



# PLANE TALK

A publication of

Statewide Aviation

## ARROW PROGRAM

WHAT UAS CAN DO FOR RURAL ALASKA



### ARROW PROGRAM

By Dylan Blankenship

DDOT&PF, Division of Statewide Aviation

In the vast and rugged landscapes of Alaska, where remote communities face unique challenges, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is spearheading an innovative initiative that promises to transform emergency response capabilities. The Alaska Rural Remote Operations Work Plan (ARROW) Program is set to revolutionize the way rural Alaskan communities tackle natural and man-made disasters, ensuring the safety of residents and the preservation of critical infrastructure.

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
ALASKA DOT&PF DIVISION  
OF STATEWIDE AVIATION

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# A MESSAGE FROM JOHN BINDER

## Deputy Commissioner, Statewide Aviation

Though summer hasn't arrived in quite the fashion many of us would like, I'm excited to share some updates highlighting the remarkable achievements and events within Alaska's aviation industry. Over the past few months, our Alaskan aviators and airfield employees have showcased their unparalleled passion and dedication.

First and foremost, I extend my gratitude to the Alaska Airmen's Association for orchestrating the highly successful Great Alaskan Aviation Gathering.

First and foremost, I extend my gratitude to the Alaska Airmen's Association for orchestrating the highly successful Great Alaskan Aviation Gathering. This extraordinary event united aviation enthusiasts from all corners of the state, fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and allowing us to celebrate our shared love for flying. The Great Alaskan Aviation Gathering truly exemplifies the vibrant and thriving aviation community that sets Alaska apart.

I am also delighted to shine a spotlight on Rebecca Douglas, an outstanding member of our Statewide Aviation team, who has earned well-deserved national recognition as a recipient of the Aviation Pros Top 40 under 40 award. This prestigious accolade not only highlights Rebecca's individual accomplishments but also underscores the exceptional caliber of professionals within our organization. Congratulations, Rebecca, on this remarkable achievement that brings immense pride and inspiration to our entire team.

Furthermore, I want to express my satisfaction in the number of our employees taking full advantage of the Certified Member training course offered by the AAEE. This invaluable professional development opportunity will greatly benefit both the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the state of Alaska as a whole. It is noteworthy that your class achieved an outstanding 75% pass rate, surpassing the historical average of 55%. This remarkable accomplishment demonstrates your dedication and commitment to enhancing our nation's largest aviation system. I encourage you to apply the knowledge gained from this training in your day-to-day operations as we continuously strive to improve.

As we embrace the summer season and the plethora of incredible activities Alaska has to offer, such as fishing, hiking, and, of course, flying, I encourage everyone to prioritize safety above all else. DOT&PF has numerous airport projects underway across the State so be sure to include those considerations in your pre-flight planning. Enjoy the warmth and beauty of the season, and know that your unwavering commitment to safety ensures the continued success and prosperity of Alaska's aviation industry.



D.C. John Binder

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J.R. Binder".

# THE GREAT AVIATION GATHERING 2023

The 25th annual Alaska Airman's Association tradeshow, the Great Alaska Aviation Gathering, took flight with incredible success over the weekend from May 6-7, 2023. Returning to the Alaska State Fairgrounds and the Palmer Airport, this year's event showcased the unwavering passion within the aviation community. With free admission, attendees were treated to a captivating lineup of speakers, thrilling events, and a buzzing atmosphere that united more than 25,000 aviation enthusiasts and professionals.

The tradeshow boasted an impressive display of over 100 aviation-related vendors, ranging from flight schools, parts suppliers, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers, providing a one-stop destination for aviation professionals and enthusiasts alike. The attendees reveled in the opportunity to explore the latest advancements in the industry, establish connections, and expand their knowledge.

The aircraft static displays were a sight to behold, with an impressive showcase of planes of all shapes and sizes. Enthusiasts and aspiring aviators had the chance to get up close and personal with these marvels of engineering, fueling their fascination and igniting dreams of taking to the skies.

The Great Alaska Aviation Gathering also prioritized inspiring the next generation of aviation enthusiasts. Free youth aviation activities engaged young minds, introducing them to the wonders of flight and fostering a love for aviation from an early age. Additionally, the aviation career fair opened doors to exciting opportunities and allowed individuals to explore potential career paths within the industry.



