Welcome to The Beacon!

By Mike Trout

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the newly established newsletter of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Aeronautics. It’s our hope to continue the tradition previously carried by e-Michigan Aviation newsletter in this new format highlighting not only the work done by the great staff within the Office of Aeronautics but also the contributions of our statewide associations, airports and their staff, pilots, mechanics, and all involved with aviation. If you have an interest in a particular area of our office or have a topic you would like to see included, please let us know at any time.

I did want to take a moment to highlight the recent findings from our Michigan Aviation System Plan economic analysis of the Michigan aviation industry. For many years, we relied on a variety of external partners to help us quantify just how important aviation is to Michigan. However, the 2017 Michigan Aviation System Plan reinforces our previous understanding with a verified figure of nearly $22 billion in economic impact to the state. This figure encompasses contributions from all components of the industry, including not only pilots, mechanics, and fixed-base operator staff, but also the hundreds of businesses that attribute their location and employment to a community airport. If you are interested in viewing this data or seeing the economic impact of your airport, please visit www.michigan.gov/aero.

As I am sure you know, the staff within the Office of Aeronautics strive every day to grow that economic impact of aviation through the variety of office functions that protect, preserve, and improve the state’s aviation infrastructure, whether through engineering work, financial oversight, inspection, or other function. Our priority remains supporting those individuals and businesses that rely on a safe and efficient aviation system and, in turn, support this $22 billion economic impact to our great state.
Michigan Air Service Grant Program Revitalized

By Ralph Sims

Following the Michigan Aeronautics Commission’s completion of the Michigan Plan for Michigan Air Service, the Michigan Aeronautics Program has recently appropriated funds for a revitalized Michigan Air Service Program. This program, currently funded at $250,000 annually, allows the MDOT Office of Aeronautics to fund a variety of air service employment projects that traditionally would not be eligible for other grant types. Projects are awarded in four primary categories outlined below with matching funds awarded in four primary categories:

1. **Airport Awareness**
   - Purpose: To increase public awareness of community airports and available air passenger and air cargo services.
   - Funds used in this category encourage the use of the local airport through education, especially for new types of aircraft, such as the introduction of new equipment and the acceptance of new services.
   - The funds are used to promote the facilities and attract new businesses or industries.
   - The category is beneficial for the communities and airports that receive funding, as it improves the visibility and acceptance of the facilities.

2. **Capital Improvement and Equipment (C&I)**
   - Purpose: To improve airport facilities for passenger acceptance, cargo handling, and airport operations to support air service and economic development.
   - Current federal funding mechanisms, such as the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), are available for various types of facility enhancement projects.
   - Projects are often delayed or never initiated due to limited funds, pre-set priorities, and program guidelines. This program category will allow Michigan airports to fund projects currently not undertaken through existing federal and state improvement programs, such as:
     - Terminal modifications
     - Security equipment
     - Flight information centers
     - Defibrillators
     - Ticket areas
     - American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements
     - Cargo handling equipment/facilities
   - Twelve airports received C&I funds for FY 2017 totaling $98,525 in state funds.

3. **Carrier Recruitment and Retention**
   - Purpose: To assist in establishing, maintaining, or increasing air service levels at Michigan airports that meet eligibility requirements.
   - Projects include the provision of incentives for air carriers that increase or maintain air service levels for community growth.
   - Coordination of efforts between the local community and the state induces carriers to provide initial or expanded services.
   - Funding in the Carrier Recruitment and Retention category is available to airports with less than 100,000 annual passenger enplanements. Those airports are eligible to receive matching funds.

4. **Aeronautics**
   - Purpose: To fund a variety of air service development and supporting projects.
   - The purpose of this category is to improve airport facilities for passenger acceptance, cargo handling, and airport operations.
   - Projects include feasibility studies, risk-sharing, and incentives.
   - There were no funds allocated for the Carrier Recruitment and Retention category for this fiscal year.

Michigan Frequent Flyer Program

By Keith Newell

It’s a beautiful summer weekend, morning not too hot, clear skies with a five knot breeze heading straight down the long runway.

You start thinking about a place to go with a friend in your favorite aircraft that seems to be collecting more and more dust lately. You can fly to the airport that houses your flying club or to the little town where your in-laws live. There is the airport that houses the fixed-base operator (FBO) where they perform maintenance on your plane but there is nothing on the squawk list. And then there is always the airport that serves the best burgers in the state. All of these places seem to be getting old and have more rubber from your tires on their runways than you would like to remember. So you decide to forego the adventure and let the dust continue to collect.

