

SOLUTIONS



RESEARCH PROGRAMS SUMMER 2008

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PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

DEVELOPING A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR PUBLIC/SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION IN MONTANA

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/planning/one_stop.shtml

The purpose of this project was to provide a roadmap for the implementation of a One-Stop Shop for traveler information services in Montana. The report provides a plan to enhance traveler information systems so that Montana residents and visitors can better find information about their transportation options. The primary audience for the One-Stop Shop is the potential rider, starting with those who are most in need, including: seniors; people with disabilities; people with low incomes; and other riders, including choice riders – students, visitors, and commuters. The recommendations state the best chance of success for a One-Stop Shop is for Montana to use 511 and 211 services, MDT public transportation and provider websites, and Google™ Transit (<http://www.google.com/transit>) to offer “One-Stop Shop information dissemination”.

The following factors point to the need for changing the way transportation information and services are provided in Montana:

- Currently there is no statewide trip planning capability; the burden of obtaining information, planning trips, and making necessary reservations or arrangements between the service providers rests on the shoulders of the customer.
- The dispatcher for an individual service provider has limited information about other service providers in the region.
- Most Montana transit systems do not have websites. Each transit website in the region describes their service in a different way. This complicates a customer’s attempt to understand service in multiple regions. Furthermore, some of the transportation services are eligibility oriented and other services, such as door-to-door paratransit systems, need 24-hour advance reservations.



- Often, coordination between transit services is limited to informal communication via telephone between service providers.
- If information were more easily available, people may be encouraged to try public transportation services.

The One-Stop Shop, as recommended, will address the shortcomings of the current situation. The intent is to meet the needs of the users: transportation providers, social service agencies, and the public. For transportation providers, it will help in understanding their own transportation options and viewing other transportation options offered by other providers. The system also will serve caseworkers, health care providers, and clients to make travel arrangements, using agency transportation providers or public intercity services. Finally, the system will provide the public with information resources for planning a trip within one county, across several counties, or even interstate.

Ideally, the One-Stop Shop could serve riders and operators statewide, considering the realities of Montana's environment. Riders would be able to talk over the phone or in person to a "mobility manager" (one per region) to find a ride. If riders have access to the Internet, assistance tools will be available online. Oftentimes, the individual seeking trip planning information will not be the same person who will take the ride. The seeker could be a caretaker, an adult family member, a receptionist, a health care provider, or a friend. Whether users are individuals or rural agencies, many will have limited or no access to specialized computer skills or high-speed communications. The system will need to accommodate this reality.

Montana's One-Stop Shop is not intended to be presented as the one and only place for customers to get transportation information. It is meant to provide enough redundancy in the ability of the consumer to find the information needed so that all relevant information can be found from this one source. Unlike other traveler information dissemination systems, Montana's One-Stop Shop will have

a specific focus on rural and/or disadvantaged populations. However, this focus will not be to the omission of the metropolitan populations who use urban transit. It will be less about providing road information for single drivers and more about making sure that those with limited transportation choices get all the information that they need.

The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to provide guidance to MDT on how to create a One-Stop Shop for public and specialized transportation in Montana. Potential barriers to implementation are noted and suggestions are made regarding how those roadblocks might be handled. To build on existing resources and realize economies of scale wherever possible, this plan describes how the existing Advanced Traveler Information Systems (ATIS) infrastructure in the state will be utilized to the greatest extent possible.

Montana is a rural state with unique transportation needs, one of the largest states in the Union containing one of the smallest populations and subject to extreme weather conditions. Those who are elderly, disadvantaged, and/or isolated in rural parts of the state have distinct needs in regards to travel information. This project is specifically focused on the needs of those populations. However, Montana has several urban areas with various public transportation choices and the needs of those customers will be addressed as well.

For more information, please contact Craig Abernathy at 406.444.6269 or cabernathy@mt.gov.





LIBRARY CORNER

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY AND FUELS

Alternative energy and fuels are currently on the minds of policy managers everywhere, as well as average Americans who are dismayed every time they fill their gas tanks. View [web resources](#) to explore good internet sites for alternative fuels and energy conservation.

The National Agriculture Library's [Bioenergy and Biofuels](#) site lists many agencies that currently are engaged in research in these alternative fuels. The USDA [Economic Research Service](#) reports that "In the US at this time, ethanol (corn) is the largest source of bioenergy used as a fuel substitute for petroleum fuel, while biodiesel (vegetable oils) provides a smaller share of bioenergy. Together, biofuels currently account for 5 percent of transportation fuel use, and will reach 36 billion gallons annually by 2022" at current rates. The use of ethanol as a fuel additive has already impacted agriculture, consumer food prices, and the environment.

Similarly, the [National Energy Policy Act of 2005](#), which recognizes the importance of diverse energy sources, outlines specific recommendations to reduce energy use in public buildings. As a large consumer of energy products and technologies, governments can make an impact on energy consumption in a number of ways, such as mandating energy efficient lighting, metering of electricity, and installation of photovoltaic systems to heat buildings.

Along these lines, the Department of Energy's [Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Office](#)

held a forum early this year to discuss deploying [renewable energy technologies](#). The website also has links to renewable energy basics of [biomass](#), [solar](#), [geothermal](#), and [wind](#), and determining which technology would best fit your area in the event that a renewable system for a building plan is under consideration. There are links to implementing projects, case studies, finding resources, and contacting a working group to get started.

In Montana, the US Forest Service explores the issue of [woody biomass](#) to heat buildings and presents success stories on its website of how public schools are using biomass to save on heating bills and reduce hazardous forest slash. [One grant](#) helped a pellet mill reduce forest waste, create jobs in a rural setting, and introduce a renewable fuel at the same time.

The library has recently acquired a title on this topic:

AASHTO's [Primer on Transportation and Climate Change](#) notes that main trends for alternative fuels will be reduction in greenhouse gases and need for imported oil. Although alternative fuels might increase to "more than 8 percent of the transportation fuel supply by 2030" (p. 26) it is a very important contribution.

For more information on this topic, or for other library services, please contact Lisa Autio at lautio@mt.gov, or 406.444.6125.



DID YOU KNOW?

AASHTO Research Committees

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It represents all five transportation modes: air, highways, public transportation, rail, and water. Its primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system.

Much of AASHTO's work is done by committees comprised of member department personnel who serve voluntarily. The Association provides a forum for consideration of transportation issues and is frequently called upon by Congress to conduct surveys, provide data, and testify on transportation legislation. Through AASHTO's policy development activities, member departments often address federal programs and provide guidance.

AASHTO relies on its Standing committee on Research (SCOR) to represent the Association's interests in research activities for all transportation modes. The Committee makes reports and recommendations on the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) and other activities to the AASHTO Board of Directors.

The responsibilities of SCOR are as follows:

- Encourage and assist other AASHTO committees and subcommittees

to identify research needs, define research emphasis areas, and utilize research findings.

- Solicit research problem statements from the Member Departments, AASHTO committees, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); screen the submittals; prioritize them; and recommend annual programs of NCHRP for consideration by AASHTO's Board of Directors.
- Monitor the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) performance as program manager for the NCHRP.
- Monitor the NCHRP and make appropriate recommendations and reports to AASHTO.
- Review, observe, and encourage the effective use of research funding, and recommend appropriate funding levels.
- Serve as a forum, coordinating committee, and advocate for highway and other transportation research on behalf of AASHTO and its Member Departments.
- Review, monitor, and foster coordination of the various national programs of highway and other transportation research.
- Study and foster the role of industry in highway and other transportation research.



