



 RED LODGE



MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Montana Main Street Program

2025 Annual Report

Table of Contents

Letter from the Coordinator.....4

 Meet the Team.....5

The Montana Main Street Network.....6

 Mission.....7

 Vision.....7

 Goals.....7

Celebration, Connection and Inspiration.....8

 Places on Main.....8

 Great Falls.....8

 Havre.....10

 Ekalaka.....12

 Billings.....14

 People on Main.....16

 Kayla Mosher.....16

 Abigail Dolan.....17

 Mollie Bryan.....18

 Jean Zinda.....18

 Kelsey Merritt.....19

 Events on Main.....20

 Montana Main Street Celebrates 20 Years of Service.....22

In the News.....25

 Welcome New Member Communities.....25

 Grants Awarded in 2025.....25

 MMS Revitalizes Downtowns Across the State While Preserving
 Historical Charm.....25

 Commerce Grants Help Small Business Revive Historic Downtown Miles
 City Building.....25

 Great Falls and Butte Recognized by Main Street America.....26

 Main Street American Main Street Now Conference.....27

 MMS Mural Project.....28

Impact and Outreach.....30

 Year in Review.....30

 Quarterly Updates.....32

 60 Minutes with Main Street.....34

 Grants Completed in Calendar Year 2025.....36

Appendix.....38



Letter from the Coordinator

Dear coordinating programs and supporters:

We hope you enjoy the first MMS Network Annual Report as we mark the 20th anniversary of the Montana Main Street Program. The program is powered by people and places; this report covers our collective impact for the 2025 calendar year.

In 2005, the Montana Legislature adopted Main Street America's Main Street Approach model. This national movement is considered one of the most successful economic development strategies in the United States. The MMS Program is administered by the Montana Department of Commerce's Community MT Division and supported by a grassroots network comprised of 40 member communities led by local coordinating programs throughout the state.

MMS communities are locally driven programs that implement the MSA and improve quality of life through place-based economic development and community preservation. Each member community is responsible for developing a local framework focused on planning and downtown revitalization. MMS communities receive technical and financial assistance from Commerce, as funded by the accommodations tax.

Thank you to all those working to keep downtowns across Montana the heart of our communities. It's a pleasure to share your successes, learn from your challenges and witness the diverse businesses that make each downtown unique for locals and visitors.

The MMS coordinating team looks forward to seeing you in 2026.

Sincerely,

Micky Zurcher,
Montana Main Street Coordinator

Meet the Team



Micky Zurcher
Montana Main Street coordinator

Prior to joining Commerce, Micky served as the local coordinating program leader in Boulder, Helena and Whitehall. She has been with Commerce since 2022. Micky can be reached at 406-841-2863 or micky.zurcher@mt.gov.



Jordan Conley
Community and Economic Vitality supervisor

Jordan oversees the MMS Program, the Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program and the Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Program. She has been with Commerce since 2023. Jordan can be contacted at 406-841-2773 or jordan.conley@mt.gov.



Lauren Dean
Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program specialist

Lauren has been with Commerce since 2024. She can be reached at 406-841-2794 or lauren.dean@mt.gov.

The MMS Network

Mission

The MMS Program is dedicated to bettering the economic, historic and cultural vitality of Montana's downtowns through community development and historic preservation. MMS fosters grassroots efforts through coordination and technical assistance. The program focuses on a comprehensive approach to revitalizing downtowns and preserving the historic structures that contribute to Montana's unique sense of place.

Vision

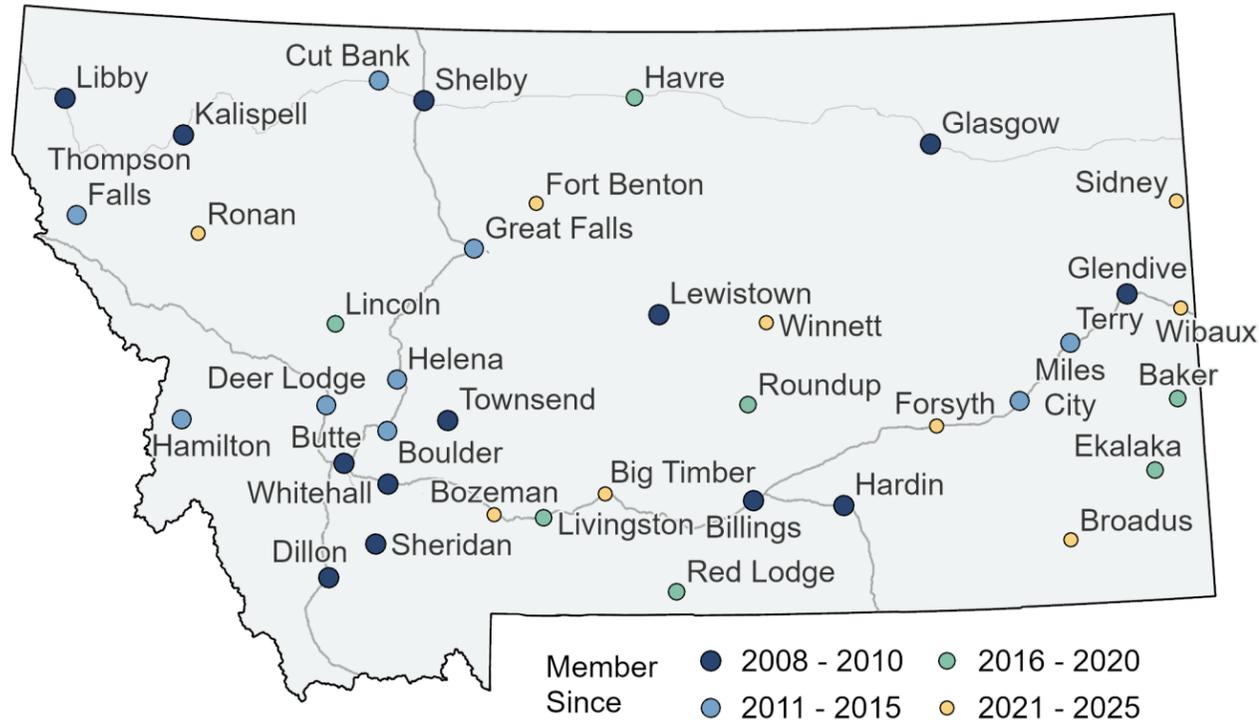
Adopting the Main Street Approach to revitalization, MMS facilitates efforts to improve downtown economies and historic districts. MMS aims to encourage and promote local efforts through a statewide network focused on educational outreach, collaboration and organizational coordination.

