



# Montana and the Sky

MDT - Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 61 No. 8

August 2010

## Montana Students Explore Aviation Careers

Ten middle school students from throughout Montana recently took part in ACE 2010. The program, sponsored by the MDT Aeronautics Division, allows student the opportunity to explore aviation careers in an aviation field trip setting.

ACE students took the controls of remote aircraft under the instruction of the Helena Flying Tigers remote aircraft club. Students were treated to unique lunch at the Pink Flamingo Cafe located in a remodeled pink school bus within walking distance of the Canyon Ferry airstrip. Following lunch, which included chocolate nachos, the students became immersed in aviation survival tactics under the guidance of emergency room doctor and pilot Bill Gallea. Using signal mirrors the ACE students signaled the MDT Aeronautics plane for their simulated rescue at the Canyon Ferry airstrip

Day two of ACE was like no other day for several of the students when they made their first orientation flight with EAA pilots Mike Nagele, Bob Caldwell, Lance Seaman, Clayton Wilhelm and MDT pilot Jim Greil. Clifford Carpenter and Jeff Simmons instructed students on the finer points of landing using the Federal Aviation Administration's flight simulator.

ACE students toured the Helena air traffic control tower and went to aviation ground school at Vetter Aviation. They calculated and plotted an aviation navigation problem with flight instructor Harold Dramstad.



*Students participated in Young Eagle orientation flights.*



*ACE students watched Frank Flynn of the Helena Flying Tigers remote aircraft club getting the airplane ready to fly.*



*ACE students gathered tinder for fire building in the aviation survival course.*

Many thanks to all who helped make this program such a success: the Helena Flying Tigers, Dr. Bill Gallea, Neil Salmi, Lance Seaman, Bob Caldwell, Clayton Wilhelm, Mike Nagelle, Clifford Carpenter, Jeff Simmons, Helena air traffic controllers, Harold Dramstad and MDT Aeronautics staff.

# Administrator's Column

**Scholarship opportunities:** Thirteen new scholarships will be awarded at the Annual Women in Aviation International Conference in Reno Feb. 24-26, 2011. The new scholarships are valued at \$92,250. Dozens of scholarship opportunities are posted on the organization's website, <http://www.wai.org/>. There are academic scholarships, flight training scholarships and scholarships that are focused on a particular career within aviation such as dispatchers and aeronautical engineers. Since the inception of the program, \$6.5 million has been disbursed. Qualifications for all scholarships are available online. Scholarships are open to both women and men, and the only universal requirement is that the scholarship applicant must be a WAI member. Scholarship applications may be downloaded online and must be postmarked by Nov. 15, 2010.

## Small Community Grants

**Applications Due:** The Department of Transportation (DOT) has released its order inviting communities to apply for grants under the Small Community Air Service Development Program — a program Congress created to improve air service to communities that suffer from insufficient air service or unreasonably high fares. Communities must submit their proposals to DOT by August 27, 2010. Applicants must also submit a separate SF424 form that is described below. DOT has indicated it will make \$7 million available for grant awards. The order is similar to previous issued orders and can be viewed at: [http://ostpxweb.dot.gov/aviation/X-50%20Role\\_files/smallcommunity.htm](http://ostpxweb.dot.gov/aviation/X-50%20Role_files/smallcommunity.htm)

**Top 10 aviation attractions:** According to traveler ratings and TripAdvisor, America has a rich history as the birthplace of aviation and rank the following as top attractions: 1. National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.; 2. Intrepid Sea, Air, & Space Museum, New York, New York; 3. Wright Brothers National Memorial, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina; 4. National Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola,

Florida; 5. Museum of Flight, Seattle; 6. Pima Air & Space Museum, Tucson, Arizona; 7. Boeing Aircraft Factory Tour, Everett, Washington; 8. Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii; 9. Gravelly Point Park, Arlington, Virginia; 10. Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum, McMinnville, Oregon.

