



Chapter 736 Newsletter for February 2016

Maine Aviation Forum 2016

Mike and Jody Watson and Charlie Surprenant attended the Maine Aviation Forum at Owl's Head Transportation Museum on Sunday, February 14th. The aim of this yearly gathering is to plan and publicize aviation-related news and events in Maine for the coming year.

The all-day event included speakers from many of the EAA Chapters and Flying Clubs in our area, as well as the Maine Aviation Historical Society / Maine Air Museum, ACE Camp, WINGs Reality, AOPA, Maine Aeronautical Advisory Board (MAAB), Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Seaplane Pilots' Association, Maine Aeronautics Association, Maine Aviation Business Association (MABA), PK Floats, and a presentation on the 'Glacier Girl' recovery from Greenland by Lou Sapienza of the Fallen American Veterans Foundation ('Leave No Man Behind'). It was a great day for those of us with a passion for aviation.

I encourage you to visit the Maine Aeronautics Association website (http://www.maineaeronautics.org/?page_id=13) for information on 2016 aviation events in Maine. Lisa Reece does a great job keeping the calendar up to date.

Other websites you might find interesting:

Maine Aviation Historical Society / Maine Air Museum in Bangor

<http://www.maineairmuseum.com/page/942/home>

ACE Camp (new website)

<http://www.maineacecamp.org/index.html>

Fallen American Veterans Foundation

<http://www.favf.us/>

WINGs Reality

<http://wingsrealityedu.com/>

Maine Aeronautical Advisory Board

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/aviation/maab/>

Maine Aviation Business Association (MABA)

<http://mrra.us/maine-aviation-business-association/>

Recreational Aviation Foundation

<http://recreationalaviationfoundation.org/>

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)

Sean Collins Eastern Regional Manager (recently moved back home to Maine)

<http://www.aopa.org/Advocacy/Airports-and-State-Advocacy/Eastern>

EAA Youth Protection Policy (NEW)

EAA recently released its Youth Protection Policy, which sets basic requirements for EAA staff and volunteers who work with children under age 18. This policy takes effect on May 1, 2016 and will directly impact our Fly-In and Young Eagles Rally in July. Charlie has done the training, which includes a background check, and I plan to do the same. I encourage you to learn about the new policy on EAA's website.

<http://www.eaa.org/en/ea/aviation-education-and-resources/ea-youth-education/youth-protection-policy-and-program>

This is something we need to discuss and plan for as it relates to our Fly-In. Please take the time to read about the policy before our meetings resume in the spring.

Mike

Changes to pilot testing and certification set for June

A new approach to pilot certification and testing is coming together with help from AOPA and industry experts, putting the FAA on track to meet a June 2016 goal of transitioning to the updated system for those seeking an airplane private pilot certificate or instrument rating.

AOPA chairs the current Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee's Airman Certification System working group, the final stage of a multi-year, industry-led effort to make the certification and testing process more relevant and meaningful to modern pilots.

"Revamping the testing and certification system has been a massive undertaking, but one that's well worthwhile," said David Oord, AOPA vice president of regulatory affairs and chairman of the working group. "Over time, the existing system has become dated. Taking the knowledge test should require a real understanding and comprehension of the information required and how it can affect your flying, rather than memorizing facts and answers to sample questions. The

updated system addresses those problems and is designed to adapt as technology and the flying environment change. The new system also directly links both the knowledge and practical exams.”

Beginning in mid-June, the FAA plans to transition away from the current practical test standards (PTS) to the new airman certification standards (ACS) for private pilot-airplane and instrument rating-airplane applicants. To prepare for the transition, the FAA is providing information on its website as various elements of the testing and certification program are revised. Among the items now available are draft standards for the private pilot certificate and instrument rating, a briefing about the new standards, answers to frequently asked questions, an informational brochure, and a document called “What’s new and upcoming in airman testing,” which was updated this month.

“Knowledge tests and practical tests will still require pilots to demonstrate that they have assimilated the information and skills needed to pilot an airplane,” Oord said. “The real difference between the old approach and new one is that the requirements will be set out clearly from the start so applicants can integrate that information into every aspect of their training and preparation.”

