

= Missoula , Montana =

Missoula / m??zu?l? / is a city in the U.S. state of Montana and is the county seat of Missoula County . It is located along the Clark Fork River near its confluences with the Bitterroot and Blackfoot Rivers in western Montana and at the convergence of five mountain ranges , thus is often described as the " hub of five valleys " . In 2015 , the United States Census Bureau estimated the city 's population at 71 @, @ 022 and the population of the Missoula Metropolitan Area at 114 @, @ 181 . In the 1990s , Missoula overtook Great Falls as Montana ' s second ? largest city , behind Billings . Missoula is home to the University of Montana , a public research university .

Missoula was founded in 1860 as Hellgate Trading Post while still part of Washington Territory . By 1866 , the settlement had moved east , 5 miles (8 km) upstream , and renamed Missoula Mills , later shortened to Missoula . The mills provided supplies to western settlers traveling along the Mullan Road . The establishment of Fort Missoula in 1877 to protect settlers further stabilized the economy . The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1883 brought rapid growth and the maturation of the local lumber industry . In 1893 , the Montana Legislature chose the city as the site for the state 's first university . Along with the U.S. Forest Service headquarters founded in 1908 , lumber and the university remained staples of the local economy for the next hundred years .

By the 1990s , Missoula 's lumber industry had gradually disappeared , and as of 2009 , the city 's largest employers were the University of Montana , Missoula County Public Schools , and Missoula 's two hospitals . The city is governed by a mayor ? council government with twelve city council members , two from each of the six wards . In and around Missoula are 400 acres (160 ha) of parkland , 22 miles (35 km) of trails , and nearly 5 @, @ 000 acres (2 @, @ 000 ha) of open @-@ space conservation land with adjacent Mount Jumbo home to grazing elk and mule deer during the winter . The city is also home to both Montana 's largest and its oldest active breweries as well as the Montana Grizzlies , one of the strongest college football programs in the Division I Football Championship Subdivision of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) . Notable residents include the first woman in the U.S. Congress , Jeannette Rankin , and the United States ' longest @-@ serving Senate Majority Leader , Mike Mansfield .

= = History = =

Archaeological artifacts date the Missoula Valley 's earliest inhabitants to the end of the last ice age 12 @, @ 000 years ago with settlements as early as 3500 BCE . From the 1700s until European settlements began a hundred years later , it was primarily the Salish , Kootenai , Pend d 'Oreille , Blackfeet , and Shoshone who used the land . Located at the confluence of five mountain valleys , the Missoula Valley was heavily traversed by local and distant native tribes that periodically went to the Eastern Montana plains in search of bison , leading to conflict . The narrow valley at Missoula 's eastern entrance was so strewn with human bones from repeated ambushes that French fur trappers would later refer to this area as Porte de l 'Enfer , translated as " Gate of Hell " . Hell Gate would remain the name of the area until it was renamed " Missoula " in 1866 .

The Lewis and Clark Expedition brought the first U.S. citizens to the area . They twice stopped just south of Missoula at Traveler 's Rest . They camped there the first time on their westbound trip in September 1805 . When they stayed there again on their return in June ? July 1806 , Clark left heading south along the Bitterroot River and Lewis traveled north , then east , through Hellgate Canyon . In 1860 , Hell Gate Village was established 5 miles (8 km) west of present @-@ day downtown by Christopher P. Higgins and Frank Worden as a trading post to serve travelers on the recently completed Mullan Road , the first wagon road to cross the Rocky Mountains to the inland of the Pacific Northwest . The desire for a more convenient water supply to power a lumber and flour mill led to the movement of the settlement to its modern location in 1864 .

The Missoula Mills replaced Hell Gate Village as the economic power of the valley and replaced it as the county seat in 1866 . The name " Missoula " came from the Salish name for the Clark Fork River , " nmesuletkw " , which roughly translates as " place of frozen water " . Fort Missoula was established in 1877 to help protect further arriving settlers . Growth accelerated with the arrival of

the Northern Pacific Railway in 1883 , and the Town of Missoula was chartered the same year . In 1893 , Missoula was chosen as the location of the state 's first university , the University of Montana . The need for lumber for the railway and its bridges spurred the opening of multiple saw mills in the area and , in turn , the beginning of Missoula 's lumber industry , which remained the mainstay of the area 's economy for the next hundred years . The continued economic windfall from railroad construction and lumber mills led to a further boom in Missoula 's population . A. B. Hammond and Copper Kings Marcus Daly and William A. Clark competed fiercely in the region over lumber share and Missoula investments . The United States Forest Service work in Missoula began in 1905 . Missoula is also home of the smokejumpers ' headquarters and will be the site of the National Museum of Forest Service History . Nationally , there are nine Forest Service regions ; Region 1 is headquartered in Missoula .

Logging remained a mainstay of industry in Missoula with the groundbreaking of the Hoerner @-@ Waldorf pulp mill in 1956 , which resulted in protests over the resultant air pollution . An article in Life magazine thirteen years later speaks of Missoulians sometimes needing to drive with headlights on during the day to navigate through the smog . In 1979 , still almost 40 % of the county 's labor income came from the wood and paper products sector . The lumber industry was hit hard by the recession of the early 1980s , and Missoula 's economy began to diversify . By the early 1990s , the disappearance of many of the region 's log yards , along with legislation , had helped clean the skies dramatically .

As of 2009 , education and healthcare were Missoula 's leading industries ; the University of Montana , Missoula County Public Schools , and the city 's two hospitals were the largest employers . St. Patrick Hospital and Health Sciences Center , founded in 1873 , is the region 's only Level II trauma center and has undergone three major expansions since the 1980s . Likewise , the University of Montana grew 50 % and built or renovated 20 buildings from 1990 ? 2010 . It is expected that these industries as well as expansions in business and professional services , and retail will be the main engines of future growth .

== Geography ==

Missoula is located at the western edge of Montana approximately 45 miles (70 km) from the Idaho border . The city is at an elevation of 3 @,@ 209 feet (978 m) above sea level , with nearby Mount Sentinel and Mount Jumbo steeply rising to 5 @,@ 158 feet (1 @,@ 572 m) and 4 @,@ 768 feet (1 @,@ 453 m) respectively . According to the Census Bureau 's 2015 figures , the city had a total area of 29 @.@ 08 square miles (75 @.@ 3 km²) , of which , 28 @.@ 90 square miles (74 @.@ 9 km²) was land and 0 @.@ 184 square miles (0 @.@ 48 km²) was water .

Approximately 13 @,@ 000 years ago , the entire valley was at the bottom of Glacial Lake Missoula and as could be expected for a former lake bottom , the layout of Missoula is relatively flat and surrounded by steep hills . Evidence of the city of Missoula 's lake @-@ bottom past can be seen in the form of ancient horizontal wave @-@ cut shorelines on nearby Mount Sentinel and Mount Jumbo . At the location of present @-@ day University of Montana , the lake once had a depth of 950 feet (290 m) . The Clark Fork River enters the Missoula Valley from the east through Hellgate Canyon after joining the nearby Blackfoot River at the site of the former Milltown Dam . The Bitterroot River and multiple smaller tributaries join the Clark Fork on the western edge of Missoula . The city also sits at the convergence of five mountain ranges : the Bitterroot Mountains , Sapphire Range , Garnet Range , Rattlesnake Mountains , and the Reservation Divide , thus is often described as being the " hub of five valleys " .

== Flora and fauna ==

Located in the Northern Rockies , Missoula has a typical Rocky Mountain ecology . Local wildlife includes populations of white @-@ tailed deer , black bears , osprey , and bald eagles . During the winter , rapid snowmelt on Mount Jumbo due to its steep slope leaves grass available for grazing elk and mule deer . The rivers around Missoula provide nesting habitats for bank swallows , northern

rough @-@ winged swallows and belted kingfishers . Killdeer and spotted sandpipers can be seen foraging for insects along the gravel bars . Other species include song sparrows , catbirds , several species of warblers , and the pileated woodpecker . The rivers also provide cold , clean water for native fish such as westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout . The meandering streams also attract beaver and wood ducks . The parks also host a variety of snakes such as racers , garter snakes , and rubber boa .

Native riparian plant life includes sandbar willows and cottonwoods with Montana 's state tree , the ponderosa pine , also being prevalent . Other native plants include wetland species such as cattails and beaked @-@ sedge as well as shrubs and berry plants like Douglas hawthorn , chokecherry , and western snowberries . To the chagrin of local farmers , Missoula is also home to several noxious weeds , which multiple programs have set out to eliminate . Notable ones include Dalmatian toadflax , spotted knapweed , leafy spurge , St. John 's wort , and sulfur cinquefoil . Controversially , the Norway maples that line many of Missoula 's older streets have also been declared an invasive species .

== Climate ==

Missoula has a semi @-@ arid climate (Köppen climate classification BSk) , with cold and moderately snowy winters , hot and dry summers , and short , crisp springs and autumns . Winters are usually milder than much of the rest of the state due to its location west of the Rockies , allowing it to be influenced more by mild , moist Pacific air and avoiding the worst of cold snaps ; however , this means precipitation is not at a strong minimum during winter . Winter snowfall averages 39 @.@ 5 inches (100 cm) , on average occurring between October 30 and April 20 . As with the rest of the state , summers are very sunny , and the average diurnal temperature variation is more than 30 ° F (17 ° C) from late June through late September , due to the relative aridity . The monthly daily average temperature ranges from 23 @.@ 9 ° F (? 4 @.@ 5 ° C) in December to 68 @.@ 6 ° F (20 @.@ 3 ° C) in July . There is an average of 24 days with temperatures above 90 ° F (32 ° C) , 45 days where the temperature does not rise above freezing , and 7 @.@ 8 days with temperatures below 0 ° F (? 18 ° C) .

== Demographics ==

The median income for a household in the city was \$ 30 @,@ 366 , and the median income for a family was \$ 42 @,@ 103 . Males had a median income of \$ 30 @,@ 686 versus \$ 21 @,@ 559 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 17 @,@ 166 . About 11 @.@ 7 % of families and 19 @.@ 7 % of the population were below the poverty line , including 20 @.@ 5 % of those under age 18 and 9 @.@ 3 % of those age 65 or over . 40 @.@ 3 % of Missoula residents age 25 and older have a bachelor 's or advanced college degree .

== 2010 census ==

As of 2010 's census , there were 66 @,@ 788 people , 29 @,@ 081 households , and 13 @,@ 990 families residing in the city . The population density was 2 @,@ 427 @.@ 8 inhabitants per square mile (937 @.@ 4 / km²) . There were 30 @,@ 682 housing units at an average density of 1 @,@ 115 @.@ 3 per square mile (430 @.@ 6 / km²) . The racial makeup of the city was 92 @.@ 1 % White , 0 @.@ 5 % African American , 2 @.@ 8 % Native American , 1 @.@ 2 % Asian , 0 @.@ 1 % Pacific Islander , 0 @.@ 5 % from other races , and 2 @.@ 8 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2 @.@ 9 % of the population .

There were 29 @,@ 081 households of which 23 @.@ 6 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 34 @.@ 4 % were married couples living together , 9 @.@ 6 % had a female householder with no husband present , 4 @.@ 1 % had a male householder with no wife present , and 51 @.@ 9 % were non @-@ families . 35 @.@ 0 % of all households were made up of individuals and 9 @.@ 1 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The

average household size was 2.18 and the average family size was 2.82 .

