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Firefighting Activity at Methow State Airport Heats Up

Helicopters and aircraft supporting the Tripod fire near Winthrop are using Methow State Airport as a staging base for medium and heavy helicopters. The aircraft are trying to control the nearly 80,000 acre blaze. The ramp at the North Cascades Smoke Jumper Base is filled with aircraft that provide the overhead direction to helicopters and water bombers working the fire. There is so much traffic at the airport and, with reduced visibility from smoke, a temporary Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) control tower has been brought in to keep arriving and departing aircraft safe.



Fire Closes Woodland State Airport for Several Hours

Woodland State Airport was shut down on August 3 when several brush fires along I-5 converged just south of the runway. Smoke from the fires reduced visibility at the airport to less than 100 feet, and a request was made to close the airport until the fire was brought under control. Quick work from several local fire departments kept the fire from spreading to airport property. Woodland was reopened several hours later.

Race to the Finish at Skykomish State Airport

On Monday, August 7 organizers of the 2006 Courage Classic Bicycle Tour used Skykomish State Airport as the finish line for 500 bike riders. After three days of riding over three mountain passes, bicyclists were greeted at Skykomish with food, drink, showers, and a welcome bus ride home. Riders and sponsors raised over \$500,000 for the Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Seattle. This annual event has used several different sites in the Skykomish area for the finish line festivities. This was the first year that the airport has been used.

WSDOT Aviation Comments on Eatonville's Comprehensive Plan

WSDOT Aviation provided comment this week on Eatonville's Airport Overlay Zone, adopted as part of the town's 2006 amendments to its comprehensive plan. The brief correspondence followed a more detailed letter submitted to the town in February 2006. Eatonville adopted a series of comprehensive plan policies in 2005 with the strong support of WSDOT Aviation. The town followed that effort with the creation of the airport overlay zone, which was adopted earlier this year. WSDOT Aviation has communicated its concern that the adopted zone fails to protect some of the most critical areas adjacent to the airport and provide a safe environment for aviation users and the general public. The February 2006 letter provided a detailed evaluation of the regulations and recommendations for improvements. In its comments this week, WSDOT Aviation encouraged Eatonville to conduct additional research – including a legal review of risks and liabilities – and make amendments to strengthen the adopted regulations.

Port and School District Discuss Future Expansion Near Sanderson Field

The Port of Shelton and Shelton School District met in August to coordinate efforts and discuss strategies for accommodating school expansion while at the same time protecting Sanderson Field Airport from encroachment. The City of Shelton is expecting rapid and substantial population growth in coming years, and there may be a need to expand the school campus located southwest of the airport. The school district and Port of Shelton discussed key points that might affect the airport including: building height and density; noise abatement measures; and emergency evacuation plans. In response to a request for comment, the FAA advised that it would oppose expansion towards the airport runway, and WSDOT Aviation concurred that efforts should be made to avoid development in the extended runway centerline. This meeting was the first step in what is expected to be an ongoing cooperative process.

Aviation Conducts Interviews for Construction Project Manager Position

With Stan Allison's recent move to the WSDOT Office of Transit Mobility, WSDOT Aviation is seeking to fill the vacancy created in the Local Airport Aid Grant Program. Aviation's Eric Johnson and Nisha Hanchinamani, along with Human Resources Adrienne Sanders, spent the day Wednesday interviewing three candidates for the position of Construction Project Manager. The position will share responsibilities in

administering the Local Airport Aid Grant Program, which provides crucial financial assistance to the state's 130 public airports. Recommendations will be presented to Aviation Director, John Sibold, and a decision to fill the position should be made within the following weeks.