



# MSO GA NEWS



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*Editor's note: The writers for this issue brought in so much **great stuff** that I was sure everyone would want to have a chance to read it. This experimental "electronic edition" is unedited, compared to the heavily edited version for print publication. Please let me know if you think this a good or bad idea: Gary Matson, [gjmatson@montana.com](mailto:gjmatson@montana.com)*

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## GENERAL AVIATION CAN BE A GROWING ASSET FOR MSO

By Gary Matson

What is General Aviation? Halftrack flies off, leaving Beetle Bailey, Sergeant Snorkel, and all of Camp Swampy celebrating the departure? Actually, no. It's all aviation except scheduled airlines or military. Emergency medical services, charter and sightseeing flights, business flying, flight instruction, and personal flying: All of these are currently part of MSO General Aviation. For the purpose of this article, let's focus on the benefits of business and "small airplane" flying. This is the segment of GA that would bring more assets to MSO if more privately owned hangars were built here. Lets call it "PF", for "private flying."

**Economic benefits.** Funny how this winds up being one of the first things we think about in modern life. *The economic benefits of GA are substantial, but don't show up as income in the MSO ledger the way payments from airlines, vendors, and others do, and are therefore much harder to evaluate.* There are actually 3 kinds of economic benefits created by PF.

1. Direct benefits at MSO
  - o To our FBO's, Minuteman and Northstar: Fuel, maintenance and other services.
  - o To the Airport: FBO's pay MSO a fuel flowage fee (\$66,558.30 in fiscal 2005-6) for the aviation fuel they sell; private hangar owners pay a ground lease fee and maintenance fee to the Airport.
2. Indirect benefits to the larger Missoula area
  - o MSO employees and vendors spend their earnings here.
  - o Business owners who fly to business contacts bring their incomes home to Missoula
  - o New businesses start up, and old businesses stay because of opportunities to access larger markets through private flying
  - o Missoula contractors benefit from constructing hangars and other facilities for GA use
  - o County property tax, assessed at 1.5% of the appraised value (\$600 for \$40,000 hangar)

3. Induced benefits – Each dollar earned at MSO and spent in the Missoula area will circulate in the community more than once. Depending upon the local economy, the number of times the dollar circulates before it's whisked away by the global whirlwind can be 2-7 times. To be conservative, a multiplier of 3 is reasonable.

According to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), "General Aviation is a \$64.5 billion dollar industry providing economic growth to state and local economies." It's hard to estimate how much the Airport and the Missoula area could benefit from an increase in MSO private flying. However, there are templates for local economic studies, which could be used here if there were interest. Clearly there are important economic benefits, but they are not only much less visible than the staple MSO income from the Passenger Facility Charge but are also distributed through the entire Missoula area rather than coming directly to MSO as a point beneficiary.

**The intangibles.** Numerous benefits of private flying are obscure to the casual observer. Some of them are quality of life enhancements not often thought of. They would all be increased by an attractive expansion of GA hangars and facilities in Missoula.

- Promoting aviation – Volunteer pilots members of the Experimental Aircraft Association offer "Young Eagle" flights to budding aviators ages 8 through 17. Nationwide, EAA pilots had flown over 1,000,000 Young Eagles by the end of 2003, many of them by Missoula private pilots. The Missoula based Civil Air Patrol offers in-depth training and experience to young persons interested in aviation. Missoula educators use the Airport and private pilot organizations as resources for their classrooms. Missoula private pilots volunteer their time to do "job shadows" for high school students. Pilots take their friends aloft for more evidence of what we have here in this Western Montana place that is so precious.
- Medical help – Volunteer private pilots transport patients lacking travel resources to locations of medical treatment.
- Ensuring a future for aviation – Missoula FBO's offer flight training for aspiring pilots. Many of the flight instructors, as well as the students, go on to commercial and other professional aviation careers. Others become private pilots, purchasing aircraft themselves or renting them from local FBO's.
- Aviation Safety – Flying an airplane is an activity demanding practice, a lot like golf. With no practice at all, I can easily keep in the middle of the fairway all the time using my putter! Similarly, with no practice at all I can safely taxi the airplane around the Missoula airport. Neither type of "putting" gets me where I want to be. That can only be safely done through practice. Pilots who fly out of Missoula are practiced communicators, because both ground and air operations are cleared by controllers, and we are therefore more familiar with communications language and structure that keeps us safe other places. When more GA pilots experience control in Missoula's Class Delta airspace, both as pilots based here and as pilots stopping by, the result will be greater safety through communications practice.
- Participation in Montana's community of private pilots – This community is a vibrant participant in Montana's culture but is unknown to most non pilots. An attractive GA development in Missoula would enhance our airport as a destination for special events attended by dozens of aircraft and their pilots and passengers. Examples of events in Montana during August are:
  - Montana Antique Airplane Association, Three Forks
  - Twelfth Splash-In-Fly-In, Whitefish
  - Lincoln Airport Opening Celebration
  - Montana Fun Weekend, Cut Bank
  - Eighth Annual Polson Fly-in, with special events all weekend

