

Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 76, No. 11

November 2025



2025 Montana Aviation Educators Workshop Reaches New Heights

In early October, educators from across Montana gathered for the annual Aviation Educators Workshop, hosted by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Aeronautics Division in partnership with the Montana Learning Center (MLC). This two-day event focused on connecting aviation with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in engaging and innovative ways.

Participants enjoyed a variety of enriching activities, including classroom lessons on aviation science, hands-on experiments, and exclusive tours of aviation facilities at Helena Airport. A highlight was the opportunity for attendees to experience a flight aboard an MDT Aeronautics Division aircraft, providing real-world perspective on aviation careers and training.

The second day shifted to the MLC, where educators took part in interactive, inquiry-based learning sessions indoors and outdoors. They also had the chance to operate the MLC's advanced flight simulator, adding another dimension to their professional development. The workshop equipped teachers with practical lesson plans and materials to inspire their students through aviation-themed STEM projects.

Open to Montana educators focused on STEM, this annual workshop offers 20 professional renewal units through the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). By blending aviation and STEM, the event plays a vital role in motivating the next generation of pilots and aerospace professionals throughout the state.



2026 Montana Aviation Conference Registration Open

The Aviation Organization of Montana (AOM) is pleased to announce the 41st Montana Aviation Conference will be held in Billings February 26-28, 2026, at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. The MDT Aeronautics Division supports the conference by providing a staff member dedicated to the successful planning and execution of the conference. The conference offers three days of speakers, seminars, workshops, awards ceremonies, business meetings, comradery, and social events. It is an opportunity for those from the aviation community to connect, learn, and exchange ideas and information. Around 500 participants are expected this year.

If you are interested in saving money on your registration fees, check out the "take off to landing" package on the registration website and register by January 31, 2026!

Lodging is available at a special rate by calling the Billings Hotel and Convention Center in Billings at 406-248-7151. Mention the Montana Aviation Conference for discounted room rates. Hotel room reservations must be made before January 1, 2026, to get the event rate.

For more information, contact the MDT Aeronautics Division at 406-444-2506 or email katkins@mt.gov.

Vendor and attendee conference registration is open and may be completed by scanning the QR code:



Aeronautics Loan & Grant Applications Close November 15

To access the on-line portal go to:
mdt.mt.gov/aviation/loans-grants.shtml
Or scan the QR Code

If you have any questions or need assistance with the loan and grant program, please contact:

Stephen Torske
at 406-444-9569 or
storske@mt.gov.



2026 Aviation Scholarship Application Deadline November 14!

How to Apply

Scan the QR Code below or go to
mdt.mt.gov/aviation/scholarships.aspx
for instructions on how to apply
for the 2026 Montana Aviation Scholarships.



Tailwinds, Richard Walker McKamy

It is with great sadness we report the passing of fellow aviator and adventurer, Richard McKamy. "Quick of wit with original one-liners. A dutiful, loving son and brother, a loving, helpful father, an idyllic husband, staunch and solid, an astute businessman and partner, an accomplished pilot, mentor to young aviators, outdoorsman, mountain climber, skier, adventurer. Ever thoughtful and keenly interested in his friends. All who knew him were a part of these adventures."

To view Richard's full obituary, scan the QR Code or go to:

billingscremation.com/obituaries/Richard-Walker-McKamy?obld=43955858

Photo Courtesy of Billings
Cremation and Burial Services.



Winter Survival Clinic Jan 9-11

The MDT Aeronautics Division's Winter Survival Clinic provides pilots with critical skills to survive emergency landings in harsh winter conditions. Held at the Sugarloaf Lodge near Anaconda, the clinic offers hands-on training in shelter building, fire starting, signaling, and first aid. Participants also experience overnight survival exercises under expert guidance. This clinic honors pilot Terry Surratt's legacy by emphasizing preparedness in Montana's challenging terrain. The division develops programs like this to prepare pilots for emergency situations, strengthen aviation knowledge, and enhance survival readiness across Montana's aviation community. For more information, contact mdtad@mt.gov.

