

*Winter 2025*

## MDT Aligns Agency Structure to Core Purpose

Over the last year, MDT leadership has taken a hard look at how the Department's structure can better support our mission, our performance, and our employees while we serve Montana.

The result of this review has guided shifts in programs and movement of teams to align by core purpose, function, and the services each provides.

MDT's new structure includes four overarching program areas as well as the current five districts. The new programs include:

- Project Development & Delivery
- Asset Strategy, Operations, & Maintenance
- Statewide Planning & Modal Operations
- General Operations

Aligning our teams by core purpose and function enables the public to more easily understand our structure and obtain the services they need.

For employees, it improves collaboration and workflows, ensures uniform processes, and reduces duplicated duties, and inefficient or outdated practices. Staff can put their efforts toward their core responsibilities and expertise while relying on other MDT experts that provide service and support through their core responsibilities. Career paths will be better defined and will lead to improved retention and recruitment.

For our valued partners in the contracting and consulting areas, MDT is working hard to provide more advanced notice of upcoming work, clarifying our processes, reducing re-review, and striving to eliminate delays while improving transparency and access to professionals and decision criteria.

Montana's changing and growing transportation needs are outpacing our resources. This new service model will help MDT as we demonstrate our own efforts to build and sustain an agency that is effective, efficient, and aimed at excellence. We must keep pace, own our part, and provide the service and quality transportation system Montanans have come to expect.

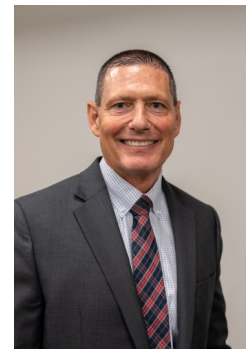
The simultaneous hard work of our transportation stakeholders, natural resource partners, and users of our system, in support of MDT leadership intent and action steps, will help to make us successful.

We know this is not a one-and-done step, but rather a continuous evolution. We welcome your feedback along the way. To view the new Department Outline, or to find current MDT contact information, visit [mdt.mt.gov/contact/](http://mdt.mt.gov/contact/).

### MDT Program Area Leadership



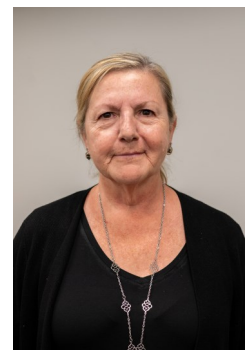
*Dustin Rouse, Project Development & Delivery Operations Manager*



*Jon Swartz, Asset Strategy, Operations, & Maintenance Operations Manager*



*Doug McBroom, Statewide Planning & Modal Operations Manager*



*Sharon Duncan, General Operations Manager*



## Federal Surface Transportation Program Status

The country's current Surface Transportation Authorization is set to expire on September 30, 2026, prompting early efforts to shape the next reauthorization package. This critical legislation determines funding levels, policy directives, and program requirements for key federal agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

Earlier this year, subcommittees in both the US House and Senate began gathering input from stakeholders across the country. MDT submitted its list of priorities, emphasizing:

- continuation of the current highway formula;
- an increase in the percentage of program dollars distributed by the highway formula;
- continuation of the formula bridge program; and
- commitment to a well-funded transportation program.

MDT's priorities are closely aligned with those of national and regional partners, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO), and neighboring states.



## NEWSLINE SUBSCRIPTION UPDATES

**Did you know?** The Newsline is available by both mail (print) and email (electronically). Please contact Lauren Eichenfels, Newsline Editor, to add or update your subscription preferences.

➤ **By email:** [leichenfels@mt.gov](mailto:leichenfels@mt.gov)

➤ **By phone\*:** 406-444-7614

**\*Please leave a voicemail with your full name, phone number and mailing address for print subscriptions, OR your name, phone number and the best time of day to reach you to create or update your subscription.**

**Moving? Change of address? Please let us know!** We are happy to update your current mailing address if you wish to continue receiving the Newsline.

**NOTE:** Due to State costs associated with printing and mailing, all returned copies of the Newsline will be removed from future mailings to that address and/or contact. New subscriptions may be requested at any time by contacting the Newsline Editor (see options above). We thank you in advance for your help in reducing waste and your assistance in providing updates to your subscription information as they occur.

## Meet Doug McBroom, Statewide Planning and Modal Operations Manager

Doug McBroom is the Statewide Planning and Modal Operations Manager\* at MDT. With over 20 years of service on behalf of the department, Doug is leading efforts to improve Montana's transportation system across all modes: transit, freight, rail, aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, and traffic safety.

Doug holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Montana, where he also earned degrees in biochemistry and chemistry. His career includes past roles as MDT Chief Chemist, MDT Maintenance Operations Manager, a research scientist, and an educator in high schools and universities.

**Fun Fact:** When he's not working to keep Montana moving, Doug enjoys competing in triathlons and camping with his wife and grandchildren. He's also an avid Griz fan—no surprise, given his alma mater.

Contact Doug at 406-444-9240 or [dmcmbroom@mt.gov](mailto:dmcmbroom@mt.gov).

\*See the cover of this issue for information on MDT's agency alignment efforts.

## Montana Trails Grants: Information for 2026 Application Cycles

**Recreational Trails Program (RTP):** The RTP is a federally funded grant program that awards about \$1.5 million annually. Eligible activities include construction or maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails or trail-related facilities, purchase of trail equipment, and development of trail education or ethics programs. Find more information and resources to assist with applying for this grant online:

[fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/recreational-trails](http://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/recreational-trails).

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) will accept applications for this grant **through January 16, 2026**, via the online system: [funding.mt.gov/login.do](http://funding.mt.gov/login.do).

**Trails Stewardship Program (TSP):** The TSP is a state funded grant program through the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 24 in 2019 and the collected tax revenue from recreational marijuana sales in Montana. The TSP has awarded over \$5.5 million since establishment, funding 140 trail access and improvement projects across the state. Eligible activities fall under three project categories: new trail and shared-use path construction, rehabilitation and maintenance, and trailside and trailhead facilities construction.

FWP will accept applications for this grant **through January 30, 2026**. Find more information and resources to assist with applying for this grant online: [fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/trail-stewardship](http://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/trail-stewardship).

## New Transit Section Supervisor

Jennifer Andrews earned her Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Carroll College, and has been a dedicated member of MDT since 2005. She began her career in the Fiscal Services Division, where she held a variety of financial and accounting roles. In 2018, she transitioned to the Rail, Transit and Planning Division as a Financial Contact, where she worked closely with federal programs such as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Prior to becoming the Transit Section Supervisor, Jennifer built a strong foundation in financial oversight and interagency collaboration that continues to support her work today.



Jennifer Andrews,  
MDT Transit Section  
Supervisor

**Fun Fact:** When she's not crunching numbers, Jennifer enjoys camping, fishing—especially paddle fishing—and spending time with her family.

Contact Jennifer at 406-444-6100 or [jeandrews@mt.gov](mailto:jeandrews@mt.gov).

