

Montana LTAP Progress Report

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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This State Fiscal Year (SFY) 4th Quarter Report is submitted to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide details on the activities and project work of Montana LTAP in support of MDT Project No. 02443, Montana Local Technical Assistance Program, during the period April 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

This quarter is the first quarter where we are feeling as though the global COVID-19 pandemic effects on our program have been reduced. Our restrictive operating environment has lifted from the County and State perspective, and we are able to begin planning for events. Venue availability is an issue and lodging availability in some locations has been difficult to acquire due to large tourism load. This is the fourth quarter in a year that has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 restrictions, with numerous training cancellations, an MSU campus-wide slowdown/shut-down, and minimal relief from local and tribal, city and county-specific policies on travel, training and gathering of groups including work crews. Our out of State Travel was administratively suspended, and as an outreach center, we utilized every exemption we could to continue to offer training and technical assistance in line with our mission as an LTAP.

Highlights of Montana LTAP's accomplishments during that period include the following:

- As incoming National LTAP Association President, Matt chaired the NLTAPA Annual Conference Planning Work Group
- We are delivering in-person trainings while following social distancing when possible, encouraging use of COVID precautions, PPE and group size guidelines.
- We are now offering only live classes for flagger certifications and re-certifications. Moving forward, we may consider remote delivery using Go-To Meeting in circumstances where distance and budget don't allow us to travel to reach customers.
- LTAP-MACRS trainings were re-scheduled for September/October with limited attendance, venue size considerations and other COVID-19 related considerations.
- LTAP hosted three monthly safety webinars during the fourth quarter
- We conducted several technical assists and other professional activities to include:
 - Montana DNRC State Lands Roads - Rattler Gulch technical assist.
 - Montana DNRC State Lands Roads - Huckleberry Pass technical assist.
 - Montana DNRC State Lands Roads - Chamberlain Creek technical assist.
 - Montana DNRC Aggregate Sources - Chamberlain Creek technical assist.
 - Leading the 2021 APWA Snow Rodeo planning
- Our instructor-led classes included the following:
 - 11 Flagger Certification classes (live)
 - 2 First Aid classes
 - 2 OSHA 10 classes
 - 1 Forklift Certification class

- MSHA New Miner class
- TCT Class for Yellowstone National Park
- The first Rural TIMS class in Billings

Our reach included a total of 287 student contacts this quarter including the following:

- 83 County Employees
- 45 City
- 107 Private Individual/Contractors
- 34 Tribal Employees
- 58 Federal Employees

This progress report is organized following the four LTAP focus areas:

1. Safety
2. Infrastructure Management
3. Workforce Development
4. Organizational Excellence

SAFETY

COVID-19 restrictions are no longer limiting our classes in a significant way. We can plan and deliver classes in the area of Safety. Our program delivery still has been impacted this quarter, and we expect further impacts moving forward.

Past Activities

Proactive safety training initiatives for local governments are key objectives in this focus area. Technology transfer is accomplished through safety-related articles in LTAP's quarterly newsletter, safety training seminars, staff responses to phone and email inquiries, and on-site technical assistance. In the projected LTAP budget, 48 percent of funding is allocated to the Safety focus area. Table 1 shows the safety focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 1: Safety Area Budget Summary, 4th Quarter 2020 - 2021.

Task 1: Safety 48%				
Quarterly Payroll	70,141.00			
Quarterly IDC's	21,796.29			
Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	33,099.24	33,667.68	132,396.96	137,026.49
Prof. Services	943.44	-	3,773.76	-
Travel	600.00	1,670.88	2,400.00	3,275.57
Supplies/Comm.	820.20	666.96	3,280.80	1,447.11
Minor Equipment	-	90.24	-	109.19
Totals	35,462.88	36,095.76	141,851.52	141,858.36
IDC's	10,137.12	10,462.22	40,548.48	40,541.64
	45,600.00	46,557.98	182,400.00	182,400.00

Thirteen (13) safety related workshops were conducted during this three-month period. A total of 213 participants attended. The workshops included:

- Two of our three planned Webinars were hosted this quarter and recorded. The third was not held due to a software issue at WTI. Webinar Topics covered:
 - April 2021: Gravel Road Maintenance – Part 2
 - May 2021: Rural TIMS, Guest Speaker Jerry Prete, State of Montana TIMS coordinator
 - June 2021: Def. Driving not delivered due to Software crash
- The webinar recordings can be accessed via the LTAP website link: <http://www.coe.montana.edu/ltapv2/resources/webinars/index.html>
- 10 in-person Flagger Certification classes were conducted during the 4th quarter. Topics included First Aide, safety, uniformity and liability issues.

