

Memo

**To:** Montana State Library Network Advisory Council

**From:** Sara Groves, Communications & Marketing Coordinator

**Date:** March 3, 2014

**Re:** Early Literacy Projects update

The Ready 2 Read Rendezvous has been rescheduled for April 25 – 27, 2014 in Bozeman, MT. Saroj Ghoting, a nationally-renowned early literacy expert, is slated to present all day Saturday, April 26. I am working on finalizing other speakers now and securing attendees. The Rendezvous will provide great opportunity for attendees to experience some exciting hands-on learning, hear from national experts, learn about some of the projects other libraries are tackling, and network with their peers in both learning and social environments.

I am currently working with Montana PBS and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to facilitate filming training on the Growing Up Wild curriculum to support the Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunks that are available through MT libraries. These six 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. The videos feature Montana experts on the trunk themes, which are ungulates, owls, bears, tracks, creepy-crawlies, and fish. Educators, librarians, and other interested individuals can access the videos to discover basic information on the subject matter, learn how experts explain scientific material to children, and access data on the subject that can promote learning in the library or in classrooms. The MT Head Start Collaboration Office is paying for development and editing of the videos. Additionally, I am working on putting together a group of people who can help address the struggles some libraries are having with moving the trunks from library to library.

I will attend the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) Conference in Biloxi, MS to represent Montana this year, along with Cindy Christin of the Bozeman Public Library. I am very excited to attend this conference and to have the opportunity to network with other individuals who work on statewide literacy projects from around the country. Additionally, I am excited to learn more about summer reading and to think about how the State Library can increase the significance of this project.

The Montana State Library was 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 could have brought \$37.5 million to Montana to address needs in early childhood development and education. The State Library's portion would have covered part of an early literacy position at MSL. The Montana State Library was the only library in the country to be recognized as a funded partner in this national grant. The grant, however, was not awarded to Montana. Jennie Stapp and I participated in a planning meeting with the Governor's office and other stakeholders on what should happen next in Montana if the grant was not

received. We continue to be involved to see how libraries can contribute and participate in the most meaningful way as Montana makes early learning and early childhood development a priority.