

# FATALITY MARKER PROGRAM

## HIGHWAY SAFETY



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# CROSSES TO MARK FATAL ACCIDENTS



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# IN THE BEGINNING . . .

- ESTABLISHED 1952
  - Governor's Office
  - Montana Highway Commission
  - American Legion Post #27
- The unique idea of marking fatal traffic accident sites with a white cross was the brainchild of Floyd Eaheart, a member of Hellgate Post #27 in Missoula after 6 lives were lost in that area over the 1952 Labor Day Holiday.



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# APPROVAL

- The Montana Highway Commission (now MDT) approved the program in January 1953 with the blessing of the then 13th governor of Montana, J. Hugo Aronson
- The safety program started out as a county and later district project for the Missoula American Legion Post. However, the idea was soon adopted as a statewide program.



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- Operates under a Letter of Instruction signed by the Director of MDT, David A. Galt on November 5, 2001.
- In January 2007 the Director of Montana Department of Transportation, Jim Lynch, was instrumental in getting the American Legion Highway Fatality Marker Program included on the Official Montana Highway Map and at all highway entrances into Montana.



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# HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM

- Approved in 1952, and in operation since 1953, places a white cross at the site of a fatal traffic accident unless opposed by the family of the deceased.
- Program receive referrals from family members, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, DUI Victims and law enforcement.
- Markers are placed closest to the scene of the fatality.



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# MDT GUIDELINES

- Shall NOT use reflective materials/paint
- Placement of decorations shall be discouraged
- MDT can NOT provide materials nor maintenance
- One delineator post per accident w/ multiple markers
- Posts should correspond to 1.12 lb/ft steel “U” delineator
- Markers are limited to 12" wide and 16" long
- Placement – 30 feet from paved shoulder OR  
6 feet behind guard rail OR  
1 foot from fence line



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# SIGN REMOVAL

- Signs will be removed under three circumstances:
  - If a family requests the removal of a sign, it will be expeditiously removed.
  - If a sign is no longer in satisfactory condition due to wear
  - When a section of highway is reconstructed to new standards, all markers that involve the old roadway shall be taken down regardless of condition.
- Removed markers will not be replaced unless requested by a family member.



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# FATALITY MARKERS 2018

- District #5 provides assistance to Posts
  - Installation and maintenance
  - Manpower and resources
  - Updates database and logs news articles (1262+)
- Continued to provide assistance to District #4
  - Arlee
  - Ronan
  - Paradise
  - Thompson Falls
  - Installed and/or maintained markers as requested
  - Provided GPS information to Lake County GIS Department



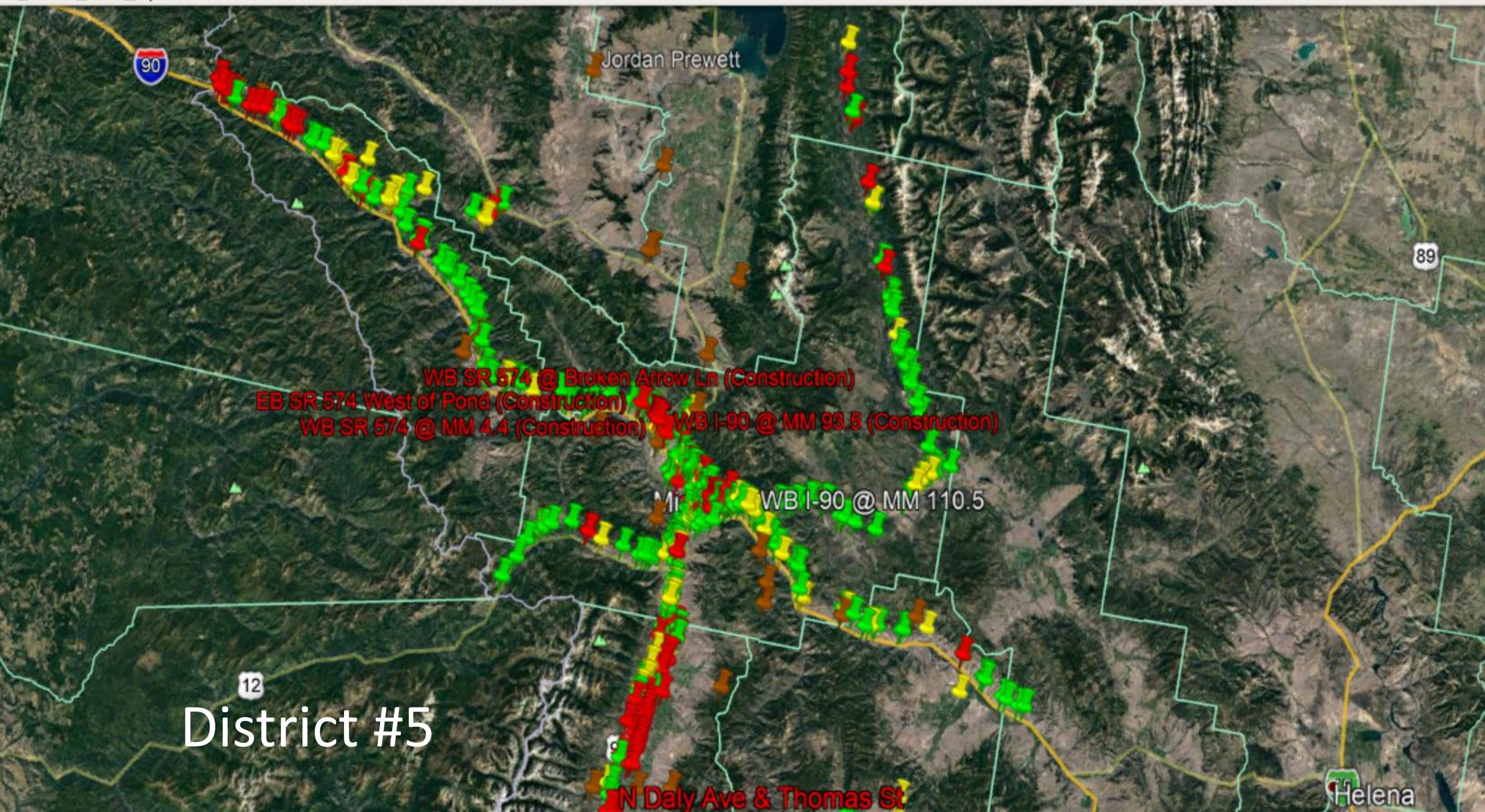
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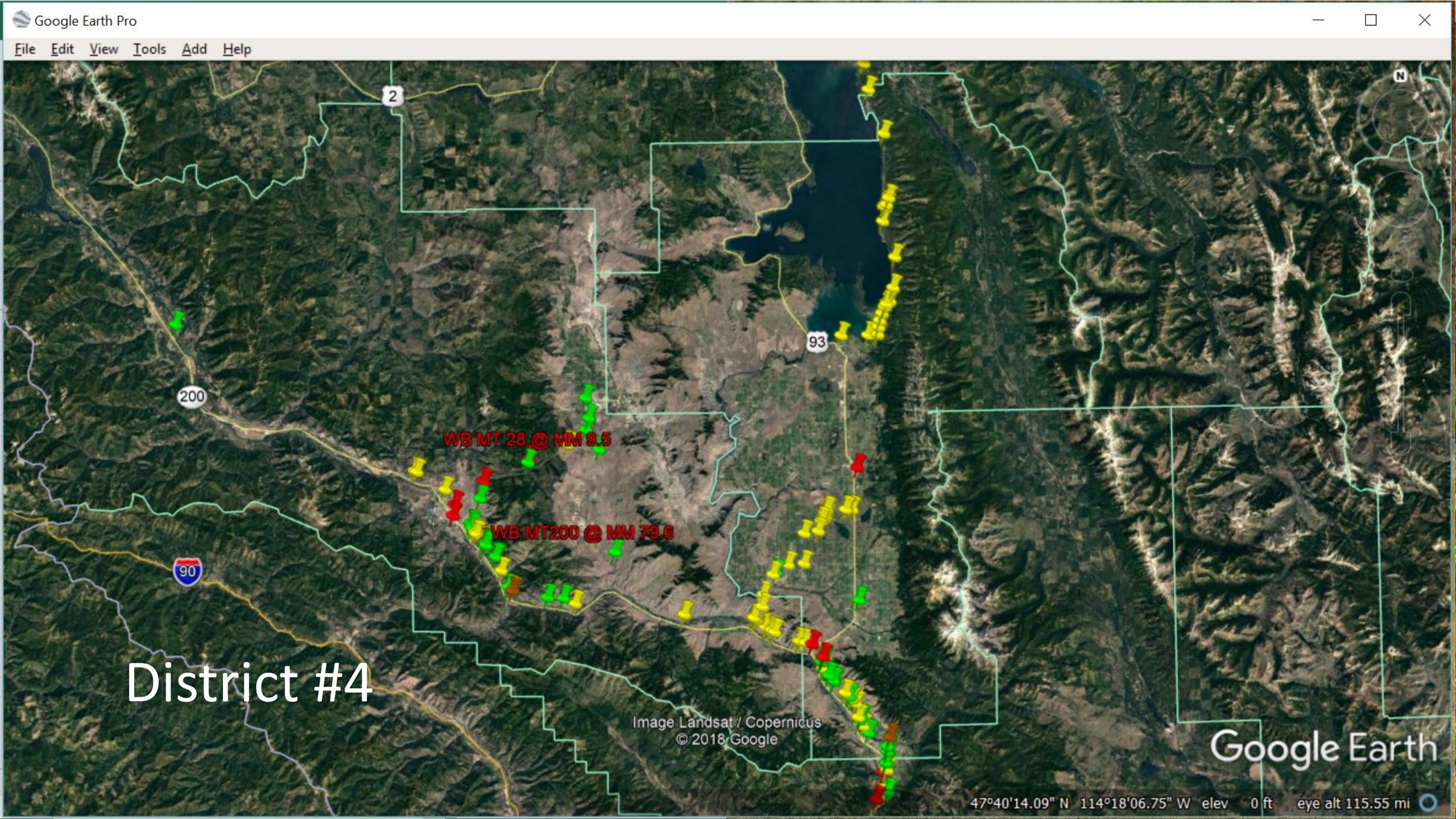
# STATISTICS