## The world's scariest airports:

SmarterTravel, an online travel site, has released its list of the World's 10 Scariest Airports for takeoff and landing. While aimed at airline passengers, the airports also prove challenging for GA pilots. 1. Barra Airport, Barra, Scotland: It's always a beach landing and runways form when the tide goes out; 2. Gibraltar Airport, Gibraltar: The main road to Spain intersects the runway; 3. Toncontin International Airport, Tegucigalpa, Honduras: A 45 degree bank and quick drop in altitude; 4. Nantucket Memorial Airport, Nantucket, Massachusetts: Fog often forces pilots to rely solely on instruments; 5. Paro Airport, Paro, Bhutan: Mountainous terrain means every flight is an aeronautical feat; 6. Yeager Airport, Charleston, West Virginia: Located on a flattened mountain top, so overshooting the runway means dropping over a cliff; 7. La Aurora International Airport, Guatemala City, Guatemala: A startling approach weaves through volcanoes and mountains; 8. LaGuardia Airport, New York City, New York: Crowded airspace (JFK/Newark are nearby) and main runways extend over water; 9. Wellington International Airport, Wellington, New Zealand: Windy and the northern approach threads local hills and trolley lines; 10. John Wayne Airport, Santa Ana, California: Noise ordinances force pilots to quickly reduce throttle on takeoff.



*Montana and the Sky*  
Department of Transportation

Brian Schweitzer, Governor  
Jim Lynch, Director

Official monthly publication of the  
Aeronautics Division  
Telephone - (406) 444-2506  
Fax - (406) 444-2519  
P.O. Box 200507  
Helena, MT 59620-0507  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/)

Debbie K. Alke, Administrator

**Aeronautics Board**  
**Tricia McKenna, Chairman**  
**Robert Buckles, Member**  
**A. Christopher Edwards, Member**  
**William (Bill) Hunt, Jr., Member**  
**Fred Lark, Member**  
**Fred Leistiko, Member**  
**Roger Lincoln, Member**  
**Chuck Manning, Member**  
**Ted Schye, Member**

*Montana and the Sky*  
Is published monthly  
In the interest of aviation in the  
State of Montana.

Third Class postage paid at  
Helena, Montana 59604

**Editor:** Patty Kautz

*continued page 3*

# Administrator's Column, continued

**Backcountry airstrip resolution passes:** The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed a backcountry airstrip resolution July 29 by voice vote. The resolution “recognizes the value of recreational aviation and backcountry airstrips located on the Nation’s public lands and commends aviators and the various private organizations that maintain these airstrips for public use.” Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.), House GA Caucus co-chairs Allen Boyd (D-Fla.) and Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), and Rep. Walt Minnick (D-Idaho), introduced the resolution in June and gathered support through a Dear Colleague letter. Recreational aviation and backcountry airstrips serve a vital role for emergency flight operations, fire fighting, wildlife management and tourism.

**No deadline set for no lead ban on Avgas:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirmed that it has not set a deadline for the removal of lead from avgas—and that it will coordinate closely with industry stakeholders in the development of a solution to the issue. AOPA, NBAA, GAMA, NATA, EAA are part of a coalition working to develop a plan for the transition to an unleaded avgas. The EPA assured the coalition that it will consult with the FAA, states, industry groups and user groups and consider the impact of potential regulatory action on the GA fleet. FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt has said he is “keenly” aware of concerns about avgas and noted the “community is committed to finding a solution to bring this to a successful conclusion so there will be no interruption in the supply.”



## Calendar of Events

**August 15** – Columbus Airport Woltermann Memorial Dedication Fly In breakfast, car show, class reunion. For further information, phone Gary Woltermann at (406) 321-4111.

**August 21** – Cut Bank Airport Fly In, car show, 1/8 mile drag racing and various flying events. For further information, contact Dave Ries (406) 873-8683.

