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Date Event

January 31, 2005 - MSL Commission and Networking Task Force Planning Retreat (Montana State Library in Helena)

January 31, 2005 - Library Legislative Day (Montana State Library in Helena)

February 1, 2005 - MSL Commission and Networking Task Force Planning Retreat Continues (MSL Conference Room in Helena)

February 2, 2005 - MSL Commission Meeting (MSL Conference Room in Helena)

For more details: http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html

BIG SKY LIBRARIES

Number 90 November/December/January 2004

An Evening @ Montana Libraries

By Sara Groves, Communications/Marketing Coordinator

On January 31, 2005, legislators, librarians, and library supporters from throughout Montana are invited to attend "An Evening @ Montana Libraries," or Library Day. The evening promises good food, music, and conversation, plus the opportunity to speak with attending senators and representatives about library-related issues.

"An Evening @ Montana Libraries" will be held at the Montana State Library (1515 East Sixth Avenue in Helena) on Monday, January 31, 2005 from 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. A full dinner buffet will be served, and the Parlor Pickers, a Helena-area bluegrass group, will offer entertainment. Traditionally, over 200 people attend the event, including many senators and representatives from throughout Montana who are concerned about Montana's libraries.

"'An Evening @ Montana Libraries' is sometimes the only opportunity that librarians have during the legislative session to sit and talk with legislators about library issues, such as funding," said Diane Gunderson, co-chair of the event and volunteer coordinator at the Montana State Library. "I hope that librarians and library supporters from around the state will make a point to attend this important evening, and voice their concerns to legislators."

"An Evening @ Montana Libraries" is sponsored by the Montana Library Association and the Natural Heritage Program.

Reaching Out to Save Montana's Libraries

By Christie Briggs, Montana Talking Book Library Supervisor

The Montana Talking Book Library recently entered a brand new world - the world of fundraising. As equipment, cassettes, and recording books and magazines for our patrons becomes more expensive, and as our budget has faced many cuts in the last several years, we have had to turn to raising private dollars in order to maintain the high level of service that our patrons have come to expect.

For the first time, the Montana Talking Book Library ran a paid advertisement soliciting funds. We will also begin work on developing a fundraising brochure, planned giving opportunities, and additional fund raising avenues in the start of 2005. Without private fundraising and outreach, the Montana Talking Book Library might have to reduce staff (and we already rely very heavily on our 100+ volunteers to make up for staff we do not have) or cut services to our patrons. Unfortunately, MTBL is not alone as more libraries face tough decisions like our own.

In FY2004, state spending on public libraries in Montana equaled 36 cents per Montanan, which is alarming enough. However, what is even more alarming is that this number is decreasing steadily and rapidly - down six cents in the last two years. This decrease has resulted in fewer staff in Montana's libraries, fewer hours that Montana's libraries are open, and fewer available resources for our patrons.

As library funding continues to decrease, it is increasingly up to library staff and Friends groups to raise much-needed capital for library expenses. Unfortunately, book sales and other traditional library fundraisers often do not make up the difference. Therefore, staff and Friends groups are shifting their priorities - from running the best possible library to making sure funds exist to keep the best possible library running.

Continued on page 2

A Message from the State Librarian

Darlene Staffeldt.

As many of you know, there have been several big changes here at the State Library. We have lost some cherished staff members, and as a result, we anticipate having many new people with new skills working to provide you and our own patrons with the best possible service.

We are also about to start construction to increase our capacity for staff, production and service. The new construction has already presented many challenges, and for those of you who have undertaken construction of your own facilities, you know exactly what I'm talking about! But, we hope that after construction is complete, we will have a more modern facility to answer the changing needs of the Montana State Library.

Even *Big Sky Libraries* is changing. This newsletter has served Montana's libraries and librarians well, and will continue to do so in its new capacity. We will shift to a quarterly publication, which will be eight pages long, beginning with this issue. *Big Sky Libraries* will also focus on one major theme per issue - and will examine that theme and the many ways it affects Montana's libraries in each article. This issue's theme is change, and I assure you that there are many changes in Montana's libraries to talk about!

I have jumped head-first into my own new position. In spite of the fact that I have been at the Montana State Library for 28 years, there is still a lot to learn as your new State Librarian. While many things have changed, one thing certainly hasn't: I vow to work as hard as possible to represent Montana's libraries, and to ensure a positive future for libraries and librarians in this state.

