



Montana Students Explore Careers in Aviation

By David J. Hoerner, Bureau Chief, Safety & Education

The MDT Aeronautics Division has a multitude of assignments and projects that need constant attention and a continuous effort to complete. Caring for all the state owned airports, educating pilots on emergency landing techniques and surviving cold winter conditions is just a small portion of our job description.

One of our most essential programs is providing aviation and aerospace information to the students of Montana. The future of aviation rests in the hands of adults that currently have jobs in aviation or are connected to the aviation field. Aviation careers are abundant but over the years, the desire to pursue a career in aviation has decreased. That's why integrating aviation education into the schools has become more important now than ever.

Aeronautics was fortunate to receive 13 donated flight simulators from the Fort Harrison *Starbase* and we have been making them available to interested schools. These simulators are designed to resemble the cockpit of an aircraft with computer-generated images that mimic the pilot's view and are typically used for training pilots. Students will gain a practical approach to flying and have an understanding of airfoils, control operations and basic flight.

Browning Junior Academy has received one of these simulators with the help of Academies teacher, Johanna Hellman. Polson Middle School and Lindeman Grade School have also received simulators. All were received with great enthusiasm and will aid in building an existing aerospace program. Wibaux School Superintendent, Terry Quantis, is starting an Aerospace program for his high school students and received a simulator to help start the new program. These simulators will provide exciting education regarding future career paths in aviation.



A TSA agent at Yellowstone Airport made luggage tags for the students.



Students from Browning Junior Academy loved hearing about all the job opportunities in aviation.



Derek Amohs, FAA Instructor speaks to students at the Lincoln Airport during aviation career days.

I recently attended career days for aviation at the Lincoln and Yellowstone Airport, where the students learned about aerodynamics and operations at airports. All the students were able to fly on the flight simulators and received information on possible aviation careers. Their smiles told the story of fun that was had by all. I also participated in Clancy career days; the students received individual flights from the local chapter of the EAA. While not flying, the students learned how to fly flight simulators and visited the Helena Tower.

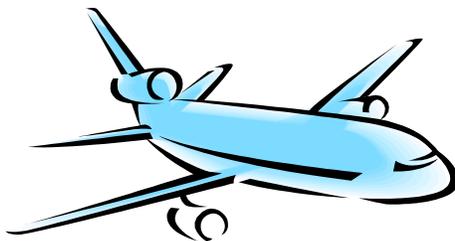
We encourage all aviation professionals to get involved and take the time to help students learn about the importance of careers in aviation in Montana; as well as their significance around the world.

Happy Flying!

Administrator's Column

Ron Mercer Has Retired....after 33 years with the Helena Regional Airport. Born and raised in Helena, Ron began working for the airport in 1981 and became the director in 1987. Under Ron's leadership, the airport has experienced significant growth, particularly in attracting both aviation and non-aviation businesses to the Airport; creating hundreds of local jobs. A few of those improvements include: Boeing Corporation, f/k/a Summit Aeronautics, Costco Wholesale, the National Guard Complex, the tennis center and a large soccer complex. Ron was appointed to the Montana Aeronautics Board by Governor Marc Racicot in 1993 and re-appointed in 1997. He served as Chairman of the Board during both of those terms. He has been influential in promoting both state and national aviation initiatives and supporting legislation for the Aeronautics Division and industry; including the successful increase of the aviation fuel tax to assist Division operations and airport development. He was also instrumental in supporting the Division throughout the creation and organization of the Montana Transportation Department. Many annual aviation conferences were hosted and chaired by Ron in Helena where his leadership was always appreciated. He made it a priority to put on a great show and made sure everyone had a good time. Due to Ron's recommendation many years ago, MDT continues to compile monthly boarding statistics for all commercial service airports; a report that is enjoyed by many. Ron has accomplished and been recognized for his professional work with the Helena Regional Airport throughout the Helena community and aviation community nationwide. In recognition of Ron's departure, the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County honored him with the naming of a street. A portion of Skyway Drive that brings people to the Helena Regional Airport terminal was re-named Mercer Loop. In another surprise action, the City of Helena issued a Proclamation on May 19th proclaiming "Ron Mercer Day." Mayor Jim Smith asked all Helena citizens to join in thanking Ron for his years of service and wishing him the best on his retirement. Congratulations and best wishes to Ron and his family of "22" as he refers to his wonderful wife Shari, five lovely daughters and son-in-laws and ten fabulous grandchildren. He will leave a great hole in our industry. Thank you Ron for your support and friendship and for paving the way for many of us. You will be missed.

