



PLANE TALK

Publication of Statewide Aviation



Summer 2014

Let's Go Flying!

There's a reason Alaska has more private pilots per capita than anyplace else - just look at all the cool places you can go in an airplane! Alaska has 403 public-use land-based airports and thousands of lakes and gravel bars to land at, 586,412 square miles of land, and 2,427,971 square miles of airspace. This summer we hope you get a chance to see Alaska from above!



The Lake Hood Pilots Association held an informal fly-in at Big Johnstone Lake east of Seward. Throw in two folding bicycles, a wooden sled, and off you go!



One of the bigger events kicking off the summer flying season is the Valdez Fly-In. Over 300 aircraft from all over the state and lower 48 compete in a poker run, STOL competitions and Flour Bombing! (photo courtesy Melisa Osborn, DOT&PF)

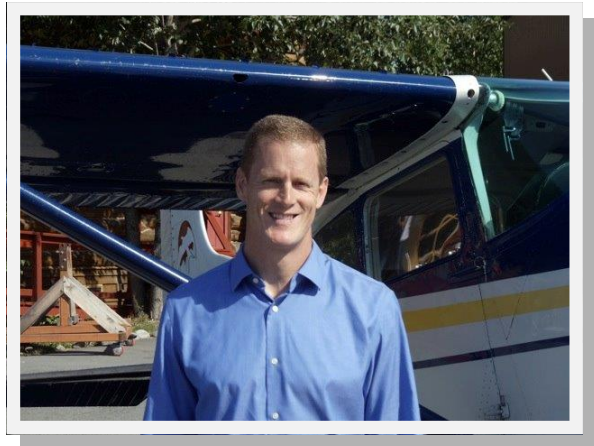


There's a place to land just about anywhere in Alaska - even a sandbar on the Tanana River. (photo courtesy Kurtis Smith, DOT&PF)



McArthur River - white beaches and good fishing! (photo courtesy Wolfgang Junge, DOT&PF)

Message From Deputy Commissioner



Now that summer is here and thousands of pilots are out enjoying the great flying in Alaska, it's a good time to talk about safety. Off-airport operations are common in Alaska, occurring on glaciers, bush strips, lakes, and gravel bars. Pilots are generally on their own to determine the length, width, obstacles, surface conditions, and approach clearances. The local FAA and Alaska DOT&PF are working with aviation stakeholders to airmark practice strips on runways, providing a practice area for short field takeoffs and landings (STOL). Six gravel strips at Fairbanks International, Goose Bay, Nenana, Palmer, Soldotna, and Wasilla are planning to have practice runways. Pilots can practice on these strips to better learn their own limitations and understand the handling



*Practice runway markings at Palmer Airport
Photo courtesy Greg Wickham*

characteristics of their aircraft during slow speed, high performance maneuvering.

With the highest concentration of Alaska's public and private airports located in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, we welcome the new CTAF allocation for this congested airspace. The FAA's collaboration with all of the aviation stakeholders resulted in a common sense plan that will facilitate efficient traffic flow while significantly increasing safety for the aviation veterans and beginners alike.

Many of the State's airports are located in rural communities and are unattended. As the weather improves, and Alaskans head outdoors, it's critical that communities help instill a safety mindset at and around our airports. People, pets, and debris can be extremely difficult for pilots to see, and the results of a collision can be devastating. Prior to any activity on the airport, please contact the airport manager or rural contractor to ensure coordination and safety.

We were pleased to host FAA HQ personnel from Airport Safety & Standards, Compliance and Management Analysis, and the Civil Rights office in May, and showcase Alaska's aviation system. The opportunity to educate our federal agencies on the magnitude of our system, and emphasize the vital link that aviation plays in the lives of our residents, helps to articulate our need to partner, both through policy and financial resources, to ensure the long-term sustainability of our most critical mode of transportation.

Finally, I want to congratulate Dee Hansen and her team on a tremendous Great Alaskan Aviation Gathering. It was truly a class act, and provided insight into aviation's integral role in our Alaska way of life. I look forward to 2015!

Fly Safe,

John Binder
Deputy Commissioner

ADOT&PF Training



Airport managers/foremen from across the state participated in a week-long airport training program offered by the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). The [Airport Certified Employee \(ACE\) – Airfield Operations](#) program is a Part 139-based curriculum designed to educate and challenge airport personnel with airfield operations responsibilities. Included in the training was a tour of the Anchorage International Airport airfield. Participants had lots of positive comments after the training - “ACE course had a lot of helpful information. I came back to my station with a better knowledge of all aspects of operations for airports and will share with my co-worker.”



The Department’s 4th Alaska Maintenance Leadership Academy was held in Anchorage this spring. This is a great opportunity for Maintenance and State Equipment Fleet superintendents, foremen, and leads from around the state to collaborate, discuss, and share ideas as DOT&PF continues to work to better serve Alaskans. Personnel from both the Anchorage and Fairbanks International Airports also participated. Keep up the good work and keep Alaska moving!

Fairbanks International Airport - FAI

The **Annual Fairbanks Aviation Day** entertained and educated a couple thousand people including many families with kids. The festivities began with a pancake feed almost immediately followed by kids eager to sign up for the EAA Chapter 1129's Young Eagles flights. Fairbanks ATC controllers operated a 70 ft. by 30 ft. mini-airport complete with taxiway and runway markings. Kids were getting instructions from the "tower" to taxi, take off, and land. Outdoors there were over two dozen aircraft on display.

This community event is organized by the Airport Operator's Council and sponsored by many organizations. (Complete story and photos available here - <http://blog.aopa.org/vfr/?p=1416>)

The **US Honor Flag** was brought to Fairbanks to honor fallen Alaska State Troopers Sergeant Patrick "Scott" Johnson and Trooper Gabriel Rich. The honor flag arrived on Alaska Airlines at the Fairbanks International Airport with the airport providing a water arch salute as the airplane approached the terminal.

The airport's draft [Airport Master Plan](#) will be released in early July. The master plan provides the framework needed to guide future airport development. Airport stakeholders and the public are encouraged to participate, and will have 30 days to review and provide comments from release date.



Lining up to see the inside of a Boeing 727 , donated to the University by FedEx. Photo by Shari George



ATC controllers coached "pilots" waiting to "take off" on the mini-airport at Fairbanks Aviation Day. Photo by Ron Dearborn



An Alaska Airlines flight carrying the US Honor Flag greeted by a water salute at Fairbanks International Airport.

Governor's Aviation Advisory Board Tours Lake Hood Seaplane Base



The Governor's Aviation Advisory Board held their spring meeting in Anchorage that included a tour of the Lake Hood Seaplane Base (LHD). Long-time pilots and users of LHD participated in the tour and provided great perspective on what many consider a gem for the Municipality of Anchorage.

LHD is currently undergoing a master plan that will help guide the long-term plans for development. The public is encouraged to participate in the process. For more information contact Tim Coons at tim.coons@alaska.gov

Mat-Su Valley Has New CTAFs

Heads up for pilots who fly in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. On May 29, 2014 a significant change took place to the Common Traffic Advisory Frequencies (CTAFs) assigned north and west of Anchorage. Approximately 78 airport CTAFs changed. In addition, 36 airports will have CTAFs assigned for the first time. Goose Bay, Wolf Lake and Anderson Lake are just three of the airports whose CTAFs will change.

The new frequencies will be found on flight charts, in individual airport listings in the Alaska Supplement, along with a map in the **Notices** section that shows the "big picture" change taking place. Check out the AOPA Alaska website for more information.

Upcoming Events

JULY 14 - Fairbanks Airport Master Plan Public Meeting, [Pioneer Park Exhibit Hall](#)

JULY 14-18 Aviation Career Education Academy, for youth ages 8-14. Contact M. Timmerman at 343-4217 or TimmermanMA@muni.org

JULY 28-30 Aviation Advisory Board Meeting , Nome, Alaska (907) 269-8654 for more information

Unalakleet Airport Changing of the Guard!

Harry Johnson, Jr. retired after 35 years of serving the people of Western Alaska and the State of Alaska while working at the Unalakleet Airport. Harry's dedication and service to the people of Western Alaska are a model for others to emulate. We all wish Harry a long and happy retirement and he will definitely be missed.

John Wilson has been promoted to the Airport Manager position and will continue to provide excellent public service to the people of Unalakleet and Western Alaska. Congratulations on your new position John.



Harry and the M&O Team - (L-R) Albert Saccheus, Unalakleet, John Wilson (new Unalakleet Airport Mgr.), Bob Madden, Nome Airport Mgr.; Mike Coffey, Chief Statewide M&O; Harry Johnson, Jr.; Erik Weingarh, St. Mary's Airport Manager; Evan Booth, Western District Supt.; Melvin Paukan, St. Mary's Airport; Steve Potter, Northern Region Maintenance Mgr.

