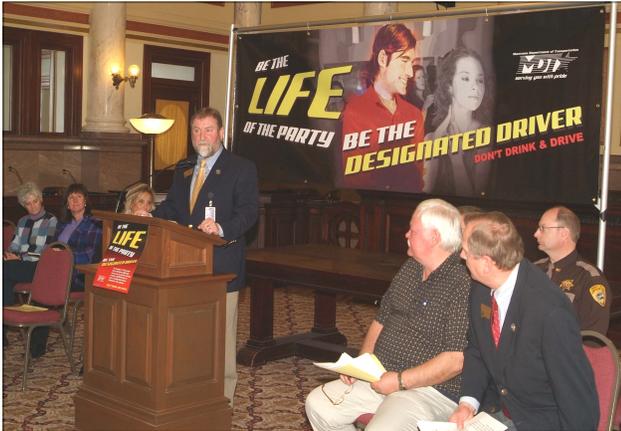


MDT Sponsors Designated Driver Campaign



MDT Director Jim Lynch kicks off the Holiday Designated Driver Campaign at a news conference at the state capitol November 30.

When it comes to traffic safety, impaired driving continues to top the list of concerns for the Montana Department of Transportation. Alcohol-related crashes are among the most preventable, and while every traffic fatality is tragic, those involving impaired drivers remain the most senseless. Last year between December 1 and January 1, ten people in the state died in alcohol-related crashes.

This holiday season, MDT is sponsoring the media campaign, "Be the Life of the Party; Be the Designated Driver." This statewide effort is intended to remind people of the importance of the designated driver. The messages will be pub-

lished in newspapers and broadcast on radio and television in addition to other publicity efforts.

During the month-long campaign, MDT is also providing information about issues surrounding holiday parties, responsible drinking, and community programs that provide free rides home. The Montana Tavern Association, Montana Department of Revenue, Montana Board of Crime Control, and Safe Kids, Safe Communities along with local law enforcement have all teamed with MDT to help raise awareness of the importance of the designated driver.

It is up to all of us to keep impaired drivers off the road. It starts with taking responsibility for our own actions and never driving while impaired. It also includes taking responsibility for those around us by offering to be the designated driver and refusing to let those who have had too much to drink drive. When hosting a party, help keep guests from overindulging by serving high-protein foods, which help slow absorption of alcohol. Know that salty foods tend to make people thirsty and possibly drink more, and that carbonated mixers cause alcohol to be absorbed into a person's system more quickly than noncarbonated mixers. Have nonalcoholic drink options available. If you are the host, be prepared to provide a safe ride home for each of your guests.

Being or having a designated driver is one step to a safe holiday. Taking away the keys of those who have had too much to drink is another.

Have a safe and happy holiday. And remember, the best defense against a drunk driver is a seat belt—so please buckle up.

MDT Develops Strategic Highway Safety Plan

MDT Director Jim Lynch has a vision for transportation safety in Montana that "all highway users in Montana will arrive safely at their destinations." This may not seem too grand or challenging an endeavor, but Montana's crash statistics tell us we have a lot of work to do!

In 2004, Montana had 229 fatalities, 9,263 injuries, and a total of 21,783 crashes on its roadways. Montana's statistics for overall traffic fatalities per mile driven, rural single vehicle crashes, and impaired driving crashes are among the highest in the country. These are alarming figures, and in the words of Director Lynch, "even one fatality is unacceptable!"

MDT is working hard to bring together key safety stakeholders to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) for Montana. The development of a successful and useful

plan calls for a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven approach that brings together a multidisciplinary team of safety professionals and stakeholders to work toward a common highway safety goal.

The SHSP planning effort has identified over one hundred agencies, organizations, and individuals at the federal, state, and local levels who are directly or indirectly involved in transportation safety in Montana. Once complete, the SHSP will increase coordination, communication, and cooperation among state and local agencies, tribal governments, law enforcement, planning organizations, and other safety advocates throughout the state.

The plan will use a partnership approach to identify opportunities to reduce the number of fatal and incapacitating

... continued on page 2

Safety Plan continued . . .

injuries on Montana’s roadways. The plan does not discuss every safety strategy currently being implemented in the state, nor does it address every type of crash problem. Instead, it focuses on strategies with the greatest potential to reduce the most severe crash types with the goal of reducing fatal and incapacitating injuries.

