



# PLANE TALK

A publication of

Statewide Aviation



## AVALANCHE TEAM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

### ALASKA DOT&PF WINS AWARD FOR INNOVATION

By Dylan Blankenship  
DOT&PF

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities' Aviation Program has been honored with the highly coveted "Most Innovative State Program Award" by the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO). This esteemed recognition highlights Alaska's remarkable achievements and groundbreaking initiatives in the field of aviation.

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
ALASKA DOT&PF DIVISION  
OF STATEWIDE AVIATION

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# A MESSAGE FROM DIVISION OPERATIONS MANAGER TROY LARUE

Winter arrived this year with a vengeance, the only upside to the recent pandemic is the opportunity to be able to work from home when conditions are less than optimal outside. Office closures were harder to decide in the past, as a lot of staff work on federal projects and closures would eat up available overhead. The productivity level and cost savings are a true benefit to the State of Alaska and keeping more people off of the roads during extreme weather events, taking some pressure off the crews that are out battling the storm. If you are one of the people that keeps Alaska moving, thank you for your dedication; and if you are one of those people utilizing Alaska's transportation system, please give the plow drivers a lot of room!

If you have not heard, John Binder resigned as DOTPF's long serving Deputy Commissioner to return to the cockpit and fly 767s for Northern Air Cargo. We had the great pleasure of working with him for over 10 years, which is an extremely long time for a publicly appointed state official, and I think we all agree he was not only very personable, but also extremely effective in his role. He still has the same cell phone number and loves to hear from colleagues, so don't be afraid to reach out to him. While we miss him and wish him the best, we will continue to complete the DOT&PF mission and keep people moving!

Department staff conducted the fall airport project priority meeting, called the APEB, on October 23rd, in Anchorage. Regional planners presented future projects for consideration and board members rated them based on level of need and priority. Our planning team continues to look forward to what upcoming projects need programming and collaborate with maintenance and design staff to start the process.

The industry and government as a whole continues to experience staffing challenges. Inflation strains incomes and resources over the last couple of years, making it hard for Government to keep up. We are noticing private industry is more nimble to pivot when the economy changes and state government is still working it out, causing a lost of staff and new challenges. Agreements are in place to help with wages and employee retention in the short term, as we start collective bargaining negotiations for both LTC and SU unions. Leadership is aware of the current issues and committed to continue advocating for resources.

While faced with extreme inflation, we remain encouraged by the amount of federal funds coming to Alaska to support our infrastructure. Eight automated weather observation systems (AWOS) were recently built and turned over to the FAA for future maintenance and operation. These systems are critical to the safety of the flying public and through the prior FAA reauthorization and the coordination between the FAA and Department, become FAA assets to support the national airspace system. We await how the next FAA re-authorization will land and hope to see it by next spring. We also anticipate the outlook will be very optimistic for Alaska. The State of Alaska is extremely blessed to have an FAA Regional Office based in Alaska and a great relationship with our federal counterparts. We look forward to our continued success.

A big thank you to all the staff that are already walking the extra mile this winter to keep us safe. You are the backbone of Alaska, we would not be able to move this winter without you!



# UNDERSTANDING THE NEW FAA 7460 PROCESS

Embarking on any construction project near an airport involves a meticulous process of obtaining Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval, an essential step to ensure the safety of airspace. To acquire the coveted FAA Determination letter, a critical document in this process, a 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration form must be submitted a minimum of 45 business days before the commencement of work, or up to 9 weeks prior. However, it's crucial to note that due to the intricacies of FAA reviewers' schedules and potential connectivity issues, some FAA offices may indeed take the full 45 days. As a result, meticulous planning is paramount to avoid delays in project timelines.

This specific timeline is mandated by CFR 14 Part 77, a regulation designed to safeguard airspace and ensure smooth coordination between construction activities and aviation operations. To streamline this process, the 7460 submittal is exclusively conducted online through the FAA's dedicated portal: <https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp>. It's crucial to note that alternative methods such as mailed, faxed, physical copies, or PDF submissions are no longer accepted, emphasizing the FAA's commitment to modernizing and enhancing the efficiency of their procedures.

Furthermore, precision in providing information is paramount to a successful 7460 request. Multiple coordinate points must be submitted for each work area to ensure accurate representation. Without sufficient and precise information, the FAA cannot process 7460 requests, leading to potential terminations. To guide applicants through this crucial step, the FAA provides examples and a helpful advisory circular (AC) outlining the requisite information for airspace analysis.

## Access the Advisory Circular document here:

[https://www.faa.gov/airports/resources/advisory\\_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.current/documentNumber/150\\_5300-20](https://www.faa.gov/airports/resources/advisory_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.current/documentNumber/150_5300-20).

In summary, understanding and adhering to the FAA's 7460 submittal process is integral to the success of any construction project near airport airspace. Proactive planning, adherence to online submission protocols, and precision in providing necessary information will not only ensure compliance with FAA regulations but also contribute to the overall safety and efficiency of aviation operations.

### § 77.7 Form and time of notice.

- (a) If you are required to file notice under § 77.9, you must submit to the FAA a completed FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration. FAA Form 7460-1 is available at FAA regional offices and on the Internet.
- (b) You must submit this form at least 45 days before the start date of the proposed construction or alteration or the date an application for a construction permit is filed, whichever is earlier.
- (c) If you propose construction or alteration that is also subject to the licensing requirements of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), you must submit notice to the FAA on or before the date that the application is filed with the FCC.
- (d) If you propose construction or alteration to an existing structure that exceeds 2,000 ft. in height above ground level (AGL), the FAA presumes it to be a hazard to air navigation that results in an inefficient use of airspace. You must include details explaining both why the proposal would not constitute a hazard to air navigation and why it would not cause an inefficient use of airspace.
- (e) The 45-day advance notice requirement is waived if immediate construction or alteration is required because of an emergency involving essential public services, public health, or public safety. You may provide notice to the FAA by any available, expeditious means. You must file a completed FAA Form 7460-1 within 5 days of the initial notice to the FAA. Outside normal business hours, the nearest flight service station will accept emergency notices.



## Meet the new face of Fairbanks International Airport

Fairbanks International (FAI) has revealed a captivating new logo, designed by DOTPF employee Andrea Deppner, that serves as a visual embodiment of the airport's mission and values. The logo's vibrant palette of purple, green, and blue harmoniously captures Alaska's natural beauty, featuring a plane soaring amidst the enchanting Northern Lights. This dynamic composition symbolizes FAI's commitment to balancing aviation services with environmental responsibility, as well as its dedication to providing a seamless and magical travel experience for passengers.

The modern design not only showcases the awe-inspiring landscapes of Alaska but also emphasizes the airport's core values. Andrea Deppner's creation beautifully merges the dynamic nature of air travel with the celestial dance of the Northern Lights, highlighting the interconnectedness of destinations under the Alaskan sky. This logo is not merely a visual upgrade; it's a meaningful representation of Fairbanks International's identity, illustrating the synergy between nature and technology as passengers embark on their journeys through the Alaskan airspace.

# A word from the Alaska Air Carriers Association

By Will Day, Executive Director

The Alaska Air Carriers Association (AACA) has been focused heavily on U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) advocacy efforts this fall. We have been working to bring national awareness to failing weather infrastructure, to retain access to safer flight procedures, and to ensure the FAA Reauthorization Act acknowledges Alaska's unique operating environment. The Association is also preparing to host its upcoming annual convention.

## Ensuring national awareness of failing weather infrastructure.

In August, Executive Director Will Day met with USDOT Secretary Buttigieg, Senator Sullivan, and local air carriers in Kotzebue to discuss the impacts of AWOS outages, the need for more AWOS and ADS-B infrastructure, and the desire for more weather cameras.



*"U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg spoke to Northwest Arctic leaders about transportation needs at the Kotzebue Youth Center during his visit on Aug. 14, 2023. Northwest Arctic Borough Mayor Dickie Moto, Elder and borough assembly member Walter Sampson, NANA's Vice President of Lands Qaulluq Elizabeth Cravalho, DOT Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs Arlando Teller. Photo by Tiffany Creed, director of public communications at Maniilaq Association." - The Arctic Sounder*

## Advocating to retain advanced required navigation performance procedures for small aircraft.

In July, the FAA's Office of Aviation Safety released a memo limiting future approval of Advanced Required Navigation Performance procedures. The AACA responded by working with Senator Sullivan's office, Island Air Express, and Flight Tech Engineering to ensure local air carriers retain access to these procedures, which allow small-category aircraft to conduct safer IFR operations in and around mountainous terrain.