Welcome Jeff Wadkamper....as Helena Regional Airport Director. For 23 years, Jeff has been a part of the airport's operations; from mowing grass during the summers while in high school to his most recent position as Assistant Airport Director. A lifelong goal to one day become Director of the Helena Regional Airport has been achieved. Aviation has always been a part of Jeff's life. Both his mother and father are flight instructors. Jeff credits his new position to both Mercer, for teaching him everything he knows about the airport business, and his wife Shar, for her continued support. Although Jeff is not a new-comer to the Montana aviation scene, I look forward to continuing to work with Jeff and the great staff at the Helena Regional Airport. Congratulations Jeff.



Montana and the Sky

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Calendar of Events

June 13-15 – 8th Annual Winifred-Breaks Fly In; June 13 - Arrival, camp in the breaks and barbeque provided by The Cub-Works (location TBA); June 14 – Fly out up Judith River to join Lewistown Fly in for breakfast; Poker Run, hangar burgers by the plate at the Winifred Hangar (9S7); June 15 - Departure for Johnson Creek and other backcountry strips. For further information contact Ralph Rogers (406) 462-5487.

June 14 - 10th 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 21 – Meadow Creek Work Session. All volunteers must sign volunteer sheets prior to any work. Volunteer sheets should be available in the airstrip sign-in boxes. Sign in sheet is good for one year and for all three locations, Spotted Bear, Meadow Creek and Schafer Meadows. For further information phone (406) 444-2506

June 21 – Plains Airport Fly In breakfast 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for further information contact Randy Garrison (406) 370-6179.

June 21 – Spring Burger Burn at Morrison Park in Helena, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., sponsored by EAA Chapter 344, free hamburgers, hot dogs and soft drinks. For further information contact Don Whitson (406) 443-8853 or Al Hathy (406) 449-2865.

June 23-26 - Commemorative Air Force Mitchell B-25 "Maid in the Shade" will be at the Cut Bank International Airport. Tours and rides will be available. For more information and to book a flight, call the airport at (406) 873-8683. Updates can be found at www.cutbankairport.org or on Facebook at Cut Bank International Airport.

July 4 – Townsend Festival of Flight. Deluxe pancake breakfast, EAA Young Eagles Rally 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. For further information about the breakfast and fly in contact Lance Seaman (406) 442-8459 or Neil Salmi at (406) 980-0544 or neilsalmi@yahoo.com.

July 12 – Del Bonita work session. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

July 19 - Jim Bridger fly in and celebration days. Breakfast 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. the fly in is held in conjunction with Jim Bridger days that will be going on in the town of Bridger. For further information contact Merrill Pfeifer at (406) 662-3319.

July 19-20 - Schafer Meadows Work Session. All volunteers must sign volunteer sheets prior to any work. Volunteer sheets should be available in the airstrip sign-in boxes. Sign in sheet is good for one year and for all three locations, Spotted Bear, Meadow Creek and Schafer Meadows. For further information phone (406) 444-2506

July 20 - St. Ignatius Fly In – 8:00 a.m. to noon. Free huckleberry pancake breakfast, Sponsored by EAA, Young Eagle rides, Av gas giveaway and door prizes. For further information contact Mike Kuefler (406) 544-2274.

July 24-26 - Fourth annual CanAm Aerobatics competition will be held at the Cut Bank International airport. Participants from the U.S. and Canada will be flying "in the box" and all participants and spectators are welcome. Updates can be found at www.cutbankairport.org or on Facebook at Cut Bank International Airport.