Specifically, the following goals were adopted to reduce fatalities and incapacitating injuries in Montana:

- Reduce the statewide fatality rate from 2.05 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2004 to 1.79 by 2008.
- Further reduce the statewide fatality rate to 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by 2015.
- By reducing the fatality rate, Montana's incapacitating injuries will also fall from 1,700 in 2005 to 950 in 2015.

Year	Statewide Traffic-Related Injuries	Statewide Traffic-Related Fatalities
1997	10,688	265
1998	10,075	237
1999	10,459	220
2000	10,798	237
2001	8,982	230
2002	10,086	269
2003	9,632	262
2004	9,263	229

The next step was to support these goals by identifying key objectives on which to focus our efforts. These objectives cover engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services. A multidisciplinary approach and a cooperative effort by all Montana’s safety stakeholders will be necessary to meet the following objectives:

- Reduce statewide alcohol- and drug-impaired fatal and incapacitating injury crashes.
- Reduce and mitigate the consequences of single-vehicle run-off-the-road fatal and incapacitating injury crashes.
- Reduce fatal and incapacitating injury crashes for young drivers (under age 21).
- Increase safety belt usage to 90 percent.
- Reduce Native American fatal crashes.
- Reduce fatal and incapacitating injury crashes involving [commercial] trucks.
- Reduce fatal and incapacitating injury crashes in urban areas.
- Reduce motorcycle fatal and incapacitating injury crashes.

Montana’s Alarming Safety Statistics

- Montana has the highest alcohol-related fatality rate in the U.S. for the second year in a row.
- 66% of fatal crashes in Montana are single-vehicle crashes compared to 58% in the nation.
- 47% of all Montana fatalities involve impaired driving, and even more alarming is that DUI convictions are declining!
- Although seatbelt usage in Montana is fairly high, 72% of all fatalities are people NOT wearing their seatbelts.
- 73% of all fatal crashes on Indian lands in Montana are single-vehicle crashes.
- Although Native Americans represent 6.5% of the state’s total population, they account for 14–20% of the fatalities in the state.

- Reduce older driver fatal and incapacitating injury crashes.
- Establish a process to reduce crashes, injury crashes, and fatal crashes along identified high-crash corridors.
- Establish a process to reduce crashes, injury crashes, and fatal crashes in identified high-crash locations.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated transportation records and crash reporting, data management, and analysis system accessible to all stakeholders to manage and evaluate transportation safety.
- Develop an effective and integrated emergency medical service delivery system.

What are our next steps? MDT staff and its partners will develop strategies for implementing these objectives. Multidisciplinary teams made up of individuals having expertise or a key role in each objective will play a part in this effort. These teams will develop specific action plans for each objective. The plans will identify strategies, resources, and lead or implementing agencies. Finally, a plan that pulls all of this together will be available this spring.

This plan has taken a lot of effort to date and will require continued dedication from all those working to improve safety on Montana’s highways. As MDT Director Jim Lynch said, “It is rewarding to work with so many people that have such a vested interest in reducing deaths and serious injuries from transportation-related crashes in our state.”

We are at a critical stage in the process and welcome participation from anyone with an interest and/or expertise in these topic areas. If you have questions or would like further information on participating in the development of Montana’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan, please contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240 or cstrizich@mt.gov.

2006 Transportation Commission Schedule

Meeting Dates

All meetings are in Helena unless noted otherwise.

January 25
March 1-2
April 13
May 24-25
June 28-29 (visit to District 5)
August 2-3 (visit to District 2)
September 13-14
October 18-20 (this will include the TCP prep meeting)
December 6-7

Note: Dates for the TCP development will be named at the January 2006 meeting.

Conference Call Dates

All conference calls begin at 10 a.m.

February 6
March 6
April 10
May 8
June 5
July 31
August 28
October 2
November 13
December 18

July bids will be awarded during the June 28 meeting if possible.

State's Newest Rest Area Opens Near Mosby

The most recent addition to Montana's rest areas recently opened on Montana Highway 200 near the central Montana community of Mosby. The new year-round facility is the latest of MDT's efforts to improve Montana's rest areas in response to public input and the recommendations of the 1999 Montana Rest Area Plan.

The Mosby Rest Area is designed with safety in mind. It is similar to the new Lookout Pass facility on Interstate 90 west of Missoula and features individual private restrooms and a large, well-lit lobby. Informational displays in the lobby will feature a state map, a regional map, and a display with information about the historic Cat Creek Oil Field and recent dinosaur and fossil finds, plus road reports and emergency contact information. The exterior offers visitors picnic areas, a pet exercise area, and walking paths with a historical marker about Kerchival City. Exterior lighting contributes to the safety and security of the traveler. Crossman, Whitney, Griffin of Helena designed the facility, and the prime contractor for the project was Century Companies, Inc., of Lewistown.

