Airport Renaming Honors Biggerstaff

By Vicky McCray, Press Editor originally appeared in the April 25, 2013 issue of Judith Basin Press reprinted with permission

A large crowd "crowded" into the snowplow storage shed at the Stanford Airport to remember the late Mike Biggerstaff and his unselfish service to the airport. The purpose of the gathering was to celebrate the addition of "Biggerstaff Field" to the airport's name – Stanford Airport Biggerstaff Field.

In the words of Mike's son Brian, the renaming is actually only a formality, as the airport had really been Mike's for quite some time, 37 years to be exact. From 1974 when he and his wife Connie first came to Stanford until his death in May 2011, Mike was the "force" behind the airport.

The name change was initiated by the Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA), of which Mike was one of the founding members. The former airport manager was also a member of the organization at the national level, serving time on the board of directors.

The AMAA group presented their idea to the Judith Basin County Commissioners in October 2012, and the Commissioners made the change official on February 5, 2013. Saturday's celebration allowed family and friends one more time to share stories about the guy behind the airport.

Several of Mike's aviator friends and peers with AMAA flew in for the morning, seven small planes parked and tied down on the runway apron. Originally, a flyover was planned in Mike's memory, but Saturday's weather opted not to cooperate with plans and it was canceled.

Mike Campbell, president of AMAA, welcomed everyone on Saturday before turning the presentation over to Larry Carver, who made light of his inclusion in the celebration.

"I want to thank John Semple and the Montana Aerial Applicators for telling me yesterday that I'm the main presenter," Carver said.

Carver noted that Mike came to Stanford and started a spraying business with his first partner, Willis Bailey.

"From that day forward, this has really been Biggerstaff's Airport," Carver said. "Everybody that flew in here looked for Mike. Everybody that talked about Stanford Airport, it was Mike. Today I get calls for fuel, they're looking for Mike.

"Now, it will forever be Biggerstaff Field," he added, "so I think that's real appropriate."

Mike's daughter Brandi had put together a couple of photo albums for the occasion and urged people to have a look. She also had written an article about her dad for the previous week's Press and shared that article on Saturday.

She remembered the trips she and her brother had taken with their dad in the Super Cub, "flying around and looking at things – Square Butte and the mountain goats."

"Plug your ears, Mom," she said, "but Dad used to do loops in that baby. We'd go up and do the old loopy-loop and it was just the coolest thing because you could feel those 'g's' just pulling on you and we'd say, 'Do it again! Do it again!'"

Brandi told everyone her dad was her hero, and she misses him terribly.

continued page 4
Administrator’s Column

House Bill 546 – Requires the marking of meteorological evaluation towers (MET) taller than 50 feet agl (but less than 200 feet agl) located in unincorporated, rural areas of the state. It also requires the reporting of the tower’s location and height to the MDT Aeronautics Division so the information can be made available to pilots. It is estimated that more than 100 unmarked MET’s less than 200 feet tall are located in rural areas across the state. Thanks to Rep. Roy Hollandsworth, the Association of Montana Aerial Applicators and other aviation industry representatives in the state who worked to get the bill passed.

House Bill 588 - Increased the penalties for using aircraft to spot game for the purpose of hunting the same day. Conviction of violating this statute increased the fine range to $300-$1000, depending on the species being hunted and added a mandatory minimum loss of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges and recreational use privileges on state trust land for 24 months.

Tower closures, controller furlough, sequestration = chaos: Congress passed legislation giving the FAA flexibility under sequestration to move money between accounts that would allow $253 million from the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to be transferred to the operations account. It has been determined that the Reducing Flight Delays Act of 2013 will allow the FAA to transfer sufficient funds to end employee furloughs and keep the 149 contract towers originally slated for closure in June open for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. This is only a band-aid solution as through the end of the fiscal year September 30, 2013. While good that action was taken to relieve air traffic delays and keep the towers open it is unfortunate that the AIP fund was robbed to fund these programs. AIP funds already fall short of meeting the long-term infrastructure needs of our airports.