The cost is \$75, and the clinic is open to all pilots interested in enhancing their survival skills.

This course fills up fast, so register now!

Scan
Me!



Search and Rescue Trains in Frigid Waters

Earlier this year, Lewis and Clark County Search and Rescue conducted a unique training initiative in partnership with the MDT Aeronautics Division. The team borrowed a decommissioned aircraft from MDT Aeronautics, which is used as a survival training aid. In a creative approach to emergency preparedness, the aircraft was sunk in Canyon Ferry Reservoir to serve as the centerpiece for scenario-based exercises.

Search and Rescue personnel conducted intensive aircraft-specific rescue and recovery drills using the submerged fuselage. The program provided volunteers the opportunity to practice emergency egress, water rescue, and aircraft recovery operations in conditions modeled after real aviation accidents. By using an actual decommissioned airplane and the challenging environment of Canyon Ferry, the training brought a new level of realism and skill development to these rescuers.



2026 Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic

You do not have to be a flight instructor to attend

The Montana Aeronautics Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic (FIRC) is an annual FAA-approved course designed to help certified flight instructors (CFIs) renew their instructor certificates and stay current with the latest in aviation training and safety practices.

The 2026 clinic will be in Helena at the Doubletree Hotel February 6 - 7, 2026, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. both days.

Course Highlights

- Fulfills FAA renewal requirements for CFIs and Chief CFIs.
- Open not only to current and aspiring CFIs, but also to any pilots interested in professional development and aviation safety.
- The curriculum covers regulatory updates, safety topics, instructional techniques, and practical teaching strategies relevant to modern flight training.
- Attendees receive renewal credit upon successful completion, which supports the continued privilege to instruct under FAA regulations.

Registration and Tuition

- Tuition is \$75, with a \$25 discount for pilots registered in Montana.
- Montana pilot registration is available for \$10 per year, providing tuition savings and supporting state aviation programs.
- Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, and non-instructors and students are encouraged.

The clinic is part of the MDT Aeronautics Division's broader efforts to promote flight safety and education throughout the state. This event provides important professional networking as well as opportunities to refresh teaching knowledge and learn about changes in general aviation instruction and regulations. The Montana FIRC continues to serve as an essential resource for aviation professionals across the state, supporting the highest standards of flight instruction and safety.

For more information, contact Matt Lindberg at 406-444-2506 or mdtad@mt.gov.

To register, scan the QR Code or go to:

aviationseminars.com/registration-form/?type=firc&course_id=2026106 aviationseminars.com

Lodging is available at the Doubletree by Hilton located at 22 N Last Chance Gulch.
Call (406)443-2200 and mention FIRC for the state rate.



2026 Aircraft and Pilot Registration Renewals Begin December 1!

Aircraft customarily kept in Montana, as well as any aircraft with a Montana address on its FAA registration, must be registered with the MDT Aeronautics Division **on or before March 1st every year (or within 30 days of purchase date for any aircraft purchased)**. Montana does not tax aircraft but instead issues an annual aircraft registration fee in lieu of tax. The fees are set by the Montana Legislature and are determined according to the type of aircraft and its age.

Annual renewal invoices will be mailed in the last week of November. Please be sure to check your mail.

** A statutory penalty for late registrations must be assessed in the amount of five times the registration fee if payment OR signed affidavit for exemption with supporting documentation is not received by the deadline.*

** Please keep in mind that aircraft out of annual inspection are not considered "unairworthy" by administrative rule and will be subject to annual registration fees.*

ACTION IS REQUIRED ON ALL AIRCRAFT REGISTRATIONS ANNUALLY.

Did You Sell Your Airplane? Send Us Your Bill of Sale.

In order to cancel your state aircraft registration, the MDT Aeronautics Division requires a copy of the **FAA Bill of Sale**, per administrative rule 18.12.315(d), and must accompany your signed exemption affidavit found on the bottom portion of your annual renewal invoice.

