NEWSLINE

Montana Department of Transportation

mdt.mt.gov

Fall/Winter 2026

Serving Montana with Pride: A Tribute to John Althof

Words by Newsline Editor, Lauren Eichenfels

At the end of the day, it is a writer's job to tell a story. Some stories are easier tapestries to weave than others, but to me the greatest joy (or sadness) comes from giving words to the stories that already exist all around us – the stories of love, life and service that make the world a brighter place.



John Althof (pictured second from the left) and his MDT Traffic Safety Engineering team dressed in red (#RedOutForRailSafety) in honor of Operation Lifesaver's annual rail safety campaign. The week-long campaign, which usually takes place in mid-late September (September 21-27, 2026), known as See Tracks? Think Train® Week (formerly known as Rail Safety Week).

John Althof is one of those special stories. When I began my career at MDT over a decade ago, he struck me as a "larger than life" figure, known to many in the department as "Althof" to differentiate from other well-known staff by the same first name. While I never had the pleasure of getting to know him on a personal level, I did have the opportunity to work with John over the years on a variety of communication-focused efforts, including this very newsletter. I don't believe John was a big fan of writing, but I learned early on that he had a passion for rail crossing safety and was always happy to talk about the topic with someone who would take the time to truly listen. I'm not sure he was public speaking's biggest fan either, but I'll never forget the times I heard him speak about his passion – even to an audience of one or two people. Somehow, despite his soft-spoken manner, you could hear the intensity of his commitment to advocating for safety. I remember hearing him say that it really "tore him up" to read or hear about each life lost at a Montana rail crossing. From that day on, I never doubted those simple words that spoke to his commitment to this great state and the people who are lucky to call it home (or are just lucky enough to visit for a while).

In my time with MDT, I've seen the department continue to promote its focus on the ultimate goal of Vision Zero – zero deaths and zero serious injuries on Montana's roadways. I've had the privilege to serve alongside talented, passionate people who adopted Vision Zero as more than just an "ambitious goal," but as a critical part of their ethos in service on behalf of the State of Montana. The passionate folks who see safety for all as not just a tagline or some copy in a government brochure or report, but as a sacred calling in service to their fellow humanity. The people who know that safety isn't just ***a focus*** of our work at MDT, but ***the focus*** of our work. Ensuring our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and other community members can return home safe at the end of the day is what makes us truly proud to serve Montana.

John was a remarkable example of that commitment to safety and service. Whether he was volunteering his time and expertise as Montana's long-time board member and State Coordinator to **Operation Lifesaver** (***oli.org***) or serving in his "day-to-day" role as MDT's Rail Highway Safety Engineer, John cared about the public he served. Indeed, he was instrumental in Montana and MDT being recognized by BNSF Railway (BNSF) for demonstrated commitment to rail crossing safety with the "Tracking to Zero" award three years in a row. In early August, John was formally presented the ***2026 "Tracking to Zero" award*** by BNSF, which he accepted on MDT's behalf.

While John's physical lifetime came to a close a few weeks after this award was presented, we can think of no better way to honor and pay tribute to a public servant who exemplified passion and commitment to safety – not just as a job, but as a calling in service to Montana.

So, in closing, I'd like to say simply: Thank you, John. Thank you for exemplifying care and service, and for believing that the goal of Vision Zero was all of ours to share. Thank you for reminding us that the value of human life can't be quantified by data alone, but by a shared commitment to public safety. Thank you for taking the time to volunteer and to serve beyond your day-to-day role – particularly the time you spent teaching "newbies" at MDT, like me all those years ago, the importance of rail crossing safety. You demonstrated the true meaning of "Serving with Pride," and I hope we (MDT) continue to do you and your legacy proud on behalf of Montana.

Rest easy, John.

On behalf of John's family, friends, his many colleagues at MDT, and his many more partners, stakeholders and acquaintances – statewide and beyond – we extend our deepest condolences for your loss and humbly memorialize a life spent in service.



John Althof, pictured with Mary Ann Monaldi, BNSF Manager Public Projects – Montana, Wyoming, receiving Montana's third "Tracking to Zero" award on behalf of MDT in August 2026.

"So every man, woman and child…shall be able to say, on coming as I have come, towards the evening of life, in all sincerity and truth, if you seek my monument, look around you." **– Julius Sterling Morton, 1894 (Washington Arbor Day Address)**

Message from the Editor

To our valued *Newsline* readers:

From every ending comes the possibility of a new beginning, and this quarterly newsletter is no exception. Over decades in print, and later on digital formats, we hope this has been a valuable resource for you, our readers.

On the cover, you will notice this is the combined "Fall/Winter 2026" issue of the *Newsline*. This special, one-time-only issue will be the last published in 2026. One of the largest factors in our decision to combine the Fall and Winter issues this year was the loss of the legacy software program that had developed *Newsline* issues and housed our templates for the publication for many, many years – longer than this *Newsline* Editor has been with MDT! While this loss was not immediate, the "end" of Microsoft Publisher this October comes with the potential of a fresh "start" for the *Newsline*.

To that end, we will return to our normal quarterly publishing schedule in 2027 and are excited to share a "refreshed" look and layout with you, our valued readers! In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this very special combined issue. We honor several of MDT's own, while providing timely updates, public involvement opportunities, safety tips and resources, and general information on the Department's statewide efforts. You may notice the annual spotlight on District Projects is missing from this combined issue, but don't worry! That spotlight is anticipated to return in Winter 2027. In the meantime, please visit the MDT Public Involvement website (***mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/***), where you'll find information on project development and construction, plans and studies, as well as a link to the interactive **Active Projects Map** (see below for web link and QR code).

