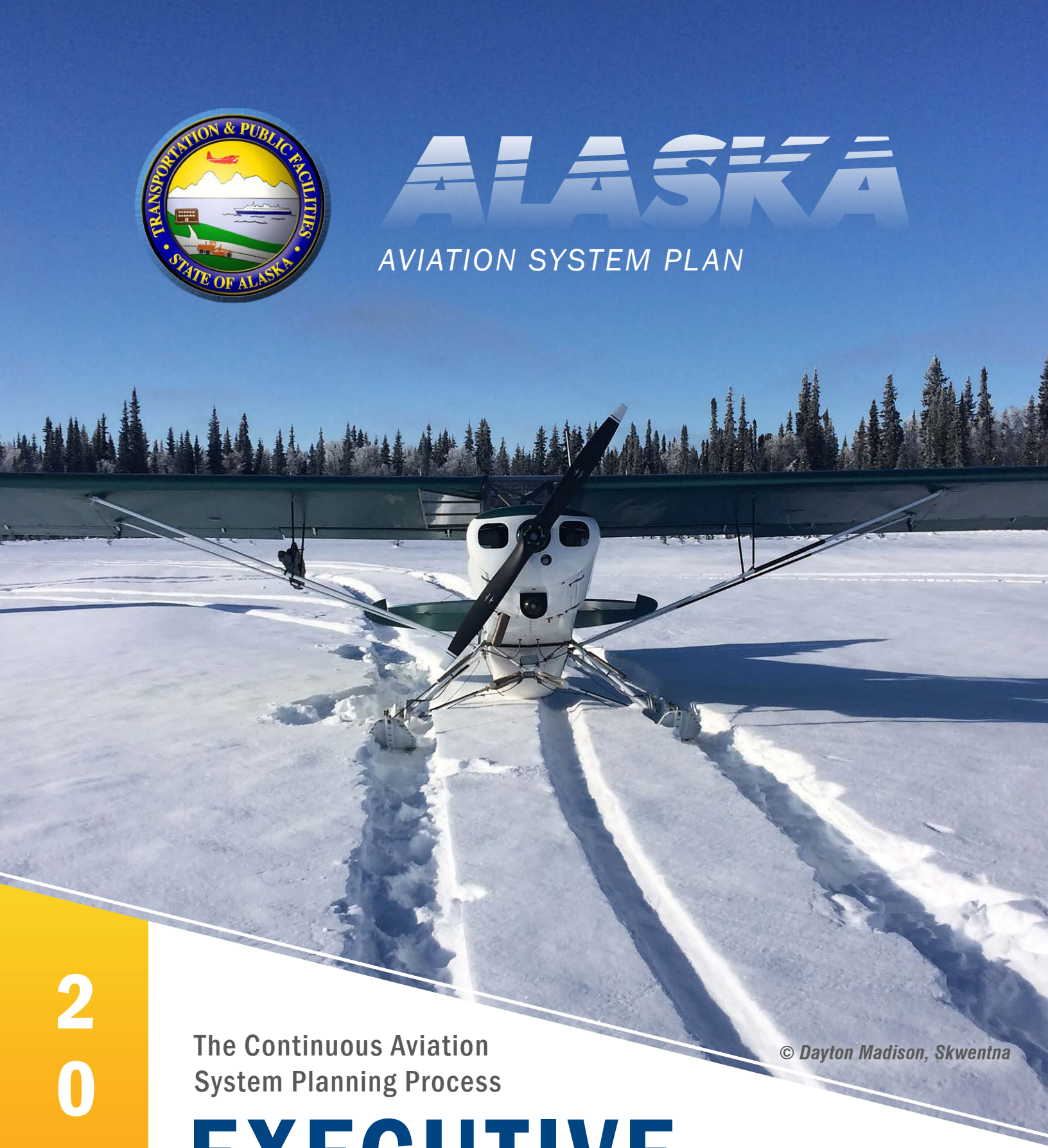
ALASKA

AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN



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2017

The Continuous Aviation System Planning Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

STATEWIDE AVIATION

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From the desk of Deputy Commissioner Binder

I am pleased to present the 2017 *Alaska Aviation System Plan Executive Summary*, highlighting key accomplishments throughout the year as well as other work completed by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF).

It comes as no surprise that the aviation system in Alaska supports a vital way of life for Alaskans, providing rural residents a vital link for travel, medical services, mail delivery, and shipment of goods. Aviation supports the development of commerce helping to promote a healthy economy and strong communities. The system currently boasts:

- 396 public use airports, with 279 land-based, 113 seaplane bases, and 4 heliports
- Approximately 758 recorded landing areas (public, private, and military)
- 9,254 registered aircraft
- 3,732 registered Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

In federal fiscal year 2017, the Alaska Region of the Federal Aviation Administration distributed $222.5M in airport improvement program (AIP) grants to Alaska. Funding contributed to runway, taxiway, and apron rehabilitation projects, master plan updates, airport security enhancements, new equipment, and a variety of other work to enhance and maintain airports across the state.

