



MSO GA NEWS

Spring 2021



New roles for Cris and Brian. [Read more](#)



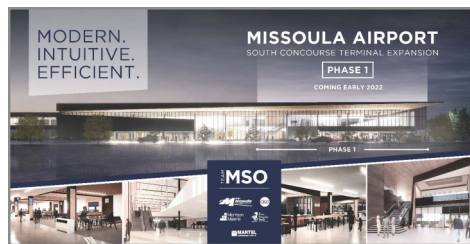
Give me a brake! [Read more](#)



Runway safety at MSO. [Read more](#)



Santa flies again in Missoula!
[Read more](#)



New terminal construction at MSO; update.
[Read more](#)



CAP CFI Pete Graf takes his instruction to Texas. [Read more](#)



Runway construction at
Ravalli County Airport.
[Read more](#)



Cave art and airline ground handling?
[Read more](#)



Progress at Museum of Forest Service
History. [Read more](#)



FBO updates, flight instruction, Neptune
Aviation. [Read more](#)



Red Sleighs Over Montana. [Read more](#)



Short topics at MSO. EAA, airport ops,
badges. [Read more](#)

Reflections of MSO Directors

By Gary Matson

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with Missoula International Airport's Director and Deputy Director for a visit. Anyone who's been around the airport much in recent years will be aware of how much these two are appreciated. Cris Jensen, Director, and Brian Ellestad, Deputy Director. The bittersweet part of our visit was its occasion, Cris's departure to take a position in administration at the Reno, Nevada airport. In fact, on the day of our visit Brian's title at MSO had become Acting Director. The two have been carrying on, just as always, as an effective management team but now with a new goal of achieving a smooth transition of leadership.



MSO Chief of Public Safety Justin Shaffer presents Cris with a fire axe trophy at Cris' farewell party. The Public Safety Department contributed to making the beautiful plaque and axe, created by Field Maintenance technician Geoff Hamers. MSO News photo

Career highlights

What might members of the airport community be interested in amongst Cris' sixteen years of guiding MSO? Being a reporter of limited imagination, I started with the obvious question to Cris: "What are some of the highlights during your tenure?" One might think that the control tower, new terminal, etc. would be on the list, but no. His arrival at MSO came at a time when the former Director was being prosecuted for stealing \$645,000 in public funds from the airport. Federal and state investigators descended on the airport offices. Public trust suffered. Missoula County even considered disbanding the Airport Authority. From that rough beginning, Cris is proudest of helping to create a smoothly operating, collaborative team in airport administration and staff. Those of us who have followed events at the airport will confirm that today's team of administrators, staff, and airport Board of Commissioners

is harmonious, collaborative, and highly effective. They get stuff done!

New staff positions created during Cris' tenure included Business Development Manager, a position now held by Dan Neuman. Amanda Jacobson is Advertising Manager. These two positions give Missoula's airport a bit more of an entrepreneurial spin than is present at other airports. For example, Dan has pioneered the development of the airport's own ground handling operation. Started on a shoestring, it now reliably serves subscribing airlines and operates at a profit. In another new position, Projects Manager Tim Damrow is in charge of tracking the ambitious undertaking of the multi-year and multi-million-dollar new terminal construction.

Jesse Johnson was Chief of Public Safety for 6 years. He expressed his appreciation of Cris' style of leadership. Cris liked to say, "I will give you enough rope to choke yourself, but never enough to hang yourself." To Jesse, this meant that he "isn't going to do our job for us." He wanted us learn from mistakes and become better. We knew he would always have our backs if we were struggling but would let us do what we knew we had to do to get the job done.

One of the curious practices that Cris introduced at MSO was the use of CO₂ to disperse fog. A truck traversed the runway shooting the gas skyward. It actually worked! Complication? Well, the temp had to be below about 28 degrees before the "freezing fog" would clear. Still, over the years landings have been enabled that otherwise would have been diverted elsewhere. The CO₂ treatment is a kind of quirky, unexpected, but effective trick. Also on the subject of weather, Cris hasn't really noticed much change over his time here except maybe that Februarys have become more unpredictable. That is, don't ever say in January that we're lucky to be having such a mild winter. You might regret that statement in February.

Future projections

What projections does Cris have for MSO's future? The concept will be refined in the upcoming Airport Master Plan process that will be conducted during Brian's tenure. There has been a presumption of a parallel runway someday – Rwy 30L, 12R. That's a ways away. There is plenty of land south of today's Rwy 12/30 for the development of aviation and non-aviation uses. One idea includes a solar array. There is plenty of land for e.g. a 10-20 megawatt solar installation. If that were to take place there would have to be assurances that surfaces wouldn't

See Reflections (Continued on page 3)

Reflections (Continued from page 2)

create glare for aircraft traffic at MSO. There is continuing interest in more general aviation (GA) hangars. Today's GA developments both on the east side of the airport and south of Minuteman happened much faster than expected. To coin a phrase, "we'll see what the future brings."

"Policeman, fireman, play with airplanes"

Cris' family has grown up over their 16 years in Missoula. His two boys are MSU grads, one living in Bozeman and the other in Missoula. His daughter will graduate from Corvallis High on June 5. His wife has been a school counselor at Lone Rock. She and Cris are both Reno natives and the old friendships they have there bring a pleasant anticipation to their move. Although housing is maybe even more scarce there than in Missoula, a friend sold them a very nice house at a good price.

How will Cris' job at Reno differ from the one here? His title is Chief of Operations and Public Safety. He'll oversee fire, police, airfield operations, and the communications center. Cris says that this will be "...everything I wanted to be since I was a little kid: Policeman, fireman, play with airplanes." He'll exercise these responsibilities at two airports, Reno/Tahoe International (KRNO) and Reno/Stead (KRTS). Both airports have some fame. The winter Olympics were held at nearby Squaw Valley in 1960 and travelers utilized KRNO. The world famous Reno Air Races are held each year at KRTS. Most pilots and aviation enthusiasts have attending these races on their bucket list.

Cris has his Private Pilot certificate but has not flown for years. He had always thought that he'd pursue that someday but has been developing a parallel interest in boats as part of his retirement plan. He may follow the lead of a friend who lives on his boat in the San Juan Islands and travel on water instead of in the air. "...it's a lot of the same stuff. There's the navigation aspect, meteorology..."

Cris says he'll come back to Missoula. He expects to retire after 5 years at Reno, which will put his airport administration career duration at 36 years. "That's enough!" He doesn't expect to do consulting or other aviation activities just travel, relax... "...I'm countin' down!"

New challenges for Brian

Brian, on the other hand, is planning on tackling more challenges in airport management including putting his hat in the ring to become MSO Airport Director. As Deputy, Brian has had outstanding success in bringing more airline service to Missoula. Asked if he could wear that airline service hat and the Director's hat at the same time Brian replied in the affirmative. He has great respect for the diverse and abundant skills in the present MSO staff and

believes that all of the airport's functions can be effectively managed by existing staff. Brian observes that more Missoula community growth will stabilize sustainable, increased airline service at MSO. Now, the warmer seasons bring peaks in air travel by people wanting to experience Montana's special attractions. Travel drops off during the colder seasons but this drop off could be balanced by local travelers as Missoula grows.

Brian will continue the airport's friendliness to general aviation. Tangible evidence of GA growth is the new hangar construction of recent years. One of the intangibles of airport support is the annual General Aviation Barbecue. Enjoyed by local pilots and aviators, it's become a tradition. Look for it again this fall after last year's pandemic-caused hiatus.

Brian has really been around... Minnesota, Wisconsin, Florida, Kentucky. What does he enjoy most about the Missoula area? He and his wife love to be outside and have a special interest in backpacking. For the uninitiated, that means putting your house and groceries on your back and hiking several miles, usually uphill, to a camping place. The rewards are worth the effort – exceptionally beautiful wild places and opportunities for spiritual recharge. Less attractive to Brian are summer wildfires. He's been evacuated from his home near Lolo twice! Those who still love this place after things like that are truly Montanans!

Farewells

On the occasion of Cris' departure, Brian says "I just want to thank Cris for all these years that he's been here. He's been a great mentor and, probably more importantly, friend over the years and he's going to be missed." Cris echos Brian's words. "...we've spent a lot of time together and he puts up with me and lets me have the limelight when he's done the hard work for a very long time. It's time he gets the glory. I'm really excited to see what happens at this airport in the future."

Cover photo – Cris and Brian, chefs extraordinaire, 2018 General Aviation BBQ. MSO News photo



Missoula County Commissioner Dave Strohmaier (far left) shares his best wishes with Cris and Brian at the March 30, 2021 farewell party. MSO News photo



Santa flies again!

MSO GA News

Spring hardly seems like the season to celebrate Christmas but it's never too late to recognize the rebirth of a fun tradition with an aviation link. Missoulian writer Laura Scheer covered the historic holiday event in the December 18th Missoulian. She tells of community-wide effort with its beginning in fond memories of Santa's lit-up sleigh airborne behind a helicopter on a flyover around the Missoula area. It hadn't happened since 2004. Community resident Lynn Lease spearheaded interest in bringing that fun holiday sight back again especially for the enjoyment of kids who had been struggling during the tough pandemic year. Her husband, Brian, and his crew of volunteers got busy with plans to revitalize the long-neglected sleigh. First, though, it had to be lifted off the roof of the John Deere RDO Equipment Company at the Wye, where it had been displayed each Christmas after its last flight. The company and D&G Crane Services donated time and equipment to move the sleigh off the roof.

As excitement about the project grew, local business and more than 200 people donated to raise money for the flyover. MSO's Minuteman Aviation evaluated the airworthiness of the sleigh and would provide the helicopter to get it airborne at Christmastime. High Country Carriers, Sorenson Transport, and the Missoula Downtown Foundation chipped in with services and funds.

After a day of showers and wind, December 21st was a

calm night. Santa's flyover was a 100% successful culmination of weeks of work and anticipation. It couldn't have been a better way of showing the value of enthusiasm and community spirit brought together to create a memorable, fun experience shared by all.

Cover page photo by Art Dykstra. The Minuteman Aviation helicopter gives Santa a smooth landing after the December 21 flight.



Bryan Lease shows the work he and volunteers have done to get the sleigh ready for the flyover. Photo by Tom Bauer, Missoulian

Red Sleighs Over Montana

Pat Collins and MSO News

If one had to guess where a high energy, creative adventure might be hatched at MSO it might be... you guessed it, the Museum of Mountain Flying. Although the spring season that marks this edition of the newsletter is better known for the Easter Bunny than Santa's sleigh, the story of the Christmas event that brought together the best of MSO's general aviation community can't be passed up. On Wednesday, December 23, 2020, around 14 planes and helicopters launched to deliver Christmas gifts for the kids of Montana communities. Museum President Eric Komberec along with volunteer Kevin Brick put together most of the logistics in just 1 week! Pat Collins and his "angels" along with Museum volunteer Natalie contributed a tremendous effort in putting together toys and gift baskets. Pat gives us the following summary of the event:

"On December 13th I received a call from Eric (Komberec) about an idea he had regarding delivering Christmas gifts to rural communities in Montana. Within an hour of our first conversation, he called back and said he had 10 airplanes/helicopters committed to doing deliveries

and we needed communities and gifts. So, the word went out and designated donation delivery sites identified. The Museum was hosting a book signing on December 19th and we would meet there to establish roles. I had a contact with Family services through MT National guard who was able to donate some small stocking stuffers. I also reached out to the Community and The Union Club Bar and Grill board donated funds along with Christian Real Estate.

We also had some community members give in support of this worthwhile cause. Eric contacted the news media and we were recognized through televised interviews. Four realtors from Berkshire Hathaway Montana Properties began the task of shopping for the children in the 20 identified communities. We had some specific requests like clothing and boots/coats which they were able to purchase and assign names to. We then were able to purchase toys, games, blankets, sleds etc. By December 21st everything was at the Museum hangar, sorted and ready for delivery.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

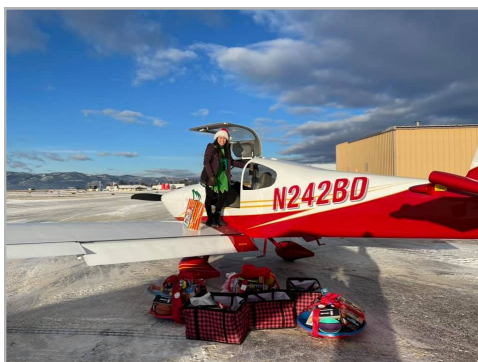
Bryan Douglass was in charge of getting aircraft assigned to a designated community. Our first attempt to set the plan in motion was Tuesday the 22nd. That failed due to weather and everyone launched on Wednesday the 23rd. Each aircraft had at least one stop, some had multiple. Each had a Santa or Mrs. Claus. I was Santa on the Libby flight and it was heartwarming to see the turnout. When a 5-year-old asks for a blanket as a gift which we had you know it was worth everything we put into this. I am not certain, but I think 11 fixed wing and 3 rotary wing aircraft were used in the First "Red Sleighs over Montana" adventure."

Next Christmas should be even bigger! Eric predicts an earlier start next year, around November, with a goal of reaching locations across much of Montana.

