

TRANSPORTATION INTERIM COMMITTEE

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BECCA BROWN – MAY 2026

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE VISITS GALLATIN VALLEY

The Transportation Interim Committee (TIC) went out on the road for their first-ever road trip travel meeting in the Gallatin Valley on Monday-Tuesday May 11-12, 2026. Drawn to the Gallatin Valley's version of dynamic growth and enterprise, the committee met with students and leaders to talk about road design, self-driving vehicles, auto repairs--and even hot air balloon licensing.

MDT DESIGN UNIT AND WESTERN TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (WTI) AT MSU

The Transportation Interim Committee (TIC) visited with staff from the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) and the MDT Design Unit, two programs that partner with the College of Engineering at Montana State University (MSU) to recruit MSU students into traffic planning, design, and research fields.

BOZEMAN/BELGRADE TRAFFIC CORRIDORS AND STREAMLINE BUS SERVICE

TIC members boarded a Streamline bus to ride around Bozeman and Belgrade, while Belgrade Public Works Director Camaree Uljua pointed out areas of population growth, emerging housing developments, and new businesses, as well as several areas of traffic infrastructure planning, including the beginnings of the [Belgrade Urban project](#). **Streamline** is Bozeman's zero-fare fixed route bus service, and will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in fall 2026.

BOZEMAN YELLOWSTONE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BZN)

At the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN), President & CEO Brian Sprenger hosted TIC members in the original terminal (built in 1951) while the main terminal is under construction. BZN is the fastest-growing airport in Montana, and one of the top 100 airports in the nation, having seen an exponential increase in demand since roughly 2013.

CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT (CVFD) STATION #1

The committee visited the Central Valley Fire District (CVFD) Station #1, where Chief Jay Wittwer described some of the challenges of interacting with traffic near Montana's fastest-growing airport. Drivers must yield to an Authorized Emergency Vehicle when sirens or emergency lights are engaged, pursuant to [61-9-402\(5\), MCA](#).

GALLATIN HIGH SCHOOL CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Gallatin High School (GHS) opened in the fall of 2020, becoming the City of Bozeman's second public high school. Now serving approximately 1500 students, GHS has a robust slate of Career & Technical Education

(CTE) classes preparing students for multiple career pathways including Automotive Technology, Construction, and Engineering.

FIGURE 3 (RIGHT): The TIC stands in the GHS Automotive lab, while Career Outreach Coordinator Karl Schwartz describes how GHS students are educated in Auto maintenance and prepared for a career in the Automotive industry.



ENDEAVOR BALLOONING

While not considered “public transportation,” another form of transport available in the Gallatin Valley is flying in a hot air balloon. Endeavor Ballooning owner Colin Graham welcomed the TIC to his shop to learn about how balloon operators are licensed, to see how balloons are stored and maintained, and to watch how a balloon gets inflated – a process that requires at least 3 people, to prevent the balloon from floating away!



FIGURE 4 (LEFT): Endeavor Ballooning owner Colin Graham (and son Declan) stands in a basket and controls burners to inflate a hot air balloon while the TIC stands in the foreground.

Pictured left to right: Becca Brown, Sen. Denley Loge, Sen. Gregg Hunter, Rep. Denise Baum, MDT Deputy Director Larry Flynn, Rep. Curtis Cochran, Rep. Greg Kmetz, Sen. Russ Tempel, Rep. Sidney “Chip” Fitzpatrick.

MSU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND OPTICAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER (OpTeC)

Within the College of Engineering at Montana State University, students have opportunities to engage in Transportation Engineering and Infrastructure concepts through the Civil Engineering program, or Photonics and Optical Technologies through the Electrical Engineering program and the Optical Technology Center (OpTeC). These programs are aimed at educating the next generation of transportation and automation innovators, to replace current employees who are nearing retirement age.

AURORA INNOVATION, INC.

Located near the MSU campus in Bozeman, the Aurora innovation campus is one place where lidar technologies are being developed for autonomous vehicles to “see” and react to real-time traffic challenges including roadway obstructions.