The Great Alaska Aviation Gathering!

More than 23,000 aviation enthusiasts stopped by the FedEx hangar May 3-4, to participate in Alaska's premier aviation event - the Great Alaska Aviation Gathering. DOT&PF was there and well represented with booths from the Division of Statewide Aviation, and the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

This year's event featured a keynote address by AOPA President Mark Baker and a general aviation caucus meeting. The two hour meeting covered topics ranging from weather reporting to unmanned aircraft. Jim Cieplak, with the [Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation](#), gave an overview of ADS-B and called for the FAA and industry to work together to define a "minimum operational network" of ADS-B stations, to fill gaps along commonly traveled routes in the state.

Tom George, Alaska Regional Manager for [AOPA](#), explained that the network of Alaskan weather reporting stations is less than half the density of the lower 48 states. He highlighted the need to distribute new National Weather Service surface observations, continue to support augmented weather observations at key locations, as well as adding certified AWOS stations where needed for IFR approaches.

Adam White, Government Affairs representative for the [Alaska Airmen's Association](#), explained that while military training is important to the nation and the state, more needs to be done between industry, military planners and the FAA to find a middle ground before expanding the training airspaces. Aviation safety and access need to be preserved while at the same time accommodating military training needs.

Lee Ryan, Chair of the [Governor's Aviation Advisory Board](#), described how the Bypass Mail system benefits GA by providing infrastructure—such as the ability to buy fuel—at locations which otherwise wouldn't have facilities. He expressed concerns about proposals to create a huge offshore unmanned aircraft operations area, over a million square miles in size. As manned aircraft operations increase in the Arctic procedures to safely accommodate both types of operations must be defined.

Medallion Foundation Promoting Aviation Safety

The [Medallion Foundation](#) has been busy bringing aviation safety outreach around the state. Medallion sets up Aircraft Training Devices and Simulators at numerous aviation events. This spring they've participated in Alaska Aviation Safety Councils Spring Seaplane Seminar, Christian Pilots Association Fly Day, The Great Alaska Aviation Gathering, Valdez May Day Fly-in, Cliff Hudson Memorial Fly-in, and most recently the FAA Pancake Breakfast at Palmer Municipal Airport. Coming up you'll see them at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer.



***Maya Mossanan, a student in the Talkeetna Build-A-Plane project flying the full motion Super Cub simulator as father Sassan watches.
(Photos courtesy Rob Stapleton)***



Medallion brought a Garmin 1000 simulator in a trailer, and added a flight simulator aspect to the FAA's Youth Aviation Education outreach at the annual FAA Pancake Breakfast held at the Palmer Municipal Airport.

Airport Spotlight

Kotzebue Runway Safety Area

By Jeff Roach, Transportation Planner DOT&PF

“Are they digging a hole to China?” the pilot on approach to the Kotzebue Airport asked the flight service station radio operator with a little concern in his voice. “I don’t know, but they’ll probably just dig it and then fill it back in again” was the reply.

The ensuing conversation, regarding the large excavation adjacent to the main runway at the Kotzebue Airport, demonstrates that there are often many questions and misconceptions about ongoing airport projects. The hole is actually a material mining site for the recently resumed Kotzebue Airport and Runway Safety Area Improvements –Stage III project.

The material excavated from the site is used to construct the new access road around the west end of the runway. The hole will then be filled with excess excavation material from other parts of the airport that is unsuitable for use when constructing operating areas on the airport. To the outside observer it may look like the contractor dug a hole only to fill it back in again, but the material mined from this site on the airport is a cost effective alternative to transporting material to the airport from another material source. The hole left after the removal of construction material then has to be filled back in with waste material so it does not create a hazard to operations on the airport.

There are reasons for efforts during construction projects that aren’t always apparent. That’s where the Project Manager’s Office is valuable. Each active construction project has an on-site office and the public is welcome to contact the project management staff to answer any questions that arise during the project.

The Kotzebue Airport project, which was awarded to Brice Inc. in October 2012, is anticipated to be completed by November 30th. The Project Manager’s Office is located in the FBX Hangar next to the Alaska Airlines terminal. Questions can also be directed to the project management staff by phone at 907-442-2007.



The new access road around the west end of the Kotzebue Airport main runway under construction



The site of the future extension of the runway safety area on the east end of the main runway.



A small plane prepares to take-off at the Kotzebue Airport.



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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