With every change, new challenges arise. But every challenge also presents opportunity - to learn, to adapt, to rise to the occasion, and to succeed in new ways. Perhaps librarians are aware of this more than many in other occupations, as libraries and thus, librarianship, have seen big changes in the past several years.

While many predicted the demise of libraries and librarians with the advent of the Internet and search engines like Google, we have instead become more valuable than ever. People turn to us now as information navigators, clearing the path and pointing patrons toward the information they need. We are now the "ultimate search engine," trained experts in finding information, wherever it is - in books, in archives, and on the Web.

One thing that hasn't changed, however, is that libraries continue to be places of opportunity. In fact, over 90% of respondents in an ALA survey indicated that they believe America's libraries are places of opportunity for education, self-help and access to technology. Studies show that when the economy goes down, library use goes up. And, as information becomes the great equalizer in today's society, libraries play an increasingly critical role in leveling the playing field by providing free access to technology and information resources to everyone.

As we all know from experience, change can mean good things like improved service, better work environments, better relationships, etc. The changes here at the State Library will be many, and I believe that they will impact what we do here, and as a result, what you do out there. Our changing environment here at the State Library will indeed provide many opportunities for us all.

Reaching Out to Save Montana's Libraries-continued from page 1

As the legislative session begins in January, we must all work together as advocates for increased state spending on libraries. There has never been a greater need to ensure that our state's libraries do not fall victim to budget cuts. During this current economic recession, our libraries are needed (and used!) more than ever. As information becomes the great equalizer in today's society, libraries play an increasingly critical role in leveling the playing field by providing free access to technology and information resources to everyone.

Fortunately for us, everyone loves libraries. But libraries can't live on love alone. In our new capacity as fund raisers and lobbyists, we are the voice for increased library funding. Please make your voice heard in the 2005 legislative session, in your community, and to your patrons. Let everyone know that libraries are hurting, and that only their support, including their financial support, will help.

Commission Report: Existential Life Lessons from David Bowie and Mahatma Gandhi

By Donald Allen

Donald Allen

"Ch-ch-ch-changes" ~ David Bowie

Why is it that many bands are one-hit wonders or have a brief, shining period of success and then fade into oblivion only to be heard from again on compilations and TV shows, such as "Rock of the 80s?

Because they don't change; they allow themselves to become stale and outdated.

David Bowie - Ziggy Stardust - rock star, actor, and icon is arguably one of the most malleable pop culture figures of all time. He has migrated from one generation to the next with unabashed transformation, living, in effect, his own lyrics to "Changes:" singing "time may change me, but I can't trace time."

Librarianship, like Bowie, is arguably one of the most malleable professions in recent years. Looking at Bowie as an example, we know that we must continue to embrace change in order to stay relevant to this and future generations. And, also like Bowie, while we embrace change, we must continue to be what people love about libraries - we certainly don't want to turn off our loyal fan base.

As a result, we still introduce people to the love of reading, but we also introduce people to computers, email and the Internet. We have story hours for children and parents, and we also have classes on how to surf the Internet designed specifically for parents and children (as well as for many other age groups). We provide reading lists for all ages, as well as lists of Web sites.

While libraries and librarians could have turned their backs on the digital revolution, we instead embraced this major change and, if anything, helped to propel it forward. Libraries are, after all, playing an increasingly important role by providing free access to information resources and technology to everyone. Is there anything else out there that can make that claim?

Libraries will continue to be the great equalizer in our society by providing this free access to information, and also by showing people how to access the information they need - whether it's on the Web or buried somewhere in an ancient book. Teaching others how to find, use and evaluate information is a unique skill that librarians bring to a society suffering from information overload.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." ~ Gandhi

So far, we have been leaders in the digital revolution. Yet I keep hearing the question, "Won't the Internet make libraries obsolete?" As we all can attest, new technology is making libraries even more vitally important, especially in rural and under-served communities throughout Montana where people often do not have access to the Internet at home.

Libraries have always been places of opportunity, self-help and lifelong learning where we can find what we need for our health, school, jobs and family. And with today's library technology, libraries are reaching beyond their walls to connect to the larger, global community. Polson reaches Paris and Big Sky accesses Beijing. Today's library technology means that information from around the world is just a few clicks away and affords us opportunities like never before.

