



*Connecting The Blind With Information*

January 12, 2011

Christie Briggs  
Montana State Library  
Talking Books Regional Librarian/Supervisor  
P.O. Box 201800  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Christie:

As you know, for individuals who suffer from the loss of their vision, the ability to access their home-town newspaper in audio format is critically important in maintaining their sense of independence and inclusion in society. This is especially true since these individuals must rely on others for transportation, and often can become isolated.

Aside from producing our daily broadcasts, coordination of over seventy volunteer readers, filling requests for receivers and trying to raise money and community awareness, it has been necessary for us to increase the options for our listeners regarding the technology that is used for them to receive our broadcasts.

As you know, the one-time money that we received was for a website, updates to our radio signal equipment, receivers, and exploration of technologies to expand the capabilities of our service. I have been very busy with our new website, which includes live streaming of our broadcasts, as well as the ability to take applications and donations over the internet. Recently, I also finalized an agreement with Montana PBS to designate a special channel for MAIN to put our broadcasts on digital television audio in Montana! The streaming and the television channel are very generous donations which I have secured from Montana Public Radio and Montana Public Television. The use of these technologies for delivering our broadcasts is providing wonderful new options for our listeners. We know that the streaming is being utilized, and will be widely used as we can get internet radio receivers to our listeners, since the majority of them do not actually use computers. Many individuals who do not get good radio reception are also anxiously awaiting the implementation of the DTV audio, which will be available soon.

Along with these new developments, we have been working on Board expansion around the state, as well as developing another fundraising event and expanded grant writing opportunities. With a staff of one full time and one part time person, it is easy to see that we have made great progress with limited resources. However, the challenges in this economy are numerous and we must support the implementation of these new methods of

delivering our broadcasts. This is critical, since we are the only resource in the State where all daily and over twenty weekly and semi-weekly newspapers are available in audio format. I am requesting that the State Library Commission support the efforts of MAIN to maintain this high quality audio newspaper service for blind and low vision patrons by supporting us in the amount of \$20,000.00 for 2011.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Cotnoir, Executive Director