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## **Montana State Library and Regional Partners Receive \$730,659 to Provide Scholarships for Future Librarians**

(HELENA) --- Jon Tester, United States Senator for Montana, joined the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in announcing that the Montana State Library was selected to receive a \$730,659 "Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program" award. It is the third grant the State Library has received from IMLS for recruitment purposes.

The three-year grant is known as SWIM, as it consists of a formal partnership between four states - South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. The objective of the grant is to recruit and provide IMLS-funded scholarships to educate 50 librarians and school library media specialists from throughout the region to work in rural communities.

"As a former school teacher myself, I know just how important libraries are to our communities," said Senator Jon Tester. "Libraries play a vital role in helping students succeed and I am pleased that Montana will have resources to help the next generation of librarians."

The Montana State Library was one of 33 successful grant applicants. The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program supports efforts to recruit and educate the next generation of librarians. IMLS anticipates the loss of as many as 58% of the current pool of professional librarians across the nation by 2019 and designed this grant program to help recruit a new generation of librarians.

"Montana libraries are being used now more than ever before as people struggle in these difficult economic times," said Staffeldt. "This grant couldn't have arrived at a better time as it recognizes the key role of libraries and librarians in maintaining the flow of information that is critical to support formal education, to guide commercial enterprise, and to strengthen individual decisions."

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information about the SWIM grant, please visit <http://msl.mt.gov> or contact Sue Jackson, Library Development Consultant at the Montana State Library at (406) 444-5350 or at [sujackson@mt.gov](mailto:sujackson@mt.gov).