

AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE LAST FRONTIER

FAA Airports Division FY-2008 Issue No. 1

Message from the Division Manager, Byron K. Huffman



Greetings one and all and welcome to this edition of the Alaskan Region Airports Newsletter. As I write this piece, I am sitting in Washington, DC serving a detail as the acting Director of Airports Safety and Standards (AAS-1). It is affording me a unique opportunity to see things from a more global perspective rather than from the Alaskan Regional perspective. So far, so good!

As you all know by now, we are experiencing a particularly challenging year with the FAA reauthorization bill having not been passed and our operation under and extension of nine months of funding authority. We have been working closely with all of our customers to identify a game plan for getting the most grant money possible on the streets to take care of our critical projects this year. While we have not been given a clear indication as to whether we will get funding authority for the fourth quarter of FY-08, conventional wisdom dictates that we will most likely get that authority before the current extension lapse at the end of June.

While we are feverishly working to get the grants out, congress continues to work on getting a new reauthorization passed. Being in headquarters,

I have been directly involved in working with agency staff to address various amendments that are being attached to the bill. This process is often very-critical and crucially important as we work to ensure we can support the efforts we are directed to accomplish by congress. While I am here in headquarters, the staff in Alaska is working closely with all of our customers to keep things on track. And on top of all that activity, they have prepared engaging and timely articles for this newsletter. I hope you all will enjoy this edition of the Alaskan Region Airports. Please send us your feedback and let us know what you think. You are important to us and we want to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Byron

2008 Topics.....

- **Message from the Manager**
- **New Faces, New Places with the Airports Division**
- **Web surveys**
- **National Based Aircraft Inventory Program**
- **Review of NEPA Scoping Letter**
- **Notice of Proposed Construction**
- **We're here to help..... Really!**
- **Timely Development**
- **Reducing the Risk of Runway Incursions or Aircraft Accidents and Incidents.**

New Faces, New Places within the Airports Division

James Lomen

Jim was selected as the Deputy Division Manager in October 2007. Jim was the Airports Improvement Program (AIP) Specialist prior to his selection. Jim, congratulations on your much deserved promotion!

Dee Rutledge

Dee joined the FAA Airports Division in September 2007 as a Management & Program Analyst. Dee is responsible for the front desk, direct support for management and other various tasks. Dee will be the first person you'll see when you come to our office. So, please say hi to Dee when you visit our office. We're glad to have you Dee!

Brad Garland

Brad has been selected as the AIP Airports Program Specialist. Brad will be responsible for AIP/PFC. Brad, congratulations on your promotion!

Eric Helms

Eric has been selected as the Project Manager responsible for Central Region in March 2008. Eric came from the FAA ATO. Eric will also be responsible for Reimbursable Agreements. We're glad to have Eric as part of the Airports family!

Katrina Moss

Katrina Moss has accepted a position with SWCA in April 2008. Katrina's former position is being advertised as an Environmental Protection Specialist. We hope to have Katrina's replacement soon.

Alaska Aviation System Plan Update

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT&PF) has begun efforts to update the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP). The AASP will address aviation infrastructure and policy needs for the aviation system in Alaska. For more information go to www.AlaskaASP.com

Submitted by: Pat Oien

FAA National Based Aircraft Inventory Program

The overall goal of the program is for all enrolled airports to confirm that the based aircraft inventory counts for aircraft types, especially the single-engine, multi-engine, and jet, are a fair representation of the number of aircraft based at their airports.

Back in 2006, FAA began documenting the national inventory of based aircraft using the N-number for each based aircraft at all non-primary National Plan of Integrated Airport System (NPIAS) airports. GCR & Associates, the firm under contract to FAA to oversee the Airport Safety Inspection Program, developed a website to allow each airport or sponsor to enter based aircraft data. After all information was entered GCR found duplications on N-numbers based at more than one airport and other discrepancies. The next step is confirming the based aircraft in order to eliminate duplicate aircraft based at more than one airport and the reason why. A comment section has been added to document the reason an aircraft may be based at a second location such as a seasonal aircraft also known as a snowbird, etc.

The verified data helps support our short-range and long-range development and forecasts in the National Airspace System for new aviation technologies such as GPS, WAAS, and LPV approaches. This data allows us to target and prioritize improvements because accurate information on based aircraft may be used as justification for many proposed Airport Improvement Program (AIP) projects at non-primary airports. Confirmation of based aircraft letters went out to our sponsors and airport managers for the Alaskan Region in early April.

