



Economic Impact Study  
**Ekalaka Airport**  
2026

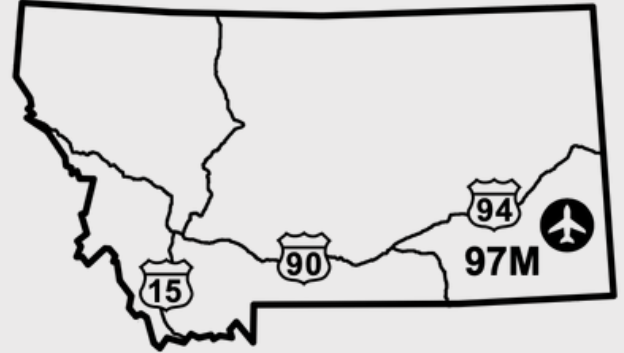


**MONTANA**  
Department of Transportation



# Ekalaka Airport Impact

Ekalaka Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located two miles southeast of Ekalaka, the county seat of Carter County, in southeastern Montana. The airfield features a primary runway of 3,800 feet and handles approximately 200 annual operations. The airport primarily supports recreational flying, agricultural operations, and emergency medical transport for this remote community of approximately 400 residents, where the nearest major hospital in Billings is roughly 190 miles away. The airport also hosts an annual fly-in featuring a flour drop competition, barbecue, and hangar dance.



## Total Economic Impact on Montana



**Jobs**  
1



**Economic Impact**  
\$127 Thousand



**Payroll**  
\$34 Thousand

## Qualitative Impacts

In addition to generating substantial economic impacts, this airport supports a variety of harder to quantify “Qualitative Impacts” that support critical statewide safety and enterprise. The 2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports Study documents the following non-inclusive list of qualitative impacts associated with the airport:



**Aerial Firefighting**  
Supports Wildland Firefighting Operations



**Recreational Flying**  
Supports recreational flying and access.



**Emergency Medical Aviation**  
Supports Air Ambulance Operations



**Agriculture Support**  
Supports Agriculture through Aerial Application

# Montana Airports Support Our State



**Jobs**  
39,400



**Economic Impact**  
\$6.4 Billion



**Payroll**  
\$2.4 Billion

Montana's airport system functions as a critical component of the state's transportation and economic infrastructure, enabling connectivity across a large and geographically dispersed landscape. Through scheduled commercial service and general aviation activity, airports provide access between Montana communities and regional, national, and international markets, supporting passenger travel, freight movement, and time-sensitive operations that cannot be efficiently served by surface transportation alone.

Beyond mobility, Montana's airports support a broad range of economic activity that contributes to employment, income generation, and business operations throughout the state. Aviation-related enterprises, on-airport and nearby businesses, visitor spending associated with air travel, and ongoing investment in airport facilities collectively generate economic activity at the local, regional, and statewide levels. These effects extend across multiple sectors, including tourism, healthcare, construction, professional services, and natural resource industries.

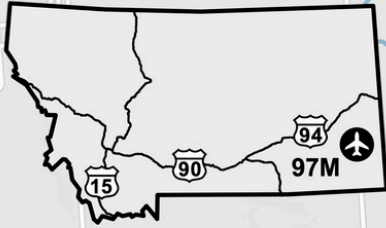
To document both the economic contributions and broader community functions of the state's aviation system, the Montana Department of Transportation undertook a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of Montana's airports. The **2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Aviation** study examines the full scope of airport-related activity, including aviation and non-aviation businesses, visitor spending, capital investment, and secondary economic effects, while also identifying the specific roles individual airports play in supporting residents, businesses, and critical services across Montana.



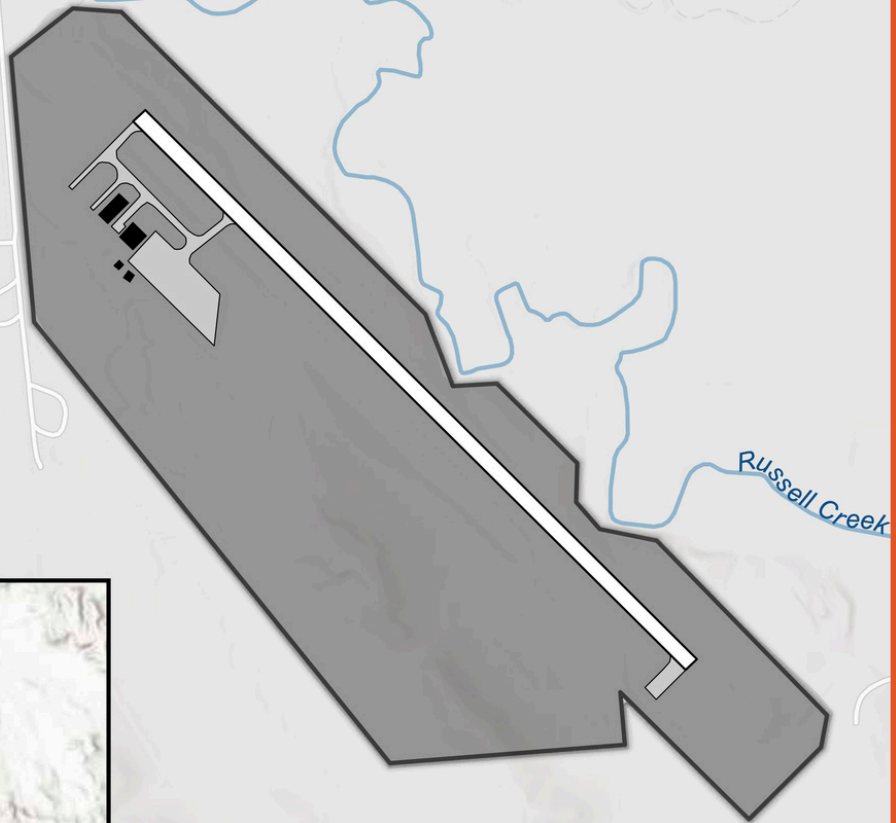
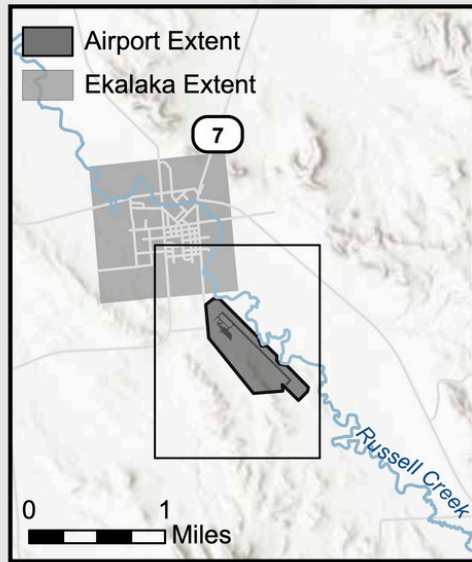
# Ekalaka Airport (97M)

Ekalaka, MT

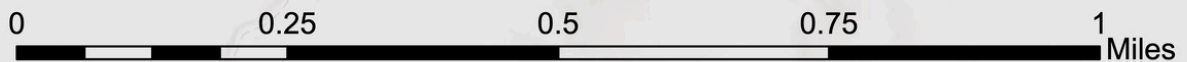
323



45° 52.6' N  
104° 32.3' W  
3503'



Airport Extent	Airport Structure
Paved Runway	Paved Area



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