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Montana Talking Book Library Awards \$8,000 in Scholarships

(HELENA) --- The Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL), a division of the Montana State Library that serves blind and low-vision library patrons, is pleased to announce awards of eight \$1,000 scholarships to MTBL patrons to attend the annual Summer Orientation Program (SOP). The SOP, which is sponsored by the Montana Association for the Blind, is being held in Helena on the campus of Carroll College from June 15 – July 11, 2009.

The Montana State Library (MSL) Commission voted to approve use of funds from the MTBL Trust, which is funded by gifts from private individuals. All requests for use of trust funds must be approved by the MSL Commission.

“We at the State Library are proud of our service to Montana’s blind and low vision residents,” said Darlene Staffeldt, Montana State Librarian. “Our ability to offer these scholarships is an extension of our service to our library patrons so that they may more fully embrace all that life has to offer.”

To be considered for the MTBL \$1,000 scholarships, applicants must be:

- 1) an established patron of MTBL and active for at least six months on the service;
- 2) in good standing as a MTBL patron, meaning that they take care of the equipment and have no overdue materials;
- 3) a first-time attendee at the Summer Orientation Program.

The Summer Orientation Program is an adjustment and training program designed to help people with failing eyesight acquire the skills and attitudes that will enable them to remain independent and self-reliant. Participants learn different and safer techniques in mobility, in coping with personal daily living activities, in cooking and performing household tasks, and in getting more enjoyment out of living.

“We are delighted to be able to provide eight of our patrons with a scholarship to attend this important program,” said Christie O. Briggs, Regional Librarian with MTBL. “Losing your vision is a huge adjustment for people and the Summer Orientation Program provides an overview that helps our patrons manage this loss successfully.”

The 2009 Montana Talking Book Library (SOP) recipients are:

- 1) Carole Borgen of Kalispell
- 2) Pansy Callantine of Townsend
- 3) Wilma Carlson of Lewistown
- 4) Eleanor Casey of Helena
- 5) Evelyn Grant of Columbia Falls
- 6) James Guslander of Lewistown
- 7) David House from Missoula
- 8) Wanda Moffett from Missoula.

The Montana Talking Book Library, a program of the Montana State Library, offers alternative reading materials for nearly 3,000 Montana citizens who have visual, physical, or reading challenges that prevent them from reading standard print. All materials are provided to patrons free of charge. MTBL's collection consists of more than 68,000 recorded book titles, 80 magazines, and 300 descriptive videos.

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>. For more information, contact Sara Groves, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, at (406) 444-5357 or via e-mail at: sgroves@mt.gov.