

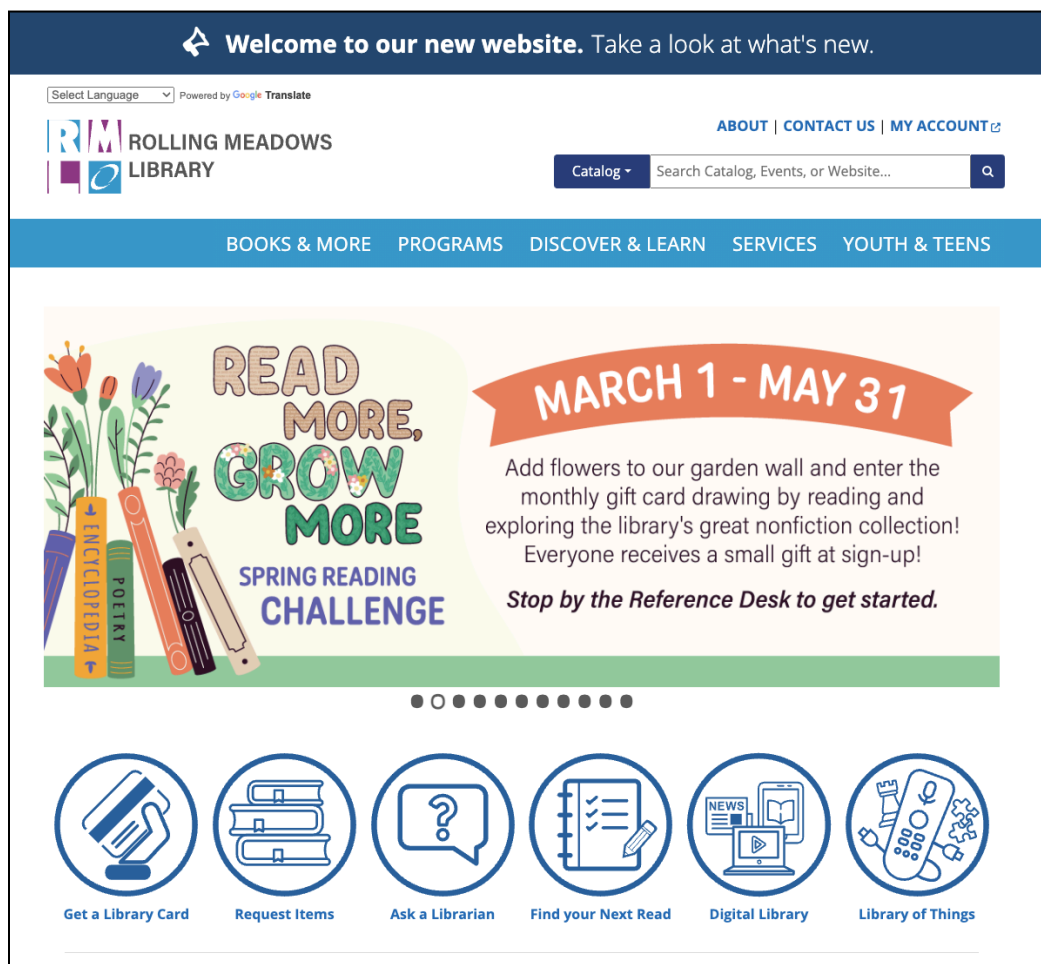
## Executive Director's Report

### April 2025

#### New Website Launches with Enhanced Online Access

The Library's new website officially launched on April 25, marking a major milestone in our goal to modernize and improve digital access. The redesigned site features a clean, mobile-friendly interface, significantly improved accessibility, and introduces two highly requested services: improved online program registration and patron room reservations. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with patrons noting how easy the new site is to navigate and use.

Special thanks go to Special Services Director Jessica Van Swol for the immense work leading the development and content coordination, and to IT Director Mike for providing the technical support necessary to bring it all together. This project directly supports multiple Strategic Plan goals, particularly Goal 4: Marketing and Outreach, by making library services more accessible, intuitive, and user-friendly.



### **Job Fair Partnership with IDES**

In collaboration with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), the Library hosted a job fair on April 30. The event brought together 13 local employers and job support organizations, with 74 job seekers attending. According to IDES survey results, the fair generated 441 employer visits, 135 resumes distributed, 80 on-site interviews, 14 follow-up interviews scheduled, and 16 job offers extended.

Reference Services Director Jennifer C. led the coordination of the event, ensuring a smooth and well-organized experience for both employers and job seekers. IDES staff expressed their appreciation in a follow-up note, writing, “We truly appreciate your support and hospitality—the space was fantastic, and the event was a great experience.” They also indicated strong interest in future collaborations.

This program reflects Strategic Plan Strategy 1.2: “Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors.”