## New Maintenance Division Administrator

Steve Felix was recently selected as the new MDT Maintenance Division Administrator. With over 26 years of experience at the department—including more than a decade as Missoula Maintenance Chief—Felix brings to the role a wealth of leadership experience in operations, safety, and interagency coordination. His proven dedication to MDT's mission positions him well to lead and enhance statewide maintenance operations.

Contact Steve at 406-444-6157 or [sfelix@mt.gov](mailto:sfelix@mt.gov).

## Follow Us:



@montanadot



@mtdot



/montanadot



Montana Department  
of Transportation



# Slow Down, Move Over: Memorial Dedicated to Honor Lives Lost

On September 9, 2025, Governor Greg Gianforte dedicated the Montana Wall of the Fallen Tow Operator Memorial at the Headwaters Rest Area near Three Forks. This memorial represents the culmination of a vision born from the tragic loss of two tow truck operators, who were struck and killed while working at a crash scene on October 25, 2020, on Interstate Highway 90 (I 90) near Columbus. The completed memorial serves to recognize the ultimate sacrifice paid by tow operators who have died in the line of duty as responders. This recognition advocates for widespread adoption of safety training, like the National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder Training. As the first and only state memorial of its kind, it also serves as an important reminder to the public to know and follow Montana's Slow Down – Move Over Laws.

Emergency first responders, tow truck operators, maintenance workers (including snowplow drivers), law enforcement, and Motor Carrier Services (MCS) officers travel our roadways to provide aid, emergency care, regulation, and safer routes for the rest of us.

MDT extends sincere gratitude to the Montana Tow Truck Association, as well as the many safety partners and entities that worked to bring this important vision to life. Please remember to always slow down and move over for all emergency responders and other roadway workers. They risk their lives to keep others safe on Montana's roadways, and they deserve respect and safety on the job so they can go home to their loved ones.



Photo Credit: Move Over Montana (Facebook)

## Explore Future Careers Through MDT's Intern Program

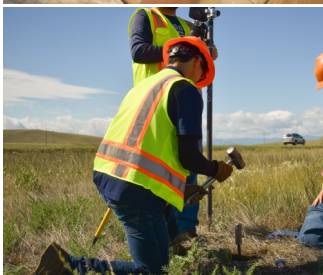
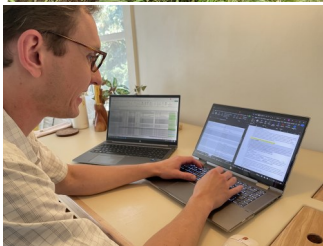
Each summer, MDT hosts a new group of talented, aspiring transportation professionals through the department's Internship Program. Participating interns are able to learn firsthand about their chosen MDT career area, ranging from research to engineering. The annual program starts in May and runs through mid-August, and typically expects a 40-hour work week, Monday-Friday. Internships are paid and available in a number of areas/divisions at MDT. Specific locations and roles vary annually, depending on department needs and upcoming projects. To be eligible to participate, students must:

- be enrolled in a college, university, or technical school; or be within 6 months of graduation date;
- have completed at least 60 academic credits\* (or 30 credits if enrolled in technical school); and
- be in good academic standing.

*\*Interns with less than 60 credit hours may be considered.*

Interested in being an intern at MDT in 2026? Visit MDT's Current Openings web page ([mdt.mt.gov/jobs/current-openings.aspx](https://mdt.mt.gov/jobs/current-openings.aspx)) for future postings and more information, or contact MDT's Recruiter, Angela Murolo at [amurolo@mt.gov](mailto:amurolo@mt.gov). At MDT, you'll find more than just a job. You'll find a career!

Congratulations to the 20 interns who completed the 2025 Internship Program! Check out MDT's YouTube channel to meet them and hear about their experiences: [youtube.com/user/MontanaDOT](https://youtube.com/user/MontanaDOT).



## Montana BUILD Grant Application Awarded Funding

This past summer, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2025 funding awards for projects across the country through the discretionary grant program, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD). MDT was among the applicants selected for funding, with an award of \$25 million for the Brockway – West Project in McCone County. This project will reconstruct approximately 7 miles of Montana Highway 200 (MT 200), including widening shoulders, reducing and flattening vertical curves, and installing milled centerline and shoulder rumble strips. These improvements are expected to significantly enhance safety by addressing documented risks in the region, with the goal of reducing serious injuries and fatalities – including risks associated with rollover crashes.

Congratulations to MDT's Alternative Funding Section staff for their hard work on behalf of Montana to submit this successful application! Learn more about BUILD and other discretionary grant programs, including opportunities for support from MDT, at [mdt.mt.gov/business/discretionarygrants/](https://mdt.mt.gov/business/discretionarygrants/).

## 2026 Application Process for Transit and Highway Traffic Safety Grants

### Transit Grants

Transit applications will only be accepted through the BlackCat Transit Data Management System: [secure.blackcattransit.com/Login.aspx?site=mtdot](https://secure.blackcattransit.com/Login.aspx?site=mtdot).

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on December 1, 2025. Applications will be due **February 6, 2026**.

For more information, contact Jennifer Andrews at 406-444-6100 or [jeandrews@mt.gov](mailto:jeandrews@mt.gov).

### Highway Traffic Safety Grants

Highway Traffic Safety applications will only be accepted through the Montana Grant and Loans web-based system: [montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl](https://montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl).

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on January 1, 2026. Applications will be due **March 1, 2026**.

For information, contact Kevin Dusko at 406-444-7411 or [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov).

# 2025 Project Highlights and Progress

Each year, winter's arrival in Montana signals an end to construction and road work until spring and warmer temperatures arrive. While "construction season" can bring challenges to summer and fall travel, warm weather provides a limited opportunity for crews to advance or complete these much needed improvements to our roadways. These improvements will allow for safer, more efficient travel and support of Montana's economic vitality for years to come. MDT and our construction partners would like to extend sincere thanks to our customers—you, the traveling public of Montana. Thank you for your continued patience and support, and for helping make this another successful construction season. We look forward to 2026 and continuing to build better roadways for all of Montana. Learn more about the district projects featured in this issue, as well as other active and upcoming projects around the state, online: [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/).

## Missoula District

### Project: Taft-West

**Background:** For the past few years, MDT has been working to improve Interstate Highway 90 (I 90) near the Montana/Idaho border. The I 90 Lookout Pass to Taft project area is in rugged, mountainous, and heavily forested terrain and roughly parallels the upper reaches of the St. Regis River. The area is used for recreational activities during both summer and winter, and access is provided at two interchanges including Lookout Pass and Taft. The 6-mile stretch was separated into 2 projects (Taft-West and Lookout Pass-East) to be completed over 4 construction seasons. For Taft-West, the eastbound side of I 90 was completed in 2024, and the westbound side was completed in 2025. Construction on the Lookout Pass-East segment is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2026.

Learn more about this project at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90lookout/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90lookout/).

**Bid:** \$38 million

**Contractor:** Acme Concrete Paving, Inc.

**Status:** Construction on the project was completed in 2025. The chip seal for the Taft interchange is scheduled for 2026.



