



Browning/Starr School Airport Greatly Appreciated

On June 30, the MDT Aeronautics Division hosted the Browning Airport Appreciation Day at the Browning/Starr School Airport. The event was well attended by local residents, many Blackfeet Tribal dignitaries and officials, members of the MDT Aeronautics Division and several people who flew in just for the festivities. Jim Lynch, director of the Montana Department of Transportation served as emcee. The event opened with a traditional Blackfeet prayer and the playing of drums, followed by several speeches. To top it off, the grill was opened and some of the world's best hamburgers, brats and hot dogs were served to the hungry attendees.

The Browning/Starr School airport is a small, paved, general aviation airport that is owned and operated by the MDT Aeronautics Division. It serves the local community of Browning, the Starr School and the Blackfeet Reservation. The airport is used widely by general aviation pilots, the US Forest Service as well as being a vital link for hospital medical flights for the area.

The MDT Aeronautics Division has made major improvements to the facility in recent years including many ramp and apron upgrades, a new tie down area, an improved access road, better security and the installation of pilot controlled runway lighting. Future improvements are also on the slate, including a precision approach path indicator for precision visual nighttime landings.

This is the third year the MDT Aeronautics Division has planned an airport appreciation day at an MDT owned airport, though last year's event was cancelled due to forest fire danger. Judging from the great attendance this year, the annual event is expected to become more and more popular.



Senator Carol Juneau, Browning (l) thanks Jim Lynch, MDT director for the improvements done at the Browning/Starr School Airport.



The Cuts Woods Singers, made up of Blackfeet Nation youth, entertained the crowd with their awesome talent.

Administrator's Column

Medical extension: FAA has extended the duration of first- and third-class medical certificates for pilots under the age of 40. Under the revision, first-class medical certificates have been extended from six months to one year and third-class medical certificates from three years to five years. The ages and examination periods were selected based on current ICAO standards. The new duration periods are effective immediately and affect current medical certificate holders as well. Pilots will not receive an updated medical certificate stating the new expiration date. The duration period for second-class medical certificates remains at one year, regardless of age. For those older than 40, the duration periods remain at six months for the first-class certificate and two years for the third-class certificate. Medical certificates will continue to lapse to lower classes as they have in the past and will still expire on the last date of the month.

Interesting: Ever wonder what happens to loose change from your pocket that you forget to claim after placing in the bin when passing through airport security? Me either, but the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has collected – and kept – more than \$1 million in the past three years from airline passengers who forget coins at checkpoints. The TSA has been keeping change since October 2004 when it lobbied Congress to amend federal law and let the agency use the money to defray security costs. Previously, money left at checkpoints went to a general fund. The \$1.05 million collected between 2005 and 2007 is a small fraction of the \$18 billion TSA has spent in those years.

New AOPA President: Phil Boyer, AOPA President since 1991, has announced he will retire at the end of this year. Replacing Phil will be Craig Fuller, a 40-year pilot, aircraft owner and AOPA member. Phil is a recognized leader in business, public affairs and association management. Craig will become only the fourth president of this 414,000 member association in its 70 years of existence. Best wishes, Phil, and welcome, Craig.

AirVenture a Success: Although the final numbers aren't in, the attendance at EAA AirVenture 2008 appeared to be similar to last year considering high fuel prices and a struggling economy. There also were more aircraft, show planes and visiting aircraft on Wittman Field. Good to see the turn-out of general aviation. It was estimated that crowds at Theater in the Woods were 5,000 – 6,000 each evening. In 2009, EAA hinted at a multi-theme convention, including the arrival and showing of Virgin Galactic' White Knight Two and - hopefully – SpaceShipTwo. Plans also include a Concorde reunion, and a special tribute to mission aviation and the organizations that use flight to carry out their efforts throughout the world. EAA President Tom Poberezny commented, "It wasn't what we did over the last three months. It was what we did over the last 30-40 -50 years that caused people to come. I can reinforce to you very succinctly that the reason they came is not the airplanes. The reasons they came is the relationships, the people, the community." Dates for 2009 are: July 27 – August 2.

Reminder: Be sure to check for effects on airspace prior to flight as forest fire season is upon us. If you don't need to pass through the affected area, don't. Please make all efforts to avoid the area — leave airspace, air traffic control and radio frequencies available for fire-related operations.



