



# PLANE TALK

Publication of Statewide Aviation



Summer 2012

## FAA TOURS ALASKA'S RURAL AIRPORTS



*May 9, 2012 at the Hooper Bay Airport—(L to R) FAA Rick Neff, DOT&PF Commissioner Luiken, FAA Mike Mc Nerney, FAA Frank Smigelski, FAA Associate Administrator Christa Fornarotto, FAA Assistant Administrator Victoria Wassmer, FAA Airports Division Mgr. Byron Huffman, FAA Regional Administrator Bob Lewis, DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner-Aviation Steve Hatter and DOT&PF Roger Maggard.*

DOT&PF was very pleased to welcome back FAA Associate Administrator Christa Fornarotto and join her in a field inspection of Alaska's rural airports. The inspection included many flyovers and landings at airports in the Y-K Delta. Conditions were challenging as many airports were still managing record snowfall conditions.

There are 257 airports in Alaska funded by the FAA airport improvement program (AIP) with 166 classified as general aviation airports having less than 2,500 passenger enplanements annually. These airports may be small in size but are huge in the services they provide to villages where aviation is the only mode of transportation. The FAA works with aviation stakeholders and local communities to ensure that our airports remain safe and efficient and meet the needs of the public. DOT&PF receives approximately \$150M annually in AIP funding to help meet the needs of rural airports.

The role of aviation in Alaska is huge, contributing \$3.5 billion to the state economy and 47,000 jobs—that represents 10% of all jobs in our state. The "Alaska's Aviation Lifeline" video recently released by the Department truly captures what aviation is all about in our state and can be viewed at these links: [www.vimeo.com/39894638](http://www.vimeo.com/39894638) or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDGw09IuApE>

## Message From Deputy Commissioner



Greetings and Best Wishes to All!

I'm excited to be looking out of our office windows and seeing seaplanes takeoff from Lake Hood! Winter did hit us all hard this past year and it was slow to give way to Spring. Nevertheless, the Division of Statewide Aviation and the Alaska International Airport System (AIAS) team had plenty to keep us busy and I'll high-light a few of those activities here.

We held a successful Governor's Aviation Advisory Board meeting at the Palmer Airport in early May. We were pleased to interact with key Mat-Su Valley aviation stakeholders at that meeting and I believe we're on track to both think strategically and to work collaboratively toward supporting a growing aviation need in a growing community.

On the AIAS side of our DOT&PF aviation organization, Commissioner Luiken and I spent a fast and furious week in China recently reaching out to both Chinese international cargo carriers and to key Chinese civil aviation officials. We spent the much valued time and opportunity emphasizing the strategic advantages of our Anchorage and Fairbanks airports and the cargo transfer freedoms we enjoy made possible by federal legislation and US Department of Transportation policy. We continue to make progress in marketing our Alaska advantage in hopes of building our cargo market share, while also buffering ourselves against an unpredictable global economy. We will be hosting another International Cargo Summit this October in Anchorage to keep focus on these key marketing communications.

We were able to sponsor another American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) Certified Member (CM) training class and exam—the 2012 CM Academy—and we're very proud and honored to announce 14 new Certified Members including our own DOT Commissioner, Marc Luiken. The Department now has a total of 31 CM's. The intent behind DOT sponsorship of this credential is to emphasize the importance of professional development within DOT as we perform as stewards of the vast public trust that is our state aviation system. We also have encouraged our partners who operate and maintain municipal and private airports to take advantage of this annual opportunity.

Finally, I'll mention this year's FAA Regional Airports Conference. Our FAA Alaska Region partners put on a great two day conference held at the University of Alaska Anchorage. DOT&PF had robust participation with folks traveling from our three regional locations. The Commissioner and I were able to spend a full day traveling to Western Alaska to view Bethel Airport and several remote village airports with Ms. Christa Fornarotto, the FAA Associate Administrator for Airports. This excursion was actually Christa's second trip to Alaska in less than six months. We much appreciate an FAA officer with her position, status, and responsibilities taking the time to understand our large and complex aviation system. It goes without saying that "seeing is believing" in our state and we thank the FAA team for helping their headquarters leadership become "believers," as it were, regarding the needs associated with our state aviation system.