**September 10 - 12** - MDT Aeronautics Division’s Annual Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Helena. For further information, please contact: Jeanne MacPherson at (406) 444-9568, [jemacpherson@mt.gov](mailto:jemacpherson@mt.gov).

**September 10-11** – MTCAA Fall Conference, Lewistown. For further, information call (406) 477-6645.

**September 11** – Polson Fly In. For further information, contact Mauri Morin at [maurv8@gmail.com](mailto:maurv8@gmail.com).

**October 16** – AOM Meeting, MDT Aeronautics Division, 10:00 a.m. For further information, phone (406) 444-2506.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (406) 444-7696. MDT produces 2,200 copies of this public document at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$858. This includes \$465 for postage.

## 2011 International Art Contest Open for Entries

The 2011 International Aviation Art Contest “50 Years of Human Space Flight” is accepting artwork for their annual contest. The deadline for entries is January 14, 2011. To request a brochure with contest rules and application please contact Kelly Dimick at (406) 444-2506 or email [kdimick@mt.gov](mailto:kdimick@mt.gov).



# Both Sides of the Border Come Together for Work Session

By: Jim Greil, Airports/Airways Bureau Chief

On Saturday July 10 one of my favorite annual gatherings of the year took place, the multinational Del Bonita fly-in and work session. The location itself is a descriptive depiction of the event; a flourishing plain broken only by a few nondescript fences, some small buildings and a quintessential prairie airfield, outlined by stark, white runway cones, contrasting against the green of the fields. This seemingly insignificant airstrip is a small reminder of an important line in our world, one that separates two sovereign nations, but also highlights the similarity of those aviators who use it. I would be hard pressed to try to find notable differences between those aviators from the north and south. The camaraderie that the two groups of flyers feel for each other when we gather at this small airport once a year only solidifies that unwritten and mutual bond pilots share.

This event was started years ago by the MDT Aeronautics Division and the Alberta Flying Farmers after the successful construction of the Del Bonita International Airport, located between Cut Bank, Montana and Del Bonita, Alberta. The Del Bonita airport is one of the three international airports administered by the MDT Aeronautics Division and located directly on the US and Canadian border, all entirely located in the international boundaries “no man land.”

The fly-in is always well attended by participants from both sides of the border. The Alberta Flying Farmers provided participants with wonderful grilled burgers and hot dogs. It is always so nice to see our good friends from the north. Ken Wilhelm and myself flew our Division’s Cessna 206 up there on a surprisingly mild and overcast day and were happy to see so many other aircraft there from both sides of the border. Our Division provides a multitude of tools and “gopher bombs” for the runway maintenance work. We also made a couple of long haul truck trips this year delivering stacks of fence posts and other items to be replaced.

After the usual international hellos and chit chat, the eager group walked the length of the runway and back, performing maintenance all the way. The work was steady and fruitful with the occasional stop to have a drink and perhaps discuss with our neighbors other flying adventures we had over the course of the summer. After we exhausted our supply of gopher holes to fill, fences to paint, runway cones to replace and other items for upkeep, we once again gathered to the comfort of lawn chairs, good food, good company and speeches. As we dined, we listened to short presentations by various representatives, including US and Canadian Customs, Alberta Flying Farmers, Nav Canada, as well as my own spiel about our ongoing plans for this airport and all of our other summer projects. Don Althen from Alberta is always the ringleader and emcee for the event and was there when the airport was created. After the speeches were over and our bellies were full, it came time to say goodbye for another year I know it’s a year until the next one, but I’m already looking



*Pictured (l-r) Bob Frank-Plumlee, Lincoln and Ken Wilhelm, MDT Aeronautics Division lended a helping hand during the work session.*

forward to it again. Many thanks to the participants this year, many of whose names escape me, but not their faces or stories. A very special thank you goes to Don Althen and his family, who always put a lot of time and work into this event. Thanks again, Don! And thanks so much to all of our participants for your time and volunteerism for a great gathering and a wonderful event.

For someone new to the airport, finding the Del Bonita Airport can be a little tricky. The airport is located approximately 31 miles north of Cut Bank and is located directly on the international border. Although it sounds easy, it is actually fairly tricky to locate the US Canadian border by the air as there is no obvious demarcation, either natural or artificial to separate the two countries. For best results, try following Highway 213 north from Cut Bank until you are able to spot the two customs border shacks on each side of the highway. The most common mistake is traveling a few miles too far north and looking in the Canadian town of Whetstone for the airstrip. The runway is turf and is covered by thick, dense grass. Runway length is 4440, width is 65 and elevation is 4336, so even light twins should have no problem with operations. There is a unicom located at the customs office, but is only occasionally monitored. Make sure to call Customs one hour prior to landing if entering or leaving the US, or just as a courtesy even if you’re just visiting. After landing, be sure to park in the respective apron tie-down side depending on which country you are coming from. Call the Division at (406) 444-2506 for more information, and we’ll see you there next year...ehh!

# Charlie Russell Sky

By: R. E. Smith

It is nearly dusk. Nighthawks trace erratic patterns in the powder blue and dusty yellow atmosphere high above. Two blades twirl in front of me, washing back familiar aromas of smoky oil, pungent fuel, sweet wood and old varnish mixed with fresh air.

A day's, a week's, burdens melt away like the individual blades of grass that merge and blur beneath my tires and turn into a diminishing stream.

Up, up, up, like a homesick angel, Dad and I like to tell each other, twin grins on our faces in a light airplane on a cool day. It's just me tonight, so I let 85 horsepower take me heavenward at their own discretion.

For a time it appears I can outpace the sun, and daylight for me will last a little longer than it will for most. But fabric, steel tubes and 85 horses are not enough for that race, and the sun gains back its lead. That's all right. I settle in and enjoy the splendor of a Montana sunset suspended in my easy chair a thousand feet above terra firma.

It's too bad, Mr. C. M. Russell, that you can't be my passenger tonight. Square Butte looks stunning from this vantage point. I linger until the stock ponds below are brighter than polished mirrors set into shadow-soaked ground. Then the sun bids a final farewell, branding distant clouds with searing orange and red as it disappears behind the Highwood Mountains.

With reluctance I descend toward the darkness below, flying a familiar pattern in fading light. Over the fence now, and there's the almost imperceptible vibration from rubber just kissing grass followed by a less subtle rumble as solid contact is again made with earth.

I left a part of myself up there with the nighthawks in the Charlie Russell sky. I always do. I always will.



*Rebecca Smith's solo in her families Champ approaching the South Moccasin Mountains.*

## MacPherson Renews Master CFI Accreditation



*Jeanne MacPherson, a three-time Master and SAFE member, recently renewed her Master CFI accreditation. Jeanne is an independent Helena-area flight instructor as well as the chief pilot and the safety and education bureau chief with the Montana Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. She also serves as a FAA Team representative in the FAA's Helena FSDO area.*

Master Instructors LLC takes pride in announcing a significant aviation accomplishment on the part of Jeanne MacPherson, the safety and education bureau chief with the Montana Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. Recently, Jeanne's accreditation as a Master CFI (Certificated Flight Instructor) was renewed by the Master Instructors LLC Board of Review, the international accrediting authority for the Master Instructor designation as well as the FAA-approved "Master Instructor Program." She first earned this national professional accreditation in 2006, has held it continuously since then, and is one of only 69 worldwide to earn the credential three times.

To help put this achievement in its proper perspective, there are approximately 93,000 CFIs in the United States. Fewer than 700 of them have achieved this distinction thus far. The last 15 national Flight Instructors of the Year were Master CFIs while Jeanne is one of only seven Montana teachers of flight to earn this prestigious "Master" title. In the words of former FAA Administrator Marion Blakey, "The Master Instructor accreditation singles out the best that the right seat has to offer."

