

## MINUTES FOR THE ITD AERONAUTICS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (IAAB)

The Idaho Aeronautics Advisory Board (IAAB) met for a regular quarterly scheduled meeting on:

**Date:** Jan 15, 2025

**Location:** Idaho Department of Transportation Headquarters at 11331 Chinden Blvd, Boise, ID

**Time:** 8:30 am

The following were present:

- John Blakley, Chairman
- Chris Pomeroy, Member
- James Hoff, Member
- Robb Bloem, Member (Virtual)
- Tom Mahoney, Aero-Administrator
- Ruth Munoz, Aero-Business Operations Manager
- Flo Ghighina, Aero-Public Airports Inspector
- Neil Vickrey, Aero-Admin
- Mollie McCarty, ITD
- Rebecca Hupp, Boise Airport Director
- Mike Isaacs, Lewiston Airport Director
- Tony Bean, Moscow-Pullman Airport Director
- Ian Turner, Idaho Falls Airport Director
- Alan Evans, Pocatello Regional Airport Director
- Kristy Heinz, Pocatello Regional Management Assistant
- Andrew George, IAA-President
- Kelli Gant, IAA-Government Affairs (Virtual)
- Keaton Rowley, ITD IT/ETS (Virtual)
- Jennifer Schildgen, FAA (Virtual)
- Tim Vinnell, Gem Air (Virtual)
- John Whalen, McCall Air (Virtual)

Chairman Blakley called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. and verified the members were present. He then had observers introduce themselves and state their positions.

### **Board Minutes from previous AAB meeting**

Chairman Blakley asked if there are any revisions to the meeting minutes from Dec 4, 2024. Members stated there are no changes. Chairman Blakley made a motion to approve the minutes, Member Pomeroy seconded. Meeting minutes were approved by affirmative vote of all members present.

### **Board Member Reports**

Chairman Blakley: During his opening comments, Chairman Blakley made several remarks and highlighted a short summary of the uses of Leading Idaho funds. He mentioned Idaho continues to see an increase in backcountry flying and there are still contentions with the Big Creek Four airports. Idaho had a busy fire season in 2024 which greatly affected the general aviation in the state. The Chairman concluded by noting that commercial air service is doing well at some primary airports but still work in progress at others such as Pocatello, Lewiston, and Moscow/Pullman.

Member Pomeroy: Member Pomeroy reported that Friedman Memorial Airport had a big year in 2024 and experienced the busiest season yet with 122,000 enplanements. On the Idaho Airport Managers Association (IAMA) front, Member Pomeroy indicated he is optimistic about his role as the President and his future involvement with the work of the organization in the legislative affairs arena. He mentioned that going forward, IAMA will be proactive and looks forward to helping the aviation community around the state.

Member Hoff: Member Hoff reported that Idaho Falls Airport is doing well and that it has a new TSA Officer who recently transferred from Denver. The airport is anticipating a hearing for the new Airport Master Plan that will take place on February 20. The plan will address status of a new parking apron, control tower, and rotating beacon. Also, Member Hoff mentioned Aero-Mark FBO is enjoying a new fuel truck.

Member Bloem: Member Bloem reported it is quiet up in Northern Idaho. The city had a new commissioner sworn in on Monday, January 13.

### **Idaho Division of Aeronautics Updates**

Administrator Update: Tom shared several updates regarding the Division of Aeronautics. He highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the potential threats that face the Division. Tom also provided updates on the following topics:

Status of Aircraft Replacement: About 18 months ago a Fleet Task Force was created to research the State's needs for air transportation. An aircraft replacement study was completed in fall of 2024, and the Idaho Transportation Board approved a resolution to

advance recommendation for acquisition of a newer King Air aircraft. The request is working its way through the legislative process.

Commercial Air Service: Lewiston (LWS): Tom provided updates on commercial air service at Lewiston Regional Airport. Delta and United airlines provide service for the Lewiston area. United plans to end its service to Denver at the end of January because the local community can no longer fund United's request for a minimum revenue guarantee. Tom echoed what Chairman Blakley indicated earlier that some primary airports around the state are struggling to maintain commercial airline service.

Big Creek Four: Tom briefed the status of litigation concerning the Big Creek Four – Mile Hi, Vines, Dewey Moore, and Simonds. He provided a summary of relevant points from the Central Idaho Wilderness Act and recent dismissal of a lawsuit challenging the status of those four airstrips. The Aeronautics Division and Idaho Transportation Department are aware of the ruling and are considering its ramifications.

Andrew George, President of Idaho Aviation Association (IAA), provided additional comments regarding the Big Creek Four. He rose as a strong supporter of the backcountry airstrips and indicated that the GA community that he works with is also a strong supporter of the backcountry airstrips. He emphasized the importance of keeping backcountry airstrips open because they play a critical role in providing recreational pilots and commercial operators access to remote areas. Andrew expressed his dissatisfaction with current court ruling. While not happy with the decision, he and the IAA will support and work with any organization that supports and encourages flying in the backcountry airstrips.

Idaho Airstrip Network (IAN): Tom indicated that the newly resurrected IAN working group is active with Willy Acton, a retired USFS Aviation Officer, coordinating activities. The first meeting occurred in November 2024 and a bigger spring meeting is planned.

