



# NEWSLINE

Montana Department of Transportation  
mdt.mt.gov



## Winter 2024



**E**ach winter, MDT snowplows travel enough miles to make seven trips to the moon and back.

When a snowplow is involved in a crash, it is taken out of service immediately for inspection and repair, and the plow operators are removed from duty until they can be cleared to return to work. That means fewer resources to help Montanans reach their destinations. It also means potentially serious injuries for all involved in the crash, as well as severe damage to their vehicles.

When MDT tells drivers **don't crowd the plow**, we mean it. Over a third of the snowplows in MDT's fleet have been involved in a crash since 2015 due to poor decisions by other drivers. Tailgating, passing in unsafe conditions, and turning in the path of these large trucks are all common causes of crashes.

MDT continues to implement strategies to help reduce the potential to hit or be hit by a snowplow. Starting in the 2022-2023 winter season, MDT installed alternating amber and green lights on the snowplows to help improve visibility.

Help spread the word to give our drivers and these large vehicles room to work and be patient when traveling in changing weather conditions. The road in front of the plow is worse than the road behind it.



## Snowplow Naming Contest Results ❄️ ❄️

Be on the lookout for one of our star plows as named by MDT staff and Facebook followers. *Clear-o-pathra*, *Betty Whiteout*, and *Rocky PLOWboa* are just a few of the new names. Follow us on Facebook to see what they are up to this winter! (Pictured above: *Scoop Dogg* will be clearing snow in the Helena area this winter.) ❄️

## COMING SOON!

The 2024 Fact Book will be available online in 2025. Check it out, and learn more about MDT and other Montana transportation facts.

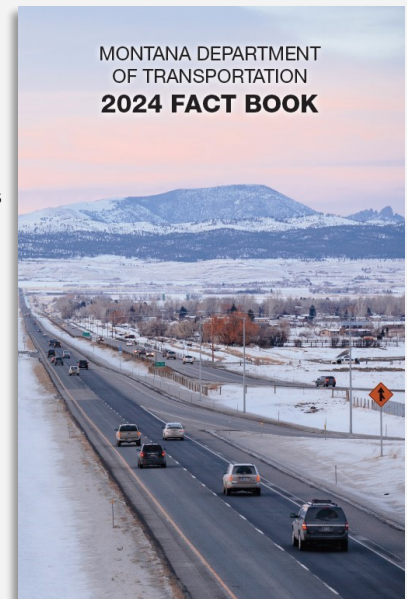
**Did you know?** Montana roads open to public travel consist of 73,670 miles, including **12,906 miles of MDT routes**. MDT is responsible for inspecting and load rating all state-owned and locally-owned bridges in Montana. This equates to **more than 4,400 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) bridges**, as well as other structures, **over 21 million square feet of deck area**.

**76%** of annual vehicle miles traveled (AVMT) occurred on MDT routes in 2023.

As part of the Vision Zero goal, MDT led the development of the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) for Montana. Since the plan's inception in 2007, safety initiatives implemented as part of this plan have contributed to a **55% decrease** in fatalities and serious injuries.

**MDT upgraded 18 rest areas since 2008**. Rest areas serve as safe stopping opportunities along Montana's highways for the traveling public and commercial carriers.

According to 2022 calculations from the National Safety Council (NSC), **\$1.87 million is the average economic cost per motor vehicle fatality**.



Find more transportation-related facts in the Fact Book, available online at <https://mdt.mt.gov/fs/factbook/>, or by scanning the QR code to the right with your mobile device.



## Federal Surface Transportation Program Status

**N**ow that the election is over and the makeup of Congress is known, it is time to begin working on Montana's priorities for the next reauthorization. Reauthorization is the process by which Congress prescribes changes, additions, and deletions to the surface transportation programs. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed in November 2021 included a five-year reauthorization of federal highway, highway safety, transit, and rail programs for fiscal years 2022 through 2026. While IIJA does not expire until September 30, 2026, priorities for state departments of transportation (DOTs) need to be developed well in advance of the expiration date in order to most effectively influence how the next surface transportation legislation is shaped by Congress and the Federal Administration.



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## Montana Trails Grants: Information for 2025 Application Cycles

**Recreational Trails Program (RTP):** The RTP is a federally funded grant program that awards about \$1.5 million annually. Eligible activities include construction or maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails or trail-related facilities, purchase of trail equipment, and development of trail education or ethics programs. Find more information and resources to assist with applying for this grant online: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/recreational-trails>.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) will accept applications for this grant through **January 15, 2025**, via the online system: <https://funding.mt.gov/login.do>

**Trails Stewardship Program (TSP):** The TSP is a state funded grant program through the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 24 in 2019 and the collected tax revenue from recreational marijuana sales in Montana. The TSP has awarded over \$5.5 million since establishment, funding 140 trail access and improvement projects across the state. Eligible activities fall under three project categories: new trail and shared-use path construction, rehabilitation and maintenance, and trailside and trailhead facilities construction.

FWP opens the 2025 application cycle for TSP on **December 9, 2024**. Find more information and resources to assist with applying for this grant online: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/trail-stewardship>.

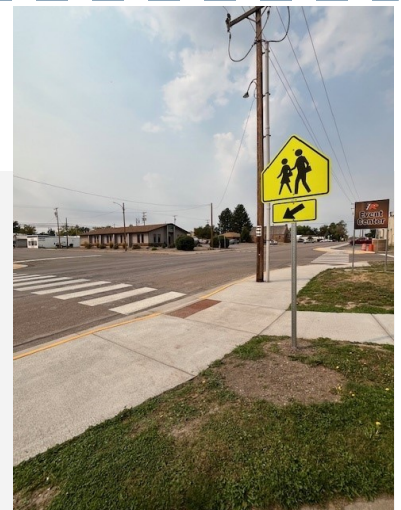
## Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program: 2025 Call for Applications

In January 2025, MDT will release the Call for Applications and \$16 million will be available. There will continue to be two categories – Capital Improvement and Pavement Preservation. The five Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) areas of Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula will administer their own Call for Application and selection process. The TA program has an emphasis on projects that improve safety and connectivity for non-motorized transportation projects such as sidewalks and shared-use paths. Eligible projects include sidewalks, shared-use paths, pedestrian bridges, curb ramps, improved crosswalks, etc. Eligible applicants include local governments, tribal governments, school districts, transit agencies, etc. Visit the TA website to learn more: [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta-application.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta-application.aspx).

### 2024 Update on TA Projects

In 2024, several TA projects were completed. These projects include:

- **US-2 Sidewalks-Evergreen:** 1 mile of new sidewalk along US 2 in Evergreen providing access to the Evergreen Junior High School and local businesses
- **Round Butte Road Path-Ronan:** 1 mile of sidewalk in Ronan along S-211 providing access to the Ronan Middle and High Schools, the hospital, and local businesses



*The completed TA projects in Lolo (left) and Ronan (right) will provide improved access and safety for nonmotorized travelers in their respective communities.*

- **Sidewalks Phase III-Cascade:** Several blocks of sidewalk, sidewalk repair and curb ramps in Cascade
- **Old Hwy 10 Sidewalk-St Regis:** 0.2 miles of sidewalk and path in St Regis connecting the school to a park
- **Sidewalks-Lolo:** 0.75 mile of new sidewalk in Lolo providing connectivity between US 93, neighborhoods, and the Lolo Middle School
- **Sidewalks-Ashland:** 0.3 miles of sidewalk in Ashland providing access to the Ashland Public School along US 212

Contact Dave Holien, TA Program Manager, at 406-444-6118 or [dholien@mt.gov](mailto:dholien@mt.gov) with any questions.

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Montana Department of Transportation



# MDT's Roy Fair Appointed to Motorcyclist Advisory Council

Roy Fair was recently appointed to the Motorcyclist Advisory Council (MAC) as a Transportation Department Official Representative by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). Roy's experience and leadership will add valuable insights and perspectives to help prevent injuries and fatalities involving motorcyclists on the nation's roadways. Roy has been with MDT since 2013 in the Data and Analysis Bureau, and is currently the Short Term Data Collection Program Lead for the Traffic Data Collection & Analysis Section.



Roy Fair, pictured with wife Shannon, on a fall motorcycle ride through the Seeley/Swan Lake area of Montana.

Roy has almost 40 years experience with a variety of motorcycles brands, styles, and builds, and is a member of Servants for Christ, Motorcycle Ministry. Over his years experience as a rider, he has seen a lot of changes - to roads, equipment and behaviors (both drivers and riders). And when he saw an opportunity to serve, during the solicitation period for the newly reestablished MAC, he took a shot at it and was more than surprised when he received the Appointment Letter from USDOT Secretary Buttigieg.

Prior to coming to MDT, Roy has been a "Jack of All Trades" over the years, working as a Carpenter and Safety Inspector for a high-end custom log home builder, a Fishing Lodge Manager, an Independent Security Contractor for Montana Department of Livestock, a Nationally Certified Massage Therapist, and a Satellite Television and Internet Technician. He is also the lead singer and guitarist for the praise and worship band Soothing Souls, and is the announcer for Montana's only Iron Horse Rodeo, the Beartooth Rally Iron Horse Rodeo, Red Lodge. He proudly served our country in the US Navy, from 1989-1995, and Roy holds a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology, with a Criminology Focus, from Montana State University (MSU) where he graduated in 2014, with departmental honors. "I am very proud and excited to serve as a representative of MDT, and will do my best to represent our great state, with honor and respect."

# MDT's Spencer Harris Appointed to National Research Panel

Spencer Harris was recently appointed to the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program Project BTS-41 Panel by the Chair of the National Research Council and the Chair and members of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee. Spencer will serve with the panel's other individual scientists, technologists, or research workers contributing their personal scientific knowledge in the public interest. The "Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program (BTSCR) develops practical solutions to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce costs of road traffic crashes associated with unsafe behaviors in partnership between the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Transportation Research Board (TRB)."



Spencer Harris, pictured at the 2024 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting

Currently, Spencer works as the Law Enforcement Liaison and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Grants Program Manager. With over 20 years of dedicated service in law enforcement, he retired from the Metro Nashville Police Department, where he cultivated extensive experience in public safety and community engagement. He holds both a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's in Criminal Justice Administration. His commitment to public safety continues through his current role, where he oversees vital grants and maintains close relationships with law enforcement and EMS professionals. MDT is excited to support Spencer with this appointment and looks forward to seeing the final results.

# MDT Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Storm Water Management Program Update

On August 4, 2024, the Montana Department of Transportation (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 September 4, 2024. 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 2024 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: [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stormwater/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stormwater/), or email [mdtms4datamanager@mt.gov](mailto:mdtms4datamanager@mt.gov) with any questions or general comments.

## Transit and Highway Traffic Safety Grant Applications Due March 1, 2025

Transit applications will only be accepted through the BlackCat Transit Data Management System: <https://secure.blackcattransit.com/Login.aspx?site=mdot>.

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on **January 1, 2025**.

Highway Traffic Safety applications will only be accepted through the Montana Grant and Loans web-based system: <https://funding.mt.gov/index.do>.

Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on **January 1, 2025**.

For information regarding:

**Transit grants**, contact Adam Kraft at 406-444-6120 or [akraft@mt.gov](mailto:akraft@mt.gov).

**Highway Traffic Safety grants**, contact Kevin Dusko at 406-444-7411 or [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov).



# 2024 Project Highlights and Progress

Each year, winter's arrival in Montana signals an end to construction and road work until spring and warmer temperatures arrive. While "construction season" can bring challenges to summer and fall travel, warm weather provides a limited opportunity for crews to advance or complete these much needed improvements to our roadways. These improvements will allow for safer, more efficient travel and support of Montana's economic vitality for years to come. MDT and our construction partners would like to extend sincere thanks to our customers—you, the traveling public of Montana. Thank you for your continued patience and support, and for helping make this another successful construction season. We look forward to 2025 and continuing to build better roadways for all of Montana. Learn more about the district projects featured in this issue, as well as other active and upcoming projects around the state, online: <https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/>.

## Missoula District

**Project:** Taft-West

**Background:** The Missoula District is working to improve Interstate 90 (I 90) in the Lolo National Forest near the Montana/Idaho border. The I 90 Lookout Pass to Taft project area is in rugged, mountainous, and heavily forested terrain and roughly parallels the upper reaches of the St. Regis River. The area is used for recreational activities during both summer and winter, and access is provided at two interchanges including Lookout Pass and Taft. The 6-mile stretch was separated into 2 projects (Taft-West and Lookout Pass-East) to be completed over 4 construction seasons. Learn more about this project at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90lookout/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90lookout/).

**Bid:** \$38 million

**Contractor:** Acme Concrete Paving, Inc.

**Status:** In 2024, construction was completed on the eastbound lanes, 3 miles east of the Montana/Idaho border. This past summer, crews replaced deteriorating asphalt pavement with new, durable concrete pavement, as well as upgraded surface drainage, replaced culverts, replaced concrete barriers, improved roadway lighting, and updated signage. Crews will return in 2025 to reconstruct the westbound lanes in the same way.



*Final passing lane being placed on I 90 in September 2024*

## 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 mobile-friendly map, or visit <https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/active-projects.aspx>.



## Butte District

**Project:** Butte Area NHS Structures

**Background:** Located on Interstate 15 (I 15) and Interstate 90 (I 90), the Butte Area Structures project was a bridge rehabilitation project that included seven bridges on the junction I 15/I 90 corridor near Butte. One unique challenge to this project was the high volume of truck traffic at the Silver Bow Interchange overpass structure that services the Butte Industrial Park and the Port of Montana. This bridge is critical for major companies and contractors including Fed-Ex, REC, Old Dominion Freight Lines, Montana Precision Products, Murdoch's Ranch supply, the Port of Montana and private residences. Detours exceeding 5 miles were required to facilitate traffic to the correct routes. With this being critical infrastructure for these entities, MDT placed an incentive/disincentive clause in the contract, requiring the contractor to complete within 50 days with incentive for up to 10 days. The contractor was able to complete the bridge deck work and had traffic back on the bridge in 40 days. These repairs were necessary to extend the functional life of the bridge.

**Bid:** \$3.2 million

**Contractor:** Sletten Construction Company

**Status:** This project has been substantially completed in 2024.



*Aerial view of the Silver Bow interchange bridge deck replacement near the junction of I 15 and I 90 near Butte*



# 2024 Project Highlights and Progress (cont.)

## Great Falls District

**Project:** Choteau-North

**Background:** The Choteau-North project is one of many full reconstruction projects along the US Highway 89 (US 89) corridor, stretching from the Hudson Bay Divide north of Browning to the Junction of Montana Highway 200 (MT 200) and US 89. This project involved many safety aspects, including improvement of the alignment and grade, wider roadway shoulders, and improving the roadside slopes to make them less steep. Over 200,000 yards of material were moved during construction. Two significant and notable issues were the elimination of a 90-degree curve with a large crash cluster and using innovative right-of-way ideas when working with landowners. Learn more about this project at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/choteau/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/choteau/).

**Bid:** \$10.9 million  
**Contractor:** Riverside Contracting, Inc.  
**Status:** This project was completed in 2024.



Reconstruction of the 90-degree curve (pictured above) and the finished roadway (pictured left)



## Glendive District

**Project:** Fairview West

**Background:** This project is located on Highway 201, beginning at the intersection with County Road 350 and proceeding easterly for 6.2 miles to the Montana/North Dakota state line. The project includes 4 foot shoulders with an improved alignment and a realigned easterly two miles to alleviate truck traffic through the Town of Fairview. Project features include a new roundabout intersection of Highway 201 and Highway 200 north of Fairview, a realigned County Road 350 intersection to remove skew, three new bridges, new culverts, rumble strips, signing, and pavement markings. Learn more about this project at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/fairviewwest/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/fairviewwest/).

**Bid:** \$34.1 million

**Contractor:** Wickens Construction, Inc.

**Status:** This project has been substantially completed in 2024, with a chipseal and miscellaneous cleanup activities scheduled for spring 2025.

Active construction on the project's new roundabout (pictured below) and the completed roundabout featuring a Paddlefish sculpture and "Welcome to Montana" sign (pictured right).



## Billings District

**Project:** Billings Bypass-Railroad Overpass

**Background:** The Billings Bypass is a six-phase project to build a new arterial roadway. The new road will begin at the Johnson Lane Interchange on Interstate 90 in Lockwood, span the Yellowstone River and BNSF Railroad, and connect to the Old US Highway 312/ US Highway 87 intersection in Billings Heights.

The Railroad Overpass (Segment 3) is currently under construction and will connect the completed Five Mile Road (Segment 1) and the Yellowstone River Bridge (Segment 2) to the Johnson Lane Interchange – Railroad Overpass (Segment 5) with a section of new roadway and an overpass over the existing Coulson Road and railroad. When this segment is complete, a temporary connection to Coulson Road will offer public access to the new river crossing! The next phase to be constructed will be the Johnson Lane Interchange (Segment 4). Learn more about this project at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/billingsbypass/default.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/billingsbypass/default.aspx).

**Bid (Railroad Overpass):** \$13.6 million

**Contractor (Railroad Overpass):** Wadsworth Brothers Construction

**Status:** Construction on the Railroad Overpass segment of the Billings Bypass is still active.



Hanging bridge girders on the Railroad Overpass project segment (pictured left) and the completed Yellowstone River Bridge portion of the Railroad Overpass project segment (pictured below).



# Get Home Safe for the Holidays – Drive Sober and Buckle Up

The holidays are a time for many people to celebrate with family and friends, and whether it is just across town or the state, the months of November through December are a busy time for travel. The holiday season is also known for being a deadly season when it comes to impaired driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), during the December months from 2018-2022, there were more than 4,700 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. In December 2022 alone, 1,062 people died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes.

Over the last ten years in Montana (2013-2022), 32% of the crash fatalities during the winter holiday period (December 15 through January 3) involved a driver with a blood alcohol content (BAC) above 0.08.

As part of the statewide, year-round effort to curb impaired driving, MDT supports law enforcement with grants to increase patrols as part of the Safety Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP). The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) and local law enforcement will be participating in mobilization patrols from Thanksgiving through Christmas and into the New Year to keep Montana's roads free of impaired drivers and to encourage all drivers to buckle up and to drive sober or find a sober ride as they celebrate the season. **(See call out box at the top of page 7...)**

You can do your part to ensure a safe and happy holiday. If you are hosting a celebration, serve alcohol responsibly and make sure your guests have safe, sober transportation home or a place to stay for the evening. As a party guest, it's also your responsibility to plan ahead if you'll be drinking. Whether it's a designated driver, calling a cab, using a ride service or staying with a friend for the night, be safe and remind your friends and family to do the same. If you see or suspect drunk driving on the road, call 911.

And remember, the best defense against a drunk driver is wearing a seat belt – everyone, every trip, every time; there is no good excuse not to.

MDT encourages drivers to drive sober, buckle up and avoid unsafe behaviors this holiday season and every day of the year and to make Vision Zero their goal. For more information, please visit: [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/).

## Super Bowl 2025: Make a Sober Ride Your Game Plan!

Super Bowl weekend (Sunday February 19, 2025) is filled with food, fun and friends. If your celebration involves alcohol, make sure your pre-game plan includes arranging for sober transportation. If you're hosting a party, remind guests to have sober transportation arranged before they arrive or be prepared to take the keys from those who shouldn't be driving. We want to remind everyone that "Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk."

If you see or suspect that someone is driving impaired, please assist law enforcement by calling 911 to report the driver and always buckle up.

You lose big time if you choose to get behind the wheel impaired, you risk your life and the lives of others on the road. Remember: If you drive impaired, you may lose money, your reputation, your car, and even your life. Enforcement for impaired driving is a focus area of Vision Zero, and increased patrols are funded by MDT.

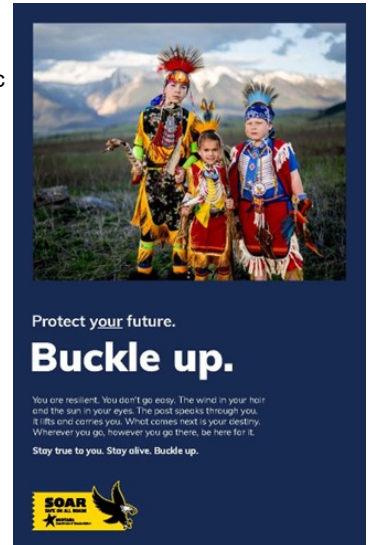
## SOAR Program Promotes Child Passenger Safety

A new school year is underway, and the Safe On All Roads (SOAR) Tribal Traffic Safety Program has been actively promoting safe back-to-school driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants (younger than 1 year old) and by 54% for toddlers (1 to 4 years old) in passenger vehicles.

While child passenger safety seat usage is approximately 90% for the nation, that rate unfortunately drops to anywhere from 23% to 79% in Tribal communities. These statistics make child passenger safety seat usage a priority for the Montana SOAR program.

SOAR coordinators promote child passenger safety, and most are child passenger safety seat certified technicians. During this campaign, SOAR coordinators throughout the state received over 150 car seats from MDT for distribution in Tribal communities to kick off the new school year. Additionally, coordinators provided education to ensure all passenger are restrained properly as students return to school.

SOAR will continue to promote traffic safety throughout the year to help protect future generations. For more information on the program, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or [scozzie@mt.gov](mailto:scozzie@mt.gov).



## A New Year of Teen Traffic Safety Partnerships

MDT kicked off the Montana Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Teen Peer-to-Peer program on September 22-23, 2024, in Billings. Over 150 students and 37 chapter advisors were in attendance.

During this kick-off, MDT launched the 2024/2025 grant year, allowing statewide FCCLA chapters to apply for funds to develop, produce and distribute traffic safety campaigns on issues impacting their communities.

Through these grants, Montana's FCCLA chapters can determine the type of campaign that is appropriate for their community and educate their peers on risky driving behaviors. MDT has partnered with FCCLA for the last eight years, with over \$160,000 in funds provided directly to the chapters to assist with a variety of traffic safety campaigns. On average, six chapters participate each year.

The submission period for grant applications for this cycle closed in November, and MDT is excited to see what this year's campaigns will bring.

For more information, contact Sheila Cozzie at 406-444-7301 or [scozzie@mt.gov](mailto:scozzie@mt.gov).





## Montana Traffic Safety Dates

⇒ **December 11, 2024—January 1, 2025\***

Winter Holiday High Visibility Enforcement

⇒ **February 9, 2025**

Super Bowl LVIII—Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk

⇒ **March 17, 2025\***

St. Patrick's Day—Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

⇒ **April 1-30, 2025**

National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

⇒ **April 21-25, 2025**

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW)

⇒ **May 1-31, 2025**

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

⇒ **May 7, 2025**

National Bike & Roll to School Day:

[www.walkbiketoschool.org/](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/)

⇒ **May 12-June 1, 2025\***

Click It or Ticket Law Enforcement Seat Belt Mobilization

**\*Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP)**

**Mobilization Periods: For more information, contact  
Spencer Harris at 406-444-0856 or [sharris@mt.gov](mailto:sharris@mt.gov).**

# Navigating Winter Weather: Ensuring Safety for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

**W**inter brings beauty but also a unique set of challenges for bicyclists and pedestrians. Embracing the season requires awareness and preparation. By understanding the risks associated with icy conditions, snow accumulation, and reduced visibility, you can take proactive steps to ensure your safety. So, as you venture out into the crisp air, keep these safety tips in mind. With these precautions, you can enjoy the Montana weather while ensuring your safety and the safety of others.



## Winter Driving

- **Clear Your View.** Ensure your windows are clear of snow and ice for better visibility of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Slow Down.** Reduce speed in winter weather. This gives you more time to react.
- **Give Extra Space.** Maintain a safe distance when passing bicyclists. Ideally, provide a minimum of six feet of clearance in winter weather.
- **Be Patient.** Allow extra time for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate winter conditions.

## Winter Biking

- **Equip Your Bike.** Use wider tires with better traction and consider studded tires for icy conditions. Ensure your bike lights are functioning and always use them in low visibility conditions.
- **Adjust Riding Techniques.** Maintain a lower speed, especially when approaching corners or intersections. Avoid sudden movements; instead, make gradual adjustments to your speed and direction.
- **Choose Safe Routes.** Whenever possible, opt for routes that are cleared of snow and ice. Familiarize yourself with your city's snow removal policies including priority routes. If traveling during night, dawn, or dusk try and opt for a route that is well lit.

## Winter Walking

- **Be Visible.** Wear bright or reflective clothing and consider carrying a flashlight. Avoid clothing that can blend into the winter landscape. Staying visible is key to a safe walk.
- **Use Designated Paths.** Stick to sidewalks and marked pedestrian crossings. If sidewalks are not present, walk on the edge of the road facing traffic so you can see approaching vehicles.
- **Mind Your Step.** Be cautious of hidden ice patches and avoid rushing. Take smaller steps to maintain balance and reduce the risk of falls. Wear slip-on micro ice cleats for added traction or bring walking sticks for increased stability.

Winter brings beauty but also a unique set of challenges. By understanding the risks and following safety tips, we can all enjoy the season while staying safe. Stay aware, be prepared, and make the most of your winter.

## Slow Down and Move Over!

**W**inter driving in Montana requires extra preparation and vigilance. Planning ahead and making the right choices behind the wheel not only help you arrive safely as a driver, but also help keep those who work on our roads out of harm's way.



Emergency first responders, tow truck operators, maintenance workers (including snowplow drivers), law enforcement, and Motor Carrier Services (MCS) officers travel our roadways to provide aid, emergency care, regulation, and safer routes for the rest of us. Statutory revisions to Montana's "Move Over" law went into effect in 2021, including changes in fines and penalties for "reckless endangerment of emergency or highway workers." You can find the current statutes in Montana Code Annotated (MCA):

<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/index.html> (Refer to MCA 61-8-346; 61-8-715; 61-8-803)

Whether you're driving for your daily commute or traveling to winter fun, these tips will help ensure you and others along your journey arrive alive:

- Stay alert and focus on the road ahead.
- Use your vehicle lights during low-light times of day and during inclement weather to ensure you can see what's ahead, and that other road users can see you.
- Slow down and adjust your speed for current weather and road conditions. The speed limit is not always a safe driving speed in winter.
- Plan ahead. Check the weather and travel conditions before leaving, and allow extra time to get to your destination.



# 2024 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting

Over 100 people attended the seventeenth Annual Transportation Safety meeting on October 16 & 17 in Helena, hosted by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Attendees included statewide representatives from safety planning and engineering, educators, enforcement, emergency and medical services, fire department, tow operators, behavior and injury specialist, Buckle Up MT coalitions, DUI task forces, and media consultants, among other safety partners and stakeholders.

The Annual Meeting kicked off with opening remarks from MDT's Director, Chris Dorrington. He spoke passionately to attendees, encouraging them to be "bold" and "creative" in their approaches to making a difference, and to be courageous in committing to the issue of roadway safety in Montana. "Speak up!" he urged attendees. "Sometimes a single idea from the past lingers too long...I ask you to be an active ambassador as you leave this room. We gather here to make a difference." Director Dorrington also highlighted the focus on Vision Zero for the two meeting days, and noted the various factors needed to reach zero deaths and zero serious injuries on Montana's roads. "You are here on purpose," he reminded attendees in closing. "As we come together over the next few days, let's put our shoulders to the task!"

Rob Stapley, MDT's Rail, Transit and Planning Division Administrator, facilitated the meeting and provided an overview of Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP), focusing on the importance of Vision Zero safety effort collaboration, coordination, and communication among all safety partners. "I encourage you all to get together and lean on one another," he said to attendees during the opening remarks on Wednesday, October 16. "We all have a stake in this issue and in reaching Vision Zero."

## CHSP Interim Safety Goal

*Reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Montana's roads by half, from 952 in 2018 to 476 in 2030.*

2021: 1,023 fatalities and serious injuries  
2022: 928 fatalities and serious injuries

2022 saw a reduction of 95 fatalities and serious injuries in comparison to 2021.

In 2023, Montana experienced a total of 984 fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. This preliminary 2023 crash data reflects 208 fatalities and 776 serious injuries, which is an increase from the previous year. Montana is making progress on the CHSP Interim Goal, which is to halve fatalities and serious injuries from 952 in 2018 to 476 by 2030. Rob shared MDT's plans, already underway, to update the CHSP in 2025. With Director Dorrington, he challenged attendees to think about how Montana can reach the goal of Vision Zero; specifically what support or resources are needed to make actionable progress and advance the goal toward zero deaths and zero serious injuries on Montana's roads.

Throughout the two days of the Annual Meeting, continuing a statewide commitment to the Vision Zero goal was the meeting focus with an awareness of traffic safety culture and consideration of the Safe System Approach. Attendees heard from speakers on a variety of topics related to education, enforcement, engineering and EMS – the 4 Es of transportation safety.

Education efforts presented spanned state, tribal and local entities. MDT and agency of record, Duft Watterson, presented on recurring and new components of Engage Montana – the department's statewide campaign focused on traffic safety through behavioral change. Teen drivers were in the spotlight, as representatives from Montana Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and the Safe On All Roads (SOAR) program shared notable successes in educating youth on topics like

seat belt use and driving without distractions. Statewide Buckle Up MT Coordinators shared local efforts to educate their communities on occupant protection – both seat belt use and child protective safety (CPS). The MDT-managed NHTSA programs shared seat belt and impaired driving education and awareness activities conducted throughout the year. As a reminder, occupant protection and law enforcement mini grants opportunities are available throughout the year. More information can be found online: [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/).



Steve Schmidt, Drive Safe and Missoula County Buckle Up MT Coordinator, engages attendees by asking them to be "safety superheroes" in their communities.

The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) joined representatives from MDT and local law enforcement for sessions focused on the importance of enforcement in impacting roadway safety. Presenters discussed the importance of crash data in working towards Vision Zero, high visibility periods and year-round enforcement, and other challenges and opportunities to enhance enforcement of traffic safety laws on Montana's roads.

MDT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) focused on infrastructure related safety projects that are data driven and strategic, highlighting recent partnerships with MHP/local law enforcement and a tribal community in Ashland. An overview was provided of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proven safety countermeasures (rumble strips, roundabouts, medians, curve modifications, signals, etc.) that address roadway departure and intersection-related crashes. Roadway departure represents the majority (2/3) of crashes in Montana, with the remaining 1/3 being intersection-related crashes.

Representatives from the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) sector, including the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), joined MDT and law enforcement officials in addressing challenges like staffing and the cost of equipment and ambulances (i.e., continued impacts of inflation). As a rural state, response time and crash severity play a critical role in determining a fatal or non-fatal outcome of a crash – also known as the "Golden Hour." EMS representatives also spoke in support of engineering countermeasures like roundabouts in successfully reducing crash severity.

Attendees also heard from speakers about the "human factor" of Vision Zero. Parents who had recently lost children in fatal crashes shared their emotionally powerful personal stories as potent reminders that even one life lost on Montana's roads is unacceptable. A teen panel from Arlee High School tearfully shared how the deaths of multiple peers in fatal crashes had impacted their tribal community, and how they honor those lives lost by educating other teens on the importance of safety behind the wheel. Changing behavior by changing the culture of traffic safety in Montana was reiterated as the key to reaching Vision Zero, and the speakers felt sharing the reality of fatal crashes – particularly the lives left behind – were critical to that change. As Beth McBride, creator of Montana Bar Fairies, stated: "We have to change culture because laws don't change fast enough."

For more information on the CHSP or the emphasis area safety efforts please contact Pam Langve-Davis at 406-444-7646 or [plangvedavis@mt.gov](mailto:plangvedavis@mt.gov), or visit the Vision Zero CHSP website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.aspx).

Presentations from the 2024 meeting can be found at [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-meetings.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-meetings.aspx).



# Education & Enforcement: Keys to Reaching Vision Zero on Montana's Roadways

At the Annual Transportation Safety Meeting (October 16-17, 2024) in Helena, there was a notable focus on Vision Zero – specifically, how can everyone work together to end deaths and serious injuries on Montana's roadways. The meeting opened with the presentation of these sobering facts:

## 213 fatalities occurred on Montana's roadways in 2022.

- 72% of all roadway deaths are a result of a roadway departure.
- 51% of all roadway deaths involved an unrestrained vehicle occupant.
- 39% of all roadway deaths involved an impaired driver.

It was noted that these are the behaviors we have the opportunity to influence and have an impact on, in terms of reaching Vision Zero. Dr. Kari Finley, Director of Montana State University (MSU)'s Center for Health and Safety Culture spoke about beliefs and our shared responsibility to grow a positive traffic safety culture across Montana. She stressed, "We must focus on growing protective beliefs to shift risky behaviors to change negative outcomes and consequences."

Education and enforcement are two critical areas that inherently represent consequences, behaviors and beliefs in traffic safety culture. Beginning with education, there are a number of different approaches being used across Montana at state, tribal and local levels. The common education related challenges facing safety partners that were shared during the Annual Meeting were engagement and impact. Simply put, how do we get the attention of our target audience and leverage that attention into changed behavior? Traffic safety education begins at a young age, with parents/caretakers and teachers in a position to implement education on topics like proper use of age-appropriate restraints (seat belts, car seats) in vehicles. As Missoula County's Buckle Up MT Coordinator, Steve Schmidt, said at the Annual Meeting: "More stuff is caught than taught."

As children age into their teen years, building on that foundation of traffic safety education becomes even more critical. Teenagers are an important demographic in Montana's traffic safety culture because they represent new drivers. They are also at an age where the concept of "peer pressure" is very much at play through social factors that create beliefs about traffic safety. These beliefs will ultimately shape behavior behind the wheel. During the Annual Meeting, MDT highlighted partnerships and programs that specifically target teens with education on topics like seat belt use, driving without distractions and not driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. Notable success at local and tribal levels shared a common thread: Traffic safety education efforts created by teens, for teens (i.e., their peers), has demonstrated strength in changing behavior. Why? Because beliefs are largely shaped at this age by

social factors, like peer input or pressure. Teens who believe in traffic safety culture are able to reach their peers in a way that will create actionable change in behavior behind the wheel.

Once teens age into adulthood, beliefs and behaviors are often established – particularly in terms of traffic safety culture.

Statewide safety partners have noted ongoing challenges for reaching an aging adult audience on a variety of safety topics, including seat belt or motorcycle helmet use, and sober driving. Great success with educating adults has been noted with the presence of an emotionally driven incentive or "hook." Adults with

established beliefs about traffic safety are increasingly unlikely to change their behavior as they age, unless an emotional connection can be established to re-engage them in related education efforts. Hearing others share personal stories about their loved one dying in a fatal crash can create this emotional connection. Education delivered through a personal source – like a child or grandchild – can also have resonance with this audience, as it makes traffic safety culture personal.

Moving from education to enforcement, traffic safety culture in adult demographics can be impacted by consequences. Focusing on consequences, like the cost of a DUI or the impact to loved ones, can change beliefs. In order to change behavior, the consequences must be perceived as relevant and real to the adult in question. Through a variety of enforcement efforts, MDT, the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) and local law enforcement agencies have seen success in addressing issues like impaired driving. High-visibility mobilization periods, funded by MDT-administered National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funds, emphasize consequences for unsafe behavior behind the wheel. Enforcement must be viewed as consistent and present, and targeted efforts by law enforcement agencies statewide continue to remind motorists about consequences of their behaviors on our roadways. Law enforcement representatives at the Annual Meeting noted the importance of inputs like data and community response in helping them continue to be strategic and effective with resources – particularly as those resources continue to be limited, compared to the growing need (i.e., unsafe behaviors on state roadways).

As a rural state, Montana's traffic safety culture – particularly among adults – has been shaped by beliefs about independence and individual autonomy. Seeing seat belt use as a personal choice, and the fairly recent passage of "open container" laws (alcoholic beverages) represent two examples of how well-established beliefs present challenges to advancing traffic safety culture in Montana. Unfortunately, safety partners have noted that laws are slow to change in Montana, so changing or reinforcing traffic safety culture will continue to rely on statewide education and enforcement efforts.

Montana's focus on Vision Zero uses zero as the ultimate goal, because any death on our roadways is unacceptable. The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) is Montana's plan for achieving that vision, and is developed through a multiagency collaborative process. MDT works with agencies and organizations across the state, implementing strategies to reduce highway crashes, serious injuries and fatalities.

To learn more about more about education and enforcement efforts and the role they plan in advancing the Vision Zero goal for Montana, visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.aspx).



Spencer Harris (MDT) facilitates a panel with law enforcement representatives at the 2024 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting.



Buckle Up MT Coordinators from across the state speak to attendees about child passenger safety at the 2024 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting.

## MDT Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Grant Program

MDT was able to support 10 rural EMS organizations with State Fiscal Year 2025 funds with grants totaling more than \$1 million. The purpose of this program is to provide competitive grants to EMS providers for acquiring or leasing ambulances or emergency response vehicles and for purchasing equipment for training, communication, or providing medical care to patients.

For more information on the EMS Grant Program, contact Spencer Harris at 406-444-0856 or [sharris@mt.gov](mailto:sharris@mt.gov).



Brooklyn Johns-Blassic (MDT) facilitates a panel on the importance of traffic crash data with representatives from MDT and MHP at the Annual Transportation Safety Meeting.

## Clear Roads TPF Study Receives National Award

MDT participated in an award-winning Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) study, Clear Roads, which was honored with the TPF Excellence Award by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in July 2024.



### What is Clear Roads TPF?

It's a research program that brings together transportation professionals and researchers from around the country to drive innovation in the field of winter maintenance. By evaluating materials, equipment, and methods in real-world conditions, the program identifies the most effective techniques and technologies to save agencies money, improve safety, and increase efficiency.

As a TPF, Clear Roads ([www.clearroads.org](http://www.clearroads.org)) brings together partners that contribute both funds and expertise to create solutions that can be used across geographic borders. These partners typically include, but are not limited to, state DOT and FHWA subject matter experts. In the case of Clear Roads, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), American Public Works Association, and Norwegian Public Roads Administration are identified partners.

MDT has participated in Clear Roads TPF since 2012, and 38 states contribute to it. MDT's Maintenance Operations Manager, Doug McBroom, is the department's champion on the TPF. He is currently serving a two-year term as the pooled fund Vice Chair, and will fill a two-year term as Chair starting in 2025. The TPF hosts two annual, in-person meetings for partners, and Montana hosted in Kalispell in September 2024.

### What has Clear Roads offered to Montana?

When asked this question, Doug quickly points out direct benefits that MDT has realized. Two examples cited are:

- **AWSSI (Accumulated Winter Season Severity Index)** – A tool developed to objectively quantify and describe the relative severity of the winter season so MDT can plan winter maintenance operations.
- **Entry-Level Driver Training (CDL) for Maintenance Operators** – Montana is required to provide training at no cost to the public. The training program is a comprehensive, step-by-step CDL training program designed specifically for heavy equipment operators.

If you'd like to learn more about the transportation pooled fund studies that MDT is involved in, please visit the Montana Pool Funded Studies web page:

[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mt\\_pool.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mt_pool.aspx).

## System's Impact Approach Permitting Process

MDT uses approach permitting to track and manage approaches onto the highway right-of-way. MDT requires an approach permit when a landowner is proposing a new approach, modifying an existing approach, or changing the use of an existing approach (i.e., changing from residential to commercial use). All approaches within the highway right-of-way require their own separate approach permit signed by the landowner and are reviewed by MDT staff.

All approach permit applications are assigned to the District Maintenance Chief to begin the MDT review process. Approach permit applications may be forwarded to the Systems Impact Action Process (SIAP) at the District's discretion depending on various criteria, such as if the approach is on an existing or proposed access control highway, will generate significant traffic volume, or has environmental impacts indicated on the Environmental Checklist. If an approach request is in an access control area, MDT will coordinate a review to determine if the approach complies with the access control resolution.

Once an approach permit application is submitted to SIAP, staff will coordinate a review and approval of the permit with appropriate MDT staff and other agencies, if necessary. These reviews may include a Traffic Impact Study, Hydraulics Report, Geotechnical Report, Design/Construction Plans, and other state/federal agency permits. SIAP staff will prepare an agreement or bond when needed for work performed within the MDT right-of-way.

SIAP staff ensure that the required Maintenance coordination, Transportation Commission approval, and Chief Engineer concurrence are obtained, if needed, prior to any work taking place within MDT right-of-way. Once the proposed approach has been reviewed by all appropriate staff, the permit is returned to the District for final approval and issuance at their discretion.

Depending on the use and location of the approach, certain modifications may be needed, such as turn lanes, raised medians, or traffic signals, to ensure the highway continues to function efficiently. Both the *Developer's Guide to the System's Impact Actions Process* and the *Approach Manual* provide further information regarding approach permitting within the MDT right of way. Find both publications on MDT's SIAP website: [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/siap.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/siap.aspx).

MDT has sole discretion over the necessary roadway mitigation that may be required for the installation or modification of an approach within the highway right of way, and must always consider both the needs of the landowner and the safety of the traveling public when permitting approaches.



# Carroll and the Carroll Trail

*By Jon Axline, MDT Historian*

Historically, Montanans have had a lot of optimism in the creation of new business ventures with the potential for rich rewards. Among those were Butte's copper kings, railroad promoters, and the thousands of men and women who came here during the gold rush days. Some of the schemes were successful, but most were doomed to failure for one reason or another. One of those unsuccessful get-rich plans was the Carroll Trail and the town of Carroll.

Fort Benton was a busy place in the 1860s and 1870s. Steamboats laden with supplies destined for the Montana mining camps, military posts, and Indian reservations docked there in large numbers. The boats also carried hundreds, if not thousands, of passengers who traveled to all parts of the region from the "Worlds Innermost Port." After the discovery of gold on Last Chance Gulch in 1864 and the rise of Helena as an important trade and transportation center, the two settlements vied for economic supremacy in the territory.

Fort Benton's economy was subject to the whims of the Missouri River. Ice in the winter and low water levels in the summer meant that steamboats couldn't make it upriver as far as the town's levee for much of the year. In those instances, steamboat captains deposited their cargoes and passengers downriver at the mouth of the Judith or Musselshell rivers or at Cow Island. Sometimes left unguarded, the supplies were plundered by looters. Some passengers were forced to walk from Judith Landing to Fort Benton, a long ways over rough and hazardous terrain.

In 1873, the owners of the famed Helena-based Diamond R Freighting Company tried to steal the lucrative steamboat trade from Fort Benton's merchants. They hit upon the idea of establishing a new steamboat port downriver near the mouth of the Musselshell River. The scheme involved building a wagon road between the new port and Helena. To that end, the company signed a deal with the Kountz Steamboat Line that would guarantee the line's steamboats would land at the new port. The Diamond R would then freight the supplies directly to Helena, thereby undercutting the merchants at Fort Benton. The agreement between the Kountz Line and the Diamond R stipulated that, in addition to providing the wagons and teams, the freighting company would construct the road and river port; it had to be ready when the river was opened for navigation in the spring of 1874.

In the fall of 1873, Charles Broadwater and George Clendennin of the Diamond R scouted a 225-mile road to the site of the proposed river port, named Carroll in honor of the plan's architect, Matt Carroll. The first freight wagons negotiated the trail to Carroll the following year. While one account claimed that the road had "plentiful supplies of wood and water," other travelers described a forbidding landscape of "little vegetation" that was "incapable of affording sustenance to man or beasts." When the road was dry, it took freight wagons about a month to make the trip between Carroll and Helena. But when the road was wet it became a "greasy, slippery, fathomless mass of clinging mud, through which the straining animals [could] hardly drag the heavily-weighted wheels."

The Carroll townsite was located about twenty-five to thirty miles west of the mouth of the Musselshell and seventy-five miles northeast of Lewistown on a well-timbered alluvial plain. Carroll stood next to the Missouri River on top of a cut bank raised fifteen to twenty feet above the level of the water. A 900-foot-high bluff loomed over the townsite to the southwest, which would require the construction of switchbacks on the wagon road to reach down to the level of the town.

Carroll never amounted to much and wasn't the kind of place that would you'd want to bring your family. It peaked in 1874, the year it was founded, and then rapidly declined. The settlement was a crude collection of log huts, warehouses, a hotel, a couple of stores, and a saloon perched on the cut bank overlooking the river. The settlement even boasted a post office and had a seasonal population of seventy-five to 200 hundred people. It was a rough and tumble settlement that attracted local indigenous people, trappers, woodhawks, ne'er-do-wells, and respectable members of Victorian society, literally fresh off the boat.

Ultimately, however, Carroll failed. The town didn't do much to undercut Fort Benton's trade and Kountz Line steamboats infrequently landed there. The Carroll Trail wasn't all that suitable for wagon traffic and it experienced the same problems with the Lakota and the Northern Cheyenne in the area as did the Bozeman Trail to the south ten years before. The tribes didn't like the presence of a permanent settlement in their last great hunting grounds. Soldiers stationed along the route and at Carroll proved unable to stop the hostilities. The Missouri River itself also proved an enemy of Carroll. The cut bank overlooking the river continually sloughed off, forcing the Diamond R and the other businesses to move their buildings back from the Missouri River. Carroll and the Carroll Trail were all but abandoned in 1876 and it was a ghost town by 1881. Today, there is no trace of the town; the Missouri River swallowed it up long ago; any other remains would be submerged under the Fort Peck reservoir. The general route of the Carroll Trail still exists as US Highway 12 from Helena to Harlowton where it turned north and passed through the Lewistown area. Many would agree that the landscape looks much as it did when the Carroll Trail was active 150 years ago.



*Photo of Carroll, taken from the Montana History Portal*

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.

**MDT Wants Your Comments on New Projects**

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

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**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.

- Newsline Editor-Lauren Eichenfels ([leichenfels@mt.gov](mailto:leichenfels@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-7614**  
 Planning Division Administrator-Rob Stapley ([rostapley@mt.gov](mailto:rostapley@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-3445  
 Bike/Ped-Shelby Clark ([mdtbikeped@mt.gov](mailto:mdtbikeped@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-9273  
 Environmental-Tom Martin ([tomartin@mt.gov](mailto:tomartin@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-0879  
 Highway Traffic Safety-Kevin Dusko ([kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-7411  
 Map Orders- [www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.aspx](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/maps.aspx) ..... 406-444-6119  
 Multimodal Planning ..... VACANT  
 System Impact-LeRoy Wosoba ([lwsoba@mt.gov](mailto:lwsoba@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-9233  
 Projects-Paul Johnson ([paujohnson@mt.gov](mailto:paujohnson@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-7259  
 Road Data & Mapping-Brian Andersen ([brandersen@mt.gov](mailto:brandersen@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-6103  
 Secondary Roads-Andy White ([awhite@mt.gov](mailto:awhite@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-9194  
 Traffic Data-Becky Duke ([bduke@mt.gov](mailto:bduke@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-6122  
 Transit-Adam Kraft ([akraft@mt.gov](mailto:akraft@mt.gov)) ..... 406-444-6120

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

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MDT's mission is to plan, build, operate, and maintain a safe and resilient transportation infrastructure to move Montana forward. Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit, and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation



# Transportation Assistance for Montana Communities - 2025

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 406-444-9238.

**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 406-444-9238.

**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 406-444-7646.

## ***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/](http://mdt.mt.gov/research/) or by phoning 406-444-7203.

**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](http://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 406-444-6103.

## ***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 Rail, Transit and Planning Division website at [mdt.mt.gov/contact/organization/railtran.aspx](http://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. For more information, phone 406-444-6103 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax/allocations.aspx](http://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 reconstruction, rehabilitation, and traffic operation improvements. For more information, phone 406-444-9238.

**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 406-444-9194.

**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 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 eligibilities and requirements under 23 USC 213. For more information, phone 406-444-6118 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta-application.aspx](http://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/](http://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 406-444-9238.

**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 406-444-0856 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-ems.aspx](http://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-ems.aspx).

**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 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 406-444-6120 or visit [mdt.mt.gov/business/grants-transit.aspx](http://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 406-444-9194.