As we look ahead to 2027 and the opportunities that await this publication, I hope you'll join me in considering what this resource means to you as one of our readers. Is this publication meeting your expectations or needs? Is there something we're doing really well that should continue? Alternatively, is there anything we could do to improve this publication as an informational MDT resource? I welcome your feedback and encourage you to contact me at any time – see the ***Newsline* Subscription Updates** call-out box below for my direct contact information.

We'll see you again in 2027, but until then: Stay safe – particularly on our roadways – this fall and winter, be well, and remember look out for one another in this vibrant, beautiful statewide community we call Montana.

- Lauren Eichenfels, *Newsline* Editor

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 map, or visit ***mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/projects.aspx*** and select "**Active Projects Map »**."

Transit News and Updates: BlackCat Migration

B2Gnow has recently acquired BlackCat, marking an important step in expanding and strengthening the platform's capabilities. While ownership has changed, customers can expect the same high level of software quality and customer service that they are accustomed to. The teams, support structure, and commitment to delivering reliable solutions remain firmly in place.

MDT will move from the current BlackCat site to a new multi-tenant platform by the end of 2026. A multi-tenant environment means that multiple customers will operate on a shared infrastructure designed to be more efficient, scalable, and easier to maintain. This modernized setup allows updates and improvements to be deployed more quickly and consistently across all users, reducing downtime and ensuring everyone benefits from the latest features simultaneously. The new platform will also provide enhanced performance, including faster load times and a more responsive user experience. In addition, it will support more frequent product updates, improved system stability, and better long-term scalability. Overall, this transition is designed to deliver a more reliable, efficient, and future-ready solution while maintaining the trusted experience users rely on today. We will schedule training and inform all users of critical milestones and important updates as we prepare the system for production. Contact Jennifer Andrews, Transit Section Supervisor, at 406-444-6100 or *jeandrews@mt.gov* with any questions.

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*
- **By phone*:** 406-444-7614

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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.

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Federal Surface Transportation Program Status

The current federal surface transportation program is approaching the end of its authorization. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), enacted in 2021, authorizes federal highway and public transportation programs through September 30, 2026.

On September 3, President Trump signed a continuing resolution that extends most IIJA authorities, requirements, eligibilities, and program conditions through December 11, 2026. The measure also provides prorated Highway Trust Fund contract authority for the extension period while Congress continues work on a new multi-year reauthorization of federal transportation programs. Although the continuing resolution prevents interruptions to federal programs and funding, MDT is optimistic that Congress will advance and pass a new transportation bill as committees resume negotiations, refine legislative proposals and work toward consensus on long-term transportation priorities.

2027 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***.

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on November 30, 2026. Applications will be due **March 5, 2027.**

For more information, contact Jennifer Andrews at 406-444-6100 or *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***.

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on January 1, 2027. Applications will be due **March 1, 2027**.

For information, contact Kevin Dusko at 406-444-7411 or *kedusko@mt.gov*.

MDT MS4 Storm Water Management Program Update

On June 29,2026, MDT announced a public review and comment period for its draft updated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). The duration of this public comment period was 30 days, closing on July 29, 2026. The intent of this public comment period was to solicit input on the draft final SWMP document to improve the implementation of MDT's program since the public can be an effective partner in improving water quality by building greater environmental awareness, leveraging support in achieving water quality goals, and increasing compliance.

The efforts to complete the 2026 SWMP update continue to demonstrate MDT's commitment to foster and improve its storm water program. MDT recognizes public involvement and public participation as an important component of a successful program. MDT did not receive comments during the public comment period.

To learn more, please visit the SWMP website: ***mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stormwater/***, or email *mdtms4datamanager@mt.gov* with any questions or general comments.

Preparing for Montana's 70th State Legislature

MDT is prepared to support and bring forward several key initiatives in the 2027 Legislative session that will support traffic safety and improve effectiveness and efficiency for the department.

MDT stands in support of primary seat belt and distracted driving related legislation. These initiatives have proven to save lives and prevent serious injuries on roadways throughout the nation and can do the same for Montanans. MDT is also seeking to conduct a pilot project using speed cameras in work zones to improve safety for workers and travelers.

MDT will seek authorization for Motor Carrier Services (MCS) Officers to enforce commercial vehicle moving violations. Currently, they may only enforce vehicle size and weight laws and must call for a Highway Patrol or local enforcement officer when a commercial operator is suspected of driving impaired or other infractions. This measure will improve both safety and efficiency.

Other legislation for efficiencies includes:

- Updating the threshold for MDT to list real property for sale. Currently any property exceeding $10,000 must be sold by auction.
- Removing the requirement for registration stickers on aircraft. With current technology, there are more efficient ways of validating aircraft registration.
- Allowing an alternative resource to list memorial highway designations. Under current law, it is required these be on the state highway map, but there is little space available to accommodate the growing number of such designations.
- Allowing MDT to adopt Outdoor Advertising rules. Rule changes must currently be presented to the Transportation Commission for approval.

As the 70th session of the Montana Legislature progresses, MDT will be on hand to work with legislators and partners to enhance the department's ability to provide a safe and resilient transportation system for Montana's residents and visitors.



An MCS vehicle outside of the Montana State Capitol

MDT Joins 2026 Foster Care Summit to Teach Teens About Traffic Safety

This year, MDT participated in the Foster Care Summit to share important traffic safety information with underserved youth from across the state. The event provided a hands-on, interactive space for teens to learn practical skills that help build confidence and promote safer decision-making on the road.

