

ST-4

Action Items: None

Montana Representative Report

June 13, 1999

Gates gives \$1.6 million to libraries in Montana!

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates has donated \$1.6 million to help Montana's 110 public libraries pay to connect to the Internet, buy computers and gain technical training.

The Gates Learning Foundation and Microsoft Corp. will distribute the grants in Montana, although how much each library will receive has yet to be determined. The amount of money given to each public library will depend on where the facility is located and income level of the community it serves.

The Gates Learning Foundation grants for Montana libraries were awarded Wednesday in a ceremony at the Lewis and Clark Public Library in Helena. Under the program, public libraries serving poverty levels of 10 percent or higher will receive about \$1 million in grants to buy computers, Internet access and technical assistance. On top of that, Microsoft will donate software worth \$600,000 to those facilities receiving the grant money. Those libraries serving populations with poverty levels below 10 percent will be eligible to buy computers at a discount. They also will receive donated computer software, technical assistance and some training options. The Gates Learning Foundation provides computers and Internet access to public libraries serving low-income communities in the United States and Canada. The foundation has already awarded grants of more than \$24 million to 1,600 libraries in 29 states to help bring Internet access to those facilities and provide their staff with technical assistance and training.

IMLS Grant In Progress: Images of the Indian Peoples of the Northern Great Plains Institute of Museum and Library Services, 1998 National Leadership grant award, \$138,346 was awarded in late 1998. This IMLS project is a model program of cooperation between several libraries and the Museum of the Rockies (Bozeman, MT). The Images Project will broaden access to new constituencies because students, researchers, and the general public will have direct access to important primary source material on the Plains Indian cultures currently only available otherwise by travel to Montana. Images are being digitized and drawn from the library collections of three of the Montana State University campuses (Bozeman, Billings, and Havre), The Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, and Little Big Horn College in Crow Agency, Montana. A digital collection will be created in consultation with Native Americans, educators, librarians, and historians. The overall organization of the database will be by tribe and all will be represented:

Crow, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Salish (Flathead), Kutenai, Chippewa-Cree, Gros Ventres (Atsina), and Assiniboine. The collection will consist primarily of images, but will include some text to give context. Most of the images are photographs, but there are also stereographs, ledger drawings, and other sketches. The items will be digitized at each site, indexed using SGML and then placed on a server located and maintained at Montana State University-Bozeman. Continued Web access will be provided by the university through its Information Technology Center (ITC).

Statewide Database Licensing

Statewide database licensing is progressing. The legislature funded the project to allow school, public, and academic libraries to buy access to a suite of electronic indexes. The Montana State Library is working with IAC and GALE to provide access to a core of databases useful to a variety of libraries in the state. Statewide licensing will allow smaller libraries access to databases they otherwise would not be able to afford and will allow larger libraries to get a reduced rate for selected indexes. Contact Bruce Newell, Montana Library Network Director at 406-444-9816 or bnewell@mtlib.org