



# PLANE TALK

Publication of Statewide Aviation

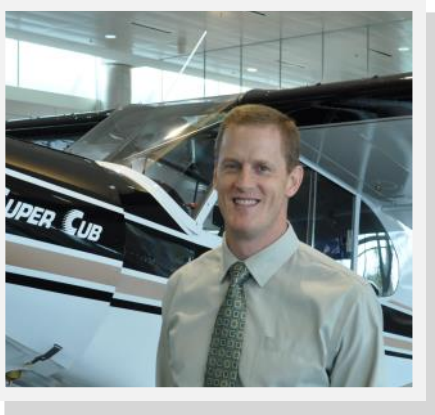


FALL 2020

## LITTLE DIOMEDE Added to EAS Program



**Message from DC Binder:**



As 2020 continues to bring challenges our way, aviation remains a bright spot in Alaska!

Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport continues to see increases in cargo activity. ANC’s widebody freighter traffic is up nearly 9% over last year with an average weekly increase of 26.75% since the beginning of April. ANC was also named a finalist by Asia Cargo News for Best Air Cargo Airport in North America. While the passenger market remains uncertain, Condor Airlines’ announced return in 2021 with flights between Frankfurt, Germany and Alaska is exciting. Flights to Anchorage will run May through September and Fairbanks service will be added in June. Flight schedules are available [here](#).

COVID-19 brought significant challenges to the rural airport construction program but implementing a COVID Mitigation Plan allowed State and contract employees to maintain safe operations and travel protocols. The result was that the summer’s airport



***Holy Cross Airport project included installing surfacing, dust palliative, lighting systems, and FAA Nav aids. The final inspection occurred in August and the project is almost complete.***

improvement program remained on schedule and Alaska fully executed \$139 million in federal Airport Improvement Program funding.

Alaska leads the way on many emerging technologies and UAS is no different. With the partnership among government and private entities, Alaska’s UAS program is rated one of the top in the country. These small systems are enabling DOT&PF to perform many tasks in much safer and more efficient ways. Some examples include bridge inspections, avalanche mitigation, erosion monitoring, material source calculations, pavement condition assessments, and much more. However, with these increased activities comes risk to piloted aircraft, and we are working closely with aviation stakeholder groups to spread the word and ensure awareness of UAS operations.

Finally, as we prepare for winter operations, we continue to meet with our customers to review winter hours and availability of commodities to make sure we’re meeting air carrier needs. I’m very happy to announce that a new Airport Manager now supervises the state’s 2nd busiest cargo airport. Joe Laroux is leading the Bethel team and overseeing 25 village airports in the surrounding Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. He is a life-time resident of Bethel and brings 10 years of equipment operations experience to the mix. Congratulations Joe!

I trust you’re meeting the challenges brought your way. Enjoy the Alaska fall, and Fly Safe!

John Binder  
Deputy Commissioner



***Congratulations to Joe Laroux!  
New Airport Manager for the Bethel Airport***

## ***Little Diomede Island Now Eligible for EAS***

Little Diomede Island sits just over two miles to the east of Big Diomede Island, Russia. The international dateline runs through the Bering Strait and divides both the islands and our two nations. The *Alaska Chart Supplement and Airport Facility Directory* says “BE ALERT: Diomede is in very close proximity to Russian airspace. Incursion into Russian airspace is a civil violation.”

Little Diomede’s remote location, rugged terrain, arctic maritime climate, and no permanent runway severely limit community access. Furthermore it has no harbor or reliable barge moorage. In the past during winter months, the Bering Strait used to freeze and the community would construct an ice runway that allowed fixed wing air service for 2-3 months. However in recent years the sea ice has not been forming at Little Diomede.

Fortunately DOT&PF has a heliport there, built by Kiewit Pacific, Co. in 1996 for a total cost of \$2.9 million. The City of Diomede has the DOT&PF maintenance contract. The heliport (DM2) is 28 miles from the Wales Airport and 128 miles from the Nome Airport, a regional hub airport that receives daily jet service.

Pathfinder Aviation, Inc. provides weekly mail delivery by helicopter through a contract with the U.S. Postal Service. Mail takes priority over carrying passengers. Needless to say, getting off the island has been a lot easier than returning.

Little Diomede was not eligible for Essential Air Service (EAS) because Congress required a community to have scheduled air service prior to 1978 to be on the EAS eligible list. Recently Little Diomede was finally added to the EAS eligible list after twelve long years of cooperative efforts by the Native Village of Diomede, City of Diomede, Kawerak Inc., Alaska Legislature, Alaska Congressional delegation, and DOT&PF.