MDT mechanics, Douglas Kiewatt and Jed Bleecker from MDT's Dillon Maintenance Shop, were on-site to teach basic vehicle maintenance, giving students the chance to explore how cars work and learn simple steps they can take to keep a vehicle safe and road-ready. From checking oil levels to understanding warning lights, these demonstrations helped the young drivers simplify basic car safety.

MDT also hosted several activities focused on responsible driving habits. A popular station featured impaired-driving goggles, an interactive activity coordinated with local law enforcement, Officer Weise from the Beaverhead County Sheriff's Office. Students experienced firsthand how alcohol or drugs can affect balance, vision, and reaction time—underscoring the importance of making safe choices behind the wheel.

MDT's participation in the Foster Care Summit reflects its ongoing commitment to supporting youth who may face barriers to transportation education. By offering hands-on instruction, meaningful demonstrations, and collaborative activities, the agency continues working to reduce crash risks and empower young Montanans to stay safe on the road.

For more information about teen traffic safety, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or *scozzie@mt.gov*.

October is National Pedestrian Safety Month

In 2020, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) launched National Pedestrian Safety Month in October (***nhtsa.gov/events/national-pedestrian-safety-month-kickoff***), aiming to draw attention to pedestrian safety. This October marks the seventh annual observance of this safety campaign, reminding us that every day, "We are all pedestrians."

This month, we encourage Montanans to engage with the latest updates and resources on pedestrian safety. Keep an eye on MDT's website and social media for informative content and practical safety tips designed to keep pedestrians safe. For ongoing guidance and resources on nonmotorized travel, visit ***mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/bikeped/***. Let's make our community a safer place for everyone, one step at a time.



MDT, OPI Partner to Improve Access to Driver's Education for At-Risk Teens

In June 2026, the MDT provided at-risk teens with the opportunity to attend the Montana DRIVE program in Lewistown through funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This project allowed youth to participate in the Montana DRIVE training offered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), with travel expenses supported by the State Highway Traffic Safety Office, removing financial barriers that might otherwise prevent them from attending. Through this effort, 21 students were able to participate.



Fort Belknap teen driver graduates of the 2026 Montana DRIVE Program, pictured with their certificates of completion.

MDT pursued this initiative in response to limited access to driver education across the state. Montana law requires that driver training be delivered by certified instructors, and many communities lack these resources. For teens in rural areas, driving is often essential, yet formal training can be unavailable. Montana DRIVE gives these students valuable exposure to driver training, even if they are unable to access a full driver's education program.

The project also expanded support for driver education in Tribal communities. Grant funding provided three full scholarships for Tribal educators to become certified driver's education instructors through Montana State University (MSU)-Northern, covering all program expenses.

MDT recently added these driver-education-focused efforts after identifying significant inconsistencies in access statewide. Strengthening driver education is an important part of MDT's broader strategy to reduce teen crashes, injuries, and fatalities across Montana.

For more information about this program, please contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or *scozzie@mt.gov*.



Fort Belknap teens participating in the 2026 Montana DRIVE Program.

Montana Traffic Safety Dates

October 1-31, 2026
National Pedestrian Safety Month

October 18-24, 2026
National Teen Driver Safety Week

October 19-23, 2026
National School Bus Safety Week

October 20, 2026
Montana Teen Driver Safety Day (Third Tuesday in October: ***MCA 1-1-229***)

October 31, 2026
Halloween Holiday—Drive Sober, Watch for Pedestrians!

November 2-6, 2026
National Crash Responder Safety Week (CRSW): ***transportationops.org/TIM/CRSW***

November 23-29, 2026
Thanksgiving & Holiday Travel—Impaired Driving & Drug Impaired Driving

December 16, 2026—January 1, 2027*
Winter-Holiday Drive Sober Enforcement

February 14, 2027
Super Bowl LXI—Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk

March 17, 2027*
St. Patrick's Day—Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

April 1-30, 2027
National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April 2027**
National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW): ***nwzaw.org***

May 1-31, 2027
Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month
National Bicycle Safety Month

May 5, 2027
National Bike & Roll to School Day: ***walkbiketoschool.org***

May 17, 2027—June 6, 2027*
Click It or Ticket Law Enforcement Seat Belt Mobilization

Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Mobilization Periods

Note: *There is STEP participation across the state, conducting intensive enforcement of specific traffic safety laws with extensive communication, education, and outreach informing the public about the enforcement activity.*

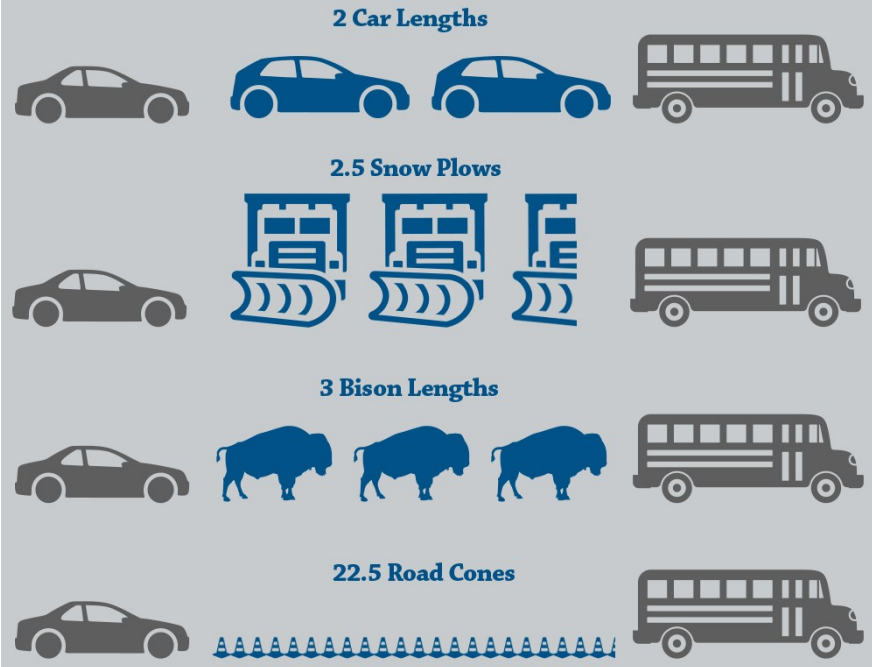
For more information, contact Orry Hatcher, MDT Law Enforcement Program Manager, at 406-444-0809 or ohatcher@mt.gov.

Dates for 2027 NWZAW pending release at time of publication, see website for current information

VISION ZERO

Safe Driving Around School Buses

You should allow a *minimum* of 30 feet between your vehicle and a school bus making a passenger stop. But what might 30 feet look like?



Update on Montana Tribes DUI Task Force

For more than 11 years, the Montana Tribes DUI Task Force has been working to reduce impaired-driving fatalities among Native American communities across the state. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of impaired driving on Tribal members, the Task Force brings together Tribal leaders, community advocates, transportation specialists, and law enforcement partners from all seven land-based Tribal communities to address this critical safety issue.

Over the past decade, the Task Force has expanded education, enforcement support, and community-driven initiatives aimed at preventing impaired driving and promoting safer roadways. Their work reflects a strong commitment to protecting lives, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that culturally appropriate traffic safety strategies reach Tribal communities. They have adopted Bylaws, elected officers and developed a strategic plan to meeting their mission:

> ***The Montana Tribes DUI Task Force, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy, and Blackfeet, will endeavor to protect the present and future generations of American Indians in Indian country. Through our alliance utilizing the four E's (Engineering, Enforcement, Emergency Services and Education) our collaborative efforts in combating impaired driving will reduce serious injuries and fatal vehicle crashes that tragically effect our Indian people.***

By elevating awareness, coordinating prevention efforts, and advocating for expanded support, the Montana Tribes DUI Task Force continues to play a vital role in improving roadway safety across Montana

For more information, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or *scozzie@mt.gov*.

Montana MDT Department of Transportation



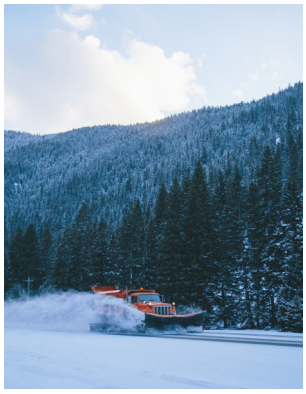
Winter Driving Tips

- Drive with headlights on, day and night.
- Don't use cruise control on wet, icy, or snow covered roads.
- Expect icy conditions on bridge decks and shaded spots.
- Slow down and drive at a speed appropriate for conditions, especially in poor visibility.
- Plan extra time to get to your destination.
- Maintain a safe distance behind other vehicles.
- Insist everyone in the vehicle is buckled.
- Pack a winter survival kit.



Prepare your vehicle for winter; check fluids, wipers, belts, hoses, headlights, brake lights, batteries, and tires.

Safety Tips for Sharing the Road with Snowplows this Winter



Don't Crowd the Plow is an MDT initiative dedicated to keeping Montana drivers and our winter maintenance staff safe.

Because of the work they are tasked with, snowplows often move at slower speeds. Here are a few reminders when traveling this winter:

- Don't pass a plow when the TowPlow is deployed.
- Where one plow is working, others may be also. Be prepared to see plows working in tandem, especially on multi-lane roadways.
- Be on the lookout for alternating amber and green lights to signal a plow is working nearby.
- When approaching a plow, reduce your speed and leave plenty of space. Working plows are often spreading salt/ sand or de-icer.

Each year, multiple plows are hit by vehicles, with the potential to cause harm and injury to all parties involved. When a plow is hit, the truck and operator are immediately taken out of service. This means one less plow is clearing Montana's roadways.

The road in front of the plow is often worse than the road behind it. Give plows room to work and be patient when traveling in changing weather conditions. Current roadway information throughout Montana can be found at ***511mt.net***.

DONT CROWD THE PLOW

Winter Travel Resources: Know Before You Go!

511

Know Before You Go this winter! For road conditions and weather information in Montana, travelers can visit ***511mt.net***, dial 511 (in state), or access either of MDT's mobile applications (iOS and Android). MDT's Traveler Information System provides road conditions, construction information, road closures, chain requirements, incident information, access to camera images/Road Weather Information System (RWIS), snowplow camera images, and rest area information.

SIAP Developments Map

The Systems Impact Action Process (SIAP), in partnership with GIS, has developed a web-based map to track and share information for projects submitted to SIAP for review and coordination. The SIAP Developments Map will include both current and historical data for SIAP review projects and will be updated regularly to ensure information remains accurate and up to date.

Information available on the completed map will include:

- Project status.
- Assigned planner.
- Permit application number, if applicable.
- Project requirements (such as Transportation Commission approval, Maintenance Agreement, Traffic Impact Study, etc.)

Projects will be added to the SIAP Developments Map in phases, beginning with active projects currently under review. As these phases continue, **the Map is live** and accessible to the public. Questions on the SIAP Developments Map can be directed to the Systems Impact Section Supervisor, LeRoy Wosoba, at *lwosoba@mt.gov*.

