



PLANE TALK

Publication of Statewide Aviation



Summer 2013

New Video Describes Challenges of Building Rural Airports

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Division of Statewide Aviation has released a second video illustrating the lifeline aviation provides communities. Filmed at airport locations across the state, *Alaska's Aviation Lifeline, Counting the Costs* features interviews with airport construction and management staff describing the fiscal and logistical challenges of building airports in the rugged, remote parts of our state. The new video can be viewed at: vimeo.com/65427672 or youtube.com/watch?v=2g5MKkJppig



Did You Know:

- Gravel in rural Alaska can cost up to \$400 a cubic yard, compared to approximately \$22 a cubic yard in other states.
- Insulation material to prevent melting of ice-rich permafrost may cost up to \$1 million.
- An airport constructed in ice and silt-rich wetland terrain may need to be constructed in phases over several years due to short construction seasons and the need to allow the runway to settle and stabilize.



Gravel being offloaded from a barge for the Gustavus Airport.



Placement of geotextile separation and sub base at the Alakanuk Airport.

Message From Deputy Commissioner



Greetings and Best Wishes to All!

In the last issue of Plane Talk we featured some of the challenging springtime conditions we expect year to year, such as annual flooding and the associated challenges we see related to maintaining and operating rural airports. As I write now in early July, we all know our rural communities have grappled with very difficult Yukon River flooding that has demanded robust response efforts from myriad federal, State of Alaska, and private entities. Those stories continue to unfold, but in this issue I'd like to point out that our outstanding DOT&PF Northern Region Maintenance and Operations (M&O) team, with assistance from headquarters staff, have worked hard to both protect and repair airports as the flooding events occurred.

The western Alaska community of Emmonak got hit hard when the waters rose there, damaging facilities around the community and severing the airport's taxiway between the runway and apron. An approximate 50-foot wide section of the taxiway was washed out and the electrical and communication lines to the FAA navigational equipment, runway and approach lights were damaged. Emergency repairs have now been completed and the airport is back to being fully operational. There were definitely timing, logistical, and interagency coordination, and resource challenges to overcome in completing this repair, but with thanks to the FAA Airports Division for giving us key approvals to use on site materials, and to a number of other partners along the way, repairs were accomplished in time for commercial fishing season—now only a few weeks away. Our DOT&PF mission is to *Keep Alaska Moving through Service and Infrastructure*, and I'm pleased to say our team got it done at Emmonak. Interruption to fish hauls by carriers could have been devastating to the community and region's economy.

I'd also like to highlight excellence in Southeast Alaska with the Sitka Airport Runway Safety Area project which is now in the final stages of completion. These large

construction projects at busy jet service hub airports are always a challenge, and small problems can often mushroom into very disruptive operational concerns. Our Southeast region team had a very solid plan in place with nighttime closures and limited use of the runway scheduled to be as non-disruptive as possible. These measures were a result of carefully coordinated efforts and great communication between DOT&PF, contractors and air carriers. In fact, we were pleased to receive a letter of appreciation from the Sitka City and Borough who offered the Department and contractors "kudos" for an excellent job with the Sitka runway overlay project.

Of course, we are always looking to capture lesson learned each time we undertake an emergency repair or a planned project. Capturing lessons and improving how we do business is in keeping with our department core value of *Excellence*.

Finally, I'd like to mention our most recent Governor's Aviation Advisory Board (AAB) meeting held June 17-19 in Barrow, Alaska. As you may know, we try to host one meeting a year in a key rural location. We chose Barrow because the Department is pursuing a Barrow Airport Master Plan, with expected completion in December 2013. The master plan will set the conditions for what many expect will be rapidly increasing operations tempo at the Barrow Airport related to private sector resource development efforts. I wish to personally thank each and every member of this vitally important board for their commitment to furthering aviation in our state, for their ability and desire to think strategically about the challenges we face in building, maintaining, and operating a large and diverse rural airport system, and for their support of Commissioner Kemp and me.

I also wish to thank the many community folks who helped with supporting this meeting—in particular, a huge thank you to Mr Tom Nicolos, AAB member and Program Manager, North Slope Borough Public Works; Mr Morrie Leman Jr., Deputy Director, North Slope Borough Public Works; Ms Reanne Heath, North Slope Borough Public Works; and Mr Pat Kennedy, Director of M&O, North Slope Borough School District. We had an excellent visit to Barrow!

Fly Safely,

Steve Hatter

Youth Aviation Adventure

The FAA Alaskan Region established a Youth Aviation Adventure (YAA) Partner in Anchorage in 2007 that recently held their 6th annual YAA event at the Palmer Airport. 30 youth attended, including boy scouts who were able to complete the requirement for the Aviation Merit Badge.

