

Mountain Wave



Summer 2005

Quarterly publication of the Colorado Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division

COLORADO HOSTS NATIONAL AWOS POLICY FORUM

Representatives from ten states, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the National Weather Service met at the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Research Center in Boulder on July 28th and 29th** to begin a dialogue aimed at establishing an economical and efficient means of delivering current **non-federal Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS)** information to the flying public nationally.



Patti Miller, Chief of the Scientific Application Branch at the Forecast Systems Laboratory in NOAA's Boulder location finishes her presentation to the group.

At the end of 2005, Colorado alone will have in excess of 25 non-federal AWOS sites, including the 12 recently sited in strategic mountain locations by the Colorado Aeronautical Board. Other non-federal AWOS facilities are located at general aviation airports throughout the State, having been funded through FAA General Aviation Entitlement funds, by the local airport sponsor or with shared state funds. Much of this vital information has so far been unavailable to aviation services nationally because the costs of dissemination has been prohibitive. Now state and national representatives have an opportunity to establish a national policy that will assure this information is accessible to the public in a cost-effective manner.



Some of the 30 delegates prepare for a day's discussion with FAA, National Weather Service, consultants and researchers.

Attendees at the two-day discussion were guests of the Colorado Division of Aeronautics at dinner on Thursday evening, July 28th - a further opportunity to react casually to the day's forum and to formulate a plan of action to accomplish their goals. Future meetings are being planned.



CDOT AWOS coordinator, T.K. Gwin (l) has an opportunity at dinner to discuss the day's meetings with (l to r) Lyle Jacobsen-Nebraska DOT, Ray Boucher-Arizona DOT and Dave Burle-Missouri DOT.



In May, Colorado Aeronautical Board and CDOFAeronautics Division staff were welcomed to the nearly-completed facility at **Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport** designed to house the Aircraft Rescue and Fire-fighting facility, as well as Airport Administration.

ANNUAL GRANT APPLICATION CYCLE OPEN THROUGH AUGUST 26

The **Colorado Aeronautical Board** announces the **2006 Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant Program** application cycle which runs through August 26 and is open to any public-owned, public-use airport facility or aviation service. Formal hearings and awards are scheduled in conjunction with the **2005 Annual Colorado Aviation Conference** on October 20th and 21st.

The Aeronautics Division anticipates a number of projects funded jointly by the local airport sponsor, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Colorado Aeronautical Board. Many of these deal with airfield maintenance and facilities development.

Last year, the Board's grant program awarded in excess of \$4M - and the anticipated funding available for this year's grant cycle is similar.

The **Annual Colorado Aviation Conference** and **Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant** hearings in late October are planned in conjunction with the **Colorado Airport Operators Association** Fall Meeting and are scheduled for the Denver International Airport Embassy Suites Hotel.

For information about the **Colorado Discretionary Aviation Grant Program** or the **2005 Annual Colorado Aviation Conference**, please call Caroline Scott at CDOT-Aeronautics Division at 303-261-4498.

CAB MEMBERS RE-ELECT PATTON

At its meeting on July 8th, the Colorado Aeronautical Board unanimously re-elected Greenwood Village representative of Eastern Plains governments, **Harold Patton**, as its Chair for another year. Mr. Patton has served on the CAB since early 1999 and as Chairman for the past three years.

Vice-Chair, **Corinne Nystrom**, long-time manager at Walker Field in Grand Junction, announced to the Board at the July meeting that she had accepted the position of Director of Aviation at Falcon Field, Mesa, AZ, and would be resigning her position on the Colorado Aeronautical Board immediately. Ms. Nystrom served as representative of statewide airport management.

Greeley resident, **Harry Felderman**, was elected Vice-Chairman. Mr. Felderman also serves as a representative of Eastern Plains governments.

Pat Wiesner was re-elected Secretary.

FAA and CONTROLLERS LOOK AT NEW CONTRACT FUNDING

Negotiations began in mid-July to define new contracts for air traffic controllers. One of the highest paid elements of the FAA's salaried professionals, controllers' salaries average \$146,500 annually. New proposals by their union would put those figures up to \$200,000 in 4 years, with a 7-hour day that included an hour for lunch plus other breaks.

