

December 2019

## New Transportation Interim Committee

The 2019 Legislature passed and approved Senate Bill 226 establishing a Transportation Interim Committee (TIC). Historically, transportation matters were combined with revenue and tax policy under the authority of the Revenue and Transportation Interim Committee. The TIC will maintain oversight of programs and rulemaking activities of MDT and the Motor Vehicles Division of the Department of Justice.

Each legislative session, legislators identify issues to study more in depth, and they appoint interim committees to conduct these and other studies between sessions. The House and Senate leadership appoints interim committee members to serve one 20-month term. The committees often invite experts to present information. The public also can express their opinions.

The TIC includes Senator Gordon (Gordy) Vance(R)—Chair, Senator Diane Sands(D)—Vice Chair, Senator Carlie Boland(D), Representative Ross Fitzgerald(R), Representative Denley Loge (R), Representative Andrea Olsen(D); Representative Mark Sweeney(D), and Senator Jeff Welborn(R).

Legislators use what they learn from the interim studies to make well-informed decisions about what bills to consider during the next session. Interim committees likely will begin developing legislative proposals in the spring and summer of 2020.

The Legislative Council assigned all 27 study resolutions approved by the 2019 Legislature to the various interim committees on May 29. The Council determined each individual committee could decide whether to include the assigned studies in its work plan and how much time to devote to each. The Council assigned these studies to the TIC:

- SJR 28 Study Materials -- Traffic Safety
- HJR 45 Study Materials -- Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths
- HJR 34 Study Materials -- Passenger Transportation

The Committee work plan has advanced the SJR 28 and HJR 45 studies. Topics of committee interest also include electric and autonomous vehicles.

## Public Involvement and Stakeholder Survey Results

As part of MDT's long-range transportation policy plan (TranPlanMT) public involvement process, public involvement and stakeholder surveys are administered every two years. The surveys are conducted by the University of Montana and identify changes in public and key transportation stakeholder group opinions on emerging issues resulting from MDT policies and programs. The general public is surveyed through a statistically valid random sample while the stakeholder survey involves nine stakeholder groups.

Montanans viewed nearly all problems studied as small, reinforcing the positive overall level of satisfaction with the transportation system. Only one problem was viewed as moderately serious, which was road pavement condition.

The public indicated that the highest priority possible actions to improve the system are maintain road pavement condition, improve the physical condition of the interstate and major highways, and include wildlife crossings and barriers. Stakeholders rated maintain road pavement condition, safety, and improving the physical condition of the interstate and major highways as highest possible actions to improve. Overall system satisfaction was slightly higher than in 2017. Airports, interstate highways, and rest areas remain the highest in satisfaction.

MDT performance and customer service items received a grade of B by the largest percentage for the public, while the quality of service was the most favorably graded followed by sensitivity to the environment. MDT's responsiveness to customer ideas and concerns received the lowest grades with a combined 57% in the B to C range; however, 23% of the public responded that they did not know.

In addition to the public survey, MDT's transportation stakeholder group survey continues to be compared to past public and stakeholder surveys. Opinions of the stakeholders closely match the public opinions. Stakeholders graded MDT's performance slightly higher than the public in all categories.

Both the public and stakeholders were asked to evaluate potential aspects of the transportation system to decrease in the event MDT's overall funding was decreased. Both groups agreed that the least preferred reductions were other major highways, maintenance, and interstate highways. Bicycle pathways, pedestrian walkways, local transit buses and rest areas ranked as the most preferable areas to decrease funding.

The complete results of the 2019 public and stakeholder surveys are available online at:

[mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/surveys/2019\\_tranplanmt\\_public\\_involvement.pdf](https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/surveys/2019_tranplanmt_public_involvement.pdf)  
[mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/surveys/2019\\_tranplanmt\\_stakeholder.pdf](https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/surveys/2019_tranplanmt_stakeholder.pdf)

For more information, contact Sandy Waddell at 444-7614 or [swaddell@mt.gov](mailto:swaddell@mt.gov).