- LTAP Conducted instructor-led classes for the City of Missoula and Missoula County covering First Aide.
- LTAP conducted an on-demand Forklift Certification Training for the City of Bozeman.
- Montana LTAP has been involved at a National level with FHWA in developing the Rural approach to TIMs. In coordination with Jerry Prete, Shawna Page co-taught the first Rural TIMS class in the new format delivered to an class of first responders in Billings, MT.

Newsletter: Newsletters are created digitally and distributed via our listserve. We have had two requests for these newsletters to be printed and mailed, but when asked, all requestors are getting our digital versions and reading them. This is a tiny fraction of our distribution, and we would rather be consistent in our delivery methods. We did know that there would be some growing pains with this change.

Challenges

- COVID-19 concerns and social distancing concerns are continuing to affect how we approach program delivery. We hope to see this decrease with time. Scheduling any training dates is a challenge due to the COVID-19 restriction on travel and gatherings. Social distancing is causing us to re-work delivery options.
- We continue to send out online training options that are available and already developed, as we have not had sufficient time to develop online content as we work to struggle through the effects of this global pandemic.
- We are delivering in-person trainings while following social distancing, PPE and group size guidelines as relevant or needed.

Planned Activities

- Flagger Certification workshops are being requested statewide.
- MACRS Fall Trainings will be conducted in September and October 2021.
- Two On-Demand trainings will be delivered in Billings and Miles City in late July.
- We have increased the circulation of online training options outside of our own center, drawing attention to AASHTO TC3, ITE and NHI courses available to our customers.
- LTAP webinars focused primarily on safety will continue in 2021 on a monthly schedule.
- We plan to participate in the NLTAPA National virtual conference in July
- We are active in the Low Volume Roads Committee of TRB and are preparing to attend TRB this winter.

- September is our time to hold the Snow Rodeo/Equipment training in Lewis and Clark County, and we are planning on this event and training.

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

COVID-19 restrictions are no longer limiting our classes in a significant way. We can plan and deliver classes in the area of Infrastructure Management. Our program delivery still has been impacted this quarter, and we expect further impacts moving forward.

Past Activities

Montana LTAP is promoting more attention on Infrastructure Management through partnerships with the Asphalt Institute, and through delivering relevant training and technical assistance. In the projected LTAP budget, 18 percent of funding is allocated to the infrastructure management focus area. Table 2 shows the infrastructure management focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 2: Infrastructure Management Area Budget Summary, 4th Quarter 2020 - 2021.

Task 2: Infrastructure Management 18%

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	12,412.22	12,625.38	49,648.86	51,384.93
Prof. Services	353.79	-	1,415.16	-
Travel	225.00	626.58	900.00	1,228.34
Supplies/Comm.	307.58	250.11	1,230.30	542.67
Minor Equipment	-	33.84	-	40.95
Totals	13,298.58	13,535.91	53,194.32	53,196.89
IDC's	3,801.42	3,923.33	15,205.68	15,203.11
	17,100.00	17,459.24	68,400.00	68,400.00

- Matt Ulberg conducted an on-site field review and technical assist for the State DNRC State Lands, Missoula office at several locations on School Trust Lands. This included 2 days of on-site review, field discussions covering Gravel Road basics, roadway maintenance and operations basics and roadway repair topics.

- Matt also provided technical assistance to Montana DNRC State Lands Roads at Rattler Gulch, Huckleberry Pass, and several sites on Chamberlain Creek. Montana.
- Matt also provided technical assistance to Ravalli County Road department (Nate Pelkey and John Horat) for a few low-volume roads in the county that are experiencing difficult maintenance challenges, and where un-paving the roads is being considered.
- Outreach continues and technical assistance continues in Infrastructure Management throughout the year.

Newsletter: Newsletters are created digitally and distributed via our listserve. We have had two requests for these newsletters to be printed and mailed, but when asked, all requestors are getting our digital versions and reading them. This is a tiny fraction of our distribution, and we would rather be consistent in our delivery methods. We did know that there would be some growing pains with this change.

Planned Activities

- LTAP will continue to work toward offering more in-house Motor Grader Operation trainings. This includes instruction on unpaved roadway management and gravel quality topics.
- LTAP will also continue to offer more topics in this area, and we deliver several on-demand as needed. Guardrail, cattleguard, sign inventory and pavement management classes are all in our offerings.

Challenges

- There is a demand for training in Gravel Roads Management, culvert installation, trenching safety, sign management, and MUTCD related trainings that will continue to be a priority.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 restrictions are no longer limiting our classes in a significant way. We can plan and deliver classes in the focus area of Workforce Development. Our program delivery still has been impacted this quarter, and we expect further impacts moving forward.

Past Activities

In the projected LTAP budget, 22 percent of funding is allocated to the workforce development focus area. Table 3 shows the workforce development focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 3: Workforce Development Budget Summary, 4th Quarter 2020 - 2021.

Task 3: Workforce Development 22%

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	15,170.49	15,431.02	60,681.94	62,803.81
Prof. Services	432.41	-	1,729.64	-
Travel	275.00	765.82	1,100.00	1,501.30
Supplies/Comm.	375.93	305.69	1,503.70	663.26
Minor Equipment	-	41.36	-	50.05
Totals	16,253.82	16,543.89	65,015.28	65,018.42
IDC's	4,646.18	4,795.18	18,584.72	18,581.58
	20,900.00	21,339.07	83,600.00	83,600.00

19 workforce development related workshops were conducted during this three-month period.

A total of 225 participants attended. The workshops included:

Highlights of Montana LTAP's accomplishments during that period include the following:

Our instructor-led workforce development classes included the following:

- MSHA new Miner
- OSHA 10 classes for North Dakota LTAP
- 11 Flagger Certification classes (live)
- 2 First Aid classes
- 2 OSHA 10 classes
- 1 Forklift Certification class
- TCT Class for Yellowstone National Park
- The first Rural TIMS class in Billings
- We are also leading the 2021 APWA Snow Rodeo planning and course development for the training.

Challenges

- We are currently reaching out to some new instructors for equipment classes that may be available through retirements from Montana Counties.
- Future COVID-19 restrictions may impact the how and what of our program delivery.
- Turnover continues to challenge local agencies, and WFD is a big area of need for training. We continue to have more demand than ability to deliver program, and we hope that the FHWA new strategic plan for LTAP helps us focus on this area into the future.
- Leadership training continues to be in high demand due to turnover in many communities. We expect that trend to continue. COVID-19 restrictions will likely dictate what we can successfully plan and deliver.

Newsletter: Newsletters are created digitally and distributed via our listserve. We have had two requests for these newsletters to be printed and mailed, but when asked, all requestors are getting our digital versions and reading them. This is a tiny fraction of our distribution, and we would rather be consistent in our delivery methods. We did know that there would be some growing pains with this change.

Planned Activities

- We plan to participate in the NLTAPA National virtual conference in July and are preparing for TRB this winter.
- Fall is our time to hold the Snow Rodeo/Equipment training in Lewis and Clark County, but we are unsure if this will be able to be held, and we are leaning toward a cancellation.
- LTAP will continue to offer in-house Motor Grader Operation in addition to our regular WFD offerings in 2021.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Past Activities

To provide the best service possible to constituents, LTAP personnel seek training to improve their outreach capabilities. Organizational excellence addresses professional development and leadership training for LTAP personnel. In the projected LTAP budget, 22 percent of funding is allocated to the organizational excellence focus area. Table 4 shows the organizational excellence focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 4: Organizational Excellence Budget Summary: 4th Quarter SFY 2020-2021

