

Executive Director's Report FEBRUARY 2025

Introducing Flicks on Fire: Early Access to the Hottest Movies

As part of Strategic Plan Strategy 2.2 “Increase the availability of nontraditional resources...” we’re proud to launch Flicks on Fire, a first-of-its-kind library service offering early access to new movies before DVD or streaming. Developed by the Collection Committee, this innovative solution bridges the gap between theatrical releases and traditional library formats. To our knowledge, no other library offers this yet, making us pioneers in this space!

How It Works:

- **Fire TV Stick:** Patrons can check out a preloaded Fire TV Stick from the library and stream the latest films directly on their TV.
- **Early Access Movies:** Each device comes loaded with 10-20 of the hottest new releases, including blockbusters and award-winning films – many still in theaters.
- **No Theater Required:** Enjoy brand-new movies from home, saving money on tickets and avoiding the wait for DVD or streaming availability.



Now Available for Checkout:

- **General Audience Stick:** Features Anora, Better Man, The Brutalist, A Complete Unknown, Nickel Boys, and more.
- **Family-Friendly Stick:** Includes Dogman, Moana 2, Mufasa, Flow, Sonic the Hedgehog 3, and other great titles for all ages.

Rotating Titles & Fresh Content

As movies become available on DVD, streaming, or other library formats, they will rotate out of Flicks on Fire to make room for new releases. This ensures that the collection stays current and exciting, giving patrons access to the latest films as soon as possible. This exclusive service for Rolling Meadows Library cardholders offers a cost-free alternative to expensive VOD rentals, ensuring that our patrons stay ahead of the latest movie releases.

Record-Breaking Winter Reading Challenge

This year’s Winter Reading Challenge was the most successful in our history, with over 260 readers signed up! More than 70 participants have already completed the challenge, and late finishers continue to roll in. Tying the launch to the Grand Reopening proved to be a huge success, driving excitement and engagement.

Introducing Self-Service Checkouts

As part of Strategic Plan Strategy 3.3 “Explore the incorporation of convenient self-service touchpoints into RML’s existing service models” the library has launched its first-ever self-checkout station. A big thank you to IT Director Mike M., who led the project from start to finish. With support from Tech Services and Circulation Services, the height-adjustable station is now installed right inside the library entrance for easy access and intuitive use. Not a replacement for staff, it provides a quick, private option for those who prefer self-service, with staff always available to assist.

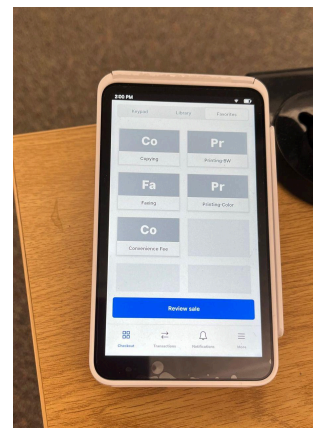
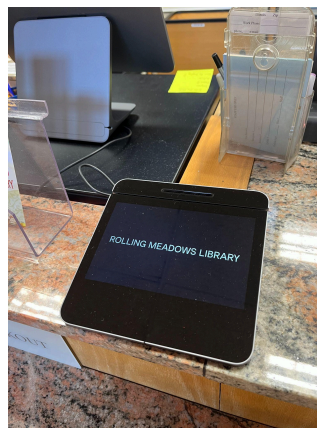


Looking ahead, we’re exploring a self-service hold shelf and considering expanding self-checkout to Youth Services. We’re also working on adding multilingual options to improve accessibility. We will continue monitoring its use and gathering feedback to ensure it enhances convenience while maintaining the welcoming, personal service RML is known for.

Now Accepting Credit Cards & Tap Pay at the Library

After many years of service, the Circulation Desk register finally broke down and has been replaced with a Tile Paystation, allowing patrons to pay with credit cards and tap-to-pay from their phones, similar to systems used in coffee shops. Additionally, a credit card reader has been added to the Reference Desk, making it easier to pay for larger print jobs, faxing, and other services. This long-requested feature improves convenience and accessibility for our patrons.

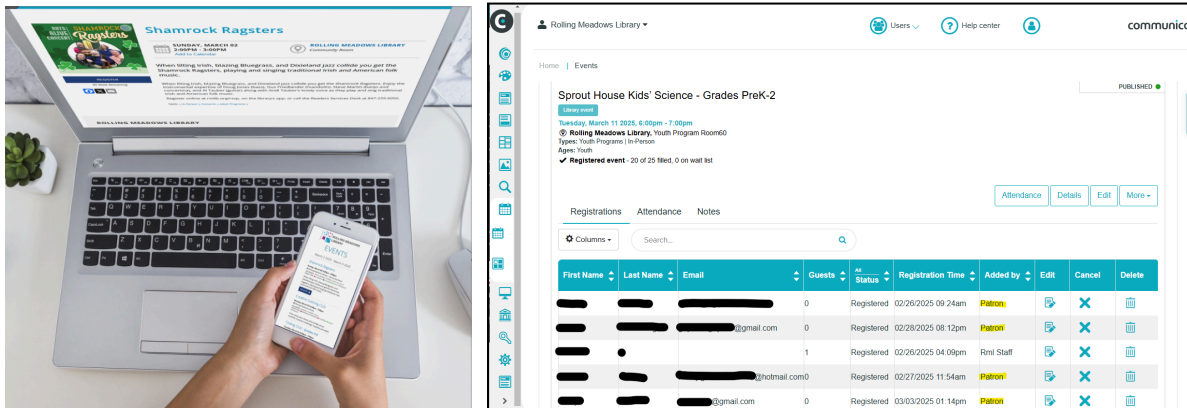
Looking ahead, we are exploring a credit card reader for the public vending machine and possibly for the Friends of the Library book sales.



Program Registration Goes Live Using the New Website

The first major milestone toward launching the new website took place on February 26, when all program registrations moved to the new system in time for spring program sign-ups. This replaces the outdated process of manually transferring registrations from an online form into a paper system, saving staff time, reducing errors, and creating a more seamless experience for patrons. This is part of Strategic Plan Strategy 4.4 “Refresh the library’s online presence, including the website...”.

This phased rollout allows staff to get comfortable with the new system before the full website launch at the end of March, marking a key step in modernizing the library’s digital services and improving accessibility for the community.



Strategic Plan Implementation and Progress

With board approval of our Strategic Plan, consultants Nick Dimassis and Melissa Brechon returned on February 26 for a final session to guide the first phase of implementation. They worked closely with department directors to develop actionable tactics, assign responsibilities, and establish realistic timelines to ensure each strategy receives the attention it deserves.

Throughout the year, we will track and share progress, with major priorities in 2025 including strengthening community partnerships and launching the new library website. Following that, we will explore joining a consortium and begin preparing for a facility needs assessment toward the year’s end. Many strategic initiatives are ongoing and will shape the library’s work moving forward.

As part of this effort, Executive Director Jack Bower will present the Strategic Plan to the City Council on April 15, outlining its methodology, outcomes, and implementation progress.

Valentine’s Day Origami

On Friday, February 14, patrons aged 13+ visited the Readers Services Desk to create colorful origami designs for Valentine’s Day. The library showcased books, printed instructions, and examples of irises, cranes, and geometric patterns to inspire creativity. The event also highlighted the Art Cart, encouraging patrons to explore its materials and continue crafting year-round.

Introducing the Puzzle Exchange

Since the puzzle table was introduced last summer, it has become a patron favorite. In response to requests for adult puzzles in our circulating collection, we launched a Puzzle Exchange as a sustainable solution to meet this demand.

Patrons can bring in a new or gently used puzzle (with no missing pieces) and exchange it for a different one, allowing them to refresh their collections while promoting reuse and environmental responsibility. This initiative aligns with Strategic Plan Strategy 2.2 “Increase the availability of nontraditional resources...”



Roof Project Update

The roof project remains on schedule. We received nine bids that were opened on February 27, all coming in significantly lower than budgeted. As a result, the architect’s fee will also be reduced, ensuring we are well within budget!

The architect is currently reviewing the bids and will provide a recommendation for contractor selection. The Planning Committee will discuss and make its recommendation at its March 10 meeting, with final approval scheduled for the March 12 Board meeting. Overall, this project is in a strong financial position, and we anticipate moving forward smoothly with construction starting in April.



Rolling Meadows Library Book Bike

As part of our Strategic Plan’s Goal 3.7 “explore the roll out of nontraditional physical access points...”, we received funding from the Friends of the Library to introduce a Rolling Meadows Library Book Bike. This investment will extend our reach, allowing us to bring library resources, programming, and engagement opportunities to parks, community events, and other public spaces - especially during the warmer months.

A book bike is a mobile library on three wheels, designed to bring books and services directly to the community. Equipped with storage for materials and an electric assist, our book bike will be accessible for more staff to use. It serves as a pop-up library station, enabling book checkouts, library card sign-ups, and interactive programming while promoting literacy and strengthening community connections.

After researching similar programs at neighboring libraries, we selected Hailey Tricycle for its durability and effectiveness in outreach. With a several-week production lead time, we expect the book bike to arrive before summer reading begins. Staff are eager to use this new tool to engage with the community and highlight the many ways the library serves beyond its walls.



In the Community

Community Relations Manager Outreach

Community Relations Manager Laura Garcia recently hosted a virtual storytime and library orientation for families in the Family Focus Program of DuPage, which also serves Cook County. The lead teacher, a former Neighborhood Resource Center and library visitor, fondly remembers Laura as her favorite storytime librarian, making it no surprise that she reached out for this special program. This grant-funded initiative supports families with young children experiencing developmental challenges, reinforcing the library's commitment to early literacy and inclusion.

Despite the frigid temperatures, Laura has also continued outreach programming at the NRC, where children enjoyed stories and LEGO building activities, keeping them engaged and creative even in the coldest months.



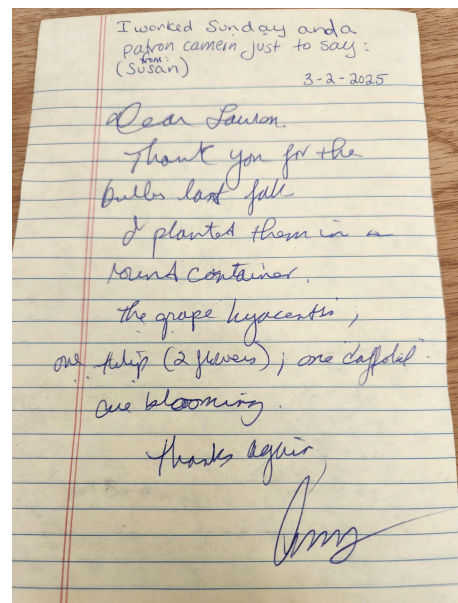
Building Community Partnerships for ESL Programs

On February 13, Jennifer C. attended the Rolling Meadows Partners meeting, connecting with ESL and literacy providers to explore potential collaborations for ESL programs at the library. This effort aligns with Goal 1 Programs & Partnerships of our Strategic Plan, reinforcing our commitment to expanding educational opportunities and community engagement.

Department Highlights

Reference Services

- Reference Librarian Anne J. completed notary training and is now an official notary public, expanding available service hours.
- Anne also led interlibrary loan best practices training for four staff members. (Strategic Plan Strategy 5.4 “Invest in staff cross-training to foster a nimble frontline team.”)
- One of our Fremd High School civic engagement volunteers has asked to continue volunteering beyond her required hours, reinforcing our commitment to community partnerships. (Strategic Plan Goal 1 Programs & Partnerships.)
- A patron shared a heartwarming follow-up to Lauren's gardening program, reporting that the bulbs received at the event are now blooming!



Youth Services

- Storytime attendance is way up, reflecting strong community engagement.
- Middle School Advisory Board partnered with RM High School entrepreneurial classes to design, produce, and purchase t-shirts for its members. (Strategic Plan Strategy 1.2 “Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors.”)
- Several successful evening programs were held, including Coding Club, Cuentos y Chocolate, and The Northern Lights. (Strategic Plan Strategy 1.6 “Reevaluate programming to ensure that days and times conform with the scheduling needs of targeted audiences.”)



Technical Services

- All DVD & CD locking security cases have been retired!
- Circulation Notices printer removed, as a new notification system is being implemented.
- Collaborated with IT & Circulation to phase out the dot matrix printer and transition to modernized notifications.



Special Services

- Led the transition to the Communico online program registration system, including:
 - Designing a custom header/footer for temporary use.
 - Collaborating with IT to streamline event creation and troubleshoot issues.
 - Developing a three-part training program for staff.
 - Rapidly correcting errors post-launch.
- 2023 vs. 2024 Facebook engagement analysis:
 - Reach: 11.4K → 26.7K (+134%)
 - Interactions: 2.1K → 3.9K (+86%)
 - Link Clicks: 241 → 570 (+137%)
 - Visits: 5K → 10.4K (+108%)
 - New Follows: 126 → 164 (+30%)
 - (Strategic Plan Goal 4.2 “Develop a broad-based marketing plan to guide RML’s promotional efforts.”)
- Spring 2025 StoryWalk selection: Why Do Roosters Crow Early in the Morning? by Jack Beard.
- Displays:
 - Main Level: In Honor of Black History Month & Love Makes the World Go ‘Round.
 - City Hall: 2025 Youth & Adult/Teen Winter Reading Challenge.



Circulation

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