

Mountain Wave



FALL 2005

Quarterly publication of the Colorado Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division

ANNUAL AWARDS TO AIRPORTS TOP \$3,000,000.00

Thirty-five Colorado public-use airports were recipients of this year's *Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant* awards during the annual grant cycle in October. Funding amounted to \$3M. State funds were committed to a variety of projects including airport improvements, airfield pavement maintenance, environmental and safety concerns.

Airport improvements included state participation in local match for federally-funded projects that expanded and enhanced a number of general aviation and regional commercial service airports, such as **Cortez Municipal Airport**, **Stevens Field** at Pagosa Springs, **Eagle County Regional Airport**, **Holyoke Municipal Airport** and **Montrose Regional Airport**.

Runway maintenance was funded at **Wray Municipal Airport**, **Walden-Jackson County Airport**, **Garfield County Regional Airport** at Rifle, **Centennial Airport**-Denver and **North Fork Valley Airport** in Paonia. Safety issues were addressed at **Vance Brand Municipal Airport** in Longmont and **Glenwood Springs Municipal Airport**. Aviation Education programs were underwritten at the *Wings Over the Rockies Museum*.

In all, nearly \$62M of state, federal and local funds have been accessed into the Colorado aviation system through the annual grant program awards. The *Colorado Aeronautical Board* will continue to fund worthwhile statewide and local aviation projects as revenues from state fuel taxes become available throughout the year.

A complete list of *2006 Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant* awards can be viewed at www.colorado-aeronautics.org.

DON'T EVER STOP LEARNING



You can't beat...

...building your own "Spirit of St. Louis" and flying it past the Eiffel Tower to Le Bourget or hitting twice the speed of sound over the desert in the X-15 ... but it was all part of a teacher's day at the most recent **Science of Flight Workshop** held by the Colorado Aeronautics Division in conjunction with **Front Range Airport**, **EAA Chapters 301 and 43** and the **Emily Griffith Aircraft Maintenance School**.

34 educator-attendees from up and down the Front Range will take these experiences - plus aero-navigation skills, the physiology of a trip to Mars and lots of hands-on teaching materials - back to their classrooms as they enthusiastically share their learning experiences with their students. And the experience of a "first flight" in a light aircraft has become the highlight of the workshop to many. A universal WOW!

CDOT-Aviation Education Director, Darci Wert, offers a special thanks to **Dr. Ben Millsbaugh** for his skill in kicking off the workshop, to the **teacher-team** of metro educators, **Lauren Allwein**, **Marcia Foster** and **Alan Godman**, who so generously share their experiences with their colleagues and to the **EAA pilots** who bring the thrill of general aviation to workshop attendees.



SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE AWARD TO DURANGO AIRPORT

The U.S. Dept. of Transportation recently announced that funding in the amount of \$750,000.00 has been awarded to the **Durango-La Plata County Airport** for use in expanding service, either by current or different carriers, from the southwestern Colorado airport to new routes. Funding from the **U.S. DOT Small Community Air Service Development Program** is aimed at encouraging “increase[d] service options for travelers, resulting in both service and fare benefits”

This year’s grants will go toward financial incentives to air carriers, studies to determine air service needs, and marketing programs that encourages communities to use commercial carriers offering local air service. It is hoped that expanded access from Durango into new markets will enhance economic development interests in the community. USDOT Secretary, Norman Mineta stated, *“These grants will help support efforts by small communities to preserve and expand their links to the national air transportation system, connecting residents to the rapidly expanding U.S. economy.”*

38 individual U.S. DOT grants, amounting to nearly \$19M, were made during the 2005 award process from the 84 applications received. **Durango-La Plata County Airport** was the lone Colorado airport to receive funding during the current cycle.

We’re proud of *Boulder Aviation Services*, that friendly FBO at Boulder Municipal Airport, for its contribution to the **HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF** efforts of \$.05 on every gallon of fuel sold.

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES CAB APPOINTMENT

Gov. Bill Owens recently announced the appointment of **Dennis R. Heap** to the Colorado Aeronautical Board as a representative for Airport Management interests statewide. He replaces Corinne Nystrom of Walker Field, Grand Junction, who resigned from the Board recently to accept a position in Arizona.

Mr. Heap, who has been Aviation Director of the Front Range Airport in metro Denver for the past twelve years, is past president of the Colorado Airport Operators Association.



COLORADO COMMERCIAL SERVICE SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS

Colorado airports chalked up a stellar year in 2004, with annual passenger counts exceeding last year’s numbers almost across the board. The most dramatic increases occurred at **Ft. Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport** amazing the competition with a gain of more than 200% over last year’s initial onset of commercial service. Much of the traffic increase is accountable to popular Las Vegas flights which have attracted passengers from all over the metro area with frequent service and great fares.