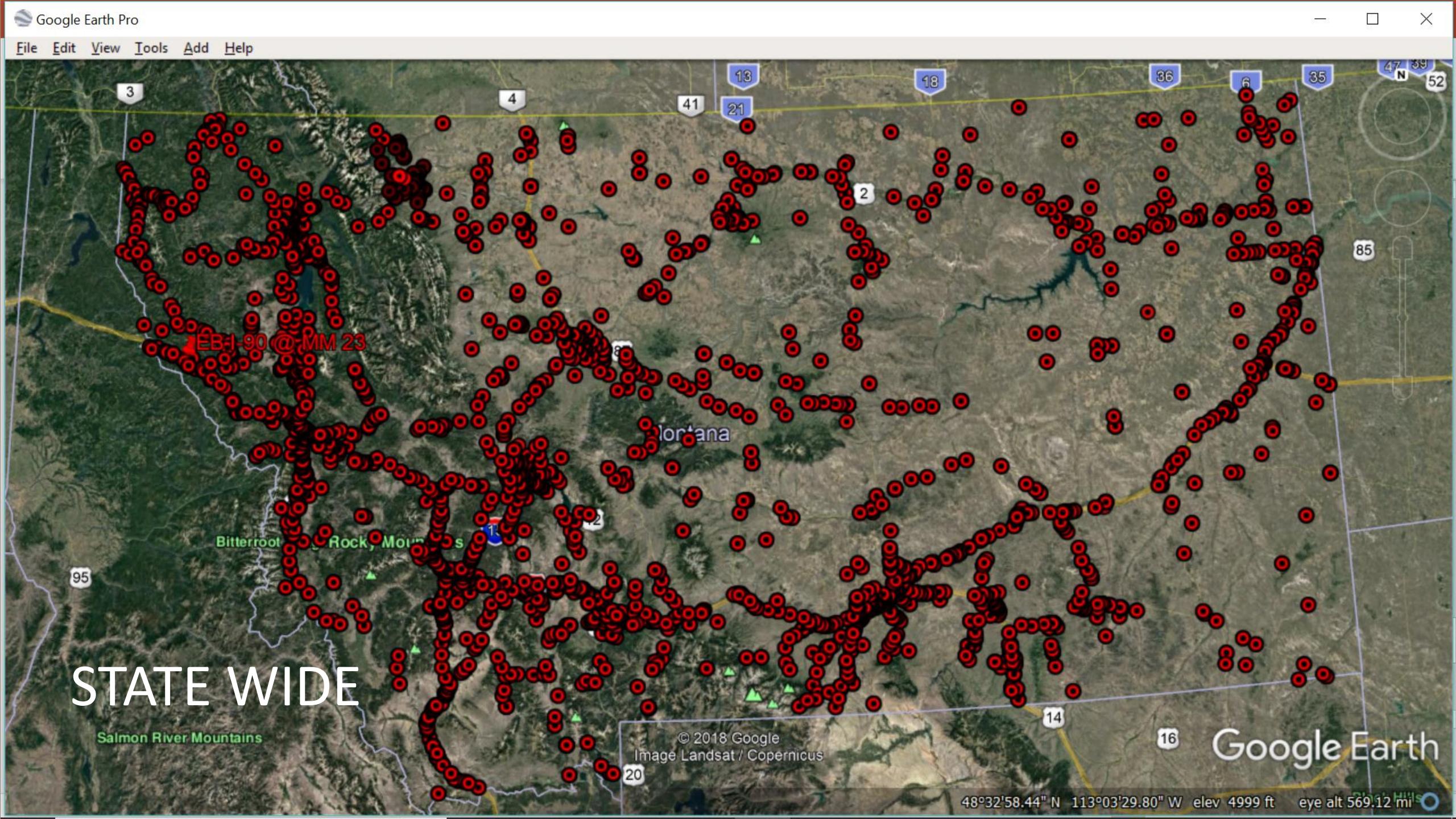
- State Database                   **2,639 Fatalities**
- District #5                       **1,291 Fatalities**
- District #4                       **353 Fatalities**
- Annual Maintenance              **411**



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# COMMENDATION

“...One of the finest projects I have ever seen undertaken by an organization. Motorists seeing the crosses should be impressed by the need for careful driving and safe speeds.”

HARRY SODERBERG, MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN



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# THANK YOU . . .

- Poteet Construction
  - Alpine Sign
  - Doug Zimmerman
  - Curt Rissman, MHP
  - Montana Highway Patrol
  - Missoulian
  - Chaplin Paul Armstrong
- U-Channel Galvanized Posts
  - Aluminum/Coated Markers
  - Cutting posts and riveting
  - Data Analysis
  - Accident Reports
  - Research Subscription
  - Paint



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