



# Economic Impact Study

# Libby Airport

## 2026

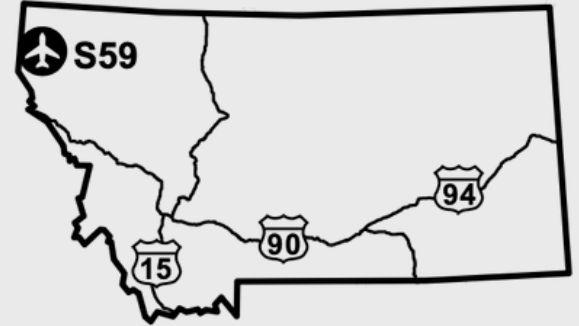


**MONTANA**  
Department of Transportation



# Libby Airport Impact

Libby Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located seven miles south of Libby in Lincoln County, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains in northwest Montana. The airfield features a primary runway of 5,000 feet. The airport supports recreational flying, environmental patrol, aerial inspections, wildland firefighting, search and rescue, military training, emergency medical flights, and public charters. On-airport tenants include an aviation manufacturer, a scenic flight charter company, and the U.S. Forest Service for wildfire operations. The facility also hosts community events including an EAA Young Eagles field day. The airport also has a connection to Hollywood: in 1989, the Libby Airport served as a filming location for the Steven Spielberg production *Always*, doubling as a smoke jumper base in the wildfire drama.



## Total Economic Impact on Montana



**Jobs**  
5



**Economic Impact**  
\$552 Thousand



**Payroll**  
\$165 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



**Recreational Flying**  
Supports recreational flying and access



**VIP/Visitor Gateway**  
Serves as Gateway for High-Profile Visitors and Tourism



**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.

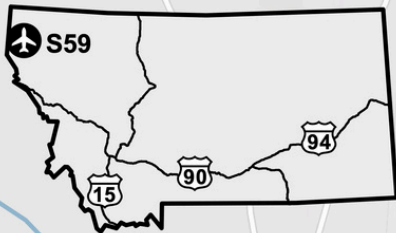
Beyond mobility, Montana's airports support a broad range of economic activity that contributes to employment, income generation, and business operations throughout the state. Aviation-related enterprises, on-airport and nearby businesses, visitor spending associated with air travel, and ongoing investment 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.

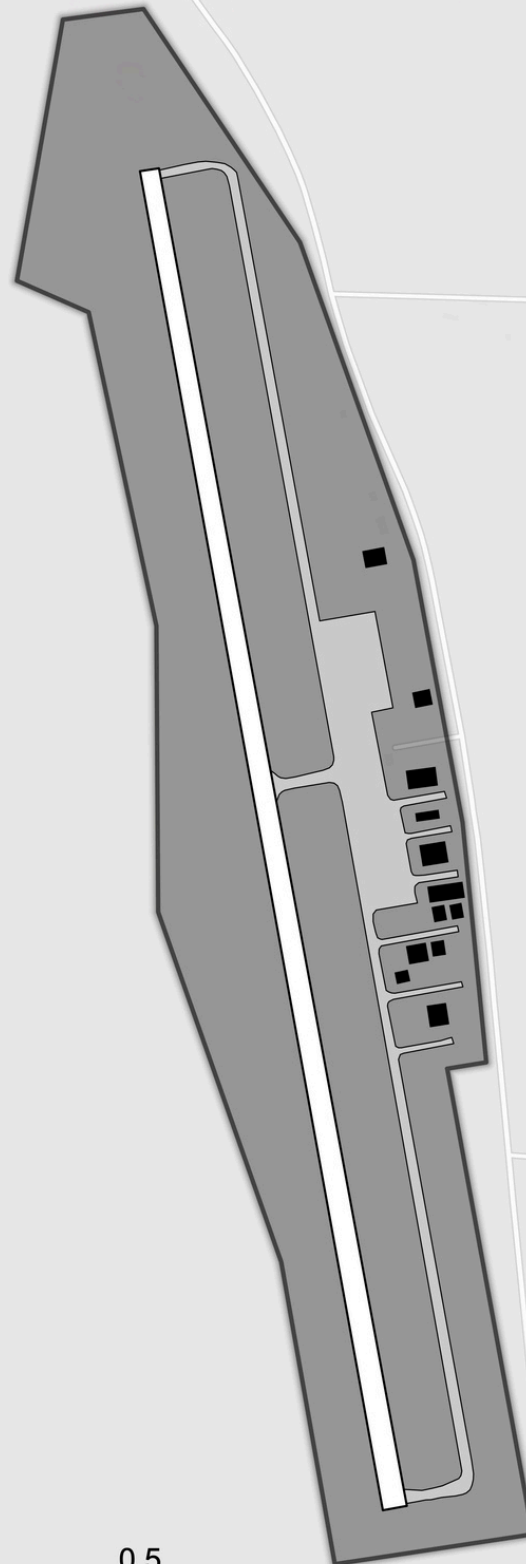
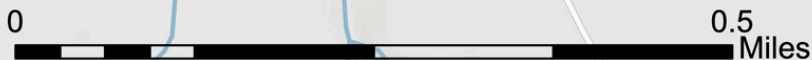
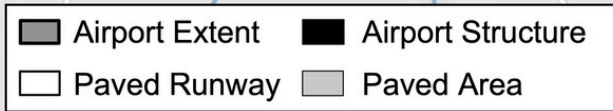
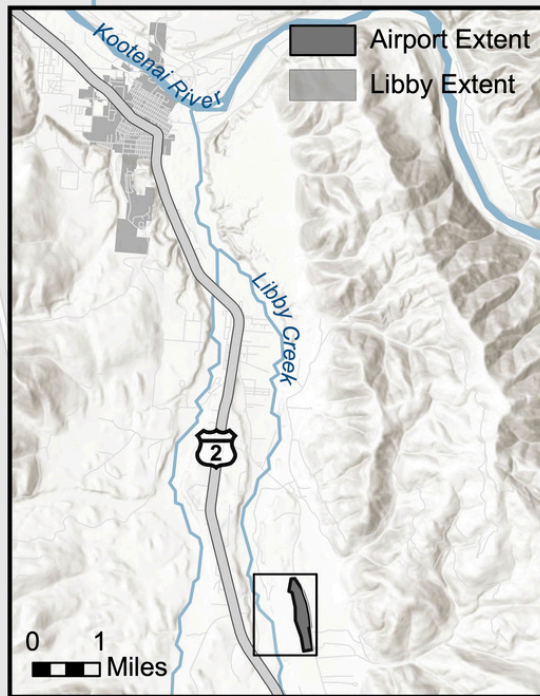


# Libby Airport (S59)

Libby, MT



48° 17.0' N  
115° 29.4' W  
2605'



AERONAUTICS DIVISION  
2630 Airport Road  
PO Box 200507  
Helena, MT 59620-0507



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