Well, the MDOT Aeronautics General Aviation Advisory Committee would like to change all that and put the passion back into flying. They are investigating a concept to create a rewards program for taking flight to the 226 airports across Michigan. There would be levels of achievement for flying to different airports with associated rewards. Maybe a free meal at a restaurant, or maybe a new flight bag, or knapsack. Perhaps a leather flight jacket for visiting every public airport in the state of Michigan. The committee is researching sponsorships from various related industries and Michigan-based businesses, and the rewards that could be offered.

The concept utilizes an e-Passport app on your smartphone that allows pilots to scan a QR code on a sign next to the ramp area at each airport. By scanning the code, the pilot gets credit for flying to that airport. Take a selfie with the sign and your airplane as the photo-bomber. The app would upload the photo and potentially add it to a social-media-like website. There, pilots and flying enthusiasts can share their adventures while enjoying others’ trips across the most beautiful state in the country.

The GA Advisory Committee is in discussions with groups like Pure Michigan and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) on potential partnering ideas for the app and the rest of the rewards program. You may just need to relearn how to enter in a new destination into your GPS. The more pilots fly, the safer the skies become, the better the planes run, and the more fun and enjoyment to be had by all.

We look forward to your comments on the e-Passport concept. Would you like a program that motivates you to fly more places around the state? What would you include in this type of program? Do you know of sponsors who may want to get involved? Do you have any other ideas on what the committee can do to motivate general aviation activity across the great state of Michigan?

Please send comments to keithnewell@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

Selling Aviation Fuels? We need your help!

Recently, the Michigan Legislature, with support from the aviation community, passed legislation reforming the distribution of sales tax revenue collected on aviation fuels, including 100LL and Jet A fuels. This new legislation permits a portion of this revenue to be transferred to the State Aeronautics Fund and the Qualified Airport Fund, rather than the state general fund, and will allow MDOT Aeronautics to continue attracting federal airport improvement program funds and may assist in increased state participation in other projects.

However, the revenue transferred to both the State Aeronautics Fund and the Qualified Airport Fund is dependent on our fuel distributors, flight departments, fixed-based operators (FBOs), flight schools, and anyone else engaged in the sale or purchase of fuel to report the information to the Michigan Department of Treasury using Form 5422. This quarterly report is due to the Michigan Department of Treasury on the following dates:
- Oct. 31, 2017
- Jan. 31, 2018

Your help in providing this information to the Michigan Department of Treasury is essential to the continued flow of funds to the state’s airport system and is greatly appreciated by your fellow system user.

More customers through “Inorganic Aviation”  
By Matthew Barresi  

If you are a commercial service airport, you’re talking about increasing your catchment area and adding routes. If you’re a general aviation airport, you’re talking about increased based aircraft and attracting more fuel visits.  

Conventional wisdom says there are only so many passengers and so many fuel stops, and everyone has a historic share. We may see temporary increases and decreases depending on advertising, special promotions and, of course, the economy. My tech friends tell me if the historic organic ways don’t work, then we must find inorganic ways!  

People use your airport when they need it (organic), so how do you get people to use it when they don’t need it (inorganic), and how can that inorganic need transfer to the organic need? The idea is that the more people who have a relationship with your airport, the more your airport will find its way into their conversations and their businesses and, ultimately, new aviation customers.  

Do you have an airport advisory committee? If not, think about forming one! Not a group to tell you what to do, but rather a group of community movers and shakers from every corner and profession in your local area: oil, retail, medical, real estate, legal, manufacturing, and so on. Let them share their ideas and insight to promote your airport while at the same time they are out there talking about your airport in their circle of influence.  

Host a monthly veterans’ coffee at the airport and let a local business sponsor it. Veterans have made great sacrifices over the years to ensure our freedom to travel, plus they have tremendous networks in businesses, government, friends and family to help promote your airport by finding new pilots and passengers.  

At your next local airport planning meeting you will no doubt talk about infrastructure, enplanements, fuel sales, and cargo tons. Now add to that “Inorganic Aviation.”  

Matt Barresi is the Gaylord Regional Airport Director and past president of the Michigan Association of Airport Executives. For more information on MAAE, visit www.michairports.org.

Airport Cooperative Research Program Seeking Ambassadors  
By Neal Barncard

You may know me as a transportation technician in the Project Support Unit, but I am also a current ambassador to the nationwide Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP). If you haven’t yet discovered ACRP, the program is an industry-driven, applied-research initiative that develops near-term, practical solutions to problems faced by airport operators. ACRP is managed by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and is sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).  

