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THE AIRPORTS APPROACH

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The grant program for fiscal year 2005 has been a resounding success

Time really seems to fly! And, it is hard to realize that another fiscal year is over. Like Ponce-De-Leon's historic search for the fountain of eternal youth, I continue to look for a fiscal year that looks like the previous year.

On a large-scale view, the process looks the same. We open grants, make, payments, and close grants. However, the internal processes necessary to do these in a timely, efficient way do change. Even with change, we have had another successful year.

How do we define success? We were able to fund the discretionary projects we had contemplated at the beginning of the year, including a few we thought we would not be able to get to. Most importantly, all of those grants needed to meet our safety objectives for the year were funded.

Here are the net grant activities for the Northwest Mountain Region for FY 2005.

State	Projects	Total Funds
Colorado	43	$85,468,481
Idaho	25	$25,610,392
Montana	43	$40,544,516
Oregon	31	$33,479,295
Utah	27	$31,616,190
Washington	39	$88,102,647
Wyoming	20	$23,868,314
Totals:	228	$328,689,835

Beyond the numbers, we exceeded the national based-on-bid goal for these grants. We also met the closeout goal for old grants. What does this mean? We continue to strive for quality and quantity in the service we provide.

Now that fiscal year 2005 is over, and we do not have funds to begin fiscal year 2006, what shall we do? We can take a deep breath for a moment. Time's up! Now, we need to work on grant closeouts, and early project formulation and coordination with your local Airports District Office. I guess it never ends.

—Warren Ferrell

Editor: Nancy Royak
Airports Division
September 2005

Follow Concourse to Gate 2

DIVISION MANAGER'S COLUMN

Lowell H. Johnson, Manager, Airports

Another fiscal year is in the books and we are very pleased with the improvements we have helped airport owners accomplish. The latest statistics for the grant program are covered in another article, but we were successful in having projects ready for grant assistance at the very end of the fiscal year. Being ready, including having bids, is a good strategy and can really pay off at the end of the fiscal year.

Some noteworthy accomplishments for the year include approving all of the new Class I airport certification manuals, as well as the ongoing work to approve the Class II, III, and IV manuals; the opening of a new commercial runway at Mahlon Sweet Field Airport in Eugene, Oregon; a runway extension at Glacier Park International Airport in Kalispell, Montana; a new general-aviation airport in Broadus, Montana; completed runway safety areas at Boeing Field, and Olympia, Washington; Cheyenne, Wyoming; and Lewiston, Idaho; and, the truly amazing and long-awaited progress on the Seattle third runway. There are, of course, numerous other improvements that have been planned and built and often have involved many complicated issues. It seems there are very few "simple" airport projects.

Another major effort has been the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for a replacement commercial-service airport for St. George, Utah. This DEIS has involved extensive and ongoing coordination with the National Park Service, due to the abundance of scenic areas, including Zion National Park, in the vicinity of St. George. Finally, the DEIS was made available to the public for comment in early September. We will continue to report on this, since it probably is establishing some precedents for future environmental studies.

It has been a successful year, but now we will start over and see what the new fiscal year brings. We pledge to continue to work with states and airport sponsors to make good investment decisions, and to address all of the unexpected issues that pop up along the way. Thanks for your support.

Pictured above is the Seattle skyline.

2006 FAA Northwest Mountain Region Airports Conference April 10-12, 2006

Hilton Seattle Airport
&
Conference Center, Seattle

- Pre-conference workshops to be held on Monday, April 10.
- Concurrent sessions on Tuesday, April 11, and Wednesday, April 12.
- The registration fee of $235 remains the same. It includes conference materials, admission to exhibits, participation in conference sessions, welcome reception, refreshment breaks, and banquet luncheons on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- A reduced fee of $180 is available for groups of five or more individuals employed by the same organization (registrations must be submitted as a group).
- All FAA employees may register at the reduced rate of $50.00.
- Topics of interest include an update on Airport Improvement Program funding, passenger facility charge program issues, Part 139 requirements, and the latest on trust fund reauthorization.
- Tentative Agenda will be on this website mid-December.