The Alaska Aviation System Plan focused on improvements and policies to increase department efficiency during 2017. With decreasing state funding available, determining ways to streamline processes and lessen spending is over time is key to productive and reliable system management. Ensuring efficient grants spending and compliance with grant assurances for federally funded projects is vital to the success of the system.

This brochure depicts several new efficiencies, including an updated digital airport project prioritization process for the department, an expanded Airport Needs Directory, and further improvements to the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program (CIMP). The AASP continues to provide an ongoing, updated outlook on Alaskan aviation by documenting existing conditions, evaluating changes, and working to maintain a busy and extremely important system.

I invite you to visit our website at *www.AlaskaASP.com* to view our facility inventory information, current and past reports, and other information. Feel free to contact Statewide Aviation if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

John R. Binder III, C.M.
Deputy Commissioner of Aviation

"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."

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Did You Know?

Aviation enables rural communities **safe and reliable access** to urban hubs throughout Alaska. While operating and maintaining the system is a top priority for the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), it is also a **necessity for rural resident access.**

What is the Alaska Aviation System Plan?

The Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP) is a multi-year planning study conducted by the DOT&PF with guidance and funding support by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Alaska's aviation system plan focuses on all airports within the state and identifies needs, sets priorities, proposes policy, and supports special studies that affect the system.

Through efforts such as the AASP, DOT&PF is finding efficiencies to work smarter and more resourcefully, while prioritizing Alaska's aviation needs. Increased efficiency is an important focus of the plan, particularly with the decrease in state revenue over the last few years. With an abundancy of needs across the system, project determination and prioritizing becomes extremely important to ensure a well-managed and maintained system that keeps people moving. Key AASP accomplishments to improve efficiency include:

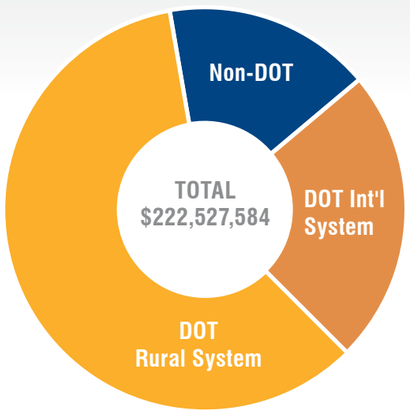
- Improving the tracking and prioritization of airport needs through the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program (CIMP) – both maintenance and capital
- Digitizing airfield capital improvement project evaluation and prioritization
- Tracking airport needs, performance measures, and inspection reporting
- Enhancing communication within DOT&PF
- Creating the airport weather station prioritization list

This executive summary captures the essence of the work accomplished in 2017 and remaining work ahead in 2018. To learn more about the AASP, or to view project specifics, visit the AASP website at **www.AlaskaAsp.com.**

Improving Efficiency with the AASP Website

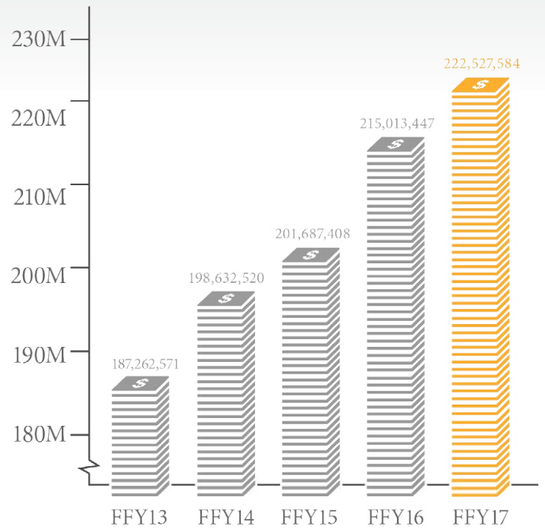
The DOT&PF continues to develop and expand both an internal and public website (www.AlaskaAsp.com). The AASP website provides a centralized database containing elements related to Alaska's aviation system. Progressive website features aim to reduce redundant systems, automate data and reporting, encourage collaboration, and provide efficiency tools to assist DOT&PF staff on daily tasks.

FFY17 AIP Grants



- $44,788,328
- $47,106,742
- $130,632,514

Average Annual AIP Funding



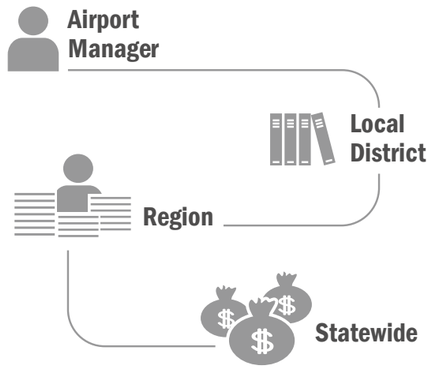
How do I ensure a need at my airport gets in the Needs Directory?