As an ambassador in this program, I serve as a key component of ACRP’s outreach efforts to bring timely and useful publications to the airport industry and engage airport practitioners in ACRP’s many activities. My fellow ambassadors and I volunteer to represent ACRP at industry conferences and events. They use the opportunities to talk with practitioners, answer questions, and share the goals and value of the program.  

Ambassadors serve a two-year term (i.e., January of year 1 through December of year 2) and agree to represent ACRP at a minimum of four to six airport industry conferences or events during that two-year term. All ambassadors attend a one-day, in-person orientation meeting and receive the training, guidance, support, and materials they need to fulfill their assignments.  


Benefits  
Ambassadors enjoy a unique connection as a volunteer to ACRP, TRB, and the National Academies— all widely respected organizations at the forefront of transportation research. They also attend key industry events at minimal personal expense, network and share experiences and best practices with industry colleagues, and bring this experience back to their home institution, agency, or company.  

ACRP provides all program materials and pays for:  
• The cost of ambassadors’ onsite accommodations (generally up to the General Services Administration (GSA)-defined limit based on location).  
• Attendee and/or exhibitor registration fees.  
• ACRP will not pay a stipend nor, in most instances, ambassadors’ transportation, food, or incidental expenses. Please see the ACRP Ambassador Program Guidelines for additional information.  

Selection Process  
Ambassadors are selected through a competitive application process. To apply, please review the ACRP Ambassador Program Guidelines and submit the ACRP Ambassador Application on or before the application deadline.  

ACRP’s general selection criteria for new ambassadors include:  
• Applicable experience working in the airport industry.  
• Familiarity with the ACRP research process and products, with firsthand experience developing or using these products.  
• Willingness and ability to present on the ACRP program and research process or other airport industry topics.  
• A clearly expressed commitment to promoting ACRP’s goals before, during, and after tenure as an ambassador. Following the two-year commitment, ACRP may call upon former ambassadors to present on the merits of the program, participate in ambassador orientations or webinars, and share lessons learned.  
• A strong professional network within the U.S. airport industry.  

Eligibility Exclusions  
Although ambassadors are volunteers, their conduct reflects upon NAS, TRB, and ACRP. ACRP expects ambassadors to comport themselves with professionalism at any event where they are serving in their role as ambassador. Inappropriate behavior, including, but not limited to, actively soliciting business during ambassador activities or through ACRP affiliation, will be taken seriously, formally reviewed by ACRP, and may lead to removal from the ambassador program. Applicants who are actively involved in business development activities, particularly when attending conferences and other industry events, should not apply.  

Neal Barncard is a transportation technician, specializing in pavements, in the Project Support Unit of the MDOT Office of Aeronautics.
The EDC and the State of Michigan secured title to acres of undeveloped land and the former Michigan military barracks complex. Today, more than 45,000 people fly annually to/from the airport. The EDC is inviting the public to participate and would like to see you at the 40-year anniversary celebration of the conversion of KAFB on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The celebration will include:

- Numerous military and civilian aircraft on display.
- Past and present GM automobiles on display.
- Sports Car Club of America (SCCA), which uses areas of the former base for competitive slalom races, will have cars on display and provide videos of former races.
- Chippewa Air/Industrial Park manufacturers will showcase the products they produce.
- The Department of Corrections Honor Guard and Emergency Response Team (ERT) will be on site.
- The US military will provide a recruitment team.
- The EDC will display antique and modern snow removal equipment.
- Photographs and military memorabilia will be on display.
- A video display of “Die Hard 2” highlighting scenes filmed at CIU will be shown.
- Dedication at 3 p.m. of the airport conference room in memory of Iven Kincheloe, a military pilot who received the “MacKay Trophy” for reaching peak altitude of 126,200 feet and for whom the former base was named.
- Dedication of “Noel Way” to longtime EDC employee Kathy Noel at 3:15 p.m.

The public’s use of CIU has continued to grow over the years. In the 1980s, CIU had less than 10,000 passengers annually. Today, more than 45,000 people fly annually to/from the airport.

It has been 40 years since the base closed. On Saturday, Sept. 30, the EDC will celebrate 40 years of successful conversion from military to civilian use.

The success of turning the former military barracks into a medium security prison prompted the State of Michigan to construct three new correctional facilities on former base property, which to date provide more than 1,000 direct, and hundreds of spin-off, good-paying jobs in the local community.

