

Memo

To: Kris Schmitz, Central
Services Manager

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Donci Bardash, Project Director
Broadband Technology
Opportunities Program (BTOP)

From: Kris Schmitz, Central
Services Manager

Date: July 21, 2011

Re: MSL Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) Public Computing
Center Grant (PCC) Update

I. Significant Accomplishments

- a. **MSL upgrades:** BTOP has ordered 6 desktops, 1 Touchsmart, 1 ADA Low-vision/low-dexterity package, 1 ADA blind patron package, a printer, and an adjustable-height desk for the MSL public access computer area. This will increase public access to needed resources within our facility, as well as provide access to MSL staff so that they may be more familiar with the technology as they provide guidance to public libraries. All items will be received and installed by August.
- b. **E-rate:** E-rate Elite has submitted their first set of deliverable to the BTOP team: a *whitepaper* exploring possible compliance issues regarding our proposed broadband roll-out process identified during the Request for Information conducted in the spring, and a *timeline* identifying required forms and activities relating to E-rate and broadband upgrades. The documents will be finalized within the week and used to determine the specific broadband roll-out process.

- c. **BTOP Technology Trainer:** Two rounds of interviews have been completed and Jennifer Birnel has accepted the position. Jennifer has more than 10 years of experience in the public school and library setting and will report to work on August 1st. Jennifer's initial tasks will include completing a training needs assessment of library public computer center staff, rolling-out Web Junction to both BTOP and non-BTOP participating libraries, and drafting library staff competencies relating to library public computer center management. Please welcome Jennifer to our team.

- d. **Partners:** BTOP hosted a partnership summit on July 19th to brainstorm creative approaches and plan next steps as a team. Partners have already assisted in promoting local library open houses through their targeted member distribution lists. We continue to execute Memoranda of Understanding.

- e. **Patron Survey:** We have received approximately 200 responses from an online survey that was launched at BTOP libraries. Topics of input include Internet resources accessed by patrons, patron technology training needs, suggestions to improve computer centers, and success stories. The most popular uses of public computers are: e-mail, social networking, searching for employment, news and entertainment, paying bills and managing finances, and completing homework. This information will be compiled and posted on-line in September and will influence our outreach, training, and sustainability efforts.

- f. **Accessibility Upgrades:** Glasgow has completed the installation of a handicapped accessible door financed with federal funds. Lincoln County-Eureka is approximately 50% complete, upgrading the restroom to be wheelchair accessible. Ronan recently began the process of receiving bids from local contractors to install a handicapped accessible door for the facility.

- g. **Gates Foundation ALA Pre-conference:** On June 23rd, the Central Services Manager and BTOP Project Director attended an ALA Pre-conference sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation for grant recipients. Much information was shared and gained, and the coordination efforts will be sustained through COSLA via an on-line Public Access Technology community funded by the foundation.

- h. NTIA Feature Article:** NTIA, our sponsoring federal agency, interviewed the BTOP project staff and Lee Phillips from Butte for a feature e-article on the federal website. They chose MSL due to the significant accomplishments attained within six short months, as well as our ability to launch a new library with grant funds during the Butte water main crisis. The article will go live later this month; a hyperlink will be available from the MSL BTOP website.
- i. Performance Measure Highlights:** The statewide average broadband speed has increased from 3.55 Mbps to 8.54 Mbps (target 21) primarily due to vendors upgrading services at little or no costs to local libraries. Average wait time for public computers has decreased from 20 minutes to 6 minutes (target 10 minutes). More than 7,000 patrons have attended computer-related training programs totaling 4,450 hours of patron training. 60% of all training is one-to-one (opposed to workshops), which aligns with national trends. Butte-Silver Bow Public Library signed a two-year lease to continue services at its new, second location in the mall. Montana State University-Billings/Parmly Billings Library launched their public computer center at the community library and held an open house.

II. Planned Activities

- a. Web Junction:** MSL is awaiting approval from the State Procurement Bureau to sole-source a contract with OCLC Web Junction. A contract will likely be executed in early August. The BTOP trainer will work in conjunction with Web Junction staff to design and launch the Montana portal. Libraries are estimated to have access to Web Junction in September-October. Detailed instructions will be sent to both BTOP and non-BTOP libraries at that time.
- b. Broadband Upgrades:** After the E-rate Elite whitepaper and timeline are finalized, the BTOP Project Director will begin working one-on-one with local library staff to upgrade broadband speeds and execute MOUs outlining the terms of grant support. It is anticipated that most libraries will have upgraded speeds in August/September.

- c. **Outreach Campaign:** The RFP scoring committee has concluded their activities and are recommending an award to Partners Creative. We are currently negotiating the terms of the contract, which we anticipate to be completed by the end of July. The first deliverable from the vendor is a draft campaign plan by mid-August. BTOP has sought volunteers for an outreach committee, which will provide guidance and approval all materials and strategies. The committee is comprised of the representatives from BTOP-participating libraries (Ronan, Missoula, and Helena), representatives from BTOP partner agencies, the BTOP Project Director, and the MSL Marketing and Communications Coordinator. However, BTOP is still in need of a representative from a rural/frontier library. The committee will convene and receive an orientation mid-August.