The median age in the city was 30.9 years . 17.9 % of residents were under the age of 18 ; 19.7 % were between the ages of 18 and 24 ; 29.6 % were from 25 to 44 ; 22.1 % were from 45 to 64 ; and 10.7 % were 65 years of age or older . The gender makeup of the city was 49.9 % male and 50.1 % female .

= = Economy = =

Missoula began as a trading post in the 1860s situated along the Mullan Military Road to take advantage of the first route across the Bitterroot Mountains to the plains of Eastern Washington . Its designation as county seat in 1866 and location of the hastily built Fort Missoula in 1877 ensured Missoula 's status as a regional commercial center ; a status further consolidated in 1883 with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway . The railroad expanded Missoula 's trade area to cover a 150-mile radius , and Missoula 's location as the railway 's division point and repair shops provided hundreds of jobs . When the railway began expanding again in 1898 , increased freight shipments came through the city , and with the arrival of the Milwaukee Road and regional office for the U.S. Forest Service as well as the opening of the Flathead Indian Reservation to settlement all within a couple years of each other beginning in 1908 , the economy began to rapidly expand .

Lumber mills , originally built to provide construction-grade materials for homes and business but then expanded to entice and then meet the demands of the railroad , profited from an increase in demand from railroad expansion and the nation at large . The Bonner mill , owned the Northern Pacific and Copper King Marcus Daly , became the largest producer of lumber in the northwest . In 1908 , Missoula 's location as both a major lumber producer and a regional commercial center helped land the city the regional office for the newly establish U.S. Forest Service created to help manage the nation 's timber supply . Over the next century , Missoula 's various lumber industries was consolidated under various entities such as the Anaconda Company in the 1970s and Champion International Paper through the 1980s until most were under control of Plum Creek Timber , all the while demand in timber dropped . In 2007 , a downward spiral of Missoula 's lumber industry began with the closure of a plywood plant in Bonner , the closure of Bonner 's sawmill in 2008 , and the closing of the Smurfit-Stone Container pulp mill in 2010 .

Since opening in 1895 , the University of Montana has had a major impact on the development of Missoula 's economy . In addition to the economic advantage from accommodating the student body , it gave the city an educated workforce not available in most of the state . The university has a close relationship with the city as Missoula 's largest employer and with the millions of dollars the school brings into the city through visitors of school-sponsored sporting and cultural events . The university also houses Missoula 's only business incubator , the Montana Technology Enterprise Center (MonTEC) , and several start-up businesses .

Beyond timber and education , Missoula 's economic mainstay has been of one as a regional trade center . Missoula has an immediate trade area of approximately 180,000 residents . The Missoula is the hub of its Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Economic Area , which includes the Montana Counties of Flathead , Lake , Lincoln , Mineral , Missoula , Ravalli , and Sanders . As of 2011 , the BEA listed the economic area population at 306,050 . Key businesses sectors serving the area include health care , retail shopping , transportation , financial services , government and social services , education , events , arts and culture . Health care in particular is one of Missoula 's fastest growing industries with St. Patrick Hospital (western Montana 's only Level II Trauma center) and the Community Medical Center already the city 's second and third largest employers behind the university . 55 % of employment in Missoula is made up of the service and retail sectors . Export industries are concentrated in heavy and civil engineering , construction , beverage production , technical services , truck transportation , and forestry- , logging- , and wood-related industries . In addition to nearly 4 million out of state visitors annually , which makes tourism a significant aspect of the Missoula economy , Missoula also is home to a vibrant sector of alternative healthcare .

As of 2013 , Missoula ranked 299 nationally in gross metropolitan product with an output of \$ 5

billion , while the city 's total personal income ranked 333 at \$ 4 @. @ 18 billion , an increase of more than 47 % since 2003 . As of 2013 , per capita personal income ranked 239 at \$ 37 @, @ 397 a year , 84 % of the national average . The Missoula metropolitan area 's unemployment rate was 3 @. @ 7 % As of June 2015 , dropping nearly 0 @. @ 8 % in the twelve months prior .

= = Culture = =

Missoula , often considered the cultural center of Montana , is the location of the state 's first university , and an eclectic mix of loggers , hippies , college students , sports fans , and retirees . Community events generally take place downtown either outdoors or in one of the several downtown buildings listed on the National Historic Registry .

Since 2006 , the River City Roots Festival has been an event each August with music , beer , food , and art , and generally attracts crowds of 15 @, @ 000 . The longest @-@ standing event downtown has been the Missoula Farmers Market that was founded in 1972 , which provides an outlet for Western Montana produce on Saturday mornings from May to October as well as Tuesday evenings from July to early September . An arts and crafts People 's Market and a Clark Fork Market run concurrently . Downtown hosts " First Friday Missoula " , a gallery walk on the first Friday of the month to feature local art from museums and galleries , such as that of Monte Dolack . Missoula celebrates " First Night Missoula " on New Year 's Eve , which includes food and live entertainment . The " Festival of the Book " to celebrate the literature of the American West was rebranded the " Montana Book Festival " in 2015 . Missoula 's two historic theatres both hold annual film festivals : the Roxy hosting the International Wildlife Film Festival , established in 1977 as the first juried wildlife film festival in the world ; and since 2003 , the Wilma accommodating the largest film event in Montana , the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival . In performance arts , the Missoula Community Theatre has held performances of musical and non @-@ musical plays since 1977 , with its affiliated Missoula Children 's Theatre also acting as an international touring program that visits nearly 1 @, @ 000 communities per year around the world .