Several organizations contributed to making the day a success including EAA Chapter 42 Young Eagles Coordinator Ed White and Pacific Air Force, Third Maintenance Wing MSgt William Brown who recruited six US Air Force volunteers to help.



A youngster tries her hand at flying the flight simulator.



*Aviation in the Know always brings smiles and ready answers from the participants.
(Photos courtesy - FAA)*

Fly-ins & Aviation Days Across the State

Hundreds of pilots and aviation enthusiasts gathered for the 10th annual Valdez Fly-In. Events included a Breakfast on the Beach Poker Run, Flour Bombing, Alaska War Birds aerobatic routine, and a STOL (short takeoff/landing) competition.

Other activities held across the state include the annual Hudson Memorial Fly-In at the Talkeetna Airport celebrating the area's rich aviation history, and Aviation Day at the Fairbanks Airport where thousands participated.



*Fly-In at Valdez Airport
(Photo Courtesy Melissa Osborne)*



*Aviation Day included tours of the Fairbanks Airport airfield.
(Photo Courtesy Fairbanks Airport)*

Airport Spotlight

SITKA “Rocky Gutierrez” Airport

By Verne Skagerberg, Transportation Planner DOT&PF Southeast Region

The runway at Sitka Rocky Gutierrez Airport (SIT) is constructed on a few coastal rock knobs connected by fill. Much of it was constructed by the U.S. Army during World War II. It was extended to 5,000 feet in 1965 and to 6,500 feet in 1975. With a Runway Safety Area (RSA) that was only 200 feet long on each end and 25 feet wide on the sides, it was far short of the FAA standard. Because of the large amount of fill that would be required, it was apparent that an Environmental Impact Statement would be necessary to support a project to build a standard RSA and, in 2001, the FAA issued the first grant to begin the long process of preparing one. Eight years later, the FAA produced a Record of Decision for an alternative that constructed an extension on one end of the runway that lengthened the RSA and provided a longer paved surface.

The RSA project will be completed this summer with a mill and pave on the runway. Doing a paving job on this runway isn't simple. A conventional half-width closure is one way to get it done while leaving part of the runway operational, but it makes a challenging runway even more so. This time, we used an approach that provided a nearly full width runway all day, every day. With the cooperation of Alaska Airlines – they adjusted their schedule to provide a longer over-night construction window – the airport was closed at night and a portion of the 75 foot wide center section of the runway was milled, repaved, and striped before reopening the next day. Each night an 1800 foot long section was done and the full length of the center section was completed in 4 nights. Once the center was done, the remaining 37.5 feet of pavement on each side could be tackled without affecting operations.

The new runway is reconfigured to provide a longer operational surface for some operations using declared distances. Although the runway is a little longer threshold to threshold, the pavement extends beyond the thresholds so that aircraft can avail themselves of longer take-off distance available, take-off run available, and accelerate stop distance available. While the additional distances aren't great, they may allow for reduced weight penalties for jet aircraft and, therefore, more efficient operations.

The RSA improvements at SIT have been a long time coming, but as a result of extensive coordination with carriers, careful construction planning, a well-managed construction process, and a little luck with the weather, the project went smoothly with little or no operational disruption and, most importantly, no accidents or incidents.



Night time paving operations at the Sitka Airport.
(Photo courtesy—Maureen Hanson, DOT&PF)



Preparing for morning reopening.
(Photo courtesy - Maureen Hanson, DOT&PF)



First night's work completed.
(Photo courtesy - Chuck Tripp, DOT&PF)



(Photo Courtesy Alaska Airlines)

Q400 Coming to Alaska!

Alaska Airlines will be flying the Bombardier Q400 aircraft in Alaska starting March 3, 2014. The Q400 will operate eight daily round-trip flights between Anchorage and Fairbanks and seasonally between Anchorage and Kodiak.

The Q400 turboprop aircraft is fast and fuel efficient and will allow Alaska Airlines to increase frequency between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

The plane is configured with 76 seats and has a crew of two pilots and two flight attendants. The aircraft also is equipped with the Head-Up Guidance (HUD) system and satellite-based navigation technology. HUD uses a transparent glass display that shows critical flight information, and during takeoffs/landings, an image of the runway is superimposed over the actual view out the window. The technology can eliminate flight cancellations, diversions and delays caused by restricted visibility.

For more news and information, visit the Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air Newsroom at www.alaskaair.com/newsroom

Upcoming Events

July 10-12 [3rd Cargo Airships for Northern Operations Workshop](#)

July 14 Salmon Bake and Centennial Celebration featuring special guests and aerobatic pilots Patty Wagstaff and Debbie Gary and live music by the Carhartt Brothers Band. Alaska [Aviation Museum](#) - 3:00pm-6pm Call 245-5325 for tickets.