Cover page photo by John Haines. Art Dykstra and Dave Bretz about to land in Thompson Falls.



Art Dykstra and Santa Dave Bretz. John Haines photo



Elf Jackie Douglass and her Dad, Bryan's RV-10 airplane. John Haines photo



Mark Mamuzich, Santa Claus, and Shaela Mamuzich. John Haines photo



Tia Komberec. John Haines photo



Aerial elves departing from MSO. John Haines photo



Santa Dave Bretz distributing gifts at Thompson Falls. John Haines photo



Left: Santa Brandon Bretz at Minuteman ready for sleigh departure. Keely Flatow photo



Kraig Kosena and a little girl in White Sulphur. Megan Kosena photo

The National Museum of Forest Service History

Update from Lisa Tate, Executive Director

For the past year, The National Museum of Forest Service History has made significant progress in efforts to bring a world class visitor experience, the National Conservation Legacy, to Missoula.

The Museum's capital campaign to build the Conservation Legacy Center has currently raised 80 percent of the 10.5M goal, with about \$2 million left to raise. After much consideration, the Board decided to redesign the Conservation Legacy Center (CLC) so that it maximizes the use of wood and, in particular, mass timber technology, which is a building framing system that uses large solid-wood panels for wall, floor, and roof construction. The Museum is working with Nationally renowned Mass Timber architect, Tom Chung to create a world class showpiece design. The Museum has also hired Art Processors, a leading exhibit design and visitor experience firm to help plan exhibits and the overall visitor experience in the CLC and throughout the 31 acre campus. The Museum continues to have very strong support from many partners locally, regionally, and nationally.

The current Visitor Center and Forest Discovery Trail, featuring a new lookout exhibit, will be open Memorial day through Labor day from 10am to 4pm daily. Please stop by

to learn more!

Editor's note: Although the Museum is a next door neighbor and not directly part of the Missoula International Airport this newsletter includes updates for two reasons: 1) The Museum has significant collections about local aviation history; 2) It is a wonderful, nearby, interesting place not only for local aviators and residents but also for visitors traveling through the airport. ✈️

Get Out and Fly!

Ravalli County Airport

By Dave Hedditch

After over 50 yrs of working to get Ravalli County Airport improved, it is finally happening. The actual dirt moving part of this 17-million-dollar project started last fall (2020) and should end around the end of June (2021). The work includes moving the runway 400 feet east of the old runway, moving the entire runway 1550 feet north and extending the runway 1000 feet north for a total runway length of 5200 feet. The max weight limit of 25,000 lbs dual wheel does not change. Hangar spaces will increase, ramp space increased, and taxiways will be improved.

Currently, the Ravalli County Airport will be closed to all traffic from 5 Apr to 1 Jul but check NOTAMS for changes to the schedule. Also, runway headings, new GPS approaches, and airport identifier will change.

The next hurdle to overcome is the sewer system for the airport. The last word is the city of Hamilton does not want to support the airport though it does have the capacity.

The commissioners, pilots, and people working at Ravalli County Airport want to thank the FAA, Montana Aeronautics Board, Robert Peccia & Associates, and all

the people who donated money to the Aviation Safety Foundation for their support in pursuit of this project.

Cover page photo by Fred Hasskamp – Ravalli County Airport, March 2021, ✈️



Runway construction at the Ravalli County Airport, March 2021. Photo by Fred Hasskamp

Dan's Desk


By Dan Neuman, MSO Business Development Mgr.

The subject of this edition of Dan's Desk is history. That very word evokes mental images of dusty Egyptian tombs, elegant Greek sculpture, cave paintings in France and..... Ground Handling? That's right Ground Handling! A little know fact about the Airport is that we have a 12 year history of running our own (for profit) Ground Handling operation. Ground Handling, for the uninitiated, is the process of performing all of the tasks associated with getting passengers and cargo onto and off of commercial flights.

This operation started in 2009 with \$267,000 in revenue and 50,573 enplanements and has grown to the point where we serviced nearly a third of the Airport passengers last year. Since inception, this enterprise has moved 1.3 million passengers on and off airplanes, producing \$3.9 million dollars in revenue. The financial impact on the Airport has been calculated at over \$14 million dollars (Passenger Facility Charge, Vendor and Parking Revenue, etc). And if that's not enough, we are projected to handle almost 1,700 flights during the next fiscal year and produce \$937,000 in revenue. Pretty impressive numbers for a rag tag outfit that started with a handful of Ex-Northwest Airlines people, a conglomeration of third hand equipment and a single Airline contract. We currently handle all American Airlines, Allegiant Air and Frontier Airlines flights.

It's not all about the money though, as Cris Jensen (Airport Director Emeritus) is quick to point out. "It is

about helping people and having the ability to influence the customer service experience that passengers receive when they pass through MSO," according to Jensen. He and the rest of the Airport staff have been supportive of this effort throughout the years.

With the addition of several new markets to the Missoula operations this year, it appears that the Ground Handling operation is going to continue to make history. 



The skilled MSO ground handling crew provides services that help both the airlines and the airport.

Missoula Airport Terminal Expansion – Spring 2021 Update

Article and photos by Tim Damrow, MSO Projects Manager

With a wild and unpredictable 2020 in the books, we are optimistically looking forward to the final stretch of construction on the "South Concourse". While our passenger traffic is still in recovery mode, construction remains on track to open the first phase of our terminal construction project in early 2022.

As our long and drawn-out Montana winter slowly comes to an end, we are just about ready to finish the last section of work on our parking lot expansion. This expansion is meant to increase available parking but also ease navigation through the lot. This summer, we will see a new parking lot exit plaza that will help efficiently route traffic out of the parking lots during the peak arrival banks. The new exit will also lay the groundwork to optimize and expand the "east" section of the lot in the not-too-distant future.

While the exterior shell of the building may be

obscuring your view into the worksite, rest assured that progress on the building interior is progressing rapidly, with activities ranging from utility installation to painting and flooring. If you have not already done so, please sign up below for one of our tours to get a firsthand look at the South Concourse!

The South Concourse is the first of a two-phase project to fully rebuild the Missoula Airport Terminal. This new concourse will be home to most of the functions taking place in the current building, with everything from boarding gates to baggage claim eventually residing in the South Concourse. At this point the airport will be able to operate both buildings in tandem, using a connector tunnel to allow passengers to board aircraft through both the old and new terminals. We anticipate this "dual operations" phase to be somewhat short lived but necessary as we remobilize our

See Terminal (Continued on page 8)

Terminal (Continued from page 7)

contractors and re-evaluate/secure our funding to proceed.

