

# Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 71, No. 12

December 2020

## Flight Instructor Refresher Course



The MDT Aeronautics Division is hosting Aviation Seminars for the 2021 FIRC scheduled on January 22 and 23, 2021, at the Delta Hotel Colonial, 2301 Colonial Drive, Helena, Montana. This two-day, FAA-approved course will run from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday. It meets FAA renewal requirements for certified flight instructors and includes IACRA renewal.

Registration can be completed online at <https://www.aviationseminars.com/registration-form/?type=firc>. Tuition for Montana Aeronautics Registered Pilots: \$175.00, promocode required. Contact Aeronautics at [mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov) or call (406) 444-2506 to get your promocode and save \$20.00. Tuition for Non-Montana Aeronautics Registered Pilots: \$195.00. Not an Aeronautics Division registered pilot? Register now with the Division for \$10.00 per year and save \$20.00 off the FIRC registration. With your registration you will receive a pilot registration card, Montana Airport Directory, and newsletter. Email [mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov) or call (406) 444-2506 for more information.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Delta Hotel Colonial at prevailing government rate plus tax. Reserve your room by calling (406) 443-2100 and reference rooming block "Aeronautics - Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC)." Or click [Book your group rate for Flight Instructor Refresher Course \[marriott.com\]](#) Last day to book is Tuesday, January 5, 2021. This clinic will be socially distanced and will comply with the latest COVID-19 safety guidance.



Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

## Virtual Aircraft Mechanic Refresher & Inspection Authorization Seminar Available February 27, 2021

The IA renewal seminar is typically held concurrently with the Montana Aviation Conference, which has been canceled for 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, we will be offering the seminar virtually due to the conference cancellation. Normally, all IA speakers would be in attendance at the conference, but a virtual seminar will allow presenters from around the nation to present and accomplish renewal requirements.

Registration will open on January 4, 2020. You will need a computer with speaker, webcam, and a highspeed internet connection to participate in this virtual seminar.



# How Many Hours Did You Fly in the Last Year?

The FAA is seeking information from general aviation aircraft owners as part of its latest General Aviation Activity Survey. The FAA just needs one bit of information: the number of hours you fly annually. Please submit your hours before

January 11, 2021.

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) use the data, both by itself and in conjunction with aircraft age, to calculate accident rates, which are used to compare safety over time and safety performance among different aircraft types and configurations. According to a notice posted by the FAA to the Federal Register November 10, 2020, the data is also used by other government agencies, the aviation industry, and others for planning, forecasting, cost/benefit analysis, and to target areas for research.

You can submit your annual flight hours by going to [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and entering Docket Number FAA-2020-0993.



Tim Conway, Administrator

**Montana and the Sky**  
Department of Transportation

Steve Bullock, Governor  
Mike Tooley, Director

Official monthly publication of the  
Aeronautics Division  
Telephone - (406) 444-2506  
Fax - (406) 444-2519  
P.O. Box 200507  
Helena, MT 59620-0507  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/)

### Aeronautics Board

- Tricia McKenna, Chair**
- Robert Buckles, Member**
- Dan Hargrove, Member**
- William (Bill) Hunt, Jr., Member**
- Roger Lincoln, Member**
- John Maxness, Member**
- Walt McNutt, Member**
- Tom Schoenleben, Member**
- Jeff Wadekamper, Member**

Editor: Patricia Trooien

Follow MDT on social media!



## Aircraft Registration Deadline March 1, 2021



Montana does not have any taxes for aircraft but does assess an annual registration fee in lieu of tax for annual aircraft registration. The fees are set by the Legislature and are determined according to the type and age of the aircraft.

Aircraft customarily kept in Montana, and those with a MT address on their FAA registration, must be registered with the Montana Aeronautics Division on or before March 1 every year and within 30 days of purchase. Aircraft renewal invoices are sent the first week of December, a reminder is sent in January. A statutory penalty for late registrations must be assessed in the amount of five times the registration fee if payment isn't received on time.

Please keep in mind that aircraft out of annual inspection are not considered "unairworthy" as defined by administrative rule and are subject to annual registration fees.

Online aircraft and pilot registration services are available at: <https://app.mt.gov/aeronautics>. Vendor fees apply.

