

Montana Aeronautics Division – Summary of Services

The Montana Aeronautics Division supports Montana's public-use airports, including commercial service airports, by acting as a funder, regulator, planner, operator, and liaison to federal and industry partners. Its mission is to keep the statewide airport system safe, functional, and economically strong.

Funding and Project Support

- Operates the Airport Loan and Grant Program, providing grants and low-interest loans for pavement, lighting, communications, terminals, fuel systems, and other improvements.
- State funds frequently serve as the local match for FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants, allowing small state investments to leverage large federal dollars.
- In FY 2027, awarded about \$3.33M to 46 public-use airports, including many commercial service airports.

Oversight, Safety, and Planning

- Through the Airport/Airways Bureau, inspects all non-primary public-use airports to support safety, compliance, and maintenance.
- Manages the State Aviation System Plan (SASP), which evaluates capital needs, pavement conditions, airport roles, and trends, informing airport master plans and the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.
- Produces the Montana Aeronautical Chart and Airport Directory for pilot information and airport facility awareness.

Direct Airport Operations

- Owns and operates 14 state airports, including Yellowstone Airport in West Yellowstone, a seasonal commercial service airport.
- Coordinates with airlines and the U.S. Forest Service to support seasonal air carrier service and wildfire operations.

Liaison and Coordination

- Serves as a liaison to FAA, airlines, and other federal partners on funding, compliance, and air service matters.
- Provides Economic Impact Studies and monthly enplanement reports to help airports support air service, plan projects, set rates, and guide decision-making.
- Supports the Essential Air Service Task Force in preserving EAS for Montana communities.

Support for the Statewide Airport Network

- Montana's system includes commercial service hubs and an extensive general aviation network, together handling over 1M operations annually and providing statewide access.
- By funding improvements and coordinating system-wide planning and safety programs, the Division strengthens the network of feeder and reliever airports that support cargo, air ambulance, firefighting, business aviation, and general transportation needs.