The FAA has already tested the new standards in both Florida and Washington state and found them to be comparable to existing standards in terms of difficulty, time, and information required. The new standards do delete some topics, particularly those related to outdated or little-used technologies and discontinued products. Among the topics that have been eliminated in the new ACS and current tests are ADF/NDB operations, world aeronautical charts, and questions about the height of blowing sand. Questions about flight plans also have been temporarily removed. They will be updated to reflect the FAA’s discontinuation of the domestic flight planning form in favor of the form used by the International Civil Aviation Organization, a transition scheduled to take place in October.

Notams going digital

The analog and text-based notam system is on the way out, and AOPA is participating in the transition to a digital system of filing and accessing notams that has already begun to facilitate powerful new tools for pilots.

United States Notam Service will migrate into the Federal Notam Service.

The FAA processed and disseminated more than 950,000 domestic notams in 2015, and a similar number of various other types. This avalanche of data can be much more easily sorted through with the new [FAA Notam Search](#) website, created to supplement (for now) and eventually replace the PilotWeb portal familiar to many pilots. The new notam search portal allows pilots to sort notams by location and flight route, and even look back at past notams up to three years old. The PilotWeb portal will be phased out following the transition.

The digital system will allow pilots to tailor notam searches very specifically to their mission, and one example that may come to fruition is a map depicting obstruction light outages, which

are difficult to plot based on text notams but can be very important to emergency services pilots and others flying at low levels. AOPA has suggested incorporating aviation maps, such as sectionals, into the notam search as well.

A parallel tool allows airport managers and others who file notams to **do so electronically online**. The Notam Manager tool is digital and will both simplify sorting notices and enhance safety. Nearly 700 airports now utilize the Notam Manager tool, and AOPA is encouraging more airports to use the new program.

Enhanced notam accessibility and more effective ways to sort them were among the mandates of the Pilot's Bill of Rights, and the new FAA website for searching notams was a direct result of the collaboration among stakeholders that followed.

AOPA opposes user fees as reauthorization moves to full House

AOPA is standing firm in its opposition to user fees as FAA reauthorization legislation moves to the full House. The legislation passed out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee on a 32 to 26 vote following a marathon markup Feb. 11.

“We’re profoundly disappointed that user fees are still part of this legislation,” said AOPA President Mark Baker. “AOPA simply won’t accept user fees in any form on any segment of general aviation. And while there are some very positive provisions for GA in this proposal, user fees are a nonstarter for us.”

Following an amendment, H.R. 4441, also known as the Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act of 2016, would exempt Part 135 charter operations in Alaska and Hawaii from user fees, but operators in other states would still be subject to the charges—a situation AOPA says is unacceptable despite the inclusion of pro-GA provisions like third class medical reform and certification reform in the bill.

Baker pledged to continue to work with general aviation advocates, including Reps. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Todd Rokita (R-Ind.), to defeat user fees. Both Graves and Rokita have a long history of opposition to user fees and both voted “no” on sending H.R. 4441 to the full House.

In addition to user fees, the bill that passed out of committee retains plans to separate air traffic control functions from the FAA and place them into a federally chartered not-for-profit entity. The controversial privatization plan survived a proposed amendment from Committee Ranking Member Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), which would have kept the FAA intact and provided a portion of the agency’s funding through mandatory spending, reducing the funding uncertainty caused by the annual appropriations process. That measure failed on a 25-34 vote along party lines.

During the 10-hour markup, dozens of amendments were considered. Among those adopted was a provision to increase Airport Improvement Program funding to 2011 levels and provide a 2 percent annual increase in the funding level, which was accepted on a 47 to 12 vote.

Another provision affecting GA was an amendment that would allow private pilots to use the Internet to connect with passengers who want to share a ride, reversing a 2015 court decision that only pilots holding at least a commercial pilot certificate can seek passengers through some websites. While that amendment was accepted, DeFazio advised that he would take a close look at the language, saying he doesn't want to create "an Uber in the sky" with inexperienced pilots.

Other amendments adopted by the committee include a measure to prohibit e-cigarettes and vaporizers on airplanes, require additional cockpit barriers in new commercial aircraft, and create a micro-UAS category for the purpose of regulating commercial drones weighing less than 4.4 pounds.

The bill now moves to the full House where it will likely face another round of amendments as well as skepticism from appropriators who have expressed opposition to removing ATC operations from the fiscal oversight of Congress. No timeline has been set for House consideration and it is not yet known when the Senate will offer its own proposal for FAA reforms. Current FAA authorization expires March 31, making it unlikely that the House and Senate will agree on final legislation before the deadline and setting the stage for another extension to keep the FAA operating.