**PLEASE POSTMARK OR TIMESTAMP YOUR REGISTRATION PAYMENTS OR AFFIDAVIT FOR FEE EXEMPTION WITH REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1 FOR A RENEWAL, OR BEFORE 30 DAYS AFTER A NEW AIRCRAFT PURCHASE, TO AVOID THE PENALTY.**

For other questions, please contact the Aeronautics Division at (406) 444-2506.

**\*ACTION IS REQUIRED BY AIRCRAFT OWNERS ON ALL AIRCRAFT REGISTRATIONS EACH YEAR**

# Browning Airport Receives Runway Improvements

It has been about eight years since the Browning airport was resurfaced. With help from Cody White and his crew of the Browning MDT Section House and Matt Ladenburg of the Havre MDT maintenance, the runway was crack sealed, fog sealed, and restriped on September 29, 2020.



Photo Credit; MDT Maintenance Staff

This state-owned airport is located on the Blackfeet Reservation. It's primarily utilized by air ambulance services and also serves as a gateway airport for aircraft visiting Glacier National Park or other recreational destinations on the east side of the Rocky Mountain Front.

This pavement maintenance project will extend the useful life of the runway surface for many years.

revising questionable private landing facility operational statuses from "operational" to either "closed indefinitely" or "abandoned." Statuses will be revised within the National Airspace System Resources database, resulting in amendments to all applicable aeronautical products utilized by pilots. If you own or manage a private airstrip, it is imperative that you notify the FAA or Montana Aeronautics of any changes.

The updated charts are in need of the most accurate airport information, as these airports show up on air traffic controller radars. An aircraft in distress could be vectored to the nearest useable airstrip, in some cases it could be a private one. Additionally, private strips that remain charted and have the correct contact information on file with the FAA prove valuable during Search and Rescue operations for overdue aircraft in Montana.

Information may be updated through the *Aeronautical Information Portal*: [https://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/flight\\_info/aeronav/Aero\\_Data/](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/Aero_Data/)

## Are You the Owner of a Private Airport?



Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

If you own property with a private landing facility, it is important to keep your information up to date and respond to any information requests from the FAA or Montana Aeronautics to ensure the most accurate information is available to pilots flying in and around Montana. The FAA depends on private owners' to inform them of changes to landing facilities. Many landing facilities are being redeveloped and can no longer be utilized for landmark reference or emergency operations, both of which pilots take into consideration during flight planning.

The FAA Aeronautical Information Services is validating and

## Montana Aeronautics Operates Under Administrative Rule & Statute For Aircraft Registration Process

In early 2020, the Aeronautics Division adopted a new administrative rule encompassing the existing aircraft registration process. The new rule reflects registration fee increases passed by the last legislature and went into effect July 1, 2019.

The rule outlines the process and requirements for new and existing aircraft registrations in Montana. It also includes definitions, terms, and procedures for aircraft owners for many commonly asked questions.

The rule makes clear that proof is required when submitting an affidavit for fee exemption, also due by March 1.

A Request for Agency Action process is also defined in the rule for those seeking waiver, exemption, or any sort of other request to their aircraft registration.

To read the rule, please visit <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/aero/aircraft-reg-admin-rules.pdf>.



# MDT Aeronautics Pilot Registration

Montana is required to register all pilots in the state; the fee is \$10. Included is an annual Montana Airport Directory, subscription to *Montana and the Sky* newsletter, and pilot registration card. Registered pilot information is collected only to aid in search and rescue cases as it can help us locate and contact you sooner during an emergency. Annual registration renewal memos will be mailed in December. You may return the enclosed form or renew online.

- Locate the form at <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/regpilot.shtml>.
- Register online at <https://app.mt.gov/aeronautics/registration/Contact/Lookup> (vendor fees apply).
- Request the form be mailed or emailed by calling the Aeronautics Division at (406) 444-2506 or email [mdtaerosafetied@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetied@mt.gov).

## Montana Airport Directory

**2020 Montana**

Airport Directory  
59th Edition!