There is no doubt that libraries are changing, and will continue to change as new ways of managing information become available. The libraries that we know and love today will likely be very different places with very different offerings in just a few years. Changing and moving forward is continuous, hard work. Librarians must continue to embrace change, while simultaneously leading the way for change in information management - being the change we wish to see in the world.

Big Changes for Darby Community Public Library

By Jenny Johnson of The Ravalli Republic

On September 23rd, friends of the Darby Community Library, along with Forest Service officials and community members joined in the library's grand opening and ribbon cutting.

Touted as the "Sistine Chapel of small-diameter round wood," Forest Service officials cite the library as an example of using underutilized small timber. The 5,000-square-foot library is a national demonstration showcasing a new type of

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Same Change, Different Day

By Tori Orr, Manager, Information Services

"In 1994, if a political party or interest group had even a rudimentary Web site, it was a pioneer in the Information Age. In 1995, if a party or organization had a flashy series of Web pages that included graphics, audio, video or text, it was hip. In 1996, if a candidate for president had a Web site, he would likely give out the address during televised appearances... By 1997, if a party or interest group still did not have a Web site, it was run by a bunch of idiots... The Web is potentially the greatest thing since the postal system and the telephone for political interest groups." ~ Kevin Hill & John Hughes, writers of Cyberpolitics: Citizen Activism In the Age of the Internet.

Just ten years ago no one would have imagined the avalanche of change that Internet and Web access would create in politics. Until then, we accepted that every few years a new state legislature would come into session; some discussions would be held in relative privacy; groups and tireless lobbyists with well-hidden connections would campaign tirelessly for their own brand of change; and citizens would have to work pretty hard to keep up with it all. Contrast that with this last election and the many grass-roots efforts created and coordinated by citizens all over the country and you get a sense of the increase in participatory democracy that only means good things for government.

Welcome to 2005 where politics, news and entertainment seem to blend into a swirling vortex of constant change. Whether you like your politics "lite" and prefer to catch up on the unfiltered political satire of Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* without subscribing to cable television, or you take your political diet more seriously, resources on the Internet allow you to become as politically active as your schedule will allow. In 1993, it was nearly impossible to simply check on the work being done with your tax dollars by your own representatives in your own backyard. Today there are many free, non-partisan, non-profit sites like **http://www.Stateline.org,** which has twice been honored with National Press Club journalism awards for compiling daily reports linking to the top political news in the 50 state capitols, along with news stories and analysis by its staff of Washington-based reporters.

This year marks the 59th Legislature of our beautiful state and where better to check on the progress of the current session at **http://leg.state.mt.us**? If you'd rather trust your local newspaper for their editorial reporting, a bookmark to the Montana Newspaper Association's guide to all our state's newspapers online at **http://www.mtnewspapers.com/links** is a lifesaver.

There is even a glimpse into future experiments with the bigger picture with an attractive homegrown tool called Newsmap **(http://www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/newsmap.cfm)** that approaches news with a visual reflection of "the constantly changing landscape of the Google News aggregator" **(http://news.google.com).** At this Web site, each colored box is a different topic; each color's intensity implies change over time, and each size of clickable news-box represents the number of referring articles, or popularity of each topic. What's popular in the U.S. compared to Canada? This tool tries to provide a quick color-coded indication of global trends in news reporting.

To say that time equals change has become a cliché despite the cyclical nature of politics. Whether it is the change instigated by our current crop of new legislators or very familiar data visualized in new ways with different tools, change is certainly the only thing we can all count on, over and over again.

Montana Shared Catalog Adds 19 New Libraries

By Sarah McHugh, Montana Shared Catalog Administrator

Members of the Montana Shared Catalog (MSC) welcomed 19 new libraries to the consortium this October. The new libraries include the BridgerNet consortium, several school libraries and several small to mid-size public libraries primarily in the western and south central part of the state.

