

**Marketing and Public Relations**  
**Prepared by Sara Groves**  
**For August 2011 Commission Meeting**

**Goal One – Content** - *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

**Ready 2 Read** – The new bins are being distributed to libraries. Libraries must have completed a survey, completed two trainings in early childhood, and completed a form outlining the trainings they have completed and their plans for a “Books and Babies” program. Our goal is to distribute 20 new bins to libraries around the state; this will mean that 65 libraries in Montana are providing early childhood services to their very youngest patrons.

The Montana State Library was selected to receive \$35,000 from the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation. This money will be used to support projects that support our long-term vision of the program and how we will continue to grow it.

Specifically, \$22,500 will be used to fund training for 30 librarians. I have been working on developing this training since this money was awarded in mid-June. The event, which we’re calling the Ready 2 Read Rendezvous, will be held October 7, 8, and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Bozeman, MT. All trainings will be held at the Bozeman Public Library. National trainers and experts are being brought in to speak on Every Child Ready to Read, early learning and literacy, play spaces in libraries, becoming a family-friendly library, Mind in the Making, Growing Up Wild, advocacy, and MORE! To be selected to attend, libraries will have to already be a Ready 2 Read library, meaning that their library has received a bin of books for its permanent collection, staff have attended at least two prior trainings on early childhood development, and they hold a regularly-scheduled infant/toddler program.

The additional \$12,500 will be used to support the Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunk program that we have developed in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks. This money will be used to develop and distribute 24 new trunks. Eleven of these trunks will be specific to Montana’s tribes as recognized through the Office of Public Instruction and will include materials that represent the cultures and belief systems of those tribes. These trunks will be placed in a reservation’s tribal library for use in their community, but will also be shared among libraries in the state via interlibrary loan. I will work closely with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Office of Public Instruction to develop these trunks.

The remaining 13 trunks will be developed around themes in the existing Growing Up Wild curriculum and shared among libraries throughout the state.

We also were asked to submit an application with a quick turn-around time of less than a week to the Washington Foundation. I submitted an application for approximately \$10,000 and received the entire \$10,000! Funding from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation will be used to support new "Play and Learn Centers" in public libraries throughout Montana. The Play and Learn Centers will offer high-quality toys and hands-on interactive tools with the goal of expanding the traditional role of children's services and increasing the capacity of libraries to recognize and realize their full potential as community hubs for healthy child and family development, parent and community involvement and lifelong learning beginning at birth. We are currently experimenting with a model "Play and Learn Center" in Bozeman through a grant received from the Friends of the Bozeman Public Library. The model center will be on display for the Fall Workshop with testing being done for a few months before we move forward with spending the Washington Foundation money to supply libraries around the state with their own Play and Learn Centers.

It is very important to note that BOTH foundations commented that part of their decision was based on MSL's financial support of the project, providing some evidence of the value of the financial commitment we've made in this statewide project.

Additionally, after conducting a lengthy survey of libraries who have been official Ready 2 Read libraries for a year, I have begun work on a series of new brochures that are designed for parents and caregivers with limited literacy skills themselves. This was identified as a top need by participating libraries. I have written all of the materials and am working with a designer to get everything produced. I hope to have these available by Fall Workshop, but it is possible that they will not be printed until our Ready 2 Read Rendezvous in Bozeman.

Late last year, MontanaPBS approached me about a potential partnership between our two organizations to support early learning efforts. The first result of that partnership is the distribution of something called "Library Corners," which include an 8X12 foot colorful rug and two approximately two feet by eight feet banners featuring favorite PBS Kids characters. Libraries will also receive approximately 50 books to add to their children's collections. I received a windfall of applications from libraries around the state and three were selected: Ronan Public Library, Roundup Public Library, and the Bitterroot Public Library.

In addition to the Library Corners, Ronan Public Library and the Bitterroot Public Library are also hosting "Super Why Reading Camps", which are early literacy camps for preschoolers. These five-day intensive camps will be held in early August and are geared to help low-income preschoolers develop some of the lifelong literacy skills they may be lacking. Using a multi-media approach with a focus on the show "Super Why", these camps have resulted in a 95% increase in students' abilities to identify letters and sounds at the end of the one-week timeframe! MontanaPBS wants to host these camps in libraries around the state.

**Ready 2 Read Goes Wild!** – The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP), in partnership with the Montana State Library (MSL) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Head Start division received a small grant from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council for Environmental Education to help support the Read 2 Read Goes Wild! program. As part of this grant, trainings have taken place at Fort Peck, Fort Belknap, and Lame Deer. An additional training will take place in Ronan on August 12. The Ronan Public Library, Salish-Kootenai College Library, and the North Lake County Public Library have been asked to participate and would like to help.

**Montana Library Day** – Last year we hosted our first ever Montana Library Day, a promotional event during which we collected stats from participating libraries and used it to emphasize the value of libraries. We created a huge number of materials, including web banners, posters, bookmarks, table toppers, press releases, and more. Libraries were encouraged to collect data, photos, and patron surveys. From the information that libraries submitted electronically, we (I should say Stacy) set up the information and photos so that libraries could then download a series of customized brochures that helped tell their libraries stories to funders, community members, etc. about how that particular library was supporting the community.

So, we're doing it again this year. All marketing materials have been updated and an announcement has been sent out on Wired to encourage all libraries to participate on September 14, 2011.

**BTOP** – I got to sit on the marketing committee for BTOP, which meant that I got to spend A LOT of time reviewing applications from various advertising agencies as part of the RFP process. But it was a lot of fun and a very interesting process and I feel very strongly that we will have a great statewide marketing campaign with the agency that was selected. I am looking forward to working with the marketing committee in the development of the campaign. I also attended the BTOP Partner Update, which was a very useful exercise.

**Mymontanalibrary** – Tracy Cook and I are redesigning the mymontanalibrary.org site. We have begun to develop a collection development policy that will guide us in this development. We are taking off all of the stuff that needs IP authentication and will work to develop the site so that it is Montana specific with the goal of providing Montanans with access to unique and free resources about Montana's history, culture, economy, government, literature, and geography. There's nothing else like that out there so we think it will truly be patrons' Montana library.

**Facebook** – We've launched the official Montana State Library Facebook page. We're up to 77 likes and it's proving to be another effective form of communication with librarians and others who are interested in our services.