1. Member of public sees a need at their local airport
2. Call a Regional Planner or Airport Manager
3. Need is placed into the needs list by that Planner/Manager
4. Needs are placed into projects and prioritized
5. Projects are constructed as funding becomes available

Needs Directory

The internal AASP website stores and tracks airport facility needs, from the smallest maintenance item to large capital projects. Needs are determined by department staff, public requests, or issues that arise throughout the year that require documentation and are input by DOT&PF staff on a facility by facility basis. Documenting aviation-related needs in a single location greatly reduces duplications and increases staff efficiency. Recorded needs flow through a new website feature and turn into design, construction, and maintenance projects. The Airport Needs Directory automatically updates any time new information is added to the website, and is available upon request. To receive a copy, contact a regional planner at http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/cip/stip/assets/dotplanners.pdf.


© Stephen Brewer, Red Dog Airport



Flow of M&O Project Prioritization

Maintenance & Operations Projects

Similar to the capital side, Maintenance and Operations (M&O) projects can now be created and tracked within the AASP internal website. Each project is tailored to best improve the performance and effectiveness of the airport by grouping needs together into one project. The website assists with project prioritization by departmental district, region and statewide to ensure the most important priorities are funded. This new feature streamlines the process and supports communication from the airport manager all the way up through management.

Airport Project Evaluation Board

DOT&PF planners begin Airport Project Evaluation Board (APEB) project applications months in advance of the formal review meeting. Statewide Aviation and Program Development Regional Planners revised and modernized the APEB nomination process within the internal AASP website. Digitizing the process allows better project tracking over time, and planners can now create each application, conduct preliminary scoring, review and update project information, and submit for board review within the internal website. This streamlined process automates and improves the capital project process.

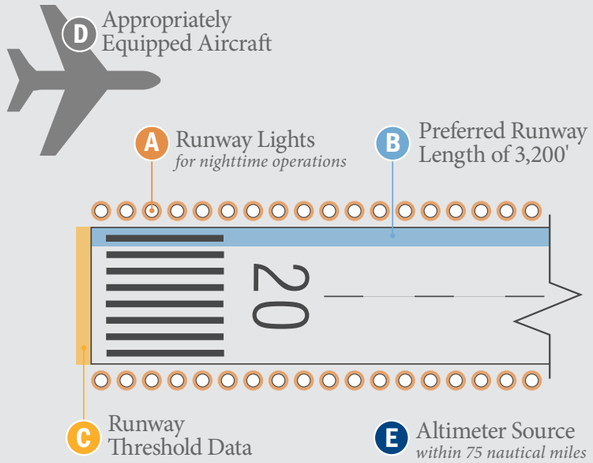
Aviation Weather Reporting in Alaska

The AASP Weather Working Group was established in 2015 and concluded in early 2017. While the State of Alaska is significantly larger than any other state in the country, Alaska would need approximately 200 additional stations throughout the State to replicate the density of weather reporting stations in the contiguous United States. The working group identified the need for additional certified weather stations across the state, and determined 21 airports in the system have existing instrument approaches, but no certified on-site weather stations. A prioritized list of what airports would benefit from installation of a weather station was developed, public comment sought, and potential future funding opportunities identified.

Further research on this topic highlights significant deficiencies and gaps in Alaska's federal aviation weather reporting system. While additional funding is not yet available to improve this issue, other steps toward improvement include advocacy, technical assistance, and awareness. Several policy recommendations stemmed from work group efforts:

- **Advocate** re-establishment of a federally funded weather station development program and appropriate budget to support it.
- **Support** continued funding of human augmented weather observation programs until additional automated stations can provide for safe and efficient stand-alone weather reporting capabilities.
- **Encourage** DOT&PF leadership and the federal congressional delegation to press for additional FAA certified Automated Weather Observation Station (AWOS) stations.
- **Maintain** the prioritization list to help allocate additional state and federal monies as available.
- **Advocate** policy changes to allow weather stations collecting AWOS type weather to be widely distributed and available over the FAA aviation weather network for flight planning purposes.
- **Provide** information to assist communities seeking certified weather station development.

What does an airport need for an instrument approach?



For more information on the AASP's Weather Work Group, go to: http://www.alaskaasp.com/Documents.aspx

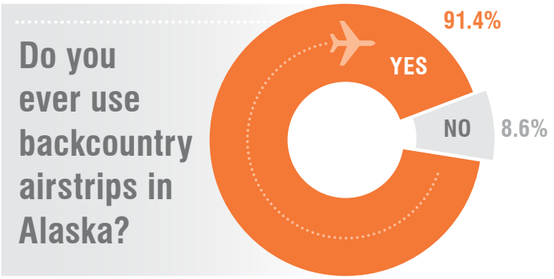
Backcountry Airstrip Recap

The AASP formed the Backcountry Airstrip Work Group in 2015 to define backcountry airstrips, identify locations within the system, and determine preservation and enhancement possibilities. While hundreds of off-field landing areas exist across Alaska, efforts for this study focused on marked and improved remote airstrips across the state. The work group **identified, inventoried, and classified 50 backcountry airstrips**, but recognize many more exist.

The Backcountry Airstrip Work Group also formed a Preservation Policy to focus DOT&PF's efforts:

> Alaska's backcountry airstrips are a crucial element of the state's aviation infrastructure, often serving as the only access points to remote areas. It is the policy of DOT&PF that these essential facilities be preserved and protected and continue to benefit Alaskans. These airports are by definition not included in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and are not eligible for federal funding. Any comprehensive preservation policy will include efforts to educate the public on the benefits of these facilities, a system for pilots to report conditions of these airports, and the coordination of volunteer / stakeholder groups for maintenance efforts.

In an effort to better understand the importance and needs of backcountry airstrips, a public survey was conducted in 2017 and widely distributed with the help of the Alaska Airmen's Association (AAA), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the Recreational Airstrip Foundation (RAF), and the Alaska Air Carriers Association (AACA). A wide range of data was collected, including who uses the system and why, frequency of use, importance and identification of existing needs or issues.



A public, informative brochure is available for download on the AASP website: http://www.alaskaasp.com/media/1867/aasp_backcountry_brochure_august_2017.pdf or by contacting Statewide Aviation.

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ALASKA
Aviation System Plan

For more information contact:
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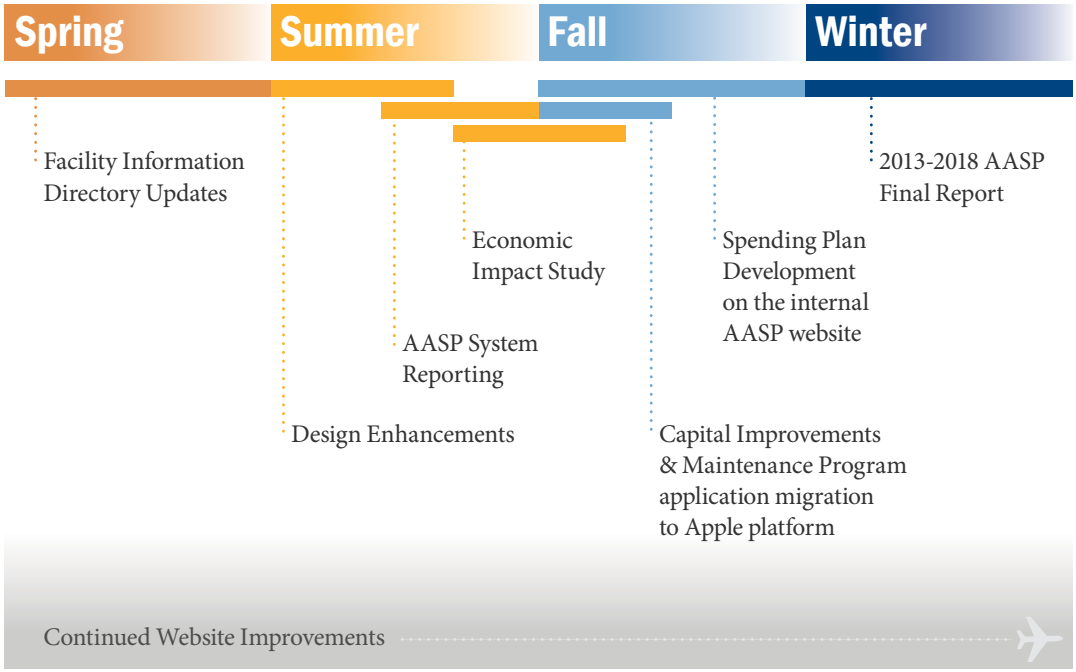
Prepared for:
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

With a Grant from:
Federal Aviation Administration

Printed at
Northern Printing Company
for $2.82 per copy.

What is Next in 2018?



Acknowledgements

Detailed technical reports, as well as this summary, were prepared for the DOT&PF, Division of Statewide Aviation, by DOWL, with CDM Smith, Northern Economics, Northern Horizon, Panther International, Southeast Strategies, and Orion Aviation.

Vital participants in the preparation of these reports included the Alaska Region Federal Aviation Administration staff and DOT&PF personnel from all regions and divisions.

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