Today's Skills for Tomorrow's Libraries
July 29, 2025

9:00 AM - 9:50 AM:

Brynhild Haugland: The Future is Fast: Broadband in North Dakota

Program Description: North Dakota needs high speed, reliable broadband to take our state into the future. Consumers need reliable and fast broadband services for communications, education, entertainment, and remote access to work. Businesses rely on broadband services for online retail, telehealth, system monitoring and reporting, financial transactions, marketing, and supply chain management. The public sector uses broadband for everything from public safety to education to communications and community engagement to running today's Federal/State/County/Municipal infrastructures. This session will present a snapshot of the current state of broadband in North Dakota. We'll also point out how close we are to providing high speed broadband access to all regions of North Dakota. Libraries are community anchor institutions. We'll discuss the role that libraries will play both now and in the future in closing the digital equity gap.

Speaker Bio Brian Nybakken/ Al Peterson

Brian Nybakken joined the North Dakota Information Technology Division (NDIT) as Broadband Program Manager in April of 2024 after working in the North Dakota Secretary of State's Office since January of 2018. He is responsible for managing North Dakota's broadband-for-all initiatives through administration of more than $175 million in federal broadband grants. Nybakken spent 5 years working at the North Dakota Attorney General's Office as a Project Manager/Program Specialist. Previously, Nybakken spent 9 years at Aetna Insurance. Nybakken holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education as well as Social and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Mary.

Al Peterson has been with the North Dakota State Library since 2000. He has held various positions in Public Services and Training. Currently, he is the Outreach Specialist for the North Dakota State Library. He sets up and presents webinars, conducts book discussions with state employees, organizes conferences, and gives a pretty good tour of the Liberty Memorial Building.

Pioneer Room: Battle of the Books

Program Description: Guess who's back…Battle of the Books is back and it is expanding! This session discusses how North Dakota's Battle of the Books works, basic timelines, as well as how the (new) elementary level fits into the program! This presentation is most appropriate for middle and elementary school librarians.

Speaker Bio: Tammy Kruger is the Literacy Specialist at North Dakota State Library. She has a background in a variety of library types – school, medical, academic, public, and now government – as well as experience in early childhood education

10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Brynhild Haugland: Connecting with Community with Mobile Outreach

Program Description: The library does not need to be limited to a building. Join this panel session to learn more about how libraries are building connections through mobile outreach.

Speaker Bio: Monica Struck is the Public Library Specialist at the North Dakota State Library. She received her Master of Science in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2012 and has been working in North Dakota libraries ever since. When she isn't helping public libraries be awesome, Monica enjoys reading dystopian fiction, watching Chinese dramas, and chasing after her children.

Kerrianne Boetcher has been the library director at the Ward County Public Library since 2012. She grew up in North Dakota and attended the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks (B.S. in Education*) and Saint Catherine University in St. Paul, MN (MLIS).

Pioneer Room: Together We Can: Understanding and Preventing Human Trafficking

Program Description: Human trafficking is often hidden in plain sight — affecting individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and communities. This presentation will provide an introduction to what human trafficking is, how it happens, and why it matters to all of us. Participants will learn how to recognize the signs, understand who is most at risk, and explore meaningful ways to take action within their own communities. Together, we can help build safer and more informed communities.

Speaker Bio: Stacy Schaffer is the Founder and Executive Director of 31:8 Project, an organization that works to prevent and raise awareness on human trafficking. She has based her work in advocacy on the ideal that no one person can do everything, but everyone can do something. Stacy is the coordinator for the Demand Reduction Program and an adjunct professor at the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. She graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Hamline University in St. Paul, MN. Prior, she received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Behavioral Sciences from the University of Mary. Stacy currently serves as a board member of the North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations, board member of CHI St. Alexius Health, committee member of the North Dakota Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force and committee member of the North Dakota Governor's Prayer Breakfast. Stacy often credits her motivation, work ethic, and determination from growing up on a farm near a rural town in North Dakota.

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Brynhild Haugland: DefeND Cybersecurity Training

Program Description: In an increasingly connected world, cybersecurity is not just an IT concern—it's everyone's responsibility. This session is designed to educate attendees on essential cybersecurity awareness topics, with a practical focus on how to stay safe online at home, work, and in the community. Leveraging nationally recognized resources such as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM), DefendND, Niche Academy, and other educational platforms, this presentation provides actionable knowledge to help users recognize and respond to everyday cyber threats.

Speaker Bio: Tony Aukland - NDIT's Technology Outreach Director, began his career in the Operations center of Valley City State University, graduating with Mathematics Education, Computer Science, and Athletic Coaching degrees. In his nearly 30 years serving the state of North Dakota with multiple roles in, Desktop support (physical and virtual), Systems/Server Administrator, Education, and Cybersecurity. He was the first in the state to serve as cybersecurity analyst for the NDSLIC, North Dakota State and Local Intelligence Center, the state's Fusion Center. Tony is certified in SANS Security Awareness and GIAC Security Leadership, and many more. He and his wife, Donna, recently completed their MBA degrees with the University of Mary. On a personal note, Tony volunteers in the community and at his church, Cub Scouts, and is a member of the Legacy School Parent Committee. His hobbies include Tae Kwon Do, hunting, boating, and riding his motorcycle. He and his wife Donna reside in Bismarck and have 3 children.

