

# Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

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April 2023

## Montana Aviation Conference Draws Record Crowd

The 38th annual, Aviation Organizations of Montana's Montana Aviation Conference in Billings hosted a diverse group of presenters, speaking on topics from airspace to medicine, search and rescue, safety, regulations, stories of adventure, and much more.

Three excellent keynote speakers entertained and educated audiences during luncheons and banquets: Brigadier General Kendall Switzer, Mark Baker, and Betty Darst. The exhibit hall was full, and over 440 people gathered for the event. The Montana Pilots Association partnered with Robert Peccia and Associates and Edwards Jet Center to offer a static display and social at the Billings airport Friday afternoon.

Four Wright Brothers Master Pilot awards for 50 years of flying were awarded to John Leiberherr, Michael Pardis, Roger Meggers, and John Tronstad. One Charles Taylor Master Mechanic award was presented to Thomas Willis. In addition, \$39,000 in scholarships were also awarded to deserving recipients.

The 2024 Aviation Organizations of Montana's Montana Aviation Conference is scheduled to be held February 29-March 2, 2024, at the Copper King Hotel in Butte. We can't wait to see you there!

Thanks to all who spoke, volunteered, sponsored, exhibited, attended, and enjoyed this year's conference; you make the conference a success! We hope you'll join us again next year in Butte!



Photos clockwise from top left: Kendall Switzer speaks at the opening luncheon; a US Air Force C-130 open for tours at Edwards Jet Center; color guard presents flags; a 1955 T-34 displayed at the Edwards Jet Center static display.



C-130 photo courtesy of Keely Zimmerman Photography.

# Montanans Earn Distinguished Recognition

Ridgeline Aviation, headquartered in Bozeman with a second campus in Billings, was named the best flight school in the Northwest Mountain Region for 2023. Additionally, Summit Aviation of Bozeman received a distinguished flight school award.

For the third time, Joe Kuberka from Blue Goose Aviation in Polson and for the second time Melissa Harlow of Bozeman have been recognized as a top distinguished flight instructors in the region. This award was only given to six flight instructors in the Northwest!

The awards come from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association 2023 annual flight training experience survey.

Congratulations!



Tim Conway, Administrator

*Montana and the Sky*  
Montana

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# Pilot Survey Open for Restricted Airspace Proposed Near Townsend

The US Air Force has put forth a proposal to establish an aerial gunnery range and restricted airspace near Townsend.

The Air Force is requesting affected users of this airspace to take a survey to assess potential operational impacts to the area and gather your comments and feedback.

The survey can be accessed by visiting:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7K8YC2M>.

# Courtesy Car Grant Application Period open April 1 – May 31

**Reminder:** The Airport Courtesy Car Application period is from April 1-May 31. There are up to four reimbursable grants of up to \$5,000 available for a courtesy car. A municipality or third party may apply. If you would like to see a courtesy car at your airport, talk with your airport manager. It may be helpful to learn that new legislation has also reduced the insurance requirements for vehicles purchased with state grant funds. Information can be found at: <https://leg.mt.gov/> by searching for SB103. The application and more information about the program can be found at: <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/courtesy-cars.shtml>.

Please note that the link for the online application is available beginning April 1 and closes at 5 p.m. on May 31.

For more information, contact Stephen Torske at the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Aeronautics Division at 406-444-9569.



# Up-to-date NOTAMs Provide Critical Safety Net

A recent phone call with an aeromedical pilot has reminded us at the MDT Aeronautics Division of the importance of Notices to Air Missions (NOTAM)s and those who place them.

Feedback provided by medivac operators described how critical weather, NOTAMs, and runway information is to making dispatch decisions for medical flights. For example, weather cameras are becoming more frequently used and relied upon as they increase in numbers, but NOTAMs are the existing format for finding and reviewing critical flight information.

NOTAMs are placed by authorized personnel at their respective locations. At larger commercial service airports, there is usually a designated person or two on the airport staff. For state-owned airports in Montana, the MDT Aeronautics Division issues NOTAMs. At non-commercial public service airports, it is usually the airport managers. The quality of information available in the system is a direct product of the information put into the system by NOTAM managers. The intent of NOTAMs is to publish relevant safety information that is of a temporary nature, such as runway closures and conditions, rather than issues that are permanent in nature or that are a known risk.