**General Aviation at other Montana Airports.** Missoula has long been known as, to put it bluntly, "unfriendly" to GA. I have heard this not only from virtually every pilot based somewhere else but also from aviation authorities (I won't cite them, but trust me). Personally, I don't believe this to be the case but for whatever reason MSO's GA component is much less than for most Montana cities.

Bozeman has 260 based GA aircraft as opposed to Missoula's 90, and has 131 hangars of all shapes and sizes. Helena has 204 based GA aircraft and 81 hangars. Both airports:

- Own hangars and lease ground for privately owned hangars

- Provide sites for new hangar building by private owners
- Fund GA development out of their regular operating fund
- Furnish and maintain GA taxiways, requiring the hangar owner to pay paving cost from hangar to taxiway

Smaller, non-commercial airports have a different basis for their operations. Hangars, taxiways, and infrastructure can be funded 100% by the FAA Airport Improvement Program. The Montana Division of Aeronautics also has an aggressive funding support program that has been a boon to many of our smaller airports. In contrast, AIP entitlement funds are not available for GA development at commercial airports like MSO, and State Aeronautics funds are not generally provided where there is significant income from commercial operations.

**The bottom line.** Assets that could be increased by expanding GA development in Missoula are a little harder to appreciate than the direct income from the Passenger Facilities Charge that is MSO's funding staple. Still, assets brought by private flying can be great, and it will be worth the already substantial time investment of Airport Board and Staff to continue planning ways to increase GA presence here.



Bozeman (above) and Helena have particularly well-developed GA areas. BZN (GA area is upper right in the photo) makes no charge for new hangar owners to hook up to electricity/gas; HLN charges a 1-time fee of \$650. BZN charges a one time fee of \$1500 for sewer/water hookup and a monthly fee of \$35. HLN currently allows individual wells and septic systems to be installed by private hangar owners, but is considering centralizing these utilities in the future. (Photo courtesy of Brian Sprnger, BZN)



Missoula Pilot Gary Weyerman and Young Eagles. Our local EAA Chapter 517 has flown many of the Young Eagles that are included in the nationwide tally of over a million YE flown. Young Eagle flights are given by volunteer EAA pilots, without charge, to any interested young person between the ages 8 through 17. The flights are a community service and encourage an interest in aviation. (Photo by Frank Tremper)

## **MSO BOARD GENERAL AVIATION COMMITTEE**

By Paul Stafford

News flash - government works slowly. The Hangar Ground Lease saga continues. We last left our story in May with a joint meeting of the GA, Lease and Facilities committees, who asked for some pilot-unfriendly changes to the draft lease. I tabled the discussion (rather than accept their changes) until I could have some off-line discussions with the players. To all I would like to say thanks for your patience. The creation of a GA friendly airport is not something done in a day, or evidently even in a year, but we are on the right track. I will appreciate your presence at meetings to lend support to the GA committee members as we put issues on the table. These include meetings of the Board's Lease and Contracts Committee and Facilities Committee, to be held soon. It will be very important to have a good showing of pilot support at the August 29<sup>th</sup> regular Board meeting, at which the GA Hangar Lease Agreement will be considered for possible approval by the MSO board.

