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TO ALL MONTANA GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT OWNERS AND OPERATORS

It looks like winter has arrived, as its icy fingers begin to grip our state, our airports, and our way of life. Snow plows are working hard. De-icing is critical. Drain everything that can freeze! General Aviation (GA) airports are not exempt from the dangers that can come from Old Man Winter's deeds. Liability lurks everywhere, and we need to use all the tools at our disposal to deal with it. NOTAMS become extremely important during winter operations.

As a manager and an owner, you must remain aware of the tremendous liability you have to maintain a safe public airport. We have been discussing this issue in the Montana Community Airport Association (MTCAA) meetings over the past three years. Many of you have joined us, and that is what makes the dialogue between similar airports so effective.

Over these past three years, a number of staunch supporters have allowed MTCAA to grow from just a dream to the valuable and informative organization it is today. Our core support group consists of dedicated airport managers, owners, consultants, pilots, major aviation representatives, aviation support industries, airport contractors, pilots, and friends of the airports. They come from all walks of life. Our transformation as a service organization has been quite a project and very educational. We continue to tweak our direction to focus on the topics most important to the airports. Some things we tried worked; others ideas were great but more than we could handle at the time.

As we have grown, it is time to shift some of the burden from the individual supporters to the airports themselves, as they will enjoy most of the benefits. The training sessions are extremely beneficial to a small airport, but the strength of a community airport voice in the aviation system is extremely



effective. There is a movement underway for the states to band together and become the largest organized group of airports in the world. MTCAA intends to focus on Montana, but there are many advantages to linking with other states that are doing this very same thing (just to mention a few of our neighbors: Minnesota, Wyoming, Colorado, Washington, and Alaska). This could be a very healthy connection. Now is the time! We have 120 airports in Montana. Most of them are classified as GA, and 85 or more of them are non-air carrier "community airports." That is a bunch, and a high percentage of the airports in the U.S. fall in this category – we need to be heard. So, I ask you – why not?

Please watch for a registration form in January requesting your airport to formally join MTCAA. I ask that you discuss the advantages that come from supporting a grassroots organization dealing with the issues that face community airports. JOIN US AND PARTICIPATE! Your dollars spent to join the MTCAA will help offset the expenses of providing resources, conferences, and the newsletter. While your financial contribution is important in helping MTCAA to be a viable organization, YOUR PARTICIPATION will be the key to our combined success.

Looking ahead, the MTCAA has reserved a booth at the Aviation Conference in Missoula in 2010. We will have a series of speakers and an open discussion about community airports during that conference. Stop by the booth and talk airport; we don't know all the answers, but we will help you find someone who does! See you there!

NOTE! WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT www.mtcaa.org. MTCAA will be adding important information to this site on a regular basis following the delivery of this newsletter.

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