UAS Selection: Competition for becoming selected as a federal-approved test site for drone technology has heated in recent weeks, and now 50 groups from 37 different states are vying for the six slots to be determined by FAA. The privacy argument of drone technology continues. The FAA recently held a public engagement session to accept comments on the agency’s proposed privacy policy for UAS.

Special Issuance medical certification changes: A major change has been made to the medical certification process for several common diagnoses that previously required a special issuance and a review process by the FAA prior to issuing a medical certificate. Under the new policy applicants with arthritis, asthma, glaucoma, chronic hepatitis C, hypertension, hypothyroidism, migraine and chronic headache, prediabetes, and renal cancer can receive their medical certificates directly from their AME.

Anthony Foxx receives nomination: President Barack Obama nominated Charlotte, N.C., Mayor Anthony R. Foxx, a 42-year-old attorney with government and private-sector experience, to become the next U.S. Secretary of Transportation. If confirmed by the Senate, Foxx would replace outgoing Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who announced in January that he would not serve a second term. Foxx holds law degree from New York University’s School of Law and a bachelor’s degree in history from Davidson College in North Carolina.
Calendar of Events

May 25 – Air Fair 2013 – Wokal Field, Glasgow. This will be a fun, family friendly event filled with static aircraft, cars, and inflatables for the kids. There will also be some aircraft/helicopter contests for those who are looking for a challenge or little bit of competition. A free lunch will be provided by Choice Aviation. Glide, Fly, or Drive we would love to see you at Air Fair 2013! For further information on the Glasgow event contact Steve Stanley at (406) 228-4023 or ggw@choiceaviation.com.

May 25-26 – Spotted Bear Work Session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

June 1 – Benchmark Work Session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

June 8 – 9th Annual Fly In at Lewistown Airport; 7:00 a.m. to noon. MPA sourdough pancake breakfast. Antique, Warbird, Experimental and Sport Airplanes. Held in conjunction with Central Montana Flywheelers Exhibition. For further information contact Jerry Moline (406) 350-3264.

June 8 - Havre Airport Fly In Breakfast beginning at 7:00 a.m. For further information contact Darren Huestis (406) 945-1861 or darren.huestis@nuwaveservices.com.

June 15 – Father’s Day Fly In, Twin Bridges Airport. Aerobatics, Young Eagle Rides, Pancake Breakfast, BBQ Dinner, Static Display and more. For further information contact Kendra Horn at (406) 684-5335 or email Kendra@rubyvalleyaviation.com.

June 15-16 – Meadow Creek Work Session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

June 15-16 – Valley Hangar Father’s Day Fly In. Saturday, June 15 - Fort Peck Airport, 4:00 p.m. – Short Field Landing Contest; 6:00 p.m. – Pilots Steak Feed; 7:30 p.m. – Fort Peck Summer Theatre showing “Footloose”. Sunday, June 16 – Fort Peck Airport, 7:00 a.m. – Public Breakfast; 4:00 p.m. – Fort Peck Summer Theatre showing “Footloose”. Other attractions include Fort Peck Interpretive Center. For further information contact Shane Hoyer at smp@nemont.net or (406) 526-3563.

July 4 – Townsend 4th of July “we feed you” breakfast and fly in. There will be a Pinewood Derby Race held in conjunction with the fly in. The race is sponsored by Aircrafters, Inc. with racing to begin at 10:00 a.m. People of all ages are encouraged to build a car and enter the races, prizes will be awarded. For more details on the race and obtaining a car contact Russ Voorhees at aircrafters@mt.net. For further information about the breakfast and fly in contact Tracy Salmi at (620) 786-1571 or Neil Salmi at (406) 980-0544 or neilsalmi@yahoo.com.

July 4 – Gene Souchey & Teresa Stokes will be performing in Baker with the “ShowCat”. Gene will perform a solo act and a night “Pyro” act, as well as the pair doing the famous wing walking act in the afternoon. There is a lot of family festivities planned, as this is the 100th year of Fallon County. Stop in and check out the refurbished airport! For further information contact Roger Meggers at bakerair@midrivers.com or (406) 776-3508.