The James McKenna family donated part of the land for the rest area. James McKenna (1883-1974) was a Montana success story. At age 31, James filed on a homestead northwest of Grass Range where he opened a law office in 1914. For 60 years he led a rich and active life in Central Montana. He served as Fergus County Attorney for 18 years and judge for Judicial District 10. He represented Fergus County in the state legislature, serving terms in both the House and the Senate. A dynamic member of the community, McKenna was active in several professional, civic, and fraternal organizations.

Although the official "first flush" ceremony won't happen until next spring, travelers have given the Mosby Rest Area rave reviews since its unofficial opening in late summer of 2005.

With several additional MDT rest area projects in the pipeline, visitors and residents can look forward to more new and improved facilities as they travel around Montana. For more information on Montana's rest area program, contact Sheila Ludlow at 444-9193 or sludlow@mt.gov or Larry Murolo at 444-6163 or lmurolo@mt.gov.

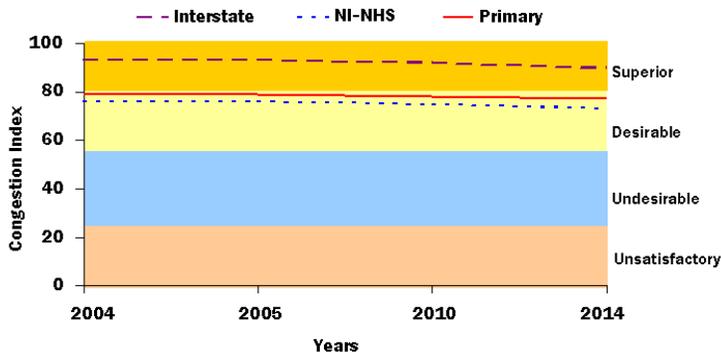


The new Mosby Rest Area is a welcome stop for travelers in this relatively remote section of Montana.

Here are a few comments rest area users provided to MDT during a November survey:

- "This is a beautiful facility, Montana needs more of these. Thanks MDT!"
- "Great facility and very welcomed!"
- "Thanks for a great place to stop."
- "This was a much needed rest area . . ."
- "It is so nice to have this rest stop here after traveling this road over the past 14 years. Thank you."
- "I was impressed!"
- "Great job with this rest area! Keep up the good work."

Congestion Levels Meet Goals



MDT continually monitors current and predicted congestion on Montana's major rural highways.

The Department has established performance goals for each highway system and uses these goals to develop its Capital Improvement Program. The performance goal for the Interstate System is to maintain a congestion index (CI) of 70 or higher. The goal for the Non-Interstate National Highway System (NI-NHS) and the Primary System is a CI of 55.

The graph above indicates that these highway systems are currently well above their goals and are expected to remain there for the next ten years and beyond.

Out-of-State Visitors Increase

A recent study by the University of Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation found that visitors to Montana increased by 4 percent in 2005. That amounts to 10 million non-resident visitors last year. The count included visitors arriving by air as well as those driving into the state.

The nonresident visitors spent over \$1.9 billion in Montana and contributed 29,000 jobs to the economy according to statistics compiled by the institute.

Check MDT's Road Report For Winter Travel Conditions

Winter driving in Montana can be challenging. Give yourself an edge and check out MDT's Traveler Information site before you leave home.

The site, located at www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo, has information on road conditions throughout the state in an easy-to-read color format. Web users can also view images of the roadway at selected locations on the RWIS (Road and Weather Information System) page.

For recorded road reports, call 800-226-7623 or TTY 800-335-7592. This information is updated every 30 minutes or as major changes occur. Motorists can also call 511 to receive site-specific, real-time reports on road and weather conditions.

Transit Tales

Transit Program Changes Move Forward

Thanks to Montana's congressional delegation, the recently passed Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU, includes funding increases and other changes that will greatly benefit existing and future users of Montana public transportation services. MDT is working with state, tribal, and local agencies and associations to take advantage of these changes.

The largest funding increases are in the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Rural General Public and Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Programs. These programs provide operating and capital funding for local, regional, and intercity transit service. MDT staff has met with over 30 agencies across Montana to identify potential new Section 5311 service providers and encourage expansion of existing services.

