

State Librarian's Report April & May 2013

Prepared for the June 12, 2013 Commission meeting
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Goal Four – Consultation and Leadership:

The Montana Library Association (MLA) annual conference continues to be a key venue for the State Library to communicate, educate and collaborate with our colleagues from around the State. In addition to hosting the State Library Commission meeting and facilitating the Conversations with the Commission session, I also shared a State Library report as part of the conference vendor talks and the MLA membership meeting. Additionally, I participated in a panel at the Public Librarians Interest Group regarding last year's Attorney General's opinion on library board funding authority, A.G. Opinion 54, NO. 7. The panel was offered as part of MLA's continuing effort to educate its membership about the opinion. Participating on the panel with me were attorney Jim Scheier and MLA Government Affairs representative Judy Hart. The panel shared an overview of the history of the laws in question and steps taken last year by both the State Library and MLA to evaluate the impact and implications of the opinion.

Another highlight of the spring season is the spring federation meetings. In addition to attending the South Central Federation meeting in March, I virtually attended the Golden Plains Federation meeting (although network access eventually kept me from participating) and I attended the Tamarack Federation retreat in Big Fork. I was very pleased to see that the Tamarack Federation invited Arni Fishbaugh, Executive Director of the Arts Council, to conduct a session similar to the one she offered to the Commission last December. Her message of relationship building and articulating public value are cornerstones of library service.

Goal Five – Collaboration: MSL promotes partnerships and encourages collaboration among its users.

In late April Sarah McHugh and I were invited to attend the Montana Academic Library Symposium. This is the first time non-academic librarians have been invited to participate in this event and we were very pleased to do so. The focus of this year's symposium was on collaboration. John Helmer and Jodi Allison-Bunnell from Orbis Cascade were key note speakers and offered their views of the benefits and challenges

for collaboration. I was invited to participate on a panel with the new library deans from MSU, Kenning Arlitsch, and UM, Shali Zhang. We were asked to share our visions for statewide collaboration. I was very pleased to hear that both deans are committed to statewide library collaboration and we explored some “low hanging fruit,” including their use of Discover It!, that might lay the ground work for further collaboration.

In early May, as the liaison from the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, I attended the annual Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition conference in Washington, DC. Much of the conference focused on increasing broadband adoption and the use of gigabit broadband. I was reminded how far behind Montana is when it comes to broadband deployment. This is an important subject as it relates to Montana libraries’ ability to continue to serve as digital literacy centers for Montana communities as well as overall economic development in the state. After learning more about models in other states I believe broadband deployment is a concern that needs to be addressed at the executive level and I have had initial discussions with the State CIO, Ron Baldwin and Governor’s Chief of Staff, Tim Burton about my concerns.

The Office of Public Instruction launched their second annual Summer Six Reading Challenge to encourage children to read at least six books over the summer in order to retain reading skills and avoid the “summer slide.” I was honored to attend the kickoff event at the Lincoln School in Helena with Superintendent of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau and Montana First Lady, Lisa Bullock. I encouraged the classes of youngsters to get library cards and to visit their local public libraries to help them achieve their summer reading goals.

Goal Six – Sustainable Success: MSL is efficient and effective (measured against partner and patron outcomes) and is engaged in fulfilling its mission.

On May 16 I had my regular meeting with Governor’s Chief of Staff, Tim Burton. We discussed the outcome of the Legislative session, the state pay plan, our early literacy efforts and my interest in a focus on broadband deployment. Tim said that in the next few months the Governor will conduct agency reviews and will begin to develop administrative priorities.

The week of June 13 staff hosted Timothy Owens, our state program coordinator from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). It is the goal of IMLS to visit each state every five years. During his visit Timothy reviewed our policies and procedures that govern how we manage our LSTA awards, he met with staff that manage LSTA projects, he met with Kris Schmitz to review the financial management of our federal

funds, he reviewed with me our progress on our five-year plan, he attended a Network Advisory Council meeting and the Pathfinder Federation spring meeting, he met Commissioners Bartow, Miller and Hinch and he toured several libraries to learn more about their use of LSTA-funded services. It was a very fruitful week for him as it gave him firsthand knowledge of many of the programs and priorities for Montana libraries. As a follow-up to his visit he will send us a formal letter with suggestions on how we may better manage our LSTA funds.

We are currently negotiating the terms of the FY'14/15 contract for the operation of the Montana Natural Heritage Program with the University of Montana. The new contract will represent the fifth biennial contract with the University for the operation of this program. The amount of the contract remains \$878,226. This amount has remained the same since the FY10-11 biennium. Additionally, the contract includes \$80,106 in Montana Land Information Act (MLIA) funds for on-going development of the Wetlands and Land Cover themes of the Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure. These funds were previously approved in the FY'14 Land Plan.

Staff is busy planning for and/or administering changes as a result of the outcomes of the 2013 Legislative Session:

The Montana State Library has been doing much of the work already required to administer the Montana Land Information Act since September 2011. Beginning July 1 Kris Schmitz will administer the MLIA account which was previously administered by the Department of Administration.

The additional \$13,000 in funding for statewide databases will give us a little more cushion to negotiate contracts with our vendors.

As of this writing, the Water Information System Manager position is currently posted for recruitment. Staff hopes to have this position filled by early July. Objectives for this two year position have already been developed so the person will need to hit the ground running in order to demonstrate the value of the position for on-going funding.

The Talking Book Library plans to contract with Westaff to retain their current temporary employee who will work on their digital conversion during FY '14. This contract will commence July 1.

Library Information Services staff is currently renewing their contract with the Internet Archive for ongoing digitization services. This contract includes an additional \$15,000

over the previous contract with an option to spend up to an additional \$25,000 depending on how quickly digitization of state publications proceeds.

Staff is preparing a fact sheet that will accompany state aid checks to public libraries to educate library staff and trustees about the increase in state aid, their legal rights as they pertain to the state funding and the importance of documenting how the funds are used. Staff will also prepare an online reporting tool that libraries can use to record this information. This information will then be used to secure continued funding in the future.

As of this writing we continue to await a decision regarding the allocation of the funds appropriated for state employee pay raises.

The property tax reappraisal bill that would have included funding for oblique imagery was tabled in committee. Similarly, the bill to conduct an interim study on the value of Light Detection and Ranging (LiDar) or elevation data did not make it through the legislative process.

Staff will monitor a number of the interim studies approved by the Legislative Council including studies of the state play plan system and electronic records management.