August 7-9 - Montana Antique Aircraft Association's 37th Annual Fly In at Three Forks. Begins Thursday at 12:00 p.m. Fly In Theme: Stearman / WWII Trainers. Flour Bombing & Spot Landing contests, aircraft on display, lunch and dinner available Friday and Saturday, free camping on the 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 8-10 - Splash In 2014 sponsored by the Glacier Pilots EAA Chapter 102, Kalispell Montana. Seaplanes, music, a magic weekend. For visiting aircraft, water or land, contact Ry Keller, EAA Director at forestkeller@montanasky.us. Camping, food, and other activities. Musicians and music fans contact Bill Montgomery at bill@stillwaterlanding.com.

August 10 – Lions Club Drive In, Fly In breakfast and model airplane show at Hysham Airport 7:00 a.m. to noon. For further information contact Bob Miller (406) 342-5252 or email bpmiller@rangeweb.net.

August 15-17 - Montana Fun Weekend fly-in and car show at Cut Bank International Airport. Breakfast will be available on Saturday and Sunday mornings with various events and concessions Friday night and all day Saturday. Top three airplane awards of \$100 each will be given on Saturday. Updates can be found at www.cutbankairport.org or on Facebook at Cut Bank International Airport.

August 16 – Russian Flat Work Session, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Hosted by Central Montana Hanger. For further information contact Pete Smith at (406) 366-1435 or pete@hcr-inc.com.

August 22-24 – Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Lewistown, MT. For further information contact Dave Hoerner at (406) 444-9568 or dhoerner@mt.gov.

August 30-31 – Mountain Madness Air Show featuring the USAF Thunderbirds. Glacier Park International Airport (FCA). For further information call (406) 758-2800 or info@kalispellchamber.com or visit www.montanairshow.com.

September 6 – Columbus (Wolterman Memorial) Airport fly-in with breakfast service starting at 8 a.m. For further information contact Hardin Graham: (406) 780-0034; Alan Drain: (406) 780-0171; or Mark O'Bryant: (406) 696-6923.

September 6 – Havre (KHVR) Air Fair fly-in breakfast, airplane rides for youth, sky bowling. For further information contact Willie Hurd 406-265-2977 or pronghorn@mcn.net.

September 20 – Missoula GA barbeque, noon to 4 p.m. Share a day of celebrating general aviation at the "MSO GA BBQ!" Chefs extraordinaire Cris Jensen and Brian Ellestad in their highly anticipated annual appearance. Fantastic restored cars and hotrods by the Garden City Rods and Customs car club, displays of MSO aircraft of special interest including those of the Museum of Mountain Flying. Pilots from around the State are invited to attend, park at Northstar Jet. Mark your calendar! Don't miss this one! For further information contact Gary Matson at (406) 370-6584.

New Staff at Yellowstone Airport



Bron Hansen

The Yellowstone Airport is pleased to welcome Bron Hansen as the newest employee with their team. Bron has accepted the position of Airport Operations Specialist at the Yellowstone Airport. He previously worked with the MDT Aeronautics team last year as an intern at the Yellowstone Airport. Bron has over seven years of experience in the aviation field with increasingly responsible roles working in a variety of capacities within the industry. He is a commercial pilot, as well as a Certified Flight Instructor. His experience is enhanced by his education, as he will complete his Bachelor's Degree in Aviation Administration this fall. Bron is excited to be back in West Yellowstone where he grew up, as he enjoys the outdoor activities that the area has to offer. Bron is excited to join the MDT team and is enthusiastic about furthering his knowledge, experience, and career in airport administration while serving the aviation and local community.



Luke Smith

The airport is also excited to welcome Luke Smith. He is filling the airport manager internship this summer at the Airport. Luke began studying aviation in 2012 and is excited to start his first job in the aviation industry. Luke is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Aviation Management at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Luke is hoping to get his private pilot's license this fall or spring when he returns to school. Coming from Chicago, Luke is excited to be in West Yellowstone where he gets to spend a lot of time outdoors and away from the big city congestion. Luke is very enthusiastic about joining the MDT team and eager to further his knowledge, experience, and career in airport management while serving the aviation and local community.

There's nothing like an airport for bringing you down to earth.

— *Richard Gordon*



Fort Belknap runway 10/28 is temporarily closed to fixed wing aircraft. The Helipad adjacent to the runway is still open for operations. Any questions please call (406) 353-2205.

