

Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Program

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2027 Scholarships Available

Montana is fortunate to have many generous individuals and organizations who support aviation by offering scholarships. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Aeronautics Program helps to match these scholarships to qualified applicants and encourages individuals interested in aeronautics to apply for scholarships. The scholarships are offered to help defray costs of education (e.g., flight instruction, aircraft airframe and power plant (A&P) mechanic school, etc.). Recipients will be announced in January 2027 and awards will be presented at the Montana Aviation Conference in Missoula. Winners will be provided a complimentary aviation conference registration and a free Friday lunch for themselves and up to two guests sponsored by the Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM).

Available Scholarships

38 North Aviation LLC Aviation Training Scholarship

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

Aerotronics Maintenance Training/Avionics Technician Scholarship

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

AOM Flight Training

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

AOM Mechanic

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

Brett Thoft Memorial Scholarship

Two scholarships of \$2500 to be awarded.

Briar Creek Scholarship

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

Montana Ninety-Nines Scholarship

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

Montana Ninety-Nines Scholarship - In memory of Esther Combes Vance

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

MPA Arlin Wass Memorial Maintenance Technician

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

MPA Aviation Maintenance Scholarship

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

MPA Central Montana Flight Training Scholarship

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

MPA Junior Pilot Scholarship

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

MPA Mike Ferguson Flight Training Scholarship

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

MPA Ty and Carolyn Campbell Aviation Mechanic Scholarship

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

Ridgeline Aviation Flight Training Scholarship

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

How to Apply

Scan the QR Code below or go to mdt.mt.gov/aviation/scholarships.aspx for instructions on how to apply for the 2027 Montana Aviation Scholarships.

Requirements:

- You must be a Montana resident to apply.
- All applications must be submitted online.
- Emailed or mailed applications will not be accepted.
- Candidates must submit a separate application for each individual scholarship name. Tailoring each application to the specific scholarship you are applying for is highly recommended.
- The Montana Ninety-Nines scholarships are reimbursement awards only. You must provide them with your eligible receipts for up to the dollar amount you were awarded within 12 months.
- Additional opportunities might become available. Please check our website for the most up-to-date list of scholarships.
- Scholarship applications must be submitted on or before 11:59 p.m. MST, November 13, 2026.



Aviation Scholarship Winner Highlight!

Alexandra Calloway-Nation

A Rising Pilot Bringing Fresh Energy to Montana's Aviation Community

The Montana 99s scholarship became a true turning point in Alex's aviation journey - one that not only helped fund her flight training but opened the door to a vibrant, welcoming aviation community she hadn't known she was missing. With the support of the Montana 99s, she stepped into new roles as Secretary of the chapter, redesigned their newsletter, launched a book club, joined airmarking events in Sidney and Red Lodge, and began representing the 99s on the AOM board to help plan the 2027 Montana Aviation Conference. Through these experiences, she discovered that becoming a pilot isn't just about earning ratings - it's about finding a place to belong, contribute, and grow alongside others who share her love of flight.

Her passion for aviation stretches back to childhood visits to her grandmother's condo perched above the Gastineau Channel in Juneau, Alaska. She spent those early days watching small planes and float-planes lift into the mountains, sparking a fascination that only grew stronger in Montana's wide-open landscapes. When she finally began training in Cut Bank, she found joy not just in taking off, but in the discipline, judgment, and continual learning that aviation demands.

Now a student pilot with about 70 hours, she is working toward her Private Pilot Certificate, with plans to earn her Instrument and Commercial ratings. Her long-term dream is to launch an air-tour and charter business serving eastern and north-central Montana, sharing the region's breathtaking, little-seen beauty from the air.

Beyond aviation, she recently completed her online MBA and continues expanding the businesses she has built over the past seven years, including a growing collection of short-term rentals near East Glacier. In both entrepreneurship and aviation, she is driven by the same spirit: a love of learning, a passion for growth, and a belief that lifting others is one of the most meaningful ways to rise.

Photo courtesy of Alexandra Calloway-Nation



5010 Inspections Completed For 2026

MDT Aeronautics' Airports and Airways Program has completed their 5010 Master Record Airport inspections for the year. This year's inspections focused on Central Montana's publicly owned airports. Stephen Torske and Karen Hallenbeck of MDT Aeronautics were able to inspect 39 airports from May to September. The airports were reported to be in good condition thanks to the ongoing efforts of Montana's aviation community, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Montana Aeronautics Board funding. These grants help bridge the financial gap between FAA funding and local shares.

5010 inspections are required by the FAA to ensure safety and maintain an information system for every public-use airport in the United States. In Montana, these evaluations are carried out by the MDT Aeronautics Program for public-use, non-commercial airports. Other materials, such as aeronautical charts and instrument approach procedure plates, also utilize information gathered from these inspections.

During the evaluations, inspectors gather information regarding obstructions, airport operation counts, visual landing aids, pavement conditions, lighting details, and other safety and general data elements. The evaluations also assess or confirm the runway approach slope obstruction gradients, which are crucial in determining if runways meet the standards for precision and non-precision approaches.



Aeronautics and FAA Funding Support Airport Improvements Across Montana



Ekalaka (97M)

KLJ Engineering project manager, Justin Zindell, reported the Ekalaka project consisted of acquiring land use and airspace easements for the Acquisition and installation of a new Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) III. This included a new pad, security fence, conduit and power cables, and access gate. The project replaced the aged and inoperative Super AWOS that was removed during the project. The new AWOS now provides accurate onsite weather for the region, increasing aviation safety and providing current weather for medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) operations into the airport.