## Federal Surface Transportation Status

As calendar year 2019 comes to a close, the federal surface transportation program continues to operate through December 20 under a short-term continuing resolution (CR). The good news is that the latest CR signed by President Trump in November cancelled the rescission in highway contract authority that would have taken effect July 1, 2020. In total, state departments of transportation stood to lose \$7.6 billion in highway apportionment with individual state impacts at varying degrees. Due to strategic management of its federal highway program, Montana's share was nearly the smallest at \$4.9 million. While repeal of the rescission by Congress was welcomed news, the lack of a full-year appropriation bill and the pending September 30, 2020, expiration of the FAST Act present challenges in long-term planning and delivery of the federal highway program.

# 2019 Construction Project Progress

## Missoula District

### Project: Huson East – Frenchtown MT

**Background:** The project is an 11-mile reconstruction of the Frenchtown Frontage Road Route 574 from the I-90 Huson Interchange to its intersection with Hwy 93. The new road includes 4-foot shoulders, new drainage pipes, new guardrail and signs, turning lanes into Frenchtown High School, and an 11-mile multi-use path with solar-powered, rapid flashing beacons at the Frenchtown Pond Park. Solar radar speed detection signs were added in the Frenchtown High School area. The 11-mile multi-use path is seeing a lot of foot and bicycle traffic since its completion this past June.

**Bid:** \$12.2 million

**Contractor:** Schellinger

**Status:** Fall 2019



## Butte District

### Project: Rocker Interchange Improvements

**Background:** This project is located just west of Butte on Interstate 15/90 and includes a six-legged, 115-foot radius roundabout, 491 linear feet of retaining wall, intersection improvements, upgraded water lines, and new storm water sewer lines. Over 10,000 square yards of Portland Cement Concrete Pavement and over 6,300 feet of curb and gutter were placed.

**Bid:** \$6 million

**Contractor:** Missouri Rivers Contracting

**Status:** Summer 2020



## Glendive District

### Project: Poplar Main

**Background:** This project on US 2 through Poplar constructed a new pavement section consisting of a pulverized cement treated base and new pavement. The easterly two-thirds were reconstructed to include new curb and gutter and new roundabouts at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kirn Road. The roundabout at Kirn Road was identified to address a crash trend at that intersection. Additional safety enhancements include rectangular rapid flashing beacons and raised median pedestrian refuge islands at two school crossings near the west end of the project.

**Bid:** \$14.2 million

**Contractor:** Knife River

**Status:** Spring 2020



## Billings District

### Project: 5 Miles North of Roscoe North

**Background:** This project is a continued widening and reconstruction of the existing roadway in the Hwy 78 corridor and includes a bridge replacement over East Rosebud Creek. It begins at RP 25.2 and extends north approximately 1.7 miles along State Primary Route 78/MT 78 to RP 26.9. The new bridge was constructed off alignment leaving the old structure as the route for traffic throughout construction. The new road has four- to six-foot shoulders, which the old highway did not have. Hwy 78 fronts the Beartooth Mountains and leads to many recreational destinations.

**Bid:** \$8.6 million

**Contractor:** Sletten

**Status:** Spring 2020



## Great Falls District

### Project: York Road Roundabout

**Background:** Due to frequent crashes at the two-way stop rural intersection of York Road and Lake Helena Drive, a roundabout was constructed to reduce frequency and severity of crashes, and to improve roadway operation for future growth.

**Bid:** \$2 million

**Contractor:** Bullock

**Status:** Fall 2019



## New FHWA Division Administrator for Montana



Montana District Administrator for FHWA Lucia Olivera

Lucia Olivera will begin as the Montana Division Administrator (DA) for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in February 2020.

Since May 2018, Lucia has served as Policy and Strategy Analysis Team Leader in the Office of Policy and Governmental Affairs. In this role, she provides leadership and guidance to a diverse team of professionals in conducting policy studies on topics such as highway funding and financing, emerging mobility trends,

and economic analyses. Lucia's coordination efforts and extensive knowledge of Federal transportation policies and programs have enhanced and advanced a policy research portfolio that meets the diverse and changing needs of the agency, the department, and the transportation community.