July 6 - Air Fair 2013 – Ravalli County Airport, Hamilton. Heritage day fly in breakfast 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. This will be a fun, family friendly event filled with static aircraft, cars (Bitter Rodders Car Display), and inflatables for the kids. There will also be some aircraft/helicopter contests for those who are looking for a challenge or little bit of competition. Glide, Fly, or Drive we would love to see you at Air Fair 2013! For further information on the Hamilton event contact Leland Blatter (406) 363-6741 or 6s5@choiceaviation.com.

July 13 – Del Bonita Work Session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

July 20 – Air Fair 2013 – Ennis Big Sky Airport, Ennis. This will be a fun, family friendly event filled with static aircraft, cars, and inflatables for the kids. There will also be some aircraft/helicopter contests for those who are looking for a challenge or little bit of competition. A free lunch will be provided by Choice Aviation. Glide, Fly, or Drive we would love to see you at Air Fair 2013! For further information on the Ennis event contact Troy Hunter at (406) 682-7502 or eks@choiceaviation.com.

July 20-21 – Schafer Meadows work session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

July 21 – St. Ignatius Fly In – 8:00 a.m. to noon. Free huckleberry pancake breakfast, Young Eagle rides, Av gas giveaway and door prizes. For further information contact Mike Kuefler (406) 544-2274.

August 1-3 – Montana Antique Aircraft Association Annual Fly In at Three Forks Airport (Pogreba Field). Flour bombing, spot landing contests. Free camping on airport. For further information contact Pat Green at greenrrg@aol.com; Ken Flikkema at (406) 580-6207; Bob Green at (406) 539-7830 or Tim Linn at (406) 451-5897.

August 3 - Air Fair 2013 – Yellowstone Regional Airport, Cody, WY. This will be a fun, family friendly event filled with static aircraft, cars, and inflatables for the kids. There will also be some aircraft/helicopter contests for those who are looking for a challenge or little bit of competition. A free lunch will be provided by Choice Aviation. Glide, Fly, or Drive we would love to see you at Air Fair 2013! For further information on the Cody, WY event contact Joel Simmons at (307) 587-9262 or cod@choiceaviation.com.

August 11 – Lions Club Drive In, Fly In breakfast and model airplane show at Hysham Airport beginning at 7:00 a.m. For further information contact Bob Miller (406) 342-5252 or email bpmiller@rangeweb.net.
Mike taught Brian to fly, and today Brian makes his living in the air. Based in Philadelphia, he does aerial survey work for Keystone Aerial Surveys. He flies the airplane and the camera is GPS-triggered, Brian said.

"They're big, like 350 pounds. They cost more than the airplane," he said.

Brian has been flying for over 20 years. He earned his student license at 16 and his private pilot's license at 17.

His job requires the weather be nice and sunny, he said, a fact which helps to alleviate his mom's worries somewhat.

Mike's brother Dan spoke briefly at the ceremony, thanking all those people who made the renaming possible and all those people who attended the ceremony.

"That's a real tribute to Mike," Dan said of all those in attendance, "and much appreciated by the Biggerstaff and Fulbright families. Thank you, one and all."

He noted his admiration for those who flew in for the occasion and jokingly told them they could get their landing score card after they had eaten their lunch, which was provided through Tall Boys Catering of Hobson, owned by Valerie Carr.

Dan remembered the first loop he ever did with Mike.

"It was ugly," he said. "Things kind of unraveled at the top, but we got better."

He said the important thing about the day was to enjoy the camaraderie and to share Mike stories.

"I just didn't know what to expect," said Mike's wife Connie. "And with the weather turning bad, so many planes that wanted to fly in, couldn't. If the weather had been nice, there would have been more planes and there would have been a flyover. Some of the old seasoned spray pilots, that strong wind wouldn't have bothered them. They could have done it, but it would have been miserable for everyone standing out in the wind."

In their letter to the Commissioners, AMAA members explained their organization started in 1992 to promote and defend aerial application in Montana – their logo, "Professional Aerial Applicators Providing Crop Protection Products and Services to Production Agriculture Across Montana." The letter stressed Mike's character and work at the Stanford Airport and with the organization as emulating the "professional." It also stressed all of the things Mike did for the airport, including extending and resurfacing the runway, painting the strips and numbers, upgrading the runway lights, and meeting and greeting folks who flew into Stanford. He was instrumental as well in securing grants to pay for these updates and upgrades as well as to purchase a new snowplow for the runway.

