



## MDT Aeronautics and Helena Airport Celebrate!

The Aeronautics Division continued MDT's Centennial celebration with an open house August 17 in conjunction with the Helena Regional Airport. The event kicked off with remarks from Lt. Governor John Walsh, MDT Director Mike Tooley, and Helena Regional Airport Manager Ron Mercer.

Over 30 aircraft from the area provided an interesting static display for the crowd. Local pilots spent their Saturday displaying and talking about their aircrafts. Almost all spectrums of present day and earlier year's airplanes were represented. This included the oldest aircraft, a 1929 Stinson Detroiter.

In the home built category there were different renditions of RV-6s and a Rutan Model Long-EZ, which has a canard wing up front. In the military category was the Warhorse Cessna Bird Dog, the English made Dehavilland Chipmunk, a like new Beechcraft T-34 Mentor and an impressive P-51 Mustang.

Cessna aircraft was represented by the popular 185, 172 and a Cessna 206. Piper Aircraft had a couple of beautiful yellow Super Cubs present. The Department of Livestock brought their hot rod Hughes 500 helicopter.

In the big twin engine category the state was represented by a King Air and Turbine Aero Commander. The military was delivering troops to Helena for training and it was impressive to see C-130 Hercules four engine transport airplanes lined up on the ramp. A few lucky spectators received tours through the giant military airplanes.

Rick Griffith, retired manager of the Bert Mooney Airport in Butte and MDT Transportation Commissioner, prepared a delicious lunch that included prime rib sliders, topped with homemade close slaw and finished off with a dill/horseradish sauce. The sandwiches were accompanied by tasty baked beans and sausage. The Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM) helped sponsor the luncheon.

The Helena EAA Chapter provided young eagle airplane rides for close to 100 kids ages 8-17. Thousands of free flights are given by volunteers from this organization around the country each year and the Helena Chapter does a great job supporting this program. This program was created to help school aged students discover the fun, freedom and accessibility of personal aviation through a hands on flight.

The Musician Dan Hunthausen was joined by Michael Kakuk who provided entertainment that was enjoyed by many as they relaxed in Morrison Park.

The Helena Airport provided transportation between the park and its Airport Fire Station One where folks were treated to equipment displays, including many snow removal and fire trucks. The Boeing 727 that was donated by FedEx to the airport was also open and available for touring together with mobile emergency responder training units complete with live fire demonstrations; a structural trainer, Haz-mat unit, car fire simulator and Blackhawk helicopter trainer.

Many thanks to all who made this event a success, including the several hundred people who attended.



*Pictured (l-r) Helena Regional Airport Manager Ron Mercer, MDT Director Mike Tooley, Chris Bokovoy and Lt. Governor John Walsh during opening remarks.*



*A great variety of aircraft were on display for all to enjoy.*

# Administrator's Column

**100-Year Celebration:** Thanks to everyone that supported MDT Aeronautics Division's recent celebration. I appreciate the cooperation and help that was shown by staff, the Helena airport and airport businesses and the many volunteer aviation enthusiasts that turned out to assist. It was a great day – **THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!**

**USDOT Issues Award:** Cape Air has been selected to provide essential air service to Glasgow, Glendive, Havre, Sidney and Wolf Point with direct flights to Billings beginning December 1, 2013 through November 30, 2015. The communities together with MDT Director Mike Tooley identified Cape Air as their preferred provider. Under the contract, Sidney will receive five (5) round-trip-day and the other four communities will receive two (2) round-trip-day. Cape Air has interline ticketing and baggage agreements with all of the legacy air carriers and Frontier. The communities are currently serviced by Silver Airways, a company that won the EAS contract in 2011 but declined to bid on a new contract this year. Silver Airways will continue offering flights until the start-up date of December 1. Cape Air, of Hyannis, Massachusetts, will use nine-seat Cessna 402 planes to serve each community. We welcome Cape Air to Montana and look forward to assisting with a smooth transition.

**Solicitation Posted:** The Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (SPP) will solicit industry to provide airport security screening service. Services include comprehensive screening of passengers and personal property at Yellowstone Regional Airport (WYS); Glacier Park International Airport (GPI); Bert Mooney Airport (BTM); Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, (BZN), Montana. The contract term for WYS will be from the date of award for four months with four four-month option periods. GPI, BTM, and BZN will be from the date of award for twelve months with four one-year option periods. Proposals are due September 30, 2013 and can be found at: <https://www.fbo.gov/>.

**DOT Inspector General Says Close Towers at Night:** The FAA should close minimally used air-traffic facilities during overnight hours to reduce controller fatigue and save money, per a recent government report. The IG said 72 towers and radar rooms don't handle enough flight traffic overnight to stay open. The report recommends the FAA develop a plan for reducing hours at those facilities and report back within 180 days. Closing the towers at night is estimated to save as much as \$11 million annually. These 72 air-traffic facilities don't meet the FAA's own minimum standards for traffic to justify full-time service, according to the report. A facility must handle at least four flights an hour for four consecutive hours to remain open, according to FAA standards.

**UAS Approval:** Federal regulators say they have certified two types of unmanned aircraft for civilian use, a milestone expected to lead to the first approved commercial drone operations later this year. The FAA said the drones are Insitu's Scan Eagle X200 and AeroVironment's PUMA. Both weigh less than 55 pounds, are about 4.5 feet long and have wingspans of 9 to 10 feet. A major energy company plans to fly the Scan Eagle off the Alaska coast to survey ice flows and migrating whales. The PUMA is expected to support emergency response crews for oil spill monitoring and wildlife surveillance over the Beaufort Sea. Nonmilitary use of drones in the U.S. has been mostly limited to police and other government agencies.



## *Montana and the Sky*

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# Calendar of Events

**September 14, 2013** – Thompson Falls airport “Fly In” Festival Fundraiser, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to benefit the Thompson River Animal Care Shelter (TRACS) a no kill, nonprofit, all volunteer shelter for homeless animals. Taste wines, beer and hors d’oeuvres from around the world, live entertainment, live auction, silent auction. Tickets \$30 in advance; \$35 at the fly in, call (406) 827-8722 to order tickets or tickets are available at D & D Liquors in Thompson Falls or directly from TRACS. Free car/shuttle service available for out-of-towners. For further information visit [www.pet-tracs.com](http://www.pet-tracs.com)

**September 26-27, 2013** - Montana Community Airport Association 2013 Fall Conference. Hilton Garden Inn Kalispell. For further information visit our website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/).

**September 28, 2013** – Dillon Airport Fly In. Young Eagle rides, pilot games, static displays, breakfast starts at 8:00 a.m. and lunch will also be available. For further information contact Clare or Randy Bailey (406) 683-5242 or T.J. Reynolds (406) 683-2160.

**February 27 – March 1, 2014** – Montana Aviation Conference. Holiday Inn Grand, Billings. For further information contact Patty Kautz [pkautz@mt.gov](mailto:pkautz@mt.gov) or (406) 444-9580.

## Reminder for Hunters

With hunting season upon us, remember that there are some important regulations regarding the use of aircraft while hunting. It is illegal to locate any game animal for the purpose of hunting that animal during the same hunting day that you are airborne. It is also illegal to use an aircraft for the purpose of concentrating, pursuing, driving, rallying, or stirring up any game bird, migratory bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal. A person may not spot or locate any game animal or fur-bearing animal and communicate the location of the game animal or fur-bearing animal to any person on the ground by means of any air-to-ground communication signal or other device as an aid to hunting or pursuing wildlife. Additionally, it is illegal to kill, take, or shoot at any game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal from an aircraft.

If you have questions regarding these, or any hunting regulations, contact your local Fish, Wildlife and Parks office or your local game warden.



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 1,800 copies of this public document at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$702. This includes \$483 for postage.

## Conrad Airport (S01) Now Offers Fuel

Conrad airport now has fuel available on the airport. In order to get fuel a pilot must call the manager, Dan Brown, at (406) 788-5790.

# Helena Pilot Restores Classic Aircraft

By Mike Korn, Assistant Chief, MT Fish Wildlife & Parks

We've all seen the ad in Trade-A-Plane, Barnstormers or other aviation classifieds: **Project Plane. Be flying by spring! 90% complete. Many spare parts. Priced to sell. No reasonable offer refused.**

Invariably, these are ads placed by people who started with high hopes and great expectations that just never panned out: a kit plane still in pieces that now occupies way too much room in the garage/basement (ship in a bottle?); the Cessna 120 with a "...few dings from a minor groundloop..." (Such as spars, landing gear, propeller, fabric and struts) or the perennial barn find that only needs fabric and a "...little TLC..." in spite of corrosion, unbraiding control wires, rotten wood and of course, flat tires (original, though!) Invariably, they end up for sale, incomplete and in some cases potentially worth less than their resurrection would cost to make them even resemble complete airplanes, let alone airworthy.

But at the Helena airport, one man has managed to stick with two unique projects that were ongoing efforts for over 20 years. Both projects took flight recently for the first time and within six months of each other. Paul Gordon has restored numerous classic aircraft of the Golden Age of Aviation "...the coolest airplanes of all..." Paul is known nationally for his craftsmanship in restoring classic aircraft and his encyclopedic knowledge of aircraft, their history, designers, changes (and why) and the companies that produced them is rivaled by few. On his list of completed projects and repair work includes 4 Boeing Stearman's, a US Navy N3N, some Piper PA-12's, an American Pilgrim, and as well as other Interstates. He has been and continues to be, asked to fabricate and fit long unavailable parts from steel and aluminum on such planes as four 1937 Rearwin Speedsters, two Bellanca Pacemakers and two other 1931 American Pilgrims. He uses photos, reverse-engineering, aircraft mechanic smarts and a good bit of head-scratching. After over 20 years fitting his own work between others' projects, he was finally able to start logging airtime in his own recently completed planes: a 1943 Interstate L-6 Liaison plane and a 1929 SM-2A Stinson Detroit Jr.

The L-6 is the culmination of Paul's long-term affinity for Interstate aircraft and is the third he has owned. The restoration brought it back to the version used by the military as forward spotter for artillery or schlepping the brass around to staff meetings. Paul chose, however, to power the bird with a few more horses, replacing the less than superior Franklin 113 with a popular 0320 conversion. Its expansive observation glass surrounding the cockpit belies its original mission, providing spectacular panoramic views of the land below and the sky above. After more than 20 years of work, the L-6 took wing on November 3 of 2012. It flies straight and true hands off, a testament to the original design as well as Paul's workmanship and ability. Ask Paul about the L-6 and you'll learn its personal genealogy, how it fit into the larger Interstate Aircraft Company's line as well as those who designed and flew them.



Paul with his "projects" the L6, and the Detroit Jr.



The Detroit barks to life on its maiden flight.



Paul at work in his shop.

*continued page 5*

# Helena Pilot Restores Classic Aircraft, continued

But without doubt, Paul's crowning achievement is the 1929 Stinson Detroiter Jr. whose Wright radial belched to life with white smoke during a ground test early May of this year. In typical understated Gordon fashion, he'll tell you it was, "... a proof of concept project." Armed with pictures and a few Stinson factory technical drawings and regular communication with the handful of others who own similar planes, Paul set out in 1994 to literally build the plane. He began with an original right wing panel, 2 ailerons, the lift struts and the tail feathers from a SM-2-A that had been owned by Portland Airways. He then welded, stitched, doped, glued and bent from there. He changed the engine from the original 1929 version which was a Wright J6-5, to a later engine which was a standard modification in the 1930's as aircraft engines improved and became more reliable. Although he made some modifications to certain elements of the plane such as designing and building the entire tailwheel steering mechanism, he basically held true to the Stinson's early airline transport model. The FAA issued him a standard airworthiness certificate in May and shortly thereafter, the Detroiter took to the air for its maiden flight on July 6. A small but appreciative audience gathered on lawn chairs by taxiway Charlie to witness the event. Paul, along with Bunky Larson (who owns a 1931 Stinson Model S and acted as training pilot), gave 'er the gas and the Stinson lifted off Runway 27 with a radial roar. Since then, Paul has logged about a dozen hours flying the Detroiter, taking it to Three Forks for the August Montana Antique Aircraft Association fly-in. Paul walked, or should I say flew, away with Best Antique and the People's Choice awards from that event for the Detroiter. With those projects done, Paul is still picking up work on smaller projects as well as doing motorcycle work on both his and other people's projects. His affinity for English motorcycles as well as his welding and fabricating skills is still in demand with the local and national two-wheeled fraternities. And then there's that Pietenpol Air Camper whose fuselage has been hanging from the ceiling in the hanger along with those uncovered wings for all those years. They have found their way over to Paul's "active" work area and appear to be suddenly coming together as the days go by. "I guess I'm just a little obsessive," says Paul. "Just gotta keep working on something."



## Christmas... In August?



Every year at Yellowstone Airport a celebration known as "Christmas in August" is held. This event stems from the original "Christmas in August" event inside Yellowstone National Park. On August 24, 1925 at Fishing Bridge in Yellowstone National Park, it snowed on the tourists! The tourists and park staff decided to have an impromptu Christmas Celebration the next day on August 25<sup>th</sup>. They enjoyed food and exchanged a few small gifts and "Christmas in August" was born!

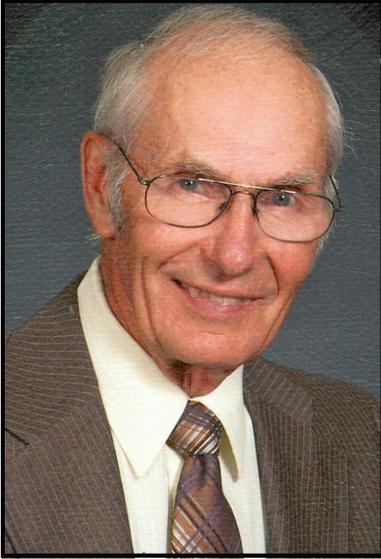
Yellowstone Airport continues this tradition and has done so for more than 20 years! The celebration for the airport is very fitting being that the airport is closed during the winter months and unable to observe the holiday season.

On August 23, 2013 the celebration with the airport team was held. A potluck style of various delicious foods and treats were shared. Great conversations and the expressions of gratitude to one another for another great season were exchanged.

There were many new faces as well as many familiar faces at the event. Those in attendance this year were SkyWest Airlines, MDT Aeronautics, Yellowstone Aviation FBO, TSA, Avis, Budget, and the Smoke Jumper Café.

# In Memory of Willis “Will” Francis Mavis

*Originally appeared in the August 7, 2013 issue of the Helena Independent Record*



On Wednesday, July 31, 2013, Willis passed away at St. Peter’s Hospital in Helena as the result of a heart attack.

Willis Mavis was born in Fergus Falls, Minn., on March 11, 1928. He was the sixth child born to Emil and Rose (Schleske) Mavis.

Willis was a resident of Friberg Township, graduating from Fergus Falls High School in 1946. He married Isabelle A. (Senn) Oct. 1, 1950.

Willis joined the Air Force in 1952 where he was trained as an air traffic controller. In 1956 he left the Air Force and joined the Federal Aviation Administration. His career brought him to Montana, where he worked as an air traffic controller in both Great Falls and Billings before becoming the manager of the Helena tower in 1974. He retired from federal service in 1985.

Will was a member of Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church for 39 years. He was a member of both the Quiet Birdmen (QB) and Montana Pilots Association. As a private pilot and an active part of the local aviation community, he assisted in the development and presentation of flight safety, search and rescue and survival seminars. He was also an active member of the local Elks Lodge and a member of the Gates of the Mountains Boat Club.

Will was always an avid hunter and fisherman. He had a great love of the outdoors and enjoyed spending time with his family and friends at his cabin at Holter Lake. He especially enjoyed teaching his grandchildren how to fish and waterski.

Willis was preceded in death by his parents and four siblings, Doris, Evelyn, Wesley and Mike.

Surviving is his wife, Isabelle, of Clancy; son, John (Susan); and grandchildren Brianne, Mackenzie and Tanner of Littleton, Colo. Other survivors include his sister, Loretta Stiery of Fergus Falls, Minn.; brothers, Lloyd (Olga), of Minneapolis, and Duane (Mary Jane), of rural Erhard, Minn.; and several nieces and nephews.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Isabelle and the rest of the family.

## Johnson joins RAF board

SuperCup.org founder Steve “SJ” Johnson has joined the seven other volunteer directors of the Recreational Aviation Foundation.

With over 4,500 hours, Johnson is a Gold Seal flight instructor and dedicated advocate of aviation and safety.

In 2000, Johnson bought his first Super Cub. He started SuperCub.Org, a website for Super Cub and backcountry aviation enthusiasts which continues to grow. “Members focused my interests into a vehicle to enhance access to some of the most beautiful parts of our country,” Johnson says, adding, “I strongly believe that through proper introduction and education, we can show others that backcountry aviation is a viable, valuable, and safe combination – and a whole lot of fun.”

“Steve’s approach to aviation perfectly matches the intent of the Recreational Aviation Foundation,” RAF president John McKenna said, “and we are pleased he is making time to serve on our board.”

“It is truly flattering and humbling to be asked to be a part of the RAF leadership team. I believe this group is doing more for the kind of flying and recreation we love than any other,” Johnson said.

Johnson is a Technology Manager for a large commercial printing company in Kansas City. His main passions are teaching tail wheel and off-pavement flying, building communities and relationships through technology and other means; and his family: wife Laura, also a pilot, and step-son Billy, who is entering his last year of high school.

The RAF is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization headquartered at 1711 W. College in Bozeman, MT 59715. [www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org).



## Ninety-Nines Annual Conference Held in Bozeman



*The Montana Chapter of 99's pictured with Addison Pemberton keynote speaker. From (l-r) Debbie Alke, Linda Marshall, Addison Pemberton, Kristina Koch, Charity Fechter and front center Janine Nunes.*

The Montana Chapter of the Ninety-Nines International Organization of Women Pilots hosted the 99's annual conference in Bozeman in July. Appropriately themed "fill your bucket here" over 380 members and guests did just that. Debbie Alke, MDT Aeronautics Administrator welcomed the attendees at the Amelia Earhart Scholarship Luncheon, where multiple competitive scholarships were awarded. In addition to the business meeting, attendees had the opportunity to hear Addison Pemberton as the keynote speaker. Seminars included leadership, aviation and animal rescue, life lessons learned through aviation, flying over Yellowstone, the Air Race Classic, and the practicalities of fashion in the mid-1860s. The one-woman play "Amelia Earhart" by George Tilson was a grand finale to the opening reception and barbecue at the Broken Hart Ranch. Arlin's Aircraft did a wonderful job welcoming those who flew their own airplanes, finding tie-downs for all 52 aircrafts. The outside activities gave the attendees a great taste of Montana, with tours of Yellowstone, Lewis & Clark Caverns, and Virginia City, and horseback riding, whitewater rafting, the Museum of the Rockies and alpine fishing. The final event gave those with their own planes the opportunity to fly over Yellowstone Park.

## Fire Season Keeps Yellowstone Airport Busy



It is fire season once again at Yellowstone Airport, and fire tankers have been a familiar sight for the last several weeks. This year there have been a variety of rotorcraft and fixed wing aircraft used for aerial firefighting, ranging from Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATS) to heavy tankers, and helicopters.

This year has proved to be a very active season for the tanker base, compared to the last couple of years. The tanker base has mixed and delivered 237 loads of fire retardant, totaling 201,650 gallons—twice as much as last year. Of the 237 loads mixed and delivered this season, nearly half (103) were delivered during a two day period (August 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>) to fight the Two Top fire, located 8 miles south of Yellowstone Airport. Friday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, the Yellowstone Airport simultaneously hosted 10 fixed wing tankers—3 Convairs, 2 P2Vs, and 5 SEATs— as well as a few helicopters. Fire season is not over yet, but the recent decrease in daytime temperatures, continually shorter days, lighter wind conditions, and increased precipitation have all contributed to reducing the threat of wild fires in the immediate area.



## Bridger Airport Fly in Fun for All



*The weather was perfect for the annual Jim Bridger Days and Fly In on July 19 & 20. Friday started off with a great spaghetti dinner, family bingo and a quilt show at the Civic center and ended with a magnificent fireworks display at dusk. Saturday kicked off with a fantastic Fly In at the Bridger airport, followed by a wonderful Lions breakfast, then moved on to one of the best attended parades on record and sashayed into lunch - courtesy of the VFW. Vendors lined Veteran's Park with wonderful edibles and many great items you just don't get a chance to buy anywhere else. The afternoon heated up with the best attended and largest Demo Derby in the Bridger Derby's history. The night wound down to the toe tapping magic of the Bucky Beaver Ground Grippers.*