Prior to this position, Lucia served as Special Assistant to the Administrator, where she provided direct support to the Office of the Administrator in coordinating critical Agency activities during the Administration's transition. Lucia also served as Acting Assistant DA in the Colorado Division. Lucia joined FHWA in 2009 as the Legislative and Budget Analyst for the Office of Research, Development, and Technology. Her diverse professional experience includes working as Research Assistant for the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress; Research Analyst at the American Road and Transportation Builders Association; and Program Manager at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Lucia holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Information Systems from Southern Utah University and a Master's degree in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

## MDT Employees Accept New Positions



Missoula District Administrator Bob Vosen

Robert (Bob) Vosen was recently named Missoula District Administrator for MDT.

Bob graduated from Montana State University (Go Cats!) in 1996 and started his career as a Civil Engineer Specialist in the Great Falls District. He's held several positions, including the last eight years as the Missoula District Construction Engineer.

Contact Bob at 523-5802 or [rvosen@mt.gov](mailto:rvosen@mt.gov).



Traffic and Safety Bureau Chief Gabe Priebe

Gabe Priebe was recently named Traffic and Safety Bureau Chief for MDT.

Gabe worked in the MDT MSU design unit and graduated from Montana State University in 1999. After several years in the private sector, he returned to MDT in 2005 where he worked in Consultant Design, Traffic & Safety, and then Utilities before accepting his current position.

Contact Gabe at 444-9252 or [gpriebe@mt.gov](mailto:gpriebe@mt.gov).



Rail, Air Quality and Studies Supervisor Sheila Ludlow

Sheila Ludlow was recently named Rail, Air Quality and Studies Section Supervisor for MDT.

Sheila graduated from the University of Utah and began her career with MDT in 2002. She has held several positions, most recently as the Great Falls District Area Planner, before accepting the Rail, Air Quality and Studies Section Supervisor position.

Contact Sheila at 444-9193 or [sludlow@mt.gov](mailto:sludlow@mt.gov).

## North Central Montana Transit Receives Grant

MDT will receive funding on behalf of North Central Montana Transit to replace buses that have exceeded their useful life and purchase the bus maintenance facility the transit system has been renting. The transit system provides trips to healthcare facilities, grocery stores and tribal colleges in its service to two tribal governments, Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation and the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council in north central Montana.

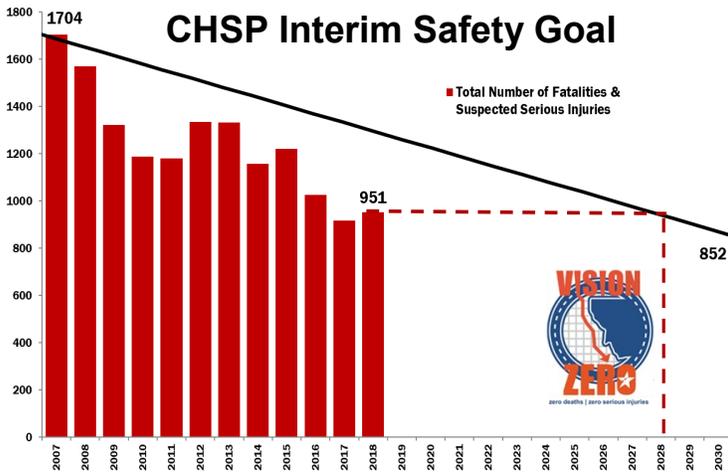
# 2019 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting



**VISION ZERO**  
zero deaths - zero serious injuries  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION

Over 100 people attended the Twelfth Annual Transportation Safety meeting held October 30–31 in Helena. Attendees included representatives of the 4Es of transportation; safety-education, enforcement, emergency medical services, and engineering disciplines.

MDT Director Mike Tooley opened the meeting talking about breaking down barriers, solutions to overcoming hurdles, and MDT's progress on reducing fatalities and suspected serious injuries on Montana roadways. The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) interim goal is to halve fatalities and suspected serious injuries from 1,704 in 2007 to 852 by 2030. In 2018, Montana experienced 951 fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. Director Tooley also called for Montana's support for AASHTO's aggressive goal to reach zero deaths by 2040.



Guest speaker Professor Nicholas J. Ward, Director for the Center for Health and Safety Culture at Montana State University, spoke on Psychological Reactance and Moral Disengagement. He explained how psychological resistance to being told what to do triggers defense mechanisms and leads to disregarding normal reasoning, often resulting in resistance, assigning blame, and negative outcomes on others. Understanding these influences can be used in developing messaging to reach those who previously have been resistant to traffic safety messaging.

