



Spokane Chapter

SPOKANE FLYER

May 2008

Could there be ethanol in your airplane fuel?

If you have an autogas STC for your aircraft or fly one of many light sport or ultralight planes and use automotive unleaded fuel, listen up. There have been big changes in the gasoline marketplace.

In early April, stickers began appearing on auto fuel pumps indicating that all grades in the pump, "may contain up to 10% ethanol." After a series of inquiries with the various fuel distributors in the Spokane area, it became painfully apparent that all grades and all brands of unleaded gasoline would contain

ethanol by the end of the month. Major brands were the first to switch with unbranded stations following shortly thereafter. Now, it is nearly impossible to find non-ethanol blended gasoline in eastern Washington or north Idaho. If you do find it, it may still have traces of ethanol as, unlike 100LL, a tanker truck may switch between E10 or unblended anytime.

The story is the same across the country as the oil and gas industry laps up the benefits of this legislation. Although there is no regulation that outlaws non-ethanol, blended gasoline, the oil companies receive a 5.1 cent reduction in their federal fuel tax for each gallon of gasoline mixed with a 10% mixture of ethanol. In addition, the 2007 federal law mandated that nine billion gallons of ethanol-laced gasoline be put into the market during 2008. Apparently, a new reporting period began in April, triggering a stampede among the oil companies to inject a massive quantity into the fuel stream immediately. This move effectively trumped the state laws that were intended to keep unblended fuel available. By the way, that mandated amount of fuel required to be in the market steadily climbs each year. In 2008 it's nine billion gallons, in 2009 it's 11.1, in 2010 it climbs to 12.95 billion gallons. The number tops out at 36 billion gallons in 2022.

It seems that EAA and AOPA have also missed the boat on the ethanol issue. Their efforts were directed to make sure that states exempt fuel used in aircraft from the ethanol "requirement," by working the various legislatures such as Oregon, Missouri, Montana, and Washington. In reality, what has happened is that the federal tax break incentives and quotas for the inclusion of ethanol into the nation's fuel supply have virtually guaranteed the elimination of unblended unleaded gasoline from the marketplace.

Thinking about going to Idaho or even Montana to get your unadulterated gas? Think again! In Idaho, the gas companies get a 2.5 cent break on their state gas tax for every gallon of E10 they sell. In Montana it's 4 cents. This is on top of the federal 5.1 cent tax break.

Even though the Washington State law (SB 6508), which was supposed to go into effect in December, 2008, exempted "high-octane aviation fuel" from the ethanol requirement, the Federal laws (Volumetric Ethanol Tax Credit of 2004, Energy Policy Act of 2005, and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007) have trumped the states and caused the paradigm shift in the gasoline marketplace.



NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

WEDNESDAY
MAY 21, 2008

6:00 P.M.

Marie Callender's Restaurant
2111 N Argonne Rd.

Guest Presentation:
JOHN TOWNSLEY
WPA Legislative Director
&
U.S. Forest Service (Ret.)

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SPOKANE FLYER

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Editor

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Chapter general meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month except August and December. Board meeting are held on the 1st Thursday of every month.

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President's Message: Gary White

Matt Fugazzi a forecaster from the National Weather Service office joined us this month for a presentation on satellite weather interpretation. In case you missed it, the presentation is available on the web at:

www.wrh.noaa.gov/otx/cases/sat_overview/Sat_RAD_workpp_files/frame.htm

Matt described how to use visible, infrared, water vapor, and radar images along with TAF/METAR information to obtain a more complete weather picture prior to flight. The weather in the Pacific Northwest is so dynamic; it has fascinated me since childhood (almost as much as flying).

Matt's presentation has changed the way I flight plan, and it's really helped fