical Services added 9,581 new items to the catalog in 2025, representing a 4% increase over the previous year. Notable additions included the expanded Tonies boxes and character collections, Playaway Launchpads, and historical materials from the Holbrook Heritage Room.

The department also implemented a new magazine cataloging process that allows patrons to request specific issues. The benefits of this improvement will become clearer with the start of new magazine subscriptions in 2026.

In addition, Technical Services managed a major vendor transition in the fall after Baker & Taylor ceased operations. The department continues to adjust to the new vendor, Ingram. Ingram is saying that service levels are expected to return to normal by the end of the first quarter of 2026. I added Ingram Express, which offers expedited turnaround for high-demand items needed immediately. Selectors can use this Ingram account to get items that are in high demand or missed the first time around. Following the onboarding of more than 2,000 libraries at the end of 2025, we anticipate a more consistent turnaround time and overall experience with Ingram in 2026.

End-of-year projects are complete. In 2025, 185 missing items—those staff were unable to locate on the shelves—were removed from a total collection of 110,319 items. An additional 373 lost items, defined as materials checked out but not returned, were also withdrawn from the catalog.

Human Resources

I am happy to welcome Becky Olds to the library staff. Becky has been with the organization for over a month in the Public Services Department at the Coldwater branch. She is settling into her role well.

The start of the new year brings a flurry of activity in Human Resources. I am coordinating employee enrollment for the discounted Lifecare Ambulance Membership. Then will prepare for the upcoming Colonial Life open enrollment period in February. Shortly after that, we will start talking to employees about retirement participation with MERS. More on that in the coming months!

Marketing

Marketing efforts in 2025 focused on continued support of library programs and events. This included increased use of Facebook Events and a refreshed format for the library's event guide to improve visibility and engagement.

Marketing also highlighted the expansion of library collections, with particular emphasis on the growing Library of Things, and promoted the arrival of the new bookmobile.

Right at the end of 2025, Meagan launched a new informative video series. It has featured topics such as the history of the state Christmas tree, the northern lights, and spotlights on the Bronson and Algonsee branches. This series will continue into the new year with a focus on helping patrons learn how to use the library, including navigating the website and accessing digital resources.

Our most borrowed items for 2025 are in! Drumroll, please.

Fiction

- *My Murder* by Katie Williams, our 2025 One Book One County pick
- *The Crash* by Freida McFadden
- *The Housemaid* by Freida McFadden

Non-Fiction

- *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance
- *The Let Them Theory* by Mel Robbins
- *Atomic Habits* by James Clear

Young Adult

- *Dragon Ball Z* by Akira Toriyama
- *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins
- *My Hero Academia*

Juvenile Fiction

- *Dog Man: Big Jim Begins* by Dav Pilkey
- *Grime and Punishment* by Dav Pilkey
- *Dog Man 7* by Dav Pilkey

DVDs

- *Wicked Part 1*
- *A Minecraft Movie*
- *Sonic the Hedgehog*

Library of Things

- Wifi Hotspots
- Tonies Starter Kit
- Playaway Launchpad - Yellow

Submitted, Kimberly Feltner

- Take Your Child to the Library Day will happen on February 7, 2026! Every branch will be offering a craft and snacks, and will also be the culmination point of our districtwide Scavenger Hunt!
- It's absolutely bananas to think that the time for SRP planning has arrived, but it's here! I will be hosting BDL's first 2026 Summer Reading Program meeting next month with the rest of the Admin team, the Branch Managers, and Coordinators!
- Our 2026 One Book One County discussion dates will be made public very soon! The branches have ordered additional copies and are waiting patiently for them to arrive. *The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by John U. Bacon. The book is described as "a recent, definitive account of the 1975 sinking of the freighter, focusing on the lives of the 29 crew members and the emotional aftermath for their families, while also exploring the likely causes of the disaster, such as rogue waves, structural fatigue, and potential human error."