Three emphasis areas reported on successes and challenges. The Roadway Departure & Intersection Crashes Emphasis Area champion provided an overview of the new tools the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is using to prioritize safety projects. Additionally, an overview was given of the FHWA proven safety countermeasures that MDT is implementing and considering as standard business practice. These proven safety countermeasures can be found at: [safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/)

The Occupant Protection Use Emphasis Area champion provided a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration program update and highlighted the increase of certified child passenger seat technicians as a result of the statewide

*continued on next column*

training efforts of the Buckle Up Montana coordinators. The 2019 annual seat belt observation survey also shows increased use with 89 percent seat belt use on all roads.

The Impaired Driving Emphasis Area champion facilitated a panel discussion regarding the challenges of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) within the Criminal Justice System. The panel included Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Chad Parker, Traffic Safety Resource Officer Doug Samuelson, and Judge Greg Mohr. Panel discussion included an overview of law enforcement training programs to identify alcohol and drug impaired drivers, and training for judges and prosecutors on DUI law and impaired driver detection.

The consensus among participants at this year's meeting is that enhancing public education and awareness is crucial in promoting change and shifting how people perceive appropriate driving behavior. Always wearing seat belts, understanding what constitutes impairment and deciding not to drive, following traffic control and not speeding are the most important behavioral changes to help us reach zero deaths and serious injuries.

For more information, contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646 or [plangvedavis@mt.gov](mailto:plangvedavis@mt.gov), or visit the Vision Zero CHSP website at [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.shtml)

## Social Host Responsibility

If you're planning a holiday gathering, make sure your to-do list includes ensuring guests have a sober ride. Keeping friends and family safe is the top reason to do this, and more motivation comes from the law. If you serve alcohol to minors or anyone who is obviously intoxicated, you can be held liable if that person injures or kills someone. This law applies to anyone who hosts a social gathering, including private individuals, employers, and organizations.

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you celebrate the holidays:

- Know who the designated drivers are and give them equal beverage service with non-alcoholic choices.
- Limit your guests to those you know well.
- Serve drinks yourself and stay sober so that you know which guests are reaching their limit.
- Have plenty of food available.
- Provide alternatives to alcoholic beverages.
- Arrange for a ride service or other sober drivers.
- Only serve to those you know are legal drinking age.
- Avoid "pushing" drinks on your guests or mixing strong drinks.
- Provide entertainment, games or activities so there is more to do than drink.
- Stop serving alcohol at least an hour before guests will be leaving.
- Do not serve alcohol to anyone who is visibly or noticeably intoxicated.
- Be prepared to take someone's keys if you feel the person should not drive.

# MDT Cable Median Barrier Study Complete

If you've driven between Laurel and Billings or west of Missoula in the last few years you may have noticed a series of cables supported by metal posts in the median of Interstate 90. These cables and posts are known as median cable rail and are becoming a cost-effective way to prevent cross-median crashes on high-speed, divided highways. A cross-median crash occurs when a vehicle leaves the roadway to the left and completely traverses the median, ending up in the opposing lanes of traffic. This type of crash often results in fatal or serious injuries.

MDT recently completed a Cable Median Barrier Study to explore further use of this treatment on Montana's interstate system. The study explored other national and state studies and practices. The study found that median cable rail is a cost-effective way to greatly reduce cross-median crashes. The crash data for the run of rail between Billings and Laurel also pointed to a significant (almost 90%) reduction in this type of crash. This treatment isn't without limitations; proper median widths, adequate slopes, and sufficient space for the cable to deflect after being struck are all important considerations. The study's recommendations helped MDT initiate several project nominations in the Butte, Bozeman, Missoula, and Helena areas.

For more information, contact Gabe Priebe at 444-9252 or [gpriebe@mt.gov](mailto:gpriebe@mt.gov).

## Transit and Highway Traffic Safety Grant Applications Due March 1, 2020

Applications will only be accepted through the Montana Grant and Loans web-based system [fundingmt.org/index.do](http://fundingmt.org/index.do). Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on January 1, 2020.

For information regarding:

**Transit grants**, contact Eric Romero at 444-7645 or [eromero@mt.gov](mailto:eromero@mt.gov).

**Highway Traffic Safety grants**, contact Kevin Dusko at 444-7411 or [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov).