In light of limited resources and a decreasing **Aviation Trust Fund**, FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey, suggests that such increases might well jeopardize other ATC expansion and hopes for a quick resolution and contract agreement.

FAA WINGS SURVIVAL SEMINAR

FREE!
Saturday and Sunday
September 17 and 18
Doubletree Hotel
3203 Quebec Street
Denver

Register at www.faasafety.gov
Call Chris Lucas (303) 530-4495 for more information



With the Rockies as a backdrop, one of eight World War II B-17s still flying, departs Montrose for the Front Range. The aircraft is owned by the the **Arizona Wing of the Commemorative Air Force**.
(photo by Dick Manhart)

TIME FOR DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE OF FAA FUNDING

For years, the Federal Aviation Administration has drawn on revenues held in and generated to the **Aviation Trust Fund** for its operations and to create and maintain the nation's aviation infrastructure. But the Trust Fund is being depleted rapidly - with an eye to exhausting its ability to fund infrastructure and safety issues within a decade.

Identifying the time-critical issues confronting the FAA in regards to the Aviation Trust Fund, FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey, spoke cautiously about setting standards for the Agency in the coming months. Now is the time, she stated, to look at funding alternatives before the expiration of aviation taxes in late 2007 which have been the principal source of many FAA programs.

The increasing use of RJs, business jets and microjets greatly impacts airport usage and the way in which we build infrastructure, but does not increase the revenues generated from ticket taxes...and it is no longer realistic to rely on a single source alone to fund increased need. The Agency acknowledges that it must be fiscally savvy and cut operating costs while still providing a safe aviation system in the next decades. With the growing deficit and entitlement spending, the FAA is competing with other government entities for ever-limited general fund revenues and alternative funding sources are being pondered.

Many in the current FAA administration, although not openly commenting on "user fees" at this point, are hinting at a "direct link between the use of resources and payment for them" and a consistent, stable revenue stream not tied to the price of a ticket. With the advent of FAA fees for FAA services will come the likelihood of greater input from users and a place at the table in decision-making. It can, too, provide an incentive to users to utilize resources prudently and the advent of cost-saving measures.

Although not welcomed by the flying public, such fee-based programs are likely to be heard from again. Expect a lot of conversation and "trial balloons" to be floated by the FAA before September 2007, when existing ticket taxes lapse.

"THIS IS AN INCREDIBLE WAY TO SPEND TWO DAYS OF MY SUMMER"

CDOT's **Aviation Education Program** continues to attract teachers to its 2-day training workshops - sending to the classroom first-hand lessons about aviation that excite students with the magic of flight. Buena Vista's **Central Colorado Regional Airport** hosted the mid-July event that brought 22 elementary-, middle- and high-school teachers together to learn the *Science of Flight* kits, debuting in Colorado thanks to the EAA and Einstein, Inc. Colorado is one of three states having introduced teacher-trainers to the dynamic newly-developed hands-on program.

While at the workshop, teachers were able to fly with EAA volunteers from Buena Vista, Erie and Centennial chapters, to see first-hand the work of the wildfire crews marshaled to fight the Mason Fire in Custer County and observe high-altitude certification flight testing of the *Agusta Aerospace A109 Grand* air ambulance.



Av-Ed Director, Darci Wert (l) discusses the fine art of glider flying with Walnut Hills teacher, Marcia Foster, at the recent Teacher Workshop in Buena Vista.

For her leading-edge contributions to aviation education in Colorado, CDOT Av-Ed Director, Darci Wert, was the guest of EAA at the **Airventure in Oshkosh, WI** and participated in the EAA's recent *Science of Flight* workshop held in conjunction with its fly-in annual event.



Educators from several states at the recent EAA workshop explore the *Science of Flight* teaching kit materials. Darci Wert is at the center of the group.

MOUNTAIN AWOS PROGRAM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Division has received word that the recently-completed Mountain AWOS Program received national recognition from the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#) (AASHTO) as the outstanding aviation safety program in the 50 states. The [2005 AASHTO President's Transportation Award for Safety](#) is made as part of an annual effort to acknowledge outstanding programs and persons which impact safety and represent a step "outside the box". Project Manager, T.K. Gwin, was singled out for due-credit for his perseverance and a "stick-to-it" attitude that made it possible for the program to be a success.

