



THE MONTANA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

2026 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE



FEBRUARY 15-18, 2026



BILLINGS HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. MACo Board of Directors Meeting

Room: Yellowstone

5:00 p.m. MACo Board of Directors Dinner

Room: Big Horn

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

8:30 - 10:30 a.m. PCT Trustees Meeting

Room: Boulder

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. HCT Trustees Lunch Meeting

Room: Big Horn

1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Opening General Session

Room: Jefferson

*Presiding: MACo President, Gordon Oelkers,
Roosevelt County*

1. Flag Ceremony, Marine Corps League
2. National Anthem, Angie Paulson,
Broadwater County Clerk & Recorder
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes
5. Bylaw Amendment (1 vote per county)
6. Welcome Address
7. President's Report, Gordon Oelkers
8. Executive Director's Report, Eric Bryson

1:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

2027 Legislation Lowdown

President Matt Regier, Montana Senate

Senate President Matt Regier will share ongoing efforts regarding potential 2027 legislation that may impact counties.

2:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Room: Gallatin

Coffee Break/Exhibitor Trade Show

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Transportation Planning & Funding

*Ben Gilsdorf, Associate Legislative Director for
Transportation, NACo*

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16 CONTINUED...

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Senate Bill 117 & Budget Need-to-knows

Jason Rittal, Deputy Director, MACo & Nancy Everson, Governmental Finance Director, MACo

MACo staff will break down how SB 117 works and what's new with the mill levy form so you're ready for the upcoming budget year.

4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Room: Stillwater

MACo Tax, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

Commissioner Jason Strouf, Chair, Custer County

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Room: Yellowstone

Coalition of Wildlife Counties Meeting

Commissioner Bill Wallace, Chair, Sweet Grass County

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Room: Gardner

Oil, Gas, & Coal Counties Meeting

Commissioner Richard Dunbar, Chair, Phillips County

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

MACo Committee Meetings

All attendees are encouraged to attend committee meetings regardless of appointment to receive pertinent updates and engage in policy discussions.

Room: Boulder

Agriculture Committee

Commissioner Larry Hendrickson, Chair, Liberty County

Room: Stillwater

Community Economic Development & Labor Committee

Commissioner Joe Briggs, Chair, Cascade County

Room: Big Horn

Health & Human Services Committee

Commissioner Joette Woods, Chair, Liberty County

Room: Yellowstone

Land Use, Planning & Development Committee

Commissioner Jeff Burrows, Chair, Ravalli County

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 CONTINUED...

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Break/Exhibitor Trade Show

Room: Gallatin

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Public Lands Committee & MT Coalition of Forest Counties (Joint Meeting)

Room: Gardner

Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Chair, Ravalli County

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

MACo Committee Meetings Continued...

Room: Boulder

Energy Committee

Commissioner Shane Gorder, Chair, Richland County

Room: Stillwater

Justice & Public Safety Committee

Commissioner Kevin Krausz, Chair, Custer County

Room: Big Horn

Transportation Committee

Commissioner George Real Bird III, Chair, Big Horn County

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Luncheon - PCT/WCT Membership Meeting

Room: Madison

All Attendees Encouraged to Attend

Sponsored by Western States Cat

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Community Mental Health Unfiltered

Room: Jefferson

Moderator: Commissioner Jake Strissel, Hill County

Panel: Commissioner Joette Woods, Liberty County; Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, Lewis & Clark County; Megan Gibson, Director, Yellowstone County Behavioral Health; and Terry Kendrick, North Central MT Crisis Coalition

Counties and frontline providers team up to unpack local mental health challenges, fixes in the works, and talk about what's next.

2:30 -3:00 p.m.

Coffee Break/Exhibitor Trade Show

Room: Gallatin

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 CONTINUED...

3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

The Scoop on Statewide Mental Health Today

Senator John Esp, SD 29; Meghan Peel, Administrator, Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Division, MT Department of Public Health & Human Services; Karen Alley, Associate General Counsel, MACo

Get the full rundown on mental health service delivery, state plans, system redesign efforts, and recent legislation affecting county detention centers and crisis system management.

4:30 - 4:45 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Updates from the Montana Congressional Delegation

4:45 - 6:15 p.m.

Room: Boulder

Urban Counties Coalition Meeting

Commissioner Randy Brodehl, Chair, Flathead County

4:45 - 5:45 p.m.

Room: Yellowstone

Hard Rock Mining Counties Meeting

Commissioner Bill Wallace, Chair, Sweet Grass County

4:45 - 5:45 p.m.

Room: Gardner

MT Natural Resources Coalition Meeting

Commissioner Todd Devlin, Chair, Prairie County

4:45 - 5:45 p.m.

Room: Big Horn

Reservation Counties Meeting

Commissioner George Real Bird III, Chair, Big Horn County

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Room: Jefferson

Emergency Management Workforce Project

Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras; Delila Bruno, Administrator, MT DES; Doug Dodge, Jefferson County Office of Emergency Services; Jake Ganieany, Bureau Chief, Recovery and Mitigation; Burke Honzel, Bureau Chief, MT DES; Tom Kuntz, Chief, Red Lodge Fire Department; Betsy Ross, Training & Exercise Supervisor, MT DES; and David Stamey, Chief of Emergency Services, Stillwater County

A statewide look at emergency management--the why, what, and how, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A to wrap it up.

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 CONTINUED...

10:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Room: Gallatin

Coffee Break/Exhibitor Trade Show

Sponsored by Tractor & Equipment Co.

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Friend, Foe, or Fascinating? Practical AI Applications for Counties

Karli King, IT Manager, MACo

From curiosity to caution, if you've wondered how AI fits into county work, this session is for you.

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Room: Madison

Luncheon - Fireside Chat with Senator Sheehy

Senator Tim Sheehy; and Eric Bryson, Executive Director, MACo

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Tales from the Trenches

Dan Clark, Director, MSU Local Government Center

Memorable stories from the field, highlighting unique challenges counties have faced and how these issues were addressed.

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

Aerial Recon - The Hunt for New Construction

Jason Brown, Senior District Manager, Eagleview

Learn how the Department of Revenue takes to the skies to capture high resolution imagery of newly taxable property.

3:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Room: Gallatin

Coffee Break/Exhibitor Trade Show

Sponsored by Center for Tech and Civic Life

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Room: Jefferson

BLM Grazing Permits & Recent Wins

Commissioner Ross Butcher, Fergus County; and Commissioner Todd Devlin, Prairie County

The Montana Natural Resources Coalition will share insights on their federal policy advocacy work, with a spotlight on BLM grazing permits.

MIDWINTER MIXER STARTS AT 4:30 P.M.!

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 CONTINUED...



JOIN US FOR THE

Midwinter Mixer

4:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
MADISON ROOM



HOSTED BY YOUR VERY OWN TRUSTS
MACo HCT . PCT . WCT

TRUST US, IT'S A GOOD TIME!

MACo ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

We sincerely appreciate our MACo Associate Partners for their active involvement. Their support and collaboration are crucial to the success of our initiatives and the advancement of our shared goals.

GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



MACo & NACo ENDORSED PROGRAMS



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TO BE A 100% MEMBER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES!



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Live Healthy U.S. Counties

The exclusive prescription, dental and health discounts program **free** to NACo member counties

OUR TECHNOLOGY
YOUR
RESULTS



eConnectDirect®

Multi-Bank Securities, Inc. (MBS) is proud that MACo has endorsed eConnectDirect® as an essential online investment solution designed to help Montana county finance officers manage their investment needs. This proprietary tool, developed by MBS, provides county finance officers access to thousands of fixed-income offerings from one source, making the process easy and intuitive. *To set up a free webinar, contact:*

Peter Torvik • (612) 360-2992 • ptorvik@mbssecurities.com

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

MACo provides various resources for counties, including documents to help with the annual budgeting process, calculation forms, and much more!

mtcounties.org/resources-data/

