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**Research and Innovative Technology Administration -- News**

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## **Montana State University Receives RITA Grant for Education and Research at Western Transportation Institute**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) announced today that a \$1.3 million federal grant has been awarded to Montana State University's Western Transportation Institute to apply research and the latest technologies to improve transportation safety and mobility in rural areas.

The Western Transportation Institute (WTI) is part of the national University Transportation Centers (UTC) program, which is administered by RITA. RITA is dedicated to coordinating the Department's research and development programs and advancing innovative technology solutions to the challenges facing America's transportation system. Grant recipients are required to provide matching funds.

"UTC programs attract talented researchers and students today to engage them in creating the transportation system of tomorrow," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta. "This grant demonstrates the importance of research and technology to the Department's mission of making sure that transportation continues to be an engine of economic growth for the United States well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

WTI conducts research, education and technology transfer that focuses on rural transportation issues such as weather and winter mobility, transportation management and public safety, travel and tourism, and pavement and materials. The Institute also trains engineers and professionals with the skills required for today's modern transportation system. More information about WTI can be found at <http://www.coe.montana.edu/wti>.

More than 75 colleges and universities throughout the United States participate in the UTC program conducting transportation research, education and technology transfer. Last year, UTC colleges and universities graduated over 1,100 students with advanced transportation-related degrees, offered almost 2,000 undergraduate and graduate transportation courses, conducted 300 research projects, and trained 32,000 practicing transportation professionals.

More information about the UTC program can be found at [www.rita.dot.gov](http://www.rita.dot.gov).

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