

## **Delivery Report for SCLS Board of Trustees February, 2025**

**Prepared by: Corey Baumann - Delivery Services Coordinator**

### **Waltco Shut Down:**

On Wednesday, February 5, I receive a call early in the day from our colleague at the IFLS Library System in Eau Claire to tell me that the Waltco Courier we both enlist for delivery service across the northern half of Wisconsin was abruptly shutting down by the end of the month (February 28).

Brenda Moser at Waltco called to inform me directly of this about 90 minutes later. She stated that a large portion of their other business had failed to compensate them for a sizeable amount and this rendered their service functionally incapable of further sustainability. They had concerns about employee job abandonment in the meantime and asked us to be aware of this.

This news came completely out of the blue and with an extremely short response time. There is no formal contract, only a relationship that involves regular monthly invoicing with 30 days' notice for changes both to and from SCLS. This is common with other couriers in the region and with Waltco's other customers.

For us, the news meant we were speeding up our plans to discontinue the service pickup in Madison and take on hauling materials ourselves up north to where we can make stops ourselves or have a courier shorten the trip and cut some cost. We planned to employ this as early as April 1.

For IFLS and Wisconsin Valley Library Service, it means losing their courier for local delivery. This is a substantial upheaval and a chaotic problem to solve in a short period of time.

SCLS immediately offered to assist in coordinating or filling in for anything we could realistically help with. Further, we quickly organized a weekly check-in for

all affected parties to compare strategies, solve issues, volunteer assistance, and collaborate. These were very helpful in sharing struggles and successes as we all had the opportunity to help shoulder the weight of the cessation of Waltco's operation.

Not surprisingly, the systems most directly affected jumped in quickly and have secured plans for service transition at least temporarily while they have long-range plans to confirm they make decisions for sustainability and stability.

For SCLS, we are finishing off plans to replace the services by adding materials and stops to 3 of our routes:

- Western: This intersystem route runs to Eau Claire and then down to La Crosse. We will add a stop in Menomonie for Alliance Courier to drop and carry forward materials to Minitex (in Minnesota) and UW Superior. This arrangement will save us approximately \$2500 for the remainder of the year for what we had expected to pay Waltco
- Portage County: This SCLS-based route will now depart system boundaries and stop 30-35 minutes north in Wausau. This is now a direct connection to Wisconsin Valley and UW Stevens Point (Marathon County) and will save us approximately \$8000 for the remainder of the year after accounting for increased time and fleet cost (miles and fuel).
- Columbia County: We will add a stop for Wisconsin Dells (that was previously on the Portage County route) to save some time for Portage County that will get longer. This will add some cost and time to the Columbia route, but is within tolerance for our operation.

We will need to do a more precise accounting of what we expect to save on this change.

Ultimately, while there is a burden taken on with this objective, we will see an enhancement of consistency, communication, and stability. All of those things were consistently a struggle with the previous relationships. Our staff will be taking on some of that burden each day and we will need to monitor how this affects our arrivals back from routes. We will tweak the plan in places if we see a need to relieve routes or shift burden over the next 3 months.

Our managerial staff took the news of this challenge and jumped in immediately to problem-solve. It was the most significant such challenge since moving to Pankratz and utilizing our newest supervisors. Our initial review of that kind of collaboration, prioritization, and coordination was outstanding. The team demonstrated incredible flexibility and creativity from their vast experiences at SCLS.

More will follow on how this proceeds, but all indications are that SCLS will see minimal negative impact here and actually observe some budget savings in the short-term that were a concern.