

Volunteers

At my most recent meeting of the Michigan library directors, we had a bit of a letdown. Library of Michigan had requested clarification from the state Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) on behalf of libraries regarding the Youth Employment Standards Act (YESA), which forbids volunteers younger than 14 and requires work permits for minors 14 and up. There are exceptions in YESA for organizations that are primarily geared towards children to allow younger volunteers and avoid work permits. Alas, LEO informed us that the carve-outs are meant for organizations like Scouting America and the Girl Scouts, and that the restrictions in YESA would definitely continue to apply to libraries.

Facilities

It was lovely to see and hear about all the efforts across the district this past Monday for our annual Spring in-service day. We really did a load of spring cleaning, straightening and de-cluttering. Read all about it in our branch reports.

Our quarterly dog visits from Orkin resulted in only 3 branches having spots of interest, and those were small this time around. It's a win that we'll take!

The Coldwater Branch has had some minor work done on both the staff entrance (a busted latch replaced) and the public entrance (adjustments made to the motorized doors).

The bookmobile had its winter tires swapped out for summer tires. We are grateful for Pell's Tire Service and how they can store the tires we are not using, since we have no room to do so!

I had a consultation with our Verkada camera installer about getting a quote for monitored security solutions for break-ins that would leverage our existing cameras along with optional door, window, and motion sensors. The quote is pending.

IT Department

Joining Kimberly and Jessica, I have attended two planning sessions with our Equinox support team for implementing the Aspen Discovery Layer.

The replacement routers approved in this year's technology plan have all be deployed and are working well.

The modem at the Quincy Branch failed (it was pretty old), so Charter Spectrum replaced it for us. While out there doing that, they agreed to move their equipment to the basement where

there was more room and better ventilation. So after a few hours of rewiring and moving equipment, we were back up and running better than ever.

I took a meeting with Discovery Garden, a company that supports and installs the open-source Islandora digital repository software. (Similar to how Equinox supports and maintains Aspen Discovery Layer and our open-source Evergreen library system.) I am interested in getting pricing on a more robust digital repository solution since our local collections continue to grow in scope, and will only continue to grow in importance with the decline of local newspapers. If this can fit into a future budget, it would be a good fit for us.

Other Meetings Attended

Algansee Twp., Bronson Friends of the Library, Woodlands Library Cooperative, EDF Power Solutions, Aspen/Evergreen Users Group

Submitted by John Rucker

Human Resources

Our annual enrollment with Colonial Life is completed. Due to scheduling conflicts, the representative was unable to attend one of our staff meetings but provided a recorded presentation with audio outlining the available benefits. One staff member enrolled.

The transition to the new MERS record keeper, Empower, has been completed. After some initial navigation and assistance from customer service, we are up and running. Staff members have successfully accessed their individual accounts, and all back payroll contributions have been entered.

Finally, we welcome Carolyn Youseef as a substitute Public Service Clerk. With this addition, our total staff count is now 42 employees.

Marketing

April marked the deadline for staff to finalize all summer event planning. Work is now underway on the June and July Event Guide.

Meagan Marsh has been dedicating significant time to creating flyers for Summer Reading and the America 250 celebrations. Cheryl Lawrence is developing bookmarks and reading logs, while Jessica is finalizing updates to the website for Summer Reading.

This truly is a team effort as we prepare for our biggest event of the year!

Aspen Discovery

The administrative team also had two planning sessions in preparation for launching the new catalog enhancement, Aspen Discovery Layer. We met with a variety of key players and contacts at Equinox to discuss the project timeline and training needs. Due to scheduling constraints and timing at BDL, the service will not be ready until after Summer Reading. However, the more I learn about Aspen, the more exciting its potential becomes for improving our catalog experience. More information to come!

Meetings

Kiwanis Club of Coldwater

Submitted

Kimberly Feltner

- I hope you're ready for a Rawr-some 2026 Summer Reading Program! Staff have been busy at work planning all the dinosaur, archeology, paleontology (and more!) programs for you! This SRP Program is one for the history books! BDL staff, in general, are massive dinosaur fans and have been looking forward to SRP 2026 for 5 years!
- The One Book One County Discussions were incredible! We had a total of 52 people show up for discussions, the most by far in recent memory. A huge thank you to all the branch managers who promoted the book to their patrons, the patrons who attended discussions, and to the lovely Jeanne Burg who is always so willing to help out with these discussion groups during the last two weeks of March.
- During "March is Reading Month" I was able to get into 2 classrooms to read, a preschool classroom and a 5th grade classroom. The classes were two very different audiences and two very different reading levels but the joy was identical. It was, and is, always a pleasure to read to the kids!

