

Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 76, No. 10

October 2025

2026 Scholarships Available

Montana is fortunate to have many generous individuals and organizations who support aviation by offering scholarships. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Aeronautics Division helps to match these scholarships to qualified applicants and encourages individuals interested in aeronautics to apply for scholarships. The scholarships are offered to help defray costs of education (e.g., flight instruction, aircraft airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanic school, etc.). Recipients will be announced in January 2026 and awards will be presented at noon on February 26, 2026 at the Montana Aviation Conference in Missoula. Winners will be provided a complimentary aviation conference registration and a free Friday lunch for themselves and up to two guests sponsored by the Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM).

Available Scholarships

38 North Aviation LLC Aviation Training Scholarship

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

Aerotronics Maintenance Training/Avionics Technician Scholarship

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

AOM Flight Training

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

AOM Mechanic

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

Brett Thoft Memorial Scholarship

Three scholarships of \$2500 to be awarded.

Briar Creek Scholarship

One scholarship of \$4,000 to be awarded.

EAA Chapter 344 A & P Training Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500 to Helena Colleges A & P program.

Montana Ninety-Nines Scholarship

Two scholarships of \$2,500-reimbursement of training to be awarded.

MPA Arlin Wass Memorial Maintenance Technician

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

MPA Aviation Maintenance Scholarship

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

MPA Central Montana Flight Training Scholarship

One scholarship of \$4,000 to be awarded.

MPA Junior Pilot Scholarship

One scholarship of \$4,000 to be awarded

MPA Mike Ferguson Flight Training Scholarship

One scholarship of \$4,000 to be awarded.

Ridgeline Aviation Flight Training Scholarship

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded.

Theresa Nistler Colley Flight Scholarship

One scholarship of \$2,000 to be awarded

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.

- You must be a Montana resident to apply.
- All applications must be submitted on-line.
- No emailed or mailed applications will be accepted.
- Candidates must submit a separate application for each individual scholarship name. Tailoring each application to the specific scholarship you are applying for is highly recommended.
- The Montana Ninety-Nines scholarships are reimbursement awards only. You must provide them with your eligible receipts for up to the dollar amount you were awarded within 12 months.
- The EAA Chapter 344 scholarship will be paid directly to Helena College.
- Additional opportunities might become available. Please check our website for the most up-to-date list of scholarships.

Scholarship applications must be submitted on or before 11:59 p.m. MST, November 14, 2025.



Scan Here

Nine Additional Web Cams Added This Summer

MDT Aeronautics has been hard at work installing nine more webcams throughout Montana this summer. One in particular, Lindey's West Seaport (Seeley Lake Seaport), was added for float plane pilots to see the conditions on the lake. This may be relocated in the future for a better view of the lake.

Other webcams added were at Dillon, Forsyth, Colstrip, Glendive, Sidney, Anaconda, Cut Bank, and Scobey. This brings the total webcam count to 56, and more sites are scheduled for installation.

Funds from the loan and grants program paid for fifty percent of the equipment purchases and MDT Aeronautics performed the installations.

To access the cameras go to weathercams.faa.gov/map or scan the QR Code



Air Force Proposes Expansion of Powder River Training Complex

The U.S. Air Force has announced proposed changes to the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC) aimed at enhancing aircrew readiness and supporting evolving national defense strategies.

Key updates include raising the airspace ceiling in several sectors from 26,000 to 60,000 feet and increasing the number of Large Force Exercise (LFE) days from 10 to 30 annually. These changes would also boost total training sorties by 50%, reaching nearly 5,000 per year.

The proposal is undergoing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review, with public input gathered through meetings and online submissions.

For more information and to stay updated, go to:

PRTCairspaceEIS.com

Or scan the QR Code



Some Montana Airports Charge Customs Fee

Some airports are required to provide certain facilities and services to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection if they wish to have customs available at their airports. Some airports in Montana are now charging a customs fee to aircraft clearing customs at their airport.

