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[Increasing Demand for Commercial Airplanes will Influence Future Airport System]

[Blue Skies for Arlington Fly-In]

[WSDOT Emergency Airfield Considered in Tragic Pilot Distress Call]

[WSDOT Hosts Anacortes Airport Task Force for Land Use Compatibility Workshop]

[Housing Development Designed for Airport Land Use Compatibility]

[Communities Considering Land Use Protections for Martin Field]

Increasing Demand for Commercial Airplanes will Influence Future Airport System

According to a recent London news release, Boeing forecasts a $2.6 trillion market for new commercial airplanes over the next 20 years. Strong market demand for new airplanes will lead to a world fleet with significantly improved environmental performance. New airplanes will accommodate a forecasted 4.9 percent annual increase in passenger traffic, and a 6.1 percent annual increase in air cargo traffic. "Improved fuel efficiency and increased range will allow airlines to take more travelers directly where they want to go, when they want to go," said Boeing Commercial Airplanes Vice President of Marketing, Randy Baseler.

New, much quieter airplanes may influence the aviation system with the ability to operate from noise sensitive airports. The largest market is projected to be the Asia-Pacific region. North America will be second, and Europe will make up 24 percent of new deliveries. This is important information as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and states conduct system planning for the next 25 years. Understanding trends such as point to point flying may change the investment strategy for airport facilities in the future.

Blue Skies for Annual Arlington Fly-In

The annual Arlington Fly-In, sponsored by the Northwest Experimental Aircraft Association (NWEAA), took off on July 5, 2006 at the Arlington Municipal Airport. The Arlington Fly-In is the third largest in the Unites States with more than 50,000 people and 1,600 planes. This year's event began with typical Washington weather - light rain and cloudy – but quickly changed to blue skies for the remaining days. The fly-in offered something for everyone, from touring the displays to visiting various vendors to watching the thrilling air show acrobatics. Several companies also offered aerial tours for those itching to get out and fly. More than 500 volunteers participated in the event and 174 kids got a chance to fly with the Young Eagles Program.

Along with the other 160 exhibitors, WSDOT occupied a booth to answer customer questions and provide information on its many programs. WSDOT gave away hundreds of Pilot's Guide, state highway maps, build-your-own model airplanes, and its new 2007 calendars featuring 12 of the 16 state-operated airports. The fly-in also provided Tracy Paul, WSDOT Aircraft Registration Program Manager, with an opportunity to record over 300 aircraft tail numbers. Paul will check these tail numbers against Aviation's registration database to ensure all aircraft are complying with state registration laws.

WSDOT Emergency Airfield Considered in Tragic Pilot Distress Call

The pilot of an Air Pac Airlines Piper Navaho was returning to Seattle's Boeing Field from Spokane when he encountered mechanical trouble and was unable to maintain altitude. Controllers with the Seattle Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) directed the pilot to Easton State Airport, one of the state-owned and maintained emergency airstrips located in the Cascades. Three minutes after reporting the difficulties with the aircraft it disappeared from the controller's radar and later crashed in the backyard of a home just ¼ mile east of Easton's runway. The pilot, who was the only occupant onboard, died in the crash on impact.

While this instance ended in tragedy, it serves as a reminder that the state-operated airports are vital in emergency situations where pilots traveling over the Cascades need a safe and well-maintained place to land. State-operated airports are widely known by air traffic controllers and have played a key role in the safe travel for pilots and passengers for decades.

WSDOT Hosts Anacortes Airport Task Force for Land Use Compatibility Workshop

Members of Anacortes Airport's Land Use Sub-Committee traveled to Arlington on Thursday for a workshop on WSDOT's Airport Land Use Compatibility Program. The sub-committee represents a portion of the Anacortes Airport Noise and Safety Task Force, which is charged with researching compatibility issues and making recommendations to the Port of Anacortes. The group learned about state laws governing land use planning adjacent to public-use airports, and discussed the data and research materials available as part of WSDOT's program. The workshop was one in a series of work sessions scheduled for the sub-committee; members plan to provide a report about their experiences to the full task force.

Housing Development Designed for Airport Land Use Compatibility

WSDOT Aviation provided comment this week on a development project proposed near Bowers Field in Ellensburg. The site for the project, which would construct student housing and support facilities, crosses the outer boundary of Kittitas County's Airport Compatibility Zones. Developers have utilized a cluster development design to minimize the potential for negative impacts on the airport. The design places the residential uses at the south end of the site away from the airport, while placing compatible uses such as parking and passive recreation areas in the portion of the site that lies within Zone 6. The usage and intensities of development in the northern portion of the site is consistent with WSDOT Aviation's Airport Land Use Compatibility Program.

Communities Considering Land Use Protections for Martin Field

The City of College Place hosted a meeting Tuesday to discuss land use planning adjacent to Martin Field. The session was a joint meeting of the city council and planning commission, and was attended by Walla Walla County planning staff, the owner of Martin Field, and WSDOT Aviation. Martin Field is a privately-owned, public-use airport and was recently included in the Urban Growth Area. The group discussed the value of the airport for the surrounding community, and Growth Management Act provisions requiring jurisdictions to protect public-use airports from incompatible land uses. The city has requested technical assistance from WSDOT Aviation to address GMA requirements and several upcoming development projects.