In addition to the increase in Section 5311 funding, SAFETEA-LU also includes a requirement that, beginning in federal fiscal year 2007, all applications for Section 5310 capital assistance must be consistent with locally developed coordination plans. Because most of Montana's current Section 5310 providers do not have such plans, MDT is encouraging these providers to either contract their transportation services to existing Section 5311 providers or work with other providers in their

communities to create new Section 5311 providers that will provide coordinated services.

Following is a summary of other activities MDT is pursuing in response to the SAFETEA-LU changes:

- MDT is revising its vehicle procurement process to improve the quality of the vehicles and speed up the vehicle delivery schedule.
- MDT is simplifying its application process.
- MDT is working with several agencies and communities interested in restoring intercity bus service.
- MDT staff is researching "smart card" technology that Section 5311 providers can use to automatically attribute transportation costs to the appropriate client agencies.
- MDT is developing a "Fast Track" coordination plan development process that prospective Section 5310 applicants can use to meet the new federal requirement.

For more information on these efforts, contact Patricia Saindon at 461-3615 or Tom Steyaert at 444-4210.

2005 Public Telephone Survey Results Available

According to the recently completed 2005 Biennial TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey, Montanans are increasingly satisfied with Montana's overall system, bicycle pathways, other major highways, and rest areas. They are somewhat unsatisfied with intercity bus service and give MDT a grade of B- or C+ in its performance over the last year.

The survey of 954 Montana residents by the University of Montana-Missoula provides MDT with important information on public perceptions about transportation system issues and MDT's performance at both the statewide and regional level. The complete survey report is available for viewing on the MDT Web site. Following is a summary of some of the results of the survey:

Satisfaction With Transportation Components (on a scale of one to ten)

Interstate Highways.....	7.37
Other Major Highways.....	6.32
Overall System	6.37
Airports	7.84
Bicycle Pathways	6.44
Pedestrian Walkways	6.42

Rest Areas.....	6.41
Bus Depots	5.11

Because the 2005 survey includes many of the same questions as other similar surveys since 1994, MDT is able to track historic trends in public satisfaction. Following are some examples of increases in public satisfaction in key transportation system components since 1994:

Overall System	+2.74%
Rest Areas.....	+3.39%
Pedestrian Walkways.....	+18.89%
Non-Interstate Highways.....	+21.54%
Bicycle Pathways	+40.00%

In addition to the public telephone survey, MDT also conducts a biennial survey of key transportation stakeholder groups. The results of the 2005 edition of the stakeholder survey, which was also conducted by University of Montana-Missoula, will also soon be available for viewing on the MDT Web site.

For more information about MDT's public and stakeholder surveys, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240 or cstrizich@mt.gov.

CTEP Spotlight

Citizen's Group Raises Funds for Memorial Bike Path

In 1999, 11-year-old Andrew Jami was struck by a pickup truck and killed while riding his bicycle on the frontage road west of Frenchtown Pond. Following this tragedy, the local community formed the A.J. Memorial Group and asked the Missoula County Commission to approve a bike path and walkway along the frontage road where Andrew died. The Commission accepted the project and helped the group obtain Community Transportation Enhancement Program funding for the project.

The community raised \$35,000 to help meet the required local match through fund-raising activities that included bake sales, golf tournaments, carnivals, and contributions from schoolchildren. They also worked with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to incorporate the project into the entrance of Frenchtown Pond State Park.

The pathway, which is called the A.J. Memorial Bike Path, provides safe access to nearby Frenchtown schools, and it also offers a great recreational experience for cyclists. It will eventually connect Frenchtown to the community of Huson, a little over 6 miles total.

For financial reasons, the work was split into three phases. Michelson Rock Products, the contractor for the pathway, recently completed Phase 2, an 8-foot-wide trail that parallels the frontage road beginning at Touchette Lane and extending west 1.5 miles to Houle Creek Road.



This 8-foot-wide, 40-foot-long footbridge over Mill Creek near Frenchtown is part of the A.J. Memorial Bike Path. It is made from weathering steel, a material that corrodes to form an oxide barrier that retards further corrosion. Weathering steel is usually left unpainted to provide a natural look as seen in this photograph.

Work on Phase 2 began in September 2003, and the first two sections of the path are now fully functional. Additional landscaping will be completed in the spring. The design work for Phase 3 has already started, and if all goes well, the entire path should be finished by the fall of 2006.

Montana's Historic Bridges

Part 2 – The Great Depression

by Jon Axline, MDT Historian

The Great Depression devastated Montana. Drought and declining prices for agricultural goods, copper, timber, and oil put thousands of Montanans out of work and their families in desperate need of relief. But, ironically, hard times contributed to the transformation of Montana's transportation system from one of the worst in the United States to one of the nation's best in less than a decade. President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal put hundreds of unemployed Montanans to work on a variety of public works projects, including improvement of the state's roads and bridges.

Before the Great Depression, federal law stipulated that the state match the federal funds provided to it for highway projects. Montana raised the matching funds through the gasoline tax. After 1930, however, the state did not have the revenue necessary to match the federal funds. Beginning in 1930, the federal government funded Montana's bridge program through a series of emergency relief acts. The legislation provided Montana with its federal funding allocation without requiring the matching money. Instead, the federal government would withhold portions of the state's future allocations until the amount was paid off. In December 1930, the Hoover Administration pushed through its first Federal Road Relief Act, which allocated \$1.67 million to Montana for road and bridge projects.

The commission contracted the first of several emergency relief projects in late January 1931. Among those were four bridge projects, including the Yellowstone River Bridge at Sidney. Local campaigning for the bridge had begun in the late 1920s when a group of northeastern Montana businessmen petitioned the commission for a crossing at Sidney. The Portland Bridge Company completed the massive six-span, 1,220-foot, riveted through-truss structure in June 1932.

The Sidney Chamber of Commerce sponsored a daylong party to celebrate the opening of the bridge. Montana Lieutenant Governor Frank Hazelbaker and State Highway Commission Chairman Oliver Warden spoke to a crowd of over 8,000 area residents while standing on a flag-draped span of the new bridge. Festivities included a tug-of-war between representatives from the east and west sides of the Yellowstone River, a golf tournament, musical entertainment by a fifty-piece band, a free barbeque, and a fly-over by a squadron of private planes from North Dakota.

Despite the Sidney Bridge project, most of the funds expended by the highway commission in the early 1930s were for timber and reinforced concrete bridges built in conjunction with highway improvement projects. Timber bridges played a vital role in the state's economic recovery. From 1930 to 1941, the highway department built nearly a

thousand timber bridges, mostly in eastern Montana. Simple in design and inexpensive, they were ideal for bridging coulees and small streams. The department also built nearly a hundred reinforced concrete bridges under Hoover's limited economic relief programs.

Truss bridges did not meet the needs of the federal and state road-building programs. Increasingly during the decade, the department moved away from the use of the structures because of high construction costs, chronic steel shortages, and height and width clearance restrictions. The most effective bridges for intermediate crossings were steel stringer and girder bridges. They did not have the height restrictions of the trusses and did not require as much steel to build a good functional river bridge. In many ways, these types of bridges also fit better with the Montana engineers' philosophy during that decade of building bridges of "honest structural design with simple lines, and good workmanship."

Soon after his inauguration in March 1933, Franklin Roosevelt initiated a revolutionary campaign to restore the country's economic prosperity. In May, he pushed through legislation creating the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), which spawned the Public Works Administration. The PWA distributed nearly \$7.5 million to Montana for transportation projects, initiating the greatest boom in road and bridge construction yet seen in the state. The program was the first real federal effort to integrate a system of primary highways, secondary farm-to-market roads, and urban routes into a national transportation system.

The increased workload caused by the NIRA compelled the highway commissioners to reorganize and expand the bridge department. For much of its existence, the bridge department functioned with fifteen employees, but with the reorganization, the number swelled to nearly a hundred staff members. Benedict Ornburn supervised the bridge design section from 1929 to 1942. Ornburn had very specific ideas about which designs were appropriate for specific locations and believed that bridges should harmonize with their surroundings. Ornburn and his chief designer, John Morrison, promoted a policy of designing bridges that were functional and visually appealing.

On a wintry night in December 1929, a group of Richland County farmers from the south side of the Missouri River crossed the ice to meet with the Culbertson Commercial Club about building a bridge across the river. For much of the year, residents south of the river depended on a paddle-wheel ferry to carry them across the Missouri to Culbertson. During the winter months, they either stayed at home or risked crossing the Missouri on the ice. The farmers' appeal could not have been timed better. Plans were already under-

**From 1930 to 1941,
the highway department
built nearly a thousand timber
bridges, mostly in eastern
Montana.**

way by northeastern Montana promoters to build a road from Saskatchewan south over the Missouri to connect with U.S. Highway 10 near Glendive.