This is a gentle reminder to those with the responsibility of placing NOTAMs to ensure they are updated anytime conditions change and provide reliable safety information to all pilots. Additionally, pilots are reminded to check NOTAMs as part of their preflight planning.

To search for NOTAMs, refer to <https://notams.aim.faa.gov/notamSearch/>.

# Montana Aeronautics Division ACE Experience

*By Eric Elisha, 2022 ACE Academy Participant*

In the summer of 2022, I attended the Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Academy camp. I thought this camp was really fun! We were up early in the morning, but it was totally worth it. Everyone got to fly a couple of planes from Helena to Three Forks and other airports. There were quite a few things to see including Canyon Ferry Lake and the Missouri River that runs from Three Forks.

The staff that was there were also very nice and gave everyone a drone to fly. One of the other things we did was tour Helena College. We got to see the aviation mechanic part of the school which had planes and helicopters in the hangars and a diesel truck program.

Another thing we did was tour the air traffic control tower. The tower has no radar and goes purely by sight with binoculars, which surprised me. The control tower, which looked the same as the tower in Billings from the outside, looked out-of-date as if it was from the Cold War era.

We also got to tour the Montana Air National Guard base which is north of the Helena airport and houses US Army Black Hawks and Chinooks. The CH-90 Chinook helicopters are the army "workhorses". They are also aging and have been used since the Vietnam War and been updated multiple times.

We got to see the airport firefighter training grounds which had steel model plane part so the firefighters can practice if an emergency happens at the airport. At the Exec Air hangar there were a few medical charter planes and an ambulance.

The next day we went to the airshow in Great Falls which featured the Airforce's Thunderbirds stunt team, a P-51 Mustang, an A-26 Invader, and finally a T-33 Shooting Star which was the trainer version of the P-80. There were a couple other planes doing some stunt tricks and other fighter planes as well.

My teacher Matt and the staff were kind and awesome in touring us! Without them, we would not have got this great experience! Thank you to them! This added to my love for airplanes and hopes for my future to work somewhere in the industry of the airlines. This was a great program and I highly recommend it!



The author (right) with friend Noah Sullivan at the Great Falls Airshow during the 2022 Montana Aeronautics ACE Academy.

*Photo courtesy of Eric Elisha.*

# In Remembrance of Roger Stradley

*Obituary by Lora and Anna Stradley*

Roger – a kind, gentle, funny, intelligent soul - passed away February 20, 2023. He lived an extraordinary life. Last of what was known in the wildlife biologist community as the Flying Stradleys, Roger was born to Jim and Margaret Stradley on April 7, 1938, in Sandpoint, Idaho. During his early years Roger lived in a lumber camp tar paper shanty along with his pet wolf and bear.

Roger moved to Belgrade, Montana with his parents in the early 1940s when Jim was stationed there to train fighter pilots for WWII. Gallatin Flying Service was born.

Roger received his pilot's license at 16 after being put through his paces by Jim. And so began a storied career. Roger was a bush pilot for 61 years logging about 80,000 hours. He held all the flying ratings except sea planes and airline transport. He was a commercial flight Instructor, instrument flight instructor, advanced ground instructor, Airframe & Engine mechanic with inspection authorization, and certified in single engine/multi engine – helicopter – glider.

His 61 year career included:

- 55 years - Wildlife surveys
- 26 years - Flight instructor
- 33 years - Ag pilot
- 25 years - Charter and air ambulance pilot
- 15 years - Fire patrol
- 10 years - Atmospheric research (cloud seeding)
- 20 years - Helicopter and glider pilot

Roger served a tour in Vietnam with the U.S. Army as a Green Beret and was a helicopter mechanic. The mission of his unit was to retrieve downed aircraft and occupants. He told stories of being the only soldier in the field with a downed helicopter trying to get it flying again.

