

Southern Systems Group

**Comments from CooperationToday regarding merger planning process
(as of 2.24.11, at 12:00)**

Topic: Naming the New System

February 22nd, 2011 at 13:04, Sarah Hill writes: *I like Crossroads Library System—Short and Simple. Although I don't understand why Downstate Library System or Southern Library System can't be used—that is what we'll be called anyway!*

February 22, 2011, at 14:14, Luann Toennies posts: *I do not care for any of the ones that contain "between" in them. They sound too long and wordy to me. But I like the "Four Rivers Library System" because it is fairly simple, as well as, "Heart of Illinois Library System". That would have the name of the state in it, at least.*

February 22, 2011, at 14:18, Miriam Richardson posts: *I'm prefer The "Four Rivers Library System.*

February 22, 2011, at 15:33, Joan Young writes: *I disagree with not using South or Central. That's who we are and that's what we'll be called. But I understand it's too late to change now, so my favorite of the choices left is Heart of Illinois.*

February 22, 2011, at 16:14, Kathy Hagan writes: *I vote for the Four Rivers Library System.*

February 22, 2011, at 16:53, Karen Bounds posts: *We have had two additional names suggested: Winding Rivers Library System and Many Rivers Library System. These names came from a Librarians' Round Table Discussion at the Tri-County Institute held on Feb. 18 at Centralia High School. What do you think?*

February 22, 2011, at 17:58, Donna Corry posts: *Here are a few suggestions:
Heartland Library System
Pathways Library System (takes in trails, rivers, pathways to knowledge, innovation, etc.) It could also be Illinois Pathways Library System
Inception Library System (new beginning)*

February 22, 2011, at 21:37, Ally Maddox writes: *How about Dewey Library System? Donna, I like the Heartland Library System. All of you who voted for Four Rivers, what do you think about Heartland? The more I think about it, the more I like it.*

February 23, 2011, at 13:15, Joyce Bringenberg adds: *I like Heartland Library System or Illinois Heartland Library System.*

February 23, 2011, at 14:24, A Friend writes: *A few random names:
Hodgepodge Library System
Assorted Library System
Turning Pages Library System*

Consolidated Library System
Serendipitous Library System

February 23, 2011, at 14:51, Michelle Peterson adds: *I vote for Heartland Library System or Illinois Heartland Library System*

February 23, 2011, at 17:12, Rachel Miller pens: *The new system could be called the Kites Library System (KLS).*

Kites stands for
Knowledge
Information
Technology
Experience
Sharing

A tag line could be Transcending Boundaries—Grounded in Reality

The kite is a good image for the new system as it floats on the winds of change but at the same time is grounded in principals and services. The traditional kite is a good visual; each quadrant could have a word and the ties on the tail provide places for services or words from a mission statement. Kites are both fun and useful, with roles in history, science (think Ben Franklin), sport (fighting kites), art and more. The Kites name neutralizes geographical considerations such south, north or central. This name was brainstormed by Louise Greene and Rachel Miller.

February 24, 2011, at 09:48, Harriett Zipfel writes: *Here are a few suggestions:*

River to River Library System
Trailblazers Library System
Lincoln Library System

Land of Lincoln Library System

But I like some of the names already submitted too.

February 24, 2011, at 09:51, Louise Greene adds: Yes, we were truly “Thinking Outside the Barn” for this one, something we are known for. The tagline could also be Transcending Geography/Grounded In Reality. BTW, kites are also birds common to our region of Illinois (as well as many other regions). I am an advocate of more transformative thinking as we move forward into uncharted territory with system services. KLS adds the elements of levity and playfulness, so necessary for creativity and flexibility in our rapidly changing library environment, layered on traditional core values.

Topic: Membership Criteria Version 6

February 23, 2011, at 09:00, Bonnie Tickner writes: *In looking through the proposed plans, I don’t see anything about fees for membership, particularly in regard to ILL.*

February 23, 2011, at 14:34, Bev Obert responds: *You are correct, in the membership criteria as drafted, there are no fees for anything listed.*

February 24, 2011, at 09:13, Louis Shaw posts: *The requirement of ten hours of continuing education seems burdensome for very small public libraries. Most such events in the past seemed to run three or*

four hours. This would mean the library director would have to make three or four trips, often with considerable travel time, in the course of a year. For a very small library, this can mean either paying a substitute for several days or closing the library.

