The Highwood Pedestrian Committee saw their work pay off recently with the completion of a new trail and bridge over Highwood Creek. Schoolchildren, state and local officials, and community members gathered in early November for the ribbon cutting on the Wendell Mee memorial bridge.

The Highwood Pedestrian Committee has been raising funds and applying for grants for the project including Safe Routes to Schools Grants for sidewalks connecting the main road to the school, as well as funding through a federal Recreational Trails Program grant managed by Montana State Parks.

MDT provided guidance on the pedestrian bridge including alternatives for the pedestrian structure, review of plans to insure there were no conflicts with the highway bridge, and permitting for the structure to be in the MDT right-of-way.

In Helena, the bike/pedestrian tunnel that links the East Helena trail to Broadway Street near St. Peter’s Hospital was officially opened with a ribbon cutting. Some 100 students from nearby Smith Elementary walked to the tunnel. They were led by FHWA Administrator Kevin McLaury and MDT Director Mike Tooley. Mayor Jim Smith, along with county and city commissioners, also made the trek and ribbon cutting.

The tunnel was proposed in 2003 as part of the Capitol Interchange plan after the I-15 Corridor Environmental Impact Study was conducted. The tunnel eliminates the barrier of I-15 to continue the bike/pedestrian path from Broadway, under the Interstate, to 18th Street, then Prospect Avenue.

The lighted tunnel is 10 feet by 10 feet and spans 180 feet under Interstate 15.

Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) announced that Recreational Trails Program (RTP) federal grants will be available for trail projects in Montana. Applications are due by March 1, 2014.

Montana State Parks manages the annual RTP grant program that administers federal funding with oversight from the Federal Highway Administration. Projects include: development, maintenance and rehabilitation work on urban, rural, and back-country trails; planning and construction of community trails; and, a variety of trail stewardship programs. Eligible applicants can include federal, state, county or municipal agencies, private associations, and clubs.

There will be a total of approximately $1.3 million in federal RTP funding available to be awarded. The following RTP grant categories are offered:

- The Small Grant category comprises sponsors requesting $20,000 or less per grant application.
- The General Grant category includes sponsors requesting $20,001-$45,000.
- One or two Big Grants of $90,000 will also be available this RTP grant cycle.
- For trails large enough to have regional significance in Montana, such as rail-to-trail projects, or large maintenance projects, the Special Set-Aside Grant is also available.

The Recreational Trails Program is now managed through an online grant management database system, called WebGrants. The system also allows on-going grant management, financial tracking, and reporting.

Apply for the RTP grants starting on December 3, 2013 at funding.mt.org. Hands-on training sessions will be offered in early January for prospective applicants and current project sponsors. The listing of the upcoming RTP training sessions follows:

- January 3, Kalispell 9:30 am-12:30 pm
- January 9, Bozeman 9:30 am-12:30 pm
- January 10, Helena 12:00 pm-3:30 pm
- January 14, Missoula 9:30 am-12:30 pm
- January 16, Great Falls 9:30 am-12:30 pm

For more information, visit: http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html or contact Beth R. Shumate, program manager at 444-4585 or bshumate@mt.gov.
Annual Transportation Safety Meeting Held

The 2013 Annual Transportation Safety Meeting was held October 16 and 17 at the Gateway Center in Helena. This is the seventh year since the implementation of the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) that an annual transportation safety meeting has been held, with this year’s conference having over 100 participants. The meeting provides an opportunity for safety partners, including state, federal, local, and tribal agencies as well as individuals and organizations, to report on the progress of safety strategies within the emphasis areas of the CHSP. Emphasis area safety partners work together year-round focusing on education, enforcement, emergency medical services, and engineering countermeasures to improve safety and reduce crashes.

After hearing Director Tooley’s compelling presentation on a national traffic safety initiative, participants at the annual meeting voted to renew Montana’s CHSP vision statement of “All Highway Users in Montana Arrive Safely at their Destination” to a stronger vision of “Towards Zero Deaths”. Towards Zero Deaths simply means no injuries and no deaths. While no death is acceptable, Montana’s interim goal is “To reduce the number of fatal and serious injuries by half in two decades, from 1704 in 2007 to 852 by 2030.”

Montana’s Impaired Driving Program Assessed

Montana hosted a team of traffic safety experts in May, 2013 for a statewide assessment of Montana’s impaired driving programs. Based on a review of Montana’s program materials and interviews with key stakeholders, the technical assistance team provided recommendations to assist Montana in enhancing the effectiveness of its impaired driving programs.

