

Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation | Aeronautics Program | Vol. 75, No 7 July 2026

ACE Academy and Canyon Ferry Fly-In

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Aeronautics Program invited pilots to fly into Canyon Ferry on June 20 to support the annual Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Academy, giving high school students a chance to see a variety of aircraft and learn directly from people working in aviation careers. Events like ACE Academy help introduce students to aviation pathways in flying, maintenance, airports, safety, operations, and public service while strengthening Montana's long-term aviation workforce pipeline.

Thank you to the pilots, volunteers, businesses, and aviation professionals who support youth outreach. Montana's aviation future depends on continued mentorship and hands-on exposure to real aircraft, real careers, and real people willing to share their experience!















New MDT Aeronautics Program Manager

The Montana Department of Transportation is pleased to share that Matt Lindberg has accepted the role of Aeronautics Program Manager for the MDT Aeronautics Program. MDT Aeronautics supports aviation safety, airport infrastructure and funding, pilot and aircraft registration, search and rescue coordination, training, and statewide aviation outreach as part of its work to protect and promote aeronautics in Montana.

Many of you already know Matt through his work in MDT Aeronautics, especially in safety, education, training, and outreach across the state. His background reflects the division's long-standing commitment to aviation education, community connection, and helping Montanans build lasting pathways into aviation.

"I'm truly honored to step into this role and continue serving Montana's aviation community. As a Fairfield native, aviation has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. During my high school years, MDT Aeronautics played a big role in shaping that path. From attending ACE summer camps and winter survival training to winning the Montana aviation art contest trip to the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Air Academy in 2006, Aeronautics helped turn a childhood dream into a lifelong career that has helped shape my life. Those experiences are a big part of why this work means so much to me, and why I care deeply about preserving and strengthening aviation in Montana for the next generation.



I look forward to working with our staff, the Aeronautics Board, airport managers, pilots, aircraft owners, passengers, educators, volunteers, business, our delegation, and communities across the state to keep Montana aviation safe, practical, and forward-looking. More than anything, I'm grateful for the opportunity to keep growing within this Aeronautics and to spend my career serving the people and places that make Montana aviation so special.

Thank you for your support, trust, and partnerships, I know we will do great things together!"

Airport Operations and Infrastructure

MDT Aeronautics continues to maintain 14 state-owned airports that support access, training, safety, recreation, emergency services, community connectivity, and more throughout Montana. Recent newsletter coverage highlighted infrastructure improvements at state-owned airports, including Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-supported projects that improve facilities, equipment storage, and operational readiness.

Summer is also a key season for airport maintenance, construction activity, inspections, and local improvement work statewide. Pilots should expect changing conditions at some airports and should make a habit of checking current airport information, published advisories, and local conditions before departure.

MDT Aeronautics is contracted with the FAA to inspect all non-primary public airports in Montana. We inspect things such as obstructions on approaches, lighting, pavement conditions, runway markings, windsocks, etc. All the information found in the Chart Supplement is derived from MDT Aeronautics airport inspectors.

Please say hello if you see us out and about surveying and inspecting airports this summer, we love to hear from our customers!

Airport Sponsors: Aeronautics Loan & Grant Applications Open

As a reminder to airport loan and grant applicants, the loan and grant online portal will accept FY 2028 applications starting July 1 through November 15. If you cannot enter the application, you may have a previous award that needs a closeout form or an annual status report filed.

Projects must be broken down by type and itemized on the application. For example, asphalt projects should be broken down by runway, apron, and taxiway, not as one project lumped together.

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.

Summer Flying in Full Swing Across Montana

Summer is one of the busiest and most rewarding times of year for aviation in Montana. From backcountry strips and community fly-ins to flight training, youth aviation programs, airport improvement work, and recreational flying, July brings long days and high activity across the state. With that activity comes a renewed need for sound planning, disciplined decision-making, and a continued focus on safety for pilots, passengers, airport operators, instructors, and volunteers.

Montana's aviation system supports transportation, emergency response, rural access, economic activity, tourism, recreation, exploration, education, and so much more across a wide geographic area. MDT Aeronautics encourages all aviators to take the extra time this summer to review weather, performance, density altitude, Notices to Airman (NOTAMs), runway conditions, and airport information before each flight.