Also, I am convinced that a very small community is better off with a public library, even one whose hours are very limited, than with no library at all. I believe exceptions of indefinite length should be available for those libraries which simply cannot meet the standards due to extreme economic limitations.

Topic: Delivery Recommendations

February 22, 2011, at 11:36, Diana Brawley Sussman posts: *Hi guys, Surely you've thought of this already, but the bundling guidelines for DOG need to somehow take into consideration the fact that libraries have very limited space for sorting. Sorting by destination can take a whole room of tubs/bags/shelves, etc. We'll have more destinations now (much bigger system), and fewer days of pickup, so, more tubs piling up. Maybe it could be a color-coded system integrated into the shared online catalog. Instead of sorting by exact destination, sort by route. Say, there are 6 or so colors. A book gets checked in that belongs to another library, the message gives the library's code, as it does now, but also the library's route color. Red libraries go in "red" tubs.*

February 23, 2011, at 11:01, Leslie Bednar replies: *Hi, Diana, Thanks for your suggestions on how to better refine the delivery procedures for the merged system. A process that requires member libraries to sort by destination library does pass some of the "costs" on to the members, as opposed to all sorting happening at the library System facility. For the near future, the majority of destination libraries your staff would have to contend with would be those within SILNET. And, you are correct, when we have merged automation groups, the options would expand. As we look at shared library automation software, we need to be aware of the impact on delivery procedures.*

February 22, 2011, at 12:59, Sarah Hill writes: *I'm fine with picking up my books for Paris Cooperative High School at Paris Public Library, since it is next door to our school. I assume that this means our volume will be added to their volume to determine frequency?*

February 23, 2011, at 11:43, Leslie Bednar responds: *Good morning, Sarah, You are correct, in determining the frequency of a CAT (community access terminal), we would first look at the delivery volume of all libraries in that CAT. So it is the volume of the group as a whole that gives you the number of days for delivery. This is the one advantage of considering a CAT for smaller libraries, as delivery may be more frequent. A disadvantage is that delivery occurs at one location in the CAT only, and members of that group have to arrange for material drop off and pick up at the CAT location. Thanks for your feedback!*

February 22, 2011, at 13:58, Luann Toennies posts: *I am not sure if our situation is covered in the plan. The way it is now, I usually get ILL material through the mail unless there is a whole class doing research at the same time. In that case, I will get a bag of books delivered to me. If they are going back in small intervals, I return them through our public library. If a whole group of books is returning at the same time, I call the system and schedule a pick up. Is that kind of what the committee is thinking or saying in these guidelines?*

February 23, 2011, at 15:12, Leslie Bednar replies: *Good afternoon, Luann, I really appreciate your feedback on the delivery recommendations. One of the facets of the proposal that is perhaps not stated clearly is that each delivery hub (defined as our current system buildings) would have the discretion to determine the best delivery method for a particular situation. Schools are a perfect example of a library whose delivery needs may differ within a school year. During higher request periods, the proposal would give delivery supervisors the discretion to adjust based on needs (volume). The committee will be looking at all the comments and refining the proposal further. Thank you!*

February 22, 2011 at 14:51, Joan Young comments: *My question is about the CATs. Is the thinking that someone there at the dropoff point would sort items for each participating library? Or would each library's items already be bundled together and it would just be a drop point, where participants would only need to make a quick stop to pick up?*

February 23, 2011 at 15:32, Leslie Bednar responds: *Hi, Joan, Since the CATs would be self-identified, my suggestion is that the member libraries in each CAT determine what works best for sorting and pick up/drop off. The delivery committee will be meeting again this Friday and Saturday and will certainly be considering all of the comments to their proposal as they refine the document. I hope this answers your question, and appreciate your comments!*

February 23, 2011, at 08:15, Bonnie Tickner posts: *Have you determined what alternative delivery methods means and how the costs will be covered? I am retiring and our school board is questioning the need to replace me with a certified librarian if our services are going to be drastically cut.*

February 23, 2011, at 20:37, Leslie Bednar replies: *Good evening, Bonnie, The intent of "alternative" delivery methods is to provide flexibility to delivery supervisors at each delivery hub to choose the most appropriate method for each situation. Alternate delivery includes the "traditional" delivery by system staff, delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, and other similar providers. We often have member libraries with peak delivery periods that would call for the traditional type of delivery, and then periods where only a handful of materials are requested/sent that may call for delivery by another provider. The goal of flexibility is paired with fiscal responsibility which will allow us to provide services in challenging economic times. I believe the delivery committee's intent would be to have any out of pocket costs for expenses such as return postage reimbursed by the library System. I truly appreciate your concerns regarding delivery of library materials while you are approaching retirement. You mention having services drastically cut—are you referring only to delivery? Do you have concerns regarding other System services as well? Thanks for the feedback, and congratulations on your pending retirement!*