He treated the airport like his own, Connie said, keeping it clean and well tended. Weeds and gophers had no place in Mike's personal care of the area. He was very protective of the tarmac and to avoid damage did not allow anyone to drive on it with a motor vehicle.

Today Connie, with Larry Carver's help, has taken over her husband's job as airport manager. The lease the Biggerstaffs have with the county is up in December, but she looks forward to continuing the service her husband started so many years ago.

"It was our home for almost 40 years basically," she said. "Our kids grew up there; it's the only home they've ever known. I have as much pride in it to take care of it for Judith Basin County as Mike did, maybe not in his magnitude, but I can keep it going."

Brandi Biggerstaff-Pitt shares her dad with his friends and admirers during the renaming ceremony at the Stanford Airport. Although she noted the event was difficult, she was proud of her dad and the recognition people have given his dedication to the airport. Photo by Vicky McCray
Governor Appoints Aeronautics Board Members

Governor Bullock appointed one new member and re-appointed four current members to the Aeronautics Board for a four-year term. Newly appointed as the Chamber of Commerce representative is Walter McNutt of Sidney. Re-appointed members are: Tricia McKenna of Bozeman will serve as the board chair and Montana Pilot’s Association Representative, Bill Hunt, Jr. of Shelby will serve as the representative for the Montana League of Cities and Towns, Roger Lincoln of Gilford will represent the Association of Aerial Applicators and Fred Leistiko of Kalispell will represent the Airport Mangers.

Walt McNutt lives in Sidney, Montana. He obtained a BS in Marketing and Economics and a minor in accounting from the College of Great Falls in 1969. He is a Montana State Representative and served in the Senate from 1997 through 2004 and served in the House from 2005 to 2011 in House District 37. Walt is associated with many different organizations including being a member of the Governor’s Essential Air Service Task Force. He owned and flew a 182 for over 30 years. He has been involved in aeronautics and airports for the bulk of his adult life. He and his wife Karen have two daughters Kim and Tami and two grandchildren Andrea and Tyler.

Tricia McKenna was born and raised in Butte, Montana. She attended Montana State University and has lived in Bozeman all her adult life. Tricia has served on the Montana Special Olympics board as well as chair of the Special Olympics North American board of directors. Currently she is the Administrative Director of the Recreational Aviation Foundation. She owns and flies a Super Cub. She and her husband John have 3 adult children and enjoy flying the back country.

Bill Hunt, Jr. was born in Chester, Montana and has been a life-long resident of the state. He has been the city attorney for Shelby, Montana since 2000. Bill graduated from The University of Montana School of Law in 1998. Besides his position as Shelby’s attorney, he is in general civil practice in Shelby and the surrounding area. Bill is also a 24 year member of the Montana Army National Guard currently serving the Guard with the rank of major as a Judge Advocate. He and his wife, Shelly, have an 11 month old daughter, Vivienne.

Roger Lincoln is a farmer, rancher and commercial pilot with 10,000+ hours from Gilford, Montana. He has been a crop sprayer for 51 years and currently flies a Super Cub and a Cessna 180. Roger is a member of the Association of Montana Aerial Applicators, Montana Pilots Association, Recreational Aviation Foundation, and Experimental Aircraft Association. He has been married to Mable for 52 years and they have 2 children and 6 grandchildren.

Fred Leistiko is a retired Colonel (Army-Aviation) who manages the Kalispell City Airport for the City of Kalispell. Mr. Leistiko has spent the better part of his life in aviation. He is currently President of the Montana Community Airport Association and Vice-President of the Montana Airport Managers Association. Mr. Leistiko serves on the ALERT Helicopter Advisory Board for Kalispell Regional Medical Center and is on the Board of Directors of the largest VPO (Volunteer Pilots Organization) in the United States, Angel Flight West. Mr. Leistiko is also a member of the Montana Pilots Association. This will begin his third term on the Montana State Aeronautics Board.