### **Volunteer Luncheon Celebrates Hidden Gems of the Library**

On Saturday, April 26, the Library hosted its annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, honoring the dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents throughout the year. The event’s theme, *Hidden Gems*, celebrated the quiet but invaluable impact of volunteers across the library.

This year marked the debut of the Volunteer of the Year Award, presented to Diane Pagano of the Friends of the Library. Diane has been a steady and generous presence at the Library since 2022, supporting book donations, sales, and behind-the-scenes operations. In a brief thank-you note,



she wrote, “I am deeply honored and sincerely grateful... It is a privilege to contribute to the library.”

The Library also celebrated a special induction into its Legacy Project. Board President Jean Threadgill paid tribute to Joyce Mackert, a lifelong educator, world traveler, and devoted reader, whose generous bequest will help support the Library’s future growth. Joyce’s close friend and executor, Sandi Blaker, accepted the award on her behalf.

The luncheon concluded with a lively and entertaining musical performance by Dave Rudolph, sending everyone off with smiles and laughter.



### **Roof Replacement Project Update**

The Library’s roof replacement project, covering both the shingled roof and the older flat roof not included in the most recent addition, began on April 15 and is progressing on schedule. Shingling and flat roof work are expected to be completed by May 15, with installation of the metal edge capping along the sides to follow and conclude before Memorial Day.



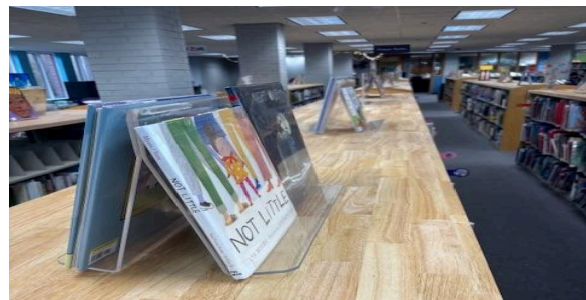
Despite several rain delays, the project remains on track and within budget. The only significant change orders required were for a small section of water-damaged insulation under the flat roof west of the entrance, and needed chimney tuckpointing and a spark guard shield, but both fall within the project's existing allowance.

Executive Director Jack Bower and Building Services Director Pete DeCicco have met weekly with the roofer and DLA Architects to monitor progress. While there has been some expected noise during shingle removal and installation, the work has otherwise proceeded smoothly.



### **Youth Services Book Shelf Tops Replacement**

After nearly a year of phasing them in, all of the old and peeling laminate shelf tops in Youth Services have been replaced with durable, solid butcherblock surfaces. Each piece was custom-cut by Building Services to fit. The new tops significantly improve both the appearance and functionality of the shelving and work areas, contributing to a more welcoming and professional space for children and families.





### **Credit Card Access Expanded to Vending Machine**

Following the successful addition of credit card payment options using Square at the checkout and reference desks, the Library has extended this convenience to the Garden Lounge vending machine. IT Director Mike installed a new Nayax credit card reader which has been in active use since its implementation. This enhancement reflects the Library's ongoing efforts to modernize services and improve the patron experience through accessible and user-friendly technology.

### **Positive Patron Feedback Highlights Community Impact**

The Library continues to receive encouraging feedback from patrons who value both our staff and our growing collection and services.

A "loyal patron" recently praised the Seed Library, calling it "amazing" and expressing appreciation for the creativity and effort behind the project. They also highlighted the "beautiful, large and useful" Library of Things collection, noting how proud they are to see this innovative offering at RML, describing the library as "alive, walking, talking—meaning new programs, new projects, creative ideas."

Other feedback included a written comment commending staff member Nicole for her attentive technology help, as well as a 5-star Google review calling the Library "absolutely amazing" and the Library of Things "a great addition."



### **Federal IMLS Funding at Risk: What It Means for Illinois Libraries**

Recent federal actions threaten the future of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the primary federal funding source for libraries and museums. An executive order issued in March 2025 seeks to eliminate several agencies, including IMLS. Although a judge has temporarily blocked the order, long-term funding depends on Congressional reauthorization.

Illinois received \$5.7 million in IMLS funds in FY2025, supporting:

- **Interlibrary delivery** of 11 million items via RAILS and Illinois Heartland systems
- **OCLC WorldCat** services for over 1,000 libraries
- **Illinois Libraries Present**, enabling 200+ libraries to host shared virtual programming

- **Project Next Generation**, digital access for at-risk youth
- **Correctional facility library services, and professional development for library staff**

Each state uses IMLS funding differently to meet local needs—ranging from digital libraries to summer reading and workforce training. While the Rolling Meadows Library is locally funded and not directly dependent on IMLS, cuts could affect shared statewide services we rely on.

We will continue to monitor the situation and support efforts to preserve this essential funding stream for libraries across Illinois and the nation.