February 23, 2011, at 09:28, Jim Stuller comments: *1. Delivery less than 5 days a week is greatly disappointing. I thought the merge was supposed to improve service not make it worse. If money is an issue, though I'm not sure how driving past small libraries saves any money, offer the extra days of service at a per day cost. Also unless larger libraries are paying more for more deliveries – you are requiring the smaller libraries to foot the bill for better service at larger libraries. The fact that this money comes from the state and not the system, if I understand it correctly, makes this policy even more inequitable. If a library is open and the courier service is operating in the area, a delivery should be made. 2. Delivery on the Go makes no sense to me. We don't have room to have a bag for every library in southern Illinois. Or are we only sorting the items for libraries on our route? These routes seem to vary almost daily so I'm not sure how to keep track of that. There is also no room in the courier van for that many individual bags. Are the tubs going away?*

February 23, 2011, at 21:06, Leslie Bednar responds: *Good evening, Jim, Thanks for your comments regarding the delivery proposal. I will number my reply in a similar manner to be sure and respond to each of your concerns.*

1. When we began this process of merging four library Systems, it was based on the impact of the State's current fiscal crisis on funding for services such as libraries and library Systems. In the delivery proposal, libraries with very large volume would likely continue to receive five day/week delivery. The decision to do so is left to the discretion of delivery supervisors who are more aware of the impact of very large volumes on their delivery operations work flows. The delivery committee's objective is to be a responsible steward of the grant funds received by the Illinois State Library. If a library requests more materials, their frequency of delivery can also increase.

2. DOG has two components: sorting/bundling by the destination library as items are placed in containers which will mean less hours spent on sorting at each delivery hub; and identifying items with a destination library following your library's delivery stop. The first places some of the "cost" on the member libraries by asking you to save us some sorting time when materials are routed through the system buildings at the end of each route. The second is a potential time saver for patrons as their requested items may not be routed through the System building before arriving at their library. Within GateNet's member libraries it is common to have a portion of a tub (or more) filled with items for the same member library. This proposal would institutionalize a practice many of our members follow informally now.

February 23, 2011, at 18:43, Gwen Montgomery adds: *The delivery based on volume as proposed looks like we would continue to get 2 pickups/ deliveries a week. If we only had 1 delivery a week, it would be a lot of work at once and no matter how many staff we have here, we only have 1 staff computer so it doesn't get any faster than that. Also, if we and other small libraries went to once a week the hangtime for delivery/return could be up to three weeks.*

I'm not sure how we could fit into a CAT. To be involved in one, it would require a trip of 30/40 minutes. I'm afraid the board would balk at paying us for our time to go there or for the mileage/gas.

February 23, 2011, at 21:10, Leslie Bednar replies: *Good evening, Gwen, Thanks for your feedback on the delivery proposal. Please keep in mind that as the volume of requests from your library/patrons increases, the frequency of delivery may also increase. And, you are correct about the CAT option, in that it does not work in all situations.*

February 24, 2011, at 08:48, Louis Shaw posts: *1. The requirement to have all deliveries for schools made to the office seems very arbitrary. In my particular case, I have an outside door and delivery directly to the library works very well, avoids involving office staff who are already overworked, and avoids the risk of a delivery being misplaced, lost or tampered with. This should be decided on a case-by-case basis, although relatively few schools are likely to have direct deliveries under these guidelines anyway.*

2. The CAT proposal is not likely to work well in rural areas where libraries are small and widely scattered. Perhaps there should be a guarantee of one CAT per county or at least for a two or three county area if the libraries in that area wanted one, regardless of number of items delivered.

3. The sorting would not be a significant problem for me but I can see it becoming a burden on the larger libraries that provide most of the interlibrary loan materials. The taxpayers in those areas are, to some extent, already propping up the rest of us and this would be more true under this proposal.

4. I do appreciate the work of the committee to maintain as much service as possible. Given the economic realities, the service is not likely to be as good as it has been but that seems to be the new reality for everything in the public sector.

February 24, 2011, at 10:58, Leslie Bednar responds: *Good morning, Louis,*

Thanks very much for your thoughtful review of the delivery proposal. My reply follows your format.