U.S. Department of Transportation selected Pathfinder to provide EAS at Diomede from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023. Now Pathfinder provides once-a-week passenger service at Diomede for a total of 52 round-trips per year to Nome, Alaska, using a nine-seat Bell 212 rotary wing helicopter aircraft.

**Cover photo courtesy of US Coast Guard  
Back cover photo courtesy Rich Sewell, DOT&PF**

## ***UAS Operations Increasing Across Alaska***

Alaska DOT&PF is deploying unmanned aircraft across the state to aid in monitoring large scale projects, responding to emergencies, and collecting high resolution imagery.

If you’ve been following the emergence of UAS (unmanned aircraft systems) into aviation, then you’ve seen the technology begin to mature and be adopted by almost every industry. The construction industry has seen the largest growth with UAS facilitating the ability to update imagery on a project monthly to sometimes daily.

UAS integration into the NAS (National Airspace System) has been a slow process with priority set on controlled airspace and creation of the LAANC UAS Facility Maps, this leaves the remaining Class G airspace with no required communication procedures for notifying General Aviation about UAS operations taking place.

DOT&PF has begun a public outreach campaign to alert pilots where UAS systems are being used. Through the use of NOTAMs, DOT&PF’s UAS website, social media, safety webinars and aviation advocacy groups, DOT&PF will be using every channel to alert of UAS operations.

For questions or more information on UAS activity please contact:

***Ryan Marlow***  
***Statewide Aviation UAS/Drone Program Coordinator***  
***907/269-0741 or [ryan.marlow@alaska.gov](mailto:ryan.marlow@alaska.gov)***  
***[www.dot.alaska.gov/uas](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/uas)***



***Sensefly Ebee X - looks like a soaring eagle!  
Wing Span: 45.7 inches; Flight Time: 90 Minutes;  
Cruise Speed: 25-68 mph; Range: 60 Miles***

## Aviation Happenings

### *Final Flight for Everts Air Cargo DC-6*

Everts Air Cargo, headquartered in Fairbanks, is the world leader in DC-6 operations. But as the company modernizes its fleet, some of their vintage DC-6's are being retired to museums and places like Chena Hot Springs. After years of planning the company delivered a DC-6 previously owned by a Norwegian airline to the Sola Aviation Museum. The crew flew the plane from its Fairbanks base via Yellowknife, Canada, to Stavanger, Norway. That final flight was completed in one, long leg of almost 16 hours, showing what the DC-6 is still capable of after 62 years! The story of why Norway wanted this airplane and the special cargo it carried can be enjoyed at this youtube link.

<https://youtu.be/vHQWsPOdhn8>



*Final resting place for this DC-6  
Sola Air Museum, Stavanger Airport  
Photo Courtesy: Reidar Årstad*

### *Cool Photo of our "State Bird"*



*Alaska Airlines on final for runway 15/33  
at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport  
Thanks to Don De Voe for this great photo taken on  
August 27, 2020*

### *Alaska Aviation Virtual Festival*

The Alaska Aviation Museum proudly held this year's Aviation Festival including a virtual flyby over Lake Hood. Watch all the action on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Txn9HosI-JU>



*Lynden Air Cargo's Herc flying over Lake Hood  
Photo Courtesy Rob Stapleton, Alaskafoto*

Special guest, ZW "Ski" Kowalewski was honored at the festival. Ski, who recently turned 100 years old, is a WWII Veteran and was a member of the famous Torpedo Squadron Eight (VT-8) devastated at the Battle of Midway. The Commemorative Air Force Alaska Wing kindly picked up Ski from Birchwood and flew him to lake hood to participate in the flyby where Ski also signed his book *A Sailor's Life in World War II*. The book is available in the museum's gift shop.



*ZW "Ski" Kowalewski  
Honored guest of the Aviation Festival*

The museum is open for visitors Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call 907/248-5325 or visit their [website](#).

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Department of Health & Social Services and travel industry organizations have partnered to launch “Safe Travels” a campaign that promotes personal health-safety and increases awareness of Alaska’s COVID-19 health mandates. The campaign is a strategic effort to reach travelers before they arrive in Alaska and provide them the information they need to make their travel decisions.

The campaign is creating clear and consistent messaging as it relates to travel mandates and the coronavirus. Travelers heading to Alaska by Land, Air, or Sea will receive the most current and accurate interstate travel information when they see *Safe Travels*. For more information visit, [www.AlaskaSafeTravels.com](http://www.AlaskaSafeTravels.com)

Across Alaska, airports are helping to protect the health and well-being of travelers and employees. When traveling through the state’s largest airports passengers can take comfort knowing these airports have prioritized the safety and cleanliness of the airport’s terminals utilizing state of the art equipment.

Airport COVID testing facilities are located at Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and Ketchikan International Airports. There is no cost to Alaska residents for the test, however, non-state residents pay \$250.00 unless they can provide proof of a test prior to landing at one of the gateway airports. The testing stations are open and staffed during flight arrival times.



**COVID testing facility at Fairbanks International Airport**

In other efforts to protect critical air workers and passengers, FEMA distributed millions of cloth face coverings to airports across the nation.

- Over 600,000 masks were shipped to twenty-five certificated (hub) airports in Alaska.
- ANC received approx. 300,000 and is distributing them in front of the airport’s TSA checkpoint.

Statewide Aviation received 5,000 masks and with the help of Tom George, AOPA; Mary O’Connor, CDC/NIOSH; Adam White, Alaska Airmen’s Association; and Jane Dale, Alaska Air Carriers Association, distributed them to essential air workers across the state.



*Passengers traveling through Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport will find boxes of masks positioned at the TSA checkpoint encouraging travelers to take them as needed.*



**Cargolux on the ramp at ANC with its newest special livery promoting the usage of face masks by painting a blue face mask on a Boeing 747-8 Freighter.**

# AOPA - Protecting & Promoting General Aviation

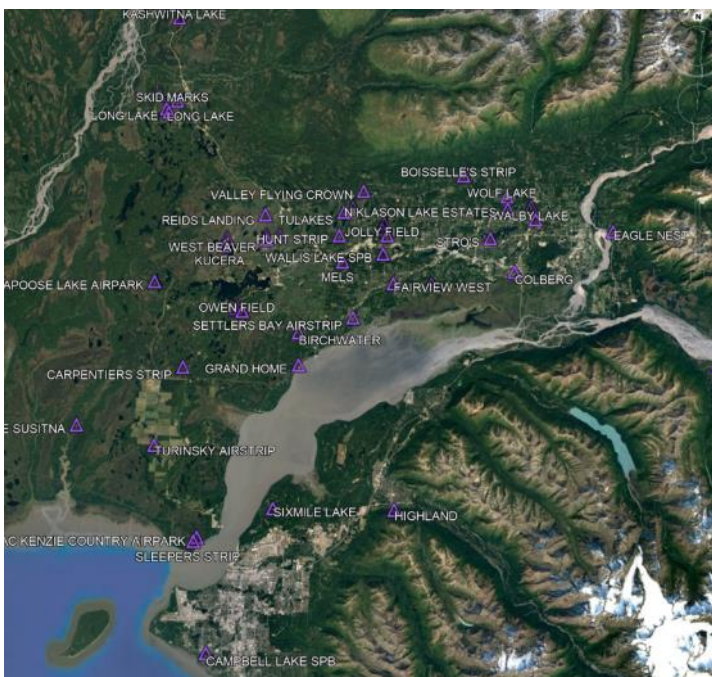
## ***Private Airport Owners Encouraged to Update Data***

**Articles submitted by Tom George  
Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA)  
[tom.george@aopa.org](mailto:tom.george@aopa.org)**

The FAA is updating the records for private airports across the nation and plans to change the status for those that have not been updated since the end of December, 2017. FAA sends questionnaires by mail to the registered owner of the airport, who may then respond by mail, or use an online account to update the record for their facility. As of early May, there were 114 Alaskan airports on the list, requiring updates.

Airports that are not been updated by the end of the year will have their status changed to “CLOSED INDEFINITELY” and be removed from the flight charts. AOPA and other aviation groups have been reaching out to owners of these airports, a number of which subsequently updated their records. If you own a private airport, check to see if your records are up to date.

For more information on this topic, including a google map of airports that were needing to be updated as of May, see: <https://blog.aopa.org/aopa/2020/06/11/pvt-airports-disappear/>



***A sample of the private airports needing to update their listing with FAA to avoid being removed from the flight charts.***

## ***Improving Safety at Your Airport***

Like to go land on sand bars, ridge tops, or beaches? How good are you at hitting the mark, and getting down and stopped in a short distance? Especially after a long, dark winter—when it was easier to *talk* about flying, than to go out and *do* it? One tool pilots in Fairbanks have is a “practice runway” hidden in plain sight on the gravel “ski strip” at Fairbanks International Airport (FAI). Each year since 2011 a volunteer crew, coordinated by the Fairbanks General Aviation Association, has organized a work party to mark out an 800 foot by 25 foot landing surface on both ends of the gravel runway, on the East Ramp. This provides a convenient set of references that pilots can use to tell how long it takes them to get airborne--or down and stopped. This year, with COVID restrictions and some challenges with a temperamental paint sprayer, it took a little longer to get the job done. The project was finished a few days before the start of the sheep hunting season.

There are five other runways in Alaska that have been approved for this type of markings in Alaska. Check and see if your airport is one of these, and if so, next spring offer to help set up a practice strip close to where you fly. This is a great way to brush out the cobwebs in the spring and contribute to aviation safety. For more details on this project, and a how-to guide to develop one of these at your airport, see: <https://blog.aopa.org/aopa/2020/08/10/neither-rain-nor-covid-defeats-practice-runway-at-fairbanks/>

The airplane you save could be your own!



***Two members of the painting crew admiring their handywork after finishing painting the “practice runway” on the Ski Strip at FAI.***

# Aviation Safety & Security

## *Alaska System Security Plan*

*By Jeremy Worrall*

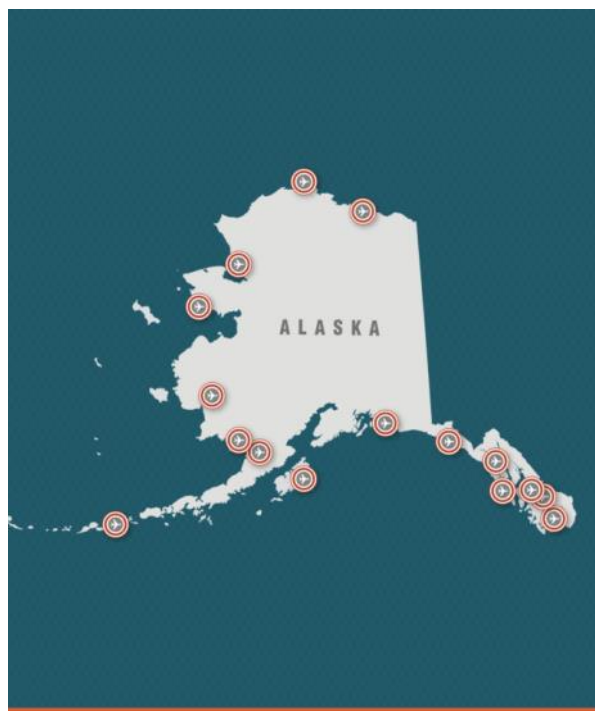
*DOT&PF Maintenance & Operations Superintendent*

The objective of the Alaska System Security Plan is to assess and review Alaska's Category III airport security environment by completing an airport security study as recommended by the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP). The study is examining existing conditions through a comprehensive inventory and stakeholder surveys, conduct a gap analysis of needed changes, and recommend statewide airport improvement projects based on that analysis. This project will first document the existing security baseline and then provide recommendations for future policy, infrastructure, and technology improvements across Alaska's Airport System. The study has a survey that is open right now; DOT&PF encourages anyone who operates at any of the sixteen airports to participate and share their thoughts on airport security.

**Outreach page:** <https://www.dowl.com/outreach/>  
select Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP)

**Survey link:** [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SWA\\_Security](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SWA_Security)

**Survey QR Code:**



**Alaska System Security Plan**

 Category III Airports

## *Fairbanks International Airport Parking*

*New App Makes Paying Easy!*

Next time you park your car at the Fairbanks Airport or airplane on the East Ramp try out the new touch-free payment option available on Apple devices. Signage with a QR code is posted at all locations where this app is available.

Republic Parking manages the parking concession at FAI and introduced this new and convenient parking app. It's the first one to be tested at Alaska airports and according to Manager Del Watkins it's working great and the company hopes to continue growing the program.

Airport Manager Angie Spear said, "the Fairbanks International Airport and its partners are always looking for new ways to provide efficiencies to our users. This application allows for visiting pilots to pay via a secure, web-based portal instead of "cash in an envelope" method that had been in place for decades. Not only have our users provided positive comments but overall revenue for transient parking has increased. This has definitely been a win-win."




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WITH YOUR PHONE**

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No registration required

Must have 

Keep ticket to exit

[www.iPayParking.com](http://www.iPayParking.com)



*Alaska National Guard Blackhawk Helicopter on Little Diomedes heliport  
Big Diomedes Russia in the background*



*Our mission is to:*

*“Keep Alaska Moving through  
service and infrastructure.”*

*To learn more visit our website: [dot.alaska.gov](http://dot.alaska.gov)*

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