

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

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Governor Bullock Unveils New "Welcome to Montana" Highway Signs

*Montana Department of Commerce and Department of Transportation
Collaborate on Innovative Makeover for State's Highway Signs*

(HELENA) – Governor Steve Bullock today announced his plan to update and replace the current *Welcome to Montana* highway signs. Governor Bullock was joined by Meg O'Leary, Director of the Montana Department of Commerce and Mike Tooley, Director of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) at the MDT Sign Shop in Helena to unveil the new design of the highway signs and give event attendees a glimpse into the MDT sign fabrication process. The signs were designed, produced and created in-house.

"The new highway signs will greet visitors and welcome Montanans home in a way we can all be proud of," said Bullock. "The powerful design and durable, cost-effective manufacturing is the perfect example of effective state government—interagency collaboration addressing the needs of Montanans."

The Montana Office of Tourism at the Department of Commerce first approached the Department of Transportation about redesigning the *Welcome to Montana* highway signs last year, hoping to further their existing efforts to brand Montana.

"This was the perfect opportunity to leverage the assets that we've built at the Department of Commerce," said Director Meg O'Leary. "We wanted to create a design that would not only evoke excitement and give the visitor a sense of what's to come, but also to cement our position that Montana is a premier tourism destination and a great place to do business."

The timing was great for the Department of Transportation, who had been planning to reevaluate and design new signs to replace the existing signs, which were designed in the late 1980s. The Department of Commerce was able to design a sign in-house that is consistent with the Montana Office of Tourism's efforts to brand Montana both domestically and internationally, and the Department of Transportation had a chance to use new technology to manufacture the signs.

Traditionally, MDT used screen printing to create signs. This was limited to a few colors and took at least a day per color to create. Now MDT is using a high-tech digital printer, which can print complex photo-quality signs that are long-lasting and quickly manufactured. Many of the images featured on the signs are photographs taken by Donita Sexton, an award-winning photographer on staff with the Montana Office of Tourism.

“The new *Welcome to Montana* signage is the result of MDT’s new technology and design partnership with the Department of Commerce,” said Director Mike Tooley. “The new signs will give the traveling public a glimpse of Montana’s beauty and encourage them to explore the many authentic experiences Montana has to offer.”

The Department of Transportation will begin replacing the signs in the spring of 2014, with all the signs to be replaced by the end of summer.

For more information about the Montana Department of Commerce and Montana Office of Tourism’s efforts to brand Montana, contact Ronja M. Abel at (406) 841-2557. For more information about the Montana Department of Transportation highway signs, contact Lori Ryan at (406) 444-6821.

A map of highway sign locations can be found [here](#).

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