



## Montana Talking Book Library Report March through September 2014

Prepared for the October 8, 2014 Commission meeting  
by Christie Briggs, TBL Supervisor

This report represents the accomplishments of the following staff:  
Briggs, Gunderson, Landry, Meier, Harris, Crepeau and 90+ volunteers.

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

### New Recording Software:

HABC (Hindenburg Audio Book Creator) recording software was approved by NLS for purchase by the Network Talking Book Libraries with recording studios. MTBL purchased HABC in July and have been learning, experimenting and utilizing its post-production editing functions on projects completed with the old LCM software (which is not being manufacturer maintained, supported, or upgraded from Windows XP OS). Recording teams are rapidly winding down their projects on the old platform. Development of a training manual for volunteers is being planned for November, with plans for one-on-one volunteer teams to begin training in December through March. The benefit to Montana patrons is access to Montana audio titles in the highest quality recording product available from a talking book library's local recording studio, staff and volunteers.

### New MT Digital Titles Completed and Circulating:

Eighteen new local titles (MDB 2001-2018), completed on the outdated LCM platform, have successfully completed the HABC post-production process and have been circulating to patrons during this reporting period. We have received positive patron feedback regarding the improved quality of the recordings. These completed titles are currently being prepared for submission to the NLS Quality Assurance Program for approval to upload to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download).

### New MT Digital Titles Awaiting HABC Post-production Completion:

Eleven new book titles (MDB 2019-2030), with recordings completed on the outdated LCM platform, are currently awaiting HABC post-production completion. The benefit to

patrons, when completed, will ensure the highest quality recordings available to Montana patrons.

Local Magazines ready for recording in Digital format:

The first and second digital magazine, *Montana Outdoors March/April 2014*, and, *The Montana Magazine of Western History, Spring 2014* have been completed using the LCM recording software and are awaiting post-production editing in the new HABC software prior to distribution to currently subscribed patrons. These will be advertised in the next issue of the Bits of Gold newsletter. *In partnership with Fish Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Historical Society, free courtesy print copies of each issue are offered to the MTBL studio to record for patrons unable to read the standard print editions.*

Montana Retrospective Conversion (Cassettes to Digital) Project:

The Digital Conversion Project began July 1, 2013. As of June 27, 2014 (end of funding for the one year project): 231 MCB (cassette) titles (or 25%) were completely converted to audio digital books (MDB's). Due to the desire to continue the project, an EPP request was submitted for approval to be considered by the 2015 Legislature. This EPP request is currently pending the Governor's approval in November, 2014. If approved by the Governor this will go forward to the 2015 legislative session and await approval outcome. If not approved by the Governor to proceed, no further progress on this project can be made, though alternative avenues may be considered.

Circulation Management:

-Carolyn Meier, Circulation Manager, with the assistance of several key volunteers, prepared nearly 30,000 audio cassette book (RC) copies for shipping to recycling centers contracted with NLS. As of 9/17/14, MTBL has not received NLS approval to ship these to the new NLS recycling contractor. This process, referred to as the "Xess process", is an on-going quarterly NLS book cassette copy recycle requirement. A similar process, referred to as the "DB Recall process" is in its second year of returning digital book (DB) copies to be re-used by NLS for new digital books to be re-distributed to Network Talking Book Libraries nationwide. The amount of DB's recalled is based on circulation statistics by each library. As cassette books diminish and digital books increase, benefits to patron ease of use will continue to improve, in addition to BARD downloading capabilities.

-Circulation Statistics- There were 236 new patrons added to MTBL patron services during this reporting period, between March 21<sup>st</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup>. There were 62,960 digital and cassette books circulated to MTBL patrons. BARD downloads from March 21<sup>st</sup>-August 31<sup>st</sup> totaled 7,876 (No Sept. statistics available). This represented an

average of 92 patrons (34%), of the 268 total BARD-only registered patrons, who actively download BARD materials. These active users are generally professionals who have the resources to personally (or through their employer) purchase and utilize several specially designed and BARD compatible mobile technology devices.