*Pictured to the left is the automated paver used for this project, smoothing the concrete out to place it at the correct thickness.*



*Pictured to the right is a smooth mat of new concrete, the finished product produced by the automated paver and placer.*

## MDT's Active Projects Map

Enjoy access to statewide project information at your fingertips with MDT's Active Projects Map. Scan the QR code to the right using your mobile device to access the mobile-friendly map, or visit [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/active-projects.aspx](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/active-projects.aspx).



## Butte District

### Project: North 19th Avenue - Bozeman

**Background:** MDT partnered with Riverside Contracting to complete pavement preservation activities on 19th Avenue from the Interstate Highway 90 (I 90) overpass, to the intersection with Main Street in Bozeman. Pavement preservation for this project is accomplished by milling off the upper layer of pavement and replacing it with new pavement. Other project elements include signal upgrades and pedestrian accessibility improvements, with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements occurring at select intersections throughout the project area. Lane reconfiguration at the intersection with the I 90 eastbound ramps includes an additional northbound through lane, which will address long traffic queue lengths at the intersection.

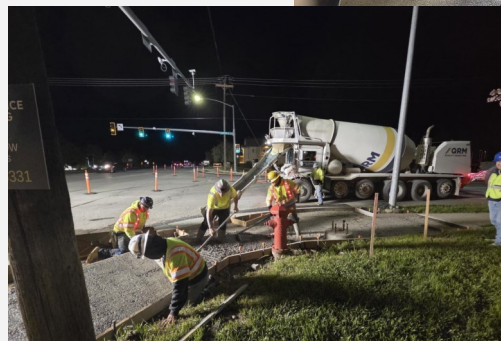
The completed project will also add dedicated turn lanes, with pavement widening, at the intersection of East Valley Center Road and North 19th Avenue, and North 19th Avenue to eastbound I 90.

Learn more about this project at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/n19thbozeman/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/n19thbozeman/).

**Bid:** \$8.5 million

**Contractor:** Riverside Contracting

**Status:** Construction was substantially completed in 2025.



*This project utilized night work primarily do to traffic volumes and used many innovative solutions to stay on schedule and budget.*



# 2025 Project Highlights and Progress (cont.)

## Great Falls District

**Project:** East of Zurich - Harlem

**Background:** MDT partnered with Wickens Construction to enhance roadway safety features along 7 miles of US Highway 2 (US 2) between Zurich and Harlem. Project improvements include widening to a 40-foot paved surface that includes 12-foot travel lanes and 8-foot shoulders, and flattening of roadway side slopes. Also included are the addition of two miles of passing lanes in both directions along with installation of new culverts. Paving activities continued into the fall, allowing work to continue as long as weather conditions would allow during the 2025 season.

Learn more about this project at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eastzurich/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/eastzurich/).

**Bid:** \$22.9 million

**Contractor:** Wickens Construction

**Status:** Construction activities for this project will resume in 2026.



*Photos of reconstruction activities during the 2025 season.*



*The completed project will improve access to local communities and industries, including agriculture, and provide a smoother driving surface for travelers on US 2.*

## Glendive District

**Project:** Timber Bridges – Glasgow Area

**Background:** This project replaced 16 existing timber bridges in northeast Montana on US Highway 2 (US 2) between Hinsdale and Glasgow, Montana Highway 24 (MT 24) between Glasgow and Opheim, Secondary Highway 248 (S 248) between Opheim and Scobey, and Secondary Highway 251 (S 251) between Poplar and Flaxville. Four of the existing bridges were replaced with box culverts, and the remaining 12 were replaced with bridges. The work was accomplished using the Design-Build contracting method and completed over a three-year period.

Learn more about this project at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/glasgowtb/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/glasgowtb/).

**Bid:** \$40 million

**Contractor:** Sletten Construction Company/Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

**Status:** Construction was substantially completed in 2025.



*The completed piling and bridge caps on US 2 at Buggy Creek.*

## Billings District

**Project:** US 191 – Mobridge Slide Repairs

**Background:** MDT partnered with M.A. DeAtley Construction, Inc., to reconstruct sections of US Highway 191 (US 191) near the James Kipp Recreation Area and the Fred Robinson Bridge over the Missouri River. This project will help stabilize a section of roadway that was damaged from landslides in the area.

Landslide sites occur in three different locations along US 191, and repairs at these sites will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 includes work at the largest landslide area impacting US 191 between mile markers 84 and 85. This slide has been an issue since the late 1950s but has worsened over the last decade. Construction on Phase 1 began this spring and is expected to continue into Fall 2026. Construction on Phase 2 is expected to begin in 2027.

Learn more about this project at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mobridge/](https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mobridge/).

**Bid (Phase 1):** \$17.7 million

**Contractor:** M.A. DeAtley Construction, Inc.

**Status:** Construction activities for this project will resume in 2026.



*Project camera footage shows progress on Phase 1 of the project as of Fall 2025.*



## Get Home Safe for the Holidays!

**T**he holidays are a time for many people to celebrate with family and friends, and whether it is just across town or the state, the months of November and December are a busy time for travel. Unfortunately, the holiday season is also known for being a deadly season when it comes to impaired driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), during the 2019-2023 December months, there were more than 4,900 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. In December 2023 alone, 1,038 people died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.

From 2014-2023, 2,032 people were fatally injured in motor vehicle crashes on Montana's roadways. Alcohol-impaired drivers accounted for 38% of those fatalities. Unfortunately, Montana is one of the top five states in the nation for alcohol-impaired driving fatalities, when compared to total fatalities in the past 10 years.

As part of the statewide, year-round effort to curb impaired driving, MDT supports law enforcement with grants to increase patrols as part of the Safety Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP). The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) and local law enforcement will be participating in mobilization patrols from Thanksgiving through Christmas and into the New Year to keep Montana's roads free of impaired drivers and to encourage all drivers to buckle up and to drive sober or find a sober ride as they celebrate the season. **(See call out box at the top of page 7...)**

You can do your part to ensure a safe and happy holiday. If you are hosting a celebration, serve alcohol responsibly and make sure your guests have safe, sober transportation home or a place to stay for the evening. As a party guest, it's also your responsibility to plan ahead if you'll be drinking. Whether it's a designated driver, calling a cab, using a ride service or staying with a friend for the night, be safe and remind your friends and family to do the same. If you see or suspect drunk driving on the road, call 911.

And remember, the best defense against a drunk driver is wearing a seat belt – everyone, every trip, every time; there is no good excuse not to.

MDT encourages drivers to drive sober, buckle up and avoid unsafe behaviors this holiday season and every day of the year and to make Vision Zero their goal. For more information, please visit: [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/).

## Super Bowl 2026: Make a Sober Ride Your Game Plan!

**S**uper Bowl weekend (Sunday February 8, 2026) is a time to enjoy great food, good company, and exciting football. If alcohol is also a part of your festivities, make safety your top priority and plan for sober transportation before the party. If you're hosting, make sure your guests have a safe way home—or be ready to take their keys if they've been drinking. Driving impaired puts lives at risk. You could lose your license, your car, your reputation—or worse. Remember: "Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk."

Traffic enforcement is increased across Montana during Super Bowl weekend. If you see someone driving under the influence, call 911 and report it. And always wear your seat belt! It's your best defense in the event of a crash.

Impaired driving enforcement is a key part of Vision Zero, with increased patrols supported by MDT. Let's work together to keep our roads safe this Super Bowl weekend.

## SOAR Program Supports Tribal CPS Training

**T**ribal traffic safety is a vital part of MDT's traffic safety program. Part of this program is child passenger safety (CPS) and car seat use. Every day, families across the state buckle up and hit the road. But for children, especially those under 13, the journey can be far more dangerous than it seems. Addressing CPS in tribal communities is not just a public health priority, it's a matter of cultural preservation and community resilience.

To ensure the safety of Tribal youth in Montana, Safe On All Roads (SOAR), MDT's Tribal Traffic Safety Program, sponsors Tribal CPS Technician certification training in their respective communities.

Avis Spencer, SOAR Coordinator from Fort Belknap, hosted a Tribal CPS Technician certification course from April 28 through May 1, 2025. Through her recruitment efforts, the Fort Belknap community added 12 new certified CPS Technicians to assist in the correct installation of car seats for community members. Prior to this training, there was only one certified CPS Technician in the Fort Belknap area.

Eileen Henderson, SOAR Coordinator from the Blackfeet Tribe, also hosted a Tribal certification course in her community from May 19-21, 2025. Prior to this training, there were only two certified CPS Technicians in that community. Thanks to Eileen's efforts, that number was increased to 14 technicians!

MDT applauds the efforts of these SOAR Coordinators and is excited to continue partnering through the SOAR Program to reduce Tribal traffic fatalities, especially child passenger fatalities, throughout the state.

For more information on this project, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or [scozzie@mt.gov](mailto:scozzie@mt.gov).



Pictured are the CPS Technician trainees, along with their respective SOAR Coordinators, from the 2025 certification efforts held in the Fort Belknap (above) and Blackfeet (below) tribal communities.





## Montana Traffic Safety Dates

⇒ **December 10, 2025—January 1, 2026\***

Winter Holiday Drive Sober Enforcement

⇒ **February 8, 2026**

Super Bowl LX—Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk

⇒ **March 17, 2026\***

St. Patrick's Day—Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

⇒ **April 1-30, 2026**

National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

⇒ **April 20-24, 2026**

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW)

⇒ **May 1-31, 2026**

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month; National Bicycle Safety Month

⇒ **May 6, 2026**

National Bike & Roll to School Day: [walkbiketoschool.org/](http://walkbiketoschool.org/)

⇒ **May 11-31, 2026\***

Click It or Ticket Law Enforcement Seat Belt Mobilization

**\* Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Mobilization Periods**

**Note: There are STEP participating across the state that conduct intensive enforcement of specific traffic safety laws with extensive communication, education, and outreach informing the public about the enforcement activity. For more information, contact Kevin Dusko, MDT State Traffic Safety Section Supervisor, at 406-444-7411 or [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov).**

## A New Year of Teen Traffic Safety Partnerships

For the past decade, MDT has partnered with the Montana Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) to promote teen traffic safety. FCCLA is a student organization for students enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences education, grades 7 through 12. There are 65 Chapters across Montana. This peer-to-peer project gives teens the opportunity to educate their peers on traffic safety issues facing their communities.

In the last five years, teen drivers represented approximately 13% of all fatalities and 22% of all serious injuries on Montana's roadways. Yet, teens only account for approximately 6.7% of the state's population. MDT has made this issue a priority.



On September 28, MDT attended the Montana FCCLA Leadership Conference, launching the annual grant opportunity for Chapters to apply for funding for the upcoming school year. With the support of these grants, Chapter members will develop new and creative approaches to teen traffic safety that are relevant to their peers and greater communities. This peer-to-peer approach helps to better educate Montana teens about traffic safety issues that are important from a teen's perspective. Projects can be focused on topics like seat belt usage, distracted driving, drowsy

driving, or impaired driving. The projects will be developed and launched throughout the school year, with final results submitted to MDT in March. After reviewing the results, prizes are awarded to the Chapters with the most creative campaigns, based on a number of criterion.

MDT is excited to continue this partnership for the 2025/2026 school year and applauds these teens and their efforts to educate their peers on local traffic safety issues. For more information, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or [scozzie@mt.gov](mailto:scozzie@mt.gov).

## Ensuring Safety for All Travelers This Winter

Montana's winters are beautiful, but they also come with a unique set of challenges for those who travel by foot, bike, or vehicle during the season. Without preparation, snow, icy surfaces, and reduced daylight can turn a simple commute or walk into a risky endeavor. Whether you're behind the wheel, on two wheels, or walking through town, here are some essential safety tips to help navigate winter conditions confidently and responsibly.



### Winter Driving

- **Clear Your View.** Before driving, make sure all windows, mirrors, and lights are completely cleared of snow and ice.
- **Slow Down.** Reduced traction on snowy or icy roads increases stopping distances. Slowing down gives you more time to react to the unexpected.
- **Give Extra Space.** When passing bicyclists, allow at least six feet of space. Slippery roads can cause sudden shifts in movement, so extra room is essential for safety.
- **Be Patient.** Bicyclists and pedestrians may be moving cautiously or more slowly due to snow and ice. Give them the time they need to navigate safely.

### Winter Biking

- **Equip Your Bike for Winter.** Switch to wider tires for better grip and consider studded tires for icy roads. Make sure your front and rear lights are working and "on" in low visibility conditions.
- **Ride with Caution.** Lower your speed, especially when approaching corners or intersections. Avoid sharp turns or sudden braking. Deliberate movements help maintain traction and control.
- **Choose Safe Routes.** Whenever possible, opt for routes that are cleared of snow and ice. Familiarize yourself with your city's snow removal policies, including priority routes. When traveling at a time of day or during conditions with low visibility, try and opt for a route that is well lit.

### Winter Walking

- **Be Visible.** Wear bright or reflective clothing to stand out against the snow. Carry a flashlight or headlamp to help see and be seen. Staying visible is the key to a safe walk.
- **Use Designated Paths.** Stick to sidewalks and marked pedestrian crossings. If sidewalks are not present, walk on the edge of the road facing traffic so you can see approaching vehicles. Predictability is key!
- **Watch Your Step.** Ice can be hidden beneath snow or appear as transparent patches. Walk slowly and take smaller steps to improve your balance. Consider using ice cleats or walking poles to help with traction and stability.

### Embrace Winter, But Stay Prepared!

Winter in Montana doesn't mean you have to stay indoors, but it does require extra caution. Understanding the risks that come with winter travel and adjusting your behavior accordingly can make all the difference in staying safe. Whether you're driving, biking or walking, being alert and prepared helps protect not only yourself, but everyone sharing the road with you.



# 2025 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting

Over 100 people attended the eighteenth Annual Transportation Safety Meeting hosted by MDT on August 13 and 14 in Helena. Attendees included statewide subject matter experts (SMEs) from planning and engineering, enforcement, emergency and medical services, fire departments, motor carrier services, tow operators, educators, behavior and injury specialists, Buckle Up MT coalitions, DUI task forces, and other safety partners and stakeholders.

Both days of the Annual Meeting kicked off with opening remarks from MDT leadership. Director Chris Dorrington and Deputy Director Larry Flynn both spoke to the importance of the Vision Zero goal, and shared deep appreciation for the local, state, federal, and tribal safety partners in attendance.

"This is going to take communication, coordination and collaboration from everyone in this room, particularly as we look ahead to the next legislative session," Director Dorrington said, noting both successes and work still to be done following the 2025 session. "Vision Zero is our shared goal, and it will take all of us – across Montana and the diverse areas of expertise represented here today - to make this happen."

The agenda for this year's Annual Meeting focused on engaging attendees in Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) update process. Opening and breakout sessions were facilitated by MDT's consultant for the CHSP update. To measure progress, the CHSP Interim Safety Goal has been updated to reduce fatalities and serious injuries from 984 in 2023 to 729 by 2030.

## CHSP Interim Safety Goal

*Reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Montana's roads by half, from 984 in 2023 to 729 by 2030.*

On the first day, attendees were given an overview of the CHSP, then were provided with an introduction to safety strategy development and their roles in implementing those strategies. Attendees participated in randomized breakout sessions where brainstorming took place on potential strategies for each emphasis area (EA) of the CHSP:

- Safe Roads
- Emergency Response – Post-Crash Care
- Safe Speeds & Safe Vehicles
- Safe Road Users

In addition to each EA facilitator, relevant MDT staff and other SMEs representing EMS and Trauma Care, emergency response, injury prevention, behavioral health, law enforcement, planning and engineering, motor carrier services, vehicle licensing, maintenance and other fields were present to provide input and help guide discussions for their respective EA.

Beginning the second day, attendees listened to a group session on Traffic Safety Culture, which included consideration of the Safe System Approach. Before resuming a full day of EA breakout sessions, attendees were briefed on how their input from the discussions during Day 1 would lead to refining and prioritizing strategies, and ultimately the development of implementation workplans for each of the four EAs. As in Day 1, the breakout sessions were rich with facilitated discussion. In closing the Annual Meeting, attendees were thanked for their participation and given an overview of next steps in the CHSP update process: develop EA implementation workplans and to finalize the CHSP update.

For more information on the CHSP update, please contact Pam Langve-Davis at 406-444-7646 or [plangvedavis@mt.gov](mailto:plangvedavis@mt.gov), or

visit the Vision Zero CHSP website at [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-update.aspx](https://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-update.aspx).

Presentations from the 2025 meeting can be found at [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-meetings.aspx](https://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-meetings.aspx).



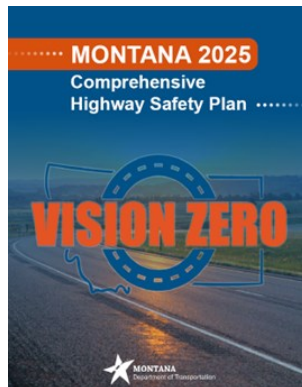
*Pictures above show attendees participating in the EA breakout sessions, where they had an opportunity to provide input and help guide strategy development related to the CHSP update.*

*MDT extends sincere gratitude to the many safety partners and stakeholders that attended this important meeting. Your expertise and participation in the CHSP update are critical as we continue to work towards the Vision Zero goal. Thank you!*



# Overview of CHSP Emphasis Areas

Over the past year, Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) Advisory Committee has been working to update the CHSP, which is the guiding document that provides strategic direction for MDT, other state agencies, and local community safety plans. The CHSP provides the collaborative framework for eliminating fatalities and serious injuries (FSI) through a data-driven process to identify key emphasis areas (EAs) and strategies, and guides resources that have the greatest potential to reduce roadway FSI. The updated plan outlines four EAs and the strategies that will be employed to support progress towards the CHSP Interim Safety Goal (see page 8 of this issue for more information), ultimately supporting MDT's commitment to work towards Montana's Vision Zero goal. The plan update is expected to be completed by the end of December 2025.



## Safe Roads



The Safe Roads EA encompasses key areas that are relative to the built environment to reduce FSI. The EA encompasses three key focus areas: roadway departures, intersections, and vulnerable road user (VRU) infrastructure (bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists).



departure FSI (52%), followed by unrestrained vehicle occupants (46%).

**Did you know?** Roadway departure crashes represent the majority (56%) of total FSI in Montana, making it a priority in the CHSP. Impaired drivers are the leading factor in roadway



Speed is a leading factor in motorcyclist FSI (17%), bicyclist FSI (2%) and pedestrian FSI (6%). As a driver, do your part to protect VRU by

observing posted speed limits and adjusting your speed as needed to account for current weather, light or road conditions.



## Emergency Response – Post-Crash Care



The Emergency Response – Post-Crash Care EA focuses on the period immediately following a crash. Montana defines Emergency Response – Post-Crash Care as response to and transporting people to a medical facility after a crash-related incident, regardless of the transport method.



**Did you know?** Unlike fire suppression and law enforcement, which are required to be provided to all citizens, EMS does not receive financial support from the state and local government in most counties. It is not deemed an essential service in Montana.



As a rural state, Montana has been nationally deemed an “ambulance desert” – meaning it could take at least 25 minutes for emergency response from a ground transporting ambulance station.

Source: Montana 2024 Trauma Legislative Report, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS): [prod-dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/EMSTS/Trauma/2024TraumaLegislativeReportFinal.pdf](https://prod-dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/EMSTS/Trauma/2024TraumaLegislativeReportFinal.pdf)

## Safe Speeds & Safe Vehicles



The Safe Speeds & Safe Vehicles EA addresses vehicle and speed-related factors and speed management strategies that may significantly impact crash severity and frequency on Montana's roadways. The EA divides crash data into three key focus areas: speed-related, aggressive and erratic driving, and large vehicles involved.



**Did you know?** Roadway departures are the top factor in both speed-related (70%) and erratic, reckless, negligent, and/or aggressive driving (74%) related FSI. Careful, focused driving at safe speeds help ensure your vehicle stays on the road!



Large vehicles are involved in 9% of total FSI in Montana.

## Safe Road Users



The Safe Road Users EA focuses on human behavior factors that contribute to FSI, focusing on driver and occupant actions that may significantly impact roadway safety outcomes. The EA encompasses three key focus areas: unrestrained vehicle occupants, impaired driving, and careless, inattentive, and/or distracted driving behaviors.



**Did you know?** Roadway departure is a factor in 74% of unrestrained vehicle occupant FSI. Seat belts are the best defense in the event of a crash, so buckle up – every person, every trip, every time.



Impaired driver related crashes represent 41% of total FSI for Montana. 35% of impaired driver related FSI occur during the summer months (June-August). The period between June and September is known nationally as the “100 Deadliest Days of Summer” due to the historical increase in roadway crashes.



As a resource to support the 2025 CHSP update, detailed fact sheets representing each EA by focal point were developed. The “Did you know?” data included in this article, unless otherwise noted, can be found in the fact sheets, located here: [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/docs/chsp/2025/2025-MDT-CHSP-Fact-Sheets-Packet-FINAL.pdf](https://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/docs/chsp/2025/2025-MDT-CHSP-Fact-Sheets-Packet-FINAL.pdf).

Vision Zero remains the ultimate goal for Montana, as no life lost on our roadways is acceptable.

# Know Before You Go This Winter!



**D**uring the winter season, MDT maintenance employees report observed conditions. Reported conditions, along with traffic incidents, road closures, highway cameras, and more are available online at [511mt.net](http://511mt.net). Users may also download our mobile app, *MDT 511*, through device app stores.

MDT encourages everyone to check 511 before traveling to stay informed of current conditions. Additionally, drivers should be prepared for changing conditions. Stay alert and reduce vehicle speed when you encounter winter road conditions.



**MDT's newly named plows will be on the road soon. When you see Snowlene, SnowMater, and others, remember:**

- Be patient. Plow operators will pull over when it is safe for you to pass.
- Reduce your speed when approaching a plow from the rear.
- Do not hug the centerline when approaching an oncoming plow.
- Where one plow is working, others may be nearby.
- Do not pass when a TowPlow is deployed.



# Systems Impact Success Story: Intersection Improvements Underway in Belgrade

**T**he MDT Systems Impact Action Process (SIAP) section coordinates the review of permits such as encroachments, approaches and utility installations. Strong communication and collaboration between MDT and developers is essential for effective Systems Impact coordination.

MDT, the City of Belgrade, and West Post Development (a private Developer) partnered to improve the intersection at Jackrabbit Lane, Amsterdam Road, and Alaska Frontage Road, south of Interstate Highway 90 (I 90) in Belgrade. This effort was coordinated by SIAP's Transportation Planning Engineer, Jean Riley.

This busy intersection sees more than 30,000 vehicles per day, making it a key location for safety and traffic flow improvements. As part of MDT's broader Belgrade Intersection Improvements project, upgrades are being made to traffic signal heads and ADA-compliant pedestrian crossings throughout the area.

In coordination with the City's planning process and MDT's SIAP, the Developer was required to enhance Alaska Frontage Road at the Jackrabbit Lane intersection to include a dedicated westbound left-turn lane, a through lane, and a dedicated westbound right-turn lane.

To minimize disruptions to the public and avoid repeated construction at the same location, The SIAP team collaborated with the Developer, the City, the MDT Butte District, and MDT Construction staff throughout this effort. Thanks to this successful collaboration, MDT decided to separate this intersection from the larger Belgrade project to accelerate construction and reduce long-term impacts on drivers and pedestrians.

The Developer agreed to provide the design for the Alaska Frontage Road portion, and also provided funding for their portion of the project.

This past spring, MDT let the project to construction and the roadway work is now complete. The signal installation for the project should be completed by the end of the year. Camaree Uljua, PE, the City of Belgrade Public Works Director expressed, "Belgrade wants to emphasize how appreciative we are that all parties were able to be flexible with their respective internal processes, allowing us to deliver a better product for the public. We are optimistic that this project can serve as a model for flexibility and nimble response in communities that are trying to respond to development pressures."

This project is just one example of successful coordination between multiple agencies through MDT's SIAP.



*Pictured above is the dedicated west-bound left turn lane added at the Alaska Frontage Road and Jackrabbit Lane intersection as part of the West Post Development project.*



# Murder on the French Woman's Road

By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

In November 1866, Montana Representative W. H. Edwards introduced a bill in the territorial legislature to authorize Constant Guyot to build a toll road from near Hartwell's mill on Ten Mile Creek, ten miles west of Helena, across the continental divide to the Mullan Road. Guyot's proposed road would cut sixteen miles off the old road to Deer Lodge and Hellgate via Mullan Pass. The bill easily passed the legislature, but territorial governor Green Clay Smith vetoed it in protest of the toll road system in Montana. After some debate, the legislature overrode the governor's veto and allowed Guyot to collect tolls on the, as yet, unfinished road.

Born in France around 1824, Constant Guyot arrived in the United States, via New Orleans, in October 1856. By 1860, he was living in St. Louis, Missouri, and listed his occupation in the census as a farmer. Sometime between 1860 and 1865, he hooked up with a female French émigré and moved to Montana Territory. In 1865, he purchased a ranch in the Ruby River valley. Perhaps realizing there was more money to be made as a toll road operator, he sold the ranch and, with his common-law wife, moved to the Little Blackfoot River valley.

Soon after the legislature chartered his toll road, Guyot went to work in earnest to complete construction of the road. He opened it for business in May 1867 and placed an advertisement in the *Weekly Rocky Mountain Gazette* announcing the new road was the "shortest and best route for travelers," who could "be accommodated with meals and lodgings at [the] French Woman's." The new road proved popular with travelers primarily because of one attraction associated with it – the French Woman. From the day it opened, the route was popularly known as the French Woman's Road. The toll gate known as French Woman's "Ranche" near the junction of Mullan Road along Dog Creek was located about one-and-a-half miles east of today's Elliston, Montana.

Pilgrims could expect a good meal and a place to sleep at the French Woman's. Meals cost \$1, and lodgings (a place on the floor) cost \$2. Almost nothing is known about the French Woman, including her name. We do, however, have a general idea of what she looked and acted like. Less than a month before her death in July 1868, the *Montana Post* described her as "the garrulous, gossiping, good natured dispenser of ranch eggs, trout, and tortured English." One admirer claimed "she was a good-looking critter – black-haired, black-eyed, and sharp and cute looking, maybe thirty years old, an' a good housekeeper. She was on the rustle and made a good living by keeping a sort of hotel for us rovin' miners." Nearly a decade after her death, a Butte physician, O'Dillon Whitford, stopped at the ranch to spend the night. He later reported an encounter with an apparition echoing the above descriptions of her. The specter, Whitford claimed, had "ravenous black hair hanging in loose tresses down the back; face snowy white, narrow and pinched ... the eyes were represented by dark shadowy caverns whose depths seemed fathomless." While she may have been good-natured, a good cook, and popular with her customers, her relationship with Constant was anything but harmonious. Constant had a reputation as a drunken ne'er-do-well who had little to do with the management of the toll road. The couple fought all the time, according to witnesses.

The French Woman's tenure as a cook, innkeeper, and toll collector came to a sudden and violent end on August 27, 1868. Sometime between 9 and 11 a.m., she was brutally murdered and her cabin ransacked. Robbery was likely the motivation for the crime. The table was set for two people when passersby found her body, "weltering in her blood." Rumors circulated that she had hidden six to seven thousand dollars in gold dust somewhere on

the premises. She had planned to use the money to visit her daughter in Paris. It is not known if the murderers found her savings.

Constant offered a reward of \$1,000 for the capture of the perpetrators. Helena banker William Nowlan added \$500 more to the pot. The slaying of this popular innkeeper shocked the territory, leading the *Montana Post* to write, "If those guilty of committing the crime are discovered, we hope no legal technicalities ... may stand between them and the rope, for hanging is too good for them."

Authorities initially suspected the two men who found the French Woman's body. But, within a short time, suspicion instead focused on Constant Guyot and his hired hand, a man named Ruelle. Guyot claimed he and Ruelle left the cabin after breakfast between 8 and 9 a.m. to tend to his hayfield five miles to the east. His alibi was not a good one, and the couple's combative relationship didn't help Guyot's case. Afraid of vigilante justice for the murder of his common-law wife, he sold the French Woman's cabin to John Lanya for \$764 in gold dust and left the territory.

The history of the French Woman's road and cabin becomes somewhat murky after Guyot left the territory. Guyot sold the ranch complex, but not the toll road. Helena merchant and entrepreneur E. M. "Lige" Dunphy eventually gained control of it. Another French immigrant, Victor Durand, collected tolls and operated a saloon at the ranch from 1870 to 1872. There is some evidence that Durand was paying for the cabin in installments and collecting tolls for Dunphy and his business partner, David Bentley. He signed a promissory note to Dunphy and Bentley for the cabin and then defaulted on it. By 1872, the property included a house, saloon, barn, fences, and other improvements – but no Durand. The ranch complex passed through several proprietors in the 1870s. In 1877, Dr. Whitford described it as a "lonely haunted place" – literally. He wrote the log cabin was "rough, dirty and moldy."

Dunphy and John Donhouer realigned portions of the road in 1871. Dunphy hired Alexander MacDonald to manage the toll road, but not the ranch. In 1876, Dunphy sold the toll road to MacDonald and J. J. McRae. Hitherto known as French Woman's Pass, it was known as MacDonald Pass by 1883. Sometime between 1879 and 1897, Lewis and Clark and Deer Lodge counties canceled MacDonald's license to collect tolls on the road, and it became a free route. The Bureau of Public Roads realigned and reconstructed the road over MacDonald Pass in 1930.

The French Woman is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere on a bluff overlooking the site of her ranch. Her death is Montana's first known cold case murder – a murder that will likely never be solved.

## Editor's Note: More from MDT's Historian...

*I've had the pleasure of reading Jon's writing for years, and hope you, our Newsline readers, have enjoyed it as well!*

*For those interested, you can take a deeper dive into Montana's history, particularly related to transportation, with his books. From the impressive feat of engineering that built the legendary Beartooth Highway, to the eclectic stories behind Montana's highway markers, Jon's vast knowledge of history and talent for storytelling bring the past to life.*

Visit the Montana Historical Society's online Shop to source Jon's available books: [mhs.mt.gov](https://mhs.mt.gov).



**MDT Wants Your Comments on New Projects**

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, please visit [mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/proposed_proj.pdf), [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.aspx), or call 800-714-7296. You can mail comments on proposed projects to MDT Project Analysis Manager, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 or email them to [mdtstip@mt.gov](mailto:mdtstip@mt.gov).

**Inside This Issue**

MDT Aligns Agency Structure to Core Purpose .....	1
Federal Surface Transportation Program Status.....	1
Montana Trails Grants 2026 Application Cycles .....	2
<b>Introductions to New MDT Contacts .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Slow Down, Move Over/Memorial Dedication .....	3
Explore Future Careers Through MDT's Intern Program.....	3
Montana BUILD Grant Application Awarded Funding.....	3
2026 Application Process for Transit/Highway Safety Grants .....	3
<b>2025 Project Highlights (by MDT District) .....</b>	<b>4,5</b>
Get Home Safe for the Holidays.....	6
Plan a Sober Ride for Super Bowl 2026.....	6
SOAR Program Supports Tribal CPS Training.....	6
Montana Traffic Safety Dates .....	7
A New Year of Teen Traffic Safety Partnerships .....	7
Ensuring Safety for All Travelers this Winter .....	7
2025 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting .....	8
Overview of CHSP Emphasis Areas .....	9
Winter Travel Safety: 511, Snowplows.....	10
Systems Impact Success Story .....	10
<i>Murder on the French Woman's Road .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>INSERT—Local Assistance Brochure</b>	

**Contact Information**

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 800-335-7592.

**Newsline Editor-Lauren Eichenfels ([leichenfels@mt.gov](mailto:leichenfels@mt.gov)).....**  
**406-444-7614**

Statewide Planning & Modal Operations Manager-Doug McBroom ([dmcbroom@mt.gov](mailto:dmcbroom@mt.gov)).....406-444-9240

Bike/Ped-Shelby Clark ([mdtbikeped@mt.gov](mailto:mdtbikeped@mt.gov)).....406-444-9273

Environmental-Tom Martin ([tomartin@mt.gov](mailto:tomartin@mt.gov)).....406-444-0879

Highway Traffic Safety-Kevin Dusko ([kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov)).....  
.....406-444-7411

Map Orders- [mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.aspx).....  
.....406-444-6119

Projects/Secondary Roads-Paul Johnson ([paujohnson@mt.gov](mailto:paujohnson@mt.gov)) ..  
.....406-444-7259

Road Data & Mapping-Brian Andersen ([brandersen@mt.gov](mailto:brandersen@mt.gov)).....  
.....406-444-6103

Statewide and Urban Planning-Mitch Buthod ([mbuthod@mt.gov](mailto:mbuthod@mt.gov)).....  
.....406-444-9238

System Impact-LeRoy Wosoba ([lwosoba@mt.gov](mailto:lwosoba@mt.gov)).....  
.....406-444-9233

Traffic Data-Becky Duke ([bduke@mt.gov](mailto:bduke@mt.gov)).....406-444-6122

Transit-Jennifer Andrews ([jeandrews@mt.gov](mailto:jeandrews@mt.gov)) .....406-444-6100

This document is printed at state expense. Information on the cost of publication may be obtained by contacting the Department of Administration.

MDT's mission is to plan, build, operate, and maintain a safe and resilient transportation system to move Montana forward. Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Montana Department of Transportation, representing planning-related information and updates from across the department.

Return Service Requested

Montana Department of Transportation  
Rail, Transit & Planning Division  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, Montana 59620-1001



Department of Transportation  
**MONTANA**

Pre Sort Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Helena, MT  
Permit No. 89



# Transportation Assistance for Montana Communities - 2026

Montana's local governments face numerous challenges in improving and maintaining their transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation needs outpace available funding at all levels. MDT administers many funding and planning programs that help local governments address their local transportation needs. Following are some MDT-administered programs that support local projects:

## **Planning and Technical Assistance**

**Systems Impact Analysis Process (SIAP)** - MDT's SIAP ensures a coordinated review of major developments and local projects initiated outside of MDT that may significantly and permanently impact the state transportation system. MDT coordinates development reviews with Montana's local governments to ensure their concerns are addressed and provides technical assistance to local governments interested in developing local processes similar to SIAP. For more information, phone 406-444-9233.