I look forward to a busy but joyful summer as we all have the opportunity to appreciate being residents of the Greatland!

Steve Hatter

Deputy Commissioner - Aviation



## *Smart Phone App & Google Map New Features on Weather Cam Website*

The FAA's [Alaska Aviation Camera Program](#) is continually enhancing its website. The latest features include beta testing both a new app for smart phones and the addition of Google Map. These upgrades are a positive step towards improving aviation safety and efficiency by giving pilots and users the tools necessary to reduce weather related aviation accidents and improve operator efficiencies such as reduced fuel costs and unnecessary flight time. AVCAM is also developing text weather data such as METARs and weather images at each site. Pilots and users are encouraged to check back often in the coming months for these enhancements. Contact Walter Combs for more information at [walter.combs@faa.gov](mailto:walter.combs@faa.gov)

## *NEW Off Airport Ops Guide*

The FAA recently issued an updated [Off Airport Operations Guide](#) that includes suggested techniques and procedures to improve the safety of off-airport operations. With nearly 11,000 registered Alaskan pilots there is a high frequency of flying and safety is a top priority. Off airport operations are common in Alaska and can occur on gravel bars or mountain tops offering breathtaking views and a spectacular experience.



*Photo Courtesy Paul Claus  
Super Cub atop the Hanigita Mts., in Wrangell-St.Elias  
National Park.*

## *Airport Construction Safety Video “Approach to Communication”*

Airport construction projects in Alaska frequently occur on active runways that involve aircraft simultaneously landing on one-half of a runway with a construction crew working on the other half. Or if it's a smaller runway the crew will actually stop work to let an airplane land and then resume after take-off. Whatever the scenario, active communication is essential.

To help with these safety challenges and clearly explain best safety practices, the FAA and DOT&PF produced a documentary-style video for both pilots and contractors. The 35 minute video includes interviews with construction crews, pilots, airport managers, aviations experts, and mechanics about what a construction project means to the safe operation of an airport.

The final video was distributed to Alaska's flying community and is recommended material for construction crews before they begin work.

Copies of the video are available and requests should be sent to [linda.bustamante@alaska.gov](mailto:linda.bustamante@alaska.gov)



*The Kotzebue Airport maintained operations with half  
of the runway closed for construction work.*

## Airport Spotlight

### Birchwood Airport

*By Wes Erb, President, Birchwood Airport Association*



One of the busiest general aviation (GA) airports owned and operated by DOT&PF is located in the community of Birchwood and provides a home base for private pilots, from the nearby Chugiak-Eagle River communities and surrounding areas. The Birchwood Airport is an integral part of the community and as one airport user stated, “For more than a few of us this place is not just a small airport that we use once in a while to tie down our aircraft, it is home and a way of life.”

The airport primarily serves recreational pilots but there are also commercial operations that include gliders, ultralight aircraft, Civil Air Patrol search and rescue operations, flight school activities and guide services. Currently there are 54 lease lots and 139 public tie-downs. The airport has two runways, one paved that serves small GA aircraft and the other runway is 2,200’ with 600 feet paved and 1,600 feet that are gravel.

The Birchwood Airport Association (BAA) is a non profit advisory group dedicated to maintaining and monitoring the Birchwood Airport. The association was officially established in 2002 by Dick Lochner.

One of the first improvements to the airport was to partner with DOT&PF and build the transient pilot shelter with a State grant and volunteer labor.

The BAA also serves as a central forum to inform Birchwood users of airfield upgrades, upcoming events, and as a single unified voice to our State leaseholder on airfield management issues. Since the inception of the BAA, the State has been very helpful in providing the necessary maintenance to keep the Birchwood Airport in top shape.

The BAA does not collect dues, instead relies on donations at the annual barbecue (this year be held June 9th.) All that is required for membership is a valid email and a desire to stay informed of current events at Birchwood through a quarterly newsletter.