Cut Bank airport (KCTB) CTAF and runway lighting controller frequency have now been changed to 123.00 Mhz.

Aviation Camp Held in Helena

By David J. Hoerner, Bureau Chief, Safety & Education

The annual Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Academy was held in Helena on May 12 and 13. High school students from around the state gathered in Helena to receive valuable information regarding the numerous career opportunities surrounding aviation and aerospace.

On the first day, students enjoyed a tour of the Montana Capitol Building followed by discussions with airport managers and professional pilots (both helicopter and airplane). Jeff Wadkamper, the Helena Airport Manager, gave exclusive permission and unlocked the door to the old U.S. Air Force Constellation plane located at the Helena Airport for students to explore.

The Constellation, also known as the “Connie,” is owned by Helena Vo-tech and in previous years has been used for training in the maintenance department. It was enlightening to see how far technology has advanced when compared to a Pilatus PC-12 that was toured after the old war “Bird.”

The afternoon consisted of hands-on flight simulator training at the Fort Harrison’s *Starbase* and ended with a trip to the mountains where students were able to utilize emergency locator devices and locate a hidden ELT.

On the second day, students were briefed on the cost and requirements of flight training, followed by a tour of the Helena Tower. The local chapter of the EAA assisted by providing flights to each student and as you can imagine, the flights were a particularly exciting experience for the students.

A special thanks to the Montana Pilots Association and the Montana Chamber of Commerce for helping Montana students attend this year’s academy. Also a special thanks to all the professionals and organizations for donating their time and expertise to help guide the students in their potential aviation career goals.



ACE students in front of Capital building.



Students Kaleb Crook (l) and Jake Sanders (r) both had rides with Helena pilot Clayton Wilhelm in his RV6.



Students were able to get an up close look at a retired US Army Jet.



Joe Rahn pilot for Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) talked to the students about careers in the department of FWP and how much fun your “job” can truly be.

In Memory



Frank E. Bass, “Montana’s Flying Auctioneer” born July 30, 1931 in Tolley North Dakota, passed away on May 21, 2014 after a battle with cancer.

Frank was raised and worked on his parents Fred and Lillian Bass’s farm. At the age of 16, he began his life-long passion for flying airplanes, which was almost cut short by an airplane accident that cost him both his legs below his knees. While most would have not ventured back into a plane, Frank learned how to fly again and learned mechanics at Wahpeton School of Science and then logged over 16,000 hours and countless awards in the aviation industry. A charter member of both the Great Falls Hanger and the Central Montana Hanger, a member of the Montana Pilot’s Association since 1958, the recipient of the Master Pilot Award in 2006 for recognition of 50 years of non-incident flying. Most recently he was acknowledged by the Montana Pilots Association with the Bill Mathews Award for successful flying while overcoming a handicap, although Frank would never accept the fact that he had a handicap.

His flying involved many mercy missions for medical patients, as he was always willing to provide a ride. He loved to share his passion for flying with anyone and everyone. He was always willing to provide air taxi service to anyone needing a ride and has flown such notables as entertainer Red Foley and his wife.

Frank moved to Central Montana in 1958 and attended the Western School of Auctioneering and started Bass Auction Company in Lewistown in that year. Frank worked hard to develop the company into the largest auction business in the state of Montana, often times logging over 100 auctions a year. The auction business was a family affair with Colie and Curt joining Frank behind the microphone and Deedee running tickets and helped in the business office. No family member was left out as the rest of the family all pitched in where needed. A local favorite was the Thursday night auctions at the Bass Auction Barn where a packed house would bring “merchandise” to buy and sell, much like the modern day E-bay. Bass Auction was very active in the community and performed countless benefit auctions including the annual 4th of July cake auction where it is legend that one year Frank sold a cake for \$750.00. Auctioneering was Frank’s passion and even into retirement, it would not take much coaxing to get him to demonstrate his auction chant.

In 1964 Frank started the Bass Mooney Aircraft company selling “the best airplane – Mooney”. He sold the FBO in 1971 and it remains in operation to this day.