# Pedestrian Safety Tips for Low-Light Conditions

Many Montanans enjoy walking for regular exercise or leisure, and many others walk to and from work and school everyday. If your schedule leaves you walking at dawn, dusk, or after dark, learn to do so safely. Below are important tips to make your low-light walks as safe as possible:

- Always be visible to drivers. Wear lightly colored or reflective clothing.
- Avoid headphones. Listen to what is happening around you.
- Stay on sidewalks whenever possible. If a sidewalk is not available, walk on the far side of the road facing traffic.
- Use crosswalks when crossing the street. If a crosswalk is unavailable, find the most well-lit spot on the road to cross.
- Make eye contact with the driver of a stopped or approaching vehicle before entering the roadway.
- Be predictable.

# Winter Driving Reminders

Part of smart winter driving includes knowing weather and road conditions before venturing out on the highway. MDT's Travel Information website [mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/](http://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/) and mobile app provide up-to-date information including road conditions and incidents. Judge conditions for yourself by viewing the many webcams MDT has in place around the state. Dashcams on MDT plows provide more road images.

While driving, be on the lookout for snowplows and give the operators room to work. Many plows are hit by private vehicles each winter. This can cause serious harm to travelers and their vehicles, plus the plow truck and plow operator are taken out of service immediately following the incident. Drive safely this winter and keep these tips in mind:

- Don't pass a plow when the TowPlow is deployed. The operator will periodically rotate the TowPlow back in line with the truck to allow vehicles to pass.
- Be aware that when one plow is working, others may be nearby. The snow cloud created by one plow may obscure additional plows in adjacent lanes.
- When approaching a snowplow from the rear, reduce speed immediately.
- When approaching an oncoming plow, don't crowd the centerline.
- Be patient. Plow operators know where they can pull over to let vehicles pass; but remember, the road in front of the plow is likely not as clear as the road behind it.

# New Hysham Rest Area



New Hysham rest area.

Less than a year after opening, MDT's new rest area at Hysham is considered among the best of its kind by the traveling public. The energy-efficient building has a heat recovery ventilator, which results in

significant energy use reduction, in-floor heat, and a surveillance security system.

Observations left in the rest area's comment box are consistently and overwhelmingly positive, with users from across the United States and Canada indicating it is "a beautiful and great rest area." A traveler from Powell, Wyoming indicated this rest area was, "The best I've ever been to." A full-time recreation vehicle traveler stated, "I hope this stays fresh-clean-shiny for a long time." Other users have commented, "The individual restrooms are good" and "Thank you for the pet area."

MDT Project Manager Jake Goettle coordinated the construction of this innovative rest area, which was completed in April 2018.

The **Montana Wildlife and Transportation Steering Committee** held its first meeting October 2, 2019. The Committee, comprised of two members each from MDT; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; and Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage, focused on defining the Committee's purpose, creating a Committee charter, and developing a workplan to begin addressing the numerous recommendations that emerged from the December 2018 Montana Wildlife and Transportation Summit. Summit information, meeting minutes, and updates can be found at [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mwt/](http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mwt/). The Committee plans to meet quarterly.

For more information, contact MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief Tom Martin at [tomartin@mt.gov](mailto:tomartin@mt.gov) or 444-0897.

## New Research Projects for 2020 Federal Fiscal Year



Each year the MDT Research Programs office solicits research ideas. In August, five new projects for Federal Fiscal Year 2020 were selected to move forward to technical panels and further consideration. These projects are listed below:

- Analyze Business Models for Implementation and Operation of a Statewide Global Navigation Satellite System Real-Time Network
- Development of Deterioration Curves for Bridge Elements in Montana
- Economic Benefits of Improving Montana's Transportation Infrastructure
- A Feasibility Study of Road Culvert/Bridge Deck Deicing Using Geothermal Energy
- Icy Road Forecast and Alert (IcyRoad): Validation and Refinement Using MDT RWIS Data

For more information, contact Sue Sillick at 444-7693 or [ssillick@mt.gov](mailto:ssillick@mt.gov).

