



NEWS ADVISORY

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For immediate release

City, UM to Dedicate 5th/6th/Arthur Wednesday

University of Montana President Royce Engstrom and Missoula Mayor John Engen will host a ribbon-cutting for the collaborative 5th/6th/Arthur Project on Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 11:30 a.m. at the corner of Maurice Avenue and South Sixth Street East.

President Engstrom and Mayor Engen will be joined by UM and City staff members, and most members of the Missoula City Council will be in attendance.

The project, called officially the 5th/6th/Arthur and Maurice Intersection Safety and Circulation Improvement Project, was a collaboration between UM and the City. Its aim is to improve safety for all modes of transportation with new driving routes, protected crosswalks and bike lanes. It also features the first Accessible Pedestrian Signals implemented in Montana; they are designed for pedestrians who are visually impaired.

The biggest difference in the area is the new direct route for Highway 12 traffic over the Madison Street Bridge from the intersection of South Sixth Street East and Arthur Avenue. Northbound traffic no longer has to travel to the edge of campus to approach the bridge.

The project opened for travel Aug. 26. Missoula travelers have adjusted well to the new traffic patterns, and a high percentage of drivers are using the new direct route over the bridge.

The project's beginnings date back to the fall of 2005, when a Montana Department of Transportation proposal was not supported by the public and lacked funding. That sent UM and City leaders back to the drawing board, where with design help from WGM Group they came up with a project to address safety and traffic circulation improvements but not increase capacity.

The University of Montana funded most of the project with a \$1.25 million Special Improvement District in the neighborhood, for which UM will pay all of the assessments. The City and the Montana Department of Transportation each contributed about \$200,000 in labor and materials. City crews provided street restoration with milling and paving, and MDT furnished and funded the new traffic signal at the corner of Fifth and Arthur.

“This project is a fine example of the power of working collaboratively to solve problems locally,” said Mayor John Engen. “The basic design was conceived in a conference room at City Hall with all the partners at the table, and it does everything we need it to do: it handles a large volume of vehicles, puts traffic where it belongs, dramatically improves pedestrian safety, is aesthetically pleasing and costs a lot less than a version that was previously proposed and rejected. Good stuff all the way around.”

Additional speakers at Wednesday’s ribbon-cutting will be Bob Durringer, UM’s vice president of Administration & Finance; Bruce Bender, City of Missoula chief administrative officer; and Nancy Wilson, Associated Students of The University of Montana Office of Transportation director.

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To see a map of the project area, go to:

<http://mt-missoula.civicplus.com/Archive.aspx?ADID=4339>

To learn more about Accessible Pedestrian Signals, go to:

<http://mt-missoula.civicplus.com/Archive.aspx?ADID=4338>

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