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Press Release

Deirdre (Dee) Brennan, Executive Director of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), is the 2016 recipient of the Illinois Library Association's Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial/Demco Award. The award recognizes an individual, group, program, or institution for sustained activity and contributions having a lasting impact on librarianship.

Dee has been the Executive Director of RAILS since January 2013. Previously, she was Executive Director of the Oak Park Public Library and served as Chief of Public Services at the Boston Public Library where she managed statewide services for 103 libraries of different types. She has long been active in Illinois library issues, including co-chairing the Future of Illinois Library Cooperation initiative that has had a lasting impact on resource sharing efforts statewide.

Since coming to RAILS, Dee has led the development of additional services for RAILS' 1,300+ members, including continuing education and consulting; successful outsourcing of delivery resulting in time, space, and cost savings for participating libraries; and initiating a grant program for libraries unable to afford the cost of joining a shared online catalog.

She has also successfully led development of a variety of statewide initiatives, including the very popular eRead Illinois e-book project and an RFP to furnish cost-effective, streamlined statewide delivery through the Illinois Library Delivery Service (ILDS).

Following in Hugh Atkinson's footsteps, Dee has been an enthusiastic and tireless advocate for resource sharing and multitype cooperation throughout her career, and for removing barriers and bringing as many participants to the table as possible, no matter what their library type, size, or financial capability. Her underlying philosophy is that we are all "stronger together."

The Atkinson Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon held on Tuesday, October 18th, during the 2016 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Rosemont.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release