On July 27, 1968 (727 like the airplane), Roger married Ann Chalmers and had two girls, Anna (Steve Roberts) and Lora. He has four step-grandchildren, Grant (Stephanie), Emery, Thomas, and James Roberts. His great loves were his family/friends, food, flying, fishing, wildlife, playing cards, music, dogs, God, and the Bible. We are sure he is flying his beloved yellow Super-Cub, 4593A, over the country he loved, keeping a watchful eye out for wildlife.

If you wish, memorial donations can be made to Warriors & Quiet Waters, <https://warriorsandquietwaters.org/>



*Roger Stradley pictured in his Piper Super Cub N4593A.  
Photo courtesy of the Stradley family.*

# CAP Provides Orientation Flights to Air Force Junior ROTC Cadets

*Contributed by Major Steven Heffel, CAP*

While the 2023 Montana Aviation Conference was in progress in Billings; Civil Air Patrol (CAP) aircraft and pilots, from CAP's Montana Wing HQ, and 14 Air Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) cadets from the new AFJROTC program at Lockwood High School converged at the Billings Airport to participate in CAP's cadet orientation flight program. This program is an extension of CAP's aviation education curriculum which has been a central feature of CAP's Cadet Program since its inception, in October 1942.

CAP pilots Lt Col Peter Graf of Missoula, Captain Greg Brainerd of Livingston, and Captain Jacob Ramirez of Billings conducted the orientation flights for the AFJROTC cadets at Edwards Jet Center, which hosted this aviation education activity on March 3-4. Each cadet orientation flight lasted about one hour and were conducted using two Cessna 182 and one Cessna 206 aircraft. The cadet orientation flight program follows the curriculum outlined in CAP's orientation flight syllabus, which covers topics including ground handling and preflight of aircraft; normal flight maneuvers; advanced flight maneuvers; interpretation of aircraft instruments; and aviation meteorology. These orientation flights add real world experience to CAP's aviation education curriculum for both CAP cadets and AFJROTC cadets, which are sister programs.

High school AFJROTC and college AFROTC cadets are allowed to participate in CAP's cadet orientation flight program thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AFJROTC/AFROTC HQ and CAP's National HQ. CAP's orientation flight syllabus offers orientation flight curriculum in hot-air-balloons, glider aircraft, and powered aircraft. However, currently, Montana Wing HQ is only capable of providing its orientation flight program in powered aircraft. But eventually, Montana Wing HQ hopes to be able to offer orientation flights in glider aircraft, as well. In the future, the Montana Wing of CAP plans to conduct cadet orientation flights for the AFJROTC programs in Billings and Great Falls and for the college AFROTC program at MSU-Bozeman. CAP's cadet orientation flight program is funded by the Department of the Air Force.

Please visit <https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com> for more program information.



*Air Force Junior ROTC cadets pose with a Civil Air Patrol Cessna 206 following orientation flights in Billings.*

*Photo courtesy of Major Steven Heffel, CAP*

# 2023 Montana Aviation Awareness Art Contest

**MDT Aviation Awareness Art Contest is designed to broaden knowledge of aviation and aerospace to promote careers in these industries. The contest is open to all students in grades K-12 in public, private, and home schools.**

## Categories:

**Category 1: Kindergarten - 5th Grade**

**Category 2: 6th - 8th Grade**

**Category 3: 9th - 12th Grade**

## Prizes:

**First Place in each category receives:**

1. A roundtrip flight to Helena for the winner and two guests (weight restrictions may apply due to aircraft limitations) for the awards ceremony on May 17, 2023.
2. All three first place winners will be presented with a trophy, certificate, and their framed artwork during the awards ceremony by a state official.
3. Following the ceremony, the winners and their families will tour the Helena Airport and enjoy lunch.

**Second & Third Place in each category receives:**

A trophy and Certificate of Achievement.

## Additional Information:

Artwork will be returned only to first place winners unless return is specifically requested. Winners will be contacted after the contest deadline. Arrangements will be made at that time for air travel to Helena.



## Entry Requirements:

1. Entries must be submitted no later than **Friday April 14, 2023.**
2. All Montana students in grades K-12 are eligible to enter.
3. Size of poster should not exceed 11" x 14."
4. Artwork must have an aviation theme—can be color or black and white in any medium.
5. All submissions must be original artwork (no tracing, etc.).
6. All artwork must be accompanied by a completed cover sheet (see below).
7. Previous years first place winners are welcome to participate but are not eligible for first place prize.