The Montana Museum of Art & Culture , which became a state museum in 2001 , is one Montana 's oldest cultural reserves , having begun in 1894 ; its permanent collection of more than 10 @, @ 000 original works . The Missoula Museum of Art is housed in a former Carnegie library ; it features contemporary art and annually features 20 ? 25 group and solo exhibits . Fort Missoula is home to the Historic Museum , dedicated to preserving the history of Western Montana , and to the Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History and the Northern Rockies Heritage Center . The National Museum of Forest Service History is constructing the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center in Missoula as well .

Opened in 1987 , Missoula 's Bayern Brewing is the oldest active brewery in Montana . Big Sky Brewing opened in 1995 and with a production of over 38 @, @ 000 barrels in 2008 , it is by far Montana 's largest brewery , and produces the best @-@ selling beer brewed in Montana , Moose Drool Brown Ale . Missoula has also been home to Kettle House Brewing since 1995 and Draught Works opened in 2011 . Big Sky , Bayern , and Kettlehouse represent the first , second , and third largest breweries respectively in the state of Montana . Also in 2011 , Tamarack Brewing and Flathead Lake Brewing Company from nearby Lake County opened pub houses at downtown Missoula locations . The city also holds annual the Garden City Brewfest and Winterfest , and also periodically hosts the Montana Brewers Festival .

Missoula 's celebration of the outdoors can also be seen in notable non @-@ profits based in the city such as the Adventure Cycling Association , the conservationist @-@ hunting organizations Boone and Crockett Club and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation , and the Outdoor Writers Association of America . In an attempt to reduce harmful emissions , the non @-@ profit Missoula in Motion promotes environmentally sustainable transportation options for commuters , such as walking , biking , carpooling , public transportation , and telecommuting . Other non @-@ profits headquartered in Missoula illustrate the city 's liberal reputation in Montana . Promoter of marijuana law reform NORML has its state headquarters in Missoula , as does the Montana Hemp Council . Forward Montana is a " left @-@ leaning though officially nonpartisan group that seeks to engage

young people in politics " . The Montana Justice Foundation , founded in 1979 , is a charitable organization that helps underprivileged and underserved Montanans to access to civil legal aid . The Western Montana Community Center supports the LGBTIQ community and the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center focuses on " nonviolence , social justice and environmental sustainability " . The largest emergency homeless shelter and soup kitchen in Montana , the Poverello Center , is also located in Missoula .

== Sports ==

Missoula plays host to a variety of intercollegiate , youth , and amateur sports organizations in addition to a Minor league baseball team . The Montana Grizzlies ' football and basketball teams of the University of Montana have the highest attendance . The Montana Grizzlies football team has a successful program within the NCAA D @-@ 1 FCS level . Their home games at Washington ? Grizzly Stadium have a near 90 % winning percentage and average over 25 @,@ 000 spectators in attendance . All games are televised throughout Montana . The Grizzlies men 's and Lady Griz basketball teams have also been successful at the conference level where they both rank at or near the top in attendance , about 4 @,@ 000 and 3 @,@ 000 respectively , and play their home games at Dahlberg Arena .

Missoula is also home to the Missoula Osprey , a rookie affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks that plays in the Rocky Mountain @-@ based Pioneer Baseball League . They play their home games at Ogren Park at Allegiance Field . Also competing regionally are the Hellgate Rollergirls , a roller derby team that competes at the Adam 's Center . Since 1977 , Missoula has also held " Maggotfest " , a festival @-@ style rugby tournament hosted by the Missoula Maggots Rugby Club the first weekend in May . The non @-@ elimination tournament focuses on the fun aspect of the game , attracting 36 teams (male and female) from around the United States and Canada . In regular season play , the Missoula Maggots compete as part of the Montana Rugby Union alongside another local rugby team , the University of Montana Jesters .

== Parks and recreation ==

The city has over 400 acres (160 ha) of parkland , 22 miles (35 km) of trails , and nearly 5 @,@ 000 acres (2 @,@ 000 ha) of conserved open @-@ space . Located at the confluence of three rivers (the Clark Fork , Bitterroot , and Blackfoot) , the area is also popular for white water rafting and , thanks largely to the novel and subsequent film A River Runs Through It by Missoula native Norman Maclean , is well known for its fly fishing . Additionally , Missoula has two aquatic parks , multiple golf courses , is home to the Adventure Cycling Association , and hosts what Runner 's World called the " best overall " marathon in the U.S. There are also three ski areas within 100 miles (160 km) : Montana Snowbowl , Discovery Ski Area , and Lost Trail Powder Mountain . Slightly farther away are Lookout Pass , Blacktail Mountain , and Big Mountain .

A system of public parks was developed in Missoula in 1902 with the donation by lumber baron Thomas Greenough and his wife Tessie . They gave a 42 @-@ acre (17 ha) tract of land along Rattlesnake Creek for Greenough Park , on the condition that " the land forever be used as a park and for park purposes to which the people of Missoula may . . . find a comfortable , romantic and poetic retreat " . In a follow @-@ up nine years later in a letter to the Missoulia , he stressed his interest in having the park remain in as close to a native state as possible . That request , along with the discovery that non @-@ native Norway maples were inhibiting the growth of native trees and shrubs such as cottonwoods , ponderosa pines and Rocky Mountain maples , led to the controversial decision to remove Norway maples from the park with the hope of returning it to its natural state .