Montana and the Sky

For Reference Only

MDT Aeronautics Division

 [www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation)

For 59 years, the Aeronautics Division has published a Montana Airport Directory. The directory is created by the division and dispersed to pilots with their annual airmen registration renewal. Directories are also sold to the public. The directory contains information and diagrams about each of Montana's public use airports, similar to the FAA's chart supplement. The division's

directory is more comprehensive and unique because it contains additional descriptions and local information that can be helpful.

The directory is created solely from user input and heavily relies on airport managers to provide the division with updated information. The division sends an annual survey to all airport managers to update, add, change, and correct any information to their respective airport pages. Once the division receives the changes, an intern team at Montana State University updates the diagrams in the directory and division personnel make the rest of the necessary changes. The Montana Print and Mail division formats and prints the directories preparing them for distribution.

Please keep in mind that the directory is published the first part of January every year and should be used for reference only. The FAA publishes its chart supplement every 56 days and is considered the official source of current airport information.

**Thank you to all who have contributed to the accuracy of the Montana Airport Directory**



## Aviation Quiz

- 1) The most common category of accident in general aviation is?**
  - A: Unsafe weather conditions
  - B: Engine failure
  - C: Loss of control
  - D: Structural failure
- 2) When an airfoil increases in angle of attack, the stagnation point on the airfoil:**
  - A: Moves above the leading edge
  - B: Dissipates
  - C: Moves toward the wing root
  - D: Moves below the leading edge
- 3) You're flying in class G airspace at 11,500' MSL, which is 1,158' AGL. It's daytime. What are your VFR weather minimums?**
  - A: 1 SM visibility, clear of clouds
  - B: 1 SM visibility, 1,000' above, 500' below, 2,000' horizontal from the clouds
  - C: 3 SM visibility, 1,000' above, 500' below, 2,000' horizontal from the clouds
  - D: 3 SM visibility, clear of clouds
- 4) It is Montana law that you must file a flight plan with Flight Service on all VFR flights greater than 250NM?**
  - A: True
  - B: False
- 5) Given the humidity level is sufficient or there is visible moisture, you can get carb ice at 75 degrees F?**
  - A: True
  - B: False
- 6) It is closer to fly from Alzada, MT to Texas, than it is to fly across Montana from Yaak to Alzada?**
  - A: False
  - B: True
- 7) Montana Aeronautics is the primary agency that conducts Search and Rescue missions related to aviation in Montana?**
  - A: False
  - B: True

# Airway Beacons - The End of an Era



*Spokane Beacon*

*Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff*

For over eighty years, airplane pilots relied on a chain of lighted nighttime airway beacons to navigate their way across Montana's big sky. At the system's height in the early 1940s, eighty-four beacons marked several airway routes across the state. The beacons were the remnants of a transcontinental air route system that had guided commercial and private pilots across the United States since 1935. As navigational technology improved through the years, the beacons increasingly became unnecessary and obsolete. There was a steady decrease in the number of beacons beginning in the early 1950s. By the 1960s, the beacons, once the pride of the nation's commercial aviation system, were no longer relevant. In 1972, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) abandoned the beacon system in Montana and turned the lanterns over to the old Montana Aeronautics Commission to operate and maintain. The beacons essentially became a nostalgic souvenir of the early history of aviation in Montana.

By 2017, the Aeronautics Division still kept the lights going on seventeen airway beacons in western Montana. The obsolescence of the beacon system and shrinking state budgets contributed to MDT's decision to decommission the system. Director Mike Tooley formed a panel, the Airway Beacon Working Group (ABWG), to study the issue and make recommendations about the future of the beacons. The ABWG solicited public comments and held three public information meetings in Billings, Missoula, and Helena in the summer of 2017. Based on the results of the public meetings and comments, Director Tooley decided to shut down the system by December 31, 2021. The Aeronautics Division shut down fourteen beacons in the spring of 2018. The search began for agencies and private citizens willing to adopt them.

MDT's Communications Bureau agreed to assume responsibility of the St. Regis and Lookout Pass beacons.

They currently hold essential communications equipment that monitor weather and road conditions on I-90. The Aeronautics Division, with the assistance of MDT's Environmental Bureau and Legal Services, devised a plan to find new owners to adopt the towers and beacons. Four beacons - Hardy, Bonita, University Mountain, and Spokane, were adopted by local and state governments to function as radio towers for emergency services equipment. The Spokane beacon still flashes east of Helena.