At the same time, Kinross Township reinvented use of military aircraft hangars, commercial buildings, and the massive runways and taxiways that once landed B-52 bombers, and F-16 fighter jets.

After the base closed, unemployment in Chippewa County soared to 28 percent. The Chippewa County Board of Commissioners and local businesses quickly formed what is today the Chippewa County Economic Development Corp. (EDC) to manage the airport, reinvent use of military aircraft hangars/buildings (Chippewa County Air/Industrial Park), and promote development of non-aeronautical land.

At the same time, Kinross Township and a real estate developer divided the housing and the commercial properties, while the State of Michigan secured title to acres of undeveloped land and the former military barracks complex.

The EDC and the State of Michigan worked together to turn the former military barracks into a medium security prison. Kinross Township began to recruit businesses to their commercial buildings. The real estate company that bought the houses sold some, rented some and re-located some. The EDC began leasing former military hangars to industrial manufacturers and, within a few years, commercial air service began to use the newly formed Chippewa County International Airport (CIU).

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The EDC also manages CIU. The GM/EDC program began in 1987 and is now one of three winter automobile research and development testing facilities in Chippewa County. The personnel who accompany these winter testing programs provide millions of dollars in revenue to Chippewa County businesses throughout the winter months. Motels, restaurants, gas stations, retail stores and recreational venues enjoy the influx of dollars generated from winter automobile testing. The EDC is pleased to have been the first to bring this type of research and development to the local area.

The EDC leases property and buildings, and prepares test surfaces for General Motors Corp. (GM) for winter automobile research and development testing. The GM/EDC program began in 1987 and is now one of three winter automobile testing facilities in Chippewa County. The personnel who accompany these winter testing programs provide millions of dollars in revenue to Chippewa County businesses throughout the winter months. Motels, restaurants, gas stations, retail stores and recreational venues enjoy the influx of dollars generated from winter automobile testing. The EDC is pleased to have been the first to bring this type of research and development to the local area.

The EDC also manages CIU. The airport provides daily air service to Detroit Metro Airport. In the early 1980s, CIU was served by a 19-passenger aircraft that stopped twice on its way to a larger hub. Today the two daily flights are nonstop, using a 50-passenger jet aircraft. Passengers arrive in Detroit in less than one hour.

The Department of Corrections
Honor Guard and Emergency Response Team (ERT) will be on site.

The US military will provide a recruitment team.

The EDC will display antique and modern snow removal equipment.

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On July 10, Gov. Rick Snyder announced the initial appointments to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force. The EDC will display CIU. The public will be able to participate in a 5K torch run at 9 a.m. on the runway (coordinated by Department of Corrections and Kinross Lions Club volunteers) and taxiway, with proceeds going to Special Olympics Michigan: Law Enforcement Run and the Kinross Lions Club.

The public will be able to walk the 7,200 foot runway at 10:15 A.M. kids and adults will be able to bike the runway at 11:30 a.m.

The public will be able to tour the airport terminal and aircraft hangars.

The public will be able to tour the airport terminal and aircraft hangars.

Come spend the day with the EDC celebrating the many successes achieved over the past 40 years of the conversion of KAFB.

Tami Beseau is Manager of the Chippewa County International Airport.

Gov. Rick Snyder makes initial appointments to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force.

On July 10, Gov. Rick Snyder announced the initial appointments to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force.

Housed within the Michigan Department of Transportation, the 27-member task force will develop statewide policy recommendations on the operation, use, and regulation of unmanned aircraft systems in this state. Individuals were nominated by their respective associations/departments for consideration by the governor. The task force will submit a report to the governor and standing committees in the House and Senate within three months after its first meeting. “These individuals have a wide variety of experience that will be helpful in creating a new statewide policy for unmanned aircraft systems. I thank them for serving on this task force and I look forward to reviewing their recommendations,” Snyder said.

Information on the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force will be made available on the MDOT Office of Aeronautics website at www.michigan.gov/aero. The MDOT Office of Aeronautics executive administrator will serve as the chairman of the task force.
MDOT Aeronautics Helps Tuskegee Students to Rise

By Stephen Tupper

Growing up in Detroit can be tough. But Thursday nights are a little easier — and sometimes downright exciting. And MDOT’s Office of Aeronautics just gave that excitement a boost.

The Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum operates both a brick-and-mortar museum in historic Fort Wayne on the south side of Detroit, as well as conducting aviation operations at Detroit City Airport.