## Transportation Alternative Project Completions

The 2019 construction season was busy for the Transportation Alternative (TA) program with approximately 10 projects under construction. Two recently completed projects in eastern Montana are the Multi-Use Path-Lame Deer and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street SE/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Path-Sidney.

The Lame Deer project included a new half-mile long, asphalt-paved path south of Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The path extends from Bureau of Indian Affairs Route 1 south of Lame Deer and follows the School Access Road for a half mile to connect with the Lame Deer Junior High and High School. This new path is an extension of the existing one-mile long path and includes pedestrian lighting, retaining walls, drainage improvements, signing, and revegetation. Pedestrians and bicyclists can travel safely from Lame Deer to the school 1.5 miles away on a separated path instead of using the roadway. The construction cost of the project was approximately \$800,000.

The Sidney project included a new three-mile long concrete path and sidewalk along 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Sidney. The project also enclosed an irrigation ditch adjacent to the new path in a 48-inch pipe. The project extended the existing multi-use path system that was built with Community Transportation Enhancement Program funds. The path connects Sidney High School to an adjacent neighborhood and includes utility adjustments, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant ramps, signing, and revegetation. The construction cost was approximately \$950,000.



14<sup>th</sup> Street SE/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Path in Sidney—before (left) after (right).

## Recreational Trails Grant Opportunity

Montana State Parks ([stateparks.mt.gov](http://stateparks.mt.gov)) announced that Recreational Trails Program (RTP) federal grants will be available for trail projects in Montana. Applications are due by January 31, 2020, at 3 p.m.

Montana State Parks manages the annual Recreation Trails grant program that administers federal funding with oversight from the Federal Highway Administration.

Projects can include:

- maintenance and construction of trails;
- development and maintenance of trailside facilities and amenities;
- grooming for winter trail users;
- acquisition of land for trails or trail corridors; and
- operation of trail education and safety programs.

Eligible applicants can include federal, tribal, state, county or municipal agencies, private associations, and clubs. The following RTP grant categories are offered:

- **Standard Grant** category includes subrecipients requesting \$10,000 to \$69,999.
- **Big Grant** category includes subrecipients requesting \$70,000 to \$100,000 (may award up to six).

For more information, visit [stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html](http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html) or contact Program Manager Michelle McNamee at [Michelle.McNamee@mt.gov](mailto:Michelle.McNamee@mt.gov) or 444-7642.

# A Meritorious Invention

*By Jon Axline, MDT Historian*

After all these years, Montana history still amazes me. Just when you think you've seen it all, something pops up that surprises and astonishes you. The stuff in the history books is interesting enough on its own, but it's the things that you find "out there" that are just as fascinating. Books are great, but being able to see, experience, and sometimes touch what made Montana the Last Best Place is even better. Nowhere is this better represented than in a nondescript building just south of the railroad tracks at the intersection of Pratten Street and Clough Avenue in Columbus.

At first glance, the building seems rather plain. It is built of sandstone cut from the old Montana Sandstone Company quarry north of Helena. Stone extracted there in the early twentieth century was used to construct the state capitol building in Helena. After the completion of the capitol, other people, such as Italian immigrant Pasquale Petosa, quarried stone there for buildings and cemetery headstones. Petosa built this building at the intersection of Pratten and Clough for local blacksmiths Hans Olson and Joe Stubkjaer in 1913. Petosa's business was located next door to the south. Born in Copenhagen in 1865, Stubkjaer emigrated to the United States in 1892 and arrived in Columbus from South Dakota about 1910. He leased this building as a warehouse to a couple of downtown Columbus merchants and later to John C. Calhoun, a local automobile mechanic. Sandstone buildings are common in Columbus, but it is what's attached to the rear of the building facing onto Pratten Street that's really interesting.

The two concrete buildings don't seem like much when you look at them, but they both have an important history that involves the United States' most famous inventor, Thomas Alva Edison. In addition to being a blacksmith, Joe Stubkjaer was also an inventor. In 1913, he developed a new way to pour double concrete walls with dead air space between them. The empty space helped remove the dampness characteristic of the interiors of solid concrete-walled buildings. It was an important invention. In order to build a hollow-walled concrete building at that time, walls were poured in sections. As each level set, builders removed the forms for each section. It was a slow process to say the least. Stubkjaer's method used one large form custom built with a dead air space in between. Stubkjaer's process resulted in walls that could be poured quickly and finished shortly after the concrete had set and the forms removed. These two, seemingly innocuous structures in Columbus that look like bunkers, were the first built under Stubkjaer's process. The *Columbus News* encouraged its readers to take a look at the prototypes, "it would be ten minutes well worth the effort."