Submitted by: Janet Victory

FAA Review of NEPA Scoping letters:

It's the Airports Division's goal to work more closely with airport sponsors' design, planning and environmental sections to develop and implement an Airport Improvement Program that best meets the aviation needs in Alaska.

FAA is requesting that draft NEPA scoping letters be submitted to FAA for review prior to agency and public distribution. The primary purpose for FAA's advance review of NEPA scoping letters is to ensure that FAA and airport sponsors' are in agreement on the scope of the proposed airport development --- before time and resources are expended in agency coordination, public review and document preparation. The Airports Division and airport sponsors' staffs both strive to coordinate and ensure we have a common understanding of Airport development project needs. Occasionally however, FAA's receipt of a draft Environmental Assessment is the first time FAA has an indication of the full scope of the development proposed. FAA review of the NEPA scoping letters is intended to improve consistency and process efficiency --- by reducing potential for NEPA document, permit and design modifications.

Please submit the draft NEPA scoping letters to FAA project manager(s) for your airport. Airport Division's project managers will coordinate with the environmental, planning and certification staff here in Airports Division. We request that these letters be submitted to our office by airport sponsors' staff rather than consultant staff.

Please contact Patti Sullivan, Airports Division Environmental Program Manager or your FAA project manager with any questions on this request.

Submitted by: Patti Sullivan

AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE "LAST FRONTIER"

Notice of Proposed Construction E-Filing

A nationwide initiative is underway to improve efficiency of submitting, studying, circulating, and issuing airspace determinations. As long as FAA has been in business, FAR Part 77 has required notice to FAA when building a structure near or on a public use airport, and in some cases when erecting a structure off airport. In the past, proponents gave notice using a paper FAA Form 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration: anymore. For several years, filing notice with FAA using the web has become common practice or filing notice for off airport construction. Airports Division is now accepting studies over the web for on airport construction proposals at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp>. Here is a brief overview of the on line e- filing process: The website is used for both on and off airport proposals. Decide which process to use, on or off airport. The left side of the portal page is used for off airport studies, or Obstruction Evaluations (OE), and the right side of the portal page is used for on airport (Non-Rulemaking Action). New users can request a user ID, and then select a password to log on to the system. Once the user is logged in, the portal page will show account information, tools for processing cases, and status for online filed cases. Filing the first case will request identification of a Sponsor. The Sponsor is usually the airport owner for NRA's (on airport), or the owner of the proposed structure for OE's (off airport) proposals. A second part of the data entry requests the Sponsor's Representative information which is usually the person actually entering the data (consultant, or builder).

Completing the Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration – on airport is similar to the paper form. Determining the latitude and longitude can sometimes be challenging. A survey is best, but if that is not available, Google Earth could be used as a tool to acquire coordinates. If the proposal is a set of construction plans for an AIP project, the Airport Reference Point coordinates will suffice. However, if the proposal is a tower, or a building, then precise geographic coordinates should be submitted to support an accurate airspace analysis of the structure.

Once the information about the case is complete, the next step is to verify the location using the Verify Map tool. A digitized USGS quadrangle map will display a bull's eye of the proposed location. The quad map is relatively poor, but for now, it's the best we can do. If the geographic coordinates are correct, select the verify button, otherwise go back and readjust the geographic coordinates until the location is right.

To finalize and submit the case to FAA for study, a sketch showing the location must be included. This can be done by uploading a PDF, or if you don't have a way to create a PDF, use the feature print and send a fax cover sheet with your sketch. The fax cover sheet has a barcode that automatically attaches the sketch to the airspace case. If you choose to fax the document, remember to select Sketch, otherwise the system will not accept the data.

The system is new, so expect many enhancements to follow as the program matures into a robust tool to help simplify and expedite processing airspace cases. Soon, we expect letters of determination to be issued electronically and will be available from the online proponent account.

For policy issues addressing airspace cases, call our office for guidance. For technical help using the online program, setting up your account, or learning how to enter batch airspace cases, contact the iOEAAA Help Desk at 202-580-7500.

Submitted by: Matthew Freeman

AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE "LAST FRONTIER"

A Note to our Sponsors, We're here to help..... really!