In other news, Cris and I continue to work on the NAPTN and Cat II approach issues. It turns out this is not as easy as it first appeared, and we are working the process with necessarily more subtlety than before. Some news should be forthcoming after the 20<sup>th</sup>...

Finally, watch your weather this summer! While we are out of winter overcast and spring rain, convective activity is upon us. On a recent flight to Jackson Hole, I flew between two CUs which topped out at 45,000', and was appropriately humbled. I heard a harrowing story about a C-421 last week that suffered severe hail damage *and* two lightning strikes. I like the old adage about pilots who use their superior knowledge to avoid having to use their superior skills.

## **MISSOULA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE**

By Chris Hart

Missoula International Airport will soon unveil a completely redesigned, user-friendly website. With new visual and technological enhancements, users will find the site easier to navigate, much more informative, and up-to-date.

The new website will provide all the information today's travelers expect, including parking options, airlines and rental cars, directions to the terminal, and real-time flight arrival and departure information. What makes this site unique are the features that visitors may not expect but will appreciate; including airport construction updates, links to local attractions and events, airport tenant information, new graphics, a live airport webcam, and a personal video greeting from Missoula Mayor John Engen.

"I did enjoy my experience filming a welcome message for the airport's web site in no small part because I was standing a few yards away from the beautiful Clark Fork River in downtown Missoula on a fantastic summer day," said Mayor John Engen. "The film crew was professional and patient with a politician who was unable to remember his lines from take to take."

GA pilots and aviation enthusiasts will also find the new website useful and informative, offering an extensive aircraft photo gallery and a detailed year-by-year account of Missoula's aviation history, as well as useful links to official government resources, newsletters, and the online version of MSO GA News.

The website will also feature a live airport webcam capable of providing visitors with a stunning view of the airport and the surrounding Missoula valley from its location high atop the Missoula air traffic control tower. Manufactured by Axis, the user-controllable webcam is one of the most technologically advanced cameras available, featuring a 26 power optical zoom, infrared night vision, and full pan and tilt capabilities. The camera is expected to be a popular resource for general aviation pilots, travelers, and aviation enthusiasts. Anyone with internet access will be able to take control of the camera for a few moments to view the airport's weather conditions, zoom in on airliners, or just enjoy the scenic view, all in real time.

The re-designed website will also include a new name and web address which was chosen to more effectively emphasize Missoula International Airport's role as a vital transportation hub, and to promote the airport as a gateway for visitors to the city of Missoula and Western Montana.

"I'm occasionally asked to welcome visitors to Missoula and accept those invitations whenever possible," said Mayor Engen. "Missoula's a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. It's

also a terrific place to visit. I'm proud of my hometown and its citizens. I'm also proud of the work the City of Missoula performs every day on behalf of the folks we serve.

Once launched this summer, visitors attempting to access the airports current website at [www.msoairport.org](http://www.msoairport.org) will automatically be redirected to the official new website.

## **THE ART OF FLYING**

By Art Dykstra, CFII

We are very fortunate that we live in an area that offers a wide variety of flying. You can take a scenic flight thru the valleys, fly low and slow in the mountains, shoot an instrument approach down to ILS minimums, land at an International Airport with 9000 + ft. of paved runway and hang out at a posh FBO, or load up the camping gear and the fishing pole and fly into a remote backcountry landing strip. Any of these can be accomplished with an hour's flight from MSO. If you choose to visit a backcountry landing site, a little planning will turn the flight into the spectacular adventure it should be.

- **THE BIG THREE: Pilot / Plane / Weather**

Each of these must be up to the task. You may have just bought the latest "Backcountry Bushwacker" airplane with all the "Alaska mods", but if your flying is not up to par, the outcome of the flight is a bit shaky. The weather is the hardest one to deal with because we have no control over it. Canceling a trip that was planned long in advance is very difficult to do, especially if friends and family are involved." You spent HOW MUCH for this airplane and we still can't go?"