The airport operations include four U.S. Air Force Academy TG-7A motorgliders and a North American T-6G. Every spring, summer, and fall the museum helps to teach kids from Detroit how to fly. This includes both a Young Eagles rally each month from April to October and several other programs, including the Ace Academy, a ground school, and flight training for scholarship students.

The ground school meets on Thursday nights and serves 10 Detroit-area youths. The objective is to provide all of the ground training necessary to take and pass the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) private pilot knowledge test. As spring approaches, daylight saving time kicks in and the sun sets later in the day, changing the emphasis over to flight operations with kids actually flying in the museum’s TG-7As.

In February, the museum reached out to MDOT to see if the department could spare some of its Michigan aeronautical charts for the ground school. Unlike the FAA-provided sectional charts, the MDOT charts cover the entire state. And, although the MDOT charts are not updated as regularly as the FAA charts, they use the same formatting as the FAA charts and are perfect for learning.

“The MDOT charts use the standard FAA format and layout, and provide the ground school students a great way to learn how to use an aeronautical chart,” said Fazal Khanr, a director of the museum who helps teach the ground school. “It’s cold outside and it gets dark pretty early in the winter months, but we have the charts spread out on the table and we can plan cross-country flights that we’ll actually take when the weather improves.”

“Flying isn’t cheap,” noted Steve Tupper, one of the museum’s flight instructors. “Even with the museum providing the aircraft and instructors free or at reduced cost, it’s not easy for the students. They’re paying for books, accessories, getting to and from the airport, and the necessities of life. Not having to go buy a sectional chart at this stage is a non-trivial thing. We’re very grateful.”

Dr. Brian Smith, the president of the museum, said, “It’s not hard for a kid to think of flying as an impossible thing. Even during the ground school, the flying part seems a long way off. But a kid who has an aeronautical chart in his or her backpack has a tangible reminder of what he or she is doing on Thursday nights. An aeronautical chart can be a powerful object. The kids already know how far a mile of road can take them. But, with a chart, they can see that a mile of runway can take them anywhere in their home state.”

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-Americans to fly as military pilots for the United States. They formed the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group of the U.S. Army Air Forces and were active from 1940 to 1952. During World War II, the units amassed an exemplary record over the course of 1,578 combat missions, including three Distinguished Unit Citations and 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses.

In addition to the displays of uniforms, photographs, and other artifacts of the Tuskegee Airmen at the museum itself, the flight operations continue the traditions of teaching young men and women - many of whom are African-Americans - to fly.

“The MDOT charts use the standard FAA format and layout, and provide the ground school students a great way to learn how to use an aeronautical chart,”

“Flying is important,” said Tupper. “It differentiates this program from any other. These kids are the true heirs of the original Tuskegee Airmen. We are disingenuous if we tell a kid to study hard and stay in school, but then fail to take her into the sky at the controls of an aircraft and show her why she should. The MDOT charts and other materials help us to do that.”

Stephen Tupper is a commercial pilot, Civil Air Patrol major, Tuskegee Airmen flight demonstration team member, and practicing attorney. For more information on Team Tuskegee, visit www.teamtuskegee.com.
Thank You, Michigan Aviators!

By Andy Miller

As the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) ambassador for the Great Lakes, I’d like to say a big thank you to the many Michigan aviators who have contributed both financially and otherwise to AOPA’s “You Can Fly” program since the beginning of the year. With that help, we’ve been able to help a lot of Michigan pilots!

“Rusty Pilot” courses, which help pilots who have been out of flying for awhile, have been held this year at International Airport (PTK), and there Airport (AZO), Mason Jewett awhile, have been held this year at pilots who have been out of flying for “Rusty Pilot” courses, which help about the joys of flying and to talk with pilots about the many things happening in aviation right now, including the new BasicMed Rules. Special thanks to the team at Hastings Airport 909, which worked with me to set up a seminar in July for the public about learning to fly.

I’m planning to make it to several more events in Michigan before the season ends (and in 2018!). If you see the yellow airplane somewhere, please stop by and say hi!

And if you think that AOPA’s “You Can Fly” initiative might be able to help you or your organization promote general aviation, please get in touch with me. In addition to things like “Rusty Pilot” courses, safety and learn-to-fly seminars, I also can provide AOPA resources for new and existing flying clubs, and we have a wonderful new project that is bringing free aviation-specific science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum to high schools.

