

Montana State Library Announces Merger Between Natural Resource Information System and Base Map Service Center

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(HELENA)-- The Montana State Library announced today a definitive merger agreement between its highly successful program, the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) and the Base Map Service Center (BMSC). The Base Map Service Center, formerly a program of the State of Montana's Department of Administration State Information Technology Services Division, is charged with developing, supporting, delivering and promoting enterprise geographic data and the spatial technologies to all levels of government and the public. All seven BMSC employees are now housed at the Montana State Library.

The merger will offer the State of Montana the most effective and efficient management of geographic information possible as the programs work together to acquire, integrate, enhance, preserve, and disseminate geographic information for the State of Montana.

"The State Library is already recognized as one of the nation's leaders in managing geographic information," said Jennie Stapp, Digital Library Director and Chief Information Officer at the Montana State Library. "The merger between NRIS and BMSC is a decisive move that accelerates Montana's geographic information strategy and offers even greater value to our partners and patrons."

"In addition to the clear strategic benefits of combining two highly complementary organizations, we can create substantial value for the State of Montana through increased flexibility for both staff and management, better utilization of shared resources, cost structure improvements, and access to new growth opportunities," said Stapp. "At a particularly challenging time for state government, this combination vaults us into a leadership role with customers and partners. This merger will enable us to provide expanded content and outstanding access to ensure Montana remains a center of excellence for digital geographic information."

In partnership with private sector, local, state, and tribal governments and in cooperation with the federal government, the Montana State Library manages the Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI), a digital representation of the physical and cultural landscape of Montana. These framework data layers are fast becoming a critical element for policy review at the national, state, and local levels. This information can help improve business inefficiencies; route traffic; study sensitive species after an oil spill recovery; plan for future development; spur economic development; deliver necessary immunization services to children in Montana communities; and much more.

"We are committed to making access to geographic information for our patrons and partners easier and more efficient. In doing so, we are creating a new kind of geographic information leader for all sectors of Montana," said Stapp. "This leadership is founded on our patrons' and partners' success; the State Library's world-class data management, enhancement, preservation, and dissemination; and best of industry products and services.

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information, visit <http://msl.mt.gov> or contact Sara Groves, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, at (406) 444-5357 or via e-mail at: sgroves@mt.gov.

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