- **PLANNING**

Planning is Risk Management. There is no denying that flying in the Mountains has a higher risk factor than the Flatlands. Our job as pilots is to minimize the risk to a level that we are comfortable with. This level will change with each flight based upon several factors, the route of flight, the people you have on board (elderly, children), and the conditions you are up against (time of year, load, field conditions, etc.). There is a delicate balance between either being over gross weight by carrying too much fuel and survival gear, or flying without fuel reserves and proper clothing. I once had a passenger show up for a flight into the Idaho Wilderness wearing a t-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops. How would you like to spend a few days hiking thru the brush in that? A great option is to make multiple trips to achieve the balance of what you need with what you can safely carry (and it is a good excuse to get in some extra flying!).

- **PREFLIGHT**

The average walk around is not adequate for Mountain flying. There are no maintenance shops and no mechanics on site if your airplane breaks down. Special attention should be given to fluid levels, fuel, oil, and brake fluid. If you have room it's a good idea to toss in a couple of quarts of oil. It might be just enough to get you home if you have an oil leak. A small basic tool kit is also handy for minor repairs. Just don't get carried away with your Snap-on collection, tools are very heavy! All nuts and bolts need to be checked for security, tire condition is very important also, unimproved strips are hard on tires. Make sure the battery is fully charged and the engine starts easily. A dead battery after a great day of camping will ruin the trip. Double check - Mixture, Master, Mags and fuel - all OFF!

- LOADING

Load your airplane very carefully. An airplane that is out of CG limits will be very difficult if not impossible to control. You can use the CG to your advantage by loading slightly aft, but within limits. This will lighten the weight on the nose wheel and make it easier to taxi, take off and land on a soft field. The cargo must be secured somehow, rope, net, seat belt. As you load each item ask yourself: "Do I want this to hit me in the back of my head?" If the answer is no, then tie it down.

- SOFT FIELD

As you depart your home field, you should practice a soft field take off. It is a great way to get warmed up, and it allows you to get a good feel for the airplane before you have to do it for real. Remember the basic concept: You are transferring the weight of the airplane to the wings as quickly as possible. One common problem I see is holding too much back pressure as the airplane accelerates. You just need to get the nose wheel barely off the ground to reduce the friction and drag. If you continue to hold full back elevator you are increasing the induced drag from the high angle of attack. For best results, hold full back elevator to start, then as the speed increase makes the elevator more effective and the nose wheel comes off the ground you can start to relax some of the back pressure. The goal is to hold the nose inches off the ground until the plane becomes airborne. If the strip is rough, you may bounce into the air briefly, don't force the plane to fly, it will fly when it reaches the right amount of airflow over the wings, so be patient. After you are flying, a technique that I like is to push the nose down and aim for a spot about half way up the trees at the far end. This keeps you in ground effect so you can build up speed. Sometimes it is difficult to judge straight and level if the strip is sloped or slanted. I hold the nose on my aiming point until I reach  $V_x$  for a short field or  $V_y$  for a normal climbout and then start climbing. Once all obstacles are cleared and things look good then clean up the airplane.

A soft field landing is takeoff in reverse: You are trying to transfer the weight of the aircraft from the wings to the wheels as gently as possible. If you watch a duck land on a pond you will see a textbook soft field landing, done to perfection. Use a touch of power if the flare and try to slide the plane gently onto the grass. You should have full up elevator on the rollout to keep the nose wheel light. If you are landing in the early morning, be extra careful for wildlife on or near the runway, and be aware the morning dew makes the grass very slick.

- CANYON FLYING

Some of the back country strips are down in the bottom of steep canyons. This can cause some concern for pilots flying in for the first time. Just keep in mind that the airplane reacts only to the wind and your inputs: Slow flight is slow flight, a steep turn is a steep turn, whether you are in a tight canyon or over the Great Plains. Pilots are the weak link in the chain. Our minds trick us into thinking we must use some secret, mystical maneuver that only four pilots in the whole Universe know. The truth is there is nothing you have to do that you didn't demonstrate on your private pilot check ride, slow flight, steep turns, short and soft landings. If you are proficient at those maneuvers, you will have no trouble at all.