### **Cover Sheet Must Include:**

1. Name
2. Grade Level
3. Mailing Address
4. Phone Number
5. Email Address
6. Return Artwork? Yes or No.

### **Mail Artwork & Cover Sheet to:**

**MDT Aeronautics Division  
P.O. Box 200507  
Helena, MT 59620-0507**

### **More Information:**

**mdtad@mt.gov  
406-444-2506  
mdt.mt.gov/aviation**

# Calendar of Events

**May 19-21, 2023 — The Cub Doctor Seminar.** Roundup, MT. Clyde Smith, Jr., aka “The Cub Doctor,” will offer his Standard Seminar. Contact Clint Worman at 406-209-1802, or visit [www.cubdoctor.com](http://www.cubdoctor.com) for information and registration. Seating is limited.

**May 20, 2023 — Lincoln Airport Fly-in Breakfast.** The Lincoln Airport Foundation will host fly-in breakfasts from 8 to 11 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month from May to September. Donations will be accepted to support the airport courtesy car. For more information, contact Doug Vulcan at [vulcandg406@gmail.com](mailto:vulcandg406@gmail.com).

**May 27, 2023 — Spotted Bear Work Session.** Fly in to help with airstrip maintenance. Session starts at 9 a.m. Lunch provided by Flathead Montana Pilots Association Chapter.

**June 3, 2023 — First Annual Livingston Fly-In.** Livingston, MT. Free Pancake breakfast with donation preferred begins at 7:30 a.m. Proceeds promote general aviation access for local youth. Pilot briefing for real-world safe STOL performance competition (flown at 85% of Gross-Weight and minimum 90 minutes of usable fuel (self-calculated)) starts at 9 a.m. in the FBO. Sandbags will be available for participants to safely increase their weight. Engine start at 9:45 a.m., with prizes for the winners (including one for best go-around decision). For more information, contact Austin Timm at 406-220-0611.

**June 3, 2023 — Second Annual Wings and Wheels.** Sheridan, MT. Details: <https://www.sheridanpilots.org/events/wings-wheels-2023>

**June 10, 2023 — Butte Wings & Wheels.** Butte, MT. Fly-in or drive to Bert Mooney Airport for the third annual aircraft fly-in and car/truck show! Enjoy a free breakfast from 7:30-10:00 a.m. (donations accepted), Avgas discount at Butte Aviation, and fun for young and old alike, plus prizes! Miss Montana will be there, weather permitting. For more information, contact Walt McIntosh at 406-670-1846.

**June 17, 2023 — Del Bonita Work Session.** Starting at 9 a.m. Contact Stephen Torske for details: [storske@mt.gov](mailto:storske@mt.gov)

**June 17, 2023 — Meadow Creek Work Session.** Starts at 9:00 a.m. Bring your shovels to 0S1 and pitch in! Lunch provided.

**June 17, 2023 — Lincoln Airport Fly-in Breakfast.** Details above.

**June 17, 2023 — Twin Bridges Fly-in.** Starts at 8 a.m. pancake breakfast for a fee with a free lunch at 1 p.m. hosted by Ruby Valley Aviation. Young Eagle rides available. For details contact Kendra Horn: [kendra@rubyvalleyaviation.com](mailto:kendra@rubyvalleyaviation.com)

**June 20-25, 2023 — Flying Legends Victory Tour.** Helena, MT. Boeing B-17 and B-25 bomber tours and rides hosted by Exec Air at the Helena Regional Airport. Tours: \$15/person or \$30/family, Tues—Thurs 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri-Sun 2 – 6p.m. Rides available for a fee by booking online at [www.flyinglegendstour.com](http://www.flyinglegendstour.com).

