



PO Box 201800 1515 East 6th Avenue Helena, MT 59620 (406) 444-3115

Memo

To: Bob Cooper, Director
Statewide Library Resources

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Donci Bardash, Project Director
Broadband Technology
Opportunities Program (BTOP)

From: Bob Cooper, Director
Statewide Library Resources

Date: November 16, 2010

Re: MSL Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) Public Computing
Center Grant (PCC) Update

I. Significant Accomplishments

- a. **Staff Hired-** Sarah Elkins, BTOP Compliance Office, reported to work on October 25, 2010. Donci Bardash, BTOP Project Manager, reported to work on November 8, 2010. Sarah and Donci continue their orientation of acquainting themselves with grant requirements and participant library needs. Bob Cooper and Kris Schmitz have begun transitioning responsibility and authority as appropriate to BTOP staff.
- b. **Mission Statement-** The Montana BTOP Project will improve Internet access for Montana communities by expanding technology related capabilities at public libraries across the state, so that Montanans will be able to recognize and use opportunities and resources available to them on the Internet. As resources to public libraries in Montana, Montana BTOP staff aims to provide accurate, timely guidance and direction on implementation and compliance to assist libraries in achieving the goals of the project without undue burden to library staff.
- c. **Vision Statement-** By 2013, communities across the State of Montana will have improved Internet access at public libraries and the knowledge to use Internet-based resources more efficiently and effectively. A more diverse population and greater number of Montanans will be able to surf the web at higher speeds to access employment opportunities, education, public assistance, social networking,

and many other applications of this technology free of charge. Libraries will have the tools to sustain their patrons' free access to the Internet through expanded partnerships, E-rate assistance, and communication resources that build recognition and understanding of the value of these services.

- d. BTOP Post-award Workshop-** Kris Schmitz and Suzanne Reymer attended the BTOP Recipient Post-award Workshop sponsored by the US Department of Commerce from November 9-10, 2010. Grant management tips and guidance from the workshop were shared with MSL BTOP staff.
- e. BTOP Website-** Working in conjunction with MSL Web Development staff, a BTOP Website is being constructed that is compliant with the transparency requirements of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). This site will be beta-tested and live in early December. The URL will be distributed to the Commission once it is live.
- f. Confirmation of Library Needs-** Sarah Elkins has been working with our 42 participating libraries to confirm their hardware, software, furniture, broadband, and renovation needs. It is expected that these changes will be incorporated into the project implementation plan in late November.

II. Planned Activities

- a. Contracts and Agreements-** The MSL BTOP team anticipates circulating the first round of participating library agreements during the week of December 6, 2010. Agreements will be executed in phases of priority and level of complexity. Library partners receiving hardware, software and furniture will be in the earlier phases. Partners receiving support for renovation projects and staffing will follow. We will host conference calls and/or GoToMeeting orientations to walk-through the agreements and reporting requirements. The mobile computer lab is unique and will be rolled-out separately.
- b. Benchmarks and Milestones-** The MSL BTOP team will be reviewing and resubmitting our benchmarks in December to National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) staff based on guidance received at the federal workshop, as well as change requests from participating Montana libraries.
- c. Communication-** By the end of the year, the MSL BTOP team will establish an Internet presence to keep the public informed, as well as a blog presence to provide on-going project-specific information to participating libraries. The provision of regular GoToMeetings and conference calls with participating libraries to highlight accomplishments and trouble-shooting will be explored.
- d. E-rate Specialist-** We anticipate hiring or contracting with an E-rate specialist in late December or early January. It has become clear that we need dedicated attention to E-rate soon and how it interfaces with many components of the BTOP grant.