Many of you may recall the airport's original promise that "No Local Taxes" would be used to fund the terminal project, and while COVID-19 presented many challenges, the airport was fortunate to receive several federal grants that will be used to push our project forward. These funds combined with financing secured through First Security Bank make the second phase, the "East Concourse" more and more of a reality.


Later this spring, the Airport Authority Board will participate in a workshop to evaluate and plot a course of action on the East Concourse. Assuming all systems are a go, we hope to begin deconstruction of the remaining terminal shortly after opening the South Concourse, followed by construction on the East Concourse. We would expect construction of this phase to occur over a 2–3-year period putting completion sometime in 2024-2025.

As work progresses through the year, our sights are now focused on "2.22.22" to offer the community a sneak peak of the new South Concourse. Barring any major delays in construction, we hope to welcome dignitaries and the public on-site for a ribbon cutting and behind the scenes look before we officially open the doors in the days following.

Also, just a reminder that we are offering weekly construction tours of South Concourse. While the pictures may be impressive, nothing can truly capture the scale and beauty of the building like experiencing it firsthand. Please use this link to schedule a spot on one of our Friday

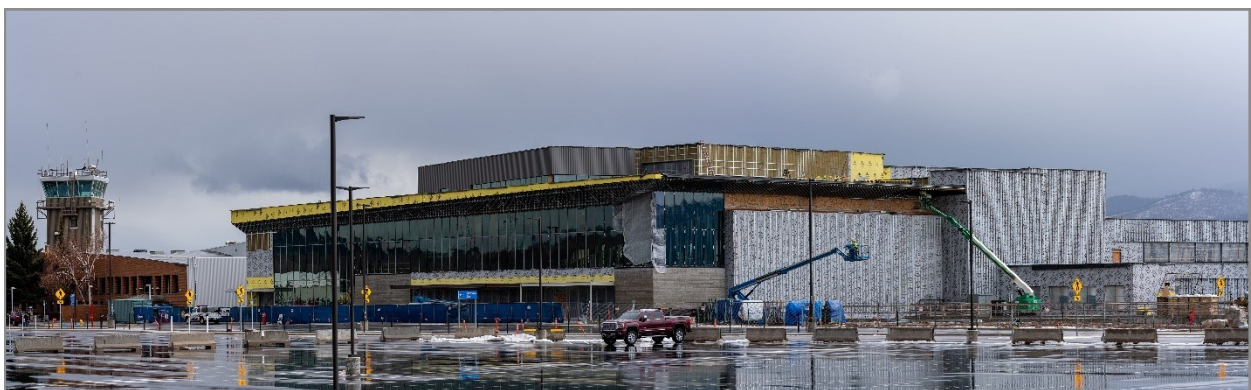
morning tours: <https://MSOtour.as.me/>

Visit www.flymissoula.com/construction to sign up for project updates and browse the latest construction photos!

Editor's note: What's an airport without food and drinks!? The concession that has been Jedediah's has been amicably transferred to Liquid Planet. It will cease operations when the South Concourse opens at which time Faber, Coe and Gregg in conjunction with local partners Kettlehouse Brewing Company and Black Coffee Roasting will be the concessionaires. Of great interest to Missoulians and travelers alike will be the pre-security viewing area, offering full views of airport operations. Aviation enthusiasts have long been deprived of the chance to watch travelers arrive and depart, or just to watch airplanes for fun. We can all look forward to that new opportunity (see photo). 



Pre-security public viewing area with refreshments by Black Coffee Roasting Company.



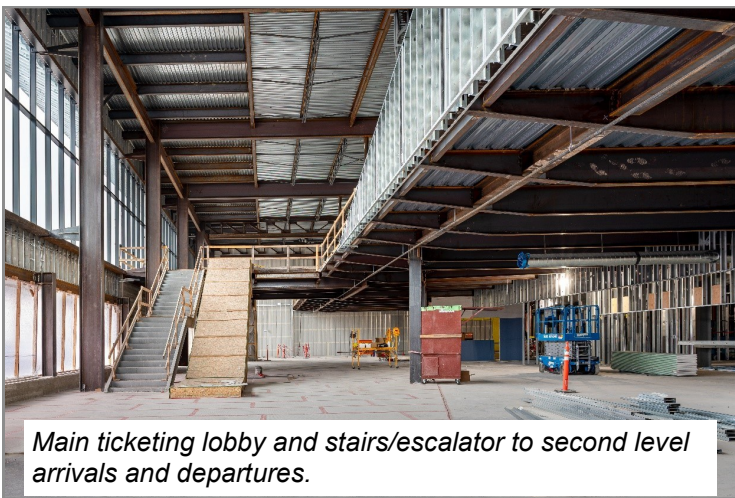
New and old terminal with exterior glass and siding installation.



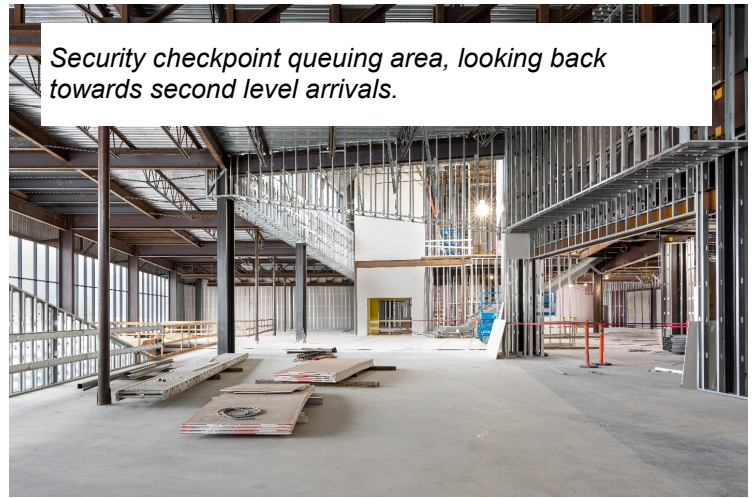
Fly the Big Sky license plates are now available through regular county motor vehicle licensing departments. For each license purchased, EAA Chapter 517 receives \$20 to further its activities promoting aviation. The additional cost for the specialty plate with standard numbers is about \$30, and for the personalized plate about \$60. Plates can be ordered at any time without affecting the renewal cycle. Standard renewal rates apply, with the specialty plate cost being added.



