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: November 17, 2011

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

I.   Significant Accomplishments

a.   Broadband: Four libraries have upgraded broadband services with financial
assistance from the grant. The primary challenges continue to be aligning the
procurement process and timeline with E-rate, delays in quotes and services due
to recent market changes and company acquisitions, coordination with local
governments, as well as coordinating with local vendors to custom bill. A recently
executed contract for E-rate application and procurement assistance with E-rate
Central will help us overcome these challenges more efficiently and with greater
confidence.

b.   Outreach: The Library.Next campaign is now live!
This social marketing campaign has created a lot of
buzz. MSL hosted two webinars to assist libraries
with maximizing the benefits of this campaign. The
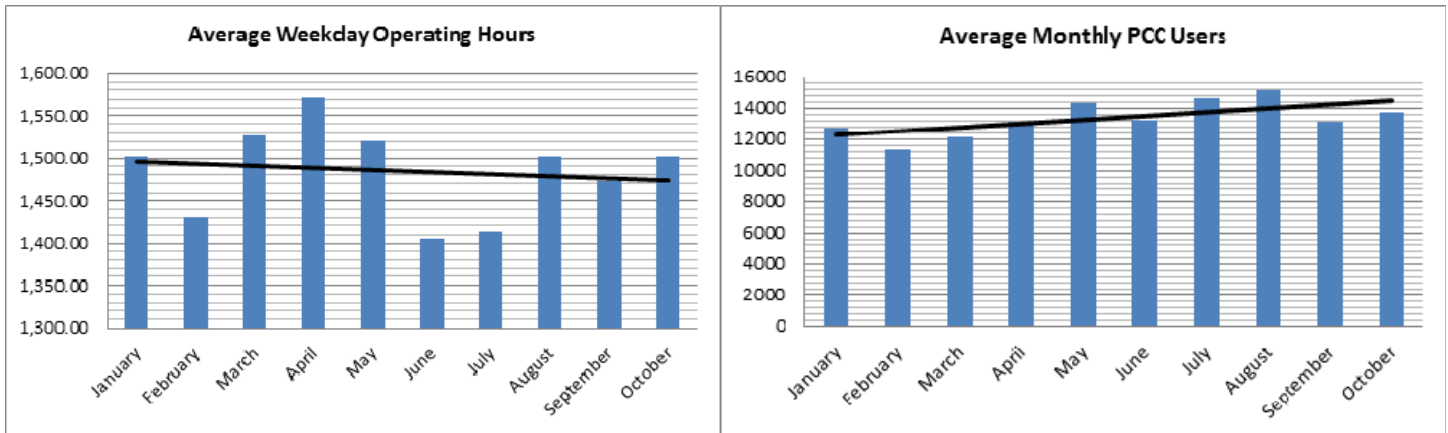launch page (www.mtlibrarynext.org) connects

Montanans with the library nearest them, highlighting specific computer resources available locally (such as: ADA-compliant workstations, children's computers, wireless access). Television, radio, and newspaper ads are running statewide. Over 30,000 bookmarks were sent to Montana schools. Community partners, such as job service offices, offices of public assistance, regional self-help legal offices, and AARP received bookmarks, palm cards, table toppers, and thumb drives pre-imaged with shortcuts to popular, reliable Internet sites. BTOP libraries received bookmarks, table toppers, palm cards, banner stands, and thumb drives. All materials are available to libraries across the state for reproduction. BTOP staff has met with the Vocational Rehabilitation program to increase direct outreach efforts to the blind, low-vision, and hearing-impaired community.

c. **E-rate:** E-rate Elite has completed a [statewide report](#) on common compliance issues for libraries participating in E-Rate, how to remain in compliance, how to prepare for a potential E-Rate audit, and resources for finding answers to compliance questions. They are currently publishing reports unique to each public library with suggestions on how best to leverage E-rate assistance. These reports will assist libraries with deciding to participate in E-rate, and if so, for which services.

d. **Training:** The BTOP technology trainer, with help from public library staff and MSL consultants, has published [Public Computer Center Learning Targets](#). These targets are recognized as being helpful for managing computing centers and assisting patrons in using computers. They will also guide training provided by MSL. The BTOP technology trainer has facilitated workshops/webinars on PC management systems, photo-editing software, blind patron software, and supporting on-line learners. Webinars are archived and available statewide. Technology-related guidance will also be posted to Jennifer's recently-launched blog: http://jbirnel.wordpress.com/

e. **Performance Measure Highlights:** As of November 15th, there are now 699 public workstations at 44 library locations. In the month of October, 3,678 patrons received either one-to-one technical assistance from a librarian or participated in a class or workshop, for a total of 1,474 hours of training. 131 public library staff received technical training in October. Data shows that while the number of patrons accessing computers is increasing, public library operating hours are decreasing. We will continue to track this trend to see if the cause is limited summer hours.

II.   Planned Activities

a.   **E-rate:** MSL has contracted with E-rate Elite for web-based E-rate training that will begin in November. For libraries needing a greater level of assistance, MSL has executed a second contract with E-Rate Central to assist local public libraries with their E-rate applications and related activities such as procurement.

b.   **Public Library Reservation, Time and Print Management System for Public Computers:** MSL has posted an RFP to purchase reservation, time, print and management systems for ten library systems. We anticipated contracting for hardware and software before the end of the year.

c.   **Upcoming Technology Training:** The technology trainer continues to host webinars on a range of topics. The webinars are promoted through Wired! and the MSL Event Calendar. Upcoming training topics include: Use of low-vision/low-dexterity peripherals and software, E-mail, Public laptop management, Helpful library uses of Web 2.0 resources, and Making libraries more accessible to patrons with special needs. Archived recordings will be posted to Web Junction when it launches in February.

d.   **Technology Funding Feasibility Study:** The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently approved using BTOP grant funds to contract for a feasibility study that will explore possible revenue streams for library technology funding statewide. The study may include emerging strategies used by other state libraries such as centralizing E-Rate participation though an opt-in consortium, a state telecommunications tax, and other approaches. MSL expects to begin drafting a Request for Proposal in February 2012, with a goal of presenting the results to the Network Advisory Council and Commission in the Fall 2012 for their consideration.