Stubkjaer and his business partners, Harry Raiff, W. W. Clarke, and Hans Olson, intended to use his invention to build cheap concrete houses. To that end, they formed the Tubular Wall Company in 1914. They built at least one demonstration house in Columbus in September of that year and may have built one or two in Billings the following year. The company claimed that it could build a five-bedroom, 576 square-foot house for only \$575 without the plumbing. Incredibly, the house could be built in a day. Stubkjaer claimed the house could be "regarded as a wonder of cheapness and durability." It is not known if the

building in Columbus still stands or how many houses the company eventually built.

But before Stubkjaer and his associates began operations, he wrote Thomas Edison a letter to make sure his process didn't infringe on an invention he developed to pour hollow concrete walls. Unlike Stubkjaer's method, Edison's process required the interior walls to be lathed and plastered "in order to get the advantage of the dead air space." Surprisingly, the competitive Edison wrote back in the negative, stating that he'd been unsuccessfully working on improving his method since 1909. Joe Stubkjaer had, apparently, out-invented the country's greatest inventor.

The Tubular Wall Company was active into the early 1920s and the Federal Government granted the patent to the invention to the company rather than Stubkjaer. It is not known how many buildings it may have constructed. It is known, though, that Stubkjaer's method was used primarily to construct concrete bank vaults. The 1910s was a time of tremendous population growth in eastern Montana because of the Homestead Boom. Almost every new town had its own bank. In many cases, the bank vaults are all that remains of many once optimistic communities in the eastern part of the state. Joe operated a blacksmith shop in the unit closest to the alley (on the right side of the photograph) until 1928 when he moved to Big Timber. He ran a blacksmith shop there for many years before moving to Shepherd in the late 1930s. He died in California in September 1948.

From 1913 to 1928, the sandstone portion of the building and the middle concrete unit functioned as a warehouse for agricultural implements and second-hand furniture. Beginning in October 1928, however, local mechanic John Calhoun conducted an automobile repair business in the building. He also sold gasoline from a pump sheltered by a tin roof facing onto Pratten. He was a descendant of one of Columbus's founding fathers and served as an airplane mechanic during World War I. He operated his repair business from this building until retiring in 1960. Calhoun passed away in Columbus at age 74 in May 1969.

This seeming bland building near the railroad tracks possesses a wealth of history important not only to Columbus, but to eastern Montana. Its connection to Thomas Edison is also interesting. It just goes to prove that in sometimes ordinary packages lurk real treasures.



*1913 concrete structure located in Columbus, Montana.*

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.

**MDT Wants Your Comments On New Projects**

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit [mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/proposed_proj.pdf), [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.shtml) 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 e-mail them to: [mdtnewprojects@mt.gov](mailto:mdtnewprojects@mt.gov).

**Inside This Issue**

New Transportation Interim Committee .....	1
Public Involvement and Stakeholder Survey Results .....	1
Federal Surface Transportation Status .....	1
2019 Construction Project Progress .....	2
New FHWA Division Administrator for Montana.....	3
MDT Employees Accept New Positions .....	3
2019 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting .....	4
Social Host Responsibility .....	4
MDT Cable Median Barrier Study Complete .....	5
Transit and Highway Traffic Safety Grant Applications Due ..	5
Pedestrian Safety Tips for Low-light Conditions.....	5
Winter Driving Reminders .....	5
New Hysham Rest Area.....	5
Montana Wildlife and Transportation Steering Committee .....	6
Transportation Alternative Project Completions .....	6
New Research Projects for 2020 Federal Fiscal Year .....	6
Recreational Trails Grant Opportunity.....	6
A Meritorious Invention .....	7