When you are turning in a canyon, 30 degrees of bank will work just fine if you have slowed down and put in a notch of flaps. The faster you go, the bigger the turn radius. Practice some turns on your way out to the strip; you will be surprised how little distance is needed to turn around. A good speed to shoot for is the speed you use on the base leg when you are in the

pattern. If you must bank steeper than 30, be aware the stall speed increases very quickly. So to safely make the turn, just relax the nose and do a slow decent in the turn, this will unload the wing and prevent the stall. As with all flying, coordination is mandatory when doing these turns!

- PATTERN

Flying the pattern at a mountain strip can be intimidating. You may have to fly an odd shaped pattern or get closer to the trees than you normally do. Try to make the pattern as “normal” as you can, but don’t become distracted by deviations you might make. It doesn’t matter what kind of gyration you do to get there, as long as you end up on final, on speed, on altitude, and in the proper configuration (gear, flaps).

You must keep your pattern in close to minimize your risk in case you have problems. Most strips do not have many good landing sites around them, so you must stay in a position to make the strip at all times. Judging your altitude is hard if the terrain is uneven. A great rule of thumb is to check your altimeter on the downwind, then lose 300 ft. abeam the touchdown point, and another 300 ft. on base. That leaves you with 400 ft. on final. This will help you avoid being out of position when you roll out on final. If things don’t look good on final, go around. As you are overflying the field on your way in, make sure you scout an exit route for yourself. Trying to salvage a bad approach that will likely lead to a bad landing in the backcountry is a really bad idea. Remember, no mechanics if you bend something. Some landing sites are one-way in, and one-way out. If that is the case, then you had better be on top of your game (practice) and it will play a big role in your risk management planning.

- DENSITY ALTITUDE

This is the one that sneaks up on you if you’re not careful.

The physical elevation of the landing strip is not the most important number. It is the altitude that the airplane reacts to, based upon air density, that’s important. As the temperature rises the air molecules move farther apart, making the air less dense. This dramatically impacts the performance of the plane. “No problem,” you say, “I’ve got a turbo charged engine on my Backcountry Bushwacker.” I am a big fan of turbo charged engines, but it does nothing to help the propeller or the wings. They are both greatly affected by the thin air. Spending a little time with the performance charts will answer a lot of question. Don’t forget, those chart numbers were flown by professional test pilots in brand new airplanes.

A well executed flight into a remote backcountry grass strip is one of the highlights of Aviation. Planning and proficiency make the flight uneventful

Lots of great resources are out there for mountain flying. One of my favorites is The Mountain Flying Bible, by Sparky Imeson. AOPA also puts out some mountain flying tips and has an interactive course online for members. It takes awhile to get through it, but has some good points.

Lastly, hands on training from a qualified Instructor is a great way to take the mystery out of Mountain Flying.

▪BE SAFE▪



Left: Approach to Fish Lake, Idaho  
 Above: Art and Maule at Fish Lake (Photos courtesy of Art Dykstra)

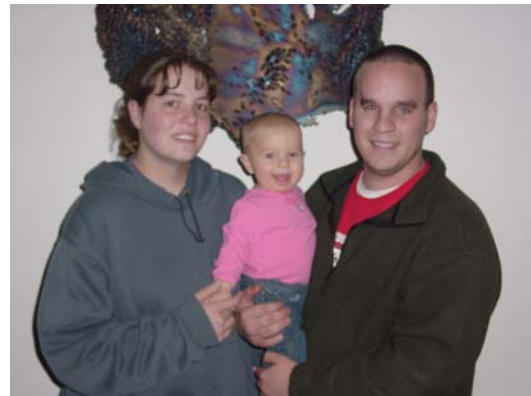
**ANGEL FLIGHT WEST – FLIGHTS OF HOPE**

By David Hunt

Imagine the hardships endured by medical patients who must travel hundreds of miles to get treatment for cancer, kidney disease, heart disease and numerous other serious illnesses. Not only do these individuals and their families face life-threatening conditions, but they also experience significant financial stress from medical bills and travel costs that are not covered by insurance providers. Now imagine a group of pilots who regularly gathered on weekends to fly off to a nearby destination for a “\$100 hamburger” and wondered if there wasn’t something more purposeful that they could do with their aviation skills and resources. Such was the genesis of Angel Flight West.