So thank you again to all the Michigan aviators and supporters who have made this good work possible. We are looking forward to continuing to grow general aviation and aviation safety in your beautiful state!

Andy Miller serves as the Great Lakes ambassador for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and can be reached at 888-411-4367.

Caro Tuscola Area Airport (CFS) has become the new home for the light sport and experimental manufacturing and repair company Midwest Sky Sports and Midwest Build Center. Midwest Sky Sports, along with Midwest Build Center, is one of only two sites in the United States. They will be building the Sling 2 certified light sport aircraft for South Africa-based aircraft manufacturer “The Airplane Factory” as an experimental category aircraft.

The light sport category was created by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to allow pilots to fly without the required medical certificates needed by private pilots at the time but includes limitations on weight, speed, and passenger loading. With this newly created license class, new aircraft manufacturers were needed to develop and build airplanes to service those customers. From then on, light sport airplanes have become popular, even among the private pilot community, due to their reduced price and flexibility to fly in and out of smaller and more remote locations.

Experimental aircraft are afforded additional flexibility, when it comes to aircraft certification. For example, the owner can build an aircraft with the latest technology at a fraction of the cost of a certified aircraft, such as the popular Cessna and Piper aircraft. The

To compliment the building, Midwest Sky Sports can service and repair your light sport and experimental aircraft. They are also an authorized Rotax repair center, with the ability to perform warranty repair on your Rotax engine if the need arises. For more information on Midwest Sky Sports, visit www. midwestskysports.com.

Midwest Sky Sports is a key contributor to the $3.6 million annual economic impact attributed to users of Tuscola Area Airport.

Mary Kay Trierweiler is the licensing specialist with the MDOT Office of Aeronautics.

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The history of what is now known as Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport began during 1923 when Army officials established an agreement with local townspeople to clear a landing area in Oscoda. The new airfield was established for fliers from Selfridge Army Air Field to test aircraft and support equipment during cold environment conditions. Their training facility through the end of practice and winter maneuvers continued to serve as a gunnery subsidiary of Selfridge, Camp Skeel Pursuit Squadron at Selfridge. As a Burt Skeel, commander of the 27th Pursuit Group during 1923, he named the airfield Oscoda-Wurtsmith after Capt. Paul B. Wurtsmith. It was primarily a base of operations and enlarged to support missions of fighter aircraft operations. It was also during that time frame that the U.S. Air Force was established. The Air Force initially named the airfield Oscoda Air Force Base (AFB). It was later renamed Wurtsmith Air Force Base in honor of one of Michigan’s military airfields that had been closed and then reopened as a public airport. Initially, the airport was operated by the State of Michigan through the Wurtsmith Base Conversion Authority. In 1994, the Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Authority assumed this responsibility. The authority is organized under the provisions of the Michigan Act 206 of 1957 and the partners are comprised of five municipal constituents: Oscoda Township, Au Sable Township, Greenbush Township, Iosco County, and Alcona County.

Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Authority, along with its local municipal partners, has been facilitating reuse of the former Wurtsmith AFB facilities. The results of those efforts include 28 businesses that collectively employ 1,600 - 1,700 workers. More than 1,200 of those jobs are in direct support of aeronautical-related businesses. Those aeronautical businesses include HAECCO Americas Engine Center, Phoenix Composite Solutions, and Kalitta Air. Of specific note is the FAR Part 145 aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) operations of Kalitta Air. The primary focus of their Oscoda operations is providing MRO services for B747 and other similar large wide-body aircraft. Kalitta Air occupies eight large aircraft maintenance hangars and a variety of maintenance support facilities at Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport. Two of those facilities are 80,000-square-foot hangars that have been constructed to support the business growth of Kalitta Air during the past 10 years. Kalitta Air is now the largest employer located north of Bay City within the state of Michigan.

The estimated economic impact from businesses operating at Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport includes more than $55 million in employee payroll and more than $360 million in output as business sales and capital expenditures. Now onto the project details for construction during 2018.

Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Runway 6/24 was originally constructed around the time of World War II as one of three concrete runways on the airport. By 1959, it was the only runway and was lengthened to 11,800 feet and widened to 300 feet. Records further show an asphalt overlay in 1974, cold milling and asphalt overlay in 1985, and another milling and overlay project in 2001. The airport was last investigated for a pavement condition index (PCI) update in 2016, at which time Runway 6/24 was given a PCI of 57. This PCI level shows a need for rehabilitation to bring the runway back to a good condition for the flying public.

The Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Authority received bids on Friday, May 26, 2017, for the Runway 6/24 and Blast Pad rehabilitation. This project will require approximately 107 calendar days to construct and it includes pavement removal, milling of concrete and asphalt surfaces, marking and grooving, electrical circuitry, and sign installation.

During construction, the grades will need to be adjusted to more closely meet current Federal Aviation Administration standards. The preferred method to achieve this is profile milling, which involves milling to variable depths to prepare for the addition of a uniform layer of asphalt. The variable depth milling will extend to a depth of approximately 3 inches. This will allow for placement of a 1-inch bituminous asphalt leveling course, followed by a 2-inch surface course of asphalt.

This project will also include the Runway 6/24 designation being changed to Runway 7/25. Proper runway markings are based on compass headings for pilot navigation purposes. These headings are affected by magnetic declination, a natural phenomenon that makes a compass read differently than true geographic north. Michigan is experiencing a magnetic drift to the west, effectively increasing the degrees of heading shown on a compass. This declination is expected to continue. For this reason, Runway 6/24 will be changed to 7/25. In addition to the change in runway numbers, all taxiway guidance signs that reference this runway will be required to be updated to match the new runway markings.

Carol Aldrich serves as the supervisor of the Project Management Unit within the MDOT Office of Aeronautics.
A Champion of Michigan’s Business Aviation Industry

By Richard Belisle

Welcome to the revamped MDOT Michigan Aviation newsletter! The Michigan Business Aviation Association (MBAA) is excited to be included in what promises to be a great resource for Michigan’s aviation community.

Since 1998, MBAA has championed an environment that allows business aviation to thrive in Michigan. We are Michigan’s advocate for aviation to make business more efficient, productive and successful. Our three pillars are Governmental Affairs, Membership Services, and Scholarships, and our membership is a strong mix of aircraft operators, repair facilities and aviation service providers from across our great state.

Most importantly, our membership is committed to growing the $22 billion annual impact of aviation on Michigan’s economy and ensuring that the infrastructure and professionals required to drive this growth are available and in good shape.

Throughout our history, we’ve worked tirelessly to advocate for our industry and protect our state’s resources to ensure that business aviation remains an economic driver for Michigan. MBAA efforts in 2002 provided more than $1 billion in critical safety and development projects at more than 90 airports, and our 2015 work with the Legislature was crucial in passing legislation that earmarked state and local aviation fuel taxes for aircraft improvement projects. Our current focus is on the passage of legislation to exempt aircraft based in Michigan from the 6 percent sales tax on aviation repair parts and maintenance. If passed, this legislation will lower the playing field with our surrounding states and provide a significant positive financial benefit for the entire Michigan aviation community.

On the national level, MBAA is an active member of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) regional groups. Through close cooperation with groups throughout the United States, MBAA ensures that Michigan’s voice is heard on national issues that impact our members. Most recently, MBAA sent letters to each member of the Michigan Congressional delegation voicing our concerns regarding H.R. 2997, which seeks to privatize our nation’s air traffic control system. Our concern is that through privatization, general/business aviation access to airports and airspace will be limited by the actions of an unelected and unaccountable board, leaving expensive and lengthy legal proceedings as our only recourse for challenging any restrictions.

For the first time this fall, MBAA will partner with Stryker Corp. on an aviation safety training day. For quite some time, Stryker has generously provided these training opportunities at no charge to the Michigan business aviation community. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate and will work to make a positive impact by promoting and marketing the event to our members. Please be on the lookout for more information in the coming weeks at www.mibaa.org.

Finally, I hope that in the near future you will have the opportunity to meet some of the scholarship winners who will benefit from the programs established by the Frank P. Macartney Foundation, the West Michigan Business Aviation Association, and MBAA. For nearly 20 years, these three organizations have worked closely to provide incredible opportunities for developing Michigan aviation professionals.

Due to the generosity of our industry partners and participation in our events, we continue to build incredible bench strength in Michigan. I sincerely hope that you have the opportunity to meet and/or work with these scholarship recipients. Our future is in good hands.

Thank you again to the MDOT team for allowing us to be a part of the Beacon. We look forward to keeping you apprised of MBAA’s efforts toward allowing business aviation to thrive in Michigan.

Richard Belisle is senior director of the Whirlpool Business Travel Center and serves as president of the Michigan Business Aviation Association. For more information on MBAA, visit www.mibaa.org.