Denver International Airport heads the 2004 list with 20+ million - and this year’s number are expected to take another leap ahead. **DIA** is now the nation’s fifth busiest hub airport behind Atlanta’s Hartsfield; Chicago-O’Hare; Los Angeles International and Dallas-Fort Worth.

Denver International Airport	20,407,002	+ 13.56%
Colorado Springs Municipal Airport	1,024,656	+ 1.35%
Eagle County Regional Airport	194,173	+ 15.34%
Aspen-Pitkin County Airport	184,261	- 2.96%
Walker Field-Grand Junction	140,618	+ 9.80%
Yampa Valley Regional Airport-Hayden	120,323	+ 17.53%
Durango-La Plata County Airport	96,522	+ 11.98%
Montrose Regional Airport	72,448	+ 4.41%
Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport	38,395	+ 1.80%
Fort Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport	31,928	+209.77%
Telluride Regional Airport	18,493	+ 20.19%
Cortez Municipal Airport	7,870	+ 16.89%
San Luis Valley Regional Airport-Alamosa	5,188	+ 35.14%
Pueblo Memorial Airport	4,511	+ 15.64%

CONGRATULATIONS, COLORADO

Citing its impact on aviation safety and the innovative nature of the project, the **Colorado Mountain AWOS Project** to install twelve automated weather observation stations in high terrain was awarded the **2005 President's Award for Aviation** at the annual **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)** meeting in September.

The award for the project was made to the **Aeronautics Division engineer, T.K. Gwin**, who has been the driving force behind the project since its inception. He is pictured below receiving the award recently in Nashville, TN.

The **Colorado Aeronautical Board** supported funds from the **Colorado General Assembly** to assure that accurate, real-time weather information is available to pilots via telephone and radio from critical mountain passes along the Continental Divide. Software is currently being developed to enable this information to be immediately accessible from the internet.



New Jersey DOT Director and 2005 AASHTO President, Jack Lettiere (r) makes the presentation to CDOT's T.K. Gwin during the Nashville Conference.

GA SALES IMPROVE IN 2005

Year-to-date and counting, General Aviation aircraft sales figures have proven the best in several years. Even though the third-quarter of 2005 was down slightly from previous '05 numbers, production this year, totaling 1685 aircraft worldwide, is 25% ahead of 2004. American delivery figures account for 700 of 875 GA aircraft sold in the world in third-quarter 2005.

In the 4-place single-engine piston market, **Cirrus** and **Cessna** remain neck-in-neck overall this year. **Cessna** showed stronger numbers in third-quarter 2005 and is rumored to be developing new models to stay competitive in the 4-seater market. **Columbia** (previously Lancair) sold more aircraft in third-quarter than the rest of the summer - **Piper** numbers increased on high-end models such as the top-of-the-line Meridian turboprop - **Mooney** continued to hold its own. **Diamond**, however, showed a decrease in sales - down about 15% from second-quarter.

Although sales have seen a significant "bump" since the valley days following 9-11, it is still unclear what the impact of higher fuel costs may have on future industry expansion.

FUTURE UNCERTAIN FOR 50-SEAT RJs

Once the darling of the commuter skies, the **50-seater Bombardier Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ)** appears to be a falling star, unable to meet the pressures from low-cost carriers and high-cost fuels. Costs per seat-mile just don't translate into competitive fares anymore and production is being suspended.

Introduced in 1991, many of the 1600 **RJs** now in airline inventories will be moth-balled in the coming months and years ...benched in favor of the larger, more comfortable 70-seaters. Airline bankruptcies, restructuring demands and leaner operating budgets require the highest return on equipment and it looks like the **50-seat RJs** may be the victim of some of the fallout. This may materialize as loss of service for some marginal markets, reduced service and fewer flight into other, and fewer airlines competing in this market. As the dynamics of the airline industry expand and compress, pressure sure looks like it is on the **50-seater RJ** with no likely exit-strategy on the horizon.

PILOTS REMINDED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WEATHER AWARENESS

The **National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)** has made some strong recommendations in recent news releases which call for greater weather awareness from general aviation pilots. The Board urged an increased value be placed on accuracy in responding to FAA written text questions related to weather - and a greater presence of weather in discussions and re-currency briefings during the **Biennial Flight Review - BFR**.

NTSB recommends basic instrument maneuvers be fully covered in a **BFR**. It urges that the FAA introduce an improved tracking system which identifies pilots at greater risk of weather-related emergencies and find a way to reduce those occurrences. It proposes updated FAA weather briefings, including the use of internet and satellite weather data.