The team recommended that Montana give priority to the following items:

- Develop a DUI tracking system to facilitate the evaluation of various programs, enforcement, and treatment used in impaired driving intervention. The data from the tracking system will help identify problem areas and form solutions. The data can also aid in showing what happens in DUI cases from arrest to prosecution, conviction and sentencing, and then in driver licensing and compliance with treatment recommendations.
- Establish a vision for reducing impaired driving and garner support and commitment from every branch of government. The data is an important support for that outreach.
- Meet MAP-21 funding requirements.

The report was finalized on June 4, 2013, and can be found at [http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/impaired_2013.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/impaired_2013.pdf). The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) Emphasis Area Team reviewed the recommendations and developed a response. Recommendations prioritized for implementation will be incorporated into the next CHSP Annual Element. The assessment was conducted as a condition of funding under MAP-21 Section 405.

For more information, contact Lorelle Demont at 444-7411 or ldemont@mt.gov.

New Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator at MDT

Angie Zanin has recently been selected to serve as the Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator with the Rail, Transit, and Planning Division. Angie is a recent Regional & Environmental Planning graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has worked the past two summers in Pennsylvania as a Park Ranger for the Army Corps of Engineers. Angie enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, skiing, and camping. She can be contacted at 444-9273 or azanin@mt.gov.
What is the True Cost of a DUI?

MT’s State Traffic Highway Safety Section recently developed information about the true costs of being charged with driving under the influence (DUI). Montana laws state it is illegal to operate a motor vehicle with blood or breath alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 or higher. No proof of impairment is required. A commercial vehicle operator’s threshold is a BAC of 0.04 and the threshold for a person under age 21 is a BAC of 0.02. In 2013, a marijuana-impaired driving law went into effect that establishes 5 ng/ml of Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol or THC as excessive marijuana concentration. Again, no proof of impairment is required.

The impact of a DUI conviction can include, but is not limited to the following:

- **Driving record** – serious traffic convictions stay on a person’s record for life and can impact vehicle insurance with higher rates or cancellation of the policy.
- **DUI convictions stack up** – the fourth DUI conviction is a felony and can be considered in any future sentencing, no matter how minor.
- **Employment** – positions that require driving include a review of the driver’s record. DUIs in a private vehicle can impact commercial driving privileges – up to suspension for life.
- **Ability to drive** – after just one DUI/BAC conviction, a driver’s license will be suspended for six months for the first offense and one year or more for subsequent offenses.

A DUI can cost a first-time offender $5,000 to $6,000.

- Fines—$300-$1000
- Court costs—$135-$500 with a trial
- Attorney fees—$70 an hour for public defender, $100-$300 an hour for private counsel
- Chemical dependency assessment and mandatory alcohol classes—$325 and up
- Driver license reinstatement fee—$200
- Vehicle impound and tow
- Additional options the judge may order:
  - Ignition interlock—$75-$120 for Installation, plus $70 a month.
  - Transdermal alcohol monitoring device—$12 a day or $360 a month.
  - 24-7 Sobriety Program—$4 a day or $120 a month.

A DUI crash can easily cost more than $100,000 if injuries are involved.

The best idea for those who choose to drink is to plan ahead and designate a sober driver, arrange for a taxi ride or shuttle, or use a community safe-ride program. For more safety tips and to learn more about the full cost of a DUI go to: plan2live.mt.gov (http://plan2live.mt.gov/docs/dui-cost.pdf). For copies of the brochure, contact Lorelle Demont at 444-7411 or ldemont@mt.gov.

MDT Introduces New Snow Removal Equipment

The latest addition to MDT’s winter maintenance fleet is coming to Montana roads this winter. The TowPlow is a steerable trailer-mounted plow that is pulled behind a snowplow truck, just like the name indicates. The TowPlow can be rotated to one side of the truck, which doubles the plow width of a tandem-axle snowplow truck. The 26-foot-wide plow gives the operator the ability to move snow efficiently and safely from two lanes of roadway in one pass. Essentially, with the TowPlow, one driver and one truck will be doing the work of two drivers and two plow trucks.

The efficiency of clearing double the lanes with half the resources is increasingly important as Montana’s highway system expands. Five TowPlows are being added to the fleet this year and will be used in the Butte, Bozeman, Miles City, Missoula, and Great Falls areas.

TowPlows have been used successfully in other states for several years, but many Montana drivers have never seen one in action. The TowPlows are equipped with either a granular spreader or a tank for dispensing liquids for snow and ice control. When the TowPlow is activated and it is rotated to the side, at first glance it may look like the truck has a jackknifed trailer, but be assured, MDT’s trained and experienced operators have the situation under control, and the TowPlow is where it is supposed to be.

Motorists are urged to use the following safety tips when encountering any snow removal equipment:

- Slow down and stay behind the snowplow. Allow at least five car lengths between the vehicle and the snowplow. Periodically, the plow operator will pull to the side or rotate the TowPlow out of the way and allow vehicles to pass. Just remember, the road behind the plow will be the safest place to drive.
- Be particularly aware of icy conditions on surfaces such as bridge decks and entrance and exit ramps.
- Turn on headlights and turn off cruise control settings.

To receive updated information on road conditions call 511, download MDT’s mobile application, or visit mdt511.com before you drive.
Drivers across Montana need to be aware of a new traffic signal being phased in at intersections with a dedicated left-turn lane. These new signals are known as yellow flashing arrow left-turn signals.

The new flashing yellow arrow signal offers a safer way to handle traffic turning left at busy intersections. The signals are being introduced nationwide and eventually will be required at all intersections where there is a separate left turn arrow signal.

Here is what to do when you see the new signal:

- A solid green arrow means turn left. Oncoming traffic must stop.
- A flashing yellow arrow means turns are permitted, but first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. Oncoming traffic has a green light.
- A solid yellow arrow warns that the left turn signal is about to change to red. Be prepared to stop or to complete the left turn if the vehicle is within the intersection.
- A solid red arrow means stop – drivers turning left must stop.

In Montana, flashing yellow turn arrows are becoming more and more common. Remember, flashing yellow means turn with caution.

For more information, go to mdt.mt.gov/flashingyellowarrows.

As winter weather settles over Montana, motorists are encouraged to check the MDT Road Report before traveling. To receive updated information on road conditions call 511, download MDT’s mobile application, or visit mdt511.com before you drive.

MDT’s 511 system covers most of the state-maintained highways, relaying timely information on travel advisories, driving conditions, weather forecasts, road construction, road closures, chain requirements, and major delays.

The 511 website includes an interactive condition map that includes a layer for camera images with winter travel information updated every 30 minutes or as major changes occur. Travelers can also sign up to receive RSS feeds or follow MDT 511 on Twitter.

MDT has more than 35 web cameras and 65 Road Weather Information Systems (RWIS) deployed at various locations statewide to provide travelers a first-hand look at road and weather information.

Be aware that conditions can change quickly from the time road information is issued to the time of travel. Follow these important winter driving tips for a safe trip:

- Conduct a pre-trip vehicle inspection to ensure the vehicle is operating properly. Fluid levels, wipers, belts, hoses, headlights, brake lights, and tires should all be in good condition.
- Keep the vehicle’s windows, mirrors, and lights clear of snow and ice.
- Make sure everyone in the vehicle is safely buckled up.
- Drive with headlights on.
- Do not use cruise control on wet, icy, or snow-covered roads.
- Drive an appropriate speed for conditions. Driving too fast for conditions is often a primary contributing factor in crashes.
- Be aware of potentially icy areas such as shady spots and bridges.
- When approaching a snowplow from the rear, reduce speed immediately. Snowplows must operate at slower speeds to properly plow and sand. Be patient and don’t crowd the plow. The plow operators know the road well and will pull over as soon as there is a spot for vehicles to safely pass. When approaching an oncoming plow, don’t crowd the center line.

For more information on winter driving and winter survival tips, go to http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/winter_main/winter_survival.pdf.
MDT Centennial Celebrations Continue

MDT’s centennial anniversary celebrations continued through the fall season with events in Billings, Butte, and Lewistown. Turnout has been good at all events with area residents and community leaders joining the celebrations.

Various displays including antique cars and MDT equipment have been a focal point at events. The Billings car show featured a 1915 Ford Model T, Highway Patrol 1935, 1977, and 2011 cruisers, and a restored 1940 panel van once owned by the Highway Department along with other vintage vehicles. MDT equipment available for close inspection included a 1960 four-wheel drive V plow, combination loader/snow blower, bucket trucks, double winged plows, and striping trucks.

MDT’s 100-Year History Timeline debuted at the Capitol Rotunda in June and has been a main feature at all of the events. A version of this timeline is now available online at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/100year.shtml. Also available on this site are videos of MDT Historian Jon Axline presenting MDT history.

This year of anniversary celebrations has provided MDT and Montana an opportunity to explore the history of transportation in the state and to look toward the future. MDT has and will continue to work to safely move Montanans to work, doctor appointments, shopping, and recreation alongside commercial vehicles moving raw and finished products in-and out-of state, activities that are critical to daily life and a thriving Montana economy.

Transit Section Hosts Annual Fall Transit Management Workshop

The MDT Transit Section hosted its annual Fall Transit Management Training in the MDT Auditorium on October 9 and 10. The training covered a variety of topics including Title VI, media training, financial management, Google forms training, interlining with intercity providers, applying for funds, and learning about upcoming MAP-21 requirements.

Nearly 50 participants from more than 40 agencies serving the general public and the elderly and disabled attended. MDT Title VI Specialist Bill Anderson, gave an in-depth presentation on the MAP-21 legislation related to Title VI plans and what is expected of the transit providers in order to meet these requirements. Bonnie Buchanan of Jefferson Lines, based in Minnesota, discussed the history of intercity bus service and how their company has played a role in transitioning people to use mass transportation across the country by effective marketing strategies.

Similar to the past management trainings, transit providers and MDT staff were provided the opportunity to network with one another and share ideas during the roundtable discussions.

For more information about the workshop, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or dajacobs@mt.gov.

Montana Transportation Commission 2014 Schedule

The Montana Transportation Commission meets at 8:30 am in the Montana Department of Transportation Commission Room at 2701 Prospect Avenue in Helena six times a year. The meeting dates are listed below; however, dates are subject to change.

January 30
March 27
May 29
July 31
September 25
November 20

For more information, contact Commission Secretary Lori Ryan at 444-6821 or lryan@mt.gov.
Assessing the Extent and Determinates of Induced Growth

Transportation projects alone cannot change surrounding land use, however land use and transportation are connected, and transportation agencies often struggle to understand and respond to this linkage. Consideration of the potential indirect effects of transportation projects on land use is required for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), as implemented through regulations and interpreted by the courts.

Due to the uncertainty involved in forecasting the effects of transportation projects on land use, transportation agencies nationally have struggled in identifying the appropriate level of analysis for this issue. In some cases this has resulted in litigation and project delays. In addition, many of the existing methodologies and guidance for assessing indirect effects were not developed to consider the rural environment in which many projects in Montana are located. To address these issues, the objective of this research project was to identify a Montana-specific, consistent, legally defensible, and efficient process for assessing the indirect land use and environmental effects of transportation projects for MDT.

This project consisted of a review of existing MDT practices in addressing indirect land use effects, surveys of MDT staff and resource agencies staff, review of case laws, and literature specific to induced growth.

As a result of this review, the consultant developed an Indirect Effects Desk Reference. The desk reference provides an overview of key definitions, regulatory requirements, and provides practitioners with a step-by-step screening process to determine if further analysis is warranted. Where detailed analysis is necessary, a detailed analysis framework process is provided that includes recommendations on the analysis methodologies most applicable to the data available in different portions of Montana.

Training on this new process was also provided to MDT staff and consultants. MDT will use the desk reference and screening process to determine analysis actions on transportation projects and incorporate them into MDT’s Environmental Manual.

Updates, evaluations, and changes to the process for assessing induced growth analysis and desk reference will be coordinated and completed with the same procedures used to update MDT’s Environmental Manual.

Visit the research project website for more information or contact Kris Christensen at 444-6125 or krchristensen@mt.gov.

Montana Summer Transportation Institute

The Western Transportation Institute (WTI) at Montana State University (MSU), in cooperation with MDT and FHWA, hosted the 2013 Summer Transportation Institute (STI) from June 17 to June 28. STI is intended to spark interest in transportation careers, aid in the development of the next generation of engineers, scientists, planners, and designers, and address the nation’s need for a diverse pool of transportation professionals.

The STI program was free to all 18 selected participants, with program expenses paid by a grant from FHWA, and in-kind contributions from MDT, WTI, and MSU. Students learned about career opportunities in transportation through a multidisciplinary, multimodal academic curriculum, which included guest speakers, hands-on laboratories, and field trips. They also gained leadership skills while working on team design-build projects. Topics and activities included road ecology, urban planning, traffic engineering, geotechnical engineering, concrete mix designs with the actual mixing of concrete batches and testing for strength, bridge design, a team design and build competition, aviation, and traffic safety/human factors.

Highlights included field trips to the MDT headquarters in Helena and Gallatin Field Airport. In addition, the participants learned about college preparation and career planning.

