



## Media Guide for Librarians

### Using the Campaign News Release Template

See the news release template: “Information spells growth in Montana communities.” Clicking the link downloads the document from the Community Toolkit webpage.

The campaign news release is designed for local library directors (or library communications/PR staff) to customize to be of maximum interest to local news outlets and audiences. Publications in urban markets may get reprinted in dailies, but the best bet for publication in Montana’s popular weekly papers is YOU. You probably also have a good relationship with your local radio station(s).

Before you distribute the release to news outlets, add (fill in) statistics, quotes or statements that are: authentic; persuasive; and locally relevant to your community.

It’s not likely to surprise anyone if a librarian says, “Libraries are valuable”...the news is: lots of people in economic development, the business sector and local government use the information services of Montana libraries every day. They value the library too.

### Enlist spokespersons—local champions—to support the message

Recruit successful local business owners, influential community leaders and/or public officials to provide quotes and help you gain media publicity. Find those who will support and diversify what you have to say about the people who rely on your library. Connect these champions with local news outlets or invite them to attend an interview or meeting with you.

#### What should I ask them to say about our library?

1. Has the library provided value to you, a friend, or a family member? How so? If not, you can talk about how libraries provide value when it comes to economic development.
2. How libraries and the information services they provide have value for workers, employers, business and commerce, business start-ups and business recruitment.
3. Why people should know that libraries have evolved to have a key role in the information age.
4. Encourage them to be genuine and enthusiastic, and say what they really feel is true.
5. Share the campaign videos and other materials with them.

#### Who should I ask?

Remembering that our main message is about the value of libraries for economic and community growth, consider geographic information professionals (county planning office?), Department of Emergency Services, law enforcement, banking, insurance and real estate professionals. These are all likely users of information services from Montana’s libraries. (If they use Cadastral, they are using a library service.) Do you have a local or regional economic development agency to contact?

Your patrons may contribute their statements or personal stories about why they value the library.

- Patrons who use library computers, resources, equipment and services for their business
- Local community groups
- Chamber of Commerce president or officer
- Local government officials
- Library board members
- Well-known farm or ranch family

## How to Get an Interview

### Contact the right person

- Newspaper editor or a reporter that covers this topic (city/local gov't; business; or education)
- Find contact information for your county newspaper at <https://www.mtnewspapers.com/membership-directory-list-contacts-web-addresses/>
- Radio hosts of interview shows or community news; these may be the morning DJs, news director or noon news reporter
- TV news director; possibly a news anchor (depending on the station)

### Communicate in their preferred method

- Newspaper journalists prefer email; you can follow up with a phone call if you don't hear back. You can also back up your email contact by finding them on Twitter; many journalists have a Twitter account.
- Radio – phone call may be most effective; then send an email so they have a record
- TV – most likely prefer email with follow-up phone call

### Deliver your “pitch.” Briefly spell out...

- Why is this news?
- How many people are impacted and how deeply is this impact felt?
- Why should the audience/readership care about this? Who should care?
- How is this timely?
- Who is the source?
- What other groups and individuals are supporting this? [Montana Library Association, Montana Association of Geographic Information Professionals, MACo, Montana Economic Developers Association, Montana Business Assistance Connection, Sarah Calhoun of Red Ants Pants, others]
- Provide names of your confirmed spokesperson(s) or champions.

### Preparation

- Be prepared. Know in advance what your most important points are.
- Provide a list of possible questions to the interviewer. Give them enough background so they know what questions to ask. [Share the campaign Q & A with your interviewer.]
- Be able to substantiate your facts. [See campaign Fact Sheet—and your library statistics.]
- Most journalists will do their own background research or add information. Have suggested websites or other sources ready. [See page 4.]
- Show up early. Media sources often operate on tight schedules. Know their deadline.
- Very dark or very light colors and complex print patterns do not show well in video or photos. Dress in medium hues and solid colors, if possible.
- Familiarize yourself with your interviewer's style and the program format ahead of time; tune in or read the reporter's work before your interview.
- Know what the journalist is interested in. For instance, if you are talking to a business reporter, be prepared to show how this topic impacts workers, employers or economic factors. [See Economic Development, Workforce and Entrepreneurship Talking Points.]

