



Executive Director's Report:

Letter to the WAMA Membership – September, 2016

Fellow WAMA Members,

690 airplanes, 1024 cars, and over 4,000 people! Those are the attendance numbers from the Bremerton Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Fly-in held August 20, 2016. Hotel stays, dining, fuel, along with other services brought an estimated \$700,000 into the local community. What community wouldn't be happy with that?

Of course, not all airports can accommodate those kinds of numbers, but the small community of Republic with a population of 1,100 hosted its "Wings Over Republic" fly-in just one week after the Bremerton AOPA Fly-in. This event brought in 120 planes and 24 attendees who arrived by car. The three-day event began at noon on Friday and ended Sunday morning, serving over 1300 meals, including 430 steak dinners on Saturday evening. The community not only benefitted from numerous hotel stays and shopping at the local stores, but the townsfolks came out to see the airport, join in the meals, enjoy the entertainment and left with a positive attitude toward pilots and airports. All monies raised by the event went toward local airport improvements.

Bringing the community together for an event at your airport not only infuses a positive attitude into the minds of the non-aviation community toward aviation and airports, but with the new awareness of your airport, the additional count of operations, and the benefit it brings to the local economy, it just might be the difference between a push to close your airport or to keep it open. We all need to do what we can to keep our airports alive.

Another push to inspire airport use is the Passport Program. I am working with Lizz Slabaugh of WSDOT/Aviation, joined by members of Washington Pilots Association, AOPA, and WAMA to provide an incentive program to fly into each of the 135 Washington State airports. This program is scheduled to be launched at the Northwest Aviation and Trade Conference in Puyallup this coming February.

There are vanity plates supporting lighthouses, bicycling, square dancing, parks and of course, all of the colleges, but wouldn't it be nice to have your own vanity license plate showing your support of aviation? Lizz Slabaugh of WSDOT/Aviation is currently working on this project. I plan to be first in line when they become available!

Summer is flying time and I had hoped to be available to visit airports around the state, but sometimes life gets in the way of best laid plans. My husband took several bad falls resulting in a dislocated shoulder, broken ball into the shoulder socket, a broken nose, and multiple stitches, which sent my course in an unplanned direction. I did have the opportunity to spend part of a day talking with Kandace Harvey and touring Harvey Field. Observing the activity at that airport and hearing about the future plans, made for a truly impressive afternoon. Visiting airports allows me to note similar challenges and successes facing airport managers and to work toward sharing those successes and mitigating the challenges. I look forward to visiting your airport soon.

All the best,
Marjy Leggett
Executive Director, WAMA