The Master Instructor designation is a national accreditation recognized by the FAA. Candidates must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth and service to the aviation community, and must pass a rigorous evaluation by a peer Board of Review. The process parallels the continuing education regimen used by other professionals to enhance their knowledge base while increasing their professionalism. Designees are recognized as outstanding aviation educators for not only their excellence in teaching, but for their engagement in the continuous process of learning — both their own and their students'. The designation must be renewed biennially and significantly surpasses the FAA requirements for renewal of the candidate's flight instructor certificate.

# Cut Bank Airport Hosts First Time Aerobatics Competition

*By: Roy Nollkamper, Mgr., Cut Bank International Airport*

Fourteen aircraft attended the first ever sanctioned aerobatics competition to be held in Montana on the weekend of July 10th. Participants began arriving at the airport on Thursday afternoon and spent Friday practicing maneuvers with the main competition and scoring taking most of the day on Saturday. The event concluded with awards and a pizza “banquet” on Saturday afternoon, just before the area was hit by a rain storm.

The competition was sanctioned by the International Aerobatic Club, Northwest division out of Portland, Oregon and was also sponsored by the Aerobatics Canada, Chapter 7 headquartered in Calgary. Competitors came from as far away as Denver, Portland and Edmonton, or as close as Deer Lodge.

The competition is divided into different categories, each with a different degree of difficulty. Any type of aircraft can be flown in any category, although the higher performance machines are necessary in the categories which are most difficult, since they have more horsepower and maneuvering capability. The beginners start in the Primary category and then, as their skills improve, move up to the Sportsman, Intermediate, Advanced and most challenging of all, the Unlimited category. No matter what category in which the pilot is flying, each performance demands a high degree of physical and mental skill from the pilot and mechanical preparedness from the aircraft. Mistakes can be disastrous.

Each competitor completes an assigned routine three separate times in the aerobatic “box.” The box is 1000 meters square and is 1000 meters high. In the Sportsman category, the planes can come no closer than 1500 feet from the ground, but the Unlimited pilots can come as close as 328 feet (100 meters) from the ground. A panel of nine judges is used for each category and many of the pilots rotate as judges. Judges are highly trained and certified.

To the unpracticed eye, each routine looks like a plane flying up, down, sideways, upside down, backwards, sometimes with power or sometimes with the engine at an idle. In reality, each maneuver has a name and must be performed with precision and timing within the four-minute time limit inside the box. Mistakes or excursions outside the box all cost the pilot points that are deducted from a perfect score. Scores are averaged to determine the winners.

The event was deemed a success by the participants and will take place again next year. It's expected, with a better date selected for next year, that the number of aircraft will at least double. This would mean that it would grow to three days in length which will present a great opportunity for aviation-minded folks to watch some top class aerobatic performances.



*Doug Sowder is climbing hard straight up in his Extra 25AP. Doug is vice president of the International Aeronautics Club and flew in from Portland. He finished second in the Advanced Category.*

*Photo by: Roy Nollkamper.*



*Dick Bevington is no stranger to aerobatic competition and seldom misses one if humanly possible. This unusual Staudacher SG300 puts over 300 horsepower to an even more unusual huge wooden two bladed propeller. Dick is in his 80's and flies this high performance plane out of Colorado Springs. Photo by: Roy Nollkamper.*



*Here's the view of a Pitts taken from Bob Harris' Extra FA300 on the trip from Portland to Cut Bank. Photo by Noel Jones.*

# To All Fellow Aviators

By: Frank W. Lester, Jr., Safety/Education Coordinator,  
Idaho Division of Aeronautics

With the summer flying season in full swing and many visitors flying into the Idaho backcountry, I ask that you remember a couple of items:

First, although we have received approval to open Reed Ranch, we have a lot of preparation that must be completed before we can officially open the airstrip. Please pass to your flying friends and neighbors that Reed Ranch is not open. There will be men and equipment on or near the runway working to ready the airport for use. Please let everyone know to avoid Reed Ranch for the time being to allow these people to safely complete their tasks. We will notify everyone through normal channels when the airstrip is open.