MDT Awards Traffic Safety Grants to Support Vision Zero

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Grants

MDT awarded almost $5.9 million in federal grant monies from NHTSA for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2027. The grants will address post-crash care, impaired driving, speeding, distracted driving, occupant protection and child passenger safety. The emphasis of this grant program is to improve traffic safety through education, enforcement and emergency medical services training. Law enforcement agencies are funded for increased patrols to concentrate on seat belt, speeding and impaired driving laws. Grants for DUI Courts, a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, a Traffic Safety Resource Training Officer, and the 24/7 Program address impaired driving. Traffic safety education programs continue with the Native American Safe On All Roads (SOAR), Buckle Up Montana coalitions, and the Teen Peer to Peer Traffic Safety programs. To learn more, visit ***mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/***, or contact Kevin Dusko at 406-444-7411 or *kedusko@mt.gov*.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Grant Program

Nearly $1 million in grant funds is awarded annually through the state funded EMS Grant program. The grants are provided to agencies staffed by mostly volunteers, Medicare-level billing providers for ambulances, emergency vehicles, training, equipment, communication, or patient care. The program is awarded through a competitive grant process that opens on May 1 and closes June 30, annually. For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2027, about $1 million in funding will be awarded to EMS providers. To learn more, visit ***mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-ems.aspx***, or contact Bryce Shaneyfelt at 406-444-3430 or *bshaneyfelt@mt.gov for* more information.

Updates on I-90 West Three Forks to Bear Canyon Corridor Study

Did you know? As part of its transportation planning process, MDT conducts several types of studies, including "corridor studies." A corridor study is a planning-level assessment completed before project development and environmental review under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA). It connects early planning with environmental compliance by evaluating safety, operational, and environmental conditions; identifying transportation needs and constraints; and supporting early, ongoing public and agency engagement. This coordination can reduce environmental-review costs and help expedite project delivery. MDT considers developing a corridor study when a corridor's regional significance or complexity warrants evaluating feasible and fundable transportation improvements or alternatives.

West Three Forks to Bear Canyon

The I-90 West Three Forks to Bear Canyon Corridor Study kicked off at the beginning of the year and is now well underway, with completion anticipated by February 2027. This corridor study of Interstate 90 (I-90) was developed between the West Three Forks Interchange in Broadwater County, and Bear Canyon Road Interchange in Gallatin County, with the intent of developing a comprehensive long-range plan for managing the corridor and determining feasible improvements identified as transportation needs within said corridor. Public and stakeholder input, environmental constraints, access management, and financial constraints are all important factors reviewed, considered, discussed and documented throughout this process.

In late August, MDT hosted an open house series – in-person and virtual – to provide more information on the I-90 West Three Forks to Bear Canyon Corridor Study. Public involvement is a critical component to the corridor study process, and these events provided details about the planning process and initial findings, as well as gathered community feedback on transportation concerns, priorities and goals. The in-person events were held in Three Forks, Bozeman and Belgrade. The Virtual Open House option provided community members with a convenient online space to review and comment on the same information presented at the in-person events, but at their own pace. Interested members of the public can also share feedback on the Study using MDT's ***Interactive Commenting Map***, which lets users pinpoint specific areas of concern or opportunity directly on the corridor map.

The next round of public involvement is anticipated to take place in late 2026/early 2027, when the draft corridor study document is made available for public review and comment.

To learn more about the I-90 West Three Forks to Bear Canyon Corridor Study, including information on participating in the public involvement process, visit ***mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90wthreeforks/***.

Community members or other interested parties can also contact Jackson Lang, MDT Project Manager, at 406-444-3246 or *jlang@mt.gov*.

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!

Editor's Note: *This article was originally published in the Newsline's sister newsletter, Montana and the Sky, also available on MDT's website: **mdt.mt.gov/publications/newsletters/aeronews.aspx**. (See Vol. 77 No. 7 July 2026, page 1)*





New Aeronautics Program Manager



Matt Lindberg, 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 program'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, businesses, 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 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!"

Contact Matt at 406-444-9568 or *mlindberg@mt.gov*.



Editor's Note: *This article was originally published in the Newsline's sister newsletter, Montana and the Sky, also available on MDT's website: **mdt.mt.gov/publications/newsletters/aeronews.aspx**. (See Vol. 77 No. 7 July 2026, page 2)*

MDT Seeks Comment on Updated Transit State Management Plan

MDT invites transit providers, local and Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, transportation partners, and members of the public to review and comment on its updated Transit State Management Plan (SMP).

The SMP establishes MDT's policies for administering Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and state-funded transit programs in Montana. It serves as the department's overarching policy document for transit program administration and describes MDT's approach to meeting federal requirements, providing subrecipient oversight, and supporting public transportation throughout the state. The draft SMP is a full rewrite of the prior plan, with reorganized content and updated federal regulatory citations and program guidance.

The updated SMP addresses MDT's administration of federal transit programs, including:

- Metropolitan and statewide transit planning under Sections 5303 and 5304
- Urban Area Formula Program funding under Section 5307
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funding under Section 5310
- Formula Grants for Rural Areas, including intercity bus and Rural Transportation Assistance Program activities, under Section 5311
- Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Program funding under Section 5339
- Montana's Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly (TransADE) program

The plan also outlines policies related to project selection, financial management, subrecipient monitoring, civil rights, procurement, asset management, maintenance, coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning, and technical assistance. It is intended to provide a clear framework for MDT, its subrecipients, and transit partners while supporting safe, accessible, coordinated, and effective public transportation services statewide.

