



# PLANE TALK

Publication of Statewide Aviation



Fall 2012

## GOOSE BAY AIRPORT MARKED FOR PILOT TRAINING



*(L-R) Gwen White, Jim Woodley, Jane Dale, Patty Livingston, and Jill Parson volunteered to airmark the Goose Bay runway this summer, providing pilots a practice area for short field landings and takeoffs. The practice strip is marked to simulate a “bush strip” typically 600-800 ft. long and 25 ft. wide.*

Off-airport operations are common in Alaska occurring on glaciers, bush strips, lakes, and gravel bars. These landing surfaces seldom meet FAA airport design standards! Pilots are generally on their own to determine the length, width, obstacles, surface conditions, and approach clearances. Consequently pilots need to be able to maintain control of their aircraft, including the abilities to touch down precisely at the end of the runway, maintain directional control, and stop in a short distance.

The local FAA and Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities recognized the high-risk nature of these off airport operations and worked with aviation stakeholders to develop a Modification of Standards to allow marking of a simulated “bush strip” within the confines of a larger, conventional gravel or turf runway.

Six airports—the gravel strips at Fairbanks International, Goose Bay, Nenana, Palmer, Soldotna, and Wasilla Airports, have been marked with practice strips 600 to 800 feet long and 25 feet wide. Pilots can practice on these strips to better know their own limitations and understand the characteristic handling of the aircraft they fly. Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is asking pilots who have used the practice strips to provide feedback by taking an [online survey](#) about the experimental program.

Organizations that have made the program possible include The Ninety-Nines, Alaska Airmen’s Association, AOPA, Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation, Alaska Airports Association, and the individual airports.

## Message From Deputy Commissioner



### Greetings and Best Wishes to All!

As summer and construction season come to an end it's a good time to reflect on all of the aviation activity that has been happening around our state. The big news is the opening of the Akutan Airport (7AK) this September, a project that has been in the works since 1999. It's not often that a brand new airport is constructed but here in Alaska they provide a lifeline for 82% of our communities. I'm pleased to say this new airport will provide much needed dependable service for the community of Akutan and will improve regional aviation safety as an emergency alternate for aircraft operating in this remote region of Alaska. Another completed airport project is the newly constructed and relocated Alakanuk Airport (AUK). The 4,000' gravel runway will allow larger aircraft to bring in fuel and freight, and will facilitate faster transportation of fish products from this commercial fishing community to market.

Most readers will know forces of change are at work in the community of Barrow. Our State-owned airport saw increased activity related to oil and gas explorations and we're anticipating both growth and change to continue. The airport Master Plan is being updated and involves myriad stakeholders to help DOT&PF scope future development on the airport. A team of us recently traveled to Barrow and met with North Slope Borough Mayor Charlotte Brower and her staff, and City of Barrow Mayor Dr. Robert Harcharek. We were pleased to provide the Barrow Assembly a short briefing on the airport master planning initiative at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Our Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI) also hit a few essential milestones. Nick Mastrodicasa was key in planning and coordinating a very successful federal roundtable event in Washington D.C., with the goal of bringing numerous federal partners together and seeking deeper financial commitments to get our state digitally mapped. One outcome of the event was commitment to

formally stand-up a federal SDMI Executive Committee comprised of the many federal agencies and to be led by a senior Department of Interior official. This kind of traction in Washington D.C. is rather remarkable these days, so hat's off to Nick for putting this together.

The below photo of the Fairbanks ramp from a few weeks ago speaks to the critical importance of our Alaska International Airport System (AIAS). The divert capability of the "system" is critically important to keeping our Asian cargo carriers confident in their stopover-in-Alaska business models. Well done Jesse Vanderzanden and Fairbanks team on receiving multiple divers during the Anchorage wind storms!



In other AIAS news, I'm pleased to announce that Tim Coons is the new Lake Hood (LHD) Seaplane Base Manager. Tim brings a wealth of capability and experience to this vitally important position. He'll be out and about to the key LHD meetings, but I encourage LHD stakeholders to swing by and see him as well.

I much appreciated participating in a visit from FAA Acting Administrator Michael Huerta. This was his first trip to Alaska and it provided a great opportunity for DOT&PF to tell the story of aviation's importance and our challenges with respect to rural Alaska. I offer my personal thanks to Bob Lewis and Byron Huffman for including a state government perspective in his visit.

I'll end this piece with an offer of congratulations to the Alaska Air Carriers Association for the absolutely terrific event they hosted on 12 October, *THE BANQUET FOR THE LIVING LEGENDS OF ALASKAN AVIATION & THE MEDALLION FOUNDATION AWARDS*. Joy Journey and Wilfred Ryan did a remarkable job emceeding the event. The stories from the legends were amazing.....and I thought I'd seen some crazy stuff in the military.....

Thanks for reading and thanks for the support our offices receive from so many of you.

Fly Safely.  
Steve Hatter

### *FAA Administrator Huerta Visits Alaska Airports*

DOT&PF and local FAA officials welcomed FAA Acting Administrator Michael Huerta on his first trip to Alaska last month. The four day visit began with a stop at the Juneau Airport and a demonstration of the Juneau Airport Wind System (JAWS) NextGen technology. This system was formally commissioned by the FAA this summer and is a turbulence-detection system that helps carriers avoid wind shears and pockets of turbulence when operating in/out of Juneau.

His tour included stops at Sparrevohn— a long range radar site; Bethel Airport—major hub for Y-K Delta; Shageluk Airport where the FAA was in the process of installing an automated weather observation system; Kotzebue Airport where DOT&PF and the FAA are undertaking a project to improve the runway safety areas; and a flyover of Goose Bay Airport to observe the short-field gravel strip marking project.

One of FAA Administrator Huerta's priorities is the multi-billion dollar NextGen air traffic control modernization program, a shift from ground-based radar to state-of-the-art satellite technology. Learn more at this link: [Why NextGEN Matters](#)



*(L-R) Calvin Schaeffer, Kotzebue Airport Mgr., Bob Lewis, FAA Regional Administrator, Byron Huffman, FAA Airports Division Manager, Michael Huerta, FAA Administrator, Steve Hatter, DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner-Aviation, Greg Holt, FAA Deputy Regional Administrator at the Kotzebue Airport.*

### *First ACE Academy Held In Bethel*

Twenty youth from 12 surrounding villages participated in the first Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy held in the Y-K Delta Region from Sept. 24-28. Angie Slingluff, FAA Aviation & Space Education Coordinator advises that the academy was a success with participants learning about aircraft, flying, flight safety, and aviation related careers. Thanks to the [Alaska Airmen's Association](#), participants enjoyed a dinner with youth motivational speaker [Jessica Cox](#). This year's Bethel ACE Academy is truly the first every Academy in the region and Angie hopes the first of an ANNUAL event.



*Photos courtesy of Andrea Pokrzywinski, ACE Academy Director*

## Airport/Heliport Spotlight

### *Diomedes Heliport—DM2*

Little Diomedes Island, Alaska sits just over two miles to the east of Big Diomedes Island, Russia. The islands are separated not only by national affiliation, but also by the international dateline, which runs through the small stretch of Bering Sea between the island pair. The *Alaska Airport Facility Directory* says “BE ALERT: Diomedes is in very close proximity to Russian airspace. Incursion into Russian airspace is a civil violation.”

Community access is severely limited with its remote location, rugged terrain, arctic maritime climate, and no permanent runway. The community has no harbor or reliable barge moorage facility. During winter months, when the sea freezes, the city constructs an ice runway allowing fixed wing air service for 2-3 months provided by Bering Air.

Fortunately there is a DOT&PF owned and maintained heliport. Kiewit Pacific, Co. built it in 1996 for a total cost of \$2.9 million, and the Diomedes City Council has the maintenance contract. The heliport is 28 miles from the Wales Airport and 128 miles from the Nome Airport, a regional hub airport that receives daily jet service.

Helicopter service provides weekly mail deliver through a contract with the U.S. Postal Service with mail taking priority over carrying passengers. Needless to say, getting off the island is a lot easier than returning. However, that is all about to change.

Little Diomedes will soon receive year-round scheduled passenger service. The new service is subsidized under the U.S. DOT's Essential Air Service (EAS) program and is unique in that this is the only EAS community in the nation served by helicopter. Evergreen Helicopters, Inc. is the successful bidder and plans to begin scheduled weekly passenger service from Nome and Wales to Little Diomedes.

For more information on this new service contact Evergreen Helicopters in Nome at (907) 443-5334. Bering Air can be reached at [www.beringair.com](http://www.beringair.com)



*Community of Little Diomedes and heliport.*



*Blackhawk helicopter on the heliport at Little Diomedes.*



*Bering Air operates regular flights a few months of each year. The only runway available at the village is one plowed on the frozen sea ice. (Photo courtesy Bering Air)*

## ***General Aviation Celebrated***

Over one hundred pilots, aviation enthusiasts, and state and local officials gathered in Anchorage on September 17th to pay tribute to the role of General Aviation. The rally was organized by the General Aviation Manufacturers Association with support from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), National Air Transport Association, and the National Business Aviation Association. This event is part of a national campaign to recognize the value GA provides to the country both in terms of the service provided and economic benefits. Governor Parnell proclaimed September as “General Aviation Appreciation Month” recognizing the vital role GA plays in Alaska and encouraging all to celebrate general aviation as a unique resource and to appreciate the achievements of those who make aviation possible in the Last Frontier.