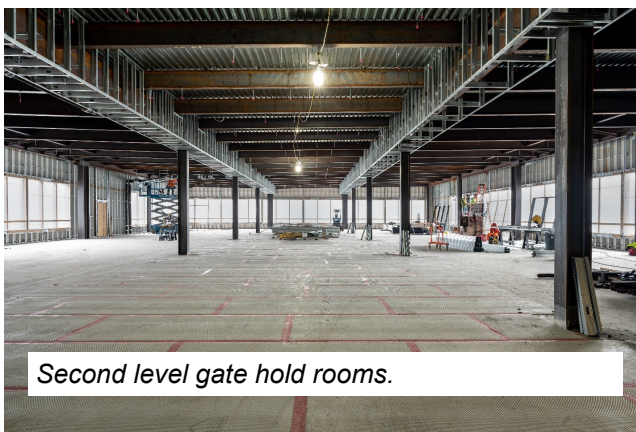
Upgraded terminal entry signage to aid in navigating the new roadway.



Main ticketing lobby and stairs/escalator to second level arrivals and departures.



Security checkpoint queuing area, looking back towards second level arrivals.



Second level gate hold rooms.



West view of the South Concourse.



Left: Partially completed and expanded parking lot, ready to pave this spring.

FBO updates, flight instruction, Neptune Aviation

MSO GA News

Minuteman update from Director of Ground Operations Josh Johnson

- Our new Delta hangar is completed and almost full! We had lots of room in the new hangar, but the Hamilton runway closure brought multiple planes and Pilots north to Missoula so they could keep flying. We may have room for 1 or 2 more? Folks can call our office (406)728-9363 for more information and to check availability.
- Flight instruction is going strong, and well-known 2-3-Niner is seeing lots of air time. We've also seen an increase in rental time in our 172 as students' progress and work on their IFR rating.
- Fire season is well under way and may be coming to a town near you (but hopefully not)! Our aircraft start out early in places like Kentucky and Virginia, but the regular season is fast approaching and Minuteman helicopters will work closer to home as things dry out this summer, ready to work with the Forest Service and attack any fire threat.

Projections are pointing to a busy summer at the Missoula Airport & Minuteman FBO. As restrictions lift, folks are itching to visit Missoula and the surrounding areas to take in all Montana has to offer!

Northstar Jet update from FBO General Manager Kynan Spethman

As Missoula's Premier FBO and Flight School, 2021 has started off strong for Northstar Jet!

- **Flight School:** The NSJ Flight School is now settled into its new dedicated hangar! If you haven't been out in a while, we've moved the NSJ flight school to Hangar #8, on the Southwest corner of our campus near the helipads. The program has a new dedicated hangar, offices, conference room and lots of exciting growth on the horizon! You'll find 4 dedicated instructors available to help you out with all your flight instruction needs. Our aircraft have already flown 350 hours this year, so don't miss out on these beautiful spring days!
- **FBO:** Increasing airline traffic, lots of new tenants, strong fuel sales and plenty of deicing all summarize the start of 2021! If its full service, heated, clean hangar space you need, we've still got lots of space in a variety of our hangars... big or small we can fit them all! Email: kynan@northstarmso.com or phone the Front Desk: 721-8886.
- **Self-Serve Fuel:** Reminder that we've got self-serve 100LL, out near the Alpha-Bravo 2 intersection on the West side of our ramp. Take advantage of the \$4.40 price... cheapest in the area!
- **Our best to Director Cris Jensen:** We wish Cris the best as he moves on to Reno's airports! He's been a tremendous partner and G.A. advocate for his entire 16 years here in Missoula! We can't thank him enough for his vision and help with all he's been a part of here at MSO!

Flight instruction update from Kurt Kleiner, CFI

- Kurt has had both doses of the Moderna vaccine and is available for CFI services, flight reviews, proficiency and refresher flights, etc. He can be contacted directly at 307.631.4385 or rock2sky@yahoo.com. *Your editor has enjoyed flying with Kurt, even learned some new things, and you will too.* Kurt passes along this note:
- **FAA NW-Mountain Virtual Aviation Safety Week:** Even though this week-long event has ended, you can still click on the link below to watch any of the presentations that you may have missed that look interesting to you. They were all recorded. When the document opens up, simply click on "Register" for any event in the list that you want to see, fill out a few blanks with your name, email address and home city/state, and the recorded presentation will start. It's that easy. Try a couple of them via the link below. I believe you can also still sign up for Wings credit for any recorded presentation you wish to watch.

[NW_Mountain_Virtual_Aviation_Safety_Week_-_Event_Agenda.pdf \(faasafety.gov\)](#)

Neptune Update (Continued from page 10)

Neptune update from Marketing Manager Kevin Condit

- The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) reached out to Neptune Aviation last summer with a problem – the MFBN need a “secure” location to build food boxes for hungry Montanans during the pandemic. Not only did Neptune have the space for the project – MSO, Horizon Air & Neptune offered to help build the 30-pound food boxes.



Employees of MSO, Horizon Air, and Neptune aviation, along with others assembled more than 2,000 Mail-A-Meal boxes in Neptune's hangar. Photo courtesy of Kevin Condit



An abundantly endowed Mail-A-Meal box. Photo courtesy of Kevin Condit

- By December more than 2,000 Mail-A-Meal boxes were built in Neptune's Hangar 7. Not only did the employees of the MSO, Horizon Air and Neptune Aviation pitch in – other groups from western Montana lent a hand (including the Clearwater Credit Union, Advanced Technology Group, First Interstate Bank, Jackson Contractor Group, AFLAC, St. Francis Xavier Parish, and private groups of family members/friends).
- Neptune Aviation's Tanker 40 will head out of Missoula on April 16th for the start of fire season (the Forest Service will activate 3 other Neptune tankers by mid-May). The remaining Neptune tankers will be utilized under “Call When Needed” contracts, it is too soon to tell when & where the rest of the fleet will be sent.
- Neptune's charter department continues to be busy with traditional charter flights and the weekly shuttle flights between Missoula & Billings.



Fly the Big Sky license plates are now available through regular county motor vehicle licensing departments. For each license purchased, EAA Chapter 517 receives \$20 to further its activities promoting aviation. The additional cost for the specialty plate with standard numbers is about \$30, and for the personalized plate about \$60. Plates can be ordered at any time without affecting the renewal cycle. Standard renewal rates apply, with the specialty plate cost being added.

MSO NEWS SHORT TOPICS

Five Valleys Flyers,EAA Chapter 517, Inc.

By Steve Rossiter, Chapter President

In 2019, EAA Chapter 517, Inc. made the decision to rebrand ourselves to better represent exactly who we are as an Organization. Often our organization was misunderstood and people thought we were only about experimental and homebuilt aircraft. Although our heritage stems from the homebuilt movement, we are anything but limited to that community. The membership of Five Valleys Flyers covers the whole gamut of aviation interests.

Only about a third of Five Valleys Flyers membership have built, are building, or are flying homebuilt (experimental) aircraft. Another third of our members own or are flying traditional, factory built, production aircraft. The last third may or may not be pilots, but are not necessarily active pilots. Many of our members are former military pilots, retired airline pilots, and professional pilots from corporations or government. And some of our members are student pilots.