During a Senate Commerce Committee hearing, Senator Sullivan obtained commitments from now-appointed FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker to review the issue, act to improve weather infrastructure, and visit air carriers in person in Alaska. Shortly after the hearing, the AACA met with the FAA's Office of Aviation Safety and Senator Sullivan's office to share our concerns and request amendments to the July memo. We are waiting for the FAA to respond to our call to action.

## 2024 Annual Convention

The 2024 Alaska Air Carriers Association convention will take place from February 6 through 9 at the Lakefront Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. The AACA convention is Alaska's largest gathering of commercial aviation stakeholders. Air carriers, repair stations, and manufacturers meet with government officials, legislators, and suppliers to share knowledge, network, and conduct business.

For the first time ever, the first 50 attendees to register before December 1 will receive ten percent off registration passes. Registration is also open for exhibitors as well. You can at

<https://aaca.regfox.com/2024-aaca-convention>

# DOTPF WINS NATIONAL AWARD

NASAO, a leading national organization dedicated to advancing aviation in the United States, bestowed this award upon Alaska's Aviation Program in recognition of its exceptional contributions to aviation innovation. The award underscores Alaska's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of excellence in aviation, particularly in the areas of safety, technology, and operational efficiency.

Alaska, known for its vast landscapes and challenging weather conditions, has been a pioneer in the aviation industry for decades. The state's Aviation Program has continually strived to enhance safety, reduce environmental impacts, and improve the overall experience of aviation within its borders. These efforts have had a significant impact on the state's aviation community and the flying public.



The award was received for work done by Alaska's Avalanche Program, in which Ryan Marlow and Tim Glasset worked with partners such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to integrate Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into the program, enhancing safety and hitting national milestones such as receiving approval to carry concussive devices onboard UAS platforms, a fully autonomous self-recharging UAS platform that can be deployed and controlled from anywhere in the state, and using UAS imagery to create accurate snow-depth modeling.

Deputy Commissioner Katherine Keith expressed gratitude for the recognition and emphasized Alaska's ongoing commitment to advancing aviation in the state. **"It's a privilege for Alaska to receive the Most Innovative State Program Award from NASAO. This award underscores our team's commitment to modernizing our transportation system,"** said Deputy Commissioner Keith. "By harnessing technology and forging strong partnerships, we're enhancing aviation safety, efficiency, and sustainability throughout Alaska, which in turn propels advancements in aviation nationwide."

This prestigious NASAO award reinforces Alaska's reputation as a leader in aviation innovation. The state's Aviation Program will continue its mission to ensure safe and efficient aviation operations while pioneering new approaches to address the unique challenges of Alaska's aviation landscape.



## SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

By Jeremy Worrall

Many State of Alaska airports are currently going through the lengthy process of renewing airport badges. This task adds workload and stress to the users, tenants, and authorized signatories at the airports as well as the airport staff. Here are a few key reminders about badge renewal and about new badge applications that can help ensure a smooth badging process. Authorized Signatories have a large role in the process and must ensure that the renewal applications are completed and that the applicants have the appropriate identification documents ready to bring to the airport badge office.



The TSA has established specific requirements for acceptable IDs used in the badging process. **The IDs must be unexpired, and two pieces of ID are required** which most commonly include a driver's license and a US passport or a driver's license and a social security card.



Questions about which IDs are accepted should be directed to the airport badging office. There are also recurrent training requirements that must be completed onsite at the airport and coordination with the airport badging office is critical to scheduling and completing this training. Badges must be renewed prior to 30 days after the expiration date. If the badge is not renewed in that time the individual must start the entire badging process over as a new applicant. Lastly, badge fees and any other airport related fee accounts must be current and paid or badges may not be renewed. Again, questions should be directed to the airport badging office at the individual airport.

**ATTENTION**  
**You are leaving the secure area**

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Plane Talk is an official publication of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Division of Statewide Aviation. The intent of *Plane Talk* is to keep the Alaskan aviation community informed. For any questions or comments, please contact Dylan Blankenship at [dylan.blankenship@alaska.gov](mailto:dylan.blankenship@alaska.gov)

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