These fees are not charged or collected by customs, but by the airport. In at least two instances, airports have Fixed Base Operators (FBO) collect their fees on their behalf. Airports may use customs fees to help offset the airport's annual expenses of having customs available.

There are 9 airports with customs available in Montana. Some are by prior appointment only, as customs agents are not based at each of those 9 airports.

5010 Airport Master Record

The MDT Aeronautics Division has finished this year's round of Airport Master Record (5010) Inspections. This year, 40 Eastern Montana airports received required inspections. The MDT Aeronautics Aviation Support Officer performs inspections with handheld survey equipment and a trained eye. Airport Managers and Sponsors receive a copy of the inspection and field notes after the inspection. Airport staff are not required to be present for the 5010s, but it is a great opportunity to catch up with the managers and go over updates or corrections to the airport data.

5010 Master Record Airport inspections are Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mandated safety and information system for every public use airport in the US. In Montana, the MDT Aeronautics Division performs these inspections for public use/ non-commercial airports on contract for the FAA. Each airport has a mandated inspection cycle of three years. The FAA Chart Supplement (formerly known as the Airports and Facilities Directory), derives all airport information within it from 5010 inspections. Many government and private publications, such as aeronautical charts, instrument approach procedure plates, third party websites and electronic flight bag apps receive their information from these inspections. Information determined includes close-in obstructions, hazard obstructions, visual landing aids, pavement conditions and markings, lighting information, and various other safety and general data elements.

The inspections also determine or verify runway length and approach slope obstruction gradients. These are used in determining whether runways meet the necessary criteria for precision and non-precision approaches.

For more information or questions about 5010 inspections, please contact Stephen Torske at 406- 444-9569 or storske@mt.gov.



New Lighting at Kalispell City Airport

Kalispell City Airport's (S27) newly installed runway lighting system is now operational. This safety upgrade will be followed by the installation of two new Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) systems, which will provide pilots with precise approach glide paths.

This project was a true team effort involving the Kalispell Airport Authority, Christian's Electric, Red Eagle Aviation, and the MDT Aeronautics Division. An MDT Aeronautics grant was awarded to the airport by the Aeronautics Board which served as the primary funding source for the lighting project.

2026 Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC) February 6 - 7

The MDT Aeronautics Division is pleased to announce registration is open for the 2026 FIRC!

Registration is \$75. Registered Montana pilots can save \$25 off the registration fee. Montana Pilots registration is \$10 a year and includes a Montana Airport Directory.

The FIRC will be held at the Double Tree Hotel in Helena located at 22 N Last Chance Gulch. Rooms are held at the state rate for attendees. Call 406-443-2200 and reference "FIRC" to receive the state rate.

Scan the QR Code to register



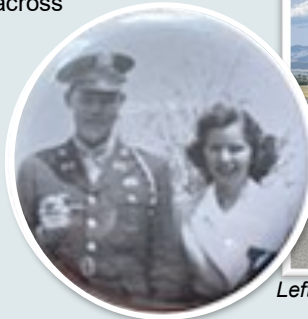
Dream Flights for Veterans Visits Helena

On August 15, volunteer pilots for Dream Flights, Darrel Fisher (Founder and president of Dream Flights) and Thomas Smith were in Helena to give Dream Flights to Veterans. The Black Devils, the First Special Service Force, was a joint World War II American-Canadian commando unit that began training in Helena in 1942. Nicknamed the "Devil's Brigade" they were in Helena celebrating their 78th reunion. Family members of the Black Devils were treated to a flight in honor of their relative who served in the unit.

The aircraft, a 1942 Boeing Steerman PT-17, was purchased by Darrel Fisher's Grandfather, William Fisher, in 1946. Fisher and Smith are flying across the country giving Dream Flights for Veterans along the way.

Thomas and Darrel gave several flights that day; one of which was Leslie Underhill, the daughter of Lucielle Diamond who was one of the pioneering women in Helena to earn her pilots license in 1940. Lucille met her husband, Adna Heaton Underhill, in 1942 while he was in training with the Black Devils in Helena.