Weather, Density Altitude, and Backcountry Awareness

July flying in Montana requires careful attention to density altitude, mountain weather, convective activity, smoke, temporary flight restrictions (TFR's) due to fires, changing wind patterns, and rapidly shifting conditions in remote areas. Warm temperatures, shorter takeoff margins, and high-elevation airports can significantly affect aircraft performance and safety margins.

Backcountry and recreational pilots should pay particular attention to runway condition, slope, obstacles, wildlife, soft surfaces, and escape options before landing at unfamiliar strips. A conservative go/no-go mindset and a willingness to delay, divert, or turn around remain essential tools for safe summer flying.

Remember to look for the density altitude awareness posters crafted and distributed by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, MDT Aeronautics, and the Montana Pilots Association at each public airport across Montana.

Aircraft Registration Reminders

Montana aircraft and pilot registration support many programs and services provided through MDT Aeronautics including educational outreach, safety clinics, trainings, youth aviation education, search and rescue, and aviation publications.

Selling your airplane this year? If you do, please retain a copy of the FAA Bill of Sale and provide a copy to our office to cancel your Montana aircraft registration.

As a reminder, annual renewals are due prior to March 1 and invoices will be mailed in December. Please be sure to update your address with our office if there are any changes.

Pilots and aircraft owners with registration questions may contact the MDT Aeronautics main office at 406-444-2506, or by email at mdtad@mt.gov.

Looking Ahead

Montana's aviation calendar continues to include airport events, educational programs, board meetings, and seasonal aviation activities throughout the summer and into the fall. Pilots, airport managers, mechanics, educators, students, and community members are encouraged to stay engaged and to share aviation opportunities in their local areas. MDT Aeronautics has been busy attending some of these events and we have enjoyed visiting with you, listening to your needs, admiring your awesome airplanes, and appreciating the great things the people in Montana's aviation community are doing. We look forward to seeing more of you at aviation events throughout the rest of the season.

As always, thank you for supporting aviation in Montana. Fly safe, look out for one another, and help keep Montana's aviation community strong, welcoming, and safety-focused throughout the busy summer season.

Calendar of Events

July 4 - Plains Fly-In and Paradise Rural Fire Department Pancake Breakfast. Plains Airport. 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Ride an antique fire truck shuttle to the breakfast held at the fire station next door. For more information, contact Randy Garrison at 406-370-6179.

July 11 - 12 - Saint Ignatius Fly-In. Saturday, July 11, 4 to 8 p.m., free BBQ with all the fixin's. Sunday, July 12, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., free huckleberry pancake breakfast, 100 gallon avgas giveaway, many door prizes. Helicopter rides both days. For more information, contact Michael Kuefler 406-544-2274.

July 17 - Polson Fly-In and Re-Opening Barbeque. Join us for burgers and hot dogs and take a look at the new Polson airport. Barbeque starts at 4 p.m. For more information, contact Willie Stene at will@steneaviation.com.

July 18 - EAA Chapter 344 Young Eagles Flight Rally. Helena. Montana EAA Chapter 344 will be hosting a free Young Eagles Flight Rally for youths ages 8 to 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the MDT Aeronautics building (2630 Airport Road). Online registration (required) go to eaa.org/eaa/youth/free-ye-flights or contact Dave Lehman, Young Eagles Coordinator at YEchapter344@earthlink.net.

July 18 - Schafer Meadows Work Party. For more information, contact Scott Newpower at 406-670-3169 or snewpower@theraf.org.

July 23 - 26 - Big Sky Balloon Rally, Billings. For event information go to, bigskyballoonrally.com.

July 31 - August 1 - Three Forks Fly-In. Friday, July 31, 2026, 12 p.m. until Saturday, August 1, 8 p.m. 2 day fly-in starting Friday evening with a potluck dinner get together. Saturday flour bombing and spot landing contests and a ping pong ball drop for the kids. Breakfast served on Saturday morning and free hot dogs for lunch. Dinner served Saturday night. For more information, contact Bob Green at 406-539-1880 or 406-539-7830.

August 8 - EAA Chapter 344 Young Eagles Flight Rally. Helena. Canceled

August 9 - Hysham Fly-In. Breakfast available for a small donation 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. For more information, contact Ruth Baue at 406-342-5328.

August 15 - MPA Central Montana Fly-In, Lewistown. 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Hosted by the MPA Central Montana Hangar. We will be serving scrambled eggs, sausage and Jeff and Stacy Martinez's world famous, cinnamon chip pancakes! For more information, contact Pete Smith at 406-366-1435 or pete180@gmail.com.