The following libraries are now part of the MSC:

- Bozeman Public Library
- Belgrade Community Library
- Three Forks Community Library
- West Yellowstone Public Library
- Park High School Library
- Clancy Community Library
- Drummond School Community Library
- Twin Bridges Public Library
- Ronan School Libraries (K. William Harvey Elementary, Ronan Middle School, Ronan High School)
- Meagher County/City Library
- Thompson-Hickman County Library
- Hellgate School District #4 Libraries (Hellgate Elementary School K-2, Hellgate Intermediate School 3-5, Hellgate Middle School 6-8)

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Public Relations Projects

Changes in the Field

By Sara Groves, Communications/Marketing Coordinator

(Starting with this issue, Big Sky Libraries will run a regular feature called "PR Projects." This feature will provide PR and marketing tips, tools, and resources for libraries to use.)

Libraries and librarians are good at lots of things, but they are especially good at changing with the times. The past decade has been one of enormous change for libraries - changes that the general public might not realize. We need to do a better job of promoting these changes, and demonstrating our continued value to our patrons and our communities.

Your local newspaper is a great tool to talk to library patrons and potential patrons about the many changes in your library. Be sure to invite the press to preview any construction that is done at your site. Send out press releases announcing new computers or better and faster Internet access. Write a regular column in the paper highlighting the latest and most popular books, DVDs, CDs, services, or speakers. Offer to write an op-ed about the changes in libraries that make us more important than ever.

Below is a sample letter to the editor that I encourage you to send to your local newspaper. Check with your newspaper regarding how they like to receive letters (most are now done by e-mail.) Be sure to include your daytime phone in case they call with questions, follow-up, or edits they would like approved. You can also download the letter in Word format from the MSL Web site at: **http://msl.state.mt.us/pio/LettertoEditor.doc.**

Dear Editor:

A question for your readers: When did you last spend time @ your library?

If it has been a while, you'll probably be pleasantly surprised at how libraries have embraced the latest technological advances while maintaining the traditional programs and services that have made them one of America's most cherished institutions.

Today's libraries, however, are not the quiet places you remember - they are dynamic and energetic places where the whole community comes together. Libraries provide children with their first exposure to books; teach parents how to safely navigate the Internet with their children; provide small business owners with information on how to turn a profit; and provide students young and old with the skills they need to find, use and evaluate information.

As our world has changed, librarians have been there to make sure our libraries are up-to-date and viable for people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds. Librarians are leaders in helping people find what they are looking for - in print and online. The personal, professional and friendly assistance they offer without any strings attached makes librarians truly unique.

Libraries have always been places of education, self-help and boundless opportunities and an indelible part of the American dream. I encourage everyone to visit our library and witness firsthand how we continue to provide important services in this quickly changing world. Also, as the legislative session begins, please remind our government officials that libraries and librarians provide a vital resource in these changing times.

Today is a great time to see what's new @ your library. Stop by today!

Sincerely,
(Name, title, daytime phone number)

Montana Shared Catalog Adds 19 New Libraries - continued from page 4

- Laurel Public Library
- Madison Valley Public Library
- Montana Legislative Reference Center
- Montana Academy Library
- Clinton Elementary
- Montana Bible College Library
- Thompson Falls School Libraries (Thompson Falls Elementary School, Thompson Falls Junior High School, Thompson Falls High School)

The new libraries either migrated bibliographic and patron records or chose to do retrospective cataloging once they joined the consortium. MSC members traveled to new member libraries in order to train their librarians in MSC cataloging specifics. Since the majority of titles already exist in the catalog, these libraries have been able to quickly find a title and attach their local holding information. Following required MSC new library training, these libraries will go live in the system. Those that migrated data have either gone live during October and November, or are close to doing so.

The MSC now includes 43 libraries and branches, and serves 56 separate library buildings. The next phase of adding libraries (Phase Four), will get underway early next year, with implementation taking place during Fall, 2005.

Montana Natural Resources - The Online Version

By Sue Crispin, Natural Heritage Program Director

In the past five years, there has been an explosion of Internet resources about Montana's biological resources. Five years ago, most of the reference material on Montana's flora and fauna was in printed form, and much of it was either fairly technical (e.g., scientific manuals) or in scattered bits and pieces (e.g., magazine articles).

While printed references continue to be invaluable and will likely remain so for a long time, the Internet has provided those of us in the information business with incredibly powerful tools and many options for getting data and information out to users - and also for empowering individuals to contribute to that information pool.