**Contact Information**

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

Administrator-Lynn Zanto ( <a href="mailto:lzanto@mt.gov">lzanto@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-3445
Bicyclist/Pedestrian-( <a href="mailto:mdtbikeped@mt.gov">mdtbikeped@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-9273
Environmental-Tom Martin ( <a href="mailto:tomartin@mt.gov">tomartin@mt.gov</a> ).....	444-0879
Highway Traffic Safety-Janet Kenny ( <a href="mailto:jkenny@mt.gov">jkenny@mt.gov</a> ).....	444-7417
Map Orders- <a href="http://mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.shtml">mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.shtml</a> .....	444-6119
Multimodal Programs-Carol Strizich ( <a href="mailto:cstrizich@mt.gov">cstrizich@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-9240
Projects-Paul Johnson ( <a href="mailto:paujohnson@mt.gov">paujohnson@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-7259
Rail, Air Quality & Studies-Sheila Ludlow ( <a href="mailto:sludlow">sludlow</a> ).....	444-9193
Road Data & Mapping-Brian Andersen ( <a href="mailto:brandersen@mt.gov">brandersen@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-6111
Secondary Roads-Andy White ( <a href="mailto:awhite@mt.gov">awhite@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-9194
Statewide & Urban Planning-Carol Strizich ( <a href="mailto:cstrizich@mt.gov">cstrizich@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-9240
Traffic Data-Becky Duke ( <a href="mailto:bduke@mt.gov">bduke@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-6122
Transit-David Jacobs ( <a href="mailto:dajacobs@mt.gov">dajacobs@mt.gov</a> ) .....	444-9192
Newsline Editor-Sandra Waddell ( <a href="mailto:swaddell@mt.gov">swaddell@mt.gov</a> ) ..	444-7614

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

MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment. *Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit, and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation.*



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

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

# Transportation Assistance for Montana Communities - 2019

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 444-9416.

**Multimodal Transportation Plans** - Outside of Billings, 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 are usually managed by the local planning offices to ensure consistency with other planning efforts. The plans help identify deficiencies, needs, and funding to ensure an efficient, safe, and modern transportation system. For more information, phone 444-9240.

**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 444-9240.

**Corridor Planning Studies** - MDT provides financial and technical support toward the development of prioritized and selected 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 444-9240.

**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 responsible agency/individual to monitor implementation of each strategy. Participating communities must demonstrate a commitment to implement and monitor progress. For more information, phone 444-7646.

## ***Information & 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 by March 31st of each year through MDT's annual solicitation process. More information can be found at [mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml), or by phoning 444-7693.

**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 444-7417 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/safetyprg.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/safetyprg.shtml)

**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 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 444-6103.

## ***Additional Support***

Most federal-aid funding for projects and programs require 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 Rail, Transit and Planning Division website at [mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml).

## ***Infrastructure and Capital Assistance***

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

**Bridge and Road Safety & Accountability Program** - The 65<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature passed a fuel tax increase that went into effect on July 1, 2017. A portion of the revenue generated by the increase is allocated to local governments for road construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of roads and bridges. Allocations are available March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. For more information, phone 444-9131.

**Surface Transportation Program-Urban** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated to Montana's urban areas (areas with a population greater than 5,000) for improvements to the Urban Highway System. Priorities are identified at the local level through established planning processes that include the public. Funds are primarily used for street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and traffic operation improvements. For more information, phone 444-9240.

**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 444-9194.

**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 444-7259.

**Transportation Alternatives** - Federal funding with state and local matching funds are 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 eligibilities and requirements under MAP-21, 23 USC 213. For more information, phone 444-6118 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta\\_application.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml).

**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 444-9420 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/forms/hsip\\_application.pdf](http://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/forms/hsip_application.pdf)

**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 444-6260.

**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 channelization and signal synchronization projects to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. For more information, phone 444-9240.

**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 444-0856 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_ems.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_ems.shtml).

**Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Program** - MDT administers a state program that provides loans for 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 444-3439.

**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 444-9192 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_transit.shtml](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_transit.shtml).

**City Park Rest Areas** - State funds are provided to assist maintenance activities in communities with existing City Park Rest Area facilities. Proposals for assistance must directly benefit the traveling public. Expenditures must be reviewed and approved by MDT to be eligible for local government reimbursement. For more information, phone 444-7653.

**Ferry Boat Program** - Federal funds are available for Chouteau and Blaine Counties with some involvement with Fergus County for improvements to the ferries and facilities. For more information, phone 444-9194.