Over the past five years, twelve high-terrain Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) sites have been located in strategic mountain passes most commonly used by general aviation, charter and light commuter aircraft. Some of the units are located in almost impossible environments - at the top of ski mountains or in conjunction with remote telecon sites.

Funded jointly by the Colorado General Assembly and the Colorado Aeronautical Board, the program is a national leader in innovative efforts to improve aviation safety. The award will be made at the AASHTO Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN in September.

A HARD LOOK AT RADAR SERVICE FOR COLORADO MOUNTAIN AIRPORTS

Over the past several months, the Aeronautics Division has been working with the FAA Denver Air Route Traffic Control Center and technical staff at the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters in Washington to determine the most realistic means of alleviating significant delays for aircraft arriving or departing Colorado mountain airports. During peak periods, long delays are experienced because controllers at Denver Center are unable to "see" traffic as it operates below radar capabilities impacted by high mountain terrain surrounding the airports. Multiple approaches and/ or departures are not possible in this blind environment, so each flight must be clear of the area before another is allowed to proceed.

On busy weekends, at holidays and in high-tourist seasons, traffic exceeds the capacity to smoothly move it in and out of mountain airports ... much is backed up and "stacked" or not allowed to leave the ground as other traffic is cleared. Solutions are being evaluated and cost analyses projected - in an effort to identify a likely solution that will expedite a smoother traffic flow.

FAA's recent development of the Capstone Project in Alaska forms some of the basis for further definition of the Colorado alternatives. In Capstone, aircraft were equipped to provide an individual radar identification; however, this is a costly option. Discretely located wide area radar sites provide an alternative. The task of selecting - and then funding - the right configuration for Colorado remains undecided.

The Division will remain vigilant and continue to pursue the best and most likely solution. A location is being defined in the northwest mountains that can provide a test platform for wide area radar, with an eye to expanding the concept to a state level as funding and technical support are available. Meanwhile, valuable findings will come from the test area and much will be learned regarding what the program can do for Colorado and how it may ultimately impact similar situations in neighboring states.

WHOOOPS!

Information on the [Mt. Werner AWOS](#) published in the Spring edition of the [Mountain Wave](#) was incorrect. It should read:

Mt. Werner AWOS - K3MW

Site elevation is 10,545 MSL
40 27' 22"N - 106 44' 25"W
127.125 - 970-871-5640

Good news on the relocation of the [Corona Pass/ Niwot AWOS](#) to its new home on [Mines Peak at Bethoud Pass](#). FCC commissioning is due sometime this summer - phone and frequency have been assigned.

Mines Peak AWOS - K0CO

Site elevation is 12,493 MSL
39 47' 40"N-105 45' 47"W
135.325 - 303-512-4416

STATE SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE BEGINS

The Aeronautics Division is happy to welcome [Wilbur Smith Associates, Inc.](#) who will be assisting in the development of the [2006 Colorado Aviation System Plan Update](#).

Work on the study, which progresses at this time, is aimed at reviewing the existing aviation community - as well as looking at future needs projected in the state for the next decades.

Of particular concern to planners is the increasing demand on mountain airports by corporate, flexibly-owned and charter cabin class aircraft attracted to the recreational and second home community recently, placing increasing demands on airport infrastructure and facilities.

Senior Planner, Chris Pomeroy, who manages the project, states that **"this hard look at our aviation needs will help us make good use of available resources in meeting the changing climate of our state's airport system"**.

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Over the past 13 years, it has been fun to watch the changes within the Aeronautics Division in terms of what we do on a day-to-day basis. When asked by someone outside aviation “So what do you do at the Aeronautics Division?”, my common answer is typically “*We work with airports and pilots to improve Colorado Airports through our aviation grant program*”. That is usually enough of an explanation to paint a pretty general picture of what we do; however, when you take a closer look, the grants are just the tip of the iceberg of what goes on in the Colorado Aeronautics Office. So I thought I would take this opportunity to walk everyone through a typical week in the Aeronautics Office and the events which occur during the course of the week.