1. The decision to deliver school library materials to the office was purely out of concern for student safety. The delivery committee will be reviewing several comments related to this issue at its meeting tomorrow.

2. CATs are intended to be on a voluntary basis. The committee has not considered setting up CATs as you describe.

3. You are correct in your observation that having member libraries sort/bundle by destination library is an undefined cost of delivery that is passed onto the members. That activity should save time at the end of routes as items are routed through the library System buildings.

Have a great day!

Topic: Draft Membership Standards

February 16, 2011, at 09:25, Annette Mills writes: *I've learned a few things that have made me really have a problem with these membership standards as proposed. First of all, why do we need these at this point? It is my understanding that the Illinois State Library would like as much consistency as possible between the new Northern and Southern Systems. Why shouldn't we wait and let the newly elected Boards of these systems come up with appropriate membership standards?*

Our interim "standards" should be that whatever level member you are in your current system, that's what you are in the new system. Why spend so much time writing standards that most assuredly will need to be changed in the near future?

Now, on to the standards as proposed. After comparing these membership standards (and I speak as a school) to current membership standards, the proposed standards are MUCH more exclusive than the current standards of ANY of the four current systems. Why would we want to do that? They are also more stringent than the Illinois State Board of Education requires for school districts. If we think that these standards will have ANY bearing on the hiring decisions of my local school board, we are living in a dream world. Losing library system membership, to my school board, means we lose about \$2,600 in per capita grants (annually), and we will possibly have to spend a couple thousand dollars (one-time cost) to implement a stand-alone circulation system. Compare that to the annual salary of a school librarian with an endorsement or master's degree. They will do the math, and this will be a "no brainer" for my school board.

I've also heard appalling numbers from small public libraries. Something like, they will have to spend 1/3 or more of their budget to hire a MLS, for a library that is SERVING ITS PUBLIC WELL. Why do we need to rock the boat for so many small publics? I'll let them speak for themselves, since I don't know that much about this issue, but I can empathize.

The fact that the initial document we started with for these proposed membership standards was a draft document proposed to ILSDO is irrelevant. That organization NEVER discussed this draft. It was ONLY a draft, and we should assume major revisions would have been made to this document before acceptance by that organization.

There are plenty of very important issues that the planning committee needs to attend to. Membership standards are not one of them. Please stop spending time on this document and move on to more important, relevant issues.

February 16, 2011, at 10:02, Jeanne Cotter posts: *I have only been the library director this year due to budget cuts of our degreed library media specialist and I teach 4 hours of the day as well. Needless to say, I cannot staff the library alone, so a recently RIF'd instructional aide was hired to cover hours during the day. I agree with Annette Mills' comment that the ISBE requires less of school districts to have a*

library specialist who meets the educational criteria. For our district, 'another certified teacher who goes to annual training on library topics' could be given the duties/oversight of the school's library. That's me. Even though I have a master's degree in instructional technology, not library media services, I qualified. I know also that losing library system membership, although not desirable, is not something worth spending thousands of dollars on to pay for another master's degree for me or pay for a qualified library media specialist (which was what resulted in this situation in the first place). I don't have an answer; just wanted to state that I see the budget side and how these standards might cause a drop in memberships.

February 16, 2011, at 11:13, Tina Hubert posts: *I, too, question the necessity of putting any membership standards in place at this time. It seems to me that the bigger issue is how to smooth the transition to a new system structure as much as possible. What the planning panel needs to concentrate on (in my opinion) is the budget for the new system, the staffing, the location, and how to ensure that there are no breaks in services from June 30, 2011, to July 1, 2011. I agree that the membership standards need to be developed in concert with the northern system – after the systems have transformed. There is no reason to have new membership standards in place at this time – if we've waited these many years to come up with new standards we can wait a little longer – this is not what is broken. Please devote your time and energy to making the new system function from day one.*

February 16, 2011, at 11:19, Janet Flatt writes: *As Annette Mills mentioned in her comments, many schools cannot afford some of the things they are requiring in the draft. We are hoping to automate our elementary schools in the next two years, but I know that if part of that would involve having to hire additional librarians instead of the people who are currently taking care of the elementary schools, we will not automate. I could also see our district dropping out and buying stand alone systems if the costs and requirements become too demanding. Money is tight everywhere unfortunately, and I feel fortunate that we have at least been able to maintain elementary libraries instead of losing them as many districts have done.*

February 16, 2011, at 12:16, Diane Steele responds: *The Lewis & Clark Library System passed the following resolution at the February 15, 2011 board meeting:*