## **In the Community**

### **2025 State of the City**

On May 1, Director Bower and Library Board Secretary Marsha Kremer attended the Rolling Meadows State of the City event, hosted by the City and the RM Chamber of Commerce. The program featured updates from Mayor Lara Sanoica and City Manager Rob Sabo on 2025 priorities, along with the Chamber's Circle of Success awards recognizing local businesses and community leaders. The event offered a valuable opportunity to engage with City leadership and supports Strategic Plan Strategy 5.7 "Collaborate actively in citywide dialogue around Rolling Meadows' future growth and development."

### **District 15 Advisory Committee**

On April 22, Director Bower attended the District Advisory Committee for Educational Excellence, hosted by Superintendent Dr. Laurie Heinz at the District 15 offices in Palatine. The meeting brought together local partners from across the district's service area, including representatives from the City of Rolling Meadows and Park District, as well as other organizations from Palatine and Hoffman Estates. Attendees shared updates from their respective agencies. Participation in this collaborative forum supports Strategic Plan Strategy 1.2 "Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors," and helps position the Library as an engaged partner in regional educational efforts.

### **Remembering Our Fallen Sponsorship**

The Library is honored to sponsor a memorial tower as part of Remembering Our Fallen, a national war memorial exhibit coming to Rolling Meadows in May. This powerful tribute honors U.S. service members who have died in combat since 9/11 and features daily ceremonies with music, prayer, honor guards, and remarks from veterans and Gold Star families. The opportunity was identified by Library Board Treasurer Steve Rossi and reflects the Library's commitment to community engagement and honoring those who have served.



### **Carl Sandburg Jr. High World of Work Day**

Director Bower and Youth Services Librarians Kate D. and Dan M. participated as guest speakers at Carl Sandburg Middle School's World of Work Career Day. They spoke to three classes of students about careers in librarianship and library leadership, sharing insights into the roles of a librarian and a library director. The visit helped foster awareness of public service careers and highlighted the Library's role in the community.

### **Library Outreach at the Young Child Expo**

Youth Services staff represented the Library at the Young Child Expo, held at Forest View Education Center in Arlington Heights. Sponsored by the Early Childhood Block Grant program and District 214 Community Education, the event highlighted local services for children from birth to age five. Staff connected with approximately 250 attendees, promoting early literacy programs and resources for young families in the community.

### **Michoacana Express Grand Opening**

On May 2, Director Bower attended the grand opening for the new Michoacana Express in Rolling Meadows. Jack welcomed the new business to the community, highlighted the Library's services, and joined in the celebration with some delicious Mexican sweets. Events like this help build local connections and support a welcoming, engaged community.



## **Department Highlights**

### **Reference Services**

- The City of Rolling Meadows Human Services social workers have committed to continuing their resident drop-in hours at the Library through May and June, reinforcing a valuable community partnership.
- We extend our best wishes to Sue M., who retired on April 29 after serving in a part-time roaming customer service role. Her service and positivity will be missed. Happy retirement, Sue!
- The Seed Library continues to thrive, with over 400 seed packets distributed between RML and the Neighborhood Resource Center. Additionally, our nonfiction Spring Reading Challenge has been a hit across multiple age groups. Each completed nonfiction book adds a flower to our growing display wall.
- New display tables have been added to the West Wing to create a more inviting, bookstore-style browsing experience. Patron feedback has been very positive, and nonfiction materials have been circulating quickly as a result.



## Youth Services

- Youth Services hosted a successful Día de los Niños celebration on April 30, with 55 participants enjoying stories, a stuffed animal craft, and cake. The event celebrated children, families, and the joy of reading.
- This month also featured a wide variety of creative and engaging programs, including Bees & Honey, Fingerprint Fun, Paint & Grow Lavender, Messy Time, and Middle School Advisory Board projects. These offerings continue to reflect the department's commitment to hands-on learning and diverse programming.
- In professional development, Librarian Dan M. attended a Title Talk hosted by Baker & Taylor and several publishers to preview upcoming fall releases for children. Youth Services Director Lucia K. participated in an ALA Zoom training titled Information Literacy: Autism Awareness for Library Workers.





### **Technical Services**

- Technical Services Director Wendy F. attended the first-quarter Technical Services Networking Group meeting at Mount Prospect Library. The meeting included a behind-the-scenes tour, highlighting Mount Prospect's automated materials sorting system.
- The department recently upgraded overdue notice printing, shifting from an outdated dot matrix printer to a more efficient laser printer.
- New additions are also coming soon to the Library of Things collection, including a balloon inflater, ladder ball set, metal detector, and horseshoes set, expanding our selection of fun, borrowable items for all ages.

### **Building Services**

- Spring annuals have been planted around the Library's main entrance to brighten the exterior and welcome patrons into the building.
- To address concerns about pet waste near the front entrance, staff installed a dog waste bin at a more appropriate location, helping maintain a cleaner and more pleasant environment.



### **Circulation**

Please refer to the Circulation Monthly Statistical Report for the latest data.