

Mountain Wave



SUMMER 2006

Quarterly newsletter of the Colorado Department of Transportation-Aeronautics Division

COLORADO AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION MEETS IN GLENWOOD SPRINGS

It wasn't all land-use issues and federal funding that held the attention of the more than 120 airport managers, sponsors and friends who met in Glenwood Springs this May for the annual **Colorado Airport Operators Association Spring Conference**. A really wide range of topics and discussions was punctuated by great, old-fashioned adventure - in fact, a good time was had by ALL.



In the coming year, Durango-La Plata County Airport manager, Ron Dent (left), will serve as president of the **Association**, which stands with the Aeronautics Division and Colorado Aeronautical Board in support of aviation interests within Colorado and nationwide.



Topping the excitement was the whitewater ride down the raging Colorado River through Glenwood Canyon and a visit to the aerial slide at the Glenwood Caverns.

Innovative, interactive workshops and seminars provided much food for thought and brought everyone up-to-date with the latest in the industry.

This year's event was sponsored by Garfield County and coordinated by Garfield County Regional Airport manager, Brian Condie.



Serving the common interests of the 77 public-use airports in Colorado, the **Colorado Airport Operators Association** provides a unified voice to state and federal agencies, the Colorado General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. It's the venue for an exchange of ideas and information where airports can share experiences and expertise. **CAOA** brings public awareness to the vitality of aviation within the State - economic, cultural, and public-safety roles that serve airport constituents.

CROSSFIELD KILLED IN CRASH

Scott Crossfield, the first man to fly twice - and then nearly three-times - the speed of sound in the 1950's, was killed when his Cessna 210 went down during Level-6 thunderstorms in the north Georgia "hills" in mid-April. Atlanta radar lost contact with his aircraft mid-morning on April 19th, before it crashed in rugged terrain enroute from northern Alabama to his home in Manassas, Virginia. He was alone at the time of the crash.

Scott Crossfield, who was 84, was one of a group of civilian test pilots who were assembled by the **National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics**, forerunner to NASA, to lead the American aviation community into the jet/ rocket era following Chuck Yeager's historic flight which broke the sound barrier in 1947. Crossfield's long record of flight tests included the **fabled X-15 rocket plane**, which reached Mach 2.97 when launched from the belly of a B-52 and flew to an altitude of 81,000 feet - over 15 miles into the atmosphere.



Following retirement from *North American Aviation*, *Eastern Airlines* and *Hawker-Siddeley Aviation*, Crossfield was active in aviation education circles and as an advisor to the **House Committee on Science and Technology**. He played a key role in the re-creation of the *Wright Flyer*, which was prevented by bad weather from re-enacting the original flight on the Kitty Hawk anniversary date in 2003.



Sent to *Mountain Wave* by our good friend and keen observer, Montrose Regional Airport manager, Scott Brownlee.

SMITHSONIAN RECEIVES BOEING DONATION

The **Smithsonian Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center** is the recipient of a \$15M contribution to its education and preservation efforts from the **Boeing Corporation**. The funds will be used to continue the care and restoration of the Museum's vast collection of aircraft associated with the northern-Virginia facility.

The Smithsonian's Dulles Airport facility will begin construction when funds are available on Phase-Two of the **Udvar-Hazy Center**. This will provide approximately 760,000 sq. ft. of archive and collection processing facility and storage, as well as a restoration hangar that will allow simultaneous work on four large aircraft.

The restoration hangar will also inspire visitors while they observe - from raised walkways above the work floor - technicians and specialists as they return important aircraft to prime condition. More than 120 historic aircraft are currently on display in the **Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Center's** 985foot, ten-story-tall aviation hangar. Another 100 aircraft await restoration.

CAB SUPPORTS FAA PILOT SAFETY PROGRAMS

One of the more enduring and successful programs offered to airmen as a way of maintaining and increasing flight safety has been the **FAA Wings Program**. Annually, thousands of airmen retain their "edge" by attending one or more of the 250 statewide venues offered by the FAA Pilot Safety Program. In 2005, more than 5600 Colorado pilots participated.

Now the **Colorado Aeronautical Board** has added its financial support to the continued success and expansion of the **FAA-Denver Flight Standards District Office program** with a commitment of \$15,000.00 to underwrite events throughout the State in the coming year. Additional seminars and workshops are planned statewide with an emphasis on one- and two-day events such as the very successful **SURVIVAL** program, attended by more than 250 airmen in the fall of 2005.

Through coordination with CDOT Aviation Education program manager, Darci Wert, locations and venues will be developed to expand the program in the near future. Watch for up-coming programs on the CDOT-Aeronautics Division website calendar at www.colorado-aeronautics.org.

The new **Denver FSDO Safety Team Program Manager is Gina Moretto**, who comes to us with an extension background with the FAA and in military aircraft maintenance. She is an active mom who loves adventures in motorcycling, downhill skiing and hiking with her two super kids and still has time for sewing, costume design and traveling.

You can expect to see Gina at the next **FAA Safety Program** event you attend.

NEW VIEWING FOR SPORT PILOTS AS LSA NUMBERS “FLY”

The Men’s Channel (*what do you think of that, girls?*) now offers **Sport Pilot TV** - available to Dish satellite, Time-Warner, Comcast and Cox cable channels every Saturday and Sunday. Here you will find insightful interviews and discussions with aviators; learn about flight planning to some of the best fly-in destinations in the U.S., Canada and Mexico; investigate



training or upgrading your **Light Sport Pilot** license; and watch over the shoulder of home-builders and professionals as they investigate the many kits and “fast-build” programs available in today’s market.

The **Light Sport Aircraft (LSA)** market continues to be one of the bright spots in the general aviation market. According to AOPA, GA pilot numbers are slipping, including the all-important student pilot market. It is universally hoped that the lower costs of owning, operating and maintaining a **Light Sport Aircraft** will encourage the reluctant flyer to seek out the alternative to the more costly piston and/or turbine fleet.

Following the lead from **Cirrus**, **Cessna Aircraft** announced it is preparing a prototype (well, mock-up at Oshkosh) of their entry into the LSA market. A decision to place an LSA in production is expected sometime in 2007. The entry of **Cessna** into the LSA community tends to give credibility to the value of the recent introduction of FAA pilot and aircraft category as a niche-player in the general aviation market.

Over the past several years, dozens of manufacturing hopefuls have entered the competitive ring, bringing new and innovative products to the 1320 lb.-or-less and 125 mph-or-less competition. The fact that the **Big Guys** are looking seriously at the market is, perhaps, a good indication that the **Light Sport Pilot** rating will have a more lasting impact than the non-eventful Recreational Pilot Certificate of a few years ago.

And in hopes of rekindling an interest in the Recreational Pilot rating, AOPA is now suggesting that the FAA approve relaxed medical requirements for the Rec rating ... something akin to a “health statement” from your family doctor in lieu of a full-fledged third-class medical. We’ll stay tuned!

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MATERIAL COSTS INCREASE

With the dramatic cost increases of fuel and petroleum-based products taking center stage, we are likely to forget that increases in other costs associated with airport construction, development and maintenance continue to play in the wings.

Most petroleum-based asphalt products used in the construction and maintenance of airport pavements have already shown significant increases. Concrete, steel and steel reinforcements and even “fill dirt” prices have followed accordingly.

The cost increases in concrete and steel can be traced back to the enormous demand for these products in the reconstruction of Iraq and infrastructure development in China.

Soaring material and delivery costs are a direct reflection of the fuel crisis, translating into higher bids for airport construction. In 2005, for example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics results show a 12.5% rise in construction materials costs over the previous year - and 2006 looks like things are only getting worse.

As the annual construction season is in full swing, airports might be wise to expect bids higher than anticipated from engineers’ estimates from even a short time ago. And the spiral shows little indication of slowing down. In some cases, this might require that projects be scaled back - in other, it may be wise to defer the entire project until funding sources may be found to shoulder the increases. Division planners have been taking a good, long look at scheduled projects while construction costs are reviewed.

MOVE OVER LAX

In February, **Denver International Airport** out-scored Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in the number of passengers through the airport in the month. The nearly 3.4M enplanements was a 10.1% increase over the same month of 2005. 3.8M passengers in April 2006 topped April 2005 by 17.5 Enplanements for the first 4 months of 2006 approached 15 million.

DIA now ranks 4th in the listing of the nation’s busiest airports, exceeded only by Hartsfield in Atlanta, O’Hare in Chicago and Dallas-Ft. Worth.

GET UP AND SMELL THE JP-4

Now you can suffer from the same impairment that international travelers experience after long hours in Economy Coach - without even leaving your computer. Once reserved for the customer in international Economy class, doctors are discovering patients with **deep-vein thrombosis (DVT)** as a result of long hours in front of the computer monitor.

But, why, may I ask, does ANYBODY want to sit for 14 hours in front of a computer when you could get the same discomforting condition while enjoying a trip to Australia?

YOUR JET FUEL TAX DOLLARS TO HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

“The longer Congress waits, the more aviation businesses suffer while more money drains from the **Airport and Airway Trust Fund**,” said Jim Coyne, president of the National Air Transport Association (NATA) when discussing proposed federal legislation that would correct an earlier Congressional *faux pas* that sent aviation fuel taxes directly into the Federal Highway Users Fund .

Last October, new rules went into effect that were designed to discourage the use of jet fuel, with its slightly lower taxes, in car and truck engines. The fuel tax on airplane fuel is 2.5 cents per gallon *less* than it is for truck-stop diesel. To prevent the diversion of the slightly cheaper jet fuel to cars and trucks, the government decided to make aviation fuelers charge the full tax rate and then apply for reimbursement of the difference. Not only that, the taxes on the jet fuel are deposited to the highway trust fund until the aircraft fuelers apply for their rebates.

According to NATA, few if any, aircraft fuelers have gone through the process of requesting reimbursement or transfer of the taxes to their rightful depository - the **Airport and Airway Trust Fund** - because of the red-tape and regulations. What this boils down to is that fuelers are passing the higher taxes on to their customers and all that tax money is piling up for highway projects.

Efforts are underway to reverse this inconsistency in legislation (S2666) proposed in late April by Montana Senator, Conrad Burns. After second reading on the Senate floor, the Bill is biding its time with the Senate Finance Committee. The proposed legislation would temporarily suspend the revised tax treatment until the Congress takes up the reauthorization of fuel taxes in 2007.

At its annual spring meeting in Glenwood Springs, the **Colorado Airport Operators Association** agreed that the magnitude of the problem lies in the loss of fuel tax revenues to the **Airport and Airway Trust Fund** and vowed a concerted effort on behalf of its repeal with members of Congress. Support for Sen. Burns’ aviation tax simplification act is coming from countless national aviation organizations including the National Association of State Aviation Officials.

AIRBUS IS COMING!! READY OR NOT

Bearing in mind the inevitable clash between U.S.-based Boeing and the European Airbus consortium, domestic airports have, never-the-less, begun the task of preparing for likely service of the 555+ passenger **Airbus 380** by the end of this decade.

In a Government Accounting Office (GAO) report (at www.goa.gov) released in May, eighteen airports reported that they were beginning - or had begun - updating their facilities to accommodate airlines interested in bringing in the behemoths. In all, today’s “wag” on actual costs for modifications to meet **A-380** requirements, sits at \$927M, most of which is likely to go to meeting the requirement for 200 foot runway width and 150 foot taxiway expanse. Much of the funding support is expected to come from the FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) - to the disapproval of many in the industry and the Congress.

Gateway airports, such as LAX, JFK, Miami and San Francisco have little choice but to prepare in all haste; and major freight hubs, Memphis, Louisville and Anchorage, know they also must upgrade if they wish to stay in the mix with the lucrative box-haulers who have a total of 10 of the “big guys” on order.

Denver International Airport is included in the list of eighteen airports interested in welcoming the **A-380**. Estimates (at today’s costs and based on today’s specifications) are for a whopping \$54.4M to widen DEN’s runways and taxiways and upgrade terminal and gate facilities, with likely completion date for these upgrades projected around 2010 or after. Airports such as DEN are hoping to buy valuable time before committing to construction, awaiting possible modification in FAA design standards currently in place for aircraft of such size and weight.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RESIGNS

After having served the Bush administration for the past five and a half years, Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, resigned the post, effective July 7th.

Prior to his leadership at Transportation, he served in the U.S. Congress for twenty years as a representative from central California and briefly was a member of the Clinton administration as Secretary of Commerce. Under his leadership, the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) was formed following 9/11. He was a strong proponent of aviation infrastructure development and appeared as a friend to GA, shying away from user fees now being widely discussed at national levels.

Following his resignation, Mr. Mineta joined a major D.C. consulting firm as a vice president.

The **A-380** can be configured to accommodate up to 825 passengers with a total take-off weight up to 1.25M pounds, anticipating a 8000 NM endurance. The European Airbus consortium is calling for delivery of passenger aircraft by late 2006 and the cargo version in 2008. Continued delays have caused concern about the reality of this timeline and forced at least one airline to cancel its order for multiple aircraft.

The world’s greatest aviation experience - this year’s EAA Air Venture - from July 24th to 30th . What’s your excuse for being at Oshkosh this year?

PAGOSA SPRINGS CELEBRATES MAJOR UPGRADES AT STEVENS FIELD

Chris Pomeroy, Senior Aviation Planner

After nearly **6 years and \$18M in Federal, State and Local investment**, Archuleta County celebrated the completion of a major upgrade to the **Stevens Field Airport** in Pagosa Springs on June 28, 2006.

The celebration included a VIP luncheon of approximately 250 people followed by a public open house. While a much needed rain shower dampened the apron for a short while, a nice display of static aircraft covered the new ramp for visitors to enjoy.

The multi-faceted and multi-million dollar project began back in the early to mid-90's in an effort to accommodate the increasing demand from larger aircraft, particularly the business jet fleet. The reconstructed airport now boasts a runway and ramp that meet FAA airport design standards for



larger aircraft including an 8100 foot runway with pavement strength of 70,000 lbs (dual wheel gear). Such a configuration can now safely and efficiently accommodate aircraft such as a Gulfstream G350. While many significant improvements to the airport were accomplished during this project, further improvements to landside facilities will continue. Plans for a future partial parallel taxiway are also in the works.

George Barter will become the new airport manager at **Stevens Field**, following his retirement from the U.S. Dept. of Justice at the end of July. He comes to the Pagosa Springs facility from Ft. Worth, TX, with an extensive background in aviation and fiscal management.



WHAT IS THE VALUE OF GENERAL AVIATION IN THE U.S.?

Travis Vallin, Director, CDOT-Aeronautics Division

Testifying last month at a hearing before the Aerospace States Association (ASA) on the National Aeronautics R&D Policy, General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) Chairman and the Chairman, President, and CEO of Cessna Aircraft Company, Jack Pelton, announced the release of a study, co-authored by some of the country's most knowledgeable transportation economists, which once again demonstrates GA's value to the U.S. economy.

GAMA, together with the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), commissioned an independent analysis of GA's current contribution to the U.S. economy at both the national and state level. The results are significantly higher than past estimates, indicating GA's increasing role as a provider of air transportation in this country.

The higher result is understandable due to the diverse nature of general aviation and its daily use for many different reasons. This diversity can cause GA's impact to be intermixed with other segments of transportation or even overlooked, masking its unique and substantial impact on the economy.

It is important to note that in 2005, GA contributed more than **\$150 Billion to U.S. economic output**, and directly or indirectly, **employed more than 1,265,000 people** whose collective earnings **exceeded \$53 billion**.

NASAO President and CEO Henry Ogrodzinski believes that those who seek to raise the amount of taxes paid by general aviation operators must consider the adverse affect tax increases have on aviation consumers in every state in the nation.

Pete Bunce, GAMA President and CEO said the study quantifies what is at stake in the upcoming user-fee debate for the significant number of Americans whose livelihoods are supported by general aviation.

The release of the long awaited FAA funding proposal has been delayed while the FAA and the Office and Planning and Budget iron out questions and concerns with the FAA's proposal so the upcoming debate will be postponed for a later date.

To view the report, *General Aviation's Contribution To The U.S. Economy* go to: www.gama.aero/PUBLIC/GAcontribution.pdf

KIDSPACE AT EAA ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL FLY-IN

Although the weather on that late-June weekend was not fully cooperative, the best of the region's aviation enthusiasts were, none-the-less, out in force at **Front Range Airport** for the EAA's annual **Rocky Mountain Regional Fly-in**.

The **CDOT-Aeronautics Division Aviation Education program** brought an expanded program for young people, which included free aviation toys, make-and-take rockets, flight simulators with a big selection of different airplanes to fly, and a bungee trampoline for a really high-energy experience.

Attendance of about 9000 at the **Regional** this year was a little off from past years, due in big part to the IFR conditions that existed on Saturday morning and the threat of an all-day rain on Sunday. But those hearty souls who did attend found a world of wonderful aviation for their day-long enjoyment.



*Cleared for take-off! Young adventurers “fly” at the **KidSpace Airport**.*

The two-day **Rocky Mountain Regional Fly-In** was sponsored by EAA chapters in Wyoming and Colorado and featured safety seminars and presentations; workshops and “how-to” forums; aircraft displays and airshow. The EAA's very successful **Young Eagles** program added numbers to its goal of first-time flights for students. Aeronautics Division Director, Travis Vallin, briefed the attendees on the State's participation with the FAA in placing surveillance radar in the mountain areas to provide improved coverage for air traffic control.



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AVIATION PIONEER LOST

**PAGOSA SPRINGS DEDICATES
NEW AIRPORT FACILITIES**

AIRPORT OPERATORS MEET