

Marketing and Public Relations **September 25, 2013 – November 22, 2013**

Prepared for the December 2013 Commission meeting
by Sara Groves, Communications & Marketing Coordinator

Goal One – Content – *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

Library Outreach – We had planned to host the third annual Ready 2 Read Rendezvous in Bozeman from October 11 – 13, 2013. The bulk of the conference this year was going to be paid for with LSTA funds. Additional funding was received from Governor and Mrs. Bullock and the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation.

We had lined up Saroj Ghoting, who is one of the nation's leading early literacy experts and one of the main developers of the American Library Association's Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program (on which MSL's Ready 2 Read program is based), to come and give a day-long session on multi-age story times and incorporating the ECRR messaging into story times for parents to hear. We had also lined up speakers who were going to focus on block play and another speaker who was going to discuss how librarians can get out into the community to partner with various organizations who are involved in early childhood development.

We had a record number of applicants. Over 50 individuals representing 40 different libraries planned to attend the Ready 2 Read conference, including representatives from each of Montana's tribes (a first). I received word that representatives from OPI, DPHHS, and the Governor's office would also attend.

However, four days before the conference was to begin, we had to cancel the Rendezvous because of the government shutdown. Some cancellation fees were incurred, cutting into our budget for a rescheduled Rendezvous, leaving me unsure if we should try to reschedule or just let it go for a year. However, after conducting a survey of libraries and other representatives who had planned to attend the October 2013 Rendezvous, 95% of survey respondents wanted the Rendezvous rescheduled. It also made me aware of just how important it is to the most rural libraries to pay for hotel and travel costs since nearly 40% of respondents said the Rendezvous was the only training they could afford to attend all year. I think this is especially important because our state's most rural libraries are often the only place that is serving families with young children in their communities.

Therefore, the Rendezvous has been rescheduled for April 25 – 27, 2014 in Bozeman, MT. Saroj Ghoting will present and I hope that we will be able to bring everyone (or nearly everyone) that had planned to attend in October.

The Montana State Library was also asked to be a partner on Montana's Early Learning Challenge Grant, along with the Governor's office, the Office of Public Instruction, the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Commissioner of Higher Education. This grant will potentially bring \$37.5 million to Montana to address needs in early childhood development and education. The State Library's portion would cover part of an early literacy position at MSL. The Montana State Library is the only library in the country to be recognized as a funded partner in this national grant. The grant will be awarded mid-December 2013.

I presented two sessions at the Montana Early Childhood conference. Both were well-attended and, according to conference organizers, had the best reviews from attendees of all of the sessions offered.

I am also currently working with Montana PBS and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to facilitate filming training on the Growing Up Wild curriculum to support the trunks that are available through MT libraries. These short training videos will become a permanent part of MT PBS' Learning Media site and will be available to parents, teachers, and whoever else may be interested in accessing these materials. I have had several meetings that include MT FWP, MT Head Start Collaboration Office, and MT PBS to fine-tune what these videos will look like. We have secured Vince Yannone, who has been dubbed "Mr. Wildlife" by various MT media outlets, to "star" in the videos. Filming is expected to take place in December.

Montana Library Week was held from September 29 – October 5. A wide range of marketing materials – from press releases to web buttons – was made available on the MSL web site. We collected data, photos, and surveys from libraries across the state. Participation this year was low but for the libraries who did participate, we were able to use their data to create great marketing materials customized for their library that they can use.

We also conducted the annual "Treasure Hunt for the Treasure State" contest in conjunction with EBSCO. The contest was held from October 27 – November 2. EBSCO provided iPod nanos for the adult, high school, and middle school winners and iPads for the winning elementary school classrooms. I am working closely with the winners and their libraries to plan awards ceremonies that may garner additional press about the databases. From one of the school librarians who had a student winner, I received this email:

I also wanted to put out a sincere thank you for doing this contest. Over and over, I have tried to get the elementary teachers to use the great resources we have available but I finally had some buy in with this contest. And it was great timing for the 6th graders as well, because I had just taught the EBSCO unit and it was a great review for them.

Thanks again for all you do to help us out!

*Kendra Hartman
Broadus Elementary*

The FY 2013 annual report is also done and available.

I am chair of the Strategic Communications, Outreach, and Public Awareness committee of the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The final plan will be presented to the BBAC at our October meeting. I am continuing work with Classic Ink (out of Bozeman) on finalizing the plan and moving forward with a statewide communications effort to promote investment in early childhood education.