MDT will submit the SMP to FTA for approval and make the plan available for public review before major revisions are finalized. Interested parties are encouraged to review the draft and provide comments, proposed revisions, or questions to the MDT Transit Section.

The draft Transit State Management Plan is available at: *mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/plans/MT-Transit-SMP.pdf*.

Comments may be submitted by email to *jeandrews@mt.gov* through November 30, 2026.



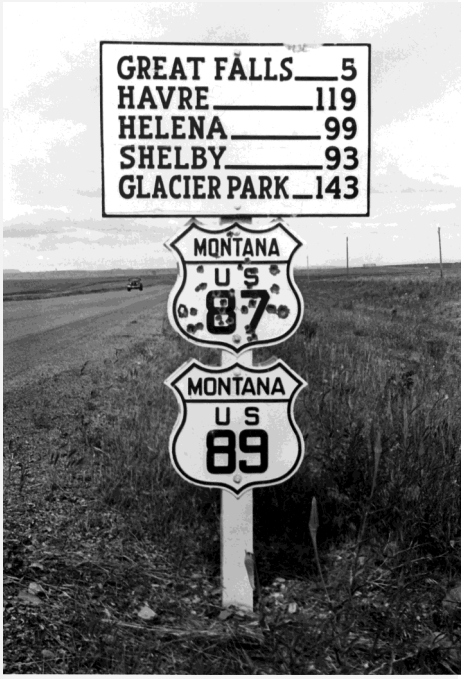


Have you noticed the new "Welcome to Montana" signs during your travels? Kudos to MDT's statewide Maintenance crews for their work to update the signs this year, as well as to MDT's Sign Shop for sign fabrication.

100th Anniversary of the US Highway Numbering System

-By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

2026 marks a century since Montana (and the United States) designated highways by numbers rather than by names. Prior to that, the state was crisscrossed by roads that had names like the Yellowstone Trail, Roosevelt Highway, and Vigilante Trail. Most provided connections between Yellowstone and Glacier national parks. Blazes to keep travelers on the right path consisted of painted fenceposts and signs to lead the way. It was a chaotic system and a named road in one state didn't necessarily mean it would have the same name in an adjacent state. Some kind of order to the confusion was clearly needed to bring the country into the modern age with a national system of numbered interstate highways that also designated a federal aid highway system.



Historic photo of a US Highways sign (US Highway 87/US Highway 89) in Montana.

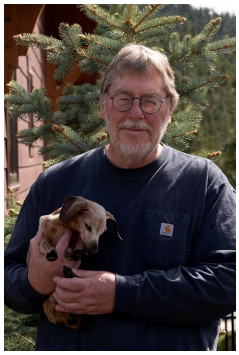
In August 1925, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO; the precursor to AASHTO) appointed a committee to study numbering America's highways. Their goal was to develop a national highway numbering system that would enable travelers to follow the same route to their destinations even if they drove through several states.

At first, the plan was opposed by the many different trail associations, including the seventeen organizations in Montana. They consisted of local businesses, entrepreneurs, and community boosters who depended on the named roads for their financial benefit. A highway numbering system would render the associations unnecessary and possibly bankrupt them. Eventually, however, the plan's logic began to make sense to them and they eventually came around to the idea. The numbering system met with public approval because of its "great convenience to travelers."

The AASHO committee developed a plan to assign even numbers to the east-west highways and odd numbers to north-south routes, a system that is still used today. Consequently, US highways 2 and 10 and Montana 200 were the primary east-west routes across the state, while US 87, 89, 91, 93, and 191 were the main north-south highways. The committee purposely left gaps in the numbering system to allow for future highway expansion.

The Montana State Highway Commission began discussions about the numbering system at its March 1926 meeting. The commissioners directed chief highway engineer Howard Holmes to install signs on U.S. Highways 10 and 89 first "on account of their having been improved to a greater degree than the other routes on the U.S. highway system." Holmes estimated that about a thousand miles would be marked and cost about $20,000 to do so (a little over $374,000 in 2026 dollars). The effort to mark the state's highways, however, didn't begin in earnest until 1928 and wasn't completed until 1930. For years afterwards, however, the commission referred to highway segments by their old names.

Closing the Chapter at MDT

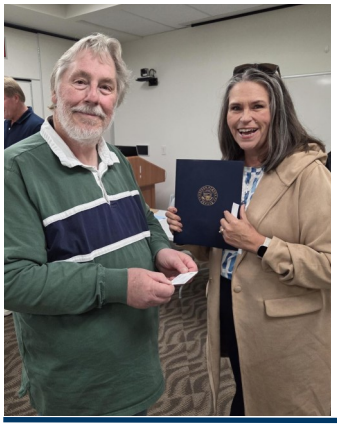


-By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

The time has come at last! After thirty-six years and nearly ten months, its time to retire from MDT. I started here on January 15, 1990. Environmental Services was a section with just nine employees and one computer for all of us. We were part of the old Preconstruction Bureau and managed by engineers who had designed and built the interstate highway system. In many ways, in those days, Environmental was the evil stepchild of the department – fortunately that attitude has significantly changed since then (I hope). Now the Environmental Services Bureau has 28 employees, we all have a laptop, and we're a critical part of the project delivery process.

As a place-based historian, this has been a dream job – as is any job where you get to use your college degree. I've had the opportunity to travel all over the state in search of historic sites, gotten to tell the state's colorful history on the roadside historical and geological interpretive markers, and research and write about Montana's transportation history. I've particularly enjoyed the "other duties as needed" part of the job. That, and all the great people at MDT that I've gotten to work with and know over the years. This has been a great place to work and I've been particularly blessed to be a part of what we do here. The MDT makes a difference and being part of the team has been particularly fulfilling.