Leslie proudly wore a button with a picture of her parents from when they were young and was grinning ear to ear when she got back from her ride.



Left: Photo of Adna and Lucielle Underhill in 1942

2026 Montana Aviation Conference to be Held in Billings February 26 to 28

The Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM) is pleased to announce the Montana Aviation Conference will be held in Billings at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center and you are invited!

The conference brings Montana's aviation organizations and the flying public together for three days of speakers, seminars, workshops, awards ceremonies, business meetings, comradery, and social events. It is an opportunity for those from many areas of the aviation community to connect, learn, and exchange ideas and information. Around 500 participants are expected this year.

For more information, to be a speaker, to volunteer or be a vender at the conference, please contact Kelly Atkins at 406-444-2530 or email katkins@mt.gov.



Calendar of Events

Oct 3 - Friday Night Flights. Billings. 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Free flights for kids ages 8 - 17. Static Displays and Free BBQ. For more information or to volunteer as a pilot, contact Joel or Lorissa at 1-800-700-5107 or bil@beaconairgroup.com.

October 3 - 4 - Aviation Teachers Workshop. Helena and Canyon Ferry. For more information, contact MDT Aeronautics at 406-444-2506 or mdtad@mt.gov.

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 the MDT Aeronautics Division at mdtad@mt.gov or 406-444-2506. To register, go to: aviationseminars.com/registration-form/?type=firc&course_id=2026106 aviationseminars.com

February 26 - 28 - Montana Aviation Conference. Billings. Billings Hotel and Convention Center. For more information, to volunteer or be a vender at the conference, please contact Kelly Atkins at 406-444-2530 or email katkins@mt.gov.

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

MDT Aeronautics Division

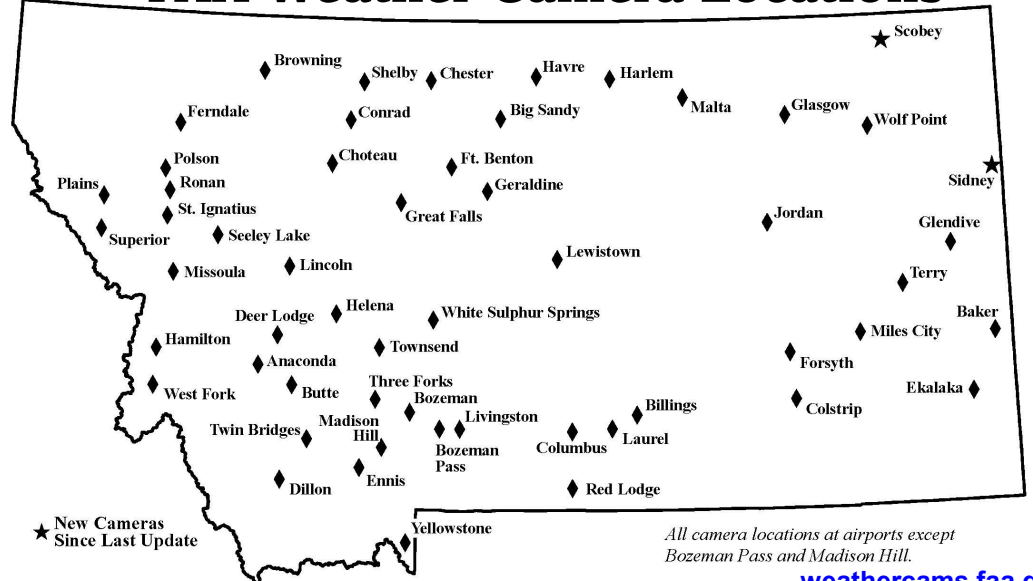
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reading
*Montana and
the Sky.*
Fly Safe!**

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FAA Weather Camera Locations



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, Montana 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.

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