RMC Advisory Committee Meets

Debbie Alke (l) and Kristi Ivey (r), Northwest Regional Representative for the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) both serve on the Rocky Mountain College Industry Advisory Committee. They were in Billings recently for a committee meeting and the annual aviation awards banquet. Kristi was the keynote banquet speaker and gave an uplifting, motivational presentation about her association, aviation careers and the future for Rocky aviation college graduates.
Spring is in the Air
By David J. Hoerner, Safety & Education Bureau

Summer flying season is just around the corner and the back country airstrips are starting to show bare ground as the snow melts away. Now is the time to prepare and refresh your memory on emergency procedures. Practice engine failures with spot landings and gliding distance using different flaps setting or get re-acquainted with full downs and hover autos.

If you haven’t replaced your old 121.5 Emergency Locator Transmitter with the new and improved 406 now would be the time to get the new transmitter. Your 121.5 ELT is not being listened to by orbiting satellites, so if you’re expecting your 121.5 ELT to bring help, it may not happen. One way to double the chance of a rescue would be to get a backup tracking device. Spot Trackers, Spider Tracks and Personnel Locator Beacons can be purchased for fewer than three hundred dollars. It would be money well spent and good insurance for you and your passengers.

Now is the time to replaced missing items in your survival kit. A few suggestions for your survival gear would be fire starter: add your favorite method of starting a fire with a flint and steal, or a lighter, magnesium block, matches, roadside flare, binary jells or for the adventurous a bow and drill. Remember that a good fire can be the difference between comfort and disaster. Add some form of a shelter consisting of a survival tent or plastic tarp with a Para-cord. Then add an axe or machete. There’s still snow in the high country so leave your snow shoes and shovel in the airplane. Bring a container for boiling water; add purification tablets, a filter device, chlorine and iodine for water treatment. Have survival chow in your pack consisting of MREs or dehydrated foods. Add some feel good drinks of coffee, tea, bouillon, cubes, and cocoa and don’t forget a vessel for a drinking container.

Be thinking of a way to get noticed by rescuers. Have a signal fire, a mirror, marking dye or signal flare. Add a handheld radio, SAT phone or Cell phone.

Pack clothing for the season. Layers of clothing are good and add rain gear to keep dry or to act as a wind breaker.

Add a medical kit and get familiar with the contents. Practice using your equipment and hopefully you’ll never have to use it. Be careful and happy flying.

Rocky Aviation Adds Industry-Leading Software

The Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program has begun using new state-of-the-art software from Talon Systems. This software places them on the leading edge of technology in aviation education, further improving their safety, maintenance, scheduling, and training.

The aviation program used a Department of Education Title III grant as seed money to purchase Education and Training Administration (ETA) software. Approximately 75 students are currently flying in the program with grade books and syllabi that are completely electronic and accessible from anywhere. Josh Mlnarik, Director of Flight Operations, said, “Due to the numerous details that have to be tracked in flight training, ETA has improved our scheduling and record-keeping. It has also given us access to valuable information to help us easily evaluate, assess, and continuously improve our operation and program.” Dan Hargrove, Director of Aviation, said it is now nearly impossible for a student to fly a lesson out of order, or not complete a required maneuver because of paperwork errors. “We’ve seen our efficiency improve dramatically, resulting in students completing flight labs in record time.”

This year, the program added Resource Maintenance System software which improves parts inventory control, maintenance inspection scheduling, and maintaining aircraft maintenance records. Doug Erickson, Director of Maintenance, said, “RMS has increased the visibility of our maintenance operation and has transformed the department to be proactive rather than reactive. Direct results include reduced shipping costs due to better parts management and reduced downtime of aircraft, allowing more available aircraft for student training.”

The third component of the software is directly related to the implementation of Safety Management Systems—an industry standard process for improving safety. “Pilots now can easily report the smallest of safety concerns—anonymously if they want—so that we can track them and make improvements before the issue becomes a big deal,” said Tom Nelson, Director of Safety. He added, “Our reporting has more than doubled because of the new system, and we are safer because of it.”

