

November 13, 2008

To: Darlene Staffeldt, State Librarian
Montana State Library Commission (MSLC)

Fr: Christie Briggs, Supervisor
Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)

RE: Proposed request from the Montana State Library Trust Fund for \$5,764.00, a portion of the annual subscription fee for Newsline™ for 2009.

NFB-Newsline™ (provided by the National Federation of the Blind) is a phone, menu driven, newspaper service where library patrons can access over 250 nationwide newspapers, three Montana newspapers (Billings Gazette, Great Falls Tribune and the Missoulian) and several magazines, all in audio format, from their home or cell phones. Each patron has a user ID# and password to their account and can bookmark specific newspapers, sections and/or articles.

The current annual cost is \$23,056. Our portion of the annual payment is \$5,764.00. The Montana Association for the Blind (MAB) paid the total annual fee until 2005 when they requested the Montana Talking Book Library share part of the cost. Our portion of the annual cost was approved by the MSL Commission to come out of the MSL Trust Fund in 2005.

The MAB organization is actively planning to approach the 2009 Legislature and request the total annual amount be funded by legislative appropriations, with the intent that Montana Talking Book Library administers the program.

When the program started, we had 48 patrons sign up. In September, 2008, we had 186 individuals signed up. Most of these are in the age range of 20-60, and most are professionals who find the NFB-Newsline™ service an essential part of their professional and personal lives.