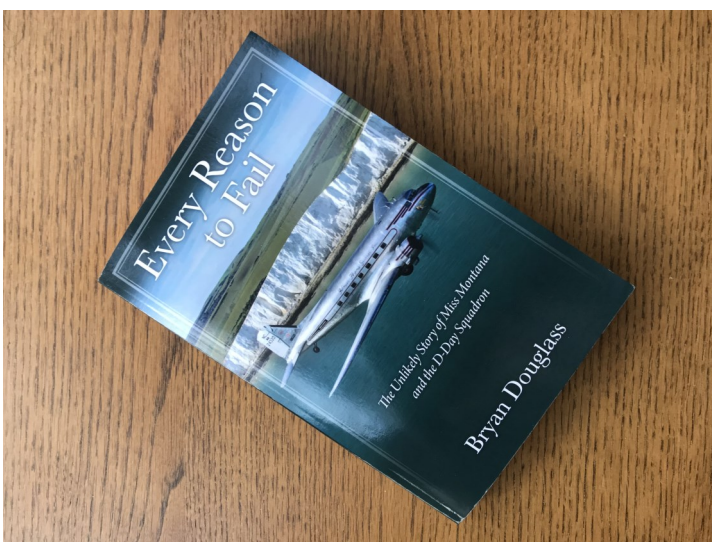
The focus of Five Valleys Flyers is to be the social center for anyone interested in aviation in the Five Valleys region. Our membership range from Superior to Phillipsburg and Seeley Lake to Darby. We also have visitors from other Montana EAA Chapters who participate in our events.

For years EAA Chapter 517, Inc. has provided three annual scholarships for budding Montana pilots and aviation professionals. This year marks the start of our third, full ride \$10,000 Private Pilot Scholarship funded by the Ray Scholarship Fund, through the Experiment Aircraft Association.

While we, like everyone else, had our activities restricted in 2020 due to COVID, we are now becoming more socially active, as restrictions are eased while respecting people's individual COVID concerns. We restarted our monthly meeting schedule last September, and in February we restarted our first Saturday of the month coffee and donuts. Coffee and donuts will be replaced for the flying season with our First Saturday of the month Pancake Breakfast beginning on May 1, 2021.

Anyone wanting to talk flying and socialize with like-minded people is welcome to join us for pancakes, coffee, and conversation. At the EAA hangar on the Missoula International Airport. Check our website for details: www.eaa517.org You can also follow us on Facebook.

Every Reason to Fail



Bryan Douglass' book about the epic adventure of Miss Montana to Normandy is absolutely a "must read" for aviators, especially those of us sharing a base with the historic DC-3. Bryan's story creates in the reader a deep appreciation for a number of things: The success of a near-impossible effort to make the aircraft flyable in less than a year's time and starting with zero resources; the rarely seen volunteer energy that showed up again and again to do the work; the rich relationships among the Miss Montana crew that flourished because of their sharing of an epic adventure; the physical and performance challenges involved in participating with many DC-3s never before together as a group and called upon to skillfully execute a "one-shot-only" D-Day Seventy Fifth Anniversary performance. The historical accounts included in the book, Mann Gulch, WWII, the Berlin

Airlift, give added value. ***Every Reason to Fail*** can be purchased on Amazon. Bryan will sell an autographed copy for \$20. Contact him at bryan@everyreasontofail.com

SeeShort topics

(Continued on page 13)

Short topics (Continued from page 12)**MSO air operations; 2020 and 2021 compared**

Although total air operations for January and February were roughly similar for 2020 and 2021 passenger travel for 2021 (53,568 enplanements + deplanements) is about half that of 2020 (108,019).

	Air Carrier		Air Taxi		General Aviation		Military		Civil		Total	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
January	557	549	508	391	689	926	4	84	760	930	2518	2880
February	491	543	419	351	934	689	42	40	806	670	2692	2293

Explanation of categories: **Air Carriers** - aircraft capable of carrying more than 60 passengers; **Air Taxi** - aircraft that are hired and have a call sign such as Exec Jet, Jet Speed, etc.; **General Aviation** aircraft with (N)ovember in the call sign; **Military** - aircraft operated by Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard, National Guard, or Reserve; **Civil** is anything that is not Air Carrier, Air Taxi or Military.

Advisories from Spokane Approach

VFR pilots inbound to MSO from the west may find it helpful to request traffic advisories from Spokane Approach, 124.9. IFR and VFR approaches from the west to Runway 12 and departures to the west from Runway 30 are restricted by terrain that concentrates traffic in narrow corridors. Your *News* Editor has found approach controllers responsive and helpful and has on some occasions been alerted to potential traffic conflicts that may not have been seen. Getting ATIS when about 30 miles out and then contacting Spokane Approach seems to work well. Approach will typically advise the switch to Missoula Tower when about 10 miles out.

Airport weather and conditions

- ATIS phone line. 406-549-2989. Call in to get ATIS when you're away from a radio.
- ASOS (Automated Surface Observing System). 406-728-3743. MSO weather 24/7.
- After the tower closes, ASOS weather is available by radio at 126.65.

Talk to a real person. 406-329-4840. The staff at our local National Weather Service office is always glad to visit with pilots about weather and can often clarify uncertainties in a forecast.

Airport access badges

- Check your badge renewal date. It expires every two years, on your birthday.
- It can be renewed anytime within the 30 days before your birthday. There is no "grace period" after the renewal date.
- Begin the renewal process by completing paperwork at the airport administration office in the terminal. Arrange with your sponsor (FBO, commercial operator, or hangar association manager) to sign your paperwork. The signed paperwork authorizes you to take the tutorial at the Airport's Public Safety Office. Badges are issued at the completion of the tutorial.

•*This message received 11/19/20 from Administrative Assistant Rick Reeve regarding accessibility of badging services:*

Public Safety Officer Jesse Johnson handles badging procedures and is only in for full time badging on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week. These are the days where appointments can be made online at: <http://flymissoula.com/badging>

The Administrative Office is extremely short staffed and has odd hours due to Covid. Coordinating any off-day requests for badging is a bit of a challenge.

See Short topics (Continued on page 14)

Short topics (Continued from page 13)

*Please do not assume we are able to attend to walk-ins.

*Please also keep in mind that it is a lot easier to accommodate requests if you call or email ahead of time. This way I can adjust my schedule. Admin. Office phone: 728-4381

*It also allows me to make sure the person coming for badging has the proper forms, knows about the ID requirements, and gets their signatory to OK the paperwork prior to coming over to the office for badging.