I started writing history articles for *Newsline* in 2005 and have put together forty-seven articles for this publication since then. Any opportunity an historian has to research and write about topics that are interesting to him or her is a good one. Working with the *Newsline's* editor, Lauren Eichenfels, has been particularly rewarding; she doesn't get enough credit for all the work she puts into it four times a year. Even though I'll be a former MDT employee, there are several articles under my author credit yet to come in future *Newsline* issues. One will describe the history of an irrigation ditch in Ravalli County. For those of you who know me, ditches are my least favorite historic sites. Hopefully, I'll have made this one at least a little interesting.



Retirement doesn't mean I'm done doing history. Plans are in the works to resurrect my masters thesis topic on the Butte police department during the labor troubles in the 1910s, investigate some guilty pleasure topics, write a few National Register of Historic Places nominations, and, hopefully, do some historic bridge projects for the engineering consultant firms. We shall see. Importantly, when I see former colleagues who ask if I've retired yet, I'll be able to say yes I have and, you know, I really miss the place. Thanks to all of you, employees past and present, for making this the greatest job ever!

In late September, Jon Axline (left) was recognized by US Senator Steve Daines as "Montanan of the Month." He's shown here with a member of Senator Daines' team, Janene Felter (right), as she presents the Senator's letter to Jon at a retirement celebration in his honor. We also want to recognize Jon as the 2026 Vivian A. Paladin Award winner, as selected by the editorial board of Montana the Magazine of Western History (published by MHS). Congratulations, Jon!

Farewell to Jon Axline

Prologue by Lauren Eichenfels, Newsline Editor

When Jon first began to hint at his impending, yet well-deserved retirement a few years ago, the writer in me began to think of how to recognize my renowned and respected colleague. While I've been the Editor of this publication for a few years now, it's rare that an opportunity or need for me to personally write something from scratch arises. Somehow, it seems all the more apropos that one of those rare opportunities (and the joy they personally bring me) would be marking the end of an era.

I had the tremendous honor and privilege of meeting Jon quite early in my career. Much like history itself, Jon could seem daunting to approach, yet I believe he loved nothing more than to talk about his passion for Montana and her rich, vibrant history. His gift for writing and storytelling is something that simply can't be taught or learned, but must be experienced to truly come to life. I've joked that only Jon could write stories about ditches or a lonesome bridge that still capture a reader's imagination and attention. Ahh, what a special skill in a day and age where time is always hurried, new is better (or best), and our connections to ourselves, others and our past becomes more…well…complicated.

To know Montana is to know and understand her history. Our state is filled with so many amazing opportunities to experience that history. Therein lies what I believe to be Jon's true legacy…the desire that others experience history, not as a dusty, static moment frozen in time, but as a beautiful, complex, even elegant patchwork of human and natural stories. The stories of Montana in all her glory…some good, some bad, some pretty ugly. Because that's what makes this the Last Best Place – the stories and lived experiences that have shaped our state, and our identity as Montanans.

Initially, I set out with the intent to send Jon off to his next chapter by writing my Editor's message to recognize his service and contributions. After all, Jon has been a fixture in this publication for longer than I've been with MDT, and his recurring editorial placement on the last page ("page 7") has been a beloved favorite of readers at MDT and beyond. If I've learned one thing from Jon though, history is meant to be shared, celebrated and preserved. It may make you laugh, some make you cry or feel anger, but those emotions allow us to connect as humans with our past.

So, without further ado or meanderings from your *Newsline* Editor, I would like to turn it over to a few of Jon's colleagues and friends to share their words for Jon…



Farewell to Jon Axline continued on page 11...

Editor's Note: More to come from Jon Axline in the Newsline!

I've had the pleasure of reading Jon's writing for years, and hope you, our Newsline readers, have enjoyed it as well! In preparing for retirement from MDT, Jon graciously put together several "back issues" worth of historical stories and photos. I look forward to sharing those with you all, starting next summer. This will allow us to share more of Jon's writing and knowledge with our readership, while giving us time to determine what comes next for this recurring section of the Newsline. 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: ***mths.mt.gov****. You can also check with your local library! If you've enjoyed Jon's writing and would like to share your feedback, please email me at leichenfels@mt.gov. I welcome your input as we plan for "what's next" in the Newsline!*

Having worked with Jon Axline while I was in Rail, Transit and Planning, Maintenance, and now in Statewide Planning, and Modal Operations, I've had the privilege of seeing his impact on MDT from multiple vantage points. Jon's historical insight has strengthened every program in the department, helping us understand how our work fits into Montana's broader story. Beyond MDT, Jon and I were also colleagues and instructors at Helena College, where his passion for history and education inspired countless students. His contributions to the Newsline, his publications, and his decades of thoughtful stewardship of MDT's history have left a legacy that will continue to shape the department long after his retirement. Congratulations, Jon, and thank you for everything you've given to MDT and to all of us who've had the honor and privilege of working alongside you. **–Doug McBroom**

Thanks for being my partner in crime in saving Montana's bridge history from the shredder. It's been a pleasure working with you. Wishing you all the best in retirement! **–Amanda Jackson**

I've had the privilege of knowing Jon for more than 20 years—as a co-worker, supervisor, and friend—and it's been a real pleasure the whole way. Jon isn't just a knowledgeable and accomplished historian; he's one of the kindest people out there, and his sense of humor has brightened more of my days than I can count. Working with Jon has been a joy, and he'll definitely be missed at MDT. Congratulations on your retirement Jon! **–Bill Semmens**

