



1ST QTR – 2025

SERVING ALASKA SINCE 1930



MERRILL FIELD BULLETIN

Fly MRI – Alaska's First and Friendliest Airport

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

I'm not sure whether I should introduce myself, or say, "Welcome back!" From what I can tell, the last Merrill Field Bulletin was issued back in 2017, which is far too long. The Manager's Office has hard copies of these Bulletins that go back to hand-typed versions where Airport Manager Joe Fouts discusses new tie-down space being created, addressing security concerns, spring clean-up, and other pertinent matters back in March 1981. I sense that the topics won't change much, but the format warrants adapting. I suppose the biggest change in the Merrill Field Bulletin is the obvious face lift, to this bulletin and to Merrill Field over the years.



When I scanned through the 30+ years of bulletins, there's a strong sense of camaraderie amongst the MRI community. My hope is that this sense of community continues to be evident to all who are a part of, or who visit our unique airport! As we look ahead to the upcoming editions of the Bulletin, I would like to focus on content that speaks to both our "over-40" members and those who are new to our community. This will ensure that we continue to engage our long-time members while also making newcomers feel welcome and informed.

I ask that you be patient with us as we fire up the bulletin again. Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for what should be included in these editions. I am eager to make the Bulletin a valuable and engaging resource for everyone! We'll do our best to keep the ball centered, and the airspeed up. So sit back and enjoy the flight!

MERRILL MENTIONABLES

One thing that is on everyone's mind... Runway 7/25 (soon to be 8/26) rehabilitation project is scheduled for summer of 2025. The design is complete, the bid awarded to Quality Asphalt and Paving (QAP), and funding appropriated. Soon, there will be several informational meetings held to ensure everyone is kept informed and has their questions answered.

This project will require closure of runway 7/25, but access to runways 16/34 and 5/23 will be maintained throughout the project. Expect ground work to begin in June, and significant completion 60 days later. MRI staff, our engineering firm, HDL and QAP will do everything humanly possible to ensure the runway closure is kept to a minimum.

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SHOP TALK FROM AIRFIELD MAINTENANCE

MRI Users,

Despite facing unexpected staffing challenges, our dedicated team at Merrill Field has been working tirelessly to ensure the safety and smooth operation of our runways and taxiways during the ongoing winter conditions. Managing snow and ice on an airport scale with only three operators covering 7 days a week requires precision, coordination, and relentless effort.

In these demanding times, we've implemented strategic approaches to maximize our resources, including optimized schedules, cross-training staff, and enhanced use of equipment. Our priority remains clear: to maintain safe conditions for all aircraft and passengers, while being fiscally responsible.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate this winter season together. Your safety is our top commitment, and we remain steadfast in our efforts to keep flights operating as smoothly as possible.

Stay safe and stay warm. And remember your snow pile is on the list!

ADVERTISING

TOWER TRANSMISSIONS

Since we are in the winter season, we would like to provide everyone with some tips for how operations change once the snow starts falling.

- ✈ Our first priority is assisting Airport Maintenance in getting the runways and taxiways open as quickly as possible. This may mean restricting the availability of touch-and-goes, use of non-standard runway configurations, or delays in arrivals or departures.
- ✈ Be prepared for runway and taxiway closures, and aware of berms and other hazards during the snow removal process. Check NOTAMS before every flight and listen carefully to clearances – you may be given a taxi route different than you are used to. When landing, some taxiways may be closed; listen carefully to exiting instructions from the controller.
- ✈ The snow and darkness create a lack of contrast making runways and taxiways harder to see; verify you have the correct surface positively in sight – ask the tower to turn up the lights if needed – especially on the gravel ski strip.
- ✈ Aircraft on final to runway 25 are very hard for us (and other aircraft) to see in front of the snow covered mountains; please turn on all of your lights, even in the daytime.

ADMIN MATTERS

MEET THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM!

Amy Garcia is the Deputy Airport Manager at MRI and has been here for 6 years. She comes to Alaska from Colorado and has a background in Finance and Organizational Management. Amy works closely with Airport Manager, Earl Malpass, on daily activities and airfield matters.



Julie Hixenbaugh is the Leasing Specialist at MRI and has been here for 6 years. Julie handles all the leaseholders and rental tenants on field. Give Julie a call for your lease, sublease and hangar sale transactions.

BreAnn Brandlen is the Service Administrator at MRI and has been here for 5 years. She is a third-generation Alaskan, holds a BA in English, worked at Pen Air ANC long ago, notes Alaskan history as a passion and is working towards her PPL. BreAnn handles all the tie-down and vehicle parking services on field. Give BreAnn a call to set up new service, pay your invoice or for general Merrill Field information.

Kirsten Bowers is the Accountant at MRI and has been here for 1 year. She comes to MRI from the Muni Controller Division. Prior to working with the Municipality, she worked at a local bank for 26 years. She enjoys riding her motorcycle in the summer and counts down the days to summer riding season. She has 2 granddaughters who are the apple of her eye and love watching airplanes. Kirsten says this is the coolest place in the city to work.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

LAKE AND PEN AIR



Merrill Field is home to some of the States great commercial air carriers! One of them is Lake and Pen Air. They predominantly fly the trusty Cessna 208 Caravan. Dana (one of their fabulous 40 employees) told us, “We fly anywhere in Alaska but the number of villages we service on a regular basis is about 26 villages. In 2023, we had 14,732 enplanements.”

When you walk into their passenger area, the feel is definitely different than walking into a the major airline terminal with 2,000 of your closest friends! Because of their size, years of consistency, and reliable service to these communities, the vibe is that of a highly professional family business serving their family and friends.



Heidi Wilder has co-owned the airline with her husband, Lyle, since 1992. They keep the three Cessna Caravans & a Cessna 206 busy year round.

Their three daily routes include trips into the YKDelta and out to the Lake Clark area of the state.

Lake and Pen Air play a key part in getting the mail and freight out to the communities that are off the highway system.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING EVENTS

Let us know of your aviation related event in time to list it here next quarter! Don't forget to give us the date, time, location, and contact info.

First come, first served.

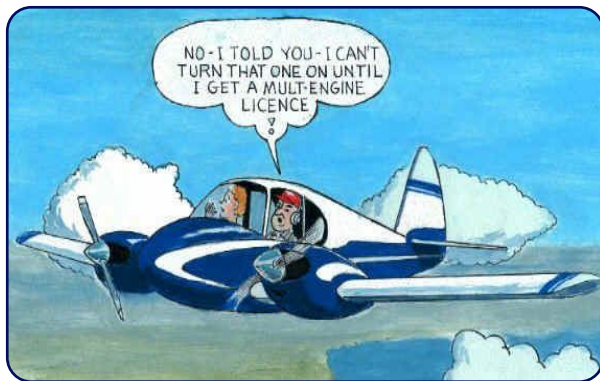
Email us at: merrillinfo@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Merrill Field Airport is celebrating **"Serving Alaska for 95 years!"** Be looking for a "Save The Date" notice for our next Merrill Aviation Celebration Event soon!

RUNWAY 7/25 REHABILITATION: Stakeholders and community outreach meetings for the Runway 7/25 Rehab project will begin in February and continue until the project is complete. Dates & times will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Follow MRI's Facebook page for updates.

Have you noticed the **"Advertising"** boxes within these pages? Are you a business and would like to advertise your business with over 1,000 individuals who receive this Bulletin? Call our office for pricing and let us help you get your name out there!

No one likes waiting in long lines. When one runway is closed for plowing, for example; or this summer during the runway rehab project, a suggestion pilots could consider is doing their runup prior to arriving at the hold short line in order to help expedite departures.



MAAAC Board Meetings:

Are held monthly on the first Thursday of each month, from 12:00pm to 1:00pm at the Anchorage Fire Department Training Center Building C room 9 (subject to change) and on TEAMS.

MAR 06	MAAAC Board Meeting
APR 03	MAAAC Board Meeting
MAY 01	MAAAC Board Meeting
JUN 05	MAAAC Board Meeting
JUL 10	MAAAC Board Meeting

Upcoming User Group Meetings for the year:
Held quarterly on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the manager's office conference room

APR 02	User Group Meeting
JUL 09	User Group Meeting
OCT 01	User Group Meeting

Save the Date:

MAY 31 Merrill Field Aviation Celebration
(more details to come)

JUN 01 Beginning in June be aware
Runway 7/25 construction
rehabilitation will begin!

Didn't you read it in the Merrill Field Bulletin?!

Are you ready for the spring flying season? It might be a good idea to check your biannual flight review, IPC, annual inspection, and consider a flight with an instructor to shake loose some of those cobwebs!

Are you following **MRI on social media**? Let's see how fast we can go from 400 to 1000 followers! Be notified of the special events and exciting news!



MRI is performing an **Economic Impact Study** to quantify the impact the airport has on our community. If you received a survey, please take a few minutes to fill it out online. The information received from surveys will help justify MRI's grant requests so we can continue providing service to our customers!

Just a reminder that the second quarter of 2025 begins on April 1st.

Automated payments will be processed at that time, so please ensure everything is set up accordingly. Keep the office apprised of any changes to your credit card or payment method to ensure your payments are processed smoothly.

ADVERTISING