Montana and the Sky

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Calendar

August 15-17 - Yellowstone Airport Fly-in. A fun time fly-in to just enjoy the area, free camping for pilots flying in, as well as a BBQ hosted by the Montana Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division. Come out and enjoy music in the park with local bands performing bluegrass and folk music on the 16th. For further information, phone Tony Bean at (406) 646-7631 or email abean@mt.gov.

August 15 – 17 – Montana Fun Weekend – Cut Bank (CTB). For further information, go to www.cutbankairport.org.

August 16 – Polson Fly In – Polson (8S1) pancake breakfast, lunch and Soroptomist's Wine Festival.

September 5-7 – 30th Annual Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Helena. For further information, phone Jeanne MacPherson at (406) 444-2506 or email jemacpherson@mt.gov.

September 13 – Ronan Young Eagles Day. Breakfast 8:00 a.m. and fly kids at 9:00 a.m.

September 13 – Billings Tower Open House and Fly In, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Fly in parking at Corporate Jet on the west end. 10:00 a.m. FSDO Safety Briefing; 12:00 p.m. luncheon hosted by Corporate Jet. Billings Tower tours available after lunch. For further information, contact Scott Newpower, (406) 670-3169 or email scnewps@bresnan.net.

2009

January 16-18 – Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic, Helena. For further information, contact Jeanne MacPherson, (406) 444-9568 or email jemacpherson@mt.gov.

February 6 & 7 - Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic, Helena. For further information, contact Jeanne MacPherson, (406) 444-9568 or email jemacpherson@mt.gov.

March 5-7 – Montana Aviation Conference, Copper King Hotel, Butte. For further information, contact Patty Kautz at (406) 444-9580 or email pkautz@mt.gov.

Pilots – Please Note!

The Ennis Big Sky Airport is currently closed and will remain closed at least through September during its \$3 million expansion. The work includes adding 1900 feet of runway and new lighting. Pilots can use the nearby airports of Twin Bridges, Yellowstone, Bozeman or Dillon in the meantime. Please remember to check NOTAMS for the latest information!

FAA Accepting Applications for Awards Program!

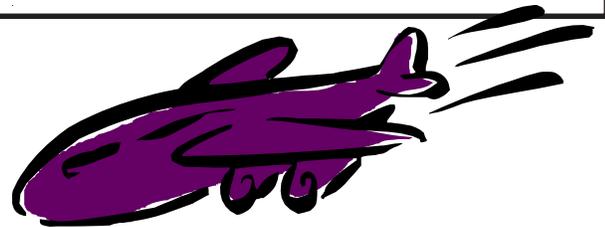
Once again, the Federal Aviation Administration's Safety Team is accepting applications for the General Aviation Awards Program. The GA Awards Program is a cooperative effort between the FAA and more than a dozen industry sponsors. The program recognizes a small group of aviation professionals on the local, regional and national level in the field of flight instruction, aviation maintenance, avionics and safety.

The window for nominations/applications opens each year on July 1 and runs through September 30. Everyone knows at least one individual that should be recognized as Montana's CFI of the Year, Aviation Mechanic of the Year, Avionics Technician of the Year, or FAASTeam Representative of Year.

Additional information and applications can be found at www.faasafety.gov. Use the airmen award programs link. If you have any questions, contact Steve Jones at (800) 457-9917 ext. 57, or steve.j.jones@faa.gov.

Deadline Drawing Near

The deadline is drawing near for those who would like your private strip listed in the new Montana Aeronautical Chart. If you haven't already contacted Max Murphy to have this included, please do so by August 29. Max can be reached at (406) 444-9581 or mmurphy@mt.gov.



Grab your Art Supplies and Create a Poster!

The theme for the 2009 International Aviation Art Contest is "Create a Poster for the World Air Games." Artwork will be judged, at least in part, for its creative use of the theme in relation to the aviation world. Entries will be judged in three classes (determined by age of entrant on December 31, 2008). I. - ages six to nine; II. - ages ten to 13; III. - ages 14 to 17.

For contest rules and to receive an application, contact Jeanne MacPherson at (406) 444-9568 or email jemacpherson@mt.gov. Contest deadline is Friday, January 16, 2009.

Schafer Meadows Work Session a Success – Thanks to Volunteer Efforts!



First time attendee Nils Jensen (l) and Jim Gipe (r) work on the fencing project at the Schafer airstrip.