Frank moved to the Beacon Star Ranch on Crystal Lake road in 1975, and transformed 160 acres into 3 runways and a hanger to house over 6 airplanes. Beacon Star offered a special gathering spot with fellow flyers dropping in for impromptu visits and fly-in’s featuring airplanes of every vintage and style. Annual Father’s Day fly-ins drew hundreds of visitors including Montana’s Governor at the time, Judy Marks, who helped flip pancakes for the hungry crowds.

Frank was a mechanical artist. He found broken down piles of yesterday’s tractors and brought them back to life with the knowledge, experience and passion of an artist.

Frank was never at a loss for words and spoke proudly of his belief in Country, his love for Patty, his fondness for John Deere, Merle Haggard, John Wayne and anything conservative.

Frank was preceded in death by his parents, Fred and Lillian Bass, his brother, LaVern (Rose) and a grandson, Joey Wyatt.

Frank leaves behind his wife of 20 years, Pat; his children Barbara (Jerry), Colie (Dorinda), Curt (Michelle), Jeff and Tyler Bass and his blended family include Steve, Matt and Mark Buck, their sister Diane (Deedee) and Jody d’Autremont (John), Jay Gordon, Jon Gordon (Roxanne) plus many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Frank is truly now the Flying Auctioneer.



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.



HOSTED BY THE MDT AERONAUTICS DIVISION

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Each year, the MDT Aeronautics sponsors an annual Pilot Search Clinic! This year's PSC will be held at the Lewistown Airport and the Yogo Inn in Lewistown, Montana from August 22nd – August 24th. Registration fees are \$140 for the entire clinic or \$70 for ground sessions only.

Registration forms can be found on our website and must be mailed in with a form of payment no later than August 8, 2014. There will be rooms available at the Yogo Inn at a state rate of \$89 per night and we encourage pilots to reserve early as they tend to fill up fast!

The program accepts 24 pilots to participate based on a first come basis and pilots that are accepted will receive an acceptance packet in the mail.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Topics:

- Search & Rescue
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- Tracking Devices
- Survival Training
- Mountain Flying
- Triage



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Please call for more information ►►►



Georgia passes aviation-friendly amendment

As its 2014 legislative session came to a close, Georgia's Governor Nathan Deal signed an amendment adding aviation activities to its Recreational Use Statute (RUS). HB494 includes liability protection for airstrip owners – the 22nd state in the nation to adopt this change. The Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) has made it a goal to add landowner liability protection to each state's RUS. "We're very pleased to add Georgia to the growing list of states that recognize the value of recreational aviation," said Eric Davis, RAF Georgia State Liaison.

"One of our primary missions is to add aviation-friendly civil protection laws to result in greater access for recreational pilots," said RAF president John McKenna.

Myron Ramsdell, a Georgia pilot and airstrip owner, heard McKenna speak of the RAF mission. "I called my cousin, Senator Rick Jeffares who serves as administrative Floor Leader to see if he could propose the amendment," he told Davis.

Republican Senator Jeffares was joined by Senators Bill Heath (also a pilot), Barry Loudermilk, and Tyler Harper as co-sponsors of the bill.

Opposition to the proposed amendment came from the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association. Davis – assisted by Bob Minter, AOPA's Southeast Regional Director – approached Senator Heath. "We worked a strategy to overcome their objections while at the same time getting the word out to over two hundred Georgia airstrip owners," Davis said, adding, "having AOPA's support was extremely helpful but at the end of the day it was Senator Heath who made it happen."

Instrumental to the effort was Amy Hudnall, Deputy Director of the Aerospace Division of Georgia's Department of Economic Development. She actively worked to bring the group together during the 2014 legislative session.

As the bill made its way through the process unopposed, Senator Heath added the RUS amendment language to a House bill related to the installation of safety markers on utility lines in the proximity of private airstrips.

"The RAF is grateful to airstrip owners throughout our state who worked at the grassroots level to make this outcome possible. We're indebted to our friends at AOPA and Georgia's Department of Economic Development for their support, and especially to Senator Bill Heath for his perseverance," Davis concluded.

The Recreational Aviation Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization headquartered at 1711 W. College, Bozeman, MT 59715; 406-582-1723; www.theraf.org.