We start each week off with a staff meeting in which we discuss the status of current projects, upcoming projects, travel and meeting schedules. Before I can get back to my office T.K., Shahn and John are off to inspect 11 airports on the Eastern Plains. After completing the [Airport Pavement Condition Index](#) inspections and while still at the airport, John will conduct the [FAA 5010 airport safety inspection](#) while T.K. checks the [installation and operation of the Automated Weather Observation System \(AWOS\)](#). Shahn will be taking pictures of airports who will be exhibiting with us at the [2005 National Business Aviation Association convention](#) as he is assisting airports design their booth displays. Shahn and John will also be talking to airport managers about their need for [surplus CDOT and DIA airport equipment](#) as there will be an upcoming surplus auction the end of the month while T.K. makes some suggestions for [airfield pavement maintenance projects](#).

Back in the office, Caroline and Nikki are busy [closing out the previous year’s grant contracts](#) which requires a lot of communication and coordination with many airport managers, finance directors and airport consultant project managers. This has to be done so we can communicate to the CDOT accounting office on which projects need to be kept on the books for another year and which ones can be closed and removed from the CDOT Accounting system. Chris and Kaitlyn are on their way to Boulder to meet with the City and the FAA to discuss the [Airport Master Plan](#) and the role the airport plays in the State Aviation System. Darci is busy working on setting up her next [Teacher Workshop](#) which she is holding in Buena Vista. Everyone knows the workshop is getting closer, because the workshop supplies continue to take up more of her office space until all that is left is a computer and a place to sit. In the meantime, her phone is going crazy with last minute changes and participants wanting to register for the workshop within the last few days.

With all of this going on at once, one might think that there would be nothing left for me to do. Well truth be known, the secret of my success is simply staying out of the way of a group of very talented and dedicated individuals. You will find me on my weekly teleconference with the FAA Air Traffic Organization Office out of Washington D.C. to discuss our [Colorado Mountain Radar study](#). After the telecom I need to run to a meeting with United Airlines to discuss [aviation fuel tax issues](#) and how we use the fuel tax to enhance the Colorado Aviation System.

So the next time you drop by the Aeronautics Division to say hello and you see an empty office or two, chances are that we are out at a teacher workshop or conducting airport safety inspections or simply meeting with airport managers and pilots on aviation planning issues. And think, [this is just Monday!](#)



Pictured are members of the [Grand Junction EAA-800 Chapter](#), honored by the CDOT Aeronautics Division for their support of the [Young Eagles Program](#) - flying hundreds of school kids on their first airplane ride.

(L to R) Scott Doughty, Dennis Crawford, Sterling Hurst and Ray Guziak.
Not pictured, Dag Adamson, Chapter [Young Eagle](#) Coordinator.

DIVISION WELCOMES INTERN

The new face at the Aeronautics Division is Intern, Kaitlyn Westendorf. A new-comer to aviation, Kaitlyn is busy learning the many facets of our community. She is a recent graduate of the University of Northern Colorado and lives in Watkins, CO.



Please help us welcome Kaitlyn to the Division.

DIA SURPLUS SUPPORTS AIRPORT SERVICES

Colorado airports scored big at the August 1st sale of Surplus Equipment auctioned off by **Denver International Airport**. 22 pieces of quality equipment, estimated at a current market value in the millions, was sold to nine general aviation, small- and medium-size commercial airports totalling a sale value of just over \$220,000.00.

The auction was held under the tutelage of the CDOT-Aeronautics Division and was supported by discretionary aviation grant funds of \$70,500.00 which represents a 50/50 cost sharing for those airports unable to take advantages of the great deals from their annual operating budget. Brooms, snow blowers, mowers, trucks and plows were distributed statewide, providing many servicable equipment-years for a fraction of the new cost.



Denver International Airport (DIA) has been a strong supporter of the state's general aviation and commercial service airports with their annual sale of surplus equipment. This year's inventory was particularly rich in quality equipment - the airports appreciated the opportunity and purchased just about everything offered for sale.

It's great to have working partners in our industry - everybody wins!



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AWOS STUDY CONVENES IN BOULDER

MOUNTAIN RADAR STUDY TAKES SHAPE

AVIATION CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED