



Position Report

Spring 2008

Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation

From the AASF Cockpit

I had a friend ask, why should I spend my money joining the Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation? The simple answer is we are stronger together than we are separately. What does that have to do with the AASF? One of our key functions is aviation safety advocacy. When FAA held meetings this winter to find out what new IFR airways aviators want, the AASF was there pushing for airways we think will improve safety and access. When military training threatened civilian access, the AASF was there to ensure military training needs and civilian access were met. The list goes on and on. AASF volunteers were on the ground floor of the Capstone movement, and we remain highly involved. Most pilots do not have the time to attend endless meetings working on a whole host of issues, but an organization like the AASF can work as a group to ensure our members' interests are covered.

I have heard some pilots comment that they would not install ADS-B equipment even if it were free. To these pilots, I would ask that you reconsider. Think again about the huge decrease in aviation accidents in the Capstone test areas. Remember that 95% of aviation accidents are either directly caused by pilots, or pilot error was causal to the accident. So why the decrease in accidents in the test areas? Simply pilots have more tools with which to make inflight decisions. You might argue that you can get those same benefits with an off of the shelf hand held GPS. Answer, no you cannot. You can get some of the benefits with off of the shelf units, but you cannot receive the full benefit of the technology; the Capstone system was put together and proven by people a lot smarter than I am. You get National Weather Service weather products in the cockpit, you can see other equipped, and if in range of a radar, transponder equipped aircraft. The search and rescue benefit is absolutely huge. Since ADS-B broadcasts your position every second, the RCC can determine where you were when you dropped below sight of a ground receiver. This feature has already saved lives. I intend to install ADS-B in my airplane at the earliest opportunity.

Capstone Status Report. Legislation to partially fund the State share of an equipage incentive program is working its way through the legislature. The AASF and other organizations continue to push for a solution to the remaining State funding. Our goal is that by the fall of 2008 there will be a program wherein an aircraft owner can purchase ADS-B equipment.

Capstone Background. The FAA has authorized funding for new ground infrastructure, including communications, navigation, surveillance, weather reporting, and airport access upgrades. However, all of this federal funding will only be expended if Alaska aviation operators voluntarily equip with the avionics necessary to utilize the FAA infrastructure. Approximately \$493 million in federal funding for needed aviation infrastructure will be in jeopardy without a commitment of State support for approximately \$34.1 million over five years.

Aviation Community Position. A State of Alaska investment of \$34.1 million over five years is as well as \$11 million in private funding, from individual aircraft owners and operators required to match \$493 million in federal funding authorized by the FAA. With this highly leveraged investment, our aviation transportation system will see an early implementation of the next generation FAA national airspace system (NextGen). With full statewide implementation, Alaskan travelers will have access to an aviation transportation system that is on a par with the rest of the U.S. A significant number of accidents will be avoided through the capabilities of the Capstone-proven avionics safety equipage package. The system also will provide increased access and opportunities for economic development and medical emergency evacuation by increasing the number of airports served by instrument approaches and having radarlike services in areas outside of radar coverage. Plus, search & rescue costs will be reduced – virtually eliminating the search operation portion and enabling expedited rescue action through aircraft tracking capabilities.

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The Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation is a membership funded organization. The membership fees cover most of our expenses. This year, membership renewals are down, way down. Flying is down in general. Will flying recover? I do not know, but I hope so. Pilots complain about the cost of fuel as one of the reasons flying is down. Consider, however, the cost of fuel as a percentage of the cost of flying. In my airplane, fuel is about 50% of my hourly flying cost. For the sake of this example, say fuel at Merrill Field is now \$4.70 per gallon. Say it increases to \$5.00 per gallon this summer. This is a 6% increase. However as a percentage of the total cost this is a 3% increase. While this is not great, it is a way to think about our aircraft operating costs in a more productive fashion. Maybe thinking about the cost of flying this way will encourage all of us to stay proficient.

Please keep in mind that the ELT monitoring system is about to change. Currently satellites monitor 121.5 day and night. This will change in February 2009 when the satellites will only monitor 406, the new frequency. The FAA has not yet mandated that owners equip with new 406 ELTs, but they could considering the NTSB has requested such a regulation change. I think the price of 406 ELTs will decrease in 2009 as demand ramps up. Also remember that Canada already has a mandate for 406 for all aircraft. So if you plan on flying through Canada this summer, you need to equip with a new 406 ELT now.

Thank you for renewing your membership. Please help us gain more members by spreading the word to your fellow aviators, about the AASF. We are trying to give our members a worthy return on the membership investment.

Carl Siebe, Chairman of the Board

Call for Letters of Interest

The Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation will have openings on our Board of Directors as of late March 2008. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please send a Letter of Interest, along with your curriculum vitae, to

Mr. Leonard Kirk, AASF

2811 Merrill Field Drive

Anchorage, AK 99501-4131

Please note "Letter of Interest" on the envelope.

The AASF Board Nominating Committee will propose a slate of 12 candidates to the Board at our next regular Board meeting, scheduled for 22 March. Up to 9 candidates will be elected to serve on the Board as of April 2008.

Board members serve 1-5 year terms. Board responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the policies and activities of the Foundation
- Reviewing and monitoring Foundation activities
- Ensuring dedication to, and use of, Foundation assets for the goals and purposes of the Foundation
- Attending most Board meetings, either in person or by call-in
- Serving on Board committees
- Completing Board tasks and assignments in a timely and professional manner
- Reviewing and approving major organizational changes, decisions, commitments and plans
- Representing the Foundation to the members and to the general public
- Supporting the Foundation in other ways, as needed

Safety Moment: Spring Pre-Flight Check-up,

General Inspection

The big picture — Be sure to give the airplane a good once-over as you first approach it. Look for obvious problems—flat tires, compressed struts, hangar rash, puddles of oil or fuel—and note anything else that doesn't seem "right."

Outdoor storage — Airplanes can deteriorate quickly when stored outside. Exposure to rain, snow, frost and temperature extremes is hard on paint and plexiglass, and (under certain conditions) can lead to airframe corrosion. Rubber gaskets and seals grow brittle, plugged drain holes trap moisture in the fuselage, water gets into fuel tanks, animals move in and upholstery wears out. Be more cautious with an airplane that "lives" on the ramp.

Take your time — If the aircraft hasn't flown in months, give yourself plenty of time to perform the preflight inspection. In many cases, the maintenance chores necessary to get it airworthy can take hours or days—and may require the assistance of an A&P mechanic. Don't rush the process, don't forget to remove pitot tube covers and air intake plugs, and don't plan to carry passengers on your first flight or two.

Nice and legal — Verify that required aircraft paperwork is aboard. The **AROW** checklist works well: **A**irworthiness Certificate; **R**egistration; **O**perating Limitations; **W**eight and Balance Information

Wings and fuselage

Wild kingdom — An airplane's various nooks and crannies can be irresistible to small animals, and there's a good chance that some friendly (or not so friendly) creatures took up residence while you were away. During preflight, look closely at control surface gaps, cabin air intakes, static ports and pitot tubes. Also check for evidence of animals (droppings, nesting materials, etc.) on and around the airplane.

Fuel tanks — Fuel contamination is a serious concern, particularly if the airplane's been sitting outside and the fuel cap gaskets haven't been replaced in years. Thoroughly drain all the sumps to get any water out of the system. Also be aware that fuel has a shelf-life: Given enough time, gasoline (particularly auto gas) will distill down to a gummy residue with a varnish-like odor.

Control surfaces — Be sure that any control locks are removed, and check that the control surfaces move freely through their full range of motion. Also be on guard for damage caused by "hangar rash," high winds or heavy loads of snow and ice. Check the tops **and** bottoms.

Landing gear and tires — Check oleo struts for proper inflation, and use a gauge to verify that tire pressure is within limits. While you're at it, look for dry rot (lots of little cracks on the sidewalls) and flat spots on the tires. If you can see fabric around the edges of a spot, the tire is worn out. Likewise, bulges and bumps are evidence of structural damage: The tire should be replaced before flight.

Engine and propeller

Don't fly over the cuckoo's nest — Engine compartments offer attractive quarters for our avian friends, and an undetected nest can be a fire hazard. Look carefully for evidence of birds, and be prepared to dig deeper if you see any. On some airplanes, it may be necessary to remove the upper portion of the cowling to do an adequate inspection.

Oil — Verify that the engine oil level is within limits. Pilots often forget that the useful life of oil is measured in both engine hours *and* calendar months. Because oil's protective qualities degrade over time, an airplane that's been sitting for several months probably needs an oil change.

Propeller — Check for nicks in the leading edges of propeller blades: Anything you can catch a fingernail on should be inspected by a mechanic. Also be on the lookout for evidence of corrosion, or fluid leakage on constant-speed props.

Alternator belt — While you're checking the prop, take a minute to inspect the alternator belt. It should be tight, but still have some "give." Any cracking or dry rot means that the belt should be replaced.

Other tips

Underway —As you taxi out, perform a brake check and verify that primary flight instruments are working properly. Take note of any abnormal noises, smells or instrument indications, and be prepared to taxi back if necessary.

Storage — Proper storage protects your aircraft and makes preflight easier and quicker. Hangars are great, if available (or affordable). If not, canopy covers and heat shields protect plexiglass and keep summer heat from frying expensive avionics. Regular washing and waxing preserves paint, and covers for air intakes and pitot tubes can prevent animals from moving in. If the airplane will be stored for a long period of time, talk to your mechanic about more extensive measures.

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Don't Forget:

April 12, 2008:

23rd Annual

Seaplane Safety Seminar

8:00AM-16:00PM

AMD Hangar, Lake Hood

For more information, check out
www.aasfonline.com

TO:

Upcoming Events

- **Alaska World Balloon Challenge, March 27-31 2008.**
@ Merrill Field
- **Annual Seaplane Seminar April 12 2008.**
@ AMD Hangar at Lake Hood
- **Alaska Airmen's 11th Alaska State Aviation Trade Show and Conference, May 3-4 2008.**
@ Fedex Hangar, Anchorage International Airport.
- **Valdez May day Fly-in and Air Show May 10-11 2008.**
@ Valdez, Alaska
- **Kenai Peninsula Air Fair and Poker Run, May 17 2008.**
@ Soldotna and Kenai Municipal Airport
- **17th Annual Palmer Fly-in & Pancake Breakfast, June 7 2008.**
@ Palmer Airport
- **Arctic Thunder Elmendorf Air Show, June 28-29 2008.**
@ Elmendorf Air force Base
- **Alaska 99's 2008 International Conference, August 6-9 2008.**
@ Eagan Center and the Anchorage Hilton Hotel.

Call for your favorite plane pictures

We are in need of interesting photographs for us to publish on our website and in our quarterly newsletters. Send us your best, copyright free plane pictures to: aasf@alaska.net

Website Update:

We are in the process of updating our website with safety handouts. Visit www.aasfonline.com for safety information in the skies. Visit and print out any information you need from the PDF files under the "Safety Handouts" link.