Culbertson (\$85)

KLJ Engineering project manager, Nathan Schroht, managed the Culbertson's new Snow Removal Equipment (SRE) Building project. The project consisted of removing the existing pilot's lounge building that had reached its useful life. A new SRE Building was designed and installed that incorporated a new Pilot's lounge, chain-link fence, 18' vehicle access gate, extending and updating utilities, and concrete approach and ADA parking spot. The existing layout made access to the airport difficult for larger vehicles such as the fuel truck supplying the fuel farm to enter and exit the airport. The new updated facility allows for better access to the airport, storage for snow removal equipment, and provides a new ADA accessible facility for pilots to plan and rest.



Photos courtesy of KLJ

Plains (\$34)

In the last year, Pehn-Stohr Field in Plains completed a new pilot lounge and installed a new self-serve fuel system with both 100LL and Jet-A fuel available. These projects, along with an upgraded AWOS and updated wind cone and segmented circle were able to be completed with FAA grants covering 90-95% of all projects, along with Aeronautics grant funding awarded by the Aeronautics Board assisting with the remaining costs. Additionally, the Airport joined the FAA Weather Camera program with installation of a four-camera system by Aeronautics, with some local funding along with Aeronautics weather camera program and grant program assistance.



Photos courtesy of Randy Garrison

Lincoln (\$69)

Lincoln airport, owned by MDT Aeronautics, continues to improve its operations. Last fall, pavement maintenance was done and a new SRE building was completed. The new SRE building has a pilot lounge with indoor plumbing! (The vault toilet is still available for those who enjoy the great outdoors.)

This August, a brand new snowplow (which was primarily FAA funded) arrived. The whole Lincoln gang came out for its arrival and to train on its operation. Derrick Olheiser installed a new bulb in the beacon after removing an attempted osprey nest on the beacon tower catwalk earning him the nickname of 'Twiggy' for the day.

With all the improvements, maintenance and new equipment, Lincoln is ready for the snow!



Calendar of Events

November 14 - Loan and Grant Application Deadline. For more information, contact Stephen Torske at 406-444-2506 or storske@mt.gov. To access the online portal, go to mdt.mt.gov/aviation/loans-grants.shtml.

December 1 - 2027 Aircraft and Pilot registrations open. Go to app.mt.gov/aeronautics/registration/Contact/Lookup and use your access code listed on your mailed invoice to register for 2027. Deadline is March 1st! First registration notices are mailed by December 1st. Check your mailboxes for your invoices.

January 8-10 - Winter Survival Clinic. Sugarloaf Lodge, Anaconda. For more information, contact MDT Aeronautics at mdtad@mt.gov or 406-444-2506.

February 5-6 - Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC). Helena. *Registration link coming soon.*

February 25-27 - 42nd Montana Aviation Conference. Missoula. Hilton Garden Inn. For more information, contact Kelly Atkins at katkins@mt.gov or 406-444-2506.

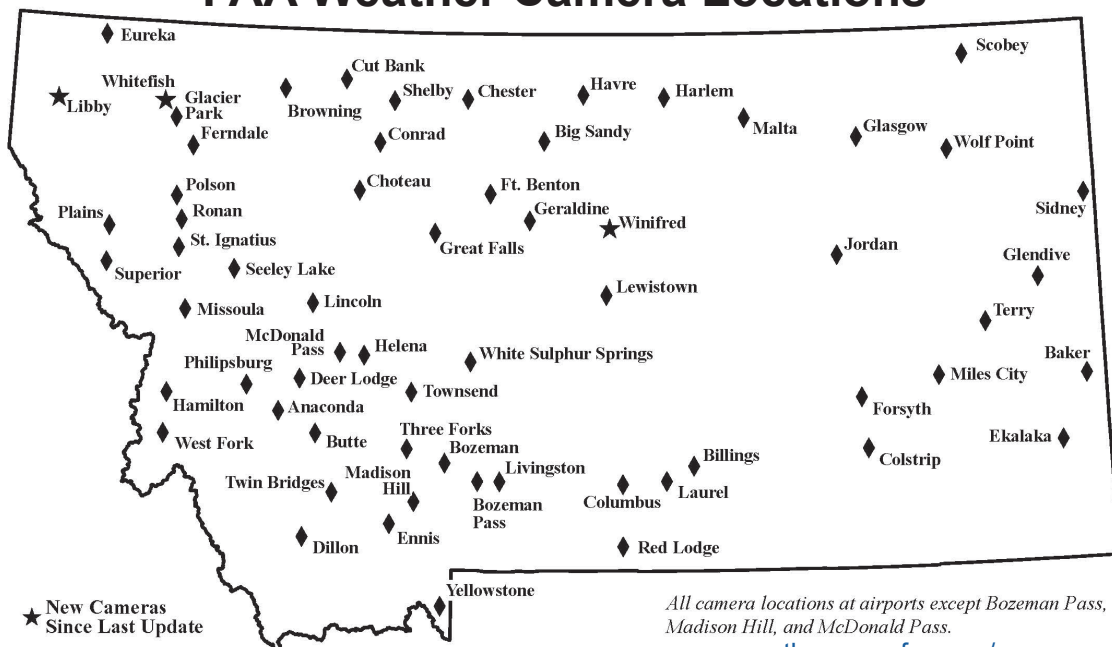
March 1st - Aircraft Registration Deadline. If you have not received your registration notice, please contact us before the registration deadline for assistance to avoid late fees.

MDT Aeronautics Program
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Helena, MT 59620-0507

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and the Sky.
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FAA Weather Camera Locations



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