The 2017 Michigan Aviation System Plan Update Released

By Linn Smith

The 2017 Michigan Aviation System Plan (MASP) was adopted by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC) in July 2017. The MAC commissioned the Planning and Development Section of the MDOT Office of Aeronautics in 2016 to update the MASP that was last updated in 2008. The Office of Aeronautics partnered with a team of consultants led by Mead & Hunt and, after an 18-month effort, a very well-received guidance document has been developed.

Michigan covers a vast area of land and water. Within its borders are residents, businesses, and manufacturers who rely on aviation to connect to more than 96,716 square miles of the state and to the national and global aviation network. Air transportation access is also vital for visitors, as thousands of tourists visit Michigan each year to experience the 3,288 miles of freshwater coastlines and abundance of forested land for hunting, fishing, skiing, and other outdoor recreation. The geography of Michigan ranges from major urban cities to remote island locations, and each airport serving this diverse geography has a significant, yet unique role within the state system. The MASP classifies the role of each airport to guide priorities for development and preservation.

The identification of system and facility goals to guide priorities is the critical step of past MASP studies, as well as this update effort. The 2017 MASP focuses on the public-use airports that, when combined, generate more than 2 million aircraft operations annually. These airports range from the largest commercial service airport in the state, Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, to small general aviation (GA) airports like Home Acres Sky Ranch in Lake City. The study focuses its resources on those airports that have distinguished themselves as meeting one or more of the system goals; however, it should be recognized that there are more than 400 private and public-use aviation facilities throughout Michigan, 226 of which are airports open for public use. Michigan also has seven licensed heliports and one licensed seaplane base, all of which are also open for public use. Through the results of the analysis of this study, 114 of the airports acknowledged as being critical to the system were studied in greater detail. This greatest addition to the 2017 MASP study is the inclusion of a statewide economic impact created by these 114 airports. The economic study concluded that aviation generated $22 billion in economic impact for the communities that these airports serve.

This system plan explores the value and role of Michigan’s airport network in providing access for all users to the larger air transportation network. We believe the 2017 MASP will serve as a resource for federal, state, and local stakeholders to maintain and enhance the system for continued use. Visit www.michigan.gov/aero to review a copy of the 2017 MASP or to review the individualized reports for each airport. Please contact me at smith50@michigan.gov, if you have any questions. We hope you find the MASP a useful tool!

Linn Smith serves as the supervisor of the Project Support Unit within the MDOT Office of Aeronautics.
Meet Kelly Badra!
By Linn Smith

The Project Support Unit of the MDOT Office of Aeronautics is honored to introduce you to Kelly Badra. Kelly has been assisting the aviation community with our office since 2007, but has been in our unit for only a year. She has quickly become a valuable asset to our team at a time when we desperately required additional staff to handle a rapidly increasing workload. Kelly is a departmental analyst with a broad range of responsibilities that include airspace studies, economic impact studies and ensuring the Michigan Aviation System Plan (MASP) data is kept current and accurate.

Recently, Kelly was nominated for a MDOT Director’s Award. Her co-workers wrote the following:

“Kelly is the ultimate team player and is a joy to work with. Her everyday actions are a positive influence on the functionality of our team. Her ‘can do’ attitude, pride in her work and integrity allows her to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction. Her ‘team-first actions’ helps balance the workload of the unit as she is always willing to help others. She leads by example to positively influence the overall morale of the office and goes above and beyond in all that she does.”

The Project Support Unit has an extremely heavy workload. At times, it can be easy to forget that we need to look for innovative ways to be more efficient in how we complete our job duties. Kelly is constantly looking for ways that we can increase our efficiency. Kelly analyzes our processes and is willing to make suggestions to improve our efficiency. During the 2016 calendar year, our customers submitted nearly 1,000 more airspace applications than 2015. Without implementing the time-saving measures Kelly assisted with, the process of these applications would have taken much longer. Kelly’s ability and willingness to analyze our processes and suggest process improvements to increase efficiency directly helped our customers.

Kelly enjoys travelling the world – preferably from the balcony of a cruise ship with her friends and family by her side. Occasionally, she has been known to jump from perfectly airworthy aircraft! The next time you need assistance with airspace protection or need an updated economic impact study for your airport, call Kelly! We believe you’ll find her customer service exceptional!

Linn Smith serves as supervisor of the Project Support Unit within the MDOT Office of Aeronautics.

If you are interested in contributing to the next edition of the MDOT Office of Aeronautics Beacon, please contact Bryan Budds at buddsb@michigan.gov.