

From Sitka to Skagway: Runway Lighting Recycle

In 2019 and 2020 the Sitka Airport replaced their older quartz runway and taxiway lights with energy efficient LED systems. Toward the end of the project, airport manager Kelly Boddy sent an email to managers across the region with specifics of the components salvaged from the lighting replacement project. Skagway Airport Manager Shaun McKnight and Southeast District Superintendent Scott Gray recognized the opportunity to upgrade and extend the life of the forty plus year old lights at the Skagway Airport.

Transporting the light fixtures and associated components from Sitka to Skagway required a team effort; getting a transport truck to Sitka via ferry, pack and load the lights, back on a ferry to Juneau, transfer to a Skagway bound ferry and then Shaun and his crew still had to disassemble and retro fit the lights to the Skagway system.

The end result was nothing short of “brilliant.”

The new lights and globes are much brighter, replacement parts are available and the glass globes and clamps are more resistant to the constant curiosity of the local raven population.



Skagway runway.

Shaun McKnight



Old taxiway light with burn hole.

Shaun McKnight

Deputy Commissioner John Binder expressed his appreciation for the Skagway crew and all DOT&PF employees in the following quote. “As Alaska faces resource challenges, responsible stewardship is essential to Keeping Alaska Moving. Though oftentimes not the easiest path, our Maintenance and Operations team continues to overcome many funding challenges by maximizing non-traditional resources and re-purposing equipment to improve the safety and operations at our airports.”

If you have a great story to share about any airport employees or projects, contact an AASP project consultant listed on page 4. We look forward to highlighting other innovative employees and stories of creative solutions in future newsletters.



Skagway's old and “new” runway lights.

Shaun McKnight



Shaun McKnight

AASP PROJECT UPDATE

By Angela Smith, PE, CM, RESPEC Aviation Group Manager

The airport inventory and facility needs update is underway. Much of the last several months were spent planning how to efficiently and effectively (1) validate all information within the aviation facility database, (2) revamp the airport inventory needs book, and (3) establish direct data connections to FAA's NOTAM and AIP grant history. In addition to holding several technical advisory work group meetings, the project team will complete 9 Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program (CIMP) inspections this summer. We hope to see you out in your community!

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AASP Project Update continued

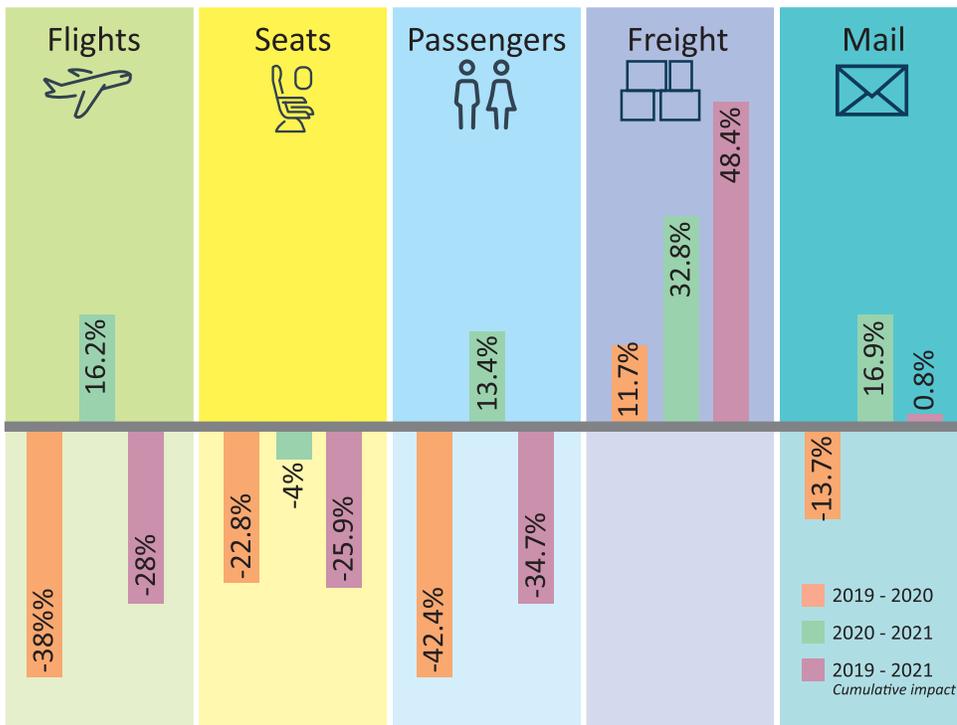
We have a new fact sheet in the hopper that many of you may appreciate. It will line out the process DOT&PF uses for rural airport project development, funding, and construction. I am looking forward to sharing the information with you.

