



Economic Impact Study of
Yellowstone Airport

2026



MONTANA
Department of Transportation

Yellowstone Airport Impact

Yellowstone Airport is a public-use airport located in West Yellowstone, in Gallatin County, approximately ten minutes from the West Gate of Yellowstone National Park. The airport provides seasonal commercial service alongside year-round general aviation activity, with over 10,000 annual GA operations. The airfield features one primary runway measuring 8,339 feet. A smokejumper base is located at the airport, supporting wildfire response and search and rescue operations across the region.



As the closest airport to America's first national park, Yellowstone Airport serves as a primary access point for tourists, with approximately 80 percent of general aviation traffic coming from transient visitors. Air Methods operates an emergency medical helicopter from an on-airport hangar, and the airport supports corporate aviation activity tied to the area's tourism and hospitality economy.

Total Economic Impact on Montana



Jobs
490



Economic Impact
\$91.0 Million



Payroll
\$41.0 Million

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



Search & Rescue
Supports Search and Rescue Operations



Corporate/Business Activity
Supports Corporate and Business Activity



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

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.

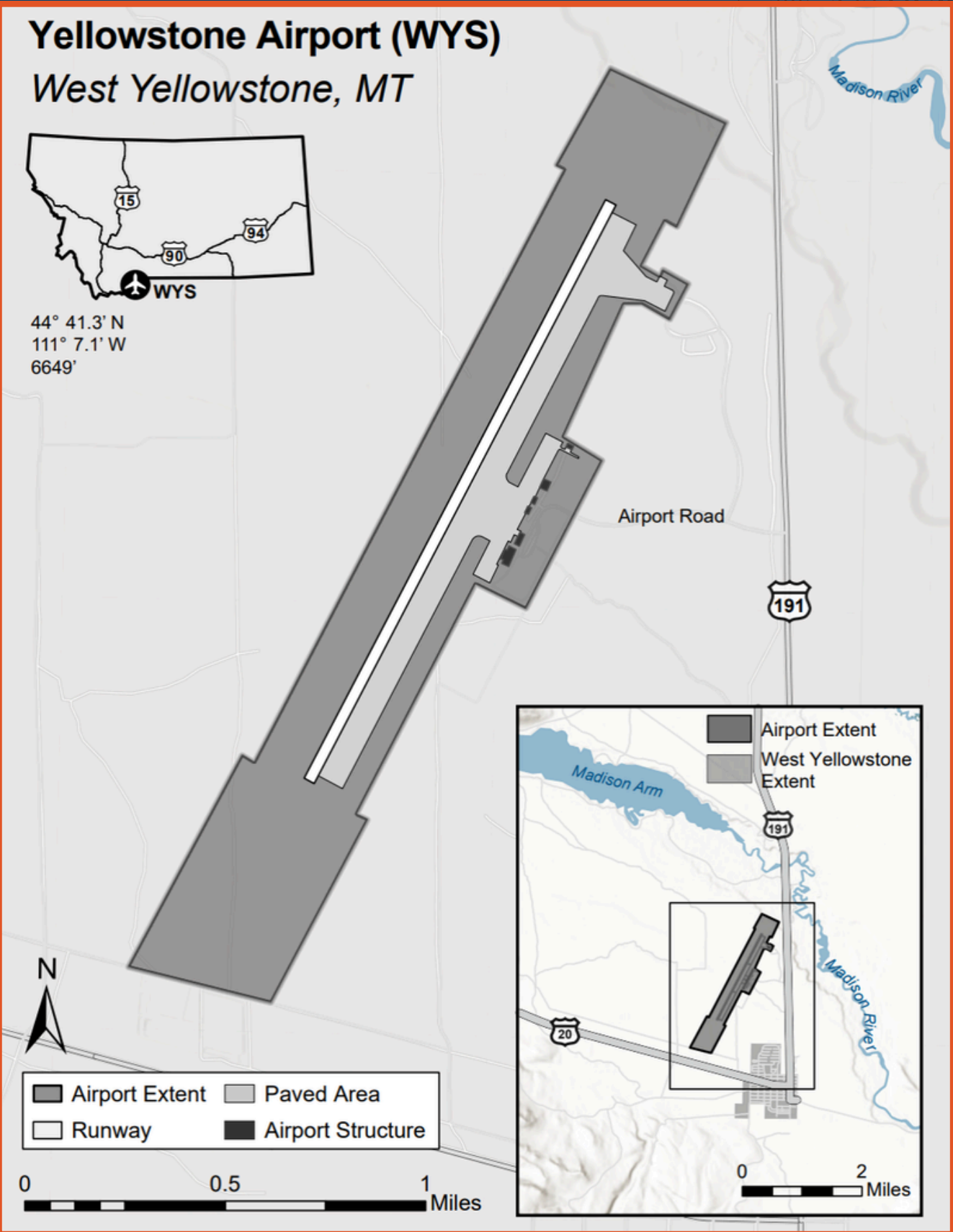
To document both the economic contributions and broader community functions of the state's aviation system, the Montana Department of Transportation undertook a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of Montana's airports. The **2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Aviation** study examines the full 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.

Yellowstone Airport (WYS)

West Yellowstone, MT



44° 41.3' N
111° 7.1' W
6649'



- Airport Extent
- Paved Area
- Runway
- Airport Structure

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