**Multimodal Transportation Plans** - Outside of Billings, Bozeman, Helena, Great Falls, and Missoula, there are no federal or state requirements for transportation plans. MDT provides financial and technical support for transportation planning in other Montana communities, including some of our fastest growing cities. These cooperative planning efforts ensure consistency with other community plans and processes. The plans help identify deficiencies, needs, and funding to ensure an efficient, safe, and modern transportation system. For more information, phone 406-444-9238.

**Travel Demand Forecasting** - MDT develops and maintains state-of-the-art computer models in Montana's larger communities to forecast future travel demand and analyze alternative transportation improvements to accommodate existing and future demand. MDT works with cities, counties, and other government agencies in the development of these models, which help inform decisions about future transportation network needs. For more information, phone 406-444-9193.

**Corridor Planning Studies** - MDT provides financial and technical support for the development of corridor planning studies. The goal of these studies is to better scope projects before moving into the project development process, achieve the lowest level environmental document while minimizing project delivery costs and time, and provide early opportunities for public and resource agency participation. For more information, phone 406-444-9238.

**Safety Planning** - This MDT program provides technical and financial assistance to local governments for the development of Community Transportation Safety Plans. Through a coordinated process, safety stakeholders and agencies identify the specific transportation safety issues in a community, develop strategies to address those issues, and determine the agency/individual responsible to monitor implementation of each strategy. Participating communities must demonstrate a commitment to implement and monitor progress. For more information, phone 406-444-7646 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/).

## **Information and Education**

**Research Programs** - MDT conducts research to discover, develop, and extend knowledge needed to operate, maintain, and improve Montana's multimodal transportation system. Interested parties can propose research topics through MDT's annual solicitation process. More information can be found at [mdt.mt.gov/research/](http://mdt.mt.gov/research/) or by phoning 406-444-7203.

**State Highway Traffic Safety Programs** - These programs provide funds to eligible applicants to promote the use of occupant restraints and prevent impaired driving. For more information, phone 406-444-7411 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/safetyprg.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/safetyprg.aspx).

**Bicyclist and Pedestrian** - MDT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator serves as MDT's liaison to internal and external bicycle and pedestrian interests. The coordinator provides input and technical support related to the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and plans. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is a clearinghouse for bicycle and pedestrian safety and educational resources. For more information, phone 406-444-9273.

## **Data Collection and Management/GIS**

MDT collects and maintains information about Montana's transportation system. Available to government entities and the public, this information includes a comprehensive location inventory of roads in Montana, including basic physical attributes such as length, width, and surface type; traffic volume and classification data; and mapping and GIS services and products, including the official Montana State Highway map. For information, phone 406-444-6103.

## **Additional Support**

Most federal-aid funding for projects and programs requires non-federal matching funds. Although not required to do so, the state provides matching funds for most infrastructure projects on the state highway system. Additionally, in times of federal program growth, the state has passed the growth in federal program funding on to programs of importance to local governments through the State-level Urban and Secondary Highway Programs.

Programs that benefit local governments are the result of cooperative state and local efforts to distribute limited funding as fairly as possible. MDT continues its commitment to support local transportation planning and projects to ensure a safe and reliable transportation system for Montana communities. For more information, visit MDT's Statewide Planning & Modal Operations website at [mdt.mt.gov/contact/organization/railtran.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/contact/organization/railtran.aspx).

## **Infrastructure and Capital Assistance**

**Fuel Tax** - Counties and cities receive a portion of state fuel tax receipts based on statutory formulas for construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of rural roads and city or town streets and alleys. For more information, phone 406-444-6103 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax/allocations.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax/allocations.aspx).

**Surface Transportation Program-Urban** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated to Montana's urban areas (areas with a population greater than 5,000) for improvements to the Urban Highway System. Priorities are identified at the local level through established planning processes that include the public. Funds are primarily used for street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and traffic operation improvements. For more information, phone 406-444-9238.

**Surface Transportation Program-Secondary** - Federal funding with state and local matching funds is allocated based on a statutory formula for improvements on Montana's Secondary Highway System. Capital construction priorities are identified at the local level and coordinated with MDT. Eligible activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation, and pavement preservation improvements. For more information, phone 406-444-7259

**Urban Highway Pavement Preservation** - Federal and state matching funds are provided for cost-effective treatments to Urban Highway System routes. These improvements preserve the system, delay roadway deterioration, and improve roadway condition without adding capacity. Priorities are identified through MDT district and local government consultation and are based on pavement management systems developed and maintained at the local level. For more information, phone 406-444-7259.

**Transportation Alternatives** - Federal funding with state and local matching funds is provided for transportation alternative projects. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; lighting and safety-related infrastructure; projects to achieve ADA compliance; and environmental mitigation and wildlife connectivity. Projects are prioritized through a competitive process in accordance with federal eligibility and requirements under 23 USC 213. For more information, phone 406-444-6101 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta-application.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta-application.aspx).

**Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** - Federal funds are available with state matching funds for infrastructure projects that improve highway safety. These funds can be utilized for any public road projects such as signing, striping, guardrail installation, slope flattening, and intersection improvements. Projects are prioritized through a competitive process utilizing a benefit-cost analysis. For more information, phone 406-444-9420 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/).



**Off-System Bridge Program** - Federal funding with state and local matching funds are allocated for replacement and repair of locally maintained bridges. Construction priorities are identified at the local level and coordinated with MDT. Eligible activities include reconstruction and rehabilitation. For more information, phone 406-444-9221.

**Montana Air and Congestion Initiative (MACI)** - Federal funding with state and local matching funds through this unique MDT program supports strategies to proactively address air quality issues related to carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Projects in eligible air quality nonattainment or at-risk areas are prioritized and selected based on air quality benefits. Eligible projects include the purchase of street sweepers and flush trucks necessary to reduce particulate matter and the funding of intersection improvements and signal synchronization projects to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. For more information, phone 406-444-9238.

**EMS Grant Program** - State funds are available through a competitive process to volunteer emergency medical providers for acquiring or leasing ambulances or emergency response vehicles, training, communication equipment, and medical care equipment. For more information, phone 406-444-7411 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-ems.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-ems.aspx).

**Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Program** - MDT administers a state program that provides loans for freight railroad improvements including construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of rail lines and related facilities. Eligible parties include railroad owners and operators and certain port authorities. For more information, phone 406-444-9193.

**Transit** - Federal funding programs administered by MDT support community transit systems with operating, capital, and planning. A locally developed coordination plan is required and must include public services as well as services for the disabled and elderly. Federal Health and Human Services funds may be used to match federal transit funds. For more information, phone 406-444-6100 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-transit.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-transit.aspx).

**Ferry Boat Program** - Federal funds are available for Chouteau and Blaine Counties with some involvement with Fergus County for improvements to ferries and facilities. For more information, phone 406-444-7259