The Aeronautics Division didn't own the land on which the beacon towers stood. Instead, it maintained long term leases with private landowners to allow their presence. Fortunately, six landowners eagerly adopted the beacons standing on their property. Two of the new owners have kept their beacons lit and they continue to mark the historic airway routes. The non-profit Idaho Aviation Heritage organization now owns and operates six of the beacons – all of which they plan to keep lit.

In recognition of their significance to the history of aviation in Montana, eight airway beacons are listed or are in the process of being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These beacons include Homestake Pass, Canyon Resort near Dell in Beaverhead County, MacDonald Pass, Silver Bow west of Butte, Spokane east of Helena, Lookout Pass, St. Regis, and Whitetail north of Whitehall. All have been adopted by new owners and will continue standing, sentinels of Montana's early aviation history. The MacDonald Pass is the most prominent of the historic airway beacons and the only one that is easily accessible.

Only one beacon, at Strawberry Mountain in Gallatin County, could not be saved and was taken down late last summer.

US Bureau of Air Commerce engineer A.S.

Watson and twenty-four men installed the tower and beacon in August 1935. It was a critical part of the newly christened Northern Transcontinental Airway route. The beacon site included not only the beacon, but also the original generator shed and remnants of the old power line between the two structures. The Aeronautics Division recently donated the removed beacon to the Montana Historical Society. MDT also completed detailed documentation of the beacon site for the National Park Service's Historic American Engineering Record. Although no longer standing, the beacon will not be forgotten. Many airway beacons still stand tall in Montana, a distinctive and unique part of the Montana landscape.

If you would like to get involved or donate to preserving the beacons, please contact Idaho Aviation Heritage at <http://idaviationheritage.org/>.



*Strawberry Mountain Beacon*

*Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff*

# Winter Survival Clinic



Students learn survival skills during a previous Winter Survival Clinic Photo Credit: Aeronautics Staff

Due to popular demand and funding made possible by HB661, the winter survival clinic is back for 2021! The course filled up very quickly, and there is high demand for it again in 2021. If you would like to get on the waiting list, please contact us as soon as you can as class size is limited. This clinic will be socially distanced and will comply with the latest COVID-19 safety guidelines.

The Winter Survival Clinic is geared for pilots in the event an emergency landing takes place and survival is necessary until help arrives. These skills can be used by anyone who finds themselves in a survival situation. Also included is emergency medical training. Meals (except Saturday evening) are provided, lodging will be optional. Classroom instruction will start at 5:00 p.m. on a Friday. Participants will meet Saturday morning for breakfast and a brief equipment check. They will then head into the field to learn techniques on winter survival and spend the night in their own survival shelters after making and eating bring-your-own dinner.



Clinic cost is \$150.00 (includes hotel Friday night). Four meals are included. The clinic starts at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and ends at 11:00 a.m. Sunday. Exact dates and location are to be announced; a venue is being secured in western Montana that will comply with the latest COVID-19 guidance.

Registration will be available after January 4. For registration form and clothing/equipment list, visit <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/events.shtml>, or call MDT Aeronautics at (406) 444-2506 or email [mdtaerosafetied@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetied@mt.gov). We hope to see you there! *\*This clinic is subject to alteration or cancelation due to latest COVID-19 restrictions and guidance. Refunds will only be available if the Department cancels the clinic.*

## Need a Car Once You Land?

The Airport Courtesy Car website <https://www.airportcourtesycars.com/> continues to grow, now listing 2,019 cars nationwide that FBOs make available to pilots.

The website also includes more than 50 listings for airports that offer shuttle services to pilots, according to founder Glenn Brasch.

Included in the listings are 100 FBOs that offer mogas, and there also is a listing of available fuel discounts available to pilots who fly in. The site features photos of 116 of the courtesy cars listed on the site, and airport cafes. The list continues to grow with the help of general aviation pilots across the nation, according to Brasch. "Pilots contact me with updates, new listings, and corrections at my email address, [airportcars101@gmail.com](mailto:airportcars101@gmail.com), which is also found on the main page of the site," he said. Officials at FBOs that offer courtesy cars are also welcome to contact Brasch to get their cars listed on the site.

## AIRPORT COURTESY CARS

Find airports that provide courtesy vehicles.



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.



***Merry Christmas***  
***From MDT—Aeronautics Staff***

***Lucas Borowicz, Tim Conway,  
Bron Hansen, Jeff Kadlec, Staci Leitgeb,  
Matt Lindberg, Marc McKee, Derrick Olheiser,  
Karen Speeg, Patricia Trooien***

## What's Next

December 2020 — Aeronautical Chart Photo contest winner chosen  
January 2021 — Aeronautical Chart and Airport Directory published  
January 2021 — Scholarship winners announced

## Calendar of Events

All events are subject to modification or cancellation per the latest COVID-19 guidance

**December 1, 2020 — 2021 Montana Aviation Scholarship application deadline.** More information can be found at <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/scholarships.shtml> or contact the Aeronautics Division at (406) 444-2506.

**December 1, 2020 — Photo contest deadline.**

**January 13-14, 2021 — Aeronautics Board Meeting.** This will be a virtual meeting, further details to be announced. For additional information, contact (406) 444-2506.

**January 22-23, 2021 — Flight Instructor Refresher Course (FIRC).** The MDT Aeronautics Division will conduct the 2020 FIRC at the Delta Hotel Helena Colonial, located at 2301 Colonial Drive, Helena, Montana. Rooms have been blocked at prevailing government rate plus tax. Reserve your room by calling (406) 443-2100 and reference rooming block "Flight Instructor Refresher Course." The two-day, FAA-approved course will run from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Friday and from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, contact Matt Lindberg at (406) 444-9568 or email [mlindberg@mt.gov](mailto:mlindberg@mt.gov).

**January 24-26, 2021 — Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA) 2021 VIRTUAL Convention and Trade Show.** For more information, contact Colleen at (406) 781-6461 or [eccampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:eccampbell@yahoo.com).

**February 19-21, 2021 (Tentative)— Winter Survival Clinic.** See Page 6 for details. For more information, contact Matt Lindberg at (406) 444-9568 or email [mlindberg@mt.gov](mailto:mlindberg@mt.gov).

**February 27, 2021 — Aircraft Mechanic Refresher & Inspection Authorization VIRTUAL Seminar.** Online Zoom Seminar. For more information, contact Matt Lindberg at (406) 444-9568 or email [mlindberg@mt.gov](mailto:mlindberg@mt.gov).

**March 1, 2021 — Aircraft and Pilot Registration Renewal Deadline.** See article on Page 2 for details.

**Quiz Answer Key: 1:C 2:D 3:A 4:A 5:A 6:A 7:B**

## WANTED: Your Montana Aviation News

Do you have exciting aviation news from Montana to share? Did you know you can send it to the Aeronautics Division to be considered for publishing in the *Montana and the Sky* newsletter? We love to hear about and share your Montana Aviation news, photos and stories. Please send contributions to [mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov](mailto:mdtaerosafetyed@mt.gov) before the first Friday of each month for the next month's issue.



**VISION ZERO**

zero deaths · zero serious injuries

MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION

**December 2020**

5403

Aeronautics Division

2630 Airport Road

PO Box 200507

Helena, Montana 59620-0507



## **Vision Zero: A Goal for Everyone**

In 2019, there were 184 fatalities on Montana roads.

What does that mean? 184 parents, children, grandparents, friends, siblings, spouses, and other loved ones had lives that were cut short. It also means countless tears and shattered lives for those left with the aftermath of unsafe driving behaviors. Which loved one are you prepared to lose? If your answer is none, then Vision Zero is also **YOUR** goal.

It will take every one of us to work towards the day that Vision Zero is met, and the fatality total reads "ZERO." Two of the highest contributing factors to traffic fatalities in 2019 were alcohol and no seat belt.

These are behaviors that can be changed! Start by always wearing your seatbelt and planning for sober transportation. Remind your loved ones and those around you to do the same.

**-Director Mike Tooley, MDT**

Visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero) for more information.

**VISION ZERO** ★  
zero deaths · zero serious injuries

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION**

This document printed at state expense. Information on the cost of publication may be obtained by contacting the Department of Administration.