Mike Ferguson (l) and Lanny Hanson (r), devoted long time volunteers at the Schafer work session are trimming trees and brush at the approach end of the airstrip.



Former Congressman Ron Marlenne (l) enjoys the dinner provided by Loren Smith (r). Thank you, Loren, for you many years of support and for always providing a great feast for the hungry workers! And thank you to the USFS employees for providing homemade pie to go along with Loren’s famous homemade ice cream!

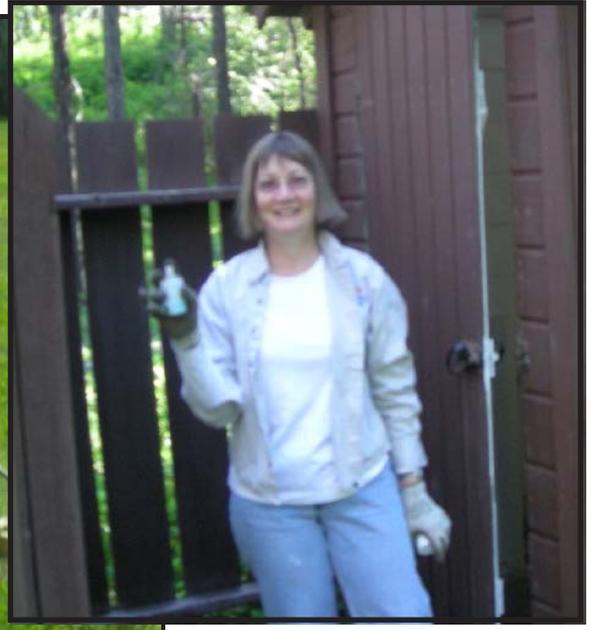


Deb Mucklow, USFS (front l) and her Schafer crew give their comments of approval for the work done to Debbie Alke (back r) and Jeanne MacPherson (back l). (Photo courtesy of Jim Gipe)

Seeley Lake pilots Dave Guelf (back l), Kal Kovatch and Geanette Cebulski (back r) are joined by Pete Smith (front r) and a USFS volunteer (front l) in their log peeling project .



More Back Country Maintenance!



A hearty crew of volunteers (Perry Brown, R.T. Adkins, Chuck Manning, Wade/Geanette Cebulski, Robert Shropshire, Peter Muellner and his dog "Bird Dog," Ed Ethridge, Hugh Rogers and Debbie Alke) showed up for the annual Meadow Creek work session. Debbie and Geanette swamped out the outhouses. Robert cut deadfall that had been blown onto the trails, and Debbie and Geanette were the "stump stackers," removing the cut deadfall from the trails. The others were busy changing the windsocks, painting the windsock standards and semi-circle, whacking and clearing weeds and small brush on the runway sides and approach ends. The work day ended with an enjoyable steak feed. Thanks to those who took the time to help in these important efforts to maintain this beautiful airstrip.

Seeley Lake Holds First Annual Fly In!

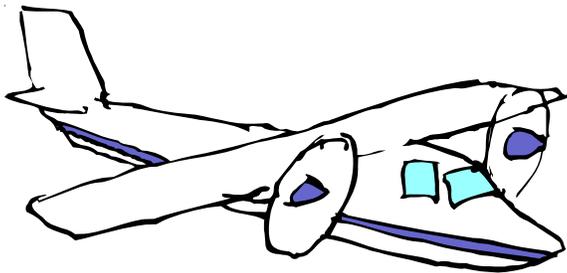


The Seeley Lake Flying Club held its First Annual Fly In and airport appreciation barbeque on Saturday, June 28. Kal Kovatch barbequed hamburgers and hotdogs for more than 100 enthusiastic aviation supporters from the local and flying community. Also in attendance were the Life Flight helicopter and crew from St. Patricks Hospital in Missoula. Several drawings were held from raffle tickets sold with beautiful prizes including a gorgeous log-framed mirror; a ride in the BRZY homebuilt from Breezy Bob Alm of Kila; (although Debbie Alke didn't win, she too was treated to a ride from Breezy!), Pampered Chef basket; a quillow; local wine basket; and on and on. Some attendees spent a comfortable evening in the campground, and a great time was enjoyed by all.

