CARES Act funds support access to online learning and e-books

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Montanan's online lives will soon be enriched through new online and downloadable e-books, audiobooks, and educational materials thanks to the Montana State Library and $250,000 in CARES Act funds awarded by Governor Bullock's administration. Partnering with public libraries, schools libraries and academic libraries, the funding will enhance three different collections to support life long learners, MontanaLibrary2Go, a streaming and downloadable collection of popular and bestseller e-books and audiobooks available to all Montanans through their public libraries; the Montana Schools shared e-books collection; and the TRAILS academic library group, which provides online learning materials to college students across the state.

"Montana was built through neighbors helping neighbors," said Montana State Librarian, Jennie Stapp. "During this pandemic, it only makes sense to leverage our financial resources to overcome the digital divide in Montana."

MontanaLibrary2Go, a program of the Montana State Library in partnership with public libraries across Montana, provides over 50,000 books for checkout in ebook or audiobook format, accessible through any electronic device or browser. One in ten Montanans has already registered to use MontanaLibrary2Go. The collection, selected by Montana librarians, is an eclectic mix ranging from the latest bestsellers and recent award-winning titles to classics.

The Montana Schools shared collection provides a similar service for over 13,000 elementary and high school students in 133 schools across Montana, with age-appropriate titles selected by school librarians.

The TRAILS academic library group used its allotment of CARES funds to add 230 e-books and primary source documents to its research databases in order to support students' success in online learning.

"Libraries exist to provide access to high-quality information sources and this partnership will benefit university students as well as the citizens of the state," said Kenning Arlitsch, Dean of the Library at Montana State University.

"Whether used for learning or entertainment, these online resources help Montanans stay connected, they enrich our lives, and leave us a little better off than we were before," said Stapp.

The Montana State Library helps all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services. For more information about the Montana State Library, visit http://msl.mt.gov.