Influence of the COVID19 Pandemic on air traffic became apparent in March of 2020. The following graph shows percentage changes air traffic elements in Alaska (minus

pass-through cargo flights) between March of 2019, 2020, and 2021. Flight availability and passenger volumes rebounded some by March of 2021, and freight volume was much higher than pre-COVID19 times. The number of seats available has lagged most likely because the carriers are transitioning aircraft away from freight capacity and back to passenger capacity.

Change in Alaska Air Traffic Elements

Source: U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Transtats Data, Form 41, T-100 Data, Alaska Domestic Segment and Market by U.S. Carriers.



FAA NEWS & UPDATES

FAA Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative (FAASI) Virtual Briefing

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) held a virtual briefing on the FAA Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative (FAASI) on May 6, 2021, from 9:00–10:30 a.m. Alaska Daylight Time (AKDT) to discuss the findings in the FAASI Interim Report.

The FAA evaluated current and planned efforts to address aviation safety challenges in Alaska. During this briefing, the FAA shared key highlights and opportunities and answered questions.



The FAASI Interim Report (PDF) is available at https://www.faa.gov/news/conferences_events/faasi/media/FAASI_Interim_Report.pdf

The FAA will offer individual stakeholder meeting opportunities via Zoom or teleconference between May and July 2021 to receive stakeholder feedback vital to our fact-finding efforts. The information collected during these outreach events will be incorporated into the FAASI Final Report.

Beginning May 18, 2021, two follow-on webinars will be scheduled each week until July 29, 2021. These webinars will be for smaller more focused audiences and topics. They are scheduled for Tuesdays (1300-1430 Alaska, 1400-1530 Pacific, 1600-1730 Central, 1700-1830 Eastern) and Thursdays (1000-1130 Alaska, 1100-1230 Pacific, 1300-1430 Central, 1400-1530 Eastern). For those webinars we will receive “requested” discussion topics in advance.

Use FAA Sign-Up Genius to schedule an individual outreach meeting on the interim report.

For individual outreach meeting-related questions, contact 9-AAL-FAASI@faa.gov

AASP Spotlight on M&O

Skagway airport manager Shaun McKnight was one of the prime players in the Skagway airport lighting project highlighted on page 1. Shaun and his four-person crew care for the Skagway airport, three bridges, 10.5 miles of unpaved roads, and 14.5 miles of mountain pass highway that transitions through 12 active avalanche paths.

It is impossible to interview Shaun without recognizing the immense pride he takes in the Skagway Airport, his crew and fellow airport managers in Southeast Alaska. Shaun is just one of the many DOT&PF employees around the state finding ways to keep our airports open for their communities, despite budget reductions and challenging conditions.



Shaun McKnight, Skagway Airport Foreman.



AirTime

Q What's new with CIMP inspections?

A You can now download all the photos from a CIMP Inspection as a zip file and as a plus, the photos retain their GPS coordinates. Within any inspection, select the Show All Photos button and you will see an option on the top right to Download All (Facilities > CIMP Inspection > Select the Inspection > Show All Photos > Download All).

Q I see some new NPIAS Airport Categories; can you explain that?

A The FAA National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) identifies airports, the roles they serve, and eligibility for federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). Phase III of the project updated terminology in the system to better correlate with the FAA. Check out the ? icon to learn more. (Facilities > General > NPIAS Level of Service).

Q Are there any new reports?

A New reports are planned for later this year; the team is currently focused on updating several current ones, including all Statistical reports to show the graphical and tabular data more clearly. These are available to download into PDF or Excel (Reports > Statistical Reporting).

Q I don't have a lot of time; how can I find out the latest on AASP?

A We get it. So, we added special section on our public website (alaskaasp.com) where we post the newest information. Look for our AASP flyer to guide you to the fresh links.



Coach Class

Need your CIMP password?

By Annette Lapkowski, P.E., Panther International Project Manager

It's summer time so you might be heading out for an inspection soon and can't remember your iPad password? Don't worry. We've got a Do-It-Yourself solution. Navigate to My Account (top right inside the AASP).

The screenshot shows the Alaska Aviation Database website. At the top right, there is a 'My Account' link and a 'Log Out' button. A yellow callout box says 'Update iPad password'. Below the navigation menu, there is a 'Welcome Message' section with a list of bullet points: Airport facilities, needs, capital projects (APEB) and CIMP inspection data; Facility documents pulled directly from eDocs, photos and sketches, and basic airport information; Miscellaneous aviation data for State of Alaska facilities as well as other public airports; Reporting module available to synthesize and analyze a variety of database elements. Below this is a 'News and Alerts' section with a list of bullet points: The AASP is transitioning to SOA login right! A new login screen is live: DOT staff can use their state email address and regular LDAP password to login; DOT&PF SFY20 operational expenses and revenues are loaded and available; Need to look up historic PCI information? Past reports are now available in the Facility Document section. For an Excel version, use the PCI Report in the Reports Tab! Internal AIP Spending Plan module - expected 2021. At the bottom, there is a 'Manage Profile' form with fields for First name, Last name, Email, User name, and Password. A yellow callout box says 'Use these for iPad access'.