I suspect that many of you have at one time or another experienced situations in which our Division has provided numerous comments on draft planning and environmental documents relating to the basic need/justification for a project. We realize this is NOT the ideal time to be raising these types of questions as you have invested a great deal of time and resources by then and frequently you are operating with a constrained schedule. Recognizing this, our Division has formed a number of "Triad Teams" made up of a planner, environmental specialist, and a project manager who will meet as a team with your planning, environmental, and design staff as often as quarterly, depending upon the level of activity, to improve our understanding of projects and to provide our input earlier in the planning and environmental processes. Our goal is to ensure that our efforts in planning, environmental and project management are more collaborative so that together we can move your much needed airport development forward. Through our meetings, we should be able to prevent those numerous back steps that can occur when planning, environmental, and project management are involved sequentially in the development of a project instead of concurrently. Bottom line is we want to work more closely with you and your staff as projects are planned so that questions can be discussed and resolved prior to the completion of planning, the initiation of the NEPA process, and the commencement of design and ultimately construction.

Another goal of these meetings is to have a better understanding of each sponsor's long-range and immediate aviation needs to enable us to develop a better Airport Capital Improvement Plan that best addresses the aviation needs of our state.

This effort to enhance our understanding and communication on your projects is another step we are taking to help facilitate timely development of those much needed construction projects. To learn more about our regional push for more timely development of airport projects, check out the Timely Development article in this publication, or give me a call at 907-271-5438, I would welcome the opportunity to expound further on the benefits that we can bring to our aviation system here in Alaska. You have probably already heard from your Triad lead, but if not please give our office a call and we'll get you connected.

Submitted by: Jim Lomen

Reminder – New Project Milestones or, Better Put, Timely Development

At our conference in May 2007, I shared some changes that we plan to begin implementing for the 2009 program. Well, 2007 is now a distant memory, 2008 is busily creating "new" memories and 2009 represents hope for even better memories. It may seem a little early to some of you, but we have started to prepare our Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP) for 2009 – 2011 and I thought it would be a good idea to remind you of those new target dates for environmental, right-of-way, legislative authority, and bid dates. Our new target dates are:

- o Environmental approved by October 1, 2008.
- o Right-Of-Way (ROW) certified by January 1, 2009
- o Legislative Authority (LA) prior to bid opening
- o Having projects bid ready by:
 - April 1, 2009 for projects with summer work.
 - July 1, 2009 for projects with winter work.

For those of you who weren't fortunate enough to hear my great presentation last year, or for those that did hear it but the facts just seem to have slipped from your memory, let me give you a brief summary of what's motivating this push for these earlier dates.

Let's start with some basic facts that I'm sure each of you are familiar with but may not have put into the context of impacting the way we can encourage development on our airports. First, guess what, Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Funds are very limited and we don't have enough to fund all the development needs that we have; construction in Alaska has some, dare I say, unique challenges that can make getting needed development accomplished even more challenging; and I believe we would all agree there is room for improvement in how we accomplish our needed construction. A fact that everyone may not be aware of is that historically we are obligating 60 to 70 percent of our AIP funds in August and early September; conservatively that is \$120 to \$140 million. Let me ask you, with winter following quickly after September how much actual construction do you think we are accomplishing with that large sum of money? Basically, when we bid and grant projects so late in the year all we accomplish is to tie up a large percentage of those limited AIP funds. Personally, I would much rather have those dollars pursuing development instead of sitting idle in the US Treasury; coincidentally, Congress feels the same way and is "encouraging" FAA to take steps to reduce the amount of AIP dollars that are lingering in the Treasury. In case you are curious, that is where the push for closeout of grants within four years, the requirement for grants to be based on bids, and our tracking of inactive grants all came from. Those requirements have had a very positive effect on the lingering dollars. However, up until now we have been missing the real opportunity to reduce those stagnant dollars that would be getting construction equipment out on the ground in the same year that we give you those AIP dollars.

To bring some credibility to this discussion let's look at some specifics for the 2007 grant year. The Alaskan Region Airports Division signed \$134.0 million worth of grants after August 2007. As of April 20, 2008 there was \$111.4 million still remaining on those grants. That means 83% of those 2007 funds are still waiting to be utilized for airport improvements. What do you think happens to that percentage as we grant earlier and earlier in the year? One would hope that it would go down, and that is exactly what happens. From June 1 to August 1 \$12.8 million was granted, of that \$7.3 million is remaining. That represents a 57% balance. Prior to June 1 we granted \$52.2 million, of that \$21.4 million is remaining which is 41% of what was granted.

AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE "LAST FRONTIER"

just in case you were wondering, we didn't have any grants prior to April 1, 2007, but we were able to grant \$39.4 million prior to May 1, of which about 32.2% is remaining, \$12.7 million. As you can see, as we get the grants out earlier and earlier there is time for work to actually be done. This is the motivation for those earlier dates for environmental, right-of-way, legislative authority, and bid dates. We want our sponsors to be ready to go to grant as soon as the AIP dollars become available, we want timely development! So what does timely development mean to us?

- On a macro level, if every sponsor in the country puts in an effort to reduce idle funds we will corporately be successful. Reducing the idle funds demonstrates to Congress that we are striving to utilize AIP funds efficiently which means Congress may be more inclined to keep AIP funding levels constant, or increase them instead of reducing them.
- Projects can be bid earlier, normally resulting in better bid prices.
- It can provide contractors time to possibly complete their construction a year earlier than when they get contract awards in August. In the current economic climate this ability represents reduced risk, which could translate into reduced cost to our program.
- More time available after construction to complete the grant closeout process.
- This next one is big for us in Alaska! Because our short construction season is recognized as a challenge, FAA Headquarters has indicated a willingness to provide a larger percentage of our share of the discretionary pie as soon as funds become available instead of distributing them through the summer months forcing us into late project starts. One caveat on this one, our Division will not initiate this request until we are confident that our sponsors will be able to obligate the funds early.

I know there are other benefits, but these are the ones that come to mind at this time. If you have others I would love to hear them. Please send them to me at Jim.Lomen@faa.gov.

In the coming weeks and months you will be hearing more and more about timely development, its benefits for the Alaska aviation system and the steps we, together, need to take to reap its benefits. Let's start today to make 2009 our most successful year!

Submitted by: Jim Lomen

Reducing the Risk of Runway Incursions or Aircraft Accidents and Incidents

Reducing the risk of runway incursions is one of FAA's primary national goals. This year, Alaska and other regions of the country have experienced an increase in the level of vehicle/pedestrian deviations (or VPD's) over 2007. Although we made a little progress towards reducing VPDs in Alaska in 2007, we are concerned at the recent trend. In recent VPD incidents in Alaska, some of the major contributing factors have been a lack of airport security and the failure to use limited-control access. This is especially true at airports where there are combined Part 139 aircraft operations and general aviation land and seaplane operations.

What can be done to remedy the VPD situation to promote aviation safety? First, airports can establish limited control access for those individuals who have an actual need to operate on an airport. This procedure will reduce the probability of conflict between aircraft operations and the non-flying public. Also, all Part 139 airports should have a well-written vehicle driving/pedestrians airport program with mandatory recurrent training—outlining all requirements for those using the airport movement/safety areas. This is a critical element to having a robust aviation safety plan and an effective tool for mitigating safety accidents/incidents. Bottom-line, we must debunk the idea that the non-flying public has an inherent right of access to our airports.

Secondly, the airport sponsor can use federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds and other funding sources to buy security fencing and gates, airport surface detection equipment, and any other critical items that will help prevent incursions. And finally, the airport sponsors can work with the FAA and the local community to increase the public awareness of airfield safety issues through education and publicity. Reducing runway incursions is not only a serious challenge in Alaska but across the nation. Therefore, by working together as a team—the Airports Division, the Runway Safety Office, and airport sponsors—we can implement effective policies and procedures that **will** prevent accidents, reduce runway incursions, and reinforce the message of zero-tolerance for VPDs.

