

# Memo

**To:** Montana State Library Commission

**From:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian and staff

**Date:** June 22, 2022

**Re: Montana State Library Brand**

Staff request the Commission accept the logo created by Hoffman York as presented to the Commission on June 15.

Background:

- After reflecting on the lack of familiarity and understanding about the work of the State Library among the public and key stakeholders, the State Library initiated a rebranding in December, 2020. The Commission approved spending funding from the State Library Trust of private donations for this purpose. [MEMO \(mt.gov\)](#)
- According to state procurement rules, in the spring of 2021 the State Library and State Procurement conducted a request for proposal (RFP) to select a firm to complete a rebranding and promote adoption of the new brand.
- The State Library selected and contracted with Hoffman York, the design firm that manages Montana's numerous marketing campaigns, including the recent Come Back Montana Campaign. Hoffman York was selected from nearly a dozen firms that responded to the RFP. The contract was executed in August, 2021.
- In the late summer and fall, Hoffman York began the process of gathering data and research on the State Library and other libraries. This work included interviewing internal and external stakeholders and consideration of a possible name change for the agency.
- In December 2021 Hoffman York led the State Library management team through an intensive day-long process to reflect on the work of the State Library and how that work might be expressed through imagery. Senior staff were

selected for this process because of the deep knowledge brought by staff of the entire agency. This process was the building block on which the creative team at Hoffman York created the first iterations of a logo.

- Hoffman York presented the outcomes of their research and suggested brand positioning to the Commission in February 2022. The Commission gave Hoffman York positive feedback and agreed that Hoffman York was on the right track. Hoffman York described next steps and included taking visual representations to staff. At that meeting it was specifically stated that the commission would not be involved in the design process.

[Building a Positioning Statement \(mt.gov\)](#)

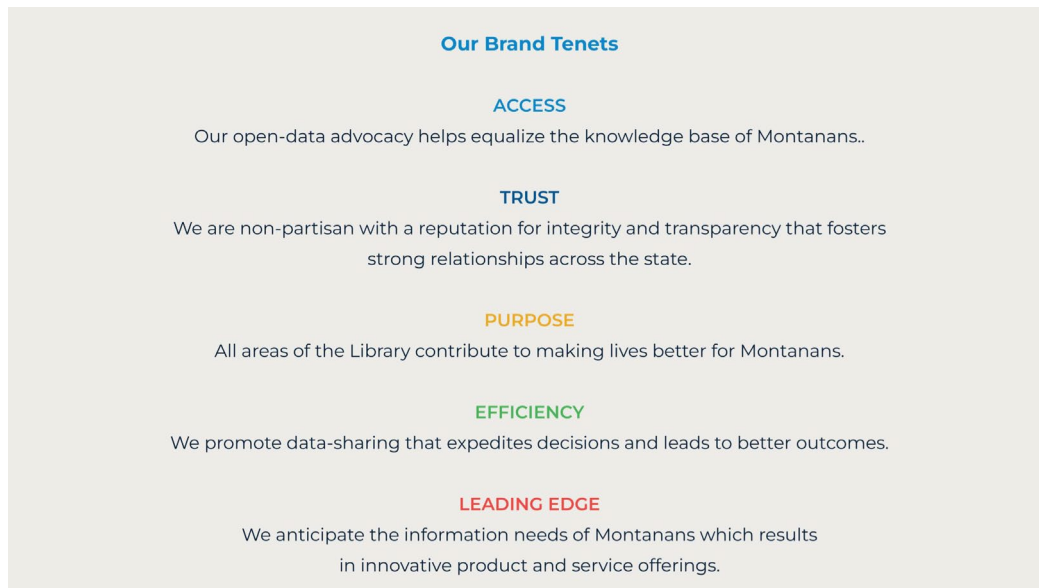
- In February and March, Hoffman York's creative team used their expertise to refine a logo design. The State Library management team then started a weeks-long process in which Hoffman York would present draft images and staff would identify certain preferred elements from the drafts which were combined and refined. This process of combining elements including imagery, shapes, colors, and fonts happened several times. This iterative process resulted in a single logo; multiple finished logos were never considered. The final logo was approved by lead staff.
- Hoffman York revealed the logo to staff and Commissioner Arlitsch at a staff retreat in May. Though other Commissioners had conflicts and could not attend, all Commissioners were invited to the event.
- The final design was revealed to the Commission on June 15.
- Using their expertise, Hoffman York is preparing a strategic communications strategy that considers the different services the State Library offers, the stakeholders and patrons, and considerations for how best communicate with these unique audiences. The strategy includes web updates, educational materials, promotional materials, and media.
- A planned webinar to educate staff on how to properly execute the strategic communications strategy scheduled for June 29 is now delayed.
- Staff intend to publicly launch the logo at the Montana Library Association Conference the first week of August.