— Cathy Zimmerman

Return to Gate 1 Follow Concourse to Gate 3

"We built it!" — Eugene Airport dedicates their new runway with a sense of accomplishment

Eugene Airport (EUG) has demonstrated a commitment to providing first-class airport facilities, and meeting the needs of the Willamette Valley in Western Oregon. This commitment culminated on September 1, 2005, when EUG opened a new 6,000-foot-long air-carrier runway (16L/34R), within budget and on schedule.

The runway dedication ceremony was held October 3, with a guest list that included FAA Deputy Associate Administrator for Airports, Catherine Lang; congressional representatives; regional FAA representatives; federal, state and local government officials; and community business leaders.

Over the years, the airport management and engineering staff have worked closely with the FAA and the local community to plan for and develop public facilities that would meet aviation demands in a fiscally and environmentally sound way. The development project, costing approximately $29 million, originally was conceived in the 1980 Eugene Airport Master Plan. The plan described a 4,000-foot, non-connecting, general-aviation visual flight rules runway, used primarily by student pilots. However, plans to implement the project were delayed for financial reasons.

Over time, the needs of the airport changed, and the project was revisited during the 1990 Eugene Airport Master Plan study. At that time, the project was newly identified as a 6,000-foot, non-precision runway with connecting taxiways. During the late 1990's, the project, funded with close to $24 million in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants, began with the airport's acquisition of the necessary land for the runway and initiation of the required environmental work.

The next phase of the project involved the relocation of a county road, obtaining environmental permits, and funding wetland mitigation. At this same time, a team, comprised of EUG airport staff and FAA representatives from numerous lines of business, was formed to work the project through completion. The collaboration produced excellent results, reducing the project time from three summers to two. The following are key elements of the project:

- The runway (pictured above) is 6,000 by 150 feet.
- There were 14,200 feet of 75-foot-wide associated taxiways.
- The runway construction project was $16.5 million. The overall project, environmental work, road relocation, building demolition, engineering and construction management, was approximately $29 million.
- Approximately 464,000 tons of concrete base were installed.
- There were 65,000 tons of asphalt used.
- The runway length and strength allow it to be used as a back-up air-carrier runway.
- The runway will have a Category I instrument landing system for reduced minimums associated with Eugene weather.
- The project was completed ahead of the original schedule, and on budget.
- The airport achieved environmental compliance (finding of no significant impact), erosion control, air-quality control, wetland mitigation, and the adoption of a wildlife management plan (FAA/USDA).
- The project had an excellent safety record, with no accidents or aircraft incidents.
- The project will result in increased capacity (simultaneous operations).
- The work improves safety by eliminating crossing air traffic at the old midfield.
- The result of the project will improve opportunity for development.

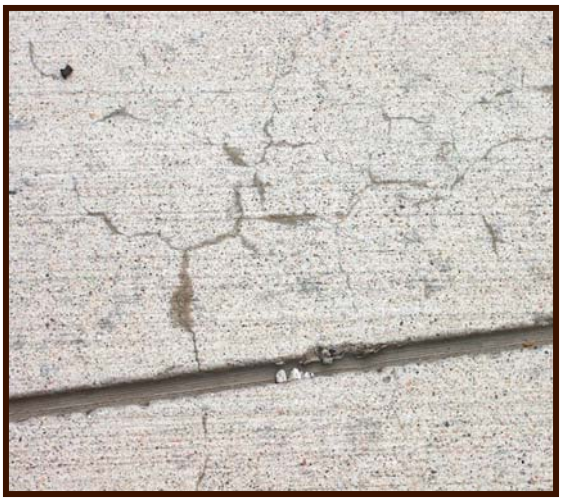
Building a new runway is a complex endeavor. This project required EUG to resolve a number of issues within a tight and demanding schedule. All of the above achievements are a direct result of the determination, dedication and hard work of the airport manager, his staff, and the project team.

—Suzanne Lee-Pang

Return to Gate 2 Follow Concourse to Gate 4

Survey of airport pavements reveals alkalai-silica reactivity continues to be a problem at airports

We recently conducted a survey of most of the airports in the Northwest Mountain region that have Portland cement concrete pavements. The purpose was to assess signs of distress cracking (pictured below), due to alkali-silica reactivity (ASR). Our intention is to develop a plan to address the affected pavement as the deterioration progresses.



