Montana Library Association April 9, 2015 Brainstorm Discussion with the Montana State Library Commission

Objective: Surface stakeholder insights on priorities that advance the MSLC mission and support Montanan libraries.

Foundation: Montana State Library Commission FY15 Work Plan: Vision, Mission, Values, Goals

Inspiration: Discussion to be informed by Aspen Institute report, Rising to the Challenge: Re-envisioning Public Libraries.

These notes summarize insights from attendees. They do not represent vetted ideas or state library priorities.

1. Agenda

1. Introductions

2. General impressions of Aspen Institute libraries report: Rising to the Challenge

3. Insights and collective wisdom on community needs

4. What are 21st Century library services?

5. Top priority investments – your wish for the future of Montana libraries

6. What can we let go of? Initial ideas on possible areas to divest or cut back

7. Summary and Next Steps

2. General impressions from the Aspen Report

What resonates?

A grander scale for library cooperation

- Report poses a grander scale for library cooperation
- Communities are built on networks not neighborhoods
- The mindset is shifting from book repository to community center; we need others to understand and see this shift – including voters and funders

- I was happy that the report addressed small and rural libraries, for example mentioning that access to broadband and e-books is even more challenging for small and rural libraries and calling them out in the action steps
- Curating information from communities and sharing it with the world. The report flips model for curating 180 degrees.

It was overwhelming. How will we do all that?

Were there gaps?

- Not much reference to children and early learning
- Not much on staff training and support
- No reference to support for training
- Not much about funding; this all takes money

3. Community Needs – Insights and Collective Wisdom

Montanans need:

There is a need to help people in communities better define their community values, goals and hopes – moving from discussions about books and DVDs to discussions about what we want for our communities.

- Places for kids in small communities – other than the streets and jails…
- Inclusive places for families and for people who are currently homeless
- Agents for economic opportunity
- There is a disconnect between government leaders/elected officials and their constituents
- There is no real glue that links community initiatives together
- Services that address mental health population shifts including homelessness, interactions with jails
- Access to social services information and professionals
- Public information – good stuff like bike trails
- Help keeping up with change; we need to foster "geeks"
- Greater online access to meet changing patron needs for example moving from DVDs to streaming
- Computer access and broadband access – across the whole state of Montana
- Statewide literacy
- Networking - connecting people to resources
- Community values – connecting community members so that they can together define their goals and hopes
- How can the library help the community meet basic human needs

Montana libraries need:

- Help with marketing – from community assessments to outreach
- More outreach to bring people into library, to inform them about our services
- Publicity, helping getting information out about programs
- Staff training
- Ways to reach underserved communities including people who are too far away, too busy, kids who can't get to the library, people who are underprivileged, and those who are unaware of library services.

Libraries need to ENGAGE in community. More importantly, librarians need to EMBED themselves in community organizations and understand their needs and opportunities.

4. Library Responses – What are 21st Century Library Services?

Serving underserved communities

- A kiosk with social services information – information on transportation, medical and mental health, homeless services, social services
- Visiting mental health professionals with "office hours" @ the library
- Bring more services out to people where they are including jails and hospitals
- Finding partners to help meet community needs > Multiplier of force
- Create senior story times

Platform for civic engagement

- Library as a community organizer – Encouraging people to come together, keep an open mind, and listen to others
- More relationships with community networks
- Bring politicians and people together
- Provide neutral space for meetings
- Enable conversations and promote community values
- Start and facilitate conversations about community needs and community values – going beyond conversations about books and DVDs to open conversations about what we want for our community

Broadband and Technology

- Enlarge the boundaries of local and global collaboration
- Bring the world to users, but also bring the voice of local users to the world

- Foster "geeks" to keep up with change
- Improve broadband – Collaborate with others to get it done. We have to solve this
- How do we fund broadband and make it more accessible? Local libraries may have to make sacrifices, reworking budgets or cutting materials budgets to fund broadband

Improve broadband. We have to solve this.

Programming

- Connect people to community resources (not just library resources) … social work, nonprofits, job services
- Programs should be in-house and online
- Curate, collect, create and publish
- Community collaborations: bike helmets, car seats, etc.

Outreach and Engagement

- Communications staff, bookmobiles, ways to get out
- Go unusual places, take off the glasses and the bun like the zombie libraries marching in town parade
- Statewide outreach (conducted by MSL)
- Leverage partnerships to tap new audiences and take advantages of new sources of funding and resources
- Go beyond walls of the library but keep libraries as "place to be"
- Pull in others to support community services such as job services
- Embrace new platforms, such as social networking tools

5. A Wish for the Future – Possible 2015/2016 MSL Priority

Broadband

- Broadband
- More broadband
- Better, cheaper broadband access
- Broadband – Keep trying
- Some foundation could come in and pay for good internet service for every library

Programs and Marketing

Take a step beyond information about services to created shared experiences.

- Broad outreach to children and adults in remote areas.

- Re-envision the Networking Task Force – it seems old school and deadly. Call it something visionary. Make it visionary.
- Renew trustee training program at state library level
- New 21st Century building – and the money to pay for it
- Actual investment in early literacy
- State library position for early literacy
- Availability: open more hours (currently open only 25 hours per week)

Collaboration and Shared Services

- I wish for free access to as many resources as possible by sharing with other libraries
- Shared story-telling (curation) online platform – most likely hosted nationally or internationally
- Improved collaboration among library institutions and also partnerships with non-traditional (overlooked) communities
- Make things like the Montana Shared Catalogue the way it is – statewide library cohesion
- More resource sharing
- Technology platforms need to work together easily for the public and library staff
- Funding to really grow the Montana Memory Project into a platform to curate community stories as well as history of Montana
- Platform for staff and patrons to share relevant information

Civic Engagement and Community Convening

- Network beyond the library into the community's needs – engagements within broad community – integration within community needs
- Change perspective about outreach – change it to community engagement
- More library partnerships with community
- Getting community stakeholders in a room to discuss needs. (Library is included.)
- Increase presence in community through networking and outreach to secure position as essential service
- Better communication between libraries and public/community about what is offered and what the community wants/needs

Change perspective about outreach – change it to community engagement.