Angel Flight Pilots (back row, L-R) Montana Wing pilots David Hunt and Jerry Cain, Washington Wing pilots Chuck DAMrosia and Jim Richards. They stand in back of five members of a Rapid City family they transported to Seattle to visit a very ill father/grandfather. (Photo courtesy of David Hunt)



To undergo treatment for retinal cancer, Isabell accompanied by one or both of her parents has flown 9 round trips from Missoula to Los Angeles on Angel Flight West flights over the past two years. (Photo courtesy of David Hunt)

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## **Our Mission**

The mission of Angel Flight West is to arrange free air transportation in response to health care and other compelling human needs. Angel Flight West links both volunteer private pilots and commercial airline partners with people in need whose non-emergency health care problems require that they travel to and from medical facilities throughout the 13 western states, including Alaska and Hawaii. The costs of all flights are donated and there is never a charge for an Angel Flight West mission.

## **The Beginnings**

Angel Flight was born out of the hearts and minds of a dozen pilots who gathered at the Santa Monica airport in the fall of 1983. They recognized that a need existed within the health care community, that transportation was a significant barrier for countless low-income people who must travel long distances to receive medical treatment. And they saw a perfect opportunity to combine their passion for flying with their desire to help those in need. The pilots promptly and resolutely formed American Medical Support Flight Team, Inc., which soon became known as Angel Flight.

In 1997 Angel Flight expanded beyond California to include the 13 western states and became Angel Flight West with state organizations called “wings”. Soon, other regional organizations were active across the country.

From the small but meaningful beginning, Angel Flight has grown from an organization of a dozen California pilots flying 15 missions in the first year to a nationwide organization today comprised of over 5,000 pilots flying over 12,000 missions per year.

## **Angel Flight America**

Angel Flight America began in early 1999 as a dream and vision of the directors of several of the larger Angel Flight organizations across the country. They realized that more people in need could be helped by the unique service that Angel Flight provides if the organizations could collaborate in a way that would leverage their collective energies and resources to bring greater visibility and recognition. With the common mission of flying people in need, seven organizations – each retaining its autonomy – formally combined their efforts in the spring of 2000.

Angel Flight America has **7 regional divisions**: Central, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, South Central, Southeast, West, and Mercy Medical Airlift.

A single toll-free number, (877) 621-7177, will geographically route a caller to the office of the appropriate Angel Flight organization.

Angel Flight West members are now part of an even larger family, stretching from coast to coast and reaching out to even more people in need, bringing them help and hope.

## **Montana Wing**

As one of the 13 “wings” of Angel Flight West, the Montana Wing has 46 members including 39 command pilots and 7 non-pilot volunteers. Our command pilots flew 52 missions in 2005. Often, our passengers include the patient and companion such as a spouse or parent flying with a child. We may fly from remote destinations within the state to several larger cities with major medical treatment facilities. Patients are also flown out of state to major medical facilities in cities such as Seattle, Portland, Denver or Salt Lake City.

Longer missions may be broken into two or more legs for passenger comfort and to better match the range of smaller general aviation aircraft. A typical flight to Seattle for a Montana patient might be one leg from the point of origin to Spokane where the passengers would transfer to a second leg with a Washington Wing pilot for the flight from Spokane to Seattle. This provides a break for the passengers and allows both pilots to comfortably fly their mission legs and return home. Pilots are always welcome to fly multiple legs if so desired.

### **Patient Requirements**

Angel Flight West arranges flights for patients of all ages. Patients must be stable, ambulatory and able to board small private aircraft with minimal assistance. They must have a medical release from their physician allowing them to fly in non-pressurized aircraft.

### **Personal Perspective**

I became an Angel Flight West member in 2003. Two years ago, I became the Montana Wing Leader. I have found flying missions to be very gratifying and a wonderful way to use my aviation interests in a very purposeful way. My passengers and their companions have been deeply appreciative for Angel Flight's services. I am inspired by their courage and spirit as they confront significant medical challenges. I always feel that I come away from flying with a deep appreciation of the opportunity to help others less fortunate. Unlike writing a check to a charitable organization, sharing your aircraft, time and resources to provide much needed transportation is a very powerful experience and in any case, you get to fly!