Tour Group Stops at Lincoln Airport



Last month, a flying tour group stopped at our Lincoln airport on its way across the country. After the group enjoyed lunch and some static displays presented by the Recreational Aviation Foundation and local pilots at the airport, it headed off in a covered wagon to visit some local sites and to spend the night in Lincoln.



Beginning September 11, Cavanaugh Bay Airport (66S) in Idaho will be closed for airport maintenance until the snow flies. For more information, contact Gary Mcelheney at (208) 334 - 8893.

MacPherson Renews Master CFI Accreditation



Jeanne MacPherson recently renewed her Master Certificated Flight Instructor accreditation through the National Association of Flight Instructors. Jeanne is an independent flight and ground instructor as well as the bureau chief and chief pilot for the Montana Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. She also serves as a FAA Team representative for the FAA's Helena FSDO. Jeanne has been a Master CFI since 2006.

To help put this achievement into perspective, there are approximately 91,000 CFIs in the United States. Fewer than 600 of them have earned the Master CFI distinction. Jeanne is one of only seven Montana aviation educators 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 the only industry professional accreditation recognized by the FAA. It is earned by candidates through a rigorous process of continuing professional activity and peer review. Much like a flight instructor's certificate, it must be renewed biennially. This process parallels the continuing education regimen used by other professionals to enhance their knowledge base while increasing their professionalism. Simply put, the Master Instructor designation is a means by which to identify those outstanding aviation educators who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth and service to the aviation community.

NAFI is dedicated to providing support and recognition for America's aviation educators while helping them raise and maintain their level of professionalism. It is also committed to providing a safe and effective learning environment for student pilots. The Association was founded in 1967 and affiliated with EAA in 1995.

J. W. French Lands in Lower 48 States

By: Kelly Dimick, MDT Aeronautics Division

On June 16, 2008, I was able to sit down and visit with Mr. J.W. French. J.W. is re-creating the late Sam Burgess' 1974 journey around the lower 48 states in an open-cockpit Acro Sport. When I asked him why he was making his journey, he proudly said that it was to honor his friend Sam Burgess.

It was fascinating to listen to everything that J.W. had to say, and to be honest with you, I tried to keep up with my note taking so I didn't miss anything, but I don't believe I did well enough to do him justice.

J.W. said that in 1978, while he was talking with Sam about him landing in all 48 states, Sam suggested that when he (J.W) retires he should do the same. So J.W.'s journey began in 2001. He was able to get to Torrington, Wyoming on July 6, 2005, but he had to turn around because his plane would not get him over the Rocky Mountains. By July 16, 2005 he had landed in 38 states. During this trip, he was also able to stop in New Orleans for a week and he helped feed 6,000 people per day.

He later had to have two shoulder surgeries and he was finally healed by the first of this year. Then, Bob Taylor, the President of Antique Airplane Association (AAA), contacted him and during the conversation, Mr. Taylor had asked him if he was going to finish.

Two weeks later, the founder of Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), Paul Poberezny, called him and they began talking about Sam and the trip. At that time, J. W. decided it was time to finish what he had started.

J. W. said the fuel was expensive but it didn't matter. He was bound and determined to finish his trip. He chuckled and recalled a time when Sam complained that it cost him \$16.95 for a motel room.

J.W. mentioned some not so friendly places that he has stopped and he also mentioned some really friendly places. He did express his appreciation for all the hospitality from everyone that he has met along his way and everything that the EAA and AAA have done. He has also appreciated the great response that was received from everyone across the United States. J.W. expects to make his last stop in Alexandria, Minnesota, before heading to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for the week of EAA Airventure 2008.



Pictured is Bob Little (l) with J. W. French on his stop in Helena.

Dr. Buzz Aldrin Visits Helena!



Recently, Dr. Buzz Aldrin, one of the first men to walk on the moon during NASA's first lunar manned mission, stopped in Helena for a book signing and to attend the Symphony Under the Stars.

Pictured here is MDT's Jim Greil and his children Kirsten, Alaric and Maximus meeting Dr. Aldrin. Little Maximus decided to give him the personal touch. Photo above courtesy of Chris Taleff.



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Physics & Astronomy at Augusta Airport



Occasionally, the U of M Dept of Physics and Astronomy uses MDT's airport at Augusta for scientific balloon launches. Last month they released this balloon which carried new sophisticated temperature and humidity sensors along with A, B and C UV sensors to correlate data on ozone concentrations.



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