



Volume 1

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NEWSLETTER

STRENGTHENING MONTANA
ONE BRIDGE, ONE PIPE, ONE MILE AT A TIME

HELENA'S GROUNDWATER INNOVATION SECURES WATER FOR DECADES

With water rights harder to secure and drought risks rising, Helena partnered with MIC member [Morrison-Maierle](#) to secure its water future. A citywide groundwater study and flexible, data-driven well testing at 11 public sites unlocked new sources and protected valuable water rights before they expired. Wells not suited for drinking were repurposed for irrigation to save costs and preserve supplies. The result: 13 recommended wells across three areas will provide Helena with a sustainable, affordable, and resilient water supply. This project is a model for how adaptive planning and smart teamwork can set Montana communities up for long-term success.

2026 MCA WINTER CONVENTION

Registration for the 2026 MCA Winter Convention in Billings is now open. The event will be held January 21-23 at the DoubleTree by Hilton and will focus on mental health and wellness. Earlybird pricing is \$500 per person until December 31, after which registration increases to \$575. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

[LEARN MORE](#)

MONTANA RANKS 46TH IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

An analysis of U.S. Census data finds Montana is investing the fifth least per capita in public infrastructure among all states, at \$1,340 per resident. While national spending has surged to a generational high, driven largely by federal funding and climate resilience needs, Montana's growth lags behind at just +21.2% over five years (and shows a slight inflation-adjusted decline). With labor shortages, rising costs, and federal funding set to expire in 2026, closing this investment gap will be critical for the state's future competitiveness and resilience.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

MONTANA STATE PRISON INVESTING IN MODERN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Montana Department of Corrections is moving forward with the installation of [new, modern water and sewer systems at the Montana State Prison](#). Funded by a \$21 million appropriation, this upgrade will address persistent leaks and outdated pipes dating back to the 1970s. Portable showers, bottled water, and emergency repairs are currently in place as crews work to complete both immediate fixes and long-term upgrades as part of a wider \$211 million facility renovation.

MILWAUKEE BRIDGE PROJECT MOVES FORWARD AMID \$160K FUNDING CONCERN

Prairie County's long-awaited Milwaukee Bridge Resurfacing and Rehabilitation Project is slowly advancing, with federal officials reaffirming their commitment despite design delays. The updated schedule targets final design by February 2026, bidding in March and April, and construction from June to September. The county fears further setbacks could jeopardize \$160,000 in Treasure State Endowment Program funding from the Montana Department of Commerce. Local leaders are keeping the state informed to preserve the funds as the decade-long effort moves forward.

CLEAN WATER ON THE WAY FOR WORDEN AND BALLANTINE

After five years of relying on bottled water, Worden and Ballantine are seeing real progress. An \$11 million project is replacing 1950s-era pipes and shallow, contaminated wells with deeper, safer infrastructure. Local businesses helped keep fresh water available during years of planning and regulatory work. Once construction wraps up in June 2026, residents will finally be able to drink safely from the tap again. This upgrade highlights Montana's commitment to practical, community-first infrastructure solutions.

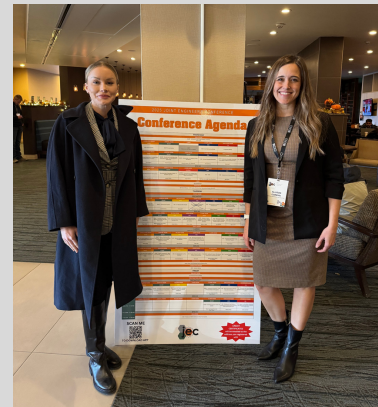
PARK CITY BOIL ADVISORY

Stillwater County issued a boil water advisory for a small area of Park City after coliform bacteria were found in a neighborhood well system. Incidents like this underscore the need for reliable water infrastructure to ensure safe, resilient service for Montana communities.

READ THE STORY HERE

MIC SESSION AT THE JOINT ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

We were excited to present at the 2026 Joint Engineers Conference, diving into Montana's infrastructure needs and the importance of sharing data, progress, and remaining gaps. By highlighting successes and challenges, we help leaders and partners across the state understand what's at stake. While there's no single solution to infrastructure needs, incremental investments and celebrating achievements are essential to keeping momentum going. Thank you to everyone who joined the session and shared their infrastructure project stories from around Montana!



VOTING MEMBER SPOTLIGHT MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) serves Montana's counties by monitoring legislative issues, providing a forum for local concerns, and delivering vital education and assistance to county officials. Formed in 1909 and reorganized in 1973 to establish a permanent office and professional staff, MACo has steadily expanded its support for counties through the creation of key member-driven programs, including the Workers Compensation Trust, the Property and Casualty Trust, and the Health Care Trust. Over the years, MACo has also brought essential services in-house to reduce costs and strengthen efficiency for its members. Guided by goals focused on legislative engagement, public education, government innovation, and responsible tax reform, MACo remains a central partner in advancing effective, responsive county governance across Montana.



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