



Economic Impact Study
Fort Benton Airport
2026



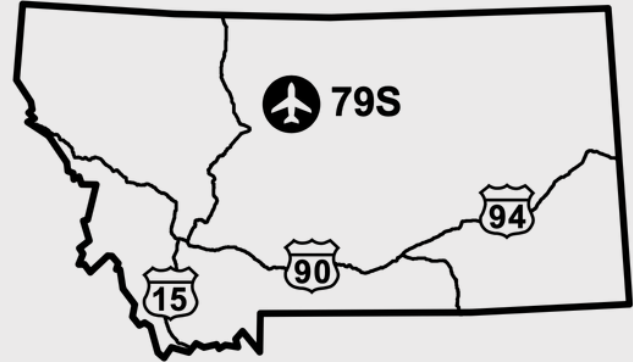
MONTANA
Department of Transportation



ZENITH
ECONOMICS

Fort Benton Airport Impact

Fort Benton Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located one mile northeast of Fort Benton, in Chouteau County in north-central Montana along the Missouri River. The airfield features a primary runway of 4,300 feet and offers major airframe and powerplant maintenance, fuel, and an instrument approach. The airport is home to New Frontier Aviation, a veteran-owned aerial firefighting company that operates single engine air tankers under federal contract for the Department of the Interior, and Taylor Aviation, a long-established agricultural aviation operation serving Montana's Golden Triangle wheat-growing region. The airport supports aerial firefighting, agricultural application, emergency medical transport, and search and rescue operations. Fort Benton, the oldest continuously occupied settlement in Montana, relies on the airport for agricultural support and emergency access.



Total Economic Impact on Montana



Jobs
2



Economic Impact
\$227 Thousand



Payroll
\$80 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



Police/Law Enforcement
Supports Police and Emergency Response Ops



Emergency Medical Aviation
Supports Air Ambulance Operations



Military Exercise/Training
Used for Military Training and/or Transit Flights



Search & Rescue
Supports Search and Rescue Operations



Agriculture Support
Supports Agriculture through Aerial Application

Source: Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports.

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.

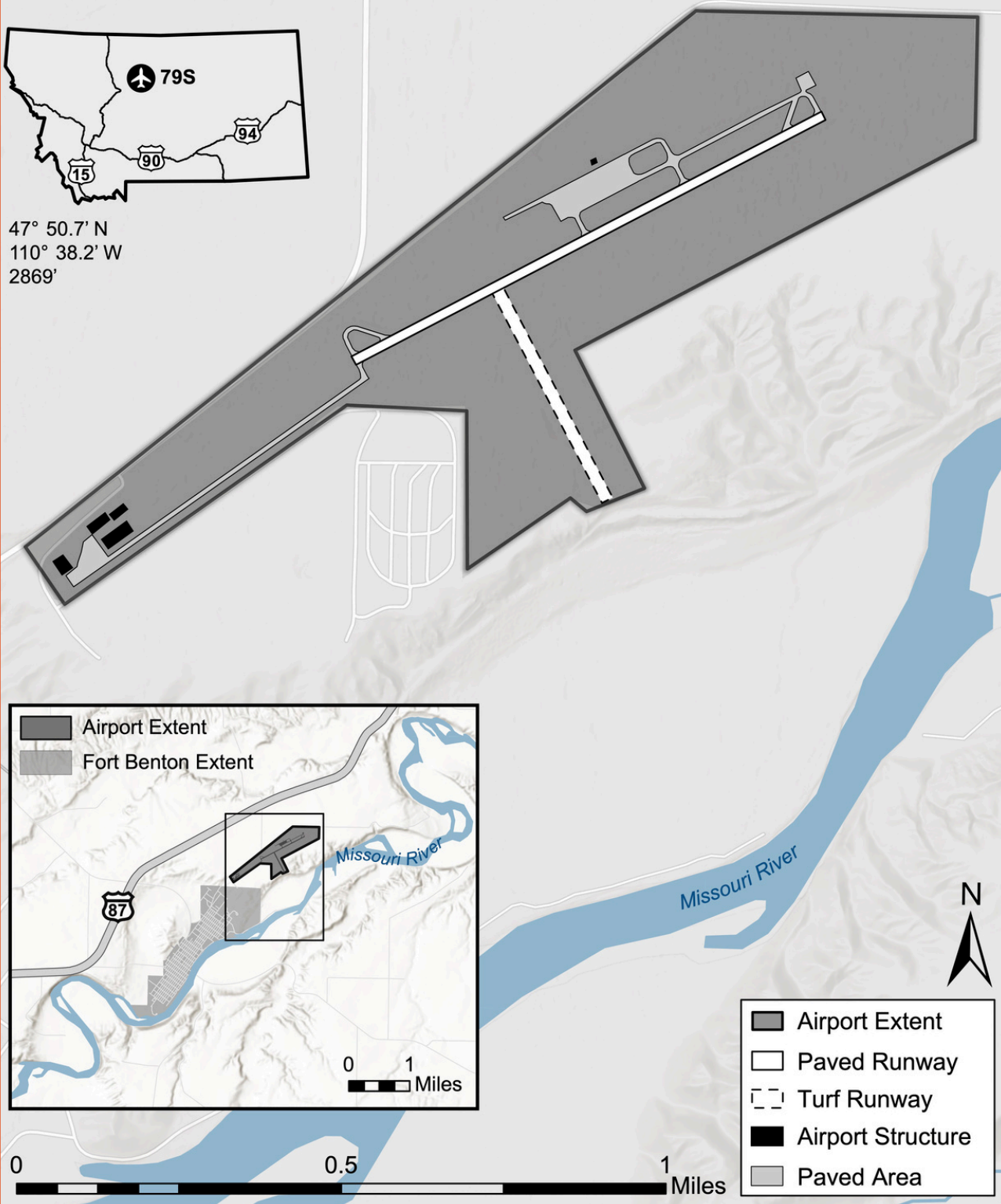


Fort Benton (79S)

Fort Benton, MT



47° 50.7' N
110° 38.2' W
2869'



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