In 1924 , Bonner Park was created out of John L. Bonner 's estate near the university . The park today has multiple athletic fields and courts in addition a band shell used by the Missoula City band through the summer . The Kiwanis club set up a park downtown in 1934 , making Kiwanis Park the first of a string of parks which line both sides of the Clark Fork River . One of those parks on the

southern bank of the river is McCormick Park , which was created with WPA funds out of surplus highway land , a parcel from the American Hide and Fur Company , and land donated from the Kate McCormick estate . The 26 @-@ acre (11 ha) park , named for Washington J. McCormick and his wife is home to a skate park , aquatics center , a free bike check @-@ out and a children 's fishing pond . Other popular parks include the Jacobs Island Bark Park , a designated area for dogs to play off @-@ leash ; the Montana State veterans ' memorial rose garden ; Waterwise Garden , a " living laboratory " garden utilizing water conservation techniques ; and Splash Montana Waterpark at Playfair Park .

= = = Caras Park = = =

Caras Park is located just south of the historic Wilma Theatre downtown . It is located on land reclaimed when the Higgins Avenue Bridge was widened from two lanes to four in 1962 . Before the reclamation , the Clark Fork River divided to create an island with the north channel 's bank extending to nearby buildings such as the Wilma Theatre . The south channel was deepened for the increased water flow and the infilled land later became Caras Park . Events in the park were not common until the early 1980s and permanent fixtures like " Out to Lunch " , which began in 1986 . The Missoula Downtown Association took over from Parks and Recreation for management of the park and made improvements to make Caras Park more event @-@ friendly . Seating , event circles , brick plazas , restrooms , and storage structures were added . Large temporary tents were used for events until 1997 when a permanent pavilion was constructed . The park is a hub of city festivities including include " Out to Lunch " , the International Wildlife Film Festival , First Night Missoula , Garden City BrewFest and offered intimate concert settings for artists such as Jewel , Chris Isaak , Santana , Ziggy Marley , and B.B. King . Located next to Caras Park is A Carousel for Missoula , a wooden , hand @-@ carved and volunteer @-@ built carousel ; and Dragon Hollow , a children 's recreational area adjacent to the carousel .

= = Government and politics = =

Missoula 's system of government has changed four times since 1883 when an aldermanic form of government was approved with the town charter . The city adopted a commission @-@ council form of government in 1911 with the opening of new City Hall and a council ? manager government in 1954 before returning to an aldermanic form of government in 1959 . Since January 1 , 1997 , Missoula has been governed in accordance with the Missoula City Charter , which calls for a mayor @-@ council system of government .

The current system comprises a mayor and city treasurer elected in a citywide vote and twelve city council members who must reside in and are elected from one of six wards with each ward having two council members . All positions are nominally nonpartisan . Council members and the mayor are elected to four @-@ year terms with council @-@ member elections being staggered to allow only one member from each ward to up for re @-@ election . There are no term limits for either position .

Missoula 's state legislative delegation is the second largest in the Montana Legislature and is represented by districts 91 ? 100 in the Montana House of Representatives and districts 46 ? 50 in the Montana Senate . Having thirteen Democrats and two Republicans in its state legislative delegation , Missoula is known as a more liberal area than the rest of the state .

Though Missoula 's political leanings may not be unique for a college town , its initiative to make marijuana possession the lowest priority of law enforcement in 2006 , and symbolic resolutions calling on Congress to withdraw from Iraq in 2007 , and to amend the U.S. Constitution to declare that " corporations are not human beings " in 2011 , often put it at odds with the rest of the state . In 2011 , the Montana legislature , with a Republican House majority , attempted to overturn Missoula 's marijuana law and revoke its ability to have an anti @-@ discrimination ordinance that included the LGBT community . The marijuana repeal was vetoed by then ? Governor Brian Schweitzer and the attempt to repeal the other died in the Senate .

== Education ==

Missoula 's first school was opened in late 1869 with sixteen students from around the region and their teacher Emma C. Slack who had come to Missoula via a two @-@ month trip by horseback , railroad , and boat from Baltimore at the invitation of her brother . She resigned two years later upon marrying William H. H. Dickinson (the first couple married in Missoula) and was replaced by Elizabeth Countryman who later married Missoula 's first mayor , Frank H. Woody . The first public high school was opened in 1904 but was converted back to a grade school after the A. J. Gibson @-@ designed Missoula County High School (now Hellgate High School) was opened in 1908 . After several expansions , Stanford University was commissioned in 1951 to create a master building plan to manage future growth . It suggested purchasing land and building an additional campus at the Garden City Airport 's Hale Field , which was gradually being replaced by the Missoula County Airport , which was then southwest of town . The new school (now Sentinel High School) was opened in 1957 . Initially the two campuses were separated between upper and lower classmen with upper classmen in the new school , but in 1965 , the two campuses became separate high schools . In 1974 , the private Loyola Sacred Heart Catholic High School was created from a merger of the all @-@ girls Sacred Heart Academy (est . 1873) and the all @-@ boys Loyola High School (est . 1912) . In 1980 , Missoula 's third public high school , Big Sky , was established .

Missoula 's public schools are part of the Missoula County Public School districts 1 , 4 , 20 , and 23 . In Missoula , there are nine public elementary schools (kindergarten to 5th grade) , three public middle schools (6th to 8th grades) , four public high schools (9th to 12th grades) , and three public schools serving kindergarten to 8th grade . Missoula also has several private schools including an international school , religious @-@ affiliated schools , as well as Next Step Prep , a theater academy high school operated by the Missoula Children 's Theatre .

The University of Montana dominates higher education in Missoula . The university , established in 1893 , was Montana 's first , and has the state 's second @-@ largest enrollment , with 12 @,@ 922 students as of 2015) . The campus houses six colleges and three schools including Montana 's first and only law school , the Alexander Blewett III School of Law at the University of Montana . The university is also the location of the state 's Regional Federal Depository Library , and houses the state Arboretum . The University of Montana College of Technology , established in 1956 and formerly known as the Missoula Vocational Technical Center , offers fast @-@ track learning programs . Multiple vocational programs not affiliated with the university ranging from photography and massage to truck driving also have a presence in Missoula .

== Media ==

=== Broadcast ===

Missoula 's single ? broadcast over ? air television media market is the largest in Montana and ranked 165 nationally in as of 2015 . Though Missoula itself is second in population to Billings , Montana , Missoula 's single @-@ broadcast over @-@ air television media market includes all of Missoula , Ravalli , Granite , Mineral , Lake , Flathead , and Sanders Counties in the more densely populated western region of Montana and serves over 112 @,@ 600 television homes as of 2015 . Missoula is home to three local affiliate channels : KPAX @-@ TV (CBS / MTN , The CW ; founded 1970 ; channel 8) , KECI @-@ TV (NBC ; founded 1954 as KGVO @-@ TV ; channel 13 , and KTMF @-@ TV (ABC , FOX ; founded 1991 ; channel 23) . Also based in Missoula at the University of Montana is Montana PBS (founded 1984 ; channel 11) . There are seventeen FM radio stations and four AM radio stations licensed in the city .

=== Print ===

Missoula has four main sources of print media : the Missoulian (primary daily) , Missoula Independent (alternative weekly) , Montana Kaimin (college) , and New West (digital , progressive) . The Missoulian was founded as a weekly publication in 1870 as The Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer . As of 2015 , the Missoulian remains Missoula 's most popular newspaper with a circulation of over 26 @, @ 000 , making it the third most read daily newspaper in Montana behind the Billings Gazette and the Great Falls Tribune . The Missoula Independent (founded 1991) is the largest weekly newspaper in Montana and the states only member of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies . With over 21 @, @ 000 readers it has twice the circulation of second place Billings Outpost . The newspaper is distributed free to more than 600 locations across Western Montana from Hamilton in the south to Whitefish in the north . The Montana Kaimin (founded 1891) is likewise distributed free throughout parts of Missoula with heavy student traffic from the University of Montana where the newspaper is printed Monday through Friday during the school year . New West was founded in 2005 as a left @-@ leaning " next @-@ generation media company " that focused on culture , environment , economy , and politics in the Rocky Mountain West .

= = Infrastructure = =

= = Health care = =

Missoula has two primary health care facilities : St. Patrick Hospital and Health Sciences Center and Community Medical Center . St. Patrick 's was founded in 1873 under the sponsorship of the Sisters of Providence . It is the only Level II trauma center in the region , the largest medical facility in Western Montana , and has undergone three major expansions since the 1980s . The hospital has 195 acute @-@ care beds , and admitted over 9 @, @ 700 patients in 2003 . The name was changed from " St. Patrick Hospital " to " St. Patrick Hospital and Health Sciences Center " in 2000 to reflect an increasing involvement with national medical research and education . The Community Medical Center and its adjacent medical facilities are located near Fort Missoula and is part of a modern complex that includes a nursing home , the Missoula Crippled Children 's Center , and private offices . It was founded in 1922 as Thornton Hospital by doctors Will Thornton and Charles Thornton and has been at its current location since 1972 . It is the only facility providing obstetrical and newborn care in Missoula County and the only hospital in Western Montana with a separate Pediatric Intensive Care Unit . The center is partnered with Seattle Children 's Hospital . The nearest Level I trauma center to Missoula is Harborview Medical Center in Seattle , Washington .

= = Utilities = =

The earliest Missoulians drew their water directly from the Clark Fork River or nearby Rattlesnake Creek . The first water system consisted of a Native American known as One @-@ Eyed Riley and his friend filling buckets of water from the Rattlesnake Creek and hauling them door to door on a donkey cart . In 1871 city co @-@ founder Frank Worden began construction of a log pipe and wooden main system that flowed from the Rattlesnake Creek 2 @. @ 5 miles (4 km) north of the city . With the addition of two small covered reservoirs , the first municipal water system was begun in 1880 . With an intake dam built in 1901 with a settling basin capacity of 3 million US gallons (11 @, @ 000 m³) , the Rattlesnake Creek continued to meet demands of the city until 1935 when five wells were added to respond to increased summer and fall demand . This system is still maintained as an emergency backup , but was discontinued as a primary source after Giardia outbreak in 1983 . Since then , Missoula has relied on the Missoula Valley Aquifer as the sole source of water . In 1889 , the first electrical plant was built by A. B. Hammond to power his major downtown properties such as the Missoula Mercantile and the Florence Hotel . In 1905 , the Missoula Mercantile (by then owned by Copper King William A. Clark purchased the water system and consolidated it with its vast electrical holdings to create the Missoula Light and Water Company (ML & W) a year later .

Electricity and water remained bundled after ML & W 's sale to the Montana Power Company (MPC) in 1929 . In 1979 , MPC sold its water utility holdings as Mountain Water Company to Park Water Company in Downey , California , which since 2011 has been a subsidiary of The Carlyle Group . In 2015 , the City of Missoula was legally granted its " ' right to acquire " the water system by exercising its power of eminent domain " , but as of June 2015 , that decision is under appeal .

Following the deregulation of Montana 's electricity market in 1997 , Montana Power Company began to divest its energy business . MPC sold substantially all its electrical generating assets to the PPL Corporation in December 1997 and its energy transmission and distribution business to NorthWestern Corporation in February 2002 . Despite filing for bankruptcy in 2002 , NorthWestern Corporation 's subsidiary NorthWestern Energy is the primary provider of electric and natural gas service to Missoula in addition to the Rural Utilities Service 's Missoula Electric Cooperative .

Local telephone service in the area is provided by CenturyLink and Blackfoot Telecommunications . Major cell phone providers include AT & T , Sprint , Verizon , and T @-@ Mobile . Trash collection in Missoula is handled by Allied Waste Industries and Grant Creek Water Systems . Allied Waste also handles recycling through a program where customers can purchase special blue bags to designate recyclables . Recycling has also been offered by Missoula Valley Recycling since 1992 , by Garden City Recycling since 2010 which offers curbside pickup , and by Pacific Steel & Recycling which offers drop @-@ off recycling . Sewer service is handled by the City of Missoula Wastewater Division .

= = = City layout and development = = =

In the mid @-@ 1860s , C. P. Higgins and Frank Worden began plotting what would become the town of Missoula along the Mullan Military Road , which ran parallel to the Clark Fork River . Through downtown Missoula , the route of the road is now Front Street . It is intersected by Higgins Avenue , to which a bridge across the Clark Fork was added in 1873 . The intersection of these two streets became the default center of the city , and remains the numerical center regarding city street addresses . The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1883 led to a housing boom along the tracks , particularly on the northern side where many of the railway workers would reside . When the Higgins Avenue Bridge was replaced in 1893 , they debated whether the bridge should continue southwest toward the Bitterroot Valley as it had earlier , or due south . Attorneys W. M. Bickford and W. J. Stephens had already laid out plots of land five years earlier for what they hoped would be a new town of " South Missoula " . The streets there were perpendicular to the Bitterroot Wagon Road while Judge Hiram Knowles who owned the land just south of the river preferred the north @-@ south plan and did not want to become part of South Missoula . The result was a 7 × 14 ? block area along the west side of Higgins Avenue commonly referred to as the Slant Streets centered along what is now Stephens Avenue . Stephens Avenue and Brooks Street are the only arterials to traverse the city diagonally along with the Bitterroot Branch of Montana Rail Link . The rest of the city , with the exception of Downtown , where streets follow the angle of the river , and newer expansions into the hills , strictly follow the grid plan . With the establishment of the University of Montana in 1893 and the announcement that the now @-@ defunct Milwaukee Road would be located south of the river , houses began to spread quickly throughout the university and south side districts . The area near the university was promoted as high @-@ end and luxurious homes appeared on Hammond Avenue (then nicknamed " Millionaires Row " and known today as Gerald Avenue) . The arrival of Interstate 90 in the mid @-@ 1960s forced the removal of 60 homes , including the Greenough Mansion . The north side of Missoula became isolated between the Interstate and the tracks while the Greenough Mansion was moved to a South Hills golf course and converted to a restaurant . This dichotomy has prevailed with the North Side feeling neglected by the city while the South Hills became an upscale neighborhood . With the release of the latest Missoula Downtown Master Plan in 2009 , increased emphasis was directed toward redeveloping the North Side 's former rail yard and the area just south of the tracks .

The city is divided into 18 neighborhood councils of which all Missoula residents are a member . The city further contains 10 historical districts : Downtown Missoula , East Pine Street , Fort

Missoula , Lower Rattlesnake , McCormick , Northside , Southside , University Area and , the campus of the University of Montana .

= = = Trail system = = =

Missoula has an extensive trail system for both commuting and recreation that extends over 22 miles (35 km) . The city is actively trying to connect its various sections within the city to each other and to recreational trails extending beyond the city . The heart of the Missoula Commuter Bike Network are the trails along either side of the Clark Fork River that link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods , the university , city parks , and outlying open space with smooth surfaces and three bicycle / pedestrian bridges . The most southern of these is Milwaukee Trail which follows the path of the former Milwaukee Railroad and continues east out of town as the Kim Williams Nature Trail beside Mount Sentinel . The Bitterroot Branch Trail connects to the Riverfront trails west of Downtown and , when completed , will provide a trail from Downtown to Southgate Mall . Near the Bitterroot Branch Trail , but not connected , is the South Avenue Trail on the west side of Reserve Street that connects the Community Medical Center with Fort Missoula , nearby athletic fields , and the Bitterroot River . The South Hills neighborhood has its own system of trails that is also approaching , but not quite meeting , the larger network .

= = = Transportation = = =

Due to its rural location , highway access is especially important to Missoula . Interstate 90 runs east ? west along the northern edge of Missoula at the base of the North Hills , with all but a small portion of the city located south of the highway . Completed in 1965 at the expense of 60 homes , the Garden City Brewery , and the Greenough Mansion , I ? 90 has four city exits and makes connections with U.S. Route 93 , U.S. Route 12 , and Montana Highway 200 . The original U.S. 12 , approved by the AASHO in 1939 to extend west into Montana did not include Missoula until the highway was rerouted along State Route 6 in October 1959 and was not extended west from Missoula until 1962 . The road now crosses Missoula southwest ? northeast . U.S. 93 serves as a major economic corridor for western Montana connecting Missoula with the Bitterroot Valley communities to the south and Flathead Lake , Kalispell , and Glacier National Park to the north . Montana Highway 200 , the longest state highway in the United States enters Missoula from the east and provides access along the Blackfoot River and a direct route to Great Falls .

Public transportation in Missoula began as early as 1890 with a horse @-@ drawn streetcar system (electrified in 1910) operated by the Missoula Street Railway Company that connected Downtown Missoula with the University , Bonner , the fairgrounds , and Fort Missoula . These streetcars were then replaced by buses in 1932 due to cost . Bus service today is provided by Mountain Line , a public transit agency created by public vote in 1976 as part of the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) that began operation in December 1977 . Mountain Line operates twelve bus routes within a 36 @-@ square @-@ mile (93 km²) area , serving Missoula , East Missoula , Bonner , Target Range , Rattlesnake , and the airport . Additionally the line has offered paratransit services since 1991 to assist the disabled , senior van since 2008 , and has four park ? and ? ride lots throughout Missoula . Special bus service is offered to the University of Montana through three of the city 's park ? and ? ride lots in addition to a late @-@ night UDASH shuttle that offers service between the University and Downtown . As of January 2015 a three @-@ year pilot program of zero fare transportation on all Mountain Line busses began , with the goal of increasing use by 45 percent .