Task D: Organizational Excellence 12%				
Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	8,274.81	8,416.92	33,099.24	34,256.62
Prof. Services	235.86	-	943.44	-
Travel	150.00	417.72	600.00	818.89
Supplies/Comm.	205.05	166.74	820.20	361.78
Minor Equipment	-	22.56	-	27.30
Total	8,865.72	9,023.94	35,462.88	35,464.59
IDC's	2,534.28	2,615.55	10,137.12	10,135.41
	11,400.00	11,639.49	45,600.00	45,600.00

- LTAP Director Matt Ulberg has been participating as President-elect of the NLTAPA, with monthly Executive Committee meeting participation, and as the Partnerships Work Group co-chair. While a significant time commitment, this has kept Montana LTAP in the loop on national issues, particularly during the COVID travel restrictions.
- Montana LTAP Director Matt will attend the NLTAPA 32nd Annual Conference (Virtual) and Meeting in July where he will become the National President of NLTAPA for 2021-2022.
- Director Matt Ulberg continues activities to review TRB papers and participate with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Standing Committee on Low-Volume Roads — AFB30. TRB is one of seven program units of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, which provides independent, objective analysis and advice to the nation and conducts other activities to solve complex problems and inform public policy decisions. Through their appointment, members agree to actively participate in and support the committee’s activities, including those that will require volunteer work. This TRB committee provides strategic planning for research and serves as a

clearinghouse for information and resources pertaining to all aspects of low-volume roads including planning, design, construction, safety, maintenance operations, environmental, and social issues.

- Montana LTAP Director Matt Ulberg plans to attend TRB Meetings in Washington D.C. this winter.
- Montana LTAP Director Participated in a virtual North Central Regional NLTAPA meeting.

Evaluations are generally collected at the end of LTAP courses to determine whether participants are using workshop information in their jobs. Evaluations were not collected in our Fourth Quarter trainings due to issues with distributing the surveys and COVID concerns.

Table 5: SFY 2020-2021 4th Quarter Workshop Evaluation Summary

Workshop Evaluations	
Topics	Approval Ratings Summary
Flagger	4.9/5.0
First Aide	4.8/5.0
Technical Assists	No data collected
TCT	4.8/5.0
Forklift Certification	4.7/5.0

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Challenges

LTAP is back to keeping up with our Road Scholar program. We were successful in obtaining a STIC grant to help acquire a Learning Management System (LMS) package and are starting that effort now.

Planned Activities

- LTAP webinars will continue in 2021 on a monthly schedule.
- We plan to participate in the NLTAPA National virtual conference in July and are preparing for TRB 2021.

- Fall is our time to hold the Snow Rodeo/Equipment training in Lewis and Clark County, but we are unsure if this will be able to be held, and our decision process with the host County is leaning toward a cancellation.
- We plan to hold a leadership class prior to every MACRS conference at a minimum. We also offer this on-demand.

State Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Fourth Quarter (SFY) Financial Summary

Table 6: Year to Date Budget Summary, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

SUMMARY:				
Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	68,956.75	70,141.00	275,827.00	285,471.86
Prof. Services	1,965.50	-	7,862.00	-
Travel	1,250.00	3,481.00	5,000.00	6,824.10
Supplies/Comm.	1,708.75	1,389.50	6,835.00	3,014.82
Minor Equipment	-	188.00	-	227.48
Total	73,881.00	75,199.50	295,524.00	295,538.26
IDC's	21,119.00	21,796.29	84,476.00	84,461.74
	95,000.00	96,995.79	380,000.00	380,000.00

Table 7: Budget Summary by Focus Area, April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

Focus Areas	Salary/Benefits	Prof. Services	Travel	Supplies/Com	Minor Equip	Subtotal	IDC's	Total
Safety - 48%	33,667.68	-	1,670.88	666.96	90.24	36,095.76	10,462.22	46,557.98
Infrastructure Management - 18%	12,625.38	-	626.58	250.11	33.84	13,535.91	3,923.33	17,459.24
Workforce Development 22%	15,431.02	-	765.82	305.69	41.36	16,543.89	4,795.18	21,339.07
Organizational Excellence - 12%	8,416.92	0.00	417.72	166.74	22.56	9,023.94	2,615.55	11,639.49
TOTAL COSTS	70,141.00	0.00	3,481.00	1,389.50	188.00	75,199.50	21,796.29	96,995.79