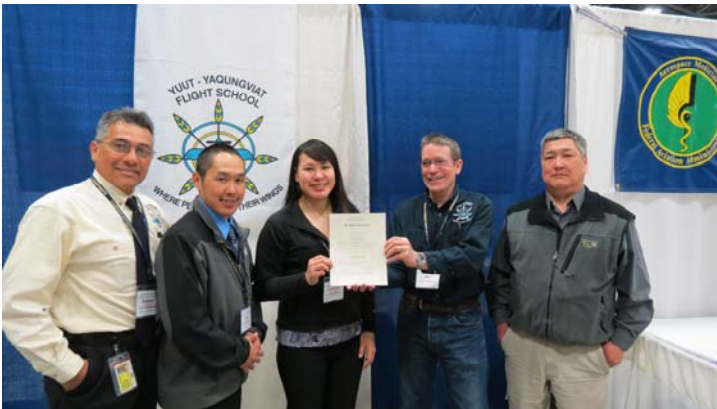
For information on joining the organization and/or receiving the newsletter please contact Wes Erb, BAA President, at [akcavok@gmail.com](mailto:akcavok@gmail.com) or Gail Miller, BAA Newsletter Editor, at [mLite@gci.net](mailto:mLite@gci.net)



***Birchwood Airport’s transient pilot shelter was built in 2004 and is maintained with pilot donations and volunteers with the Birchwood Airport Association.***



## *Yuut-Yaquingviat Aviation Center Newly Certificated Part 141 Flight School*



*Staff and students with Yuut-Yaquingviat Aviation Training Center at the Great Alaska Aviation Trade-show proudly displaying their FAA part 141 certificate. (L to R) Roberto Guerrero CF II, Travis Gloko, student from Manokotak, Katherine Hadley, student from Buckland, Michael R. Lucas—CFII, and John Amik, Manager.*

The YK Delta depends on aviation to meet the transportation needs of its many residents and helping meet that demand is the Yuut-Yaquingviat Aviation Training Center located in the hub of the YK Delta—Bethel, Alaska. The Aviation Training Center offers flight school and A&P mechanic training. More information available at <http://yuutyaquingviat.org/>



*Lake Hood Seaplane Base Manager, Andy Hutzel retired after 20 years with DOT&PF. Congratulations Andy and thank you for your years of service!*

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

9—Birchwood Airport Association Annual Membership Meeting & BBQ –CAP Hangar 11:30am to 2:00pm at the Birchwood Airport

9—[Kenai Peninsula Air Fair](#) at Kenai & Soldotna Airports

### JULY

9-13 Starbase Alaska will offer ACE (Aviation Career Education) for middle school age youth. More information - [www.starbasealaska.org/html/summer\\_academies.html](http://www.starbasealaska.org/html/summer_academies.html)

28-29 [Arctic Thunder Air Show](#)

### AUGUST

21-23 Aviation Advisory Board Meeting—Anchorage and Unalaska



The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to general aviation. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, AOPA partnered with the Transportation Security Administration to deploy a nationwide Airport Watch Program similar to the successful neighborhood watch anti-crime programs. AOPA asked 700,000 pilots and airport workers to participate in the [Airport Watch](#) program by observing and reporting suspicious activity at 5,000 GA airports. The Airport Watch Program includes warning signs for airports, informational literature, and a training video to teach pilots and airport employees how to enhance security at their airports. The toll-free security hotline is 866-GA-SECURE. More information on AOPA can be found at [www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)

## Aviation Stakeholder Spotlight

### The Ninety-Nines— *International Organization of Women Pilots*



*Members of the Alaska Chapter of the 99s met at the Lake Hood facility earlier this year. (L-R) Kimber Amundsen, Janet Hohn, Melanie Hancock, Jean White (front), Mio Johnson (back), Helen Jones, Angie Slingluff, Denise Saigh*

The Ninety-Nines, Inc. is an international organization of women pilots with members in 39 countries around the world. Founded by Amelia Earhart in 1929 and named the Ninety-Nines in honor of the original 99 charter members, the organization was created to provide mutual support, promote the advancement of aviation through education and scholarships, and to preserve the unique history of women in aviation

The Ninety-Nines are proud of their service to the Alaskan aviation community. They have provided “airmarking” at airports throughout the state. This involves painting airport markings that identify airport names, compass rose symbols and other identifications on airports. The group also offers a Flying Companion Seminar for non-pilots who fly in GA aircraft. This one day seminar has done much to allay the fears of spouses and passengers and has inspired some to go on to obtain their own pilot license.

To enhance pilot proficiency, the Ninety-Nines in Alaska offer a Short Field Skills Assessment clinic where pilots can practice short field take off and landing skills and the group has assisted in painting

practice short field runway markings at the Palmer and Fairbanks airports.

Scholarships are offered at the national level and the local Ninety-Nines Chapters in Anchorage and the Valley generally offer three scholarships a year.

For more information about the local Ninety-Nines visit [www.ak99s.org](http://www.ak99s.org) or the international website [www.ninety-nines.org](http://www.ninety-nines.org)



*Jill Parsons of the Mat-Su Chapter demonstrates lift to Brownies.*



*The 99s painting crew stand next to their airmarking project— Merrill Field Airport's name in 32' letters.*



## Meet the Team



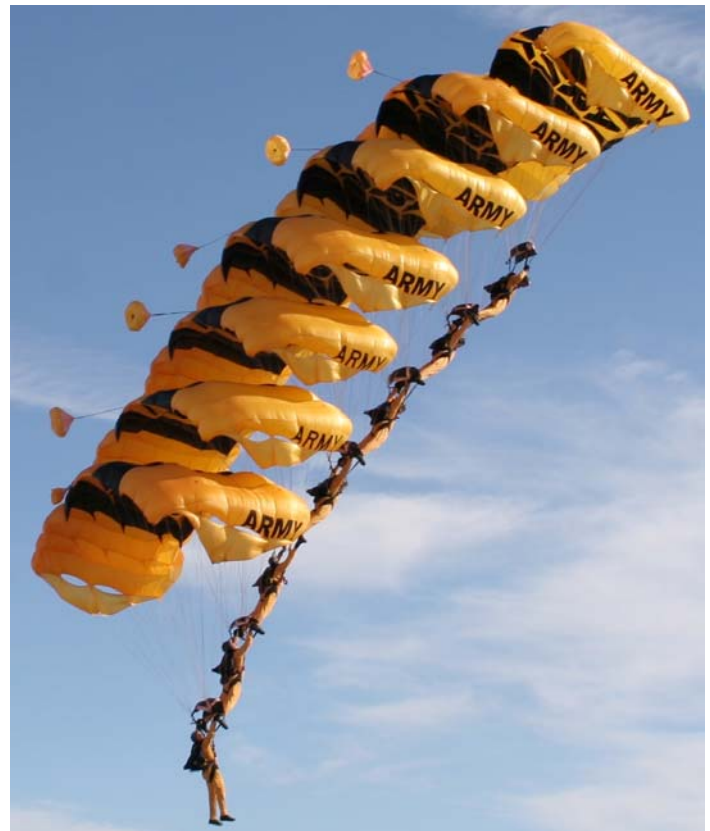
Becky Calhoun Iles is a 30 year veteran with the State of Alaska and fortunately for DOT&PF 29 of those years have been with this Department. Becky is a lifelong Alaskan born and raised in Fairbanks, attended high school in Juneau, and also lived in Anchorage and Ketchikan.

She started her career with Northern Region Planning and Research in 1981 and in 1986 was promoted to the position of Leasing Officer I. Over the years she has moved up through the ranks and in 2010 accepted the position of Statewide Aviation Leasing Chief. As such, Becky oversees three regional leasing offices, land use management, human resources, policy and regulatory development, responses to protests, appeals, and legislative inquiries on leasing matters and the Statewide Aviation operating budget.

Deputy Commissioner Hatter says, “Becky is such a tremendous asset to Statewide Aviation. The challenges she and the leasing team face with regulatory compliance are daunting. Her dedication and expertise is greatly appreciated by all.”

## *Come out and soar with ARCTIC THUNDER 2012*

Alaska’s largest air show—[Arctic Thunder 2012](#)—is scheduled for July 28th & 29th at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. There will be demonstrations by the Air Force, Army Golden Knights parachute team, and static displays of old and new aircraft. Every two years, the base hosts Arctic Thunder to demonstrate its appreciation to the Alaska community for its support of the military.





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*“Get Alaska Moving through*

*service and infrastructure.”*

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

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Division of Statewide Aviation  
4111 Aviation Ave.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

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