Goals

- Preserve and promote statewide historic and cultural resources
- Promote long-term planning for revitalization efforts
- Coordinate conversations among and within Montana communities
- Support economic and community development
- Cultivate a sense of place
- Enable the success of local businesses by supporting vibrant downtown districts

MMS communities are locally driven, implementing the nationally recognized [Main Street Approach](#). Each member community is responsible for developing a local framework focused on planning and downtown revitalization. There is a limit of 40 MMS communities; each receives technical and financial assistance from Commerce, as funded by the accommodations tax.

Montana Main Street Members



Celebration, Connection and Inspiration

Places on Main

Great Falls

For over five years, Great Falls has celebrated artists from across the world by commissioning inspirational and impactful murals throughout its downtown. According to [Great Falls Business Improvement District Executive Director Kellie Pierce](#), [NeighborWorks Great Falls](#) received a grant for a community beautification project in 2017. Cameron Moberg of [Talking Walls](#) was invited to paint the first mural in 2018, at which point the Great Falls Business Improvement District became partners in the project. Moberg continues to curate the project, which now features over 70 murals by local and international artists via an internal selection process. Artists enjoy complete creative freedom but are encouraged to research the community as well as the building where their work will reside. Neither the project facilitators nor the community know what the mural will look like until it's completed.

In addition to beautifying downtown, the [Great Walls Great Falls](#) project eliminates graffiti, improves alley safety, enhances the pedestrian experience, promotes walkability and creates a sense of community pride. In essence, the mural project is placemaking.

When the project started, Pierce recalled that community members voiced concerns about changing the facades of buildings. To address these concerns, project facilitators partnered with the local [Historic Preservation Advisory Commission](#). As part of the placemaking efforts, the project is expanding into lighting, which will allow for 24-hour usable and visible spaces downtown. Moreover, the project has made downtown Great Falls more attractive to developers by creating a welcoming environment and allowing local business owners to capitalize on the murals for marketing.

Note

The Great Falls mural project is one of many similar projects across the state. Commerce is working on a statewide initiative to promote mural assets in MMS communities. To check out this project or to submit murals, visit the MMS web page at commerce.mt.gov.



Havre

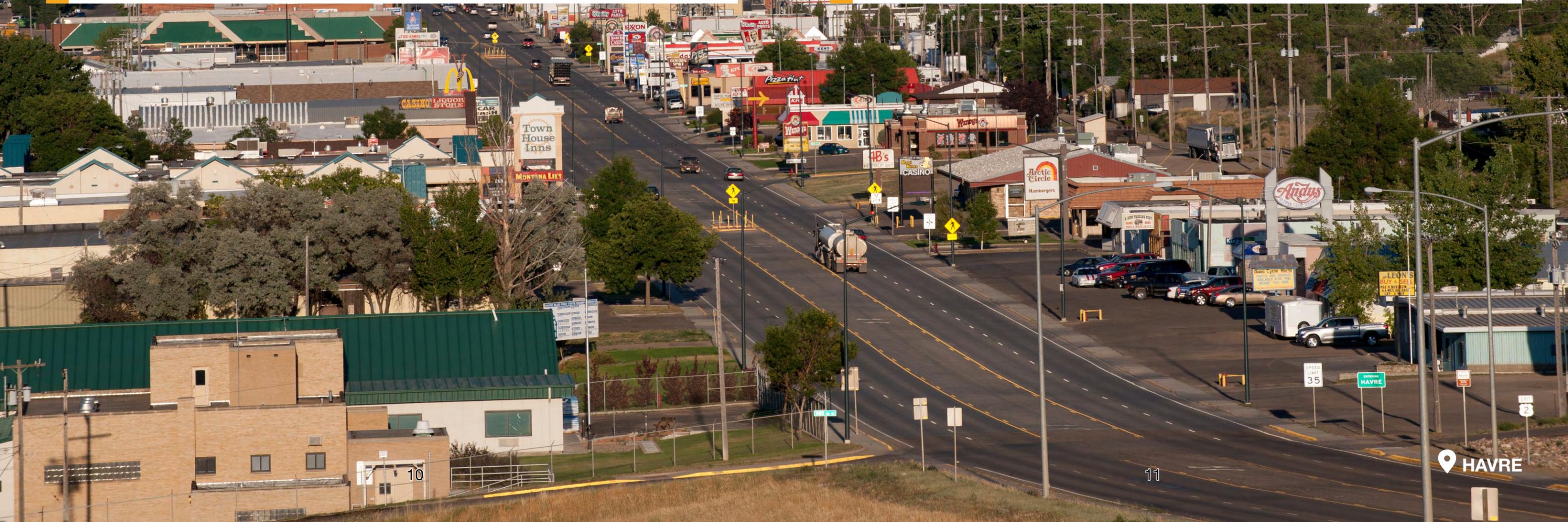
Havre offers visitors a chance to discover Montana's hidden history within an underground city: [Havre Beneath the Streets](#). This historic site originally allowed businesses to remain open after a 1904 fire devastated Havre's downtown area. It now operates as a nonprofit organization. Havre Beneath the Streets is different from a typical Main Street because it's invisible from the street.

Prior to the fire, the underground city housed brothels and opium dealers. According to Sara Strissel of [Bear Paw Development](#), the tunnels predated the fire as a site of illicit business, but post-fire, those businesses enjoyed a new legitimacy. Today, Havre Beneath the Streets offers historical tours featuring 18 displays of businesses from the 1880s to 1930s. The tours are an opportunity to learn about history, see artifacts and listen to tales from previous eras.

Christy Owens, manager of Havre Beneath the Streets, has worked in various roles with the organization for 26 years. As she stated in the "Bear with Us" podcast episode "[Shorty, Searching for Funds and Stories Underground.](#)" the attraction is an opportunity for folks to immerse themselves in that time period. Tours operate year-round, but the

peak season is May to mid-September. Havre is known as an agricultural community; the railroad is a major employer. As Strissel noted, many tourists discover Havre Beneath the Streets because they are "train junkies." When they arrive at the train museum, which is also the location to purchase tickets for Havre Beneath the Streets, they stumble upon the tour. Visitors come from all over the world, even as far away as Antarctica. One Australian tourist told Owens that he planned his trip to the U.S. to visit Havre Beneath the Streets. According to Owens, it's more than a tour — it's a destination.

Owens and Strissel have been working for nearly a decade to keep this underground treasure a part of Havre. In 2017, a portion of the underground tour had to be closed where the sidewalk was failing. A few years later, Owens and Strissel partnered to apply for a [Montana Historic Preservation Grant](#). The project was awarded \$359,672 during the 2023 Montana Legislative Session, allowing the sidewalk to be repaired. According to Strissel, the grant was the catalyst to improving safety and accessibility, leveraging funding, building partnerships and generating community support. Owens and Strissel both consider the grant project a reflection of their perseverance and commitment to Havre.



Ekalaka

History comes alive at the [Carter County Museum](#) in Ekalaka, a ranching community in southeastern Montana where natural beauty and cultural significance define the landscape. Since its founding in 1936, the CCM has been collecting, preserving and cataloging historic artifacts and specimens of scientific significance found in the surrounding landscape. The CCM is Montana's first county museum and the first to display dinosaur fossils. Additionally, CCM is one of fourteen museums on the [Montana Dinosaur Trail](#). The museum is best known for its collections showcasing the area's epicenter of dinosaur discoveries and [unique fossils](#), including *Anatotitan copei*, *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *Pachycephalosaurus*, *Pterosaurs* and *Adocus*.

CCM Executive Director Sabre Moore, Ph.D., recognized an opportunity to share the stories of southeastern Montana by identifying ways to create a larger network. As a research student for the [Montana Movers study](#), Moore cultivated relationships with [Commerce's Office of Tourism](#), [Visit Southeast Montana](#) and the [Carter County Community Foundation](#). Moore also signed up for the inaugural [Reimaging Rural](#) Program in 2020 through the [Montana State University-Extension](#). Inspired by Roundup's success with the program, Ekalaka's goals were to strengthen its community by preserving artifacts, promoting local history, supporting public programs and envisioning a vibrant future through community planning. In 2022, Ekalaka became part of the MMS Program.

In this remote corner of Montana, CCM attracts visitors from all over the world. To Moore, Ekalaka exemplifies community in the truest sense of the word, and CCM is at the heart. As Moore stated, "CCM was already the gathering place." CCM partners with its local public health office to host flu shot clinics, satellite exhibits about vaccines, local medical history and dinosaur pathologies in the upper level of the Carter County Health Center.

From 2020-2023, CCM partnered with Dahl Memorial Hospital, the local teacher advisory council and others to create an exhibit and K-12 curriculum focused on the life of Montana microbiologist Maurice Hilleman and his creation of childhood vaccines. This exhibit also explored themes of pandemics and epidemics and their effects on local

communities. Ekalaka was the first host of the exhibit, but a grant from [Humanities Montana](#) enabled CCM to take the exhibit, entitled "[Shots Felt Round Montana](#)," on the road. In 2023, it won the [Museums Association of Montana](#) Best Exhibit of 2022 award. Nearly 22,200 people saw the exhibition during its tour.

In addition to the partnerships and connections CCM has with community health, CCM offers yoga during the summer as part of an ongoing partnership with local yogi Melissa Schwede. CCM and Schwede host Sunset Yoga the Thursday before the Shindig at [Medicine Rocks State Park](#) each year. Other community gatherings include sewing workshops and the Tour De Fiber. For more information, visit [cartercountymuseum.org](#).



Note

CCM is completing a large renovation and expansion project. As the recipient of the Montana Historic Preservation Grant, CCM was awarded \$300,000 during the 2025 Legislative session. See Commerce's [press release](#) for details.

Billings

The [Masonic Temple building](#), located in the heart of downtown Billings, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Formerly home to several businesses, it had been vacant since 2019. According to Katy Schreiner, CEO of [Downtown Billings Alliance](#), the old Masonic Temple had been identified as abandoned by the City of Billings and had received numerous code violations.

In 2024, DBA was looking for a new home and three vacant spaces rose to the top of its list. The Masonic Temple building was one of them. As DBA searched for a new home, the MMS Program announced the Adaptive Reuse and Mixed-Use Grant. During this time, Schreiner connected with a property owner and regional developer, Steve Widmyer. Schreiner asked Widmyer if he would be interested in partnering with DBA on the redevelopment of this historic building if grant funding were available. Within 24 hours, Widmyer put in an offer to buy the building. According to Schreiner, the dream quickly became a community-minded partnership. Schreiner noted how powerful the MMS Program is for communities and expressed how partnerships and relationships with shared goals are needed to turn vision into action.

The DBA worked with the City of Billings and Widmyer to mobilize quickly and apply for the grant to assist with the building's rehabilitation. The application was successful, and the project was awarded \$300,000. The plan is to redevelop the building to create an incubator retail program, commercial space, apartments, yoga space and DBA offices.

"This project will create a healthier community that will provide a safety investment," Schreiner said. "We are thrilled to see this iconic building begin its come back. Architecturally and visually, it is a grand building with so much history and visibility. This project is a benefit to everything around it. By bringing this building back to life, its history will be honored, and it will be given new life for the next 100 years."



People on Main

People are the heart of MMS communities. The success of the program is driven by the people who live, work and play in Montana's downtowns. People on Main showcases extraordinary volunteers, staff, organization partners, board members, engaged community members and entrepreneurs engaged in the MMS network.



Kayla Mosher

Kayla Mosher is the president of [Thompson Falls Main Street](#). She was recognized by Annie Wooden, publisher of the Sanders County Ledger and treasurer of the local coordinating program. Wooden stated that Mosher is a champion of the Four-Point Approach, noting that “Kayla is a great organizer and promotes events around economic vitality and designs projects that have a huge impact on our community.” Mosher is also active in Thompson Falls as a parent, volunteer, business owner and community outreach coordinator for the Kaniksu Land Trust.

Wooden explained that while Mosher and her family moved to Thompson Falls to be near her husband's family, she demonstrates the commitment of someone who grew up in the area. She frequently spearheads community projects, with accessibility at the forefront of each one, making her a great advocate for the town. Events Mosher has helped organize include the Fall Forest Fest, David Thompson Days and the Pedal and Farm Tour. She is also working on wayfinding sign projects and an eastward expansion of the trail system that will focus on accessibility. Wooden said, “Kayla is a great person, a great friend and invaluable to our community. I honestly don't know what we would do without her.”



Abigail Dolan

Abigail Dolan started as the program manager for the [Helena Business Improvement District](#) in 2024. In her short time in the role thus far, Dolan noted three main accomplishments: conducting an internal file cleanup, building productive relationships with City of Helena departments and hosting a design competition for local Montana artists for new downtown summer banners. The top four designs were voted on by the public. While the artists remained anonymous during the process, a Helena artist was selected.

Dolan was recognized by the Helena Independent Record and the [Helena Chamber of Commerce's](#) list of “20 under 40” in 2025. She believes keys to success include active listening and patience. Dolan said, “Working downtown is always overwhelming; however, the community grounds you and focuses you.”

Helena Business Improvement District Board President Seth Brandenberger stated, “Abigail enthusiastically advocates for downtown businesses and property owners by building relationships and creative use of social media. Her genuine commitment to success comes from years of experience as an event volunteer and employee of many downtown businesses, making her a perfect fit for the BID and for helping Helena thrive.”



Mollie Bryan

Mollie Bryan is the general manager of the [Element hotel](#) and [Carlisle restaurant](#) in Bozeman as well as a [Downtown Bozeman Association](#) board member. Bryan was recognized by Ellie Staley, executive director of the DBA. Staley described Bryan as “an all-around enthusiastic promoter, supporter and champion of Downtown Bozeman.” For example, Bryan recently initiated a “Motivation Monday Walk-Around.” Every Monday at noon, this activity gives downtown business owners, employees and friends an opportunity to take a moment, step away from their desks,

visit a downtown business and chat with other attendees. According to Staley, Bryan is “deeply committed to Downtown Bozeman and works tirelessly to make it a better place for everyone.”

In the spirit of the Four-Point Approach of promotion, Bryan is always ready to lend her time, energy and voice to strengthen the community and celebrate downtown. Bryan is a community champion and volunteers her time on many boards and community groups, like the [NextGen Board](#) for the [Gallatin Valley Land Trust](#), the [Bozeman YMCA](#) and the [Human Resource Development Council](#).



Jean Zinda

Jean Zinda is a volunteer with the Town of Wibaux. She developed the Wibaux Garden Club to beautify the community. The club planted barrels of flowers downtown, upgraded a flower garden in the park, repaired the sidewalk, painted downtown facades, put up window displays in old buildings and businesses and changed the displays out each season.

After starting the process, Zinda got others involved and excited about freshening up the older buildings in Wibaux’s downtown. The Wibaux Garden Club put up a

new “Welcome to Wibaux” sign and is planning a Christmas lights project for downtown. Zinda’s efforts support Montana Main Street coming to Wibaux and developing ideas for future projects.



Kelsey Merritt

Kelsey Merritt is the Miles City Downtown Art Walk director, chair of the Miles City/Custer County Parks District Committee, and a consultant with SDI Architects and Design. Kelsey was recognized by Jenna Janshen of SDI. Janshen stated, “Kelsey has approached the organization and design of our main street’s revitalization efforts with thoughtful intention.”

Janshen explained that since its inception in 2024, the Miles City Downtown Art Walk has installed nine murals, four sculptures and 15 pieces of functional art, thanks to a total of over \$140,000 in grant funding. Promoting the Art Walk’s success has been key to showcasing Miles City’s main street; Merritt’s service as the director of the Art Walk has made this effort possible. In 2024, Merritt was awarded the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce Individual of the Year award for her work with the Miles City Downtown Art Walk through her position at SDI.

Janshen also highlighted Merritt’s contributions outside of the Art Walk, including her involvement in education, beautification and historic renovations. She has also volunteered her time as a civic leader throughout the years and championed the MMS Program’s move to the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce, which saved the program from going defunct.

Additionally, Merritt has led a community-wide conversation between local stakeholders to find a long-term solution for the MMS Program in Miles City and has been the catalyst for important discussions between local stakeholders regarding economic development needs.

Of Merritt, Janshen stated, “Without her, the Montana Main Street Program would not exist in Miles City, and our community deserves these resources.”

Events on Main



**Downtown Bozeman
Trick-or-Treating**
Photo credit: Downtown
Bozeman Association



Banner and Flower Program
Photo credit: Hamilton
Downtown Association



Broadus Fourth of July Parade
Photo credit: Powder River Examiner



Boxing Tournament
Photo credit: Powell County Museum and
Arts Foundation



Mimosa Showdown
Photo credit: Downtown Great Falls



Downtown Great Falls Night Market
Photo credit: Matt Ehnes



Fort Benton Summer Celebration
Photo credit: The River Press



Red Lodge Trunk or Treat
Photo credit: Greys River Photography



Townsend Ghost Stroll
Photo credit: Adam Six



Saint Patrick's Day Parade
Photo credit: Downtown Billings Alliance



Dillon Halloween Fall Fest
Photo credit: Beaverhead Chamber
of Commerce



Terry's Live Nativity
Photo credit: Hayden Maxine Photography

MMS Celebrates 20 Years of Service



To celebrate the [MMS Program's](#) 20th anniversary, Montana was selected to host the annual fall Main Street America coordinators meeting in Billings and Red Lodge from Oct. 28-29, 2025. The days were filled with learning, networking and celebrating two of Montana's member communities: Billings, the largest coordinating program in the state and an MMS member since 2010; and Red Lodge, a volunteer-led coordinating program and a member since 2016.

Fifty-nine Main Street America state program coordinators and staff, board members and MSA staff were able to witness firsthand the MMS Program and efforts by local communities to make their downtowns into community and economic hubs. In Billings, attendees met in the morning of Oct. 28 at a [Billings Depot](#) event space, The Post.

According to Michelle Williams, executive director of the Billings Depot, The Post was constructed in 1909. It served as the original mailroom for the railroad depot campus and was later used by the Red Cross to provide canteen service for World War I soldiers in 1918. One-hundred years later, the building was renamed The Post as a nod to its historic role as a mailroom, and is now used as a small event space. In 2025, it underwent a complete renovation thanks to \$140,000 of funding through Commerce's Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program. Williams said the renovations blended "historical charm with modern functionality."



The event kicked off with Julie Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center and chair of the MSA Leadership Council, who welcomed everyone to the meetings. Micky Zurcher, MMS coordinator, welcomed attendees to Montana, gave

a brief history of the state program and talked about the welcome bag presented to each attendee. Each bag featured a "Taste of Montana" and included huckleberry jam, beef jerky and caramels — all products showcased in the [Made in Montana Program](#). The welcome bags also included Downtown Billings gift cards for shopping and dining.

As part of her welcome, Williams was invited to share more about the history of the depot and its role as a destination in downtown Billings. Williams then introduced Mayor Bill Cole, who offered a thorough history of downtown Billings before introducing Katy Schreiner with the [Downtown Billings Alliance](#), who further welcomed attendees to the area.

In the afternoon, participants enjoyed a downtown tour led by Ed Gulick of Billings-based [High Plains Architects](#) and the DBA team. The tour was well received, and the tour guides were complimented for their hard work and dedication. In the evening, attendees were encouraged to explore downtown Billings and enjoy local shopping and dining.

On Oct. 29, attendees were bussed to Red Lodge to visit a rural MMS community. In the morning, attendees gathered at the [Roosevelt Center](#) and were welcomed by Mayor Dave Westwood, Roosevelt Center Director Kat Healy and Local Coordinating Program Leader Bill Foisy. Next on the agenda were updates from MSA staff, including President and CEO Erin Barnes. Lunch and beverages were provided by local businesses [Wild Table](#), [Samurai Sue's Everyday Foods](#) and [Hidden Basin Coffee Post and Eatery](#). Sherry Weamer, [Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce](#) director, facilitated the "lunch and learn." For an hour, attendees heard from locals who discussed challenges and opportunities related to operating businesses in a resort town. Participants included: Tom Kuntz, owner of [The Pollard Hotel](#), Carbon County Steakhouse, Bogarts Restaurant, the Pizza Company and Natali's Front Bar; Jean Mikulas, general manager of [Red Lodge Mountain](#); Rebecca Van Horn, [Carbon County](#) historic preservation officer; and Don Mueller, president and member of the board for the Buses of Yellowstone Preservation Trust. Attendees were then offered rides downtown in one of the historic [Buses of Yellowstone](#). After a few hours of exploring and shopping in downtown Red Lodge, attendees returned to Billings and concluded the event with final networking opportunities and meetings. On the bus to and from Red Lodge, Zurcher entertained participants with a Montana trivia competition, complete with prizes from the contributing organizations.

In the News

The following are relevant news releases or articles published throughout the past year by Commerce, local publications or MSA.

Welcome New Member Communities

On June 11, 2025, Commerce issued a news release announcing the admission of four Montana communities to the MMS network. The full release is available [here](#).

“The MMS Program will help these new members strengthen and preserve their historic downtowns through economic development support, planning downtown revitalization and historic preservation, organization, design and promotion,” said Montana Department of Commerce Acting Director Mandy Rambo.

Grants Awarded in 2025

Annually, the MMS Program awards planning and implementation grant funds. Grants are highly competitive. In Fiscal Year 2025, a total of \$100,000 was awarded to Bozeman, Butte, Glasgow and Sidney. To read the full news release, click [here](#).

MMS Revitalizes Downtowns Across the State While Preserving Historical Charm

Published in Commerce’s quarterly newsletter on Feb. 5, 2025, [this](#) story focused on the MMS Program.

Commerce Grants Help Small Business Revive Historic Downtown Miles City Building

[This](#) story, published in Commerce’s quarterly newsletter on Sept. 23, 2025, showcases the collaboration among small business owners and Commerce programs, including the MMS Program, the Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program and the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Kathy La Plante, MSA vice president of main street programs, said, “Everyone raved about [the fall coordinators meeting], and it seems like at least half of the coordinators came early or stayed later.” Gary Holloway, Vermont Main Street coordinator, noted that the coordinators “all felt very welcomed by the staff of Montana Main Street, Downtown Billings and Red Lodge and the communities in general... the customer service was good, and the food was just amazing!”

One of the most impactful comments came from Amy Hammons, Texas Main Street coordinator. Hammons said, “Seeing so much enthusiasm for revitalization and pride of place was very heartening.” She was impressed by how retail and restaurant staff in both locations were friendly, helpful and expressed interest in the attendees’ backgrounds. In Red Lodge, Hammons was especially complimentary towards the Roosevelt Center and appreciated learning how Red Lodge functions and operates with great contributors. Hammons said, “Seeing the degree of interest and respect they had for one another was very uplifting.” She also appreciated Billings, calling it “a really lovely urban district.” She noted the number of younger people involved in downtown revitalization efforts and was grateful to see substantial investment in the downtown area. In closing, Hammons said [The Burger Dive](#) served one of the best burgers she’d ever tasted.

Great Falls and Butte Recognized by MSA

MMS communities have the option of striving for national recognition from MSA, which is a program of National Main Street Center Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States. To achieve national recognition, communities must meet high standards in their use of the MSA [Four-Point Approach](#) to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization.

Great Falls is one of 821 designated MSA members to earn Accredited status — the top designation tier — for demonstrating a track record of achieving outcomes in alignment with the MSA and exceptional performance in the six standards of community evaluation.

Butte is one of 351 MSA programs to earn Affiliate status for showing a strong commitment to the Main Street model and creating meaningful improvements in the community.

As part of this national collective impact, which includes data from all our MMS communities, the Main Street movement locally reinvested \$7.65 billion, resulting in:

- Net new businesses: 6,324
- Net gain in jobs: 33,835
- Buildings rehabilitated: 10,126
- Volunteer hours: 1.9 million

The full story can be found [here](#).

MSA's Main Street Now Conference



The 2025 Main Street Now Conference was held in Philadelphia from April 7-9, 2025. Over the course of three days, 2,171 local leaders from across the country and the world gathered in the City of Brotherly Love to participate in more than 100 dynamic educational sessions led by over 190 place professionals, as well as 24 immersive mobile workshops and countless moments to connect and celebrate.

Commerce awarded seven scholarships to local coordinating program leaders and volunteers from Bozeman, Dillon (two awardees), Glasgow, Great Falls, Thompson Falls and Whitehall.

Additionally, Commerce staff members Lauren Dean, Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program specialist, and Micky Zurcher, MMS coordinator, attended the conference. In total, 17 Montanans attended, resulting in the largest Montana representation at Main Street Now in the history of this conference.



MMS Mural Project

In January 2026, the Montana Department of Commerce launched a [new web page](#) featuring exterior murals in its MMS communities to promote visitation and generate more widespread interest in its network communities. The MMS Program compiled an inventory of murals in member cities and towns. This inventory, which currently contains 143 murals, can be accessed on Commerce's website. Visitors can view a map of murals by location and learn about the meaning behind each one.

Commerce Director Marta Bertoglio said, "These murals are a way for Montanans to show the world what makes us who we are. They are an expression of our identities and our stories as individuals and communities. Our Montana Main Street Program's mural project gives these pieces visibility and makes them more accessible for both residents and visitors."

One mural, found in Broadus, is "The Good Hunting Grounds" by Miah Chalfant Real Bird. This piece tells the story of Powder River Country, Northern Cheyenne Tribe hunting grounds and the settlers of the area.