Changing mindsets

- An enlighten legislature
- More champions of libraries
- I wish that all community members/patrons found value for themselves through the library
- Libraries are considered the primary go-to partners for collaboration in their communities
- More permanent legislative funding for libraries

- Libraries = to a larger extent Community Anchors
- Unconditional community and legislative support
- More internal and external collaboration
- I wish the people in the community would view the library as indispensable – "the place to be!"
- That it didn't take years for a county commission (for example) to realize the importance of libraries
- Convincing county/city of the importance of and necessity of the library. Library is not a luxury
- Adequate funding so all services continue or increase

6. Secret Ballot – What could we consider letting go of?

Databases

- Underutilization of databases
- Databased that aren't used as much – data-driven decision
- Reference databases – usage does not justify expense
- Take a hard look at some of the databases
- Reference databases

Program Services Focus

- Montana Library to go
- Tech petting zoo
- Enterprise interface – ack!
- There is an overwhelming amount of services available. Simplify and figure out what is frequently used vs. what is underused; get rid of things that aren't used (at the state level)
- Higher level of training programs
- Fewer consultants
- We can let go of providing so much free good

Approach and Funding Structure

- Risk aversion
- Ideas of library boundaries
- Less local and more regional/statewide and national thinking
- Federations use money resource sharing
- Federation monies
- Expecting all state programs to work for small libraries
- Services not relevant to library's mission or a community's needs

- We are not departmentalized as a staff. We can all provide one-stop service

7. Note

These notes represent comments from an April 9, 2015 open meeting at the Montana Library Association that included members of the Montana State Library Commission, Montana State Library, library leaders from across the state, trustees, and board members. The meeting had over 40 participants who shared ideas, concerns and insights. Comments from participants reflect the sense of their input though not all are recorded verbatim. The grouping of comments by category in sections 4, 5 and 6 is provided by the note-taker and is not intended to limit or shape the scope of comments provided.

These notes do not represent vetted ideas or state library priorities.

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Montana State Library Commission

Vision: Develop and deliver 21st Century library resources and information services.

Mission: The Montana State Library is committed to strengthening library and information services for all Montanan's through leadership, advocacy, and service.

Values:

- An educated and inquisitive citizenry.
- Library services that are responsive to users' needs.
- Free government information that is easily accessible and widely distributed.
- Patron privacy.
- Equitable access to all library resources and services.
- Competent and professional staff.
- Open, direct, and timely communication.
- Economic development of Montana and Montanans.

Role:

The role of the State Library Commission is to set forth policies and funding priorities that empower the State Library to meets its mission and statutory obligations and to advocate for the State Library and the Montana library and information communities whenever possible.

Goals:

1. **Content:** MSL acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana Library users.
2. **Access:** MSL provides libraries, agencies, and its partners and patrons with convenient, high quality, and cost-effective access to library content and services.
3. **Training:** MSL provides appropriate trainings and training resources so that the best use can be made of the resources offered.
4. **Consultation and Leadership:** MSL provides consultation and leadership to enable users to set and reach their goals.
5. **Collaboration:** MSL promotes partnerships and encourages collaboration among its users.
6. **Sustainable Success:** MSL is efficient and effective (measured against partner and patron outcomes) and is engaged in fulfilling its mission.

Rising to the Challenge: Re-envisioning Public Libraries

Forward (IV)

The time has come for a new vision of public libraries in the United States. Communities need public libraries— more people are visiting them and using their services, materials and programs than ever before—but communities' needs continue to change…

The Public Library in the Digital Age (IX)

Libraries are essential to success and progress in the digital age.

The process of re-envisioning public libraries to maximize their impact reflects:

- Principles that have always been at the center of the public library's mission— equity, access, opportunity, openness and participation
- The library's capacity to drive opportunity and success in today's knowledge-based society
- An emerging model of networked libraries that promotes economies of scale and broadens the library's resource reach while preserving its local presence
- The library's fundamental people, place and platform assets

Strategies for Success (XI) Leveraging Library Assets: People, Place, Platform

1. Aligning library services in support of community goals
2. Providing access to content in all forms
3. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries
4. Cultivating leadership

What People and Communities Need to Flourish in the Knowledge Economy (page 5)

- **Lifelong Access** to an ever-increasing and ever-changing body of knowledge and tools to ensure that their skills remain relevant to the current economy as it continues to evolve.
- **The Capacity and Disposition to Learn in Small, Quick Doses** rather than wade through mounds of links and piles of data that provide too much information and too little knowledge
- **The Ability to Use, Understand and Process Information in Many Different Forms** including text, data, audio and video and to evaluate the quality of information from different sources and understand its relevance
- **Places to Gather**, collaborate and contribute to knowledge development
- **Access to Conversations Among Creative People** in their areas of interest so that they can innovate or maintain a competitive advantage in the knowledge economy

Creating Good Community Outcomes (Aspen 25)

- Coordinated, informal and nontraditional learning
- Jobs and Economic Development
- The Library as a literacy champion
- The library as a civic resource
- Addressing the broadband and participation divides