BRANCH DISTRICT LIBRARY
www.BranchDistrictLibrary.org

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
November 13, 2026

Courthouse Bomb Threat

On Tuesday, October 27, a bomb threat to the Branch County Courthouse was called in to staff at the Coldwater Branch library. We immediately reported this to the authorities. As this was not a direct threat against the library, we took our lead from the police and did not close the library until the County Sheriff's deputies closed off access to our parking lot and began evacuating the court house. The following day, we had a special staff meeting to debrief about the incident and discuss how we could do better with if there is a similar event in the future. It was a productive and timely discussion, as we are nearing the completion of a revised emergency procedures manual with the help of a third-party consultant, and we can incorporate staff feedback and our recent experience as we look at our final draft.

I also had a meeting with County Administrator Frank Walsh to discuss how we could both communicate better with each other and coordinate our responses better since our two facilities are such close neighbors. We will both be following up with each other as we evaluate our responses and changes made.

Personnel

We finished interviewing for the open position at the Coldwater Branch, and are happy to announce that Boston Elkins will be joining the team. Welcome, Boston!

Finances

I have had one of the 3 audit firms I contacted for quotes finally get back to me, and with many questions that I needed Tim Taylor at our accountants' office to help answer. Tim was not surprised at the lack of responses, primarily because the fact that our fiscal year is the calendar year, and this puts our audit needs right in the middle of tax season. Tim cautioned us that we should also expect any new audit partner to complete our audit in as late as May instead of February.

We also discussed the timing of our planned move in January from Taylor, Plant, and Watkins doing our payroll to the national firm Rippling. We started implementation on that this week and are aiming for the first paycheck of 2027 being with the new provider. Implementation is slated to be complete by the beginning of December, to give us plenty of time to work on staff training and onboarding before January.

Facilities

We had our quarterly Orkin, with some very small hits in Algansee, Bronson, Coldwater, and Sherwood. Affected books have been baked and Orkin made a return trip to spray affected areas.

HVAC was restored at the Quincy Branch, thankfully just a simple wiring fix. Duct cleaning was conducted at Sherwood and Algansee branches this past month.

I installed people counters on the exterior doorways at the Algansee Branch. So all branches are now using the same people counters. They do have the the same weak spot that all such counters have: namely, if someone stands in a doorway they might get counted as more than one. But at least all branches will have that same variance, and it's still useful for noticing trends as to what days are busier than others.

Recently, we received a notice from the City of Bronson that the service line to the Bronson Branch is "made of galvanized previously connected to lead materials". We immediately confirmed that the filters we use in our water fountains do filter out lead, but I also ordered test kits for lead in the water and tested both straight out of the tap and from the filtered water fountain. We were ok from both sources. For comparison, I also tested at Coldwater and the well water at Algansee, with similar results for no lead problems. I was surprised to see that the well water at Algansee was actually lower in nitrates and nitrites than the municipal water in Bronson and Coldwater. Bronson and Coldwater also had much harder water than Algansee's well water.

FOIA Requests

I received a Freedom of Information Act request, this time from an individual. This request asked for an inventory of our printers and copiers, as well as any support contracts for same. None of that is privileged, so it was something we can fill and I did so.

IT Department

In October, one of the worst security vulnerabilities in the last 15 years were uncovered for core infrastructure software powering most of the Internet, and basically all of our online tools. Our support team at Equinox took care of our library system and new catalog the same day the fix was rolled out. I took care of our in-house systems and custom software later that evening. I also now have a support vendor for helping with website upgrades and maintenance. We are preparing to do the next major upgrade of the back end to the website in the next month.

The 3 copiers approved at the last meeting were delivered, one each to Quincy, Coldwater, and Union Twp. Barring any unexpected total failures, the team from our service provider confirmed that we shouldn't need to replace any next year, since they can still get parts for the ones that remain.

I replaced the Coldwater branch public access server that had been purchased previously, which went very smoothly. And there was some IT work we *didn't* do at BDL: along with

some other mechanical maintenance at Stoop's Freightliner in Fremont, they also mounted the Starlink satellite dish to the roof and routed the cable to the interior wiring closet.

Meetings

Quincy Advisory Board, Coldwater Advisory Board, Rippling implementation, Library of Michigan Directors. This month's LM Directors' meeting was especially notable because they announced 1) the new State Librarian, David Votta, who was actually one of the people who worked with us in 2018 on our strategic plan, and 2) the new statewide mandatory AI chatbot that is on all state websites starting today, Friday November 13. LM Staff reported they have worked for months training the bot on how to respond to queries from the library community, with mixed results.

Submitted by John Rucker

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Assistant Director's Report
October 15, 2026

New Library Catalog

The official launch day for the new catalog is coming up on November 23! Staff have been fantastic in working with the new catalog and sharing the information with their library users. Flyers are available for the branches to advertise, and a quick start guide is located on our website.

First Impressions Tourism Assessment

Michigan State University Extension presented the First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment results at Tibbits Opera House. The project sent five first-time visitors into Coldwater, where they evaluated the community, ate at restaurants, shopped at businesses, and visited local areas of interest. The data is collected and shared with the public and community leaders.

The results highlighted historic charm, hospitality, and nostalgic places like the drive-in and root bear stand. Comments for consideration included safer crossings on US-12, reducing downtown truck noise, and better access to water. The Coldwater Branch was reported to be closed during their visit for one person. Another visitor called the library branch a beautiful building.

The assessment was organized by the Downtown Development Authority with support from the City. The feedback will help guide future discussions on potentially adding new services to support residents and tourists.

Human Resources

Busy time in this department! The open enrollment period for health insurance is almost complete, and I am also checking in with the three staff members who were grandfathered into AFLAC policies. John, Ashley, and I had our first implementation meeting with Rippling for timekeeping and payroll.

Winter Event Guide



Grab a copy today of the newest Event Guide listing happenings from December to February. There are great events for everyone around Branch County!

Meetings

- Department meeting for Interlibrary Loan
- Midwest Tape/Hoopla
- Child Abuse Prevention Agency Board Meeting
- Jenn Washburn, Director at KCC Morris Library
- Kiwanis Club of Coldwater

Submitted:

Kimberly Feltner

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DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES
November 2026

- Attended and helped out at the Murder Mystery in Quincy the last week of October. The program and the two actors that performed for the Murder Mystery Company were absolutely incredible!
- Attended BCCN meeting and the Coldwater Advisory Board meeting.
- Conducted interviews with John, Christina and Kimberly for a clerk position.
- I am currently rifling through stacks of books for the 2027 OBOC season! If you have an suggestions, let me know!