AIRPORT COMMUNITY HONORS KATRINA VOLUNTEERS

The Colorado aviation community said a *community thank you* from all of us to **Lorie Hinton, Dave Zarlengo** and **Nick Scott** from Centennial Airport (APA) when they honored their humanitarian contribution to the **Hurricane Katrina Relief** effort at the Colorado Aviation Conference in late October. These good samaritans were recipients of the **2005 Special Achievement Award**, which each year honors special people in the airport family who have gone above and beyond in their daily lives.

It was when Nick Scott requested leave from his APA supervisor, Assistant Airport Director, Lorie Hinton, to volunteer at **New Orleans International Airport (MSY)** following the hurricane, that the idea took shape. Before too long, not only Nick, but Lorie and Dave Zarlengo, Centennial Deputy Director for Maintenance, were ready to join the trek. With the approval of the Airport Authority, the Executive Director, Robert Olislagers, and the support of fellow staffers, the three set off in a heavy truck, with camping trailer, generators, tools and a sat phone for the 27-hour trip to Louisiana.

Immediately upon arrival, they were put to work - on FOD patrol in preparation for the arrival of **Air Force One** - when the President arrived to oversee emergency operations in the devastated city. It was HOT and HUMID, something not



Centennial Airport's Nick Scott, Lorie Hinton and Dave Zarlengo positioned in front of the most famous airplane in the world.



Dave Zarlengo, Nick Scott, and Lorie Hinton were honored for their work at New Orleans International Airport with the Special Achievement Award traveling propeller trophy at the Colorado Aviation Conference.

immediately welcome to the travelers from higher altitudes. Lorie and Nick at once got into the Operations side of the rescue and Dave began work (with new friends from Lincoln NE and Orlando FL airports) on roof and electrical repairs. The heat index was 105-106 degrees, but they stood their normal rotation, assuring that things got back to normal just as quickly as possible.

As well as continuing to work tirelessly to bring the airport back into operation and care for the hundreds that were stranded, many of the airport folks they met at MSY had lost homes and property. The Centennial crew saw first hand - from a Coast Guard helicopter - the total ruin wracked onto the City by pounding winds and relentless flooding.

The Centennial crew left the *Big Easy* shortly before Hurricane Rita repeated the unwelcome visit a month later. Their thanks goes out to the men and women at Centennial who "picked up the slack" while they were gone.

Our thanks goes to Nick and Lorie and Dave for representing Colorado so generously and so well.

ANGEL FLIGHT REUNITES KATRINA FAMILY AT MEADOW LAKE AIRPORT



Photos by Kathy Hare



Back row L to R: Trish Sevits, Pilot Mark Shook, Darlene Durham and co-Pilot Dave Bennett. The Durham and Sevits kids complete the group.



Colorado Aviation Fuel Tax – What is it?

*Travis Vallin, Director
Colorado Division of Aeronautics*

It looks like the 2006 legislative session is shaping up to be a very interesting one as discussions have begun on how the State of Colorado taxes aviation fuel. First of all, it would probably be helpful to explain what taxes are collected, the tax rate, who pays the tax, and where the tax money goes. Now keep in mind, too, that there is also a Federal tax on aviation fuel and in most instances, a local tax or airport tax on aviation fuel. And many times all these are lumped together, which makes this even more difficult to follow. But I will just address the state fuel tax, since this will most likely be the issue addressed by the **Colorado General Assembly** this session.

The State of Colorado has two types of aviation fuel taxes. An excise tax or a flat “pennies-per-gallon” tax is \$.06 cents per gallon on AvGas and \$.04 cents per gallon on jet fuel. So if you are a general aviation pilot and you put 20 gallons of AvGas in your Cessna 172 for a cross-county flight, you will pay \$1.20 in State Aviation Fuel taxes on this purchase. Of the \$1.20 in taxes, \$.80 cents is refunded to the airport at which you purchased the fuel to be used to help maintain the airport. And \$.40 cents goes to the **Colorado Aeronautics Board (CAB)** to fund the **Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant Program**.

Now if you are flying a little higher and call the local FBO to fill up your Gulfstream V with 2,000 gallons of jet fuel for a business trip, you would end up paying \$.04 cents per gallon or \$80 of state aviation fuel tax. Of the \$80 in tax, the entire amount would be refunded to the local airport to support and maintain the facility. I should note that the airlines are exempt from paying the \$.04 cents per gallon excise tax. However, they are required by statute to pay a sales tax which is the second type of aviation fuel tax collected.

The aviation sales tax is just that, the state sales tax rate 2.9% which is charged on the retail cost of jet fuel. This is charged on all jet fuel sales within the state of Colorado and account for the majority of revenue to the Colorado Aviation Trust Fund. Some call this an indexed type of tax - as the price of fuel rises, so does the amount of tax collected on the fuel. With the sales tax revenue, 65% of the tax is refunded directly back to the

airport which generated the revenue and 35% of the tax goes into the CAB statewide aviation grant program.

There are many good things about the existing system and the first one is that the state aviation funds which are collected from those using the system stay within the aviation system. Many states do not have the luxury of keeping aviation funds for aviation purposes as their aviation state tax revenues are just simply added to the general fund, leaving aviation supporters and airports lobbying for general fund revenue against education, health care and highways. Prior to 1989, this was the case in Colorado as well, but with the leadership of now-Senator Lew Entz, statute was changed to ensure aviation taxes were to be used for aviation purposes only and constitutionally protecting the **Colorado Aviation Fund** where it would require a statewide vote of the citizens of Colorado to allow aviation funds to be used for other than aviation purposes. The existing system doesn't put all our eggs in one basket, so to speak. With just the excise tax or flat pennies-per-gallon, we would not be able to offset the impact of higher fuel prices. In 2005, we have seen statewide aviation fuel *consumption* go down. However, because the amount of sales tax collected is determined by the retail cost of the fuel, **higher fuel prices equates to more sales tax collected**.

Without question, aviation taxation will be a topic of legislative debate this year, as airlines look for ways to trim expenses in all areas. But it will be interesting to see how receptive the legislature will be to modifying a system that has worked so well for so many years.

During Colorado State Fiscal 2005, which closed at the end of June 2005, the Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant Program awarded in excess of \$4M in cyclical and individual grants.

A total of \$14.4M was reimbursed to airports in the form of excise and sales taxes entitlement refunds.

BOB KLEIN RETIRES AT WRAY

Bob Klein was honored by the airports community with a commemorative plaque at the Colorado Aviation Conference for his 17 years as FBO and airport manager at **Wray Municipal Airport**.

During Bob's tenure, the runway was reconstructed and a taxiway added.

Bob is succeeded at Wray by Jim Lohman.



PHILLIP BRADEN MOVES ON

CDOT-Director, Travis Vallin, reminisces with **Phillip Braden**, FAA Denver Airports District Office (ADO) Assistant Manager at the Colorado Aviation Conference. Phillip has accepted the position of ADO Manager in Memphis, TN, and is looking forward to relocating shortly to his hometown after 12 years in Denver.



NEW FACES IN NEW PLACES

Every so often, it's probably worthwhile to introduce the new arrivals at Colorado airports. A number of new faces grace the manager's hot seat from recent appointments.

Walker Field Airport Authority recently announced the appointment of **Rex Tippetts** as Airport Manager at the Grand Junction field. No stranger to Colorado airports, Rex has most recently been Operations Director at Aspen-Pitkin County Airport and was manager at Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport earlier. He is current president of the Colorado Airport Operators Association. He fills the position left vacant when former Colorado Aeronautical Board member, Corinne Nystrom, resigned to accept the Airport Manager position at Falcon Field in Mesa, AZ.

Newly-retired from a career with the United States Navy, Evergreen native and CU grad **David Ruppel** has accepted the position of Aviation Director for the **Yampa Valley Regional Airport**. Fresh on the airport management scene, Mr. Ruppel is excited to renew his Rocky Mountain lifestyle and provide a healthy environment for his four school-age children. Yampa Valley Regional Airport is the Routt County commercial-service airport that serves the Steamboat Springs area.

Long time Airport Manager at **Lamar Municipal Airport**, **Bill Thrialkill**, retired this summer after 28 years of service

with the City of Lamar. Bill hopes to travel and find time to enjoy life a little. **Dannie McMillan** has stepped into the "big shoes".

The formal appointment of **Kenneth Maenpa** as Airport Manager at **Jefferson County Airport** was announced recently. Kenny had been acting manager since his predecessor, **Troy Stover** left to accept the position as Director of Maintenance at **Colorado Springs Municipal Airport**. Kenny has been in Colorado's aviation community for a number of years in positions at Centennial Airport, Garfield County Regional Airport, Eagle County Regional Airport.

Boulder Municipal Airport hopes in the near future to fill the position of Airport Manager left vacant at the retirement of **Ray Grundy**.

Mel Baker was appointed by the City of Steamboat Springs as Airport Manager at **Bob Adams Field** following the departure of **Matt Grow** to the **Ocala (FL) International Airport**. Mel has been with the airport for a number of years.

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