I have flown parents with their cancer stricken children and learned that one of the parents had to quit work to become a full-time caregiver, increasing their financial burden. I have flown many patients to and from treatments who are now cancer survivors and no longer need frequent trips to distant treatment centers such as Seattle. I have flown several children to special needs camps such as Eagle Mount's Big Sky Kids camp near Bozeman for children with cancer. I have also flown a couple patients who fought hard battles and unfortunately are no longer with us. I have grown as a pilot and as a person from each mission.

### **Hope and help**

That's what you can provide. Angel Flight West pilots help people whose good fortune and good health have both run out. Angel Flight West pilots provide access to medical care, and the hope it represents. Angel Flight West pilots help general aviation, demonstrating to the community that pilots and their planes perform a vital community service that is literally priceless.

For more information on how you can join Angel Flight West or help a patient sign up for a mission, visit [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org). For questions regarding the Montana Wing contact David Hunt at [afwMontanaWing@angelflightwest.org](mailto:afwMontanaWing@angelflightwest.org).

## **CONTROL TOWER PROJECT MOVES FORWARD**

By Chris Hart

In 1961, Alan Shepherd became the first American in space, gas was 31 cents a gallon, Seinfeld's Julia Louis-Dreyfus was born in New York City, and Mr. Ed, the television show about a wise-cracking palomino American Saddlebred, premiered on CBS.

1961 was also the year the Missoula air traffic control tower began operations, almost eight years before Neil Armstrong even walked on the moon. Air travelers passing through Missoula's airport have come to recognize the tower as a landmark, and one of the few airport structures which has remained unchanged over the last four decades.

Today, the tower is showing its age, and once the new tower in Billings is completed this year, Missoula's tower will become the oldest in the state. Out-dated building codes, fire safety standards, asbestos building materials, and new security issues are a few of the concerns prompting the replacement of the 45 year old tower. Air traffic controllers and Airport officials see the tower as an outdated structure whose better days may well lie in the past.

Each year, a select few of the nation's airports are chosen for the tower replacement program, and in 2001, MSO received the first federal appropriation to begin planning for the new ATC facility. If all goes as planned, Missoula International Airport will soon begin construction of Montana's newest, state-of-the-art air traffic control tower.

Prior to the construction phase, a suitable site for the facility had to be found. The goal was to find the best location. Using a sophisticated simulator, a "virtual tower" was created and tested at various locations around the airport and at different heights to determine the best solution. Air-traffic controllers and airport planners tested the vantage points under different times of day and weather conditions. The study took into consideration the topography for each potential site, the surrounding environment, sun angles, viewing angles, future airport build-outs, and potential interference to electronic navigational aids. Following the study, it was recommended that a 150 (est.) foot tower be constructed on the southwest side of the airport, approximately 4000 feet from the existing tower.

"If you follow taxiway Echo across runway 29, the new tower would be right out there in that field by those trees," said Tony Terzo, pointing to the south side of the airport towards the proposed location for the new tower.

Missoula airport staff, along with representatives from the engineering consulting firm Mead & Hunt, continue to work with the FAA to negotiate the agreement, and a recent meeting with Montana's congressional delegation to request additional funding proved very positive. With the site selection and initial design phases completed, all that's left is to build it. If everything falls into place, utility installation for the new tower could be just over the horizon.

### **Other Improvement Projects**

Several other improvement projects are underway at MSO this year. The terminal expansion on the west side of the existing passenger terminal continues to move forward as work crews approach the halfway point of the project. Masonry work and brick facade installation are progressing on schedule with an overall completion date set for mid-November. In addition, the \$1.2 million east general aviation ramp reconstruction project is now underway which will completely remove all of the deteriorating asphalt ramp and old concrete foundations. The project will be divided into two phases to lessen the impact to general aviation activity. Phase one will require about 65 days to complete and will involve all areas surrounding Minuteman Maintenance. Phase two will move to the east side of the ramp and will take about 45 days. Once finished in October, the brand new ramp will include tie-downs, improved lighting and taxi lane markings, new fencing and landscaping, and improved drainage. Pilots should use caution for men and equipment while this much needed improvement project is underway. Finally, the Airport is expected to take delivery of two factory new passenger loading bridges currently under construction by FMC Jetway Systems. The new bridges will replace the cantankerous 30 year old bridges at the Delta Connection and United Express gates. The bridges should arrive in Missoula in August with installation expected to be complete by the end of summer. For more information about these projects, please visit [www.flymissoula.com](http://www.flymissoula.com).