This cracking pattern does not always prove to be ASR. We have tested a couple of pavements and found similar cracking, due to plastic shrinkage. A total of 10 airports currently are suspected to have ASR in their pavements.

Some of these pavements, including some in service since World War II, are fairly old. Our specifications, up until the early 1990's, did not have adequate testing and mitigation procedures in the contracts, even though every one of our states have potentially reactive aggregates. Modifications were made to our specifications at that time, to test for the reaction and minimize the alkalis in the mix, in an effort to control ASR. Also, we began following industry standards. Since then, we have adopted stricter procedures, to assure that we eliminate the problem.

In the early 1990's potassium acetate pavement deicers (or anti-icers) were being introduced to replace urea and glycol, and reduce environmental runoff problems. A few years ago, we observed signs of ASR on an airport that did not have sufficient alkalis in the original mix to cause ASR. At that time, an Innovative Pavement Research Program (IPRF) contract was initiated to analyze the four newer deicers, with respect to ASR. We have confirmed our suspicions that these deicers are the catalyst in the reaction, and the current test procedures are not valid, if any of these deicers are used on the pavement.

The specifications are undergoing yet another update, with stricter requirements for pavements exposed to these deicers. For airport pavements that will not be exposed to the deicers, the current requirements are overly restrictive and will be modified in the next regional specification revision (Notice B-1).

As with most research, more is necessary. We are proposing that pavement surveys be done across the country, and that testing methods and criteria be established, which can assure us that ASR will not occur when exposed to deicers. We also are in need of a test procedure that can be used to determine how in-situ pavements will perform in the presence of these deicers.

— Jack Scott

Return to Gate 3 Follow Concourse to Gate 5

New advisory circular impacts preparation of construction documents for federally funded projects

As the new fiscal year approaches, please note that FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5370-10B, "*Standards for Specifying Construction of Airports*," dated April 25, 2005, has replaced AC 150/5370-10A.

This AC is the source for FAA construction standards and general provisions for projects funded with Airport Improvement Program and passenger facility charge dollars. Sponsors must comply with the new AC when preparing construction documents for fiscal year 2006 and beyond. The new advisory circular includes changes 1 through 14. You may access the new AC on the web at www.faa.gov/arp/150acs.cfm.

The FAA Northwest Mountain Region Notice 16, our revision to AC 150/5370-10A, is still applicable. While a majority of Notice 16 instructions have been included in AC 150/5370–10B, some have not. A new Northwest Mountain Region Notice ("B1") is being written to supplement the AC. The "B1" Notice is expected to be available early in fiscal year 2006.

(Above is a picture of a bulldozer at a construction site.)

Please, work with your FAA project managers regarding questions, timing, and use of the new AC, and the applicable Northwest Mountain Region notices.

—Brad Davis

FAA commitment to Flight Plan goals for safety drives installation of LPV's on airport runway ends

The FAA's Flight Plan has committed the agency to developing, in fiscal year 2006, 300 localizer performance-with-vertical-guidance (LPV) approaches to non-instrument-landing-systems runway ends.

The Wide Area Augmentation Systems Office (WAAS) has taken the lead in working to accomplish this Flight Plan objective. Working with the WAAS in this effort are the FAA's Airports, Flight Standards and Flight Procedures lines of business, as well as state and industry organizations.

The WAAS office is surveying all identified runway ends so that obstructions are noted for procedure development. This should be completed by September 2006. The LPV production schedule can be viewed on the Internet at http://avnweb.jccbi.gov/schedule/production.

For fiscal year 2007, the FAA is in the process of identifying runways for LPV approaches. The goal is to provide visibility minimums of ¾ of a mile or better. In cases where it becomes too costly to provide the needed airport infrastructure, and/or clear obstructions to achieve this goal, a higher minimum will be considered. The needed infrastructure for specific visibility minimums is available in change 8 of AC 150/5300-13, Appendix 16, Table A16-1B, or on the web at http://www.faa.gov/arp/publications/acs/5300-13_chg8.pdf.