## The Interview

Use the Fact Sheet, Talking Points and Q & A in the Information Powers Growth Toolkit.

Organize your talking points into categories, such as:

- WHO uses the library today...
- WHAT people are doing at the library (other activities beyond books); what is different about today's library?
- WHY people need libraries and why they should support access to public information services in the community.
- HOW people can support their library (visit the library to see what's going on; reach out to their legislator to ask for support for libraries; encourage others to visit the library; go to your library website if they are interested in downloading books or finding a schedule of events; go to the Powering MT Facebook page for interesting information about today's libraries.)

Deliver Your Message

- Choose three to four points you wish to make—then make them.
- Stay on topic.
- Use facts and anecdotes. [See Fact Sheet, your library statistics, provide examples of patrons whose success was propelled at the library.]
- Be alert, enthusiastic, concise and positive.
- Smile. A smile can be “heard” even over the radio.

### KEY CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

- Information powers growth—for people, for businesses and for communities.
- Libraries have evolved into a vital role in today's information-driven economy.
- Libraries in Montana provide professional information services that the public finds trustworthy and reliable.
- Libraries provide services and resources to help business start-ups and small business.
- Access to public information creates an environment of opportunity for incubating new business.
- Libraries provide computers, Internet access and technical support to help people apply for jobs, build their job skills, take online exams, and enter the workforce.
- Libraries are the cornerstone of the community.
- Professional information services are critical in maintaining public access to reliable and authoritative information.
- Montana geospatial data managed by the Montana State Library is used every day—and provides a great advantage to businesses located in or looking to locate in our state.

### KEY WORDS & PHRASES

Cornerstone of community. Foundation for success. Libraries in the 21st century. Professional information services. Business incubator; economic incubator. Community resource that builds workforce.

## CAMPAIGN CALLS TO ACTION

Power your community. Support your library.

Come to the library and see what's happening; discover how people are using their library today. Encourage others to visit the library or attend a program or event.

Talk to your legislators and let them know that our libraries need and deserve their support.

### Be Believable

- Be personal. Use the interviewer's name in the course of the interview and look at him/her.
- Have a story ready. People respond best to stories. Brief anecdotes play well on radio and television. A story about real people (even anonymous) will help viewers comprehend the subject.
- Be aware of your body language and posture. Communicate confidence.
- Focus on the interviewer and not on the camera.
- Be conversational but passionate.

### Be Concise

- Be aware of the sound bite/quote. Remember that a 10-minute interview may wind up being 20 seconds on the air or a few lines in the newspaper. It is essential to crystallize your thoughts in a few hard-hitting sentences.
- Talk in terms of the benefits of public libraries for individuals, families, workers, employers and the community as a whole.
- Keep language non-inflammatory, simple and candid.
- Don't over-answer.

### Provide Further Reference: FOR MORE INFORMATION

Facebook: @InformationPowersMT

YouTube: Powering MT [<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoQ8RHYFU2AYNa8LEI4jbbg>]  
[msl.mt.gov](http://msl.mt.gov)

Local phone number

### Extras

- Ask if the interview will appear in an online version or in social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. If so, share the link with your own contacts, social media and website for additional exposure. PLEASE SHARE information and links relating to media coverage with [randi@banik.com](mailto:randi@banik.com) and [stefanie@banik.com](mailto:stefanie@banik.com).
- If you know in advance when the interview will appear, share that information (with the Montana State Library and your own followers) to increase the audience.
- Consider encouraging additional interviews with partner agencies. A different perspective on the topic could make a second story and create additional exposure.
- Don't forget online news sources, such as digital news publications and local bloggers.

### For Campaign or Media Assistance, Contact:

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