August 12-16 Aviation Career Education Academy for youth in grades 6 and up at Russian Jack Park. Contact Margaret Timmerman for more information: timmermanma@muni.org

Era Alaska Unveils New Livery Promoting UAA and UAF

[Era Alaska](#) added a 34-passenger, Bombardier Dash-8 to its fleet painted in UAA's green & gold with the Seawolf mascot on one side and UAF's blue & gold and Nanook mascot on the other. Era Alaska CEO Bob Hajdukovich said this aircraft underscores the value of the partnership and synergy between Era, UAF, and UAA. Both universities are offering aviation degree programs critical to the success of the aviation industry in Alaska.



(Photos courtesy –Era Aviation)

Aviation Advisory Board Meets in Barrow

The Aviation Advisory Board held their rural meeting in Barrow that included tours of the Barrow, Wainwright, and Atkasuk airports. Official meetings at rural airport locations are an excellent opportunity for the Board to better understand the infrastructure challenges and hear first-hand concerns and comments from community members. The Board's role is to advise and provide recommendations to Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner.

The Barrow Airport serves as the regional hub for four outlying communities and supports regional oil and gas exploration and development. The airport is currently undergoing an airport master plan last updated in 2000. The master plan will provide funding decisions for the next 20 years and provide basis for prioritizing improvements. More information available at: www.dot.alaska.gov/nreg/barrowmp



DOT&PF Commissioner Kemp, Deputy Commissioner Hatter, and the Aviation Advisory Board at their meeting held in the Barrow High School auditorium.



The Aviation Advisory Board visited North Slope Borough airports in the outlying communities of Wainwright and Atkasuk.

DOT&PF Employees Earn AAAE's Certified Member Designation

The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) provides Certified Member (CM) training for airport managers. Candidates participate in a week-long class covering a wide range of airport related topics including management, FAA and TSA regulatory requirements, property management, and environment regulations. There are 34 active C.M.'s in Alaska, of which 32 are working for ADOT&PF.



CM Academy candidates (many from rural airports) at the April training class held in Anchorage.

The Great Alaska Aviation Gathering!

Alaska's premier aviation event, with attendance over 21,000, is held annually at the FedEx hangar in Anchorage. DOT&PF was well represented with booths from the Division of Statewide Aviation, Ted Steven's Anchorage International Airport and Lake Hood Seaplane Base. Also present, was the Alaska Division of Investments (Capstone Loan Program).



Luke Bowland and Rich Sewell helped staff the State-wide Aviation tradeshow booth.

Meet the Team



John Binder is the Operations Manager for the Division of Statewide Aviation, directly supporting Deputy Commissioner Hatter with oversight of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' aviation policy and functions. In this role he participates in and coordinates policy development and implementation, aviation system planning, capital project delivery, and maintenance and operations associated with the state of Alaska's 252 rural airports.

He is a retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel with pilot experience in the F-15C Eagle, T-38 Talon, and T-6 Texan II. His career included aviation and air sovereignty policy development across the Alaska region, as well as airfield operations and management responsibility for the Air Force's busiest airfield. Most recently, John consulted with the FAA on the National Airspace Defense Program and the Alaskan Satellite Telecommunications Infrastructure implementation program for Alaska. John is a native of Fairbanks and married to the former Kia Burns of Anchorage, where they live with their four children.

Deputy Commissioner Hatter says, "We are thrilled to have John on board the DOT&PF team! He comes with a remarkable mix of talents, leadership gifts, and experiences that make him the perfect candidate to provide the long term stability and horsepower we need to keep getting the department's aviation mission done with excellence. Welcome aboard John!"

TSA PreCheck– How it Works!

TSA PreCheck is available at 40 airports nationwide. Key airports participating include Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Sea-Tac, Portland, Dallas, and Salt Lake. The following airlines are participating:

- Alaska Airlines
- American Airlines
- Delta Air Lines
- United Airlines
- US Airways
- Virgin America

TSA PreCheck is a pre-screening initiative that makes risk assessments on passengers who voluntarily participate prior to their arrival at the airport checkpoint. It includes U.S. citizens who are select frequent travelers of participating airlines or members of existing Customs and Border Patrol Trusted Traveler programs.

Eligible participants use dedicated TSA PreCheck lanes at participating airports for screening benefits which could include no longer removing the following items:

- Shoes
- 3-1-1 compliant bag from carry-on
- Laptop from bag
- Light outerwear/jacket
- Belt

If TSA determines a passenger is eligible for expedited screening, information is embedded in the barcode of the passenger's boarding pass. TSA scans the barcode at designated checkpoints and the passenger may be able to receive expedited screening.

How to participate information available at <http://www.tsa.gov/tsa-precheck/how-participate>





Our mission is to:

“Keep Alaska Moving through

service and infrastructure.”

To learn more visit our website: www.dot.alaska.gov

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