Folks interested in Montana's flora and fauna now have access to a broad array of information from their desktop (or local library) computer from the Natural Heritage Program's Web site at **http://www.mtnhp.org.** For instance, you could look up any Montana bird in the Animal Field Guide to see pictures, listen to a bird's song, and learn about its status, distribution and ecology. You could then check the Montana Bird Distribution database to find out where it has been observed in Montana over the past 30 years. If you had seen one yourself, you could enter the date and location, and contribute to building this resource. If you wanted to know about the North American status and distribution of this or any other species, one click on the Heritage Web site would take you to NatureServe Explorer, where you will find a color-coded status map for each species, built from the state Heritage Programs' databases.

If you want to learn more about the flora and fauna in a certain area of Montana, you can use the Bird Distribution database to generate a list of bird sightings reported for any area of the state. You can also use the NRIS Digital Atlas (**http://nris.state.mt.us**) to find out whether any plant or animal Species of Concern have been documented for that area. For areas over 10,000 acres, you can generate a list of those species, and with one click, open the Field Guide to learn all about them.

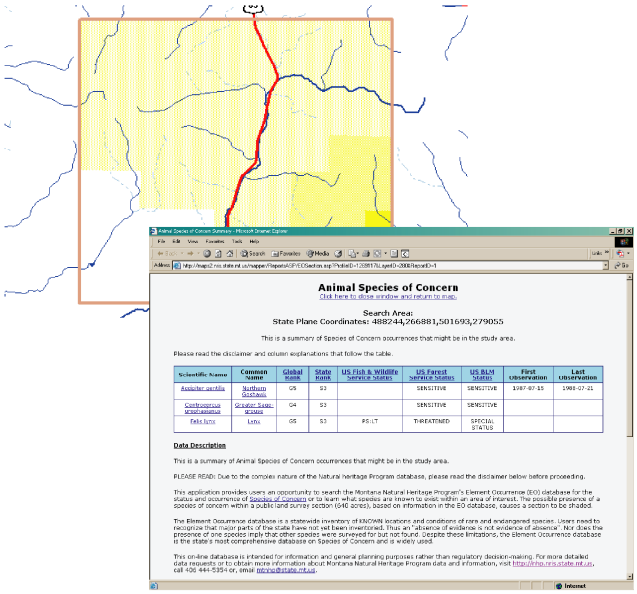
The NRIS Digital Atlas also offers a variety of information about wildlife and habitats in Montana. These include maps of land cover (NLCD), soils (NRCS), wetlands (NWI), and weeds, as well as detailed information on specific wetland sites (collected by the Heritage Program, DEQ and the University of Montana).

From the Heritage Program Web site, you will also find links to other Web sites with a wealth of information. For example, from the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks site, you can generate a list of fish species for any stream segment in the state. You can also find maps showing the distribution and winter range for game species (mammals and birds), and can learn about how to attract or manage different kinds of critters in "Living with Wildlife."

Here are just a few examples of other valuable flora and fauna resources on plants and animals that you can find from the Heritage Program Web site (click Animals or Plants, and the Related Sites):

PLANTS National Database, NRCS
USDA Fire Effects Information System
BIRDNET, Ornithological Information Source
Mammal Species of the World Web Site

Happy Trails!



New Ways of Working: Montana Partner Libraries

By Bruce Newell, Montana Library Network

Change is the only constant in most of our lives. We get older. We get wiser. We get better looking. Whatever... Throughout both our private and work lives, for better or worse, unrelenting change is a constant.

Library patrons want to find what they are looking for and get their hands on library materials as quickly and as easily as possible. In the 'good' old days, library patrons, yearning to quench their thirst for obscure or out-of-town knowledge, were mostly out of luck. Interlibrary loan was not an option for most mortals and for those fortunate few scholars with ILL privileges, it was exasperatingly slow. Union catalogs were printed, expensive, really heavy, hard to read and even harder to find. Finding a library holding a desired book took skill and considerable patience.

Things have changed. We can now, from anyplace under our glorious big sky, search library holdings in Montana and around the world using MLNCAT. Instead of relying solely upon our library's collection, we can pick and choose from 57 million titles. And just this year, five Montana libraries have decided to virtually combine their collections. As a result, these libraries give their patrons just what they want-quick and easy access to a lot of good stuff.