***(L-R) AOPA President Craig Fuller, DOT&PF Commissioner Marc Luiken, and AOPA Regional Manager Tom George, with a copy of Governor Parnell’s General Aviation Appreciation proclamation.***



***The aviation community came out in full force to support the GAMA Rally and recognize the importance and contributions of general aviation to Alaska. Signature FBO opened up their hangar for the event.***

## **Upcoming Events**

### **DECEMBER**

**11-12 - Aviation Advisory Board Meeting in Fairbanks**

### **JANUARY**

**23-24 - Aviation Advisory Board Meeting in Juneau**



### **2013 International Aviation Art Contest**

The 2013 International Aviation Art Contest is underway! The theme this year is “My Favorite Air Sport” open to youth ages 6 through 17. Entries must meet specific requirements and be mailed and postmarked no later than **January 28, 2013** to Statewide Aviation, 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502—Attn: Linda Bustamante—for more information email - [linda.bustamante@alaska.gov](mailto:linda.bustamante@alaska.gov)



***Alaskan pilots are able to access and enjoy some very special places in our state. Thanks to Scott Christy for sharing a photo from his wilderness getaway—Johnstone Lake.***

## Aviation Stakeholder Spotlight

### *Civil Air Patrol—Aviation, Teamwork, Leadership and a Lot of Fun!*

*Story and Photos Courtesy of Carl Siebe, CAP Squadron Commander*

This really happened: on August 25, 2012 a C-206 was flying over Rainy Pass in the Alaska Range headed to McGrath. Approaching the north side of the range, the pilot noticed his oil pressure was dropping and soon went to zero. Soon the engine overheated and seized, and the pilot made a forced landing on a gravel bar on the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. About three hours later a small red-white-blue Cessna began circling the valley, searching for the source of the Emergency Locator Transmitter. The ELT antenna was damaged in the forced landing and was not transmitting properly, making the signal hard to track. But the experienced search crew knew what to do and kept boxing in the signal until they spotted the downed aircraft and injured pilot waving to them. The little red-white-blue Cessna was from the Civil Air Patrol and had been dispatched to find the downed Cessna.

The Civil Air Patrol is a private, non-profit corporation chartered on 1 December 1941 under a special Act of Congress. On 26 May 1948 the Alaska Wing was chartered. Presently, there are 21 squadrons and Wing Headquarters, which are supported by a volunteer staff of 723 senior members and 292 cadets.

The volunteers serve the state and communities with an intense dedication to the areas of Search and Rescue, Emergency Services, Homeland Security, Aerospace Education, Guardian Angel Missions, Cadet Programs, Glider Activities, and Leadership Activities. The promotion of Aerospace Education assistance to the schools and the public at large is of great importance.

Every spring, shortly after school is out, the Cadets of the Alaska Wing CAP participate in a glider encampment where about 40 cadets and 10 adult leaders participate. Cadets receive ground instruction, and dual instruction flying gliders. Cadets who are old enough and gain sufficient experience can solo!

The Alaska Wing also offers a Cadet Encampment where the Cadets can learn all about the military lifestyle and gain experience should they want to join one of the military forces in the future. Cadets can receive

several orientation flights with an experienced CAP pilot where they can observe and experience basic flying maneuvers. A few CAP Cadets go through private pilot ground school and can receive flying lessons towards their private pilot certificate all through the Cadet Program.

Find a local CAP unit and get more information here:

[Alaska Wing](#)

[Introduction to Civil Air Patrol](#)



## Meet the Team



Rich Sewell works on a wide variety of aviation issues for the Division of Statewide Aviation as the Aviation Policy Planner. His first job out of college was working as an Economic Analyst at a regional planning agency in Michigan. In 1981 he moved to Alaska to work for the Municipality of Anchorage as the Regional Economist and Research Section Supervisor for Mayor George Sullivan. Before coming to work for DOT&PF in 2004, he owned a wholesale seafood business, which shipped live King Crab by air cargo to Asia and the Lower 48. From this he brings the cargo customer's perspective to airport planning and policy issues.

Rich received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Kalamazoo College in economics with a concentration on public policy analysis. Along the way he got his MBA degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Additionally he has travelled extensively in Europe, Asia, and South America. Rich says that he and his wife Ellen are members at the Birchwood Shooting & Recreation Park, and are shotgun sports enthusiasts. When they travel they always take their shotguns to shoot trap, skeet, or hunt wherever they travel. For example last March they went bird hunting while in Argentina.

Deputy Commissioner Hatter says, "Rich brings a wide breadth of experience and knowledge to the job. He can be depended on to research and stay ahead of impending national aviation issues. We're fortunate to have him on the team."

### ***Dust Control at Rural Airports & Roads***

Dust is a significant issue in rural Alaska. Aside from the obvious air quality issues, dust impacts activities such as drying fish and the costs of maintaining road and runway surfaces. A partnership between Alaska DOT&PF Statewide Research, Development, and Technology Transfer and Alaska University Transportation Center is addressing the dust problem. A research team spent this past summer doing remote field work testing dust reducing palliatives at rural runways and roads across Alaska. Using a unique dust measuring instrument the results showed various palliatives reduced dust from 65% to 99%. Results also indicate at least a 90% reduction rate for one and sometimes two years with most modern chemical palliatives.

Testing locations of roads and runways included Central, Circle, Kotzebue, Shungnak, Buckland, Noatak, Noorvik, Kaltag, Summit, Kantishna, Tetlin, Eagle, Hughes, Coldfoot, Kotlik, Golovin, White Mountain, Wales, and St. Michael.



***DUSTM—portable dust measuring instrument monitors palliatives on gravel airports and roads.***



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