



# PLANE TALK

A publication of

Statewide Aviation

## UAS TAKES FLIGHT

FAA GRANTS ALASKA SPECIAL WAIVER, THE FIRST STEP IN A NEW INDUSTRY



### UAS TAKES FLIGHT

By Dylan Blankenship

DDOT&PF, Division of Statewide Aviation

Alaska is the first state to be able to grant permission for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to operate and test with the aim of securing certification for national airspace flight. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) granted the waiver at the end of February, which was requested by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in late 2020. Alaska is now the only state with the ability to allow UAS operations classified as research or development, including aircraft under 300 pounds, to be conducted in our UAS test-site airspace.

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
ALASKA DOT&PF DIVISION  
OF STATEWIDE AVIATION

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# A MESSAGE FROM JOHN BINDER

## Deputy Commissioner, Statewide Aviation

Springtime in Alaska is a time of new beginnings, and that includes the start of construction season. DOT&PF is taking advantage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and AIP funding to make strategic investments in our airport system across the State. A record-breaking winter has not only highlighted infrastructure challenges, but also the tremendous work our DOT&PF team does to Keep Alaska Moving, and I thank them and our many partners for a job well done.

Construction season brings its own challenges and I encourage you to keep in touch and pay close attention to NOTAMs. We'll be discussing each statewide project in detail at the upcoming Air Carrier Operations Meeting on March 22. However, you are often our best eyes and ears so please don't hesitate to speak up if something isn't looking quite right.

As the traveling public continues to move on past COVID, and the packages keep arriving, DOT&PF has significant workforce needs across the State. An exciting mission, and an awesome team, make DOT&PF a great place to work. If you or somebody you know is interested, please check out Workplace Alaska for opportunities.

<https://doa.alaska.gov/dop/workplace/#agency-navigation-menu>

So, here's to another Alaska summer and some great flying! Stay safe, and see you in the air.



**D.C. John Binder**



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John R. Binder III".

## ALASKA AIR CARRIERS MEET IN PERSON FOR 2023

Early March, the Alaska Air Carriers Association (AACCA) held its annual meeting in-person, marking a return to traditional gatherings after two years of virtual events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event brought together over 150 representatives from more than 70 air carriers, aviation support companies, and aviation-related businesses in Alaska. Attendees discussed a wide range of topics, including safety, regulation, and economic development in the aviation industry.

A key highlight of the meeting was the introduction of the AACCA's new executive director, Will Day. Will Day took over for Jane Dale who retired. Mr. Day was selected by the AACCA Board of Directors, and comes to us from Colorado. He has a wealth of knowledge, and holds a commercial certificate.



The event featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including representatives from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). Attendees found the presentations to be highly educational and productive, with discussions covering a range of topics from safety and regulatory compliance to innovation and sustainability. Overall, the conference provided carriers with valuable insights and networking opportunities, and left many feeling energized and optimistic about the future of the air carrier industry in Alaska. In addition to the insightful presentations and productive discussions, attendees at the Alaska Air Carriers Conference had the chance to connect with peers and industry experts from across the state. Many noted that the face-to-face interactions were particularly valuable.



# HONORING ROGER MAGGARD

*From the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP)*



In November 2022, we lost a dear colleague, friend, and invaluable advocate for Alaska aviation in Roger Maggard. Roger served the State of Alaska for 45 years, 40 of those with DOT&PF where he became an institution and mentor for so many others over his long and successful career. Roger became the Airport Improvement Program Manager in 2005, where he programmed and funded numerous projects, bringing over an estimated three billion dollars to Alaska that were used to create the modern Alaska Aviation System. He had a clear vision for the aviation system and continued to work toward its improvement until the time of his death. Roger was rightfully considered a guru of aviation planning, sharing his knowledge, mentoring, and training with many others throughout his life. In 2016, Roger received national recognition when he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of State Aviation Officials. Roger's DOT&PF colleagues remember his quick wit, authenticity, kind and caring nature, and his belly laugh that could warm even the coldest heart. And of course, Roger was renowned for having the messiest desk in all of DOT&PF but also the inscrutable ability to find any document faster than you or anyone else could pull it from the server. He was a man of few words, but a deep heart. Alaskans statewide have benefited greatly from Roger's tireless dedication to making sure that every available penny of federal funds were spent to improve and maintain access to cities and villages throughout the state. Roger passed away on November 14, 2022, after a short illness. He will be very greatly missed. Roger, thank you for all of your dedicated years of service to DOT&PF, your colleagues and friends, and all Alaskans



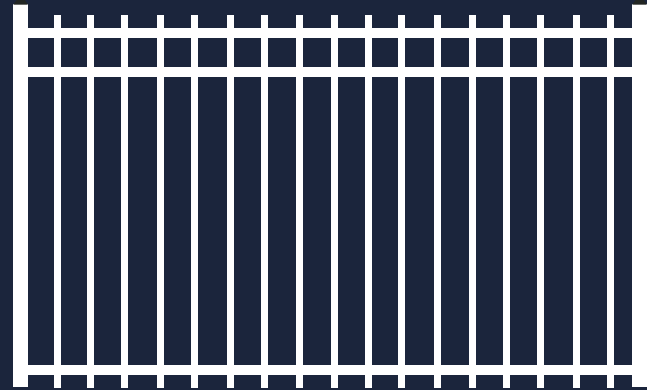
Roger receiving the "Outstanding Aviation Employee" award from the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) in 2015.

## SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

By Jeremy Worrall

*This information applies at those DOT&PF rural airports with TSA required airport ID badging programs in place.*

Winter weather has been a challenge lately and snow and ice can occasionally disrupt the control systems at gates used to access the airfield. Remember the phrase "wait for the gate" when entering or exiting the airfield and always ensure that the gate closes completely behind you. Notify the DOT&PF airport staff immediately if a gate fails to close and do not leave the gate unattended, wait until the DOT&PF staff arrive and take over control of the gate.



Some DOT&PF airports have seen an uptick in the loss of airport ID badges. Lost badges create a tremendous cost in dollars as well as time spent rebadging the entire airport, please ensure that yourself and your staff place badge accountability very high on the priority list. Always report lost badges immediately to your company's Authorized Signatory and/or the DOT&PF Airport Staff.

As always, remember the see something/say something model and report anything suspicious or out of place to DOT&PF airport management immediately.

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





## UAS TAKES FLIGHT

*(Continued from cover)*

"This officially establishes Alaska as the leader in research for Unmanned Aircraft Systems," said **Governor Mike Dunleavy**. "I am looking forward to seeing how Alaskans support and grow this developing economic sector."

The waiver enables UAS manufacturers to utilize Alaska's airspace for certification purposes, a move that will support new economic activity. The Alaska Center for UAS Integration (ACUASI), at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, is the manager of Alaska's UAS test site. As part of the FAA's Beyond program, ACUASI has been granted the authority to oversee the waiver's implementation.

ACUASI will evaluate the safety of an operator's unmanned aircraft and related procedures, using their internal processes to ascertain whether a UAS operation can be safely conducted.



Previously, individuals who wanted to undertake such operations had to apply for a special airworthiness certificate and request exemption from several regulations, which proved to be a resource-intensive and time-consuming process for both the applicant and the FAA.

"We were just handed a tool to help aircraft manufacturers get their drones certified for use," ACUASI Director Cathy Cahill said. "The FAA is allowing the test site to test and evaluate larger drones under real-world conditions," she said. "This will allow us to support the development of a strong drone economy in Alaska and across the nation."

Ryan Marlow, UAS Program Manager for the State of Alaska, reiterated that the waiver allows Alaska to use its largest natural resource as a new economic driver, its airspace. "This is a massive leap forward for UAS integration on a national level, and we look forward to supporting enhancement in airspace safety through advanced air mobility "

# ANC SOUTH TERMINAL PARKING GARAGE PARTIAL CLOSURE

Beginning March 20, ANC parking capacity will be reduced by approximately half. The South Terminal Parking Garage, built in the mid-1980s, will be partially closed for the duration of summer to accommodate construction. This means that parking will be exceedingly limited. Structural restoration, asphalt replacement and re-stripping must be completed on the approximately 50-year-old structure. No previous upgrades or major maintenance have occurred since the garage was constructed.



Travelers should allot extra time if they need to utilize parking at the airport. ANC encourages travelers to have plan for drop off or pick up in lieu of using the South Terminal parking garage. On site, other parking options include the North Terminal parking lot, the South Terminal Long-term parking lot and the Park, Ride & Fly, which provides shuttle. Off-site businesses that provide parking and shuttle services should also be considered as an alternative. Other pick-up plans could include people waiting at nearby restaurants, or the cellphone lot, for their traveler to arrive and collect their baggage.

**“Summer construction is both necessary and unavoidable,”** said Megan Peters, ANC Communications Coordinator. “ANC is attempting to make the parking situation as manageable as possible. We ask for patience while this critical rehabilitation construction is underway and that motorists take their time and follow all informational construction signs.”

**On March 20, 2023, barricades will be placed to stop vehicles from parking on levels 3 & 4. All vehicles must vacate levels 3 & 4 by March 31, 2023, at 11:59 pm. Beginning April 1, any remaining vehicles shall be towed. When work is completed for levels 3 & 4, levels 1 & 2 will undergo the same renovations.**

Any vehicles that are towed will be relocated to another parking area at ANC. Motorists looking for their vehicle moved due to the construction, or any other parking issue, can call Republic Parking at 907-677-1074.



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Winter 2023