AASHTO Research Committees (Continued)

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) was created with the intention of facilitating SCOR's work. The initial functions of RAC were generally defined at the first SCOR meeting. These are:

- Participate in establishing the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) by rating each year's research problem statements and providing the results to SCOR for its annual selection procedure.
- Work with the AASHTO Member Departments to facilitate the development of research problem statements for consideration by SCOR and incorporation into the NCHRP program.
- Undertake an organized program to identify ongoing and planned research being sponsored by Member Departments, including:
 - Listing research projects and providing those listings to all Member Departments and SCOR, to help avoid duplication and encourage more effective research on transportation issues.
 - Determine which research projects have produced reports that can be shared with other Member Departments and establish a system for such sharing.

- Maintain an overview of all State-related highway and other transportation research utilizing federal funds and advising thereon.
- Provide overall advice on transportation research matters to SCOR and the AASHTO Executive and Policy Committees.

In 2007, RAC formed 9 task groups and task forces as the principle working groups of RAC. These groups are:

- Education and Training,
- Future Needs,
- Peer Exchange,
- Program Management and Quality,
- RAC Administration,
- Research Coordination and Collaboration,
- Research Funding,
- Transportation Knowledge Networks, and
- Value of Research.

To learn more about these two AASHTO Committees, visit the [SCOR/RAC website](#) or contact Sue Sillick at ssillick@mt.gov or 406.444.7693.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

Highways For LIFE Proposals Due
MDT RRC Meeting (8/26)

September

AASHTO TIG Topics Due (9/12)
ACRP (FY 2009) Panel Member Nominations Due (9/17)
ACRP Legal Studies Program (FY 2009) Problem Statements Due (9/4)
FHWA SPR Annual Work Plan Due
International Scan Program (FY 2010) Topics Due (9/30)
MDT RRC Meeting (9/30)
NCHRP Project (FY 2010) Problem Statements Due (9/15)
STEP Project Ideas Due (9/22)
TCRP Legal Studies Program (FY 2009) Problem Statements Due (9/4)

October

AASHTO Annual Meeting (10/16-20)
ACRP Synthesis (FY 2009) Topics Due

MDT RRC Meeting (10/28)
TRB Annual Meeting Preliminary Announcement Distributed

November

AASHTO SCOR Meeting
NCHRP Project (FY 2010) Problem Submitters' Responses to Evaluations Due

December

FHWA Annual Accomplishments Report Due
MDT Research Problem Statements Due (12/31)
MDT RRC Meeting (12/9)
NCHRP Project (FY 2010) Ballot Distributed to SCOR and RAC

January

ACRP Synthesis (FY 2009) Panel Member Nominations Due
MDT RRC Meeting
NCHRP Synthesis (FY 2009) Topics Due
RAC/SCOR Meeting (1/11/09)
TCRP Project (FY 2009) Panel Nominations Due

NEW RESEARCH REPORTS

[Automated Cost Recovery: A Feasibility Study](#)

[Developing a One-Stop Shop for Public/Specialized Transportation Information in Montana](#)

[Evaluation of the Montana Department of Transportation's Research Project Solicitation, Prioritization, and Selection Process](#)

A listing of all past and current projects can be found at
www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/sub_listing.shtml.



NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

Field Investigation of Geosynthetics Used for Subgrade Stabilization

Monitoring Wildlife Crossings on US 93 South

North/West Passage Transportation Pooled Fund Study

The KEYS (Keep Encouraging Young Drivers Safety) Pilot Study: Increasing Parent Involvement in Teenage Driving Through Driver Education

Transportation Asset Management Pooled Fund Study

A listing of all past and current projects can be found at www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/sub_listing.shtml.

REMINDER

Information on research services and products, such as research and experimental project processes and reports, and technology transfer services, including our library catalog can be found on the Research web site at www.mdt.mt.gov/research.

[New Books in the Research Library – Catalog](#) (Select Search the Catalog, then New Books in upper right corner)

[New Books in the Research Library – RSS Feed](#)

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