Pioneer Room: Welcoming and Belonging: Libraries as a Catalyst for Newcomer Success

Program Description: Public libraries have been a place for immigrants since 1918. "Established in 1918, the American Library Association's Committee on Work with the Foreign Born published a series of guidebooks for adapting collections to meet the needs of immigrants, starting with *The Polish Immigrant and His Reading* in 1924, followed by German, Greek, and Italian volumes."[1] Today in North Dakota, libraries continue the work of supporting newcomers through collaborations at city and state levels to develop innovative programming.

Presenters Heather May, Community Integration Facilitator at the City of Bismarck and Shawna Marion, Community Engagement Coordinator at the Morton Mandan Public Library, share the benefits of community integration for newcomers with libraries as a key location for linking, learning, and leading. In addition, they share the value of adding multicultural perspectives to programming and explore how to expand community thinking about these advantages. Heather and Shawna will share examples of multiculturally friendly programming they are developing together and across the state and will include partnering and funding tips.

Speaker Bio: Shawna Marion is the Community Engagement Coordinator at the Morton Mandan Public Library (MMPL). Since the recent remodel and expansion project in 2022, it has been a goal to offer programming that allows patrons to

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[1] https://dp.la/exhibitions/history-us-public-libraries/immigrants-americanization

"Learn Out Loud." By providing opportunities to learn through doing, the interactions are more impactful and lasting, and that includes inviting multicultural events that foster understanding. MMPL prides itself as a community hub where ideas, identities, and opportunities can converge. With her 25+ years in education, she recognizes the importance of elevating the voices of a community to ensure all feel a sense of belonging. This has led Shawna in an active pursuit of forming inclusive partnerships that reflect the diverse community of Morton County.

Heather May is the Community Integration Facilitator for the City of Bismarck. In this role she focuses on improving refugees' access to and participation in community life. This includes promoting community awareness of refugee populations and reducing barriers to their success here. Heather realized her passion for English Language education during her 3 years of teaching English to university students in China through the U.S. Peace Corps. Since moving to North Dakota in 2016, she has continued to develop her teaching expertise with students at Fort Yates Public Middle School, the State Penitentiary, and the Bismarck Adult Learning Center. Her favorite article, which guides her teaching philosophy every day, is "Destroying the Teacher: the Need for Learner-Centered Teaching" by Alan C. McLean.

12:00 PM-1:30 PM LUNCH

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Brynhild Haugland: AI Tools You can Use Today

> **Program Description:** Explore the basic principles of artificial intelligence (AI), definitions, AI types, literacy, data collection, ethics, and resources. Learn about artificial intelligence and how it has evolved and tools that can be used in an educational setting.

> **Speaker Bio:** Katie Larson, M. Ed., is an Information Technology Specialist with NDIT|Edutech, where she has been able to marry her loves of technology and life-long learning and teaching. Prior to joining EduTech, Katie taught English and Theater to students in grades 6-12 and dual credit. In 2021, she was a national Career Compass Award finalist with e-Dynamic learning. Katie's interests include literature, cooking, weightlifting, and (of course) technology. She's thrilled she has found a role in life where she can share these passions, and she's excited to share her knowledge with you.

Pioneer Room: Libraries and the STEM Connection

Program Description: North Dakota's Gateway to Science shares STEM and literacy connections as well as collaboration ideas to spark new and exciting library programming with a hands-on STEM experience.

Speaker Bio: Alisha Kelim: Onsite Education Director for North Dakota's Gateway to Science. Alisha taught middle and high school English, earning a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, before moving to ND and becoming an elementary Library Media Specialist for Bismarck Public Schools. She is now in charge of onsite education including clubs, camps, onsite programming events, and gallery education connections at ND's Gateway to Science.

2:40 PM- 3:30 PM

Brynhild Haugland: Aiding Student Comprehension with AI tools

Program Description: Differentiating learning can be a time-consuming task, but we are now in the era of artificial intelligence! In Supporting Student Comprehension with AI Tools, learn how to use AI to augment your abilities and build comprehensive lessons to reach students through different learning methods.

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Pioneer Room: ScanDay Overview & Demonstration

Program Description: ScanDay is an event hosted with libraries across the state in which Digital Initiatives staff from the North Dakota State Library bring

scanning and photography equipment to a community and digitize items from the collections of residents and institutions. Part of this session will provide an overview of ScanDay, including its background, how it works, equipment used, importance, how to participate, and what the future holds (especially with artificial intelligence tools). The other part of the session will be a digitization demonstration. **Participants are invited to bring items from their library collections (photos, documents, etc.) and see how they are digitized and processed.**

Speaker Bio: Trevor Martinson is the Digital Initiatives Specialist at the North Dakota State Library and oversees the agency's digital collections and digitization. He also offers consultation, training, and resources on digital projects; manages the ScanDay program; and serves as Secretary of the Digital Horizons consortium. When not updating metadata, scanning, preserving digital files, exploring generative AI, or researching forgotten stories about the early Nonpartisan League era, Trevor (predictably) enjoys reading, genealogy, and spending time with his family.

3:40 PM - 4:30 PM

Brynhild Haugland: Strategic Planning

Program Description: Writing a strategic plan can seem daunting. State Librarian Mary Soucie will provide an overview of different strategy models, share tips and tricks to writing an effective strategic plan, and share the State Library's newly adopted strategic plan as well as plans from other libraries.

Speaker Bio: Mary Soucie has served as the State Librarian of North Dakota since 2014. She believes that libraries serve as community centers, connecting all the parts of the community that they serve. When she's not traveling for work, she loves to read, bake and be creative in the form of scrapbooking and papercrafting. Mary loves to spend time with her family- included the 4 footed members- and friends.

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