Moving?! PLEASE let your sponsoring FBO or hangar association managers know! They are required to report changes in hangar occupancy within 24 hours of the change. It is now the sponsor's (signatory's) responsibility to: a) Let the Airport Public Safety Office know within 24 hours of any move; b) Ensure that the AOA badge is turned in to the Airport within 30 days. The sponsor (not the badge holder, though the sponsor may attempt to collect from the badge holder) may receive a monetary fine if either the 24 hour notification or the badge return is not done.

Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT)

Missoula International Airport Air Traffic Manager Keith Eberhard presented this year's annual Runway Safety Action Team meeting at the airport on March 29, 2021. The topic of emphasis was operations on the airport's *Movement Area*, which generally includes anywhere on the airfield where pilots and ground vehicles need permission from ATC to operate: Taxiways, Runways, and runway safety areas. The typical runway safety area extends 250' laterally from the runway centerline and 1000' on the centerline from the runway approach and departure ends.

Keith reviewed the types of unauthorized movements that occur at airports. The *runway incursion* occurs when an aircraft or vehicle enters the runway safety area without an ATC clearance. A *surface incident* results when an aircraft or vehicle enters off a taxiway onto the movement area without ATC clearance. The departure of an aircraft off the runway during takeoff or landing is a *runway excursion*. These involve many factors including pilot, aircraft, and runway condition. The National Airspace System had 1,637 runway incursions during FY 2019, 415 surface incidents, and 340 runway excursions. In addition, there were 1,146 *wrong surface landings* when pilots landed on the wrong runway or on a taxiway.

Missoula pilots appreciate the friendly professionalism of our air traffic controllers. Neither pilots nor controllers are perfect but MSO has few problems. Among the things pilots can do to keep things operating smoothly is to talk plainly, use proper phraseology, read back clearances and hold short instructions, use "say again for ____" when an ATC instruction is not clear, and remember which is right and left.



Crossing this line without permission from Air Traffic

A runway incursion occurs when this line is crossed without ATC clearance. Photo courtesy of Keith Eberhard.



Crossing this line without permission from Air Traffic

A surface incident occurs when this line is crossed without ATC clearance. Photo courtesy of Keith Eberhard

Those are the Brakes or Checklist Manifesto

By Bryan Douglass

This story isn't one of those "There I was" stories that veteran pilots tell, regaling listeners with near misses, brushes with death, or enemy contact. Nevertheless, there is a better than even chance that, if you fly long enough, something like this will happen to you. As with most things that *could* go wrong but *don't*, I have a flight instructor to thank – that neither my airplane nor my pride were injured.

I learned to fly at Northstar and am very glad I did. Those hours spent in 172s were valuable, and a very good way to start. However, after working through private and instrument tickets, I looked for something I could own and use whenever I wanted, something faster, that could carry more, and do more. I settled on a Van's RV-10, which I proceeded to build and, as I approached the day that it would fly, I trained (twice) with arguably the best RV transition trainer in the world – Mike Seager in Oregon.

If you aren't familiar with RVs, for the purpose of this story all you really need to know is that all of them have free casting nose wheels. In other words, you steer every RV on the ground by differential braking, and each toe brake is an independent system from the other. The nose wheel isn't attached to any steering mechanism like some planes have. It's a very simple system, is easy to build, and usually works very reliably. However, it doesn't work well at all if one or both brake systems fail. For this reason, Mike Seager taught a before-landing checklist that included a pump test of both toe brakes to make sure they would function upon landing. It's been while but I don't recall learning that in a 172.


Fast forward nine years of flying my RV-10 - just over 1500 hours on the Hobbs. I have always followed Mike's before-landing checklist religiously because that's what good students do – whether or not we really understand the reason.

On March 23, my wife and I were returning from a week flying around southern Utah and Arizona (where it was warm!) and as I prepared to land at Missoula I tested my brakes as usual and, voila, no pressure in the right brake. Fortunately, MSO has a very long and wide runway, the airport wasn't busy, and the winds were calm. I quickly realized that I could probably land without incident and did so.

However, I didn't think about how I would make a *right* turn off of runway 30. My right brake was useless - and I needed to turn right.

Again, it took me a few seconds, but I remembered somewhere - maybe drivers education - that three lefts make a right! So, I informed the tower that I would need to make three left turns to exit at taxiway A3 – maybe more than one to get it right. The controller chuckled and it was approved. Indeed, it took two attempts because as I made the first attempt I realized (too late) that I needed to arrest my left turn and straighten out to make taxiway A3. Ahh, I thought, that right rudder might come in handy if I had a bit more speed. So, on the next attempt as I approached 180 degrees of my left turn I released the left brake, applied full right rudder and added a bit of power. Off I went down A3 like I had done it before. I had to repeat the exercise twice more to make it to my hangar but by then I was an expert. And...I didn't suffer the indignity of shutting down the runway and being towed off.

It may not seem like a big deal, but during the last week we had landed at Goulding's airstrip (4000'x75') and Marble Canyon (3600'x35'), both small, narrow airstrips with unfavorable winds and nothing but cactus and rocks mere feet off the edge of the pavement. If I had been landing at one of those with one failed brake and hadn't known it, I would certainly still be there, probably with a damaged plane. If it had happened there and I *had* known it before landing, I could have diverted to Page, Arizona nearby and picked a long runway with favorable winds.

So, thanks to all the instructors I've learned from, especially Mike Seager. If you've never practiced three lefts to make a right without a right brake, give it a try. If you want to read an excellent book about how other professions have learned from the checklist mentality in aviation, I recommend *Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*, by Atul Gawande. It may change the way you think about the darn things. 

Cover page photo: Bryan and his recently completed RV10. Photo by Gary Matson in yr 2012

Missoula Civil Air Patrol flight instructor trains U.S. Air Force personnel

Article and photos by Pete Graf, CFI, Missoula CAP Composite Squadron

Late February of this year, Civil Air Patrol (CAP) headquarters put out an email asking for instructor pilots who would be interested in spending two weeks at the USAF Rated Preparation Program (RPP). The Air Force is running two of these courses this year, three next year and plans to run four in 2023. Having been an instructor in the Air Force before retiring, I was excited about working with USAF members again and volunteered immediately. Mid-March the curriculum arrived, and I was very saddened to find that I was listed as an alternate for both of the 1-week sessions. I complained about that and was told there were 50+ who didn't make the cut and besides they always used the "spares" as I was called. In the updated curriculum, I was a spare only for the first week and much happier.