Cost:

- Refer to contract amount and financial report. Adequate funds remain in the contract with Hoffman York to successfully implement the strategic communications strategy.

Logo:

As described to the Commission, without agenda, Hoffman York applied their professional process and standards of practice to create a new logo that embodies the work of the Montana State Library. This logo is based on brand tenets that Hoffman York derived from feedback from a wide group of stakeholders and that speak to the work of the agency:



Staff recognize that this rebrand will only be successful if the Commission acts as brand ambassadors. Like the staff, we hope that the Commission see our work and these values reflected in the logo.

The logo intentionally lacks books. When the State Library launched the rebrand, Hoffman York was asked to consider a rename for the agency because the State Library is not a library in the traditional sense and because the public's view of a library brand is still that of books. After much deliberation, Hoffman York determined that there is no better name that embodies the work of the State Library than Montana State Library. As Hoffman York told the Commission in February, by retaining the name that includes the word library, and capturing the work of the State Library in a new logo, we have an opportunity to lead the public's perception of modern 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries.

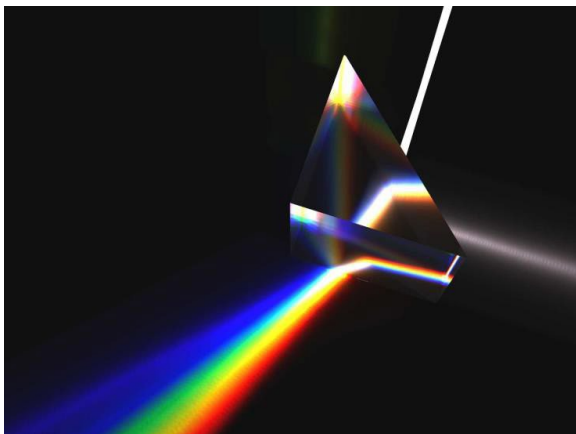
The digital nature of the State Library's work is reflected in the colors that are similarly associated with technology leaders:



The State Library's natural resources and water information systems are found in the prism and refracted light which are found throughout nature, including in a rainbow created through water:



As beautifully articulated by Hoffman York, the prism is the foundation of our logo.



A prism:

- Provides clarity
- Represents our information helping people to make change in their lives. Such a simple tool.
- Like a prism, we are the vehicle for distributing information in a new and different way.

The colors of the logo cannot be expressed as any other colors. As trusted information professionals and scientists, the staff of the State Library are charged with providing unbiased, fact-based, data and information. That prisms refract light into a rainbow is a scientific phenomenon that cannot be changed.

There is no standard State of Montana logo. Use of the state seal as a logo is not permitted. By law, the Secretary of State is charged with keeping the state seal and is the only one who has the authority to affix it to public documents.

State agencies have their own logos:



The State Library website includes the Montana.gov header and footer that identifies the State Library as a state agency.

The State is working on a rebrand and any final logos can be incorporated into documents and other promotional materials in document footers and other means.

As noted, multi-color logos are found throughout Montana state government. Regarding the cost of producing print materials with a full-color logo, the State Library is a paperless organization in keeping with Governor Gianforte's fully digital initiative so this logo will primarily be viewed in digital form. Knowing that there will be associated costs to successfully launch the new brand, in April, the Commission adopted a fiscal year '23 budget that includes a line-item for these costs.

State Library staff are deeply proud of this new logo and in how well it reflects the brand tenets which reflect our work. We are a traditional library in our [resolve](#) that all Montanans will have access to library content and services sufficient to their needs. We recognize that we live in a political world. That said, and as was well said by Commissioner Arntzen, we should not act out of fear but out of positivity. We should not bow to threats of political retribution. Nor should we tolerate and give power to ideologies that resolve to make even the natural phenomena of rainbows something to avoid. We should trust one another, and the leadership and decisions of the Commission and staff that have resulted in an opportunity to celebrate the Montana State Library and our services to Montanans.