Wind Turbine Projects: Tom reported two major Wind Turbine Projects, Lava Ridge and Taurus, are proposed. The BLM has approved Lava Ridge while Taurus is in planning stages. Both projects are subject to change with the new administration.

Administrative Notes: In the past 1.5 years Aero has experienced a 50% turnover rate in personnel. Currently Aero has three vacancies – two pilots (Safety/Education and UAS Coordinator) and one Admin Assistant. Regarding the one official metric for reporting to the ITD Board, Idaho had 4.1 fatal accidents per 100,000 flying hours in 2024.

Idaho Aeronautics Funding: Tom briefly explained core functions at Aero and clarified some of the questions regarding funding of these responsibilities. Revenue streams include fuel sale taxes, aircraft registrations, and the FAA's 5010 Inspection Program. Tom further indicated that in CY2024 the Aeronautics fund received \$3.2 million from fuel taxes. These funds are used to conduct operations, provide support to airports, and make capital improvements.

## **Financials**

Ruth Munoz, the Business Operations Manager for ITD HQ including Aeronautics, reviewed current year revenues and expenditures. Ruth also highlighted the challenges of implementing the new LUMA system which is causing some delays in financial accounting and transfers.

## **Idaho Airport Aid Program Update**

Tom gave a brief overview of several 2024 projects.

Midvale Airport: The runway surface has been prepared for paving next summer. The airport is NOTAM'd closed for the winter to protect the surface during muddy conditions.

American Falls: The city recently completed upgrades scheduled for the airport which included new pavement, runway lights, PAPIs, REILs, and a LED Rotating Beacon. The project was finished under budget and savings will help fund projects at other airports.

Burley Municipal Airport: The feasibility study was sent to FAA headquarters last spring. Funds for initial environmental work are available.

Sun Valley/Hailey: The city completed its use of Leading Idaho funds by purchasing an Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting vehicle to help increase safety.

Coeur D'Alene: The runway and taxiway projects continue.

## **Gate 58 BOI Update**

Chairman Blakley started the discussion regarding Gate 58 Project taking place at Boise Airport. He introduced Rebecca Hupp, Boise Airport Director, and asked her to provide any updates and clarification on "Gate 58" Project. Rebecca provided a short presentation.

The Boise airport is unique in that Part 135 commercial aircraft have had access to a gate which is close to the main terminal servicing Part 121 operations. This close distance allows guests to easily transition between smaller in-state aircraft and the larger commercial airliners. The Boise air terminal must expand to accommodate growth in Part 121 commercial air traffic.

The Concourse A expansion is in planning stages but will overlay the current Gate 58 location. The gate will be closed in 2025 due to demolition work and construction of a parking apron for larger jet aircraft. Part 135 operators will have to find alternative access most likely through an existing FBO. The airport is also revamping its Master Plan and operators are encouraged to participate in the process to identify alternatives to Gate 58 access.

### **Airport Management**

Tom Mahoney presented planned summer work dates for backcountry caretakers and updates on several projects.

Big Creek: Tractor shed was recently contracted at approximately 25% higher than planned. Main irrigation pump will be refurbished this winter. Leveling the tie-down area is still planned and dirt can be sourced from the McCall airport.

Stanley: Paving the middle section of the runway is planned for September 2025. Aeronautics is working with District 4 Highways to partner with them during the fall paving season. Aeronautics also developed new Standard Operating Procedures for the Stanley airport during fire base operations.

Smiley Creek: Re-siding and re-roofing the shower house and the water pump house are on hold pending available funding after the Big Creek and Stanley projects.

Warm Springs: A fire in summer 2024 burned to the runway edge and may require cleaning up damaged trees. The airstrip was heavily used as a fire base in 2024.

### **Flight Operations**

Tom reported status of Aero aircraft. The King Air is currently undergoing a Phase Inspection at Turbo Air and will be down for approximately two to three weeks. The Kodiak will be down starting in late January for a prop overhaul. The C206 will undergo its annual inspection in April 2025.

Tom also advised pilots will participate in annual simulator training for King Air and Kodiak aircraft in January through March.

### Search and Rescue (SAR)

Tom provided details of the safety statistics for 2023 and 2024 and explained a recent false alarm for a 406 MHz beacon.

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
- Total Accidents/Fatal Accidents	34/4	40/5
- Notifications /False Alarms	45/32	52/37
- Accidents - Aero Action (Launch Air/Ground)	12 (3/1)	18(6/2)
- Support Hours	62	137

### Safety and Education

Tom shared how this position analyzes accidents and creates the Idaho Aviation Accident Score Card (IAASC) annually. Tom outlined several upcoming events:

- STEM Events at BSU – 22 Feb
- Safety Stand Sown – 8 Mar
- Art Contest Submissions Due – 4 Apr
- ACE Academy – TBD June

### Other Business

The Board agreed to delay setting a date in for the next board meeting until the Idaho Airport Managers Association finalizes its annual meeting date.

Tom Mahoney indicated that IAAB Chairman and Aero Administrator will provide an annual update to the ITD Board at 11:05 a.m. and invited all to attend.

### Adjourn

Chairman Blakley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Member Pomeroy seconded, all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 10:29 am.