The plan was to drive to Denton, TX, about 25 miles north of Dallas. Ridiculous, you might say but I have family and friends on the way to visit. Early 16 March, I headed south and after 1857 miles I arrived at Denton Airport at noon on 19 March. I made myself available and was dispatched to fly two CAP members who had driven CAP vans to Denton for use during the RPP back south of Houston. By the time they were ready, we finally got airborne at 1730 and headed to Sugarland, southwest of Houston, to drop one driver, then to Ellington, southeast of Houston, to drop the second, and back north back to Denton. I finally landed at midnight after 5.8 hours of flying. 'Twas a long day but it was a good beginning of my "gopher" week as a spare instructor which ended with 12.5 flying hours.

Then on 28 March, I met my "students" for the next week. The objective of RPP is to provide up to 60 Air Force personnel primary flight training of 7.5 hours each, similar to what CAP already does for its cadets at flight academies in order to improve the personnel's test scores and make them eligible for selection to attend one of the four Rated AF Officer programs. These 60 personnel, 30 each week instructed by 15 CAP CFIs, were of diverse backgrounds that may not currently have high enough Pilot Candidate Selection Method (PCSM) scores to be selected for training for a variety of potential reasons like lack of flying experience or knowledge, low Air Force Officer Qualifying Test (AFOQT) scores, or low Test of Basic Aviation Skills (TBAS) scores. The four rated programs include AF pilot training which most aspired for, remote pilot (UAV) training, air-battle management training, and navigator or weapon system officer training.

My students were a first lieutenant weather officer and a base security sergeant. Since they were behind the power curve on their PCSM scores they were highly motivated.



Red Bird simulator instruction.

The academics or ground training we provided included weather, emergency procedures, and other aviation related knowledge. Each day we provided them with 30-45 minutes of Red Bird simulator training to give them an idea of what to expect the next day in the aircraft, a CAP Cessna 182T G1000.



Yeah, that old guy on the left is me with Lt Quinn in the pilot's seat and Sergeant Dansby in the rear seat.

Our flying goal was to give them an air sense of basic maneuvers but explicitly no landing training. We flew the basics starting with straight and level, climbs and descents, and airspeed changes. As the week progressed, we added slow flight, stalls, 45-degree steep turns, S-turns along a road, basic instruments, and a couple patterns at a non-

CAP (Continued from page 16)

towered airport. Ok, we did several landings for them to grasp the idea of landing. For several days we fought turbulence brought on by high winds like 38 kts at 2500 ft AGL and then thermal turbulence on the one calm morning we had. Lots of other students took home “souvenir bags”. I was very proud of my two. They loved the turbulence. Even though we were directed not to do more than three stalls per sortie, they both said “bring it on” and so we did multiple stalls of both power on and power off.



That's us after the last flight and the plane we used for the week.

Both of my students really impressed me with their progress. Even after only 7.5 hours of actual flying they grasped flying concepts extremely well. Motivation sure goes a long way to making things happen. It was great to be working with USAF members again, even though they were much younger than my children. One of the requirements for this program is that they be younger than 33 years by the time of their applications.

Pete's April 2021 update of Missoula CAP squadron activities:

There has been NO stop in Missoula Composite Squadron cadet activities during the COVID:

- They held meetings at Ft Missoula park open-air pavilion during last summer's warm weather
- They currently meet each Tuesday at the Ft MSO Military History Museum 6-8:30 PM (1800-2030) hosted by Tate Jones
- Recent activities besides the regular meetings include:

Attending several search training exercises (SAREXs) in Bozeman

Ground Team training days in Missoula

First Aid/CPR training on Saturday 10 April at the Fort. 14 Cadets and 3 Senior members attended

Hour-long Orientation Flights in CAP's turbo C182. Each cadet up to age 18 is authorized 5 right-seat flights covering various aspects of aviation

Museum spring cleanup planned for 17 April at the Fort

- Currently, there are 29 cadet members with 18-20 regularly showing at meetings.

There are 4 senior member pilots plus myself in Missoula. Four of us are mission qualified; the 5th is almost there. We also have one new pilot ready to check out.

Editor's note: Pete Graf is a retired Air Force pilot, a retired Delta Airlines pilot, and has major responsibilities with the Montana State Civil Air Patrol. Besides his state responsibilities he remains in touch with the Missoula squadron and is one of its volunteer flight instructors. That's Pete in the cover photo, after having passed his January 2017 checkride in the Missoula Squadron's new Cessna 206.



Fly the Big Sky license plates are now available through regular county motor vehicle licensing departments. For each license purchased, EAA Chapter 517 receives \$20 to further its activities promoting aviation. The additional cost for the specialty plate with standard numbers is about \$30, and for the personalized plate about \$60. Plates can be ordered at any time without affecting the renewal cycle. Standard renewal rates apply, with the specialty plate cost being added.

MSO GA News thanks Pat Collins, volunteer, Museum of Mountain Flying; Kevin Condit, Neptune Marketing Manager; Tim Damrow, MSO Manager of Projects; Bryan Douglass, MSO Private Pilot and volunteer, Museum of Mountain Flying; Art Dykstra, CFII and volunteer, Museum of Mountain Flying; Pete Graf, CFI, MSO Civil Air Patrol; Keith Eberhard, MSO Air Traffic Manager; Dave Hedditch, volunteer, Ravalli County Airport; Josh Johnson, Minuteman Pilot and Director of Ground Service Operations; Kurt Kleiner, CFI; Dan Neuman, MSO Business Development Manager; Rick Reeve, MSO Administrative Assistant; Steve Rossiter, EAA Chapter 517 President; Kynan Spethman, Northstar Jet General Manager; Lisa Tate, Executive Director, National Museum of Forest Service History for their contributions to this "newsletter" (news magazine!).

If you have something interesting to write about we'd like to put it in the newsletter and share it with the Missoula aviation community! Long (about 500 words), short, funny, serious, whatever. The News is published intermittently. Interested in contributing? Contact the editor (see below).

MSO GA NEWS is published in Missoula Montana by Missoula International Airport.

Editor and reporter: Gary Matson, Box 308, Milltown MT 59851 • 370-6584(c) • gmatson@montana.com

MISSOULA AVIATION WEB SITES

Ace Aviation: <https://www.aceaviationmso.com/>

Aerotrronics: <http://www.aerotrronics.com/>

Flying drones safely: <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org/>

Homestead Helicopters: <http://www.homesteadhelicopters.com/>

Minuteman Aviation: <https://www.minutemanaviation.net/>

Missoula International Airport: <http://www.flymissoula.com>

Museum of Mountain Flying: <https://www.museumofmountainflying.org/>

Nat'l Museum of Forest Service History: <http://www.forestservicemuseum.org/>

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

Northstar Jet: <http://www.northstarmso.com>



5225 HIGHWAY 10 WEST
MISSOULA MT 59808