Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT Aviation Monthly Report
December 2007

[WSDOT Offers Emergency Grant to Chehalis to Repair Flood Damage]

[Aviation Coordinates Massive Aerial Search and Rescue Operation]

[Paperless Boarding Pass will Improve Airport Experience]

[Yakima Meeting Marks Progress on Airport Land Use Compatibility]

[Tech Team Advises WSDOT on *Airports & Compatible Land Use* Update]

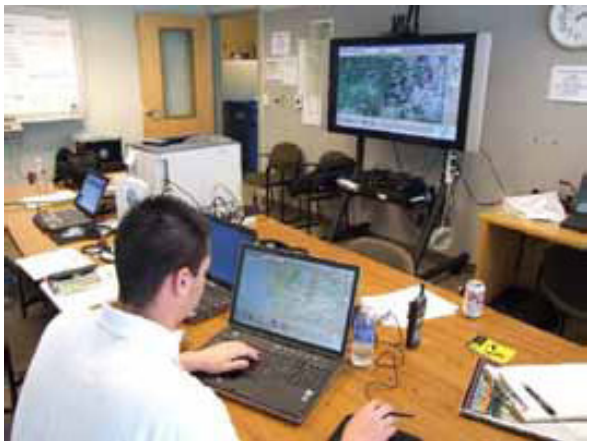
WSDOT Offers Emergency Grant to Chehalis to Repair Flood Damage

Aviation Construction Project Manager, Jeff Kvamme, contacted Chehalis Airport Manager, Allyn Roe, to discuss repairs to the flood-damaged airport using state and federal grants. Kvamme emphasized WSDOT's support in getting the airport back into operational shape through its Airport Aid Program (Emergency Project Grant). In the WSDOT Airport Aid Grant Procedures Manual, an Emergency Project is defined as the result of an unanticipated act of nature.

During the December floods, Chehalis was being used for emergency evacuation until it became flooded itself. Helicopters used Chehalis as a base of operations, and about 30 rescued people were placed in the Pilot's Lounge. When the airport was flooded, these people were once again stranded and had to evacuate yet another time.

Currently the airport's biggest loss is its weather reporting system – the AWOS. The expensive electronic components were completely covered with water. A full damage assessment will take place once the flood waters recede.

Aviation Coordinates Massive Aerial Search and Rescue Operation



WSDOT Aviation Emergency Services Coordinator, Tom Peterson, and Search and Rescue Technician, Chris Bruner, were called to the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to initiate emergency air operations in response to widespread flooding in Western Washington.

Hundreds of residents in Lewis, Thurston and Mason counties became stranded in their homes and farms after rapidly rising water caught the m off guard. Many were only able to scramble to their rooftops or into their attics. Some areas saw roads entirely cut off by landslides or water over the roadways.

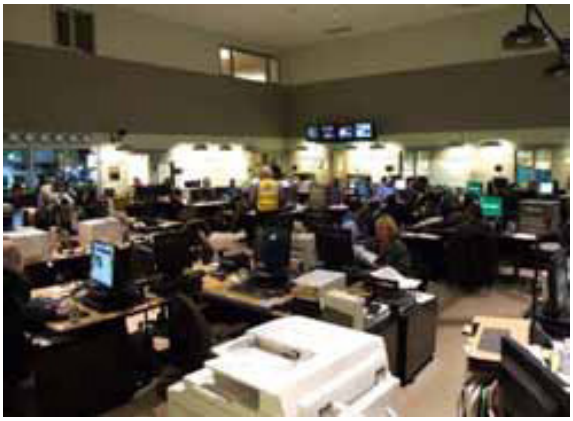
Soon after the EOC was fully activated, about 36 rescue and heavy lift helicopters were either beginning to rescue people from rooftops or preparing to transit to western Washington. Weather conditions were still and issue with rain, low cloud cover and winds challenging the aircrews' skills constantly.

By the end of the first day over 150 people were rescued by helicopter, plus five dogs and two cats.

Participating aircraft came from the following organizations:

- USCG – Air Station Port Angeles (3), Air Station Astoria (2) and Air Station
- North Bend (1)
- US Navy – Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (2)
- US Air Force – 36th Rescue Flight, Fairchild Air Force Base (2)
- Washington Army National Guard (1)
- Oregon Army National Guard (2)
- King County Sheriffs Office (1)
- Snohomish County Sheriffs Office (1)
- Washington State Patrol – Aviation Section (3)
- Washington Department of Natural Resources (3)

Near the end of the mission nearly 300 hundred rescues were accomplished and the never ending calls for help slowed considerably. A Heli-Base was set up at the Olympia Airport and restricted airspace (TFR) over I-5 from Olympia south to near Toledo was established to bring order to the area of high aviation activity. The Department of Natural Resources provided an Air Management Team to control air activity in the TFR and to help with communications.



"The most rewarding part of the operation was knowing that we as individuals, and as an agency, made a difference in so many lives. We have worked very hard over the past four years to establish better response systems and resources. We have planned, trained and exercised so we could see these kinds of results" stated Peterson. "It's what we do."

Paperless Boarding Pass will Improve Airport Experience

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Continental Airlines announced recently the launch of a Paperless Boarding Pass pilot program. It will allow passengers to receive boarding passes electronically on their cell phones or PDAs, which will then be scanned by TSA security officers at the checkpoint, eliminating the need for a paper boarding pass. Continental is the first U.S. carrier to test paperless boarding passes. Each paperless boarding pass will display a two-dimensional bar code along with passenger and flight information that will identify the traveler. TSA travel document checkers will use handheld scanners to validate the authenticity of the paperless boarding pass sent to Continental passengers. The new technology heightens the ability to detect fraudulent boarding passes while improving customer service and reducing paper use.

Yakima Meeting Marks Progress on Airport Land Use Compatibility

The Yakima Airport Board met with city planners and WSDOT Aviation Planner, Kerri Woehler, recently to review its latest work on land use compatibility for Yakima Air Terminal/McAllister Field. The board has developed a series of maps displaying characteristics that determine the Airport Influence Area, including typical traffic patterns for various types of aircraft. Airport Manager, Buck Taylor, is also developing a PowerPoint presentation that will be delivered to the city council and other stakeholders to describe the issues and make recommendations. The board is expected to present its recommendations after the first of the year.

Tech Team Advises WSDOT on *Airports & Compatible Land Use* Update

WSDOT Aviation's Technical Team met for a third time to discuss the draft update to *Airports & Compatible Land Use.* The committee received the "80 percent" draft document before the Thanksgiving holiday, and will submit comments by

December 10. WSDOT has also solicited participation from aviation planners from Oregon, Idaho and California. Representatives of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) will also review and provide their comments.

WSDOT looks forward to the feedback it will receive from the many experts in aviation and planning. Feedback from technical reviewers will be incorporated into the final draft document, which will be released for public comment in January.