The WAAS office will fund the surveys for some of the runway ends for fiscal year 2007. The National Geodetic Survey, or third-party contractors, will conduct others, and some are expected to be funded by the Airport Improvement Program. The list of surveys needed for 2006 will be available soon, and will be posted on our Internet site at: http://www.faa.gov/arp/anm/services/planning/index.cfm?nav=planning#gps.

— Carolyn Read

Return to Gate 4 Follow Concourse to Gate 6

Visual glide scope indicators that are not properly installed or maintained may present an ugly sight

Over the past years, the FAA has helped airports to install visual glide slope indicators (VGSI) on many runways throughout the Northwest Mountain Region. The purpose of these VGSI is to provide approach slope information to pilots, helping to provide a consistent, more stabilized, safer approach. The VGSI are intended to provide acceptable clearance over obstacles in the approach surface.

One of our long-term objectives, now complete, has been to install landing aids on all commercial-service runways. In addition, we install FAA-owned VGSI on many of the busier runways, and many airport owners have installed them using their own funds. Based on our records for this region, there are now 636 runway ends at the National Plan of Integrated Systems (NPIAS) airports that have VGSI installed. There are many more, including many non-standard or home made VGSI, at the non-NPIAS airports.

Proper maintenance and correct aiming are keys to making certain the VGSI provide their intended safety benefit. We recently reviewed the airport data in the Airport/Facility Directory, and noted that a great number of VGSI are shown with missing glide-slope and threshold-crossing height information. Also, during a number of airport site visits, we found that VGSI were not always being inspected, maintained, and checked for proper aiming.

The purpose of this article is to encourage you to check the published VGSI data for your airport, to verify correctness. Further, we recommend you evaluate your procedures, relative to any VGSI owned by your airport, to make certain you are maintaining and aiming not only in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, but also the specific siting established at the time it was installed. The aiming procedures are described in manufacturer's information, some of which is available on their Internet sites. Summary of recommended actions:

- For FAA-owned VGSI: No action is required; FAA will maintain the system.
- For airport-owned VGSI, installed with or without federal aid: If you are regularly checking the system, keep up the good work. If you have not been regularly checking the system, including its aiming angle, determine the specified glide angle (usually located on a label on the light box), obtain the maintenance instructions, and start checking the system, in accordance with instructions from the manufacturer and in the advisory circular.
- Call Barbara Sordahl at 425 227 2610, if you are not sure whether you or FAA own the VGSI.

Properly aimed and maintained VGSI are an important safety enhancement. When they are not being maintained and checked, they can provide faulty approach guidance to pilots. So, we urge you to make certain your systems are providing proper guidance.

— Dave Field

St. George DEIS is available for public comment

The FAA has issued a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the proposed replacement airport at St. George, Utah, which would include a 9,300-foot runway and support facilities.

The DEIS, which was developed in collaboration with the National Park Service, assesses the potential impacts that may result from the development of a replacement airport, and analyzes various noise metrics to better understand aviation noise levels in noise-sensitive properties, including Zion National Park.

On September 9, 2005, the Federal Register published a notice of availability of the DEIS. It can be reviewed at: http://www.airportsites.net/sgu-eis. Comments may be submitted to the FAA during the 60-day comment period, which will end on November 8, 2005. Also, a public information meeting and Hearing will be conducted on October 19, 2005, from 3 to 7 p.m. (MST), at The Dixie Center, 1835 Convention Center Drive, St. George, Utah, 84790.

— Carolyn Read

Return to Gate 5

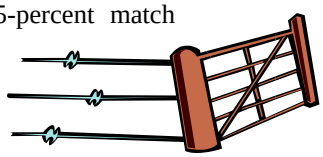
Follow Concourse to Gate 7

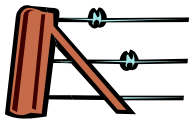
Through-the-fence operations – take a peek at what this really means to an airport sponsor

The FAA defines through-the-fence (TTF) agreements as those agreements that grant access to the public landing area by aircraft based on land adjacent to, but not a part of, the airport property. There are many benefits to the TTF operator. But, the benefits to the airport are limited and most airports do not allow such agreements.

The TTF operators usually do not pay land or building leases, fuel-flowage or tie-down fees, and other fees reserved for on-airport users. Also, the TTF operators retain the rights to their hangars and land improvements.

The airport sponsor and on-airport operators are left to pay for the operation and maintenance of the airport. This includes utility costs; electrical maintenance, grass mowing, snow plowing, crack sealing, runway, taxiway, and apron marking, seal coating, sponsor owned building maintenance, insurance coverage, wages for airport personnel, and 5-percent match for Airport Improvement Program grants.





While the FAA does not prohibit TTF agreements, we strongly discourage such agreements, because of their potential effects on the airport sponsor's compliance with the following grant assurances:

Preserving Rights and Powers: Depending on the type of agreement and its content, an airport may not be able to enforce its grant assurances against the TTF operator. These conditions may prevent the airport from fully performing the required grant terms, conditions and assurances in violation of Grant Assurance 5.

Safety and Control: Most sponsors first consider a TTF agreement when approached by one operator. Initially, it does not appear to be a safety and control issue; however, the operator may be followed by others requesting similar access. Subsequently, a simple monitor and control issue becomes a much larger one. This may limit the airport's ability to ensure safe operations in both movement and non-movement areas, in violation of Grant Assurance 19.

Hazard Removal and Compatible Land Use: Airport sponsors with TTF agreements do not have control over the land on which the TTF operation resides. This limits the airport's ability to remove and mitigate hazards and incompatible land uses, in violation of Grant Assurances 20 and 21.

Competitive Advantage: The TTF operators may realize a competitive advantage over on-airport operators. As discussed above, on-airport operators usually pay additional fees not incurred by TTF operators. On-airport operators do not build equity, because their hangars usually revert back to the airport. However, TTF operators continue to build equity and also may realize an increase in their property value, due to the access agreement. This may create unjust discriminatory conditions for on-airport operators, in violation of Grant Assurances 22 and 23.

Self-Sustainability: An airport's sources of revenue include fuel sales or flowage fees, land leases, building leases, tie-down fees, and non-aviation revenue. A TTF operator can successfully avoid all of these fees, while still benefiting from the airport facility. While, TTF operators may pay an access fee, reaching agreement on an appropriate access fee and collecting such fees can be difficult. Insufficient access fees affect an airport's ability to be self-sustainable, in violation of Grant Assurance 24.

Security: The TTF access may be inconsistent with security guidance issued by the Transportation Security Agency (TSA). The TSA created guidelines for general-aviation airports: Information Publication (IP) A-001, "*Security Guidelines for General Aviation Airports.*" The guidelines, drafted in cooperation with several user organizations, including the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), recommend better control of the airport perimeter with fencing and tighter access controls.

Overall, TTF agreements have many positive benefits for the TTF operator, but few benefits for the airport sponsor. Federal obligations do not require sponsors to permit TTF access. If you are considering a TTF agreement, we encourage you to discuss it thoroughly with your Airports District Office.

— Joelle Briggs

Return to Gate 6 Follow Concourse to Gate 8

Brigham City Municipal Airport's runway is extended

Brigham City Municipal Airport, situated about 90 minutes north of Salt Lake City along Interstate 15, is celebrating the completion of phase I of a three-phased airport development project that added 1,400 feet to the end of runway 16. Although this addition has extended the original 7,500-foot runway to 8,900 feet, until the completion of all three phases, the current operational length of the runway is 5,400 feet.

The airport (pictured below) originally was constructed in the 1930's on the now drained Box Elder Lake, a location well known for waterfowl hunting. This hunting season, more than any other time of the year, creates an increase in business-jet activity at the airport. To accommodate this increased activity, and improve airport safety, a three-phased airport development plan was initiated.

In order to proceed with the design and eventual development at the airport, the sponsor had to initiate an environmental assessment (EA). The EA revealed a need to mitigate the wetlands on the airport property. To accomplish the mitigation, a site 5 miles southwest of the airport was acquired. And, with separate Airport Improvement Program grants, the runway extension and mitigation projects were expected to occur concurrently

The start of the runway extension project, however, was delayed two weeks by non-stop rainfall. The rain resulted in adding more water to the two ponds, which already needed to be drained, at the end of runway 16. Finally, in April 2005, phase I began. Steady progress, even through the rainy summer months, resulted in the completion of runway 16's extension.

In the remaining two phases, runway 16-34 will also be rehabilitated, and the airport's safety areas will be upgraded from a B-II to a C/D-II category. Once phase III of the development project is complete, there will be a full parallel taxiway with a standard 400-foot separation from the runway, and a runway safety area that is 1,000 by 500 feet. Ultimately, these upgrades will accomplish the goals of the airport's development plan.

—Roman Pinon

Dennis Ossenkop retires

On July 31, Dennis Ossenkop (pictured right), the Airports Environmental Protection Specialist and national environmental expert, retired.

Prior to his tenure with the FAA, Dennis worked with both the Environmental Protection Agency, and The Boeing Company, with a specialty in aircraft- and airport-related noise. So, his expertise was put to good use in many environmental analyses over his FAA career.

Among many other accomplishments, Dennis did much of the environmental work on the new Denver Airport, and the third runway project at Seattle International Airport. His career with FAA spanned nearly the entire period since FAA got seriously into compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act in airport development projects. It would be safe to say, the job got increasingly complex during that period.

We will miss Dennis for many reasons, including his environmental expertise. We wish the very best to him and his family!

Return to Gate 7 Follow Concourse to Gate 9

Good news! Airports Division welcomes two new staff members

Even as we say farewell to one environmental specialist, we are pleased to announce the arrival of our new Environmental Protection Specialist, T.J. Stetz, who joined our staff on September 19. He came to us from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, where he has worked for 20 years.

A native of Charleroi, Pennsylvania, T.J. (pictured lower right) attended California State College in California, Pennsylvania, where he received an undergraduate degree in environmental sciences. He later acquired a master's degree in biology from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. He began his environmental career with West Virginia's Department of Natural Resources.

His career path soon led him to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CE) in Los Angeles, where he worked for 5 years, ultimately as Chief, Natural Resource Management. Seeking to escape the California crowds, he accepted a position in the CE's regulatory program in Seattle.

His training as an environmental scientist and biologist has brought lots of experience in a variety of environmental areas, especially wetlands. He says he is looking forward to working in the FAA on noise and air-quality issues. Based on the energy level he has demonstrated so far, including participating in some of our St. George environmental impact statement activities prior to his official start date with the FAA, he will soon be making an important contribution to our work. T.J.'s office telephone number is (425) 227-2611.

When he is not working, T.J. enjoys time with his 17-year-old daughter Erica, and his 13-year-old son Dean. He also tries to carve out time to do some of his favorite hobbies, such as hiking, sailing, and kayaking.

The end of the fiscal year closed on a good note for the Helena Airports District Office (ADO), with the selection of Maureen Dahl to fill the position of Airports Management and Program Assistant.

Maureen joined the ADO staff on September 29, and is just getting acquainted with the many facets of her new position. She will be programming Airport Improvement Program dollars, processing airspace cases, managing the surplus property program, coordinating the annual ADO seminar, purchasing office equipment, and handling all administrative issues for the office.

Maureen (pictured left) graduated from the University of Idaho in 1981, with a degree in Elementary Music Education. She also has become a skilled administrative professional. Beginning in September 2003, she worked as a security assistant with the Security and Hazardous Materials Division in the FAA Northwest Mountain Regional Headquarters Office, and, from 1989 to 2002, with the Boeing Company, as a systems analyst and computing liaison.

As a Great Falls native, who moved to Seattle in 1989, Maureen was thrilled that she would be moving back to Montana, along with her husband Jim, a native Seattleite; and their two "children," Maverick and Cassidy, (German shepherds).

Maureen says she looks forward to the challenges of learning her many new duties in the ADO. She is also looking forward to the opportunities to escape to the family's cabin in Lincoln, where she can do some of her favorite things, such as enjoy the great outdoors with her family and her dogs, and catch up on her reading.

If you wish to call Maureen and give her a big Montana welcome, her telephone number in the Helena Airports District Office is (406) 449-5271.

Return to Gate 8 Follow Concourse to Main Gate