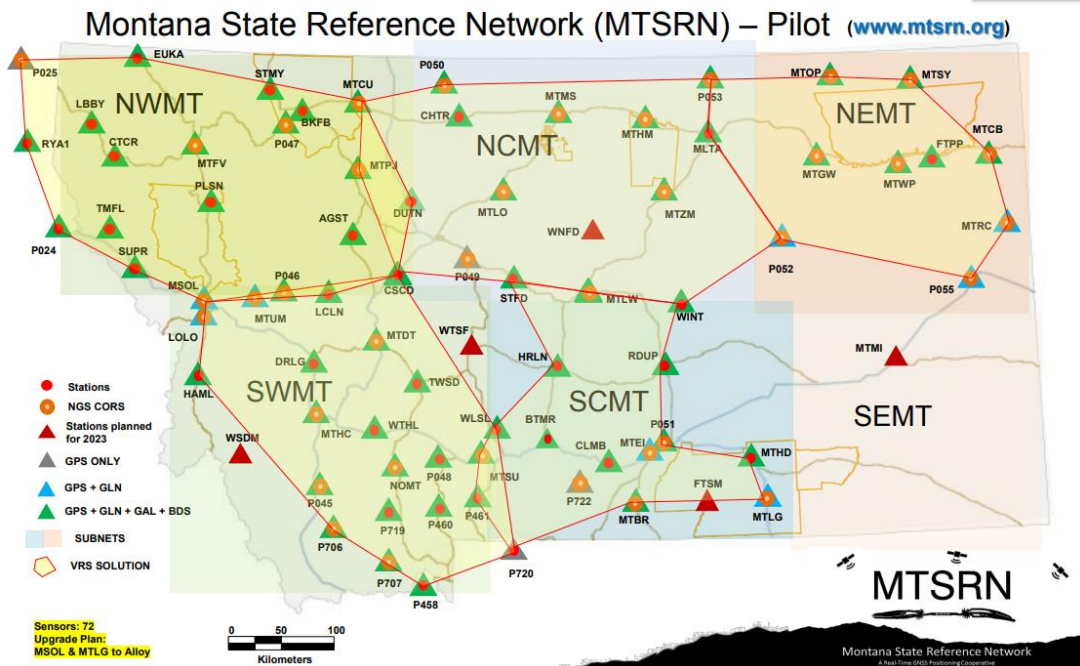


Montana Real Time Network

Interim Budget Committee – Section E Report
December 1, 2023

Also available online as a digital report: <https://arcg.is/0uy5j00>

Nov 16, 2023



Montana State Reference Network (MTSRN) as of November 16, 2023. To view a live Sensor Map, visit [Montana State Reference Network – Sensor Map \(mtsrn.org\)](http://Montana State Reference Network – Sensor Map (mtsrn.org))

December 2023 Progress Update

Administrative Rules

The State Library Commission is seeking public comment on proposed action on rules regarding the Montana Real Time Network. Comments will be posted after the deadline (December 1, 2023). The library received two public comments as of 11/30, neither of which were opposed to the proposed rules. These rules are required by statute and are necessary to implement a subscription rate to fund the Montana Real Time Network. The Commission will discuss and act on the proposed new rules at their meeting on December 6, 2023. See the following notice for the proposed rule changes: [10-102-2301 \(Montana State Library\) Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal](#)

Enterprise Fund

A proprietary fund for handling subscription fees is in place, and MSL has authority to collect and expend funds through [Senate Bill 60](#).

Process to Collect Fees from Subscribers

Configuration of [PayZang](#), the State's electronic payment processing service, is underway. The e-commerce site for users to sign agreements and purchase subscriptions/logins is on target for release in winter 2024, to coincide with the conclusion of the current agreement between Trimble and MDT. MSL is refining draft agreements for contributors, contributing organizations, and users.

FTE Created through SB 60

MSL received two permanent FTE to be funded out of the proprietary fund, the RTN coordinator and a support position. Funded as a modified position until the receipt of proprietary funding, the RTN coordinator joined MSL's staff in December 2021 to provide project management, identify standards, develop a business model, and perform outreach. The State Library anticipates filling the new support position later this fiscal year.

Outreach

MSL is developing a communications plan to engage existing and potential users. This will include, but not be limited to, outreach via professional organization tools (MAGIP, MARLS), direct communication to users/subscribers via GovDelivery, attendance at trade shows and professional meetings and conferences, and special presentations with industry advocates and target communities. MSL completed the following outreach:

- Updates to Legislature during the 2023 Session.
- Updates to MGIAC and MSL Commission in 2022 and 2023.
- Targeted RTN presentations in 2022 and 2023.

Collaboration between MSL and MDT

MSL reviewed a draft MOU with legal counsel on November 17. Upon execution, the MOU will establish an updated agreement of cooperation between MSL and MDT for the maintenance and operation of the RTN. The roles and responsibilities described in the draft MOU include:

- Montana State Library – end user support, network operations, governance, reporting, website maintenance.
- Montana Department of Transportation – network partner, meetings, build out and maintenance of network stations that meet MDT business interests.

The MOU further defines financial responsibility. At the end of the Trimble/MDT agreement, currently in effect until January 31, 2024, MDT and MSL will transition operations from the vendor to state partners. The cloud hosting services for the MTSRN will reside with Trimble. MSL will pay for associated network software costs. MDT will continue to pay for the MDT owned stations, including the cost of installation, maintenance, and repairs while MSL will build and maintain partnerships to carry the responsibility for non-MDT owned station nodes.

MTSRN Objectives

Objective 1: Establish RTN administrative office and bring pilot network under Montana direction.

Status: Complete

- RTN coordinator hired: December 2021.
- MTSRN Extended Pilot launch date: March 2022.
- Status reporting: [MTSRN status map published online](#), ongoing status reports to key stakeholders (see outreach section above).

Objective 2: Develop and implement a subscription-based funding model.

Status: In Progress

- RTN business plan: planning underway in collaboration with MDT.
- Customers subscribe to the RTN: target start date March 2024.
- Revenue is generated from the subscription service: target start date March 2024.

Objective 3: Operate the existing network and identify priority coverage areas.

Status: In Progress (Ongoing)

- The number of reference base stations increases to meet Montana's business needs: 72 base stations as of November 2023, at least five additional stations expected to come online in the coming year. To achieve the goal of statewide coverage, we currently estimate that MTSRN will require a minimum of 131 stations at completion, though this number may be significantly impacted by station placement and other factors related to station performance.
- Establish RTN working group: in development.