For five Montana Shared Catalog libraries, their collection has more than doubled as they have flung open their bibliographic doors to one another, allowed patrons to place holds on one another's collections, and devised next-day courier services to speed fulfillment.

Montana Shared Catalog Partner libraries include:

- Bitterroot Public Library (Hamilton)
- Flathead County Library (Kalispell, Big Fork, Columbia Falls, and Whitefish)
- Hearst Free Library (Anaconda)
- Missoula Public Library (Seeley Lake, Swan Valley)
- Polson City Library (coming soon)

To make this happen, each library has adopted the same circulation rules: new items circulate for 10 days, and everything else circulates for 28 days. Fines are ten cents a day. The payoff for this standardization has been huge (see the corresponding table). In the Missoula and Flathead public libraries, the number of books available to one anothers' users has more than doubled. Between Rimrock Stage and the US Mail, materials are arriving in the requesting library the very next day.

If, for example, in Kalispell you placed a hold on an on-shelf gardening book from Anaconda, you would expect to see the book in one or two days. And because 'holds' are the requesting mechanism, and there is a steady stream of books moving between libraries, the per-item cost is but a fraction of that of traditional interlibrary loan. As the project progresses, we'll determine the cost transactions and let you know what we learn.

What we do know is that this is wildly popular with library users. Patrons love having a really deep pool to in which to fish. In July and August 2004, Missoula Public Library lent 3,285 items to Partner libraries, and borrowed 2,626. During all of fiscal year 2003, MPL lent 1,132 items to all Montana libraries, and borrowed 748. Predictably upbeat, Bette Ammon, Missoula Public Library's Director, notes that being a partner library has doubled MPL's collection for an estimated $10,000 in annual shipping charges. Bette and her board figure that this is a cost effective way to delight patrons. Where else could she get her hands on 175,000 items for $10,000 year? Did I mention how happy patrons are in each of these libraries? They are deliriously happy.

By forming tight cooperative relationships, Partner libraries have made real a little of tomorrow's library landscape. They've had to change the way they do things. They have to trust each other. They've had to make compromises as they adopted a shared circulation policy. By working together, automation has made it possible for Partner libraries to give patrons what they want, when they want it, at a price libraries can afford.

And come to think of it, maybe this isn't such a big change after all. For 150 years, Montanans have been helping each other build barns. Neighbors built the West and are still, together, building it today.

Materials sent between MSC Partners, July 1, 2004-August 31, 2004:

	Materials Borrowed from other Partner Libraries	Materials Lent to other Partner Libraries
Bitterroot Public Library (Hamilton)	1,047	918
Flathead County Library (Kalispell)	3,549	2,437
Hearst Free Library (Anaconda)	184	766
Missoula Public Library	2,626	3,285
Totals:	7,406	7,406

Big Changes for Darby Library continued from page 3

construction using small-diameter logs for beams and trusses. It was constructed using local contractors and suppliers, incorporating as many local supplies as possible, Veryl Kosteczko, chair of the library board, said.

The library's high ceilings and open design feature dark stained logs and wood trim. It includes a conference room that was designed for community use, said Ted Almgren, co-chairman of the library's building committee, and a children's room and outdoor enclosure. Below stained glass in a high window, a fireplace is the centerpiece of a relaxing cozy reading area.

"We've never had a place where people could sit and relax," Almgren said.

"It's a warm and inviting place for the community to come and enjoy the library," Kosteczko said.

The new space also has new computers and will soon be networked with libraries in western Montana.

"When we get online with Western Library Network, we can check out books from other libraries," Kosteczko said.

The Forest Service and its Madison, Wis.-based forest products laboratory was looking to demonstrate more uses for small-diameter timber, also called round wood. Library folks were excited about using timber construction - Darby is historically a timber town - and it was a perfect match, Almgren said.

Thanks to contributions from community members, businesses, and grants, the library is now open without any debt and with more room to draw in library users.

Kosteczko said the library has already drawn in more users with the upgraded computer system. Previously, the Darby Community Library had about 30 patrons a week; now between 40 and 50 people visit a day.

"We're going to be holding programs and doing all of the things that libraries do for communities," she said.

(This article is reprinted with permission from the *Ravalli Republic* and reporter Jenny Johnson.)

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