Resolve to recommend all current members of Systems be continued in their current membership status until such time that the boards of both the northern and southern Systems can establish uniform membership criteria. This recommendation is based on the following rationale:

- *The funding: EAV (Equalized Assessed Valuation) is not valid due to the inequities of local assessors.*
- *Tax caps, which limit the amount of funds in some districts, have not been considered.*
- *Educational requirements: The proposed membership requirements exceed ISBE requirements for schools (which require 1 media specialist per district, not per school).*
- *The MLS expectation may not be appropriate for certain communities.*
- *It is premature to set continuing education requirements prior to determining what funding is available for provision of continuing educational opportunities.*

We hope that the new membership criteria will be more inclusive rather than exclusive, particularly during these difficult economic times.

Thanks for reading!

February 23, 2011, at 21:23, Betsy Mahoney adds: *As a board member of LCLS, I absolutely agree with the resolution passed by the Lewis and Clark Library System Board of Directors on Feb. 15 2011. After reading Tina's comments, I would like to echo her sentiments on the focus of the planning panel. It is far more important to define what our service should be and a budget, not quibbling on membership criteria*

that could look entirely different in a few years. There will be time to address all of the concerns regarding standards as the merger progresses. The most important issue facing the merger today is the smooth continuation of services.

February 19, 2011, at 12:24, Rick Balsamello posts: *While a worthy goal, any requirement of an advanced degree for any but the largest of libraries would impose an undue hardship on those who can least afford the extra expenses such a hire would incur. I have witnessed this desire among the professional library community to create a network of elites who carve out a comfortable future for themselves while simultaneously holding communities hostage to pay such tribute. This smacks of the cronyism and festering sores that have made our fair state the laughingstock of the nation for its economic excesses.*

When being evaluated by the Serving Our Public 2.0, I must annually report that our community is barely meeting MINIMUM standards in facility size, collection size, number of staff, etc. With dwindling sources of funding (exclusive of property tax levies), we do not have the resources to progress beyond our current levels. There is no silver bullet to be found in raising our tax levy in today's (or the foreseeable future, either) economic climate.

Requiring me at this stage in life to obtain an advanced degree would result in either long-term financial hardship or terminating my employment with the library. Upon achieving an MLS, my library could not afford to increase my compensation commensurate with the education, nor could they pay any other benefits, such as medical insurance, that I currently do not receive.

I do not believe that my community is alone in this predicament. What this document in its current form would do is to DECREASE access to library services in our state. Many communities would be forced to terminate system membership and/or operate in the same fiscally irresponsible manner our state government has chosen for decades. I do not believe the quality of service provided by hundreds of Head Librarians as myself is lacking due to the absence of an MLS, nor do I believe the quality of service would appreciably increase upon attainment of same. To me, this requirement is a non-starter and a stumbling block to accomplishing the really important goals we have for our constituents.

Topic: Draft Resource Sharing Plan Version 5

February 24, 2011, at 09:01, Louis Shaw posts: *The definition of a school district does not include elementary districts. Was there an intent to exclude those districts?*

February 24, 2011, at 09:11, Ellen Popit replies: *Definitely not, Louis! We'll certainly take care of that!*

Topic: Proposed Membership Criteria

February 16, 2011, at 12:16, Portia Stueve posts: *APPENDIX A*
I don't think these criteria are valid. They should be eliminated, re-worked, other criteria added. Just because you have a big population doesn't mean you have a tax base and vice-versa. What is the correlation? There is such a wide diversity in the libraries in this mega system—some barely staying alive with nothing to call their own, some building big, beautiful buildings. For example, compare Ziegler with Champaign.

APPENDIX B

No one with a Bachelor's or Master's degree is going to want to work in a small town for only 20 hours

per week. And small towns will not be able to afford such a person. It's nice to say "Pass a referendum", but let's be realistic!

PUBLIC LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS

4th bullet—What does "trained" mean?

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Why have categories? Have a set of minimum requirements, like the document has. Then use "Serving Our Public" to show progress at reaching ONE SET OF STANDARDS. Then we can use the Per Capita Grant for two purposes instead of using two sets of standards that may overlap or may go in different directions.

Just as a note, should we have another category for school/public libraries?

February 18, 2011, at 13:31, Kitty Wrigley comments: *Our Library functions as both a special and an academic library. Should I assume we would need to meet membership criteria for both types or will this be a "pick one" situation? I'm sure we're in a minority.*