The MDT Aeronautics Division must receive these documents by the annual renewal deadline of March 1st.

Aircraft owners who fail to provide all necessary paperwork before the deadline will be issued late fees and/or registration penalties.

Failure to provide the required proof for fee exemption is the leading cause of aircraft registration delinquency in Montana.

Calendar of Events

November 14 - Aviation Scholarship Application Deadline. For more information go to mdt.mt.gov/aviation/scholarships.

November 15 - Loan and Grant Application Deadline. For more information, contact Stephen Torske at 406-444-2506 or storske@mt.gov.

December 1- Aircraft and pilot registration renewals for 2026 opens. For more information or questions, feel free to contact us at 406-444-2506 or mdtad@mt.gov.

January 8 -10 Winter Survival Clinic. Sugarloaf Lodge, Anaconda. For more information, contact Barbara Barnum at 406-444-2506 or mdtad@mt.gov.

February 6 - 7 FIRC. Helena. Double Tree by Hilton. For more information contact Matt Lindberg at 406-444-2506 or mlindberg@mt.gov.

February 26 - 28 - Montana Aviation Conference. Billings. Billings Hotel and Convention Center. For more information, to volunteer or be a vendor at the conference, please contact Kelly Atkins at 406-444-9580 or email katkins@mt.gov.

March 1st- Aircraft and pilot registration renewals for 2026 are due.

MDT Aeronautics Division

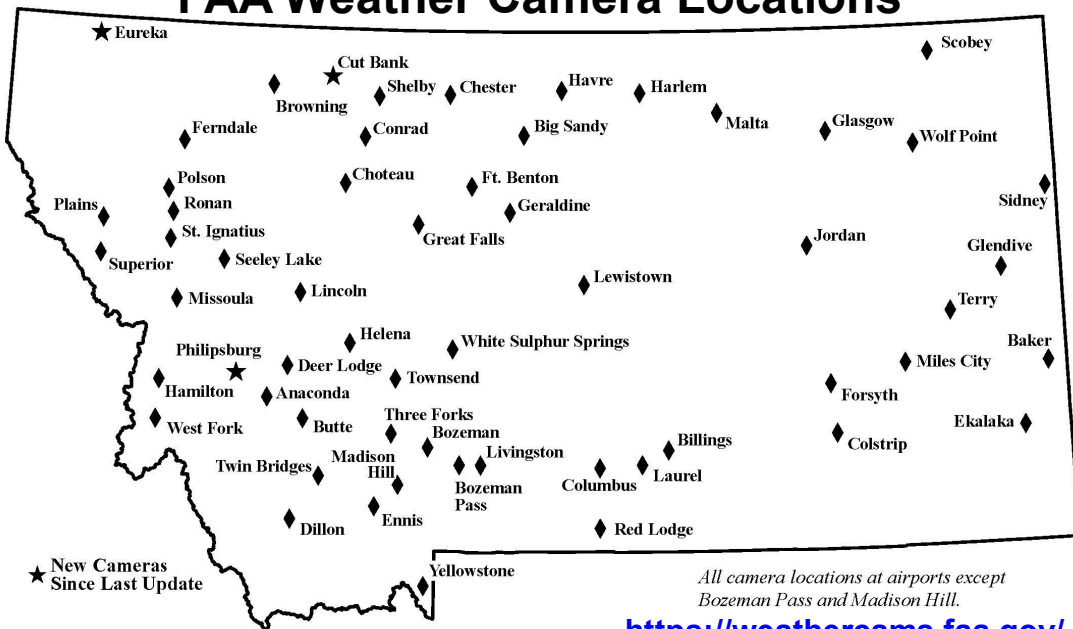
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*Montana and
the Sky.*
Fly Safe!**

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please email mdtad@mt.gov
or call 406-444-2506.

FAA Weather Camera Locations



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