## **FLYOUT NEWS - CAMERON AIRCRAFT OPEN HOUSE**

By Frank Tremper

Steve Rossiter and I flew to Coeur d'Alene (COE), Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup> to visit Cameron Aircraft. It was a beautiful day to fly! We followed I 90 up thru Mullan Pass and over Coeur d'Alene Lake. The members of Team 51 had prepared a very tasty lunch for us. We met **Murdo Cameron** and learned about his work building an all composite **full size** P 51 Mustang! Talking with **Murdo** he mentioned the idea of building other aircraft in composites, maybe a C-150, can you imagine, half the weight... maybe that's what Cessna is working on? We then flew north over Silverwood to Sandpoint (SZT) then over Haden Lake following the Clark Fork River. Steve climbed to 20 C, cool! We landed at Thompson Falls, then over Plains to Ravalli and home. I've driven the route; you just don't appreciate the beauty of the area until you see it from the air. Thank you, Steve!

*Editor's note: Missoula area pilots go on "flyouts" every flyable weekend. To get flyout announcements, contact Gary Weyermann: [gweyermann@msn.com](mailto:gweyermann@msn.com)*

## **MISSOULA EAA AND MPA NEWS**

Missoula's Chapter 517 hosts **Breakfast at the Airport** every third Saturday at the Chapter hangar at Stevensville, 9 AM to noon during the summer. The next one will be August 19<sup>th</sup>. The **August chapter meeting** is at the Stevensville Hangar, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 7 PM, and will be a family BBQ and social.

The **BIG NEWS** is the new Montana specialty license plate designed and sponsored by EAA Chapter 517 and featuring a classic yellow Piper Cub. The new plate was to have been available after July 1, 2006. For every plate ordered, \$20.00 of the fee will be returned to Chapter 517. Income earned will fund various youth-oriented activities and promote general aviation in Montana.



The local **Five Valleys Hangar, Montana Pilots Association (MPA)** met jointly with EAA 517 and enjoyed a barbecue at the Stevensville Airport on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 45 people attended this fun-filled social and educational event. Zane Rebensdorff presented the evening program, which was a "show and tell" session about the Prue 600 glider he is restoring. The Five Valleys Hangar will not meet separately this summer, but is joining in the social events for the summer. Two nearby events during August are the August 9<sup>th</sup> Lincoln Airport Opening Celebration and the August 19<sup>th</sup> Eighth Annual Polson Fly-in. For a complete calendar of events, contact Geanette Cebulski, MPA Secretary: [mpasecretary@blackfoot.net](mailto:mpasecretary@blackfoot.net)

## **WE'RE ON YOUR FREQUENCY**

*MSO GA News thanks **Chris Hart, Art Dykstra, Dave Hunt, Sherry Rossiter, Paul Stafford, and Frank Tremper** for contributing to this newsletter! If you'd like to earn cash in your spare time, write for something else. But... if you have something interesting to write about for free we'd like to put it in the newsletter and share it with the Missoula aviation community! Long (**about 800 words**), short, funny, serious... whatever. The next issue will be coming in the fall quarter. Interested in contributing? Contact the editor (see below).*

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## **MISSOULA AVIATION WEB SITES**

MSO live air traffic control and more: **<http://www.flymissoula.com>**

Missoula International Airport: **<http://www.msoairport.org>** (new site coming this summer; see story above)

Minuteman Aviation: **<http://www.minutemanaviation.com>**

Neptune Aviation: **<http://www.neptuneaviation.com>**

Life Flight: **<http://www.saintpatrick.org/index.php?view=lifeflight.main>**

EAA Chapter 517: **<http://www.eaa517.org>**

Angel Flight West: **[www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org)**