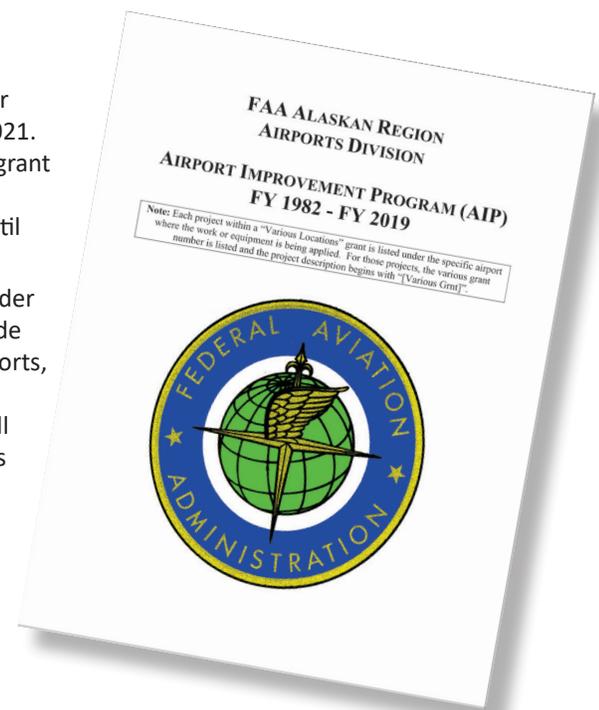
Here you'll find your username on the left side along with your password which you can update.

For @alaska.gov users, keep in mind that this password is only for the iPad, DOT&PF staff use their state email address and regular LDAP password to login into the AASP.

In The Works ...

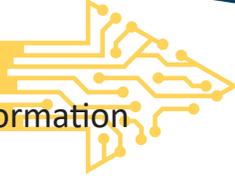
A new AIP grant tool is currently under design, with rollout planned for fall 2021. The tool will produce a report on AIP grant history, similar to the FAA's AIP Grant History booklet published annually until 2019.

The information will be searchable under a new, internal Facilities tab and include grant closeout dates for all NPIAS airports, including those managed by local sponsors. This means that all users will be able to see prior and current grants awarded, identify upcoming closeout deadlines, and produce reports. The addition of this information can help determine the age of existing infrastructure and prioritize improvements in the future.



TechShop

AASP Website Information



Weather Camera Program

The FAA Alaska Weather Camera Program is testing a new technology, based on the FAA's existing weather camera network in Alaska, aimed at making it safer to fly into remote airports and landing areas. This technology is called the Visual Weather Observation System (VWOS) and it is an advanced camera system that incorporates surface weather sensors into the camera platform to provide pilots with both visual and textual weather observations. The system is comprised of a suite of weather sensors and camera images that collectively observe and report important data fields including wind speed and direction, cloud height, visibility, present weather, temperature, dew point, and pressure. The VWOS is a low cost, advanced non-certified advisory weather system that uses automated processes to self-check and validate its operations and data outputs. Weather information is provided to users through a test website, and in the near future will be provided to pilots in the cockpit via radio transmission.

The VWOS is currently being evaluated, through early 2022, with a limited number of air carriers at four Alaska airports - Palmer, Eek, Healy River, and Tattilek. Technical performance of the VWOS system is being assessed to demonstrate that it sufficiently meets the operational need for advisory weather. This involves assessment of meteorological accuracy against other established weather observation sources, system reliability and availability, ability to successfully "self-certify," utility and potential benefit to operators and other system users, and system security. A formal process is being followed for collecting feedback from pilots and the companies they fly for. The feedback received to date has been very positive with pilots indicating strong usefulness of both camera images and surface weather observations.

Evaluation of test data will begin in Fall 2021 with the goal of demonstrating successful

system performance and operational benefits. In the future, the VWOS system could be affordably installed and operated to improve aviation access and safety at as

many as 120 Alaska locations where there currently is no weather information. For more information contact: 9-AJO-WCAM-ProgramOffice@faa.gov



Above: Four Alaska airports are evaluating VWOS through early 2022.



Right: Photo taken during installation at the Tattilek site taken from the VWOS platform depicting the Vaisala HMP55 temperature and humidity sensor and Vaisala PWD22 present weather sensor.



Left: Visual Weather Observation System (VWOS) platform after being installed at the Palmer airport site in early 2020.



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