

Columbus, Montana

Woltermann Memorial Airport



2016 Economic Impact Study for
MONTANA AIRPORTS



Montana's Airports Support Our State

Montana's airports play an integral role in our transportation system by providing access to destinations within the state, throughout the country, and across the globe. Airports also offer significant economic benefits to our communities by supporting jobs; generating payroll; paying taxes; and triggering spending at local, regional, and state levels.

The importance of airports goes beyond transportation and economics. Airports offer services and other attributes of value that cannot always be easily measured in dollars and cents. Residents and visitors use airports for leisure and business travel, and airports serve as the base for a wide range of critical activities such as wildland firefighting, search and rescue operations, and training for future aviators. Airports are the starting point for aircraft that conduct utility inspections, provide medical evacuation services, and transport staff and executives for business activity.

To better understand the value of Montana's airports from the perspective of both economics and community benefits, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) conducted a comprehensive study of the state's aviation facilities. The study analyzed the contributions of the Montana airport system, including aviation-related and non-aviation-related businesses, visitor spending, capital expenditures on construction, and additional spin-off (or "multiplier") effects. The study also examined specific activities and uses at each airport to identify how these facilities support Montana's residents and visitors.

Methodology

This study expresses the economic benefits of Montana's airports in terms of jobs, payroll, and total annual economic impact derived from the activities that occur at aviation facilities. Direct impacts include those from on-airport businesses, construction-related activities, and spending from visitors who travel through an airport. Airports host on-airport businesses that serve aircraft or passengers such as:

- Administration
- Military
- Airlines
- Maintenance
- Parking
- Concessions
- Car rental
- General aviation
- Air tours
- Air cargo

Additionally, airside and landside construction projects require continuous investments, many of which are high-dollar, long-term undertakings. Because commercial service and general aviation airports are essential to visitors' abilities to conduct business or vacation in Montana, airports support the hospitality industry through lodging, restaurant, retail, and entertainment spending.

Airports' direct impacts also have spin-off effects throughout Montana, as dollars spent at an airport and by visitors off-airport are re-spent locally, regionally, and statewide. Spin-off effects are caused when a portion of direct business revenues are used to purchase goods and services in Montana (i.e., indirect effects) and when the portion of revenues paid as wages to workers are spent within the state (i.e., induced effects).

Combined, direct impacts and spin-off effects compose the total contribution of an individual airport and determine the statewide impact of Montana's airport system.



STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Aviation is a vital key to Montana's economic activity and transportation network. The public-use airports in the state contribute:



DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACTS

On-Airport
\$251,000

Construction
\$119,000

Visitor Spending
\$69,000



SPIN-OFF ECONOMIC EFFECT
\$439,000

6S3 TOTAL IMPACTS

7

\$248,000

\$772,000

Aerial/Wildland Firefighting



Emergency Medical Aviation



Police/Law Enforcement



Woltermann Memorial Airport*



Woltermann Memorial Airport (6S3) is a small general aviation airport one mile southwest of the Town of Columbus, Montana. Serving as the county seat of Stillwater County, Columbus runs parallel to Interstate 90 in the southern region of the state. Nested at the junction of the Stillwater and Yellowstone rivers, the town offers numerous outdoor activities, including fishing, camping, and whitewater rafting.

Woltermann Memorial Airport is an important regional resource that plays a vital role protecting the health and safety of the community. The airport is a base for aerial wildland firefighting and provides medical evacuation flights for residents needing expedited medical attention. Other aviation activities include environmental patrol, recreational flying, and search and rescue operations. The airport hosts an annual fly-in each September which drew 40 aircraft in 2015. The airport has two major tenants: Stillwater Air offers aircraft maintenance, and Rickman Aviation provides fixed-base operator (FBO), fuel, maintenance, and aerial patrol services.

Airport management is planning to repave the runway with construction tentatively scheduled for 2016 – 2017.

Like many small general aviation airports in Montana, Woltermann Memorial Airport provides valuable services to the local community and is a gateway to an otherwise remote region.

*Formerly known as Columbus Airport

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