

December 8, 2008

Dear Members of the Montana Library Community,

I wanted to take a few minutes to update you on a couple issues of great importance to Montana Libraries.

First, please know that the Montana State Library Commission (Commission) at its December 3rd meeting took action to move forward with the proposed Information Access Montana statute changes during the 2009 Legislative Session. The Commission was encouraged by the support for these enabling legislative changes. The Commission is fully aware that if the proposed changes are passed into law additional conversations and process will be necessary before an administrative rules process is put in place that would change the interlibrary loan reimbursement program and repurpose the interlibrary loan reimbursement funds. For details on the legislative survey results please see the Commission's December 3rd meeting materials at: http://www.msl.mt.gov/About_MSL/commission/mtgmaterials.asp.

Second, I wanted to share the good news that the last day before the Governor's executive budget was finalized, the Governor recommended one time only monies in the amount of \$400,000 for the next biennium for the State Library from the Coal Severance Tax monies. We will be able to use these monies to fund the Library Courier/Delivery Service Pilot Project which was one of our original one time only money requests early in the Executive Planning Process(EPP). A library courier service as defined by the Montana State Library Fulfillment Taskforce is "a dependable, reliable and predictable delivery service that, with a desired level of frequency and security, physically moves library materials from one library to another or from a library to a library patron." Montana's library patrons now utilize the Internet to search library catalogs across the state, the region and the world. Many Montana libraries are further enhancing the patron experience by making their collections available to users across the state by a simple "get it" option in their library catalogs. As a result, the movement of interlibrary library loan items between libraries has increased significantly in the last decade. The pilot would establish regional library drop sites that would contract with an established commercial courier service for pickup and delivery. Libraries would utilize their regional drop site for movement of their requested materials. Courier costs would be based on frequency of delivery. Additionally, delivery by mail must remain an option for rural, remote libraries that cannot get their materials to a drop site. In order to develop a truly statewide delivery service pilot, the cost for mail service also needs to be included.

Additionally the Governor's Budget Office also recommended one time only monies totaling \$25,000 to help us upgrade our training lab computers.

Of course we are a long ways from celebration of any of these items. We need to successfully convince the Legislature that the statute changes, the one time only pilot project, and the training lab upgrades are critical and beneficial to all Montanans as they use Montana's library resources. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments at this time.

Thank you for all you do to help provide all Montanans with the best possible library services.

Sincerely,
Darlene Staffeldt, Your State Librarian