Submitted by: Maverick Douglas

AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE "LAST FRONTIER"

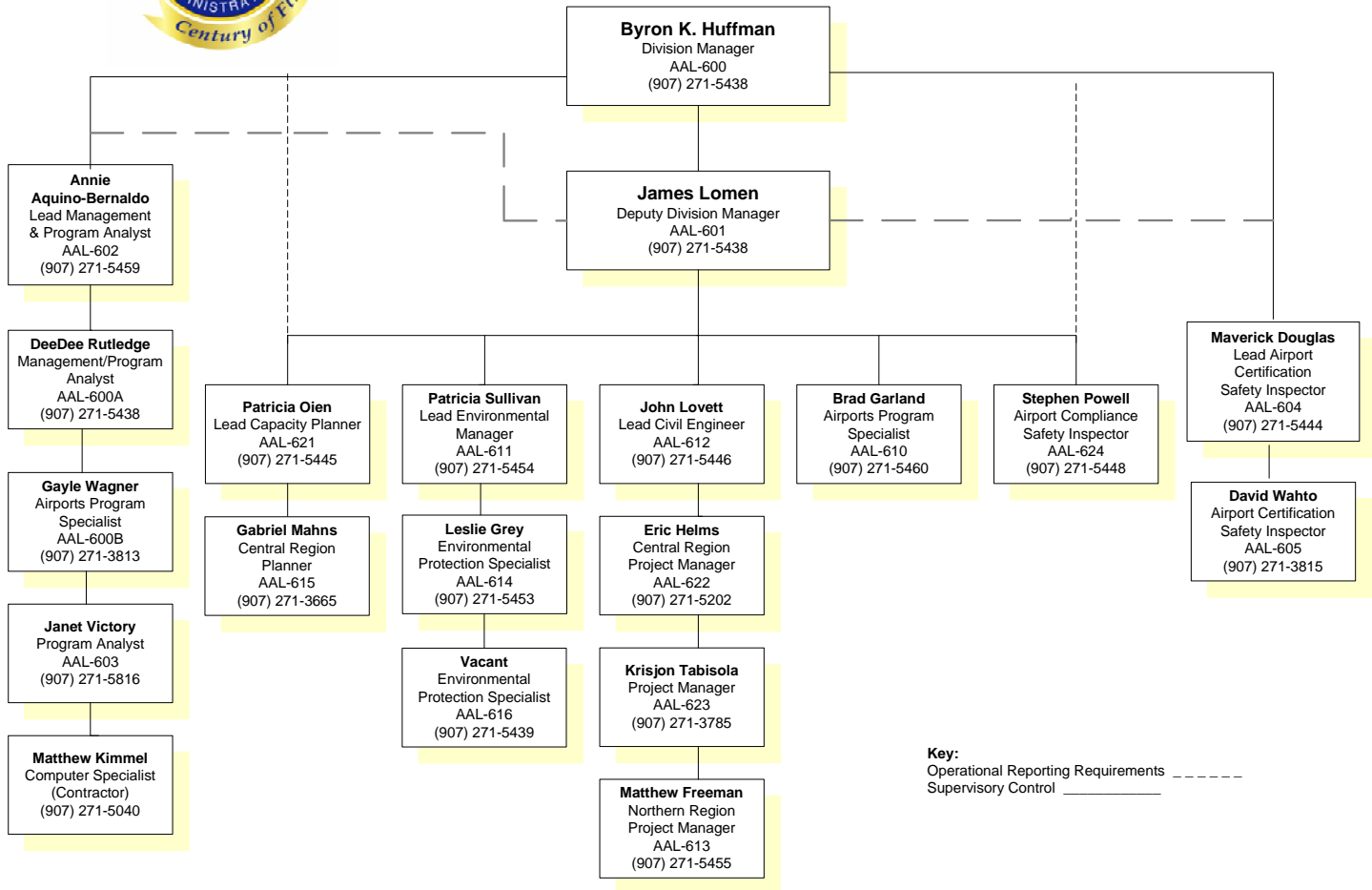
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AIRPORT NEWS FROM THE "LAST FRONTIER"



FAA Alaskan Region Airports Division Organizational Chart



Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. If you have any suggestions or comments, please send them to DeeDee.Rutledge@faa.gov or mail it to 222 West 7th Ave. Box 14, Anchorage, Alaska, 99513.

DeeDee Rutledge
Editor



Our Mission

- To provide our customers with guidance and leadership in the planning, development, and operation of the Alaska airport system.
- Enable air transportation services to be delivered in a safe and efficient manner, incorporating community and environmental needs.

Our Vision

- Our staff will be vital resources and experts to our customers who depend on us for useful and accurate information.
- We will create an environment where customer's expectations will be exceeded with confidence.

ALASKAN REGION
AIRPORTS DIVISION