

A Time for Great Things

Review and history of library federations in Montana



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Outline for today

- Federations – what are they? How do they work?
- Legislative intent and review
- History of federations
- Potential questions to start the conversation
- Next steps

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Federations

- Regional grouping of libraries – led by coordinator (director from one of the libraries)
- Funded through Coal Severance Tax (CST)
- Focus
 - Continuing education
 - Resource sharing
 - Technology
 - Programming



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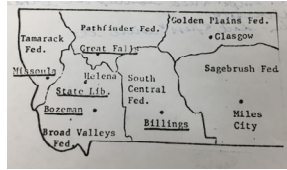
Intent of the legislature

22-1-401. Policy. It is the policy of the legislature to encourage the most efficient delivery of library services to the people of Montana. To that end the state should be divided into regions within which libraries desiring to participate in the distribution of such state funding...shall organize into library federations to pool resources and information and avoid duplication of effort.

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Role of Commission and others

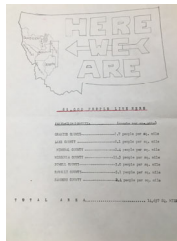
- Commission is charged with
 - Designating federations
 - Has historically set goals for federations
 - Has charged State Librarian, staff, and coordinators with reviewing federation structures
- State Library staff and coordinators carry out these duties
- Library community provides feedback



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History of Federations

- MSL has worked with federations since 1956. The current six federations were in place by 1976.
- From MSL publication "A Time for Great Things"
 - Prior to federations, Montanans believed only limited library service was possible, the federation demonstration with LSA and LSCA funds proved "library service of high standard can be a reality."
- Purpose was to improve library services for Montanans by using a regional system model with a strong central library



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Federation boundaries over time

Changes of Montana Federations of Libraries Boundaries



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Federation Funding over time

- 1979 – Legislature approves giving library federations 1% of CST monies – which was \$400,000 – 500,000 (almost twice what they receive today).
- 1986/1987 – revenues drop precipitously from around \$300,000 to \$136,253. Coordinators and MSL begin to discuss what services to cut.
- 1993 – revenue drops to a low of \$80,621.
- 1990s/early 2000s – revenue slowly increases to around \$175,000.
- 2022 – Commission is awarding \$225,000 for the six federations.

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Federation structure over time

- 1950s – 2005
 - There is a federation headquarters library that receives funding for federation and runs the federation
- 1950s – today
 - There is a federation coordinator that handles logistics, planning, and administration of federation



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Federation Services/Priorities over Time

- 1960s – individual library development was the priority
- 1970s – Commission directs federations to create goals that address the development and strengthening of library services as prescribed in the Montana Public Library Standards



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Federation Services/Priorities over Time

- 1980s – Commission sets the following priorities
 1. Resource sharing of materials
 2. Resource sharing of services – centralized ordering, resource center
 3. Resource sharing of people – admin, PR, programming, evaluation, consulting and
 4. Resource sharing of funding – individual grants to libraries
- 1990s – Begin to see technology as a theme with an emphasis on statewide Internet access and a technology network (precursor to the Montana Shared Catalog)
- Today – priorities are continuing education, resource sharing, technology, and programming

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Questions to start the conversation

- Is the legislative intent (pool resources/avoid duplication) still relevant?
- Does the current structure meet the intent?
- What is the value of federations? What are the benefits for Montanans, librarians, and board members? Who benefits?
- What are the challenges facing federations?
- Are there services that make sense regionally versus statewide? If yes, what are they?
- What else?

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Next steps

1. What goals does the Commission have for the review?
2. What are the expectations or sidebars for a review of library federations?

