Memo

To: Kris Schmitz,   **To:**   Montana State Library Commission
           Central Services Manager

From: Donci Bardash, Project Director **From:** Kris Schmitz, Central Services Manager
           Broadband Technology
           Opportunities Program (BTOP)

Date: May 18, 2011

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

I.   Significant Accomplishments

a. **Hardware:** All hardwsare has been delivered to participating libraries, including: 182 Dell Optiplex Desktops, 148 Dell Latitude Laptops, 11 HP Touchsmart All-in-One Computers, 3 iMacs, 46 Replacement Monitors, 33 Printers, 153 Headsets, 221 Privacy screens, 5 wireless cards, 8 1GB Network Switches, 6 Wireless Access Points, and 29 children's computers, pre-loaded with popular learning software for ages 3-12. The children's computers are the same Dell Optiplex model, giving libraries the ability to re-purpose them as local needs change after the grant term.

b. **Specialized Software and Peripherals :** MSL purchased and delivered 23 adjustable-height ADA-compliant desks, 43 Low-dexterity/Low-vision packages (including low-vision back on yellow keyboards, MonoMouse magnifiers, ZoomText software, and low-dexterity Mice), and 9 Blind Patron packages (including MAGic Speech-to-Text software and JAWS blind patron software).

c. **Network Upgrades:** MSL upgraded network equipment at 14 libraries, including adding wireless to one local library. Morrison-Maierle and Will's Office

World assisted with installation at 5 locations. We have been under-budget in this area and are able to shift the funds to additional hardware and software such a public computer management systems (Envisionware, PCReservation).

d. **Furniture:** Libraries received desks, chairs, laptop carts, classroom tables, and other furniture items worth over $60,000 for use in their public computer centers.

e. **Broadband & E-rate:** MSL polled participating libraries regarding their network design, current broadband services, E-rate status, and anticipated upgrade needs. The survey results will be posted on the MSL BTOP website by the end of May. This data provides the information needed to work through possible E-rate and federal BTOP grant compliance issues, as they relate to MSL providing financial assistance to libraries for broadband monthly recurring costs. At this time, 21 libraries seek grant assistance to upgrade broadband services.

f. **E-rate:** MSL, with assistance from the state procurement office, completed the RFP process for E-rate consulting services. Proposals were scored, and we are now entering into contract negotiations with E-rate Elite.

g. **BTOP Technology Trainer:** BTOP is hiring! We have screened and interviewed candidate for the BTOP Technology Trainer Position. The trainer will work to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain local library public computer centers. This includes, providing one-on-one, group, and remote training on a variety of topics ranging from basic trouble-shooting, to using the hardware and software provided in the grant, to the basics of broadband. The trainer will also assist BTOP partners in creating content to train librarians on web-based resources provided by our partners. The trainer will manage MSL's WebJunction account, and assist libraries with accessing valuable webinars and continuing education.

h. **Local Library Staffing:** MSL has provided funding to five libraries to hire technology librarians. In some cases, this has allowed the libraries to expand hours for their public computer centers (PCC). The local staff will manage PCCs and provide training to patrons on technology-related issues.

i. **Mobile Public Computer Center:** Missoula has purchased a book mobile and begun converting it to a mobile computer center. The van is scheduled to be operational this summer, staffed by a driver and operator.

II. Planned Activities

a. **Patron Survey:** MSL has designed a patron survey to determine how library PCCs in Montana are used by the public, and how we can better accommodate the public needs. The survey is currently accessible through the MSL website. BTOP will provide guidance to local libraries on adding a pop-up window to their public computers, giving patrons the option to complete the survey at the end of each session. This information will assist with our outreach campaign, as well as identify additional resources participating libraries may need.

b. **Outreach Campaign:** We will be posting an RFP for marketing and outreach services in May. The 18-month outreach campaign will include print (such as bookmarks, posters, and table-toppers), newspaper, radio, and television public service announcements. We will also explore the possibility of using social media to reach patrons with mobile devices, but perhaps without access to a computer or broadband at home. In addition to BTOP staff and the MSL marketing coordinator, MSL is currently recruiting volunteers from participating libraries and partners to be members of the BTOP Outreach Committee. The committee will advise the marketing firm and pre-approve all materials before publication. We anticipate launching the campaign in late summer.

c. **Accessibility Upgrades:** As the weather has improved, four locations are currently beginning upgrades at their facilities to improve access. For example, the Eureka Branch of The Lincoln County Library is converting a restroom to be ADA-compliant.

d. **Partners:** MSL has scheduled a partner summit for June 2nd to kick-off co-outreach and training efforts. All partnerships will be formalized through Memoranda of Understanding.

e. **Performance Measures:** MSL continues to track performance measures regarding the number of patrons using PCCs, wait times, and training hours. As most of the equipment was delivered and installed within the last month, we anticipate seeing significant progress over the next quarter.

f. **Broadband Upgrades:** We anticipate upgrading broadband speeds at 23 libraries by August 31, 2011. Our goal is to have an average marketed download speed of 21mbsp among the 43 participating libraries, though a handful are learning that significant upgrades are available from their ISP at little or no additional costs.

g. **E-rate:** The first task before the contractor will be to advise on E-rate compliance issues related to MSL paying a portion of some libraries' monthly broadband bills. During the previous Request for Information process, this issue was identified as a concern by ISPs. 18 of the 21 libraries requesting grant assistance for broadband currently participate in E-rate or plan to apply with assistance from BTOP. The E-rate consultant will also advise on "service substitutions", E-rate applications, and how to get the most out of E-rate. We expect services to begin later this month.