**June 23-25, 2023 — Annual Missouri Breaks Fly-in.** Winifred, MT. Explore seven airstrips in the Upper Missouri Breaks, based out of Winifred. Restaurant available and some meals will be provided at the airport. Saturday will feature a fly out to Lewistown, MT, (KLWT), for a pancake breakfast put on by the Central Montana Hangar of Montana Pilots Association. Contact: [michael.vivion@gmail.com](mailto:michael.vivion@gmail.com)

**June 24, 2023 — Whitefish Fly-In.** Come to 58S for a fly-in June 24th for a free BBQ Lunch from 11 a.m.- 3 p.m! Donations accepted. For more information, contact Bill McKinney at 406-261-4385.

**June 24, 2023 — Choteau Fly-In.** 6:30-10 a.m. Free breakfast, donations welcome. Young Eagles airplane rides available. See and tour Miss Montana! For more information, contact Scott Gasvoda at 406-590-2836.

**July 15, 2023 — Lincoln Airport Fly-in Breakfast.** Details above.

**July 15, 2023 — Schafer Meadows Work Party.** Fly to 8U2 to help out. Work from 9 a.m.—5 p.m. Dinner provided.

**July 15-16, 2023 — St. Ignatius Fly-In.** Come to St. Ignatius, 52S, for a weekend of fun. Saturday, July 15 there will be a free barbeque, as well as helicopter rides available for purchase from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. Fly in Sunday, July 16 for a free huckleberry pancake breakfast, and more opportunities for affordable helicopter rides from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. For more information, contact Michael Kuefler at (406) 544-2274.

**July 21-23, 2023 — Big Sky International Balloon Rendezvous.** Billings, MT. Calling all hot air balloon pilots! Come gather with other balloon pilots and enthusiasts. There is limited space for balloons. Interested pilots can register at: <https://forms.gle/UcsA76r1WY8R8Ahg9>

**August 5-6, 2023 — Montana Antique Aircraft Association Fly-in.** Three Forks, MT.

**August 12-13, 2023 — Yellowstone International Airshow.** Billings, MT. Experience a two-day lineup of family-friendly aviation excitement featuring the US Navy’s Blue Angels flight demonstration team. For tickets and information visit: <https://yellowstoneairshow.com/>

**Do You Know of an Aviation Event in Montana?**

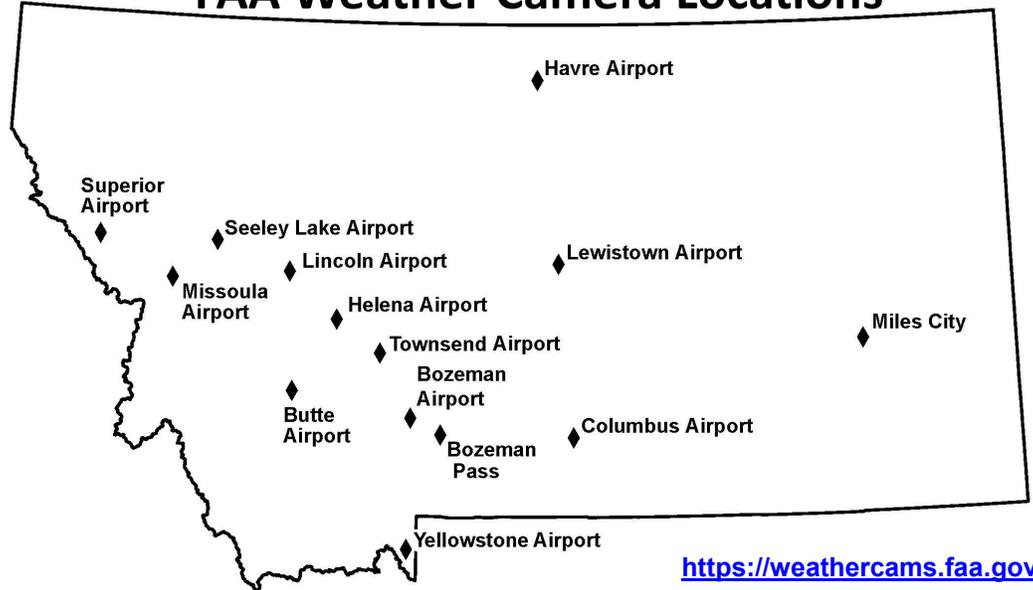
You can email your events to [mdtad@mt.gov](mailto:mdtad@mt.gov).

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## FAA Weather Camera Locations



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