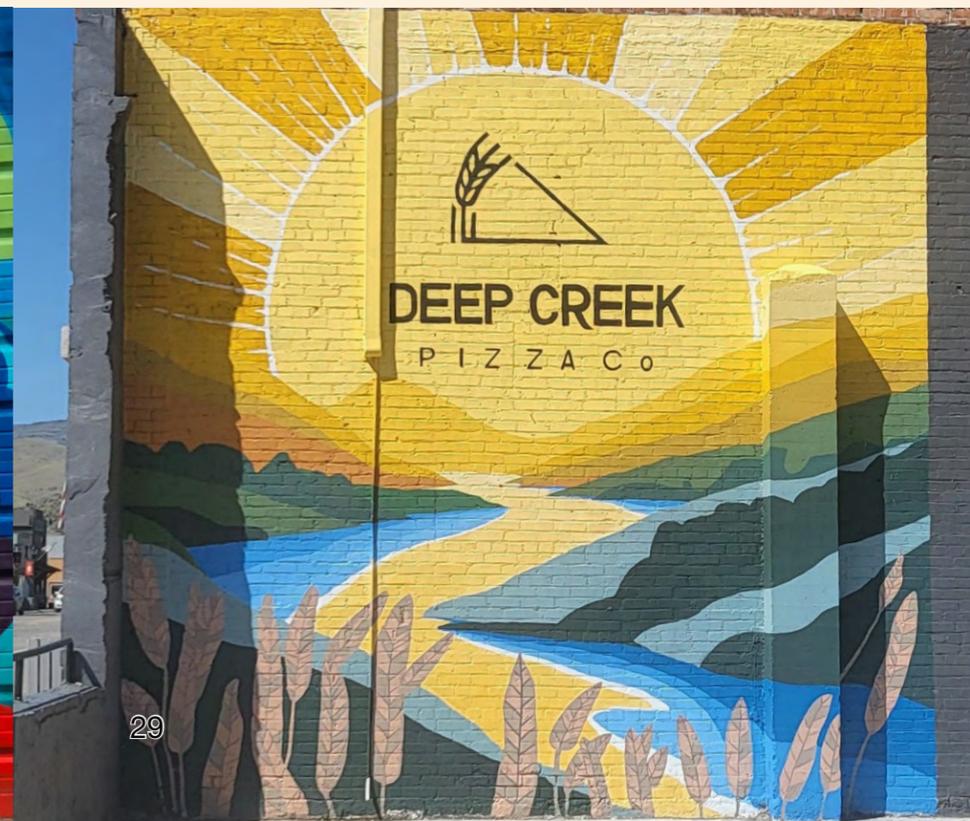
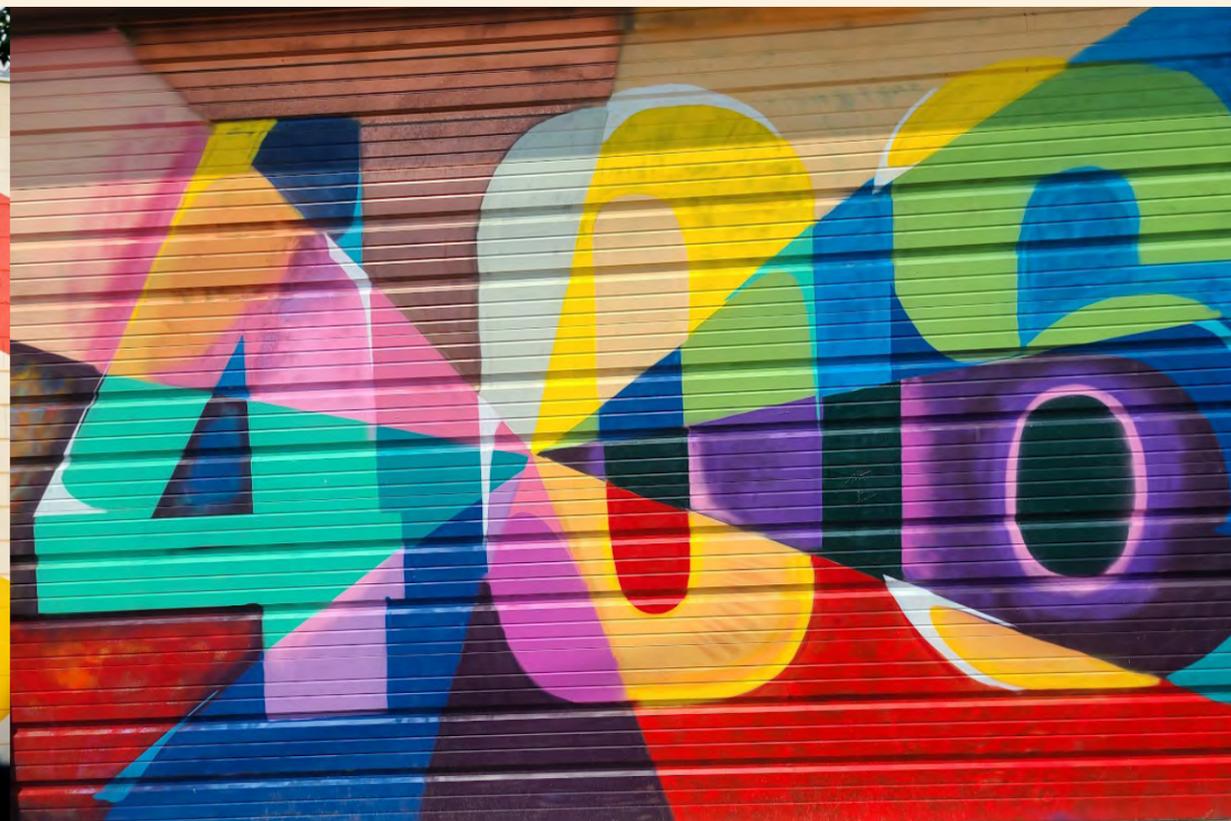
Another, entitled "The 406 Mural," was done during a community workshop where Great Falls residents were taught to spray paint. Together, they created the painting, and local artist Cameron Moberg overlaid Montana's "406" area code to tie it all together.

Several pieces were done by local high school students, such as the "Deep Creek Pizza" mural, a brightly colored depiction of Montana scenery painted on one of Townsend's oldest buildings.

No matter the subject, these murals, and others like them, facilitate artistic and cultural expression, community identity, beautification of public places and local engagement. The project was a collaborative effort, with Commerce staff using innovation and creativity to provide a tool for tourists and locals to enjoy the vibrant artwork found in MMS member communities.

The mural project is ongoing; MMS network communities are encouraged to continue submitting more mural photos on the project webpage. You may also see the murals by following Commerce's Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, where they are featured in "Montana Mural Monday" posts.

Photos courtesy of Dani Drane Photography and Cassy Patterson, Kellie Pierce and Vic Sample.

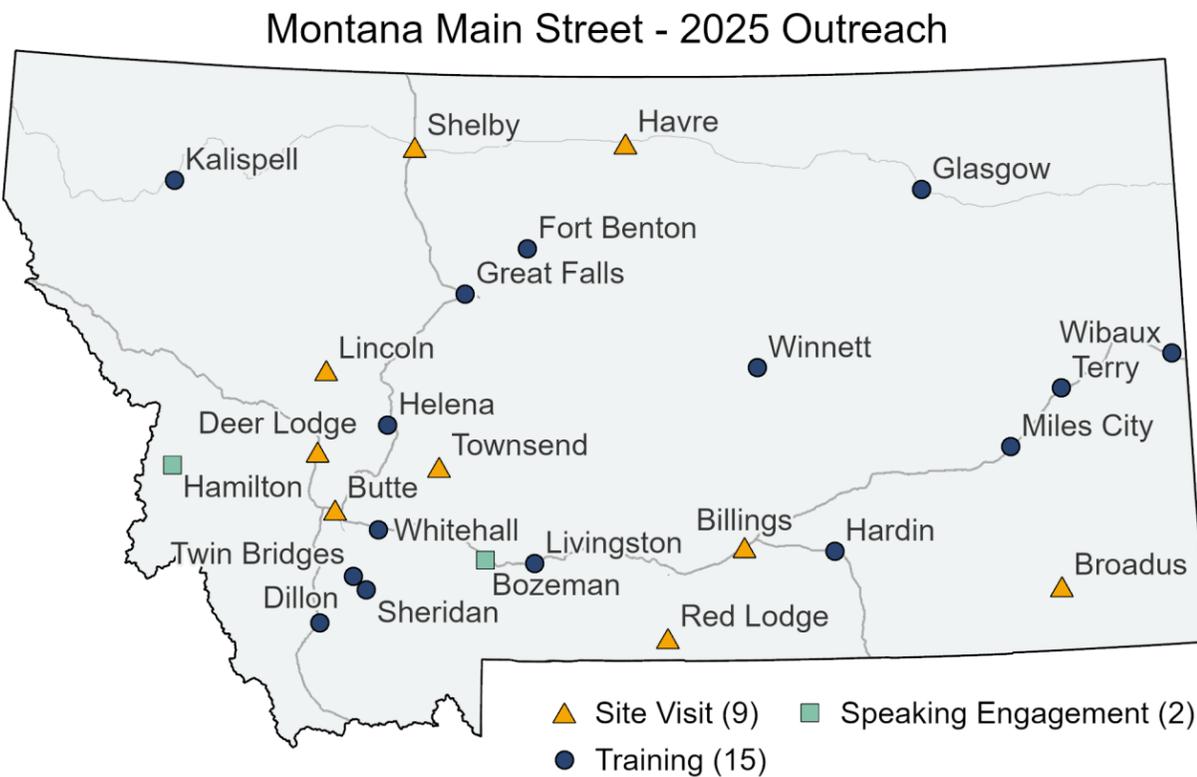


Impact and Outreach

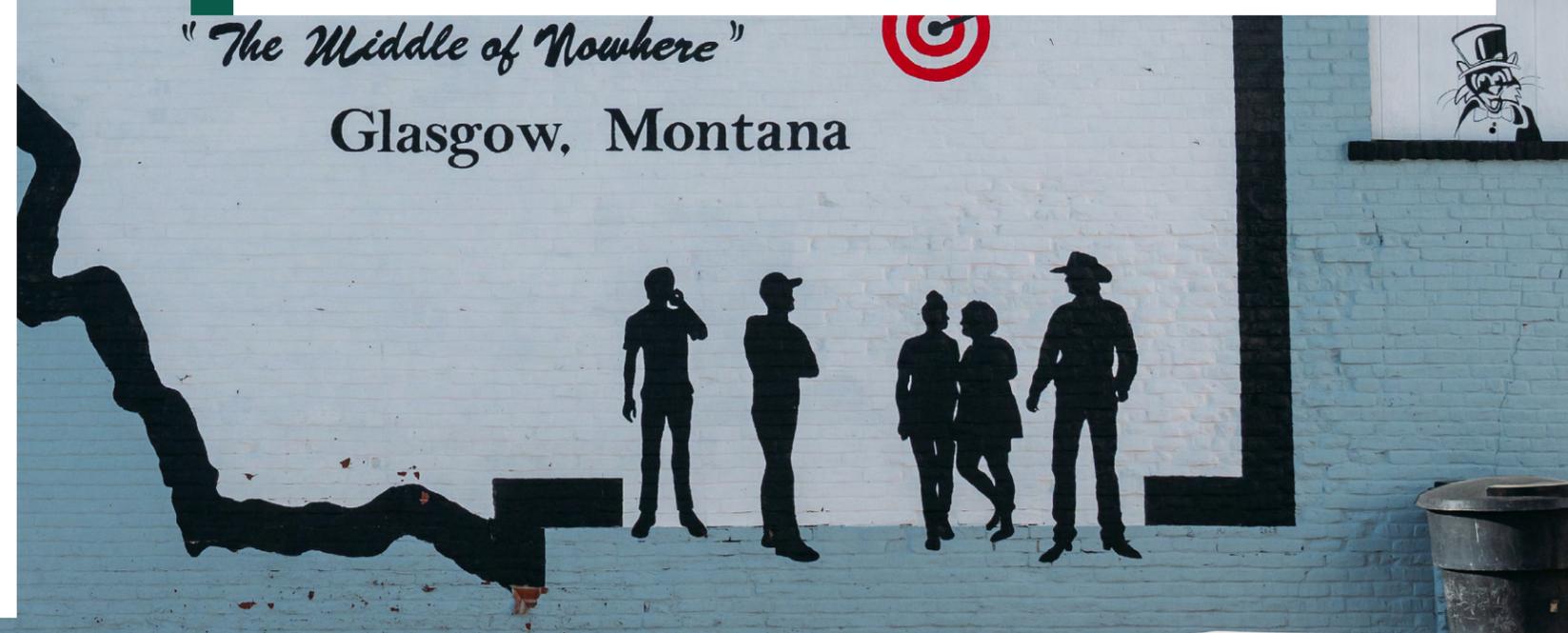
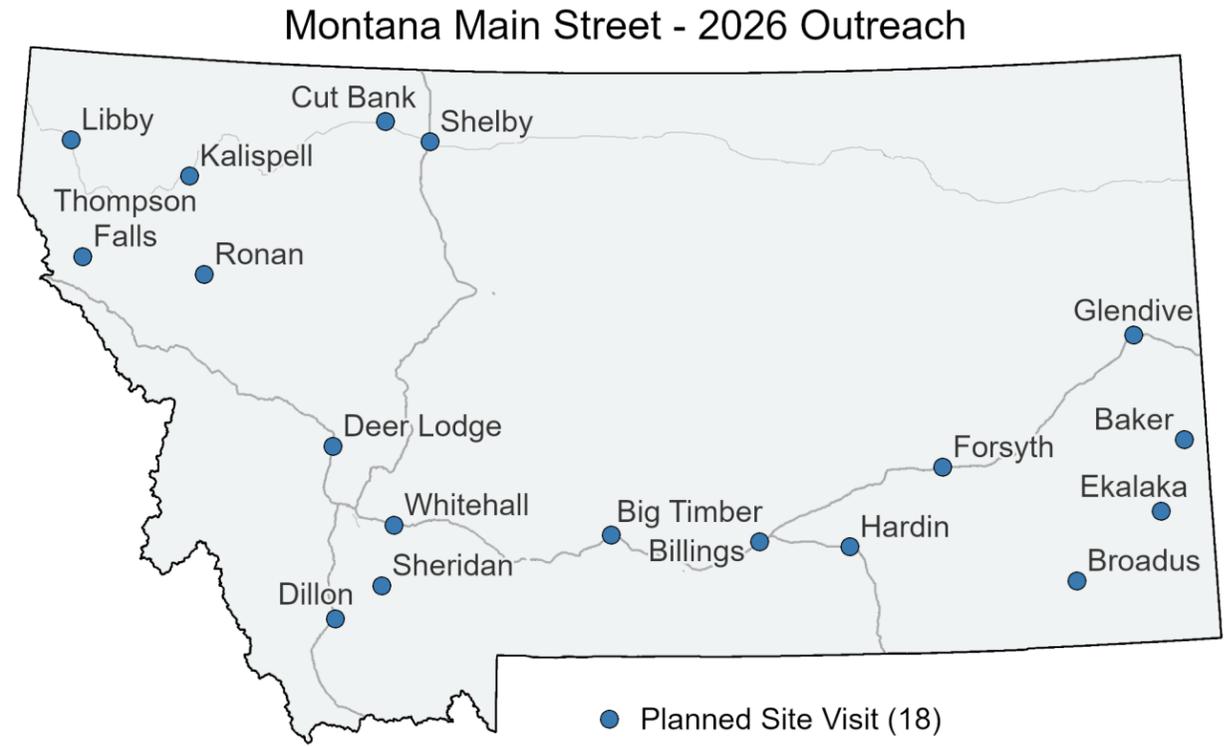
Year in Review

Commerce's Community and Economic Vitality team oversees the MMS, Montana Historic Preservation Grant and Community Development Block Grant Economic Development programs. In 2025, the team visited 26 communities, traveling nearly 10,000 miles. They met with community partners, offered workshops and trainings and performed site visits and project monitoring.

"Perhaps no program has had a greater impact on Glasgow than the MMS Program," said Shyanne Wallace, former executive director of Two Rivers Economic Growth. "This program has been invaluable, providing both funding and technical assistance that have helped us develop a strong foundation for sustainable growth. I cannot stress enough how essential this program is, not just for Glasgow, but for communities across Montana working to keep their main streets alive and thriving."



Commerce will continue to support communities in 2026 and looks forward to announcing a tentative schedule for formal site visits.



Quarterly Updates

MMS communities are required to capture downtown revitalization data and share it with the statewide program. Commerce collects this information to analyze trends, inform local program choices, relay patterns to stakeholders and shape the MMS Program.

Local coordinating programs reported the following data:

- 1,128 full-time and part-time jobs created
- 324 businesses created
- 98 rehabilitation projects completed
- 90 public improvement projects completed
- 51 new construction projects completed
- \$32,751,690 public investment
- \$28,084,817 private investment
- 6,573 events held
- 92,462 volunteer hours contributed



60 Minutes with Main Street

In 2024, MMS initiated a monthly virtual networking opportunity called “60 Minutes with Main Street.” Designed with local empowerment in mind, this call offers a platform for MMS network members to learn, share and provide updates. All calls are recorded and can be accessed by emailing the MMS coordinator.

Month	Organization	Learn in Thirty/ Spotlight Community Topic
January	Montana Nonprofit Association	Volunteerism and C3 Organizations
February	AARP	Livable Communities Grant
March	MSU Local Government Center	Board Training
April	Commerce Community MT Division	Community Technical Assistance Program
May	Commerce Community MT Division	Montana Association of Planners
June	Spotlight Community	Baker
July	Hamilton City Council	How to work with your local municipality
August	Commerce Community MT Division	Community Development Block Grant Program
September	MMS Program Coordinator	*2026 Outlook
October	Commerce Community MT Division	Montana Main Street Historic Preservation Grant
November	Spotlight Community	Great Falls
December	Commerce Business MT Division	Loan and grant programs

*Over the last two years, MMS staff traveled to member communities and solicited ideas regarding how the state program can be a better resource. As part of the two-year tour, Commerce staff created more tools to help local coordinating programs. The “60 Minutes with Main Street” call in September required a representative from each MMS community to be in attendance to learn about the 2026 changes and updates to the MMS Program. Participation reached 100%. Programming changes include:

- Formalized site visits
- Annual Participation and Member Agreement
- Excellence on Main Street Awards
- Annual report
- New resources, including the Local Coordinating Program Handbook and board handbooks, volunteer tips sheet and New Member Readiness Checklist

Grants Completed in 2025 Calendar Year

In addition to the grants awarded, the following communities completed projects during the calendar year:

Community	Grant Type	Fiscal Year Awarded	Project	Award Amount	Cumulative Costs Incurred Over Project's Life
Billings	Impact	2023	Light Bike trail mural installation project	\$40,000	\$49,740.02
Boulder	Impact	2025	Roof Repair for Boulder Rocks, LLC	\$150,000	\$150,000
Bozeman	Impact	2025	Complete plans for I-Ho Park	\$30,000	\$47,932.17
Broadus	Planning	2024	Develop a downtown master plan	\$30,000	\$29,940.85
Butte	Planning	2025	Re-lighten up "The Mountain Con" headframe	\$20,000	\$46,025.10
Ekalaka	Planning	2025	Develop a feasibility study for North Main Street	\$35,000	\$37,602.80
Glasgow	Impact	2025	Phase five wayfinding signage	\$30,000	\$36,357
Great Falls	Planning	2023	Economic vitality transformation study	\$20,000	\$60,000

Great Falls	Impact	2023	Installing wayfinding kiosks	\$50,000	\$42,475.60
Hardin	Planning	2023	Develop a wayfinding plan	\$33,333	\$44,682
Hardin	Planning	2025	Create a PAR for historic Hotel Becker	\$45,000	\$45,000
Miles City	Impact	2025	Interior renovations for Montana State's Telephone Building	\$100,000	\$133,001.61
Red Lodge	Planning	2023	Develop a revitalization plan	\$37,500	\$75,500
Shelby	Impact	2023	Facade improvements including a marquee replacement to Roxy Theatre	\$130,000	\$143,948.54
Townsend	Impact	2023	Develop "The Nook"	\$39,700	\$44,509.89



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