

To: MSL Commission  
From: Karen Strege, State Librarian  
Re: MSL evaluation  
Date: February 12, 2001

We received four responses for our request for proposals to evaluate the Montana State Library. The four proposals were from Himmel & Wilson, Wisconsin; ArtsMarket, Bozeman; Mason and Associates; Texas; and TreeFarm Consulting, Washington. The Library Advisory Council served as proposal evaluators. Members able to participate included Cheryl Heiser, Forsyth; Bill Cochran, Billings; Lyn Donovan, Sidney; Lois Fitzpatrick, Helena; and Peggy Bloom, Missoula. Sue Jackson and I also evaluated the proposals and Darlene attended the committee's conference call. Penny Moon, from the state's Purchasing Bureau, provided technical assistance during the process.

The first choice of all evaluators was Himmel & Wilson. Ethel Himmel and Bill Wilson have satisfied all aspects of the RFP process and negotiations will begin shortly before contract signing. Himmel and Wilson have successfully completed many studies for state library agencies. The evaluation committee used the study "Inventing the Future of Library Service in Arkansas," <http://asl.lib.ar.us> in the evaluation process. I urge Commission members to review this study as an example of Himmel and Wilson's work.

In addition to contract negotiations and signing, the next steps in the process are establishing a study team at MSL and finalizing implementation plans with this team and Himmel and Wilson. I hope to have these steps accomplished in the next three weeks. We all look forward to gathering information to build a plan that reflects the needs of Montana's libraries.