

## MEMO

**To:** State Library Commission  
**From:** Karen Strege  
**Re:** 1999 Resource Sharing Project  
**Date:** October 1, 1998

As you may remember, last meeting the Commission asked me to solicit opinions from the library community regarding the use of LSTA funds for the next three years to fund a "virtual" library catalog. I did so and have received the attached comments and questions.

However, another wrinkle in the use of LSTA funds for 1999 has emerged. Last week, the Governor's office called and asked if I would meet with the Governor to discuss the Commission's decision not to use LSTA funds to buy a license for a statewide database. On September 20, Dorothy Laird, Kris Schmitz, and I met with the Governor and his senior policy advisors and budget office officials.

The Governor and his associates had questions for us about the value of the project and the status of federal funds in the state. We emphasized that only a small amount of federal funds were available now to support innovative library projects. We also emphasized the importance of our long range plan in guiding our sequential projects that will result in all Montana residents having access to a plethora of information at their libraries.

The Governor understands the value of the product; however, the state's budget projections are not rosy and he must decide among many worthwhile projects. Governor Racicot concluded our meeting by saying that he would decide the fate of our proposal within the next few weeks.

The Governor may decide to ask the Commission to revisit their decision regarding the use of Federal funds. Therefore, I recommend that you postpone the decision of the resource sharing project until your December meeting. If you decide in October to approve the project, MSL could not start the project until we receive federal funds, and, as you know, Congress has not yet passed a budget for this fiscal year. If you postpone this decision until December, MSL staff will have time to either start the project or develop other plans (all based upon the long range plan) for the expenditure of federal funds in a timely manner.