Jon, working with you has been one of the great pleasures of my career at MDT! I treasure the conversations we have had over the years, and I am humbled by the enormous body of work you have accomplished at MDT and beyond. You are leaving a void that can never be filled, both at MDT and in our hearts, but embarking on a period of your life that I hope is both peaceful and enjoyable. You remain one of my most favorite people. I wish you well, my friend. **–Tom Martin**

My husband and I arrived in Montana in 1993 after we were hired by a Billings cultural resource management company. I got to know Jon over telephone conversations as the CRM company I worked for had a term contract with MDT. I remember one conversation we had after I returned from a solo archaeological survey located near Flaxville, Montana. I told him about being a lone woman walking along the highway in a rather isolated place. He asked me if I "was packing heat". As a movie buff, I immediately had visions of 1930s gangster movies, and in that moment, I knew Jon would be an enjoyable person to work with. Over 30 years later, my husband and I still share movie stories with Jon. In fact, if it wasn't for Jon, I would have never watched Plan 9 from Outer Space, a movie so bad, it was great! Cheers Jon! **–Lynn Peterson**

Jon - you gave Montana roads a voice and a story, preserving its past with patience and glory. Thank you for the history, humor and light. May every mile ahead, my friend, be scenic and bright. Congratulations!! **–Lynn Zanto**

Jon, my time with you in the Planning Division has stayed with me. You made things very memorable with the way you told stories, and shared your laughter and complaints. I learned about your loves of bugs, grandkids, and I think our love of food brought us together especially the desserts. I am very excited for your new adventure in this chapter of your life. You will be missed. May you be healthy and happy throughout and know you made a difference at MDT. –Your Friend, **Julie Cathey**

Over the years, I've heard many compliments from MDT staff about working with Jon, his books, articles, and especially his presentations at our Glendive District Annual Service Awards. Jon has helped our district deliver many high dollar construction projects, established and re-established historical markers across eastern Montana, and has never turned down a request to attend and present at our District Service Awards Luncheon. His knowledge, commitment and dedication are much appreciated. Congratulations Jon! **–Shane Mintz**

Jon, Thank you for always being willing to help with my random requests over the years we've worked together. Your vast knowledge, patience in helping to answer the public's questions, and knack for finding just the right historical detail for my MDT social media ideas, have been invaluable. You'll be greatly missed, and I wish you all the best in retirement! **–Marija Hansen**

There is no substitute for you, Jon Axline, the human repository of Montana transportation history. Always a storyteller, your ability to weave long forgotten events and shady scoundrels into engaging tales is unmatched. Please count me among the many you have entertained and are a little bit smarter through your writings and presentation, roadside historic markers, and casual conversations. As you close this chapter that is your career here, know you have secured your own place in MDT history, leaving a body of work that will serve, and no doubt amuse, generations to come. **–Charity Burns**

It has been a privilege to work with Jon Axline, he is truly a powerhouse in the Montana History community. Jon has an extraordinary ability to uncover the stories behind Montana's roads, bridges, communities, and forgotten places and make them meaningful and entertaining to everyone. He is someone I could always turn to with a question, no matter how obscure the historical detail or complicated the problem, and I knew I would get a thoughtful answer (and probably a story or two along the way). His knowledge, generosity, humor, and dedication have made him an invaluable colleague and a tremendous resource to MDT and Montana History Lovers everywhere. I will miss working with him every day, but I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know him and look forward to seeing what stories he tells next. **–Laura Evilsizer**

Happy retirement, Jon! I always looked forward to hearing your stories and wealth of history you had to share across the department. I learned much about Montana from you and the work you have done over the years is nothing but impressive. I wish you the best in your retirement! **–Geoff Streeter**

Jon, it has been great working with you over these many years. We have enjoyed your humor and your advice. Enjoy your retirement. **–Deb Wambach and Paul Sturm.**

I don't pass a Montana Historical Marker without thinking of Jon. There's no way you can quantify all the knowledge about Montana's great history that Jon has shared with people throughout the world. Thanks, Jon! **–Kevin Dusko**

Jon – Thank you for your remarkable contributions to the Newsline over the past 20+ years. Your articles have been a true highlight – thoughtful, engaging, and enjoyed by so many. Your knowledge, passion, and commitment have made a lasting impact. Cheers to your retirement! **–Sheila Ludlow**



Thanks for everything, Jon. The history, the stories, the camaraderie, the kindness, the patience, the laughs, the passion… MDT and Montana are better for your service, as are each of us. We look forward to seeing what this next chapter holds for you, and with any luck, we can look forward to reading all about it.

To request an alternative accessible format of this document, please contact MDT's ADA Coordinator at 406-444-5416, Montana Relay Service at 711, or by email at *mdtaccessibilityrequest@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****,* ***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.*

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MDT's mission is to plan, build, operate, and maintain a safe and resilient transportation system to move Montana forward.

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Transportation Assistance for Montana Communities - 2027

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 406-444-9131.

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 406-444-9131.

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/***.

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***/ or by phoning 406-444-7263.

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***.

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 406-444-7289.

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***.

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. Phone 406-444-6103 for more information on roads, mileages or maps, phone 406-444-6365 for more information on Fuel Tax Allocation amounts, or visit ***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 rehabilitation, pavement preservation, and traffic operations improvements. For more information, phone 406-444-9131.

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***.

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/***.



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 406-444-9131.

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 406-444-3430 or visit ***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***.

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