August 21 to 23 - Montana Fun Weekend Fly-In and Car Show. Cutbank. Breakfast served Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. for $15.00. For more information, contact Rick Geiger at 406-949-5709.

August 29 - Harlowton Fly-In. 6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Hosted by the the 44 Flyers. Breakfast is free, donations accepted. For more information contact Jason Loose at 406-350-0422.

September 6 - Red Lodge Wings and Wheels Fly-In/Cruise In. 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free pancake breakfast. For more information, contact Bo Enwald at 406-425-1591.

September 12 - MPA North Central Hanger Fly-In. Havre. 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Breakfast will be served 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. All activities will be completed by 11 a.m. For more information, contact William Hurd at 406-945-3646 or pronghorn@mcn.net.

September 19 - MPA South Central Fly-In. Laurel. Starts at 8 a.m. Static displays including War Birds! Food trucks and local venders. Contact John at 406-855-2372 or email at johnfredroberts@gmail.com.

September 19 - EAA Chapter 344 Young Eagles Flight Rally. Helena. Montana EAA Chapter 344 will be hosting a free Young Eagles Flight Rally for youths ages 8 to 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the MDT Aeronautics building (2630 Airport Road). Online registration (required) go to eaa.org/eaa/youth/free-ye-flights or contact Dave Lehman, Young Eagles Coordinator at YEchapter344@earthlink.net.

September 19 - Lincoln Fly-In. The Lincoln Airport Foundation will be hosting a pancake breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. For more information, contact Doug Vulcan at 406-362-4473 or vulcandg406@gmail.com.

July 2026

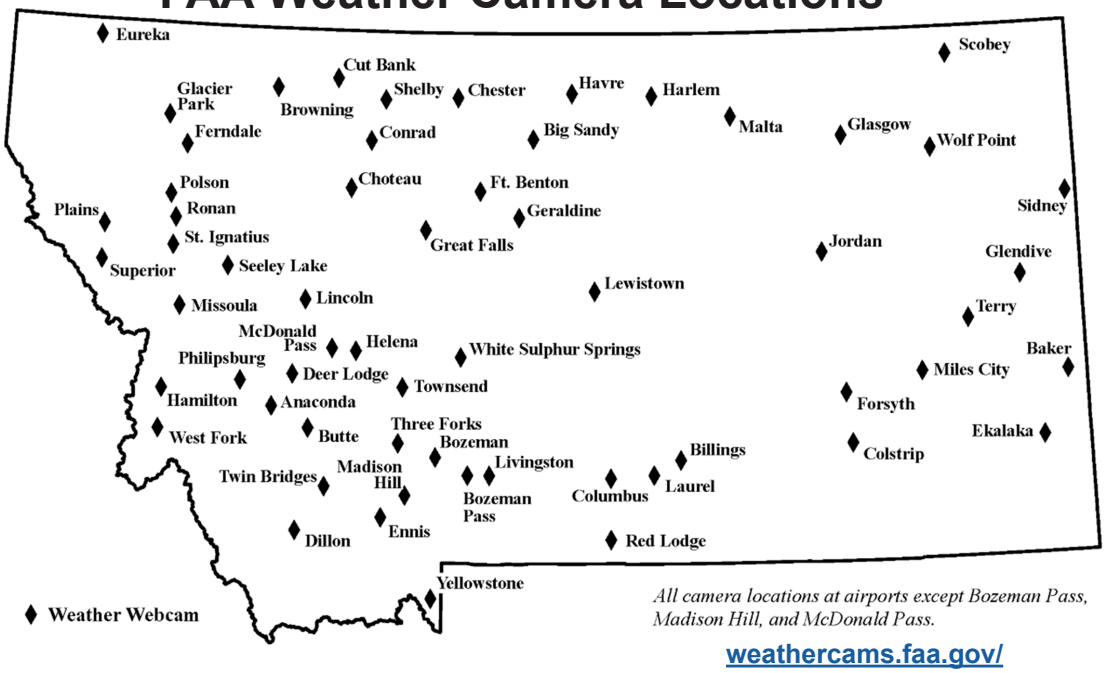
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Thank you for reading Montana and the Sky.
Fly Safe!

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FAA Weather Camera Locations



All camera locations at airports except Bozeman Pass, Madison Hill, and McDonald Pass.

weathercams.faa.gov/

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