Direct intercity ground travel needs are provided by bus carriers Greyhound Lines and Rimrock Trailways . Intercity rail travel was available from 1883 , when the Northern Pacific Railway began service through Missoula , until 1979 when Amtrak discontinued its North Coast Hiawatha route across southern Montana . In 1901 , Northern Pacific built their station at the terminus of Higgins Avenue ; since 1985 , it has been on the National Register of Historic Places . A feasibility study was commissioned by Congress in 2008 to examine the merits of reopening the North Coast Hiawatha ,

but as of 2008 , the nearest rail station to Missoula is the Whitefish station of Amtrak 's Empire Builder , 136 miles (219 km) to the north .

===== Air =====

Air travel to Missoula began in 1927 , which is served by Missoula International Airport at Johnson @-@ Bell Field , a public airport run by the Missoula County Airport Authority . It is the largest airport in western Montana , serving 582 @,@ 821 passengers in 2011 . The current building contains three jet bridges and three ground ? level boarding gates . There are direct flights year ? round to Billings , Denver , Las Vegas , Minneapolis , Phoenix , Portland , Salt Lake City , Seattle , and seasonally to Atlanta , Chicago , Los Angeles , Oakland , and San Francisco . Four airlines operate out of Missoula (Allegiant Air , Delta Air Lines , Horizon / Alaska Airlines , and United Airlines) in addition to cargo carriers FedEx Express , and UPS Airlines . The airport is also home to Homestead Helicopters and fixed ? base operators Minuteman Jet Center (an Avfuel fuel provider) , and Northstar Jet (a Phillips 66 fuel provider) .

== Notable people ==

Missoula has produced and been home to a number of notable individuals in varying fields . Its natives and residents are referred to as " Missoulians " . In politics , Jeannette Rankin , the first woman in congress , was born and raised in Missoula while Senators Mike Mansfield , the U.S. ' s longest serving Senate Majority Leader , and Max Baucus , Montana 's longest serving U.S. Senator both established careers and joined politics while living in the city . Noted athletes who were born or resided in Missoula include five Olympic medalists , Pro Football Hall of Fame Quarterback John Elway , and former Milwaukee Bucks coach Larry Krystowiak . Actor Dana Carvey , filmmaker David Lynch , and award ? winning biologist Leroy Hood were born in Missoula while Carroll O 'Connor and J. K. Simmons both attended the University of Montana . Composer David Maslanka , musician Jeff Ament , and musician and vlogger Hank Green reside in Missoula . Academically , Missoula has been home to Nobel Prize winners Harold C. Urey and Steve Running as well as 20th century Montana historian K. Ross Toole . Noted names in literature include Native @-@ American poet James Welch , crime novelist James Crumley , former head of the University of Montana 's Creative Writing Program Richard Hugo , and Norman Maclean , whose *A River Runs Through It* chronicles his life in early 20th @-@ century Missoula .

== Sister cities ==

Missoula has two sister cities , as designated by Sister Cities International :

Neckargemünd , Germany

Palmerston North , New Zealand

Missoula 's Sister City relationship with Palmerston North , New Zealand , began after Missoula resident and later University of Montana professor Harold Bockemuehl returned from obtaining his PhD from Massey University . The relationship was made official in 1983 after a meeting between then UM President Neil Bucklew and officials from Massey University . Each May , Missoula celebrates " New Zealand Day " in honor of the relationship with rugby , food , and entertainment . Missoula 's second Sister City relationship began in 1991 after a Neckargemünd delegation , led by Mayor Oskar Schuster , visited Missoula following a Fulbright @-@ sponsored faculty exchange between Heidelberg University and the University of Montana . Every September the Missoula Cultural Council holds an annual " Germanfest " to celebrate German culture and this relationship .

== Portrayal in media ==

Author Norman Maclean grew up in Missoula and wrote about it in his 1976 autobiographical novella *A River Runs Through It* . The work was adapted into a 1992 motion picture of the same

name , directed by Robert Redford , starring Brad Pitt and Craig Sheffer .

Missoula : Rape and the Justice System in a College Town is the title of a 2015 book by Jon Krakauer that looked at the Justice Department 's investigation into a " pattern of disrespect and indifference toward alleged victims " by Missoula law enforcement in sexual assault cases between 2010 and 2012 , some involving football players from the Montana Grizzlies . While being interviewed on NPR about the book , John Krakauer stated " I don 't mean to single out Missoula : Its rape rate is a little less than the national average ; I think its problems with dealing with rape are pretty depressingly typical " .

There is a lengthy study of Missoula in the title essay of Jonathan Raban 's Driving Home : An American Journey : despite writing that on his arrival , " I had the powerful impression that I had driven deep into the Rocky Mountains and somehow arrived in Rotherham or Barnsley , " and that " the overall effect [of the city] was oddly unsettling ; the streets too open for comfort , the town too closed in , inducing mild claustrophobia and agoraphobia at the same time " , he notes the literary heritage of the city and its reputation as a " kindly town " (evidenced by its being a place where " odds and ends naturally collected and cohered ") .

Missoula was portrayed in an episode of the CBS show Criminal Minds . The episode aired on November 5 , 2014 .

Missoula (as well as Jermone , MT) was also portrayed in the movie Chill Factor released in 1999 starring Skeet Ulrich and Cuba Gooding , Jr .