A few months later, members of the Missouri Bridge Association and the Sioux Pass Missouri River Road-Bridge Association petitioned the State Highway Commission to construct a bridge across the Missouri at Culbertson. Although the commissioners supported the project, they did not have the funds to pay for it. The groups, they said, needed to raise \$120,000 to pay for part of the project before they would discuss it with the federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). Through county bond elections in Roosevelt, Richland, and Sheridan Counties and a \$30,000 contribution from the Great Northern Railway, the organizations raised the money for the bridge. The commissioners then met with the BPR and instructed Ben Ornburn to design the structure. State and federal funds, however, were not yet forthcoming. Because the Missouri River was navigable at Culbertson, the highway department needed the approval of the War Department before the bridge could be built.

Even with the help of Montana senators Thomas J. Walsh and Burton K. Wheeler and BPR chief Thomas MacDonald, the bridge did not come about quickly or smoothly. The highway commission discovered that the gas tax revenue it used to match the federal allotment had dried up and was not available for the project. President Hoover's relief programs provided some money, but not enough to build any big projects like a bridge across the Missouri River. Consequently, the proposed Culbertson Bridge languished for nearly two years before the commission had enough money to fund its portion of the bridge—and only because NIRA legislation helped it out. Finally, in August 1933, the Commission let the contract for the "long cherished dream" to the Seattle-based Puget Sound Construction Company.

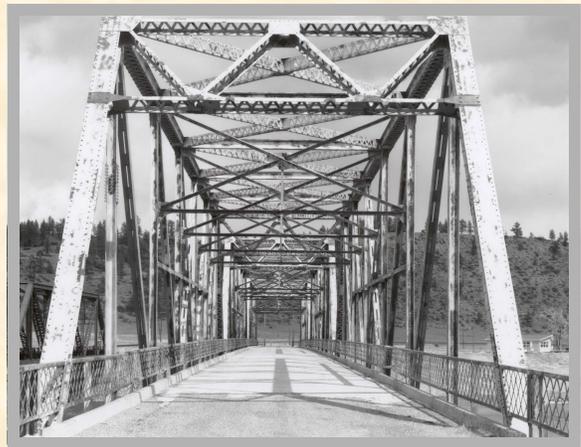
Work on the project attracted a steady stream of visitors. The *Culbertson Searchlight* reported that the traffic was so heavy on Sunday afternoons that motorists found it difficult to find a parking place anywhere near the bridge site. After only one brief shutdown because of cold weather in 1934, the contractor completed the seven-span, 1,169-foot through-truss bridge on June 21, 1934, fourteen months ahead of schedule. Because the approach work depended mostly on hand labor or horse-drawn machinery, it was not opened until mid-September. Richland County farmer Ira Palmer was the last man to cross the river on the old ferry on September 14th and also the first to drive across the new bridge.

Like the Sidney Bridge, the bridge's promoters planned a celebration to dedicate the new structure. Festivities included speeches by the key people involved in the construction of the bridge including the Chief Highway Engineer and Ben Ornburn. Senator Wheeler gave the keynote address calling the bridge an integral part of the success of the Fort Peck Dam project. The Culbertson Bridge faithfully carried traffic until 1988 when MDT replaced it with a steel stringer structure, that, like the old bridge, represented the latest in bridge technology of its time.

... to be continued

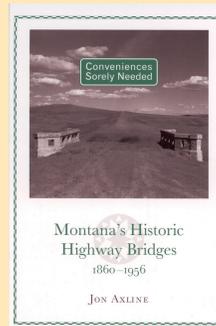


Built in 1931, the Missouri River Bridge at Wolf Creek was funded as an emergency relief project by the Hoover Administration. It was the first continuous span through-truss bridge built in Montana and is still in use.



The Reed Point Bridge on the Yellowstone River was one of the first big bridge projects built under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal make-work programs. It is visible from I-90 about 3 miles east of Reed Point.

MDT & Montana Historical Society Publish New Book on Montana's Historic Bridges



In November 2005, MDT and the Montana Historical Society Press published *Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860-1956*. This profusely illustrated volume, written by MDT historian Jon Axline, details the history and development of bridge-building in Montana. The book is available from the Montana Historical Society and local bookstores.

MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

MDT Project Analysis Chief
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

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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 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

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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.

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