**Goal Two – Access –** *MSL/MTBL provides libraries, agencies, and its partners and patrons with convenient, high quality, and cost-effective access to library content and services.*

'Bits of Gold' Newsletter:

In September, 2014, the second digital issue of MTBL's 'Bits of Gold' Newsletter will be offered to patrons in addition to website postings (both in pdf and html formats), e-mail and in large print mailings. MTBL has included several other formats to meet patron demands for a variety of necessary formats.

50% Increase in Interlibrary loans of NLS retrospective titles:

This increase is due to the NLS policy of making retrospective titles (those converted from analog to digital) only available on BARD. NLS has never offered these on digital cartridges to Network Talking Book Libraries nationwide. This has continued to place a resource burden on MTBL to provide adequate digital cartridge resources in order to meet the demands of non-BARD users, especially for in-demand books in series. We are evaluating how to streamline the ILL and digital Duplication on Demand processes to maximize MTBL's current annual digital cartridge resource purchases. NLS is partnering with MTBL in this endeavor, by considering additional ways to supplement MTBL's cartridge resources.

**Goal Three – Training –** *MSL provides libraries, agencies, its partners and Montanans with appropriate trainings and training resources so that they can make the best use of the resources offered.*

The NLS National Conference in May, 2014:

New technology products, devices and software, for both patrons and Talking Book Libraries, were introduced to Network Talking Book Library attendees. HABC audio book software training was presented for those managing local recording studios. NLS recommended learning the HABC post-production features first, as many studios need to learn how to smoothly convert recording projects from existing recording software to the new HABC platform. New Braille rules by the UEB (United English Braille) were addressed and will be forthcoming in January, 2015, from the NLS Braille specialist. Valuable information on forming Friends Groups for Talking Book Libraries was

presented. NLS is promoting a new Braille Literacy program in 2015. Other items are included in the MTBL 2015 Work Plan.

**Goal Four—Consultation and Leadership** – *MSL/MTBL provides consultation and leadership to enable its patrons and partners to reach their goals.*

BARD Demonstrations Presented:

In June, all Montana Blind and Low Vision staff received BARD training on several BARD compatible devices.

MTBL Service Presentations:

Between April and September, MTBL services and new patron technologies will be introduced to various patron consumer groups, housing authorities, college volunteerism fairs, and the public library Fall Workshop.

**Goal Five – Collaboration** – *MSL/MTBL promotes partnerships and encourages collaboration among its partners and patrons so that their information needs can be met.*

NLS Open Forum Conferences:

Highlights from March through August monthly teleconferences with NLS staff included the availability of an iBill Currency Reader to qualified low vision and blind patrons. This is offered through a collaboration between NLS and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). MTBL is rapidly signing patrons up to receive one free device between September and December, 2014. NLS is in the process of upgrading its online Network Talking Book Library reporting database.

**Goal Six – Sustainable Success** – *MSL/MTBL is a well-run organization and a sought-after employer; it is efficient and effective (measured against partner and patron outcomes), and successfully engaged in its ongoing mission.*

New MTBL Director of Recording and Volunteer Programs:

We are pleased to announce that Erin Harris, previous MTBL Readers' Advisor and Machine Lending Agent, was hired in May to this position.

Readers Advisor/Machine Lending Agent Replacement:

This position is currently in the process of being filled.

The 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon "Expressions of Gratitude":

The event will be on October 9th (Thursday) in Helena. Chrysti the Wordsmith will be the guest speaker. A change in the location brings us to Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in the north Helena Valley off Sierra Road. Invitations and directions are being sent to Commissioners with the hope that all are able to join MSL management, MTBL staff and volunteers in two hours of fine food, delightful entertainment, well deserved volunteer awards, and a surprise presentation by the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Montana.