The entire aviation program has over 100 students, which represents 10% of the student body at Rocky Mountain College. Graduates fly for airlines, the military, corporations, and in Alaska or manage airports and airlines. Hargrove noted, “Our graduates tell us their training and understanding of safety is better than that of their peers in their careers. We know these new software systems are making our program better and our graduates more marketable.”
Young Eagles Take Flight

By Pam Lytton, Polson, MT

The sky’s the limit for a group of second graders from Mrs. Laud’s classroom that took off for an aviation day at the Polson Airport on March 26. The excitement was evident as the students arrived at the airport anxious to see for themselves what they had been learning about in aviation during the month of March.

Each year the Lytton family integrates their Blue Skies Aviation Program into the Polson Schools. Brothers Wyatt and Willy Lytton who are the co-founders of this program developed it in memory of Sparky Imeson, who was a long time aviation pilot instructor and friend of the family. They felt it necessary to bring the “love of aviation” into the schools of Polson like Sparky did for them. The program has been highly successful in the Polson Community Schools for several years now.

The Lytton’s go into the schools and teach aviation to the students. Lee Lytton is a long time pilot who served his country in the Viet Nam War as an air traffic controller at one of the busiest airstrips located at Marble Mountain in Viet Nam. His years of serving his country led him to become a pilot and build a passion for aviation. Through this, he has passed his love of aviation on down to his children. Wyatt and Willy both are student pilots at this time and enjoy flying. Because of the boys love for flight, it has allowed the students in Polson to have the opportunity to learn about aviation and incorporate art lessons to go along with what they learned each week through their Blue Skies Aviation Program. It not only educates the youth about aviation, but it also includes the Young Eagles program and the Montana Aeronautics Aviation Art Contest that is held each year. By being involved with the schools, the brothers know they are getting aviation known to the students in their community and giving students an opportunity to not only learn about flight, but have the opportunity to go up in an airplane through Young Eagles and also compete in the aviation art contest.

The Lytton’s appreciate the help from local pilots, Trey and Tim Moran, Kurt Kosek Mike Kuefler and their wives, Connie Moran, Karen Moran, Norma Kosek, and Julie Kuefeler, Vince Jennison and Bob Snyder. They all played a big part in helping with the field trip and making it a fun and successful day. Trey educates the students with his aeronautics training and expertise with planes by taking them through the hangars for a visual and hands-on approach to each plane. Tim and Kurt with their ability to build airplanes and fly, show the students the planes that are being built in the hangar connected to the FBO. This gives the students a visual and ability to see the mechanics and designs of the planes while Tim and Kurt visit with the students.

Dave Hoerner, from MDT Aeronautics Division, showed the students a video of a record flight by a paper airplane and then allowed each student to make their own identical airplane seen in the video, and then took them outside to try their chances at flying their own paper airplanes, and timing their flight as they flew in the air. Dave also provided awards from the MDT Aeronautics to be handed out to the students at the awards ceremony later in the day. Each person’s involvement on this day allows the students to have fun, while learning more and asking questions about flight as well as be involved with real pilots and their years of flying and expertise.

The teacher Mrs. Laud, gave a demonstration of what the students learned and knew about airplanes through this Blue Skies Aviation Program for the past month to all the pilots who joined in to share lunch with the students that day. It was fantastic! What an amazing teacher she is!

Mike Kuefler and his wife Julie finished out the day with singing the students a song on his guitar about bears and airplanes, which totally enlightened them!

The day ended with Wyatt and Willy Lytton along with their parents Lee and Pam, giving out awards to the students. Each student earned and received their wings and a certificate for completing the full month course of this aviation program. In support of this program, Lt. Col. and Mrs. John Hoye donated t-shirts for each student to wear on behalf of the Blue Skies Aviation Program. It was a totally fun day, and another successful Blue Skies Aviation Program year in 2013 thanks to everyone involved.
May, 2013

N5410H Returning Home

Darin Meggers will be departing KBHK for a long trip of over 1500 miles on June 16, 2013. He will be flying N5410H Piper PA-18 home to Lock Haven, PA to the Sentimental Journey fly-in. Lock Haven was the home of Piper for many years before moving to Florida. It will be the featured aircraft at the fly-in as it is Pipers 75th Anniversary and the Piper Super Cub is the featured airplane. This will be quite an adventure with Ol' # 1, as she is getting to go home for the first time since 1949!