Second, I have received comments that there may be misinformation about proper departure and arrival patterns at Johnson Creek.

It is our responsibility as pilots to ensure an orderly and safe flow of traffic in and around Idaho's backcountry airports. The FAA Airport/Facility Directory, the Idaho Division of Aeronautics Airport/Facility Directory, and Galen Hanselman's *Fly Idaho* are three sources that provide the most current approach and departure recommendations to the most popular airports. Information passed by word of mouth or over the Internet, although well-intended, can skew these recommendations and inadvertently mislead others into attempting maneuvers beyond their abilities or better judgment.

Recent events indicate that misinformation about the traffic pattern at Johnson Creek is being circulated, creating a potentially unsafe situation. The following is meant to correct any misunderstandings as to what patterns are flown, when and why.

It was Emma Bryant's graciousness and generosity that provided the land on which Johnson Creek now sits. The

Bryant family, whose ranch house sits on the hill at the south end of the airport, fully supports all flying activities at Johnson Creek. However, they have three requests of those flying into Johnson Creek: First, under normal conditions, make all landings to the south and all takeoffs to the north.

Second, landings to the north are permitted whenever the pilot decides, based on weather and not convenience, that a landing to the south is unsafe or unwarranted. However, offset your base leg to the south and final approach to the east to avoid overflying the house.

Lastly, takeoffs to the south are strongly discouraged: your takeoff path is directly toward the ranch house; you are taking off toward rising terrain; and a marginally performing aircraft, struggling to stay airborne, flying passed their living room window is very disconcerting. In the recent past, high density altitudes led to three accidents and seven fatalities, each aircraft failing to out climb the rising terrain to the south. Unfavorable southerly winds generally occur in the late afternoon when aircraft should remain on the ground until more favorable conditions prevail.

As a courtesy to the Bryant family, we should honor their requests.

One last item: noise is our greatest enemy in the backcountry. Most of the airplanes we fly are noisy and sound travels great distances in the canyons. That sound amplifies tremendously when we fly in formation, make low passes and multiple takeoffs and landings. Johnson Creek and the nearby village of Yellow Pine represent a cross-section of the local population and those that come to enjoy our pristine mountain beauty. Not all of them are pilots, yet all of us share the same purpose and must find a way to enjoy our pursuits without treading on those of our neighbors.

Please enjoy our airports, but also be considerate.

## Townsend Airport Fiesta Fly In is Fun for All!

*The Townsend fly in held on July 4 had more than 57 aircraft fly in from a number of places and states. Attendees enjoyed Young Eagle Flights and a Fun Fiesta! Neil and Karan Salmi offered their home, facilities and expertise in the cooking department to help make this fly in such a big success. This is an annual event and something you'll want to put on your calendar for next year!*



Aeronautics Division  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2630 Airport Road  
PO Box 200507  
Helena, Montana 59620-0507

*August, 2010*

Pre-Sort Standard  
US Postage Paid  
Helena, MT 59620  
Permit No. 141



## *Schafer Meadows Work Session Group Effort*



*The Schafer Meadows Work Session was held on July 16-17. Volunteers worked on fencing, windsock replacement, outhouse/bear box cleaning, painting of rails, mapping/diagramming of weeds and runway low spots. Loren Smith and Jane Mart of Great Falls provided a delicious dinner of jambalaya, corn on the cob, bread and homemade ice cream with toppings that was prepared by Joe Roberts and assisted by Price Williams. Thank you to all the volunteers that offer their time to make these work sessions so successful! Landing at Schafer photo (l) by Pete Smith, Lewistown; Windsock crew at Schafer (r) by Robert Shropshire, Bozeman.*