

## #Buckleup4Lauryn: A Ribbon For Teen Driver Safety



In recognition of National Teen Driver Safety Week (October 16-22, 2016), the State Capitol was illuminated in blue light to share a special message with Montana's teen drivers and their families. MDT partnered with the Goldhahn family and the BuckleUpBlue4Lauryn campaign with the goal of increasing teen safety on the road.

Fifteen-year-old Lauryn Kate Goldhahn, a member of the Fairfield Lady Eagle volleyball team, was the passenger in a vehicle involved in a rollover accident just one mile northwest of town on August 25. Lauryn, who was

not wearing a seatbelt, was ejected from the pickup after it rolled two and a half times before coming to a halt as it struck a power pole. She was thrown a distance of around 50 feet and suffered some very significant injuries that would eventually lead to her death. Lauryn was transported to Benefis Hospital in Great Falls, and later that night flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. On the night of August 27 at 11:47 PM, Lauryn's doctors pronounced her dead after a series of non-responsive neurological tests.

After hearing of Lauryn's death, the Red Lodge Rams volleyball team started the idea of the #buckleupblue4lauryn campaign.

## Montana's Aging Infrastructure

In 2015, 9.3 billion miles were driven on the nearly 13,000 miles of state highways. Of those 13,000 miles under MDT's jurisdiction, approximately 47% (6,113 miles) of the roads and 39% (1,148) of bridges were built prior to 1965 – that's more than 50-years old. Typically, roadways are designed to last 20 years while bridges are anticipated to have a 50-year functional life.

Montana's highway infrastructure is aging and resources available to address the growing needs are limited. Montana's surface transportation program relies heavily on federal funds, which are expected to remain relatively flat for the foreseeable future, while the state funding picture is less stable. Over the next 10-years, MDT anticipates transportation needs will outpace available revenue by nearly 3-to-1, which equates to a \$1 billion annual shortfall.

Given these limitations, it is more important than ever for MDT to maximize the effective use of the limited resources by increasing the emphasis on maintaining and preserving existing transportation infrastructure. MDT's asset management system, the Performance Programming Process (P3), ensures the best system-wide investment decisions are made with available resources, based on system need and considering input from the transportation system users. This effective use of resources has allowed MDT to successfully maintain and preserve the highway system; however, the ability to maintain the condition of the existing system will decrease in future years. Facing increased costs, flat funding, an aging system, and

Blue ribbons were handed out at schools and sporting events to be tied on steering wheels of vehicles to remind everyone to buckle-up. This campaign has quickly grown statewide in Montana and neighboring states.

"As we continue to work towards Vision Zero, MDT is grateful to the Goldhahn family for allowing us to share this important message," said Director Tooley. "A story like Lauryn's is one that needs to be heard, regardless of age, to remind everyone to buckle-up every time they get in a vehicle."

In 2015, 224 people died on Montana roads. In the same year, almost 80 percent of Montana's teen crash fatalities were unbuckled.

More information on this campaign can be found on MDT's Facebook event page (@MontanADOT>Events) or at the Facebook page @BuckleUpBlue4Lauryn.

- MDT cut and distributed more than 3,000 ribbons
- About 55,000 people viewed Pat Goldhahn's video message published on MDT's Facebook page.
- Capital and Helena High, local law enforcement, and the Governor's Office had ribbons and a Vision Zero display set up throughout the week.
- MDT debuted Snapchat, its newest social media tool during National Teen Driver Safety Week-mtvisionzero
- The campaign was featured on the Ride Like a Friend Facebook page and on Teen Driver Source: [https://www.teendriversource.org/more\\_pages/page/national\\_teen\\_driver\\_safety\\_week\\_activities](https://www.teendriversource.org/more_pages/page/national_teen_driver_safety_week_activities).

increasing travel demands results in needs significantly out-pacing funding.

Over the next decade, with available funds only covering a third of the projected \$15 billion in transportation infrastructure needs, MDT will continue to make the most effective use of the limited resources available. Still, Montanans need to prepare for rougher roads, increased congestion and delay, and difficult investment decisions that affect communities across the state.

A recent example of aging infrastructure is an emergency bridge project on I-90 in Butte.

On September 22, 2016, a structural failure was discovered during a routine inspection of two bridges on Interstate 90. These bridges were originally constructed in 1963 and experienced a failure in the connection between the prestressed girders and the bridge deck. This required an emergency closure of the Interstate and implementation of a detour requiring all traffic weighing over five tons to travel around the location, resulting in increased travel times and distances. During this emergency closure, MDT partnered with Jim Gilman Excavating to build detour ramps, eliminating the need to reroute interstate traffic. The new ramps were in place in just under three weeks.

# Funding Challenges Expected to Continue

As we begin the New Year, MDT has an opportunity to look back and reflect on the department's challenges and successes in delivering the 2016 highway program.

Since the majority of Montana's highway program is funded by federal aid with required state matching funds, MDT develops and manages the tentative construction plan (TCP) based on the federal fiscal year - October 1 through September 30.

When developing the 2016 TCP, the federal program under MAP-21 had expired and MDT was operating under the latest of many short-term program extensions, which authorized funding through December 4th, 2015. At the same time, Congress had not acted on a full-year appropriations bill, so MDT was also operating under a partial-year Continuing Resolution through December 16, 2015. Combined, these short-term stays of the federal program resulted in considerable uncertainty in both the FFY 2016 funding level and payments MDT would receive to cover federal program expenditures.

To ensure MDT was positioned to deliver a full-year program of projects when authorization and appropriation bills were passed, the department developed the TCP based on full-year estimated federal funding level of \$380 million, knowing program adjustments would be needed throughout the year.

On December 4, 2015, Congress passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act authorization bill, setting the program funding level and structure through federal fiscal year 2020. The FAST Act is the first long term surface transportation authorization bill since SAFETEA-LU was passed in 2005. Shortly after the FAST Act, Congress also passed a full-year appropriations bill. As a result of these actions, Montana received a very slight funding increase (inflation) and five years of federal program stability that's been absent in recent years.

To adapt to the new program, MDT's administrative staff began managing program development activities early in the year to ensure Montana was positioned to match, receive, and use all of the available funding for infrastructure improvements. MDT's intent in these discussions was to develop an optimal mix of reconstruction, rehabilitation, pavement preservation, and safety projects, while also being prepared to react to funding and pricing fluctuations. Decisions were guided by MDT's policy direction provided through TranPlanMT and adjustments were made throughout the year, with a focus on safety and system preservation.

Each August, MDT receives notice of FHWA's program redistribution fund allocations. Redistribution is an annual process established in federal law where FHWA evaluates the national program to identify funding that will not be expended during the year and reallocates those funds between states that can use them. MDT is historically a recipient of these funds and accounts for them when developing the TCP. Though the funding varies from year-to-year, MDT uses \$10 million as a planning value. In August of 2016, Montana received its highest ever redistribution funding allocation, \$31.5 million.

Receiving such a large allocation of additional funds late in the fiscal year can present challenges because there is little time to identify projects and obligate the funds. However, the receipt of these funds dovetailed with MDT's ongoing program management activities and all of the redistribution funds were prioritized and obligated.

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**Looking forward....** Although the FAST Act provided some program stability at the federal level through 2020, the status of the Highway State Special Revenue Account (HSSRA) remains dire. The HSSRA, funded through Montana's state fuel tax, provides the state matching funds required for the federal program and also funds MDT's snow plowing, pavement preservation, and other critical highway maintenance activities.

If HSSRA funds fall short, difficult investment decisions will follow, including an increased focus on preservation and safety needs, while larger reconstruction projects and community enhancements, like the projects below, will become less common as MDT manages the state funding short fall, growing demands, and declining system condition.



## **Project: I-15 Bridges between Capitol and Cedar**

**Background:** This reconstruction and capacity expansion of the I-15 bridges between the Capitol and Cedar Interchanges in Helena includes widening the roadway from four to six lanes and replaces two deficient bridges originally constructed in 1962. The project was identified in the 2004 I-15 Corridor Study, which also identified other corridor improvements including Custer Avenue and South Helena interchange projects.

**Bid:** \$25 million

**Contractor:** Sletten Construction

**Status:** Under construction. The Northbound bridge was completed October 2016, opening 20-days ahead of schedule. The second bridge completion is scheduled for fall 2017, with the project completion in 2018.



## **Project: Fort Peck - Northeast**

**Background:** A significant section of pavement on MT 117 suffered from frost heave due to the subgrade clay soils, freezing temperatures, adjacent wetlands, and irrigated fields. This project incorporated a new high-strength, woven geosynthetic product with wicking characteristics, as well as data loggers and embedded sensors that will evaluate water movement. This project widened the road, repaired two bridge decks with rail revisions, and two horizontal curves were flattened. A wetland site was constructed, and the connection to MT 24 near Fort Peck was reconfigured.

**Bid:** \$12.3 million

**Contractor:** Riverside Contracting, Inc.

**Status:** Under construction. Started fall of 2015 and completion is expected in the summer of 2017.



**Kalispell Bypass**



**Project: Kalispell Bypass**

**Background:** Construction began in 2007 with the Reserve Loop project. In 2009, MDT moved forward with construction of the south half from US 93 to US 2 in five projects. In 2012 and 2013, MDT focused their efforts at the North end of the project with the construction of an extension of Hutton Ranch Road to Reserve Drive and the reconstruction of US 93 and Reserve intersections. In 2013, reconstruction of 3 Mile Drive laid the groundwork for the future interchange.

With the south half and the auxiliary portions of the overall project complete, in 2015, MDT awarded the contract for the north half of the bypass construction from US 2 to US 93. The result is a four-lane highway with four diamond interchanges, gravity block walls, noise walls, mechanically stabilized earth walls, storm drain, curb and gutter, asphalt and concrete paving, 5 bridges, 20 signals, 145 luminaires, pedestrian paths, and the extension of 4 Mile Drive.

**Bid:** \$33 million (northern portion)

**Contractor:** LHC, Incorporated

**Status:** Under construction. Expected completion August 2017.

**Project: Deep Creek Improvements**

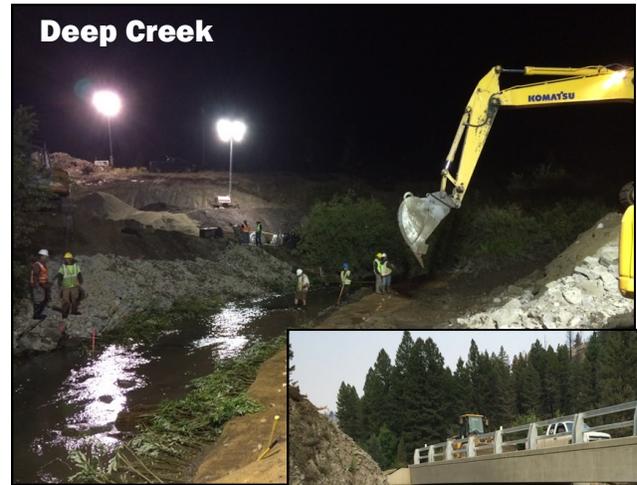
**Background:** Project included bridge replacements, road realignment, rock blasting, culvert improvements, guard rail installation, bank stabilization, stream channel and riparian enhancements, and revegetation on US Hwy 12, 11 miles east of Townsend. This project replaced five bridges: one replaced with a box culvert and four replaced with clear span bridges (three with accelerated construction.)

For accelerated construction, the road was closed to all traffic at 7 p.m. Friday. The timber bridge was removed, in-stream channel restoration completed, concrete bridge constructed, approaches complete through gravel, and the road opened by 7 a.m. Monday. MDT offered a \$2,000 per hour incentive for early completion and a \$2,000 per hour disincentive for late completion to minimize disruption to traffic. Three bridges were built on three consecutive weekends, with traffic restored by 11 a.m. Sunday morning for all three bridges.

**Bid:** \$5.9 million

**Contractor:** Schellinger Construction

**Status:** Project start June 2015—complete November 2015.



**Deep Creek**



**South of Laurel**



**Project: South of Laurel – RR Overpass**

**Background:** The Rockvale to Laurel reconstruction project is a four-phase project reconstructing 10.8 miles of US Hwy 212 from Rockvale to Laurel. The project was initiated to address safety concerns and the growing capacity needs for car and truck traffic, as well as access for local residents.

The railroad overpass south of Laurel was the first phase replacing the railroad underpass and substandard two-lane roadway south of Laurel with a new overpass over the BNSF Railway. The overpass consists of two new two-lane bridges, with the four lanes connecting to the existing two-lane Highway 212 approximately one mile south of the former underpass. The overpass will eventually connect vehicles to the new four-lane segment of Highway 212. The third segment of the project will tie into the RR Overpass project and should be completed by 2018. The final phase is scheduled to be let in 2020 and will complete the graveling and paving of all four lanes throughout the corridor.

**Bid:** \$9.8 million

**Contractor:** Scarsella Brothers, Inc.

**Status:** Project start fall of 2013—complete summer of 2015.

# Primary Seat Belt Legislation

The Montana Legislature will be asked to consider primary safety belt legislation during the 2017 Legislative Session. Enacting a primary seat belt law will save lives, reduce health care costs due to fatalities and serious injuries, and prevent many families from knowing the tragic consequences of roadway crashes.

Montana law currently requires vehicle occupants to wear safety belts, but does not allow law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle solely because an occupant is not buckled. Enacting a primary seat belt law will address what in Montana is amounting to a health crisis. In 2015 alone:

- 224 fatalities on Montana’s roadways
- 118 of these fatalities are attributed to not wearing a seat belt
- 111 of the 118 unrestrained fatalities occurred in rural crashes
- 86 of the unrestrained fatalities were ejected
- 68% of those who died on Montana’s roadways weren’t wearing seatbelts (excludes pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorcyclist fatalities)

Montana’s current observed seatbelt usage rate is 76% which is the fourth lowest in the United States. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) studies show that about 12% more people are wearing seat belts in states that have a primary safety belt law compared to states like Montana that have a secondary law. NHTSA estimates that with a primary seat belt law, Montana could save about 14 lives and 114 serious injuries each year based on a 10% increase in the seat belt use rate. The risk of a moderate to critical injury is reduced by half for those wearing a seat belt in a crash.

The National Safety Council measures the average economic loss to a community for each fatality in a motor vehicle crash at \$1.5 million. In 2015, with the loss of 224 people in Montana communities, this equals \$336,000,000.

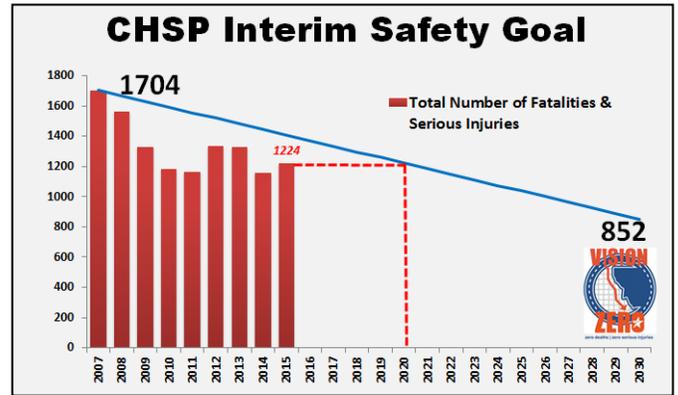
For more information about occupant protection, visit <http://plan2live.mt.gov/buckle-up.shtml>. Montana’s Vision Zero initiative is a multifaceted goal of reducing fatalities and serious injuries due to motor vehicle crashes with the support of every Montanan. Buckle Up, Every Trip, Every Time!

For more information, contact Janet Kenny at 444-7417 or [jakenny@mt.gov](mailto:jakenny@mt.gov).

# Annual Transportation Safety Meeting

The tenth annual Transportation Safety Meeting was held October 12-13, 2016 in Helena. More than 75 attendees representing the 4Es of transportation safety—education, enforcement, emergency medical services, and engineering attended the meeting. This event provided an opportunity for city, county, tribal, state, and federal safety partners to network, attend a grant management workshop, report on implementation of Montana’s Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP), and review the state’s progress in moving towards **Vision Zero – zero fatalities, zero serious injuries** on Montana’s roadways.

While Vision Zero is the ultimate goal, the CHSP uses an interim goal to track progress in reducing fatalities and serious injuries. This interim goal is to reduce fatal and serious injuries from 1,704 in 2007 to 852 by 2030. In 2015, Montana experienced 224 fatalities and 1,000 serious injuries. While there was a slight increase in 2015, Montana is still below the five-year average. This year’s meeting included three guest speakers. Washington Traffic Safety Commission Director Darrin Grondel spoke on the impact of marijuana legislation and the importance of being proactive.



St. Vincent Health Care Trauma Medical Director Dr. Barry McKenzie spoke to the importance of a primary seat belt law and about the hardships on rural trauma systems due to the increased injury severity of unbelted crash victims.

Robert Hull, safety engineer and Cambridge Systematics consultant focused on the national Towards Zero Deaths initiative, the identified emphasis areas, and opportunities to mitigate risks.

For more information on the CHSP or the emphasis area teams, contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646, [plangveda-vis@mt.gov](mailto:plangveda-vis@mt.gov), or visit the Vision Zero CHSP website at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.shtml>.

## Montana Transportation Commission 2017 Schedule

The Montana Transportation Commission meets at 8:30 a.m. in the Montana Department of Transportation Commission Room at 2701 Prospect Avenue in Helena, except as noted below. The meeting dates are subject to change.

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| February 23                | August 24                       |
| April 20                   | October 25 (starts at 1:00 pm.) |
| June 22 (held in district) |                                 |

For more information, contact Commission Secretary Lori Ryan at 444-6821 or [lryan@mt.gov](mailto:lryan@mt.gov) or go to [mdt.mt.gov](http://mdt.mt.gov).

## Highway Traffic Safety Grant Applications Due March 1, 2017

Applications will only be accepted through the Montana Grant and Loans Web-based system <https://fundingmt.org/index.do>. Register in the system and apply when the opportunity becomes available on January 1, 2017.

For information on registering for Highway Traffic Safety grants, contact Kevin Dusko at [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov) or 444-7411.

# MDT Awards Safety Grants to Support Vision Zero

This fall, MDT awarded over \$3 million in state and federal grant funds through two programs as part of the strategy to reach *Vision Zero* on Montana roads.

**Emergency Medical Services Grant Program** - nearly \$900,000 was awarded through this program. The grants provide mostly volunteer, Medicare-level billing providers ambulances, emergency response vehicles, and equipment for training, communication or providing medical care. In Montana, funding to properly equip trained volunteers falls on communities and local governments.

“In Montana, the long distances between trauma centers leaves a lot of miles for volunteer emergency responders to cover,” said Mike Tooley, director of the Montana Department of Transportation. “The grants provide tools to help make this big job a little easier.”

This annual program is state funded and awarded through a competitive grant process. To learn more, go to [http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_ems.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_ems.shtml).



**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Grants** - MDT awarded \$2.66 million in federal grant monies October 1, 2016. The focus of these grants is enforcement and education to improve traffic safety. Law enforcement agencies throughout the state are receiving grants to participate in the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) that funds overtime patrols to concentrate on enforcement of seat belt laws and impaired driving laws. Funding for DUI task forces, DUI courts, and a 24/7 Sobriety Program are other mechanisms to improve traffic safety through enforcement and education. The Native American Safe On All Roads (SOAR) program is active on reservations throughout the state and many Buckle Up coalitions continue to receive funding.

“Montana is a big state with thousands of miles to travel,” said Mike Tooley, director of MDT. “Funding safety programs throughout the state is vital to saving lives and preventing injuries.”

Grant funding is limited and awarded through a competitive application process. MDT administers these federal grant monies from the NHTSA funded through the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

For more information, go to <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/> or contact Janet Kenny at 444-7417 or [jakenny@mt.gov](mailto:jakenny@mt.gov).



# Yellowstone County and City of Billings Develop Transportation Safety Plan



*Transportation Safety Advisory Committee works to make travel safer in Montana.*

Development of the Billings Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP) kicked off in January, led by a Transportation Safety Advisory Committee (AC) consisting of the Billings metropolitan planning organization (MPO), City of Billings,

Yellowstone County, Montana Highway Patrol-Billings District, and other local safety partners, in coordination with DOWL Engineering and MDT staff as technical support. In support of the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) and *Vision Zero*, MDT provides crash data and technical and financial support for the development of community safety plans.

A CTSP brings together community leaders to work towards a common goal of reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Montana’s roadways. Similar to Montana’s CHSP, a CTSP is a collaborative process that involves a data-driven approach to identify transportation safety issues. The 4Es of transportation safety—education, enforcement, emergency medical services, and engineering are considered in determining strategies to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries. A CTSP focuses on community-wide issues and strategies to improve safety and does not identify specific roadways locations or projects for improvements.

Successful implementation of a CTSP is dependent on the involvement of community stakeholders. To encourage residential participation, public notices were distributed and a three month public survey was conducted to gather input on perceived safety issues.

The Billings AC is the first to adopt the statewide safety initiative of *Vision Zero-zero fatalities, zero serious injuries* on Montana’s public roadways. Based on crash data, the emphasis areas in Billings are: Unrestrained Occupants, Impaired Driving, and Inattentive Driving/Speeding.

The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act of 2015 requires MPOs to establish safety targets for all public roads in the MPO planning area. The AC, in coordination with the Billings MPO, chose to support the state targets, which require no additional reporting to the FHWA.

Once the plan is approved through local processes, implementation will include regularly scheduled meetings to track implementation efforts and report progress.

For more information, visit MDT’s website at Community Transportation Safety Plans <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/community-plans.shtml> or the CHSP <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp.shtml> or contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646 or [plangvedavis@mt.gov](mailto:plangvedavis@mt.gov).

**Billings CTSP  
Vision Statement:**  
*The Billings community will achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries through a culture of safety for all travelers.*

## Transportation Alternative Applications Awarded

The 2016 construction season was a busy one for MDT's Transportation Alternative (TA) projects. Construction is complete on seven projects and ongoing on eight projects. The projects have included new multi-use paths, new sidewalks, ADA upgrades, curb and gutter, signing, rapid rectangular flashing beacons, cross walks, and bike racks. Several more TA projects will be bid in the months ahead.

MDT recently awarded 12 TA projects from 42 applications received for the 2015-2016 funding cycle. Consultants have been selected on several of these projects and project development is underway. They should be ready for bidding in 2018.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act passed in December 2015 provides for five years of funding including TAs. Because of this, MDT is planning to issue a call for project applications for the 2017-2018 cycle of TA projects in December 2016 or January 2017. MDT will notify those on the TA distribution list when the call for applications is issued. This information will also be available on the TA website.

One change to the program is providing funding for maintenance/preservation TA projects. There will be a separate TA maintenance application and scoring criteria. One of the criteria for this new category is that the original project was constructed with federal funds. MDT is still in the process of fine tuning the details, and a summary of the changes will be available when the call for project applications is issued. All of the other eligible categories will remain the same. There is approximately \$7 million available for the new round of funding.

Information about the TA program is available on the MDT Transportation Alternatives website [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta\\_application.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml). For more information, contact Dave Holien at 444-6118 or [dholien@mt.gov](mailto:dholien@mt.gov).



Transportation Alternative retaining wall project located in Polson.

## Innovative Contracting Legislative Proposal

MDT currently uses two methods for project delivery: design-bid-build and design-build (design and construction under one contract). Again, this legislative session, MDT is asking for the authority other state agencies have to use alternative project delivery such as Construction Manager/General Contractor (CMGC).

CMGC project delivery aims to engage construction expertise early in the design process to enhance constructability without MDT giving up control over design details. Projects can be delivered sooner because construction begins while design is still in progress. Early collaboration between designer and contractor reduces contract disputes. Control and risk are split more evenly between MDT and the contractor. This integrated team approach to the planning, design, and construction of a highway project means improved control of the schedule, budget, and quality assurance.

## MDT's Statewide Strategic Freight Plan

MDT has begun work on a Statewide Strategic Freight Plan. The plan is required by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and will provide a comprehensive strategy for immediate and long-range planning activities and investments in Montana with respect to freight. Development of the Montana Freight Plan is being led by the MDT Rail, Transit and Planning Division.

In October, a meeting with freight stakeholders was held to discuss development of the plan and topics most important to Montana. State freight plans should include all modes of transportation, which in Montana are mainly highway, rail, and pipeline. The plan is anticipated to be in place by December 4, 2017, in accordance with regulations of the FAST Act. For more information, visit the freight plan website: <http://mdt.mt.gov/freightplan/default.shtml>.

## Automated Anti-Icing System Technology

Montana has deployed an automated deicing system in the newly constructed Interstate 15 Montana Rail Link bridge in Helena. De-icing systems have been around for decades, but anti-icing systems that do not require the use of trucks have only been in place since 1978. Systems like the FAST system installed on the newly constructed I-15 bridge have only been in place for about 15 years.

Montana's system is referred to as a strip and nozzle system. There are four strips housing roughly 100 nozzles per bridge that sprays when the system is activated. This prevents the roadway from freezing and makes for a safer roadway.

The system will be activated through a combination of roadway sensors and a Road Weather Information System site that is stationed directly on the bridge. The sensors will detect, among other things, humidity, air temp, and surface temp. It will take these readings and determine when the road will freeze. Prior to the roadway freezing, the system will activate the nozzles spraying the deicer.

Potassium acetate is the chemical used and is the same chemical used to anti-ice airplanes. It is environmentally safe and is not corrosive. The amount of chemical used will be no more, and in most cases, less than what is currently used.

The traveling public should be aware that the system can be activated at any time it senses a freezing event. This includes while traffic is moving across the bridge. If there is no freezing event for seven days or longer, the system will activate periodically in maintenance mode to prevent plugging of the nozzles. During the spring, summer and fall months, when the temperature is well above freezing, the system will be in maintenance mode. It will activate two to three times a month with straight water to flush out the nozzles to keep them in good operating condition.

This deicing system is just one more tool that MDT Maintenance uses to help keep the roads safe in the winter. MDT plows on average 4.1 million miles of Montana roads every year—which is equivalent to driving 164 times around the earth. With systems like these, MDT Maintenance can be more efficient with resources and ensure roads are free of ice and snow more quickly.

# Holiday Parties Mean Taking Care of Guests

‘Tis the season when calendars are filling up with holiday parties and gatherings of friends and family. The Montana Department of Transportation reminds hosts that taking care of guests doesn’t just mean making sure everyone has a great time. It means making sure your guests don’t over indulge in alcoholic beverages.

Not only is there a social responsibility to ensure guests don’t drink too much, it is also illegal in Montana to provide alcohol to an obviously intoxicated person. A prevailing misconception is that this is okay, as long as that person is not driving. Adults who serve alcohol to minors or anyone who is obviously intoxicated can be held liable if the person who was provided the alcohol kills or injures another person.

It is commonly known that establishments that sell or serve alcohol have potential liability, but most don’t realize the law extends to a “social host” -- anyone who hosts a social gathering, including private individuals, employers, and organizations.

To ensure the safety of your guests, when you are planning your holiday party, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Find out who is planning to be a “designated driver,” and give them equal beverage service with non-alcoholic choices.
- Limit your guests to those you know well.
- Serve the drinks yourself, and stay sober so that you know which guests are reaching their limit.
- Have plenty of food available, including protein rich foods because these slow the absorption of alcohol.
- Provide several alternatives to alcoholic beverages. Tasty blender “mocktails” or spiced up fruit juices can be very well received.
- Take fresh coffee and a dessert around to guests mid-way through the evening.
- Arrange for cab service or enlist a trusted friend to take home those who should not be driving.
- Only serve to those who you know are over the age of 21.
- Avoid “pushing” drinks on your guests or mixing strong drinks.
- Provide entertainment, games or activities so guests have something else to do besides drink.
- If you hire a bartender, oversee the service closely, make sure the bartender is following the directions you set and keeping aware of the amount of consumption among the guests.
- Stop serving alcohol at least an hour before guests will be leaving.
- Do not serve alcohol to anyone who is visibly or noticeably intoxicated.
- Be prepared to take someone’s keys if you feel the person should not drive.
- Do not serve someone a beverage containing alcohol without his or her knowledge.
- Make sure all guests have a sober driver to get them home.

# Don’t Crowd the Plow

Every winter vehicles collide with snowplows. Drivers often overestimate the speed plows are traveling and do not allow time to slow down. Other drivers take the chance and drive through the snow cloud created by the plow, then strike the wing plow that extends to the right or left side of the truck, or drivers crash into a second plow truck working ahead of the plow truck being passed. Some drivers even attempt to drive through the snow berm being created by the plow truck.

Whatever the reason, these collisions are dangerous and costly. The plow truck and plow operator are taken out of service, passenger vehicles are often totaled, and vehicle occupants may be seriously injured or killed.

Follow these tips to keep yourself, plow drivers, and other travelers safe:

- Be on the look out for TowPlows - a steerable trailer-mounted plow that is pulled behind a plow truck. The TowPlow can be rotated to one side of the truck, which significantly increases the plow width. The 26-foot-wide plow gives the operator the ability to clear more area of roadway in one pass.
- Don’t try to pass the TowPlow when deployed, the operator will periodically rotate the TowPlow back in line with the truck to allow vehicles to pass.
- Be aware that plows often work in pairs and trios. The snow cloud created by one plow may obscure additional plows in adjacent lanes.
- When approaching a snowplow from the rear, reduce speed immediately.
- When approaching an oncoming plow, don’t crowd the centerline.
- The plow operators know the road well and will pull over as soon as it is safe to do so.

***Be Patient! Snowplows generally operate at slow speeds to properly clear snow and spread sanding materials.***

# Federal Transit Grant Funding Opportunity

MDT is proud to announce its second year of using the Montana Grants and Loans web-based system at <https://www.fundingmt.org/index.do> for federal transit grants. The new system provides applicants the opportunity to submit all required forms and documentation electronically, eliminating printing, and postage costs. Applications began being accepted December 1, 2017. Applications will need to be submitted through the website no later than 5 p.m. on March 1, 2017.

For more information on transit grant opportunities, contact David Jacobs at [dajacobs@mt.gov](mailto:dajacobs@mt.gov) or 444-9192. If you are in need of technical assistance regarding the web-based grant system, please contact Eric Romero at [eromero@mt.gov](mailto:eromero@mt.gov) or 444-7645.

MDT'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.

*Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit, and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation.*



**Rail, Transit & Planning Division  
Montana Department of Transportation**

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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.

### MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans\\_comm/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf), or call 1-800-714-7296. You can mail comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to [mdtnewprojects@mt.gov](mailto:mdtnewprojects@mt.gov).

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

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Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 800-335-7592.

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## Transportation Assistance for Montana Communities - 2016

Montana's local governments face numerous challenges in improving and maintaining their transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation needs outpace available funding at all levels. MDT administers many funding and planning programs that help local governments address their local transportation needs. Following are some MDT-administered programs that support local projects:

### *Infrastructure and Capital Assistance*

**Fuel Tax Allocations** - Counties and cities receive a portion of state fuel tax receipts based on statutory formulas for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of rural roads and city or town streets and alleys. For more information, contact Ed Ereth at 444-6111 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax).

**Surface Transportation Program-Urban** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated to Montana's urban areas (areas with a population greater than 5,000) for improvements to the Urban Highway System. Priorities are identified at the local level through established planning processes that include the public. Funds are primarily used for street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and traffic operation improvements. For more information, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240.

**Surface Transportation Program-Secondary** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated based on a statutory formula for improvements on Montana's Secondary Highway System. Capital construction priorities are identified at the local level and coordinated with MDT. Eligible activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation, and pavement preservation improvements. For more information, contact Wayne Noem at 444-6109.

**Urban Highway Pavement Preservation** - Federal and state matching funds are provided for cost-effective treatments to Urban Highway System routes. These improvements preserve the system, delay roadway deterioration, and improve roadway condition without adding capacity. Priorities are identified through MDT district and local government consultation and are based on pavement management systems developed and maintained at the local level. For more information, contact Paul Johnson at 444-7259.

**Transportation Alternatives** - Federal and non-federal matching funds are provided for transportation alternative projects. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; lighting and safety-related infrastructure; projects to achieve ADA compliance; and environmental mitigation and wildlife connectivity. Projects are prioritized through a competitive process in accordance with federal eligibilities and requirements under MAP-21, 23 USC 213. For more information, contact David Holien at 444-6118 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta\\_application.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml).

**Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** - Federal funds are available with state matching funds for infrastructure projects that improve highway safety. These funds can be utilized for any public road projects such as signing, striping, guardrail installation, slope flattening, and intersection improvements. For more information, contact Patricia Burke at 444-9420 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docsforms/hsip\\_application.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docsforms/hsip_application.pdf)

**Off-System Bridge Program** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated for replacement and repair of locally maintained bridges. Construction priorities are identified at the local level and coordinated with MDT. Eligible activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation, and surface preservation improvements. For more information, contact Wayne Noem at 444-6109 or Kent Barnes at 444-6260.

**Montana Air and Congestion Initiative (MACI)** - Federal and non-federal matching funds through this unique MDT program are for strategies to proactively address air quality issues related to carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Projects in eligible air quality nonattainment or at-risk areas are prioritized and selected based on air quality benefits. Eligible projects include the purchase of street sweepers and flush trucks necessary to reduce particulate matter and the funding of intersection channelization and signal synchronization projects to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. For more information, contact Diane Myers at 444-7252.

**EMS Grant Program** - State funds are available through a competitive process to volunteer emergency medical providers for acquiring or leasing ambulances or emergency response vehicles, training, communication equipment, and for medical care equipment. For more information, contact Chad Newman at 444-0856.

**Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Program** - MDT administers a state program that provides loans for railroad improvements including construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of rail lines and related facilities. Eligible parties include railroad owners and operators and certain port authorities. For more information, contact Diane Myers at 444-7252.

**Transit** - Federal funding programs administered by MDT support community transit systems with operating, capital, and facility costs. A locally developed coordination plan is required which must include general public services as well as services for the disabled and elderly. Federal Health and Human Services funds may be used to match federal Transit funds. For more information, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_transit.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_transit.shtml).

**City Park Rest Areas** - State funds are provided for funding assistance to local governments to maintain or improve existing City Park Rest Area facilities that MDT determines are acceptable. Proposals for assistance must directly benefit the traveling public. Improvements or expenditures must be reviewed and approved by MDT to be eligible for local government reimbursement. For more information, contact Vicki Crnich at 444-7653.

**Ferry Boat Program** - Federal funds are mainly for Chouteau and Blaine Counties with some involvement with Fergus County for funding improvements to the ferries and facilities. For more information, contact Wayne Noem at 444-6109.

## ***Planning and Technical Assistance***

**Systems Impact Analysis Process (SIAP)** - MDT's SIAP ensures a coordinated review of major developments initiated outside of MDT that may significantly and permanently impact the state transportation system. MDT coordinates development reviews with Montana's local governments to ensure their concerns are addressed and provides technical assistance to local governments interested in developing local processes similar to SIAP. For more information, contact Mike Tierney at 444-9416.

**Multimodal Transportation Plans** - Outside of Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula, there are no federal or state requirements for transportation plans. However, MDT provides financial and technical support for transportation planning in other Montana communities, including some of our fastest growing cities. These cooperative planning efforts are usually managed by the local planning offices to ensure consistency with other planning efforts. The plans help identify deficiencies, needs, and funding to ensure an efficient, safe, and modern transportation system. For more information, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240.

**Travel Demand Forecasting** - MDT develops and maintains state-of-the-art computer models in Montana's larger communities to forecast future travel demand and analyze alternative transportation improvements to accommodate existing and future demand. MDT works with cities, counties, and other government agencies in the development of these models, which help inform decisions about future transportation network needs. For more information, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240.

**Corridor Planning Studies** - MDT provides financial and technical support toward the development of prioritized and selected corridor planning studies. The goal of these studies is to better scope projects before moving into the project development process, to achieve the lowest level environmental document while minimizing project delivery costs and time, and providing early opportunities for public and resource agency participation. For more information, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240.

**Safety Planning** - This MDT program provides technical and financial assistance to local governments for the development of Community Transportation Safety Plans. Through a coordinated process, safety stakeholders and agencies identify the specific transportation safety issues in a community, develop strategies to address those issues, and determine the responsible agency/individual to monitor implementation of each strategy. Participating communities must demonstrate a commitment to implement and monitor progress. For more information, contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646.

## ***Information & Education***

**Research Programs** - MDT conducts research to discover, develop, or extend knowledge needed to operate, maintain and improve Montana's multimodal transportation system. Interested parties can propose research topics by April 30 each year through MDT's

annual solicitation process. Guidelines are available at [www.mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml). For more information, contact Sue Sillick in MDT's Research Section at 444-7693.

**State Highway Traffic Safety Programs** - These programs provide funds to eligible applicants to promote the use of occupant restraints and prevent impaired driving. For more information, contact Janet Kenny at 444-7417.

**Bicyclist and Pedestrian Information** - Clearinghouse for MDT's bicycle/pedestrian coordinator who reviews planned construction projects for bicycle/pedestrian safety and access issues. The staff acts as a liaison between MDT and bicycle/pedestrian interest groups. For more information, contact Michelle Erb at 444-9273.

## ***Data Collection and Management***

MDT collects and maintains information about Montana's transportation system. Available to government entities and the public, this information includes a comprehensive location inventory of all roads open to public travel in Montana, including basic physical attributes such as length, width, and surface type; traffic volume and classification data on roads owned and/or operated by MDT (with some additional data on local roads); and mapping and GIS services and products, including the official Montana State Highway map. For information, contact Ed Ereth at 444-6111.

## ***Additional Support***

Most federal-aid funding for projects and programs require non-federal matching funds. Although not required to do so, the state provides matching funds for most infrastructure projects on the state highway system. Additionally, in times of federal program growth, the state has passed the growth in federal program funding on to programs of importance to local governments through the State-level Urban and Secondary Highway Programs.

Programs that benefit local governments are the result of cooperative state and local efforts to distribute limited funding as fairly as possible. MDT continues its commitment to support local transportation planning and projects to ensure a safe and reliable transportation system for Montana communities. For more information, visit MDT's Rail, Transit and Planning Division website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml).

### **Examples of Assistance MDT Provided in 2016**

- Granted funding to 39 transit providers and 5 intercity bus providers. Public transportation was available on all Montana Reservations.
- 12 communities received Emergency Medical Service equipment totaling almost \$1 million.