The prize of this year's raffle was an incredible Carbon Cub FX-2, with a CC340 engine and Catto Propeller. It was of course decked out with all the Alaskan goodies, such as bushwheels, ACME Suspension and VG's. The lucky winner this year was located in Fairbanks Alaska.

## AVIATION DAY AT FAIRBANKS



On Saturday, May 20, 2023, the Fairbanks International Airport came alive with excitement as aviation enthusiasts gathered for the highly anticipated Fairbanks Aviation Day. Hosted by The Airport Operators Council at the UAF Community Technical College Aviation Facility on the East Ramp at FAI, this one-day event offered a unique opportunity for attendees to immerse themselves in the world of aviation and discover the wonders that unfold at the airport.

Fairbanks Aviation Day was a dream come true for those curious about the inner workings of Fairbanks International Airport. The event provided a chance to get up close to real airplanes, exploring their intricate details and marveling at their grandeur. Attendees were able to witness firsthand the marvels of aviation technology and gain a deeper understanding of the machinery that takes flight.



Fairbanks Aviation Day also catered to the young aspiring aviators, offering free "first" flights for youth between the ages of 8 and 17. This exciting opportunity allowed the next generation of aviation enthusiasts to take to the skies, experiencing the thrill of flight firsthand and igniting their passion for aviation.

As the day drew to a close at 2:00 PM, the atmosphere was buzzing with excitement and fulfillment. Fairbanks Aviation Day had exceeded all expectations, providing an unforgettable experience for all who attended. The event not only offered a chance to explore the world of aviation but also fostered a sense of community among aviation enthusiasts, connecting people who share a common love for flight.

Fairbanks Aviation Day 2023 was a resounding success, leaving participants with cherished memories, newfound knowledge, and a deeper passion for the world of aviation. This remarkable event serves as a reminder of the remarkable achievements and endless possibilities that await within the world of flight.

## SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

*By Jeremy Worrall*

Fifteen DOT&PF rural airports have airport ID badge programs required by the TSA. If you operate or work at any of these airports you are already well aware of these programs since there are mandatory training and renewal requirements associated with badging program at each airport. It is important to remember the critical importance of maintaining possession of your airport ID badge. Misplacing or losing an ID badge has many negative repercussions including a substantial \$200 penalty on top of the replacement cost of the badge, however one of the somewhat hidden and broader impacts is that it requires the entire airport badge population to be rebadged if too many badges are unaccounted for. This comes at a tremendous expense in both time and badging fees for every single person and company at that airport.



DOT&PF uses some measures to help curtail missing badges, such as badging construction crews only for the duration of the project they are working on, imposing shorter duration badges on any companies that have repetitive failures maintaining control of badges, and some companies have good internal processes that help this issue like requiring the badge to be returned prior to an employee receiving their final paycheck. In the end the badges still have to be periodically renewed, but if everyone maintains control of their badges between those times, then the excessive cost and time wasted during off cycle rebadging can be avoided.

# ARROW PROGRAM

*Continued from cover.*

Thanks to the support of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program, the ARROW Program will harness cutting-edge technology interventions to address the real-world challenges faced by these communities. Through the program, Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and access to a shared geographic information system (GIS) will be provided, empowering communities to respond swiftly and effectively in times of crisis.

To achieve this ambitious goal, the ARROW Program leverages a strategic partnership between the Federal Aviation Administration's BEYOND Program and the Alaska Center for UAS Integration (ACUASI), creating a pathway for the Alaska DOT&PF and community partners to utilize UAS beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) for critical infrastructure inspection. This collaboration paves the way for remote communities to conduct BVLOS missions using UAS, collecting vital data that feeds into a comprehensive statewide GIS.

The significance of this endeavor cannot be overstated, especially in a region prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and extreme weather events. By equipping historically underserved communities with UAS technology, the ARROW Program ensures that emergency responders can be rapidly dispatched to protect critical infrastructure and potentially save lives in the aftermath of a disaster.

**Governor Mike Dunleavy expressed his confidence in the program, stating, "UAS technology will ensure that emergency responders are dispatched quickly to protect critical infrastructure and potentially save lives following a disaster in rural Alaska."**

The Ten communities selected are as follows: Bethel, Cordova, Denali Borough, Fairbanks, Mat-Su Borough, Nome, Valdez, Dillingham, Northwest Arctic Borough, Juneau, Anchorage

# GLOBAL AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS CONFERENCE

From UAF

The University of Alaska and Gov. Mike Dunleavy announced that the University and State of Alaska will host the inaugural Global Autonomous Systems Conference (GASC) in Anchorage on Aug. 9-11, 2023. GASC is a three-day gathering that will include presentations from worldwide experts, conversations among policy and industry leaders, and opportunities to connect with visionaries in autonomous systems. The convening is sponsored by the Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration (ACUASI) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. ACUASI is one of the nation's top drone research programs.



**“Whether it is using an Artificial Intelligence camera payload installed on a drone to spot whales, or underwater gliders to conduct physical oceanography research, Alaskan researchers are leading the way towards using autonomy to solve real-world problems,”** said ACUASI director Dr. Cathy Cahill.

The theme for this year's conference is “Trailblazing Autonomous Paths for a New World Economy” and will include sessions on research and advanced air mobility, or AAM. AAM integrates new aircraft and innovative technologies to move people and goods between nearby locations, and connect communities that do not have access to adequate transportation. AAM promises to be safe, fast, affordable, and eco-friendly, allowing people to reach their destinations quickly and efficiently. Invited experts and leaders in the fields of security, AI, emergency management, oceanography, fisheries, and more will also highlight the opportunities and challenges on the horizon for unmanned aerial systems in the economy and beyond.

**“Alaska is at the intersection of investment, innovation, and practical application of unmanned aircraft technology due to its location at the crossroads for worldwide transportation and logistics,”** UA President Pat Pitney said. **“The 49th state has consistently led the way in aviation technological advancement, and ACUASI's status as a leader in drone research and testing, across the U.S. is a continuation of that legacy.”**

**“From logistics to unmanned aircraft, from critical minerals to low and no carbon energy, and much more, Alaska is a resource powerhouse in a strategic position on the globe that has much more to offer than just our beautiful scenery and wildlife,”** Governor Dunleavy said.

The Global Autonomous Systems Conference will be held Aug. 9-11, 2023 at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage, Alaska. For more details or to register for the conference, visit [autonomousalaska.com](https://autonomousalaska.com).



# NEW FAA ALASKAN REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

*From FAA*

Michael O'Hare was appointed as Regional Administrator (RA) of the FAA's Alaskan Region in September 2022. In this role, he serves as the FAA's senior agency official, providing cross-functional oversight and leadership for the FAA Administrator and continuous coordination across lines of business to include Aviation Safety (AVS), Airports (ARP) and Air Traffic Organization (ATO). Mike is also the principal FAA representative responsible for outreach activities to stakeholders and local communities regarding environmental impacts, air safety concerns, and protection measures for the National Airspace System (NAS.)

**"It has been an honor to take the helm of the FAA's Regional Office here in Alaska. Everyone that has worked or served in Alaska knows that aviation here is a way of life and an absolute necessity,"** said Mike O'Hare, FAA Alaskan Region Regional Administrator. **"I feel privileged to be leading this amazing team of professionals doing the important work of continuing to make improvements to aviation safety standards and practices in Alaska."**



Prior to his role at the FAA, Mike served as the FEMA Regional Administrator for Region 10, covering Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Mike has previously served in leadership roles in Alaska including as Director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, roles with The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, as Legislative Aide in the Alaska State Legislature and managing information technology in the Alaska Legislative Affairs Agency.

Mike brings a strong knowledge base of the importance of air safety as well as the challenging weather conditions and geography in Alaska. Together with his relationships with local military commands, legislative affiliates, and emergency management personnel throughout the state and across the country, he is able to provide strong FAA representation.

"Alaska is a special place with unique challenges and I am looking forward to working with all of our stakeholders and community partners to make the skies of Alaska the safest and most efficient in the NAS," said O'Hare.

Mike holds a bachelor's degree from Long Island University and is a graduate of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative Executive Education Program at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



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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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