STI program and application information can be found on WTI’s website at http://www.wti.montana.edu/education/summertransportationinstitute/.

More information about this year’s program can be found on the MDT Research Bureau’s website at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/admin/summer.shtml, or by contacting Kris Christensen at krchristensen@mt.gov or 444-6125.

Electronic Newslie Available — Sign up Now!

The Newsline is available electronically for your convenience. If you wish to receive it electronically, simply send your e-mail address to Newsline Editor Sandra Waddell at swaddell@mt.gov, phone her at 444-7614, or drop a note to her attention at PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001.

All other changes such as address updates and name changes are also welcome any time.
MDT’s history is one of evolution in the sense of increased federal involvement in the road-building process. When the legislature formed the Montana State Highway Commission in 1913, it had no money with which to build roads; it functioned in a purely advisory capacity. The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 gave the commission more control over the process, but it was still hampered by the financial limitations of the counties, the key players in the process. The 1916 legislation mandated the state use its federal allocation to survey, design, and oversee the construction of roads and bridges in the state. But the commission was still dependent on the counties for determining where the money would be spent and on what projects. The relationship between the highway commission and the counties was, at best, an uneasy one.

One of the most important laws to impact the MDT in the twentieth century was the Federal Aid Road Act of 1921. The Act revolutionized the highway-building process by increasing the power of the state highway departments. It specified that all construction and maintenance done on federal aid highways be performed under the direct supervision of the highway department. The act also established the Seven Percent System, which consisted of seven percent of the total mileage in each state. Federal funds could only be expended on that system in each state. There were a total of 67,747 miles of county and state roads in Montana, of which 4,742 miles were on the state’s Seven Percent System.

The state legislature reorganized the highway commission to administer the 1921 Road Act. It created a three-man commission with the chairman functioning as its only paid member. The chairman functioned in much the same capacity as a business CEO does today. The chairman determined policy matters, awarded contracts, approved claims, and “devoted all his time to the business of the office.” The other two members of the commission were per diem positions.

Increased federal involvement in the road-building process compelled the highway department to make organizational changes as it shouldered more responsibilities for the construction and maintenance of the state’s federal highway system. The dire economic situation in Montana in the early 1920s meant that many counties were unable or unwilling to raise funds for road construction and many would not cooperate with the highway commission. The state legislature took increasing amounts of money away from the highway commission by redistributing all gasoline and license taxes to the counties. As a result, the highway department had to cut back its operations. In April 1925, the department’s activities were “confined primarily to the completion of those projects now under contract and to the maintenance of completed projects.” In 1925, new governor John Erickson directed the highway board to fix the deteriorating situation in the highway department. The new commissioners demanded “rigid economy” by the remaining employees and threatened termination for any “extravagant expenditures.” For the first time, the state was forced to turn back federal funds for road construction. The highway commission proposed to enact a new gasoline tax where all the revenue generated by it would go directly into a highway fund for road construction.

In November 1926, Montanans overwhelmingly passed the Good Roads Initiative, demonstrating the importance of good roads to the state’s residents. The initiative provided for a three-cent-per-gallon tax on gasoline with the revenue going directly into the State Highway Fund. The highway commission used the revenue to match federal funds for road construction, thereby taking the counties out of the equation. The tax placed the burden of road construction on highway users rather than on property owners as had previously been done. The increasing number of automobiles on the state’s roads guaranteed a strong financial base for the highway department’s construction programs. The initiative had a profound impact to the State Highway Commission: it not only gave the commission and the highway department operating funds, but also gave them complete control of the road building process on the federal aid system.

Federal and state legislation in the 1920s would establish the basis for how highways and bridges were constructed in Montana for the next three decades. This professionalization of highway construction in Montana caused a profound change in how roads and bridges were built in the state. The new system established the state/federal matching formula and a workable federal aid highway system in the state. Montana was able to enact a practical gasoline tax to match federal money and systematize the road-building program. The result was the most prolific period in Montana road building since the 1860s. Between 1927 and 1930, the highway commission oversaw the improvement of 2,448 miles of federal aid highways and spent nearly $28 million doing it. The result was the beginning of the modernization of Montana’s highway system that would culminate with the New Deal programs of the Great Depression.

Map of the Seven Percent System

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5,440 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of $.46 per copy for a total of $2,515 which includes $615 for printing and $1,900 for distribution.

MTD’s mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment.

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Return Service Requested

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MDT Wants Your Comments
To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

MDT Project Analysis Manager
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

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MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.