



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

Chapter 736 Newsletter for March 2013

Maine Aviation Forum 2013

Bruce Patten, Jody and Mike Watson and Bob Gembala attended the forum representing Chapter 736 on Saturday, Feb.23 at the Owl's Head Transportation Museum.

There was a decent turnout and a very successful meeting. Approximately 55 people attended.

Here are a few photos:



User fee opponents on the move again in Congress

General aviation's allies in the House of Representatives are wasting no time making sure that any proposal to implement aviation user fees runs into the customary—and overwhelming—resistance in Congress.

The Republican chairman and top Democrat on the House aviation subcommittee, and the co-chairs of the House GA Caucus, have mounted a new campaign to recruit their colleagues to sign on to a letter to President Barack Obama, to express opposition to your continued support of a \$100 per flight fee on commercial and general aviation.

Congress nixed the administration's two previous attempts to implement user fees, consistent with its overwhelming rejection of numerous user-fee proposals in the past, the letter says.

House aviation subcommittee members are urging their colleagues to send a signal that user fees would still devastate a struggling general aviation industry.

Last year, 195 members of Congress signed a bipartisan letter opposing user fees. Of those, 155 have returned to Congress in 2013.

EAA and AOPA members are urged to contact their member of Congress as soon as possible, to let them know that user fees are a bad idea—they are inefficient, expensive to administer, and can compromise safety.

FAA to close 238 (est.) air traffic control towers

It was unknown which traffic control towers would be affected when the automatic federal budget cuts in the so-called sequestration kicked in March 1, but the FAA last week released a list of airports, mainly small and medium-sized, that will be affected.

The majority -- 195 -- of traffic control towers scheduled to close are operated by outside contractors. An additional 43 are operated by the FAA.

The FAA said only air traffic control towers operated under its Contract Tower Control Program will be affected.

Federal aviation officials have said overnight shifts would be shut down at air traffic control towers, but tower operations at some airports may face outright closure.

The federal agency has also put out the option of furloughing FAA employees for one or two days per two-week pay period, beginning in mid-April.

Officials have said it is too early to gauge how much of an effect the budget cuts would have on the average air traveler, but warned of delays.

The closures, however, are not yet final. The FAA will issue a final closure list on March 18, the Associated Press reported.

Phaseout of 121.5-MHz ELTs Appears Likely

The Federal Communications Commission is seeking comments by April 1 on a plan to phase out 121.5-MHz emergency locator transmitters in favor of new satellite-based technology. This time it looks like the FCC could get its wish.

The proposal is really nothing new considering the FCC has been seeking a ban on the manufacture, sale and use of 121.5-MHz ELTs for several years. The difference this time is that opposition to the plan appears to be waning as more parts of the world are requiring the new 406-MHz ELTs and more aircraft owners are upgrading to the technology.

The international Cospas-Sarsat satellite system stopped processing signals from the 121.5-MHz frequency in 2009, and the FAA followed up by prohibiting the development of new units that rely on the frequency. But the agency has yet to ban their continued production nor has it required aircraft owners to equip with 406-MHz ELTs.

That could be about to change. Around 180,000 general aviation aircraft still carry 121.5-MHz ELTs, but signals from those transmitters can only be processed by ground-based receivers or aircraft flying overhead. The next logical step, as the FCC sees it, is a total ban on the use of 121.5 ELTs.

The FCC wants to provide a one-year grandfather period to “enable manufacturers, importers and distributors of 121.5-MHz ELTs to largely avoid any significant economic burden associated with stranded inventory.” After that, the FCC would select a specific date to “prohibit the continued use of 121.5-MHz ELTs in service.”

The Aircraft Electronics Association has said it sees no reason for the manufacture of “obsolete” 121.5-MHz ELT technology. AOPA, meanwhile, has called the FCC’s latest action on ELTs a “measured approach.”

In other words, nobody’s really fighting for the lowly 121.5-MHz ELT any longer.

To submit your comments on the proposal, **[visit the FCC’s electronic comment filing website.](#)**

NTSB to consider new safety alerts for general aviation

The National Transportation Safety Board will meet next week to consider new safety alerts aimed at reducing the number of accidents involving general aviation aircraft.

The areas under consideration include:

- Reduced-visual-reference accidents.
- Aerodynamic stalls at low altitude.
- Pilot inattention to warnings of mechanical problems.

- Risk management for aviation maintenance technicians.

- Risk management for pilots.

The board will be meeting on Tuesday to consider the issues.

An NTSB safety alert comes in the form of an information sheet about a safety issue along with guidance about handling the problem.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at the Weathervane Restaurant in Waterville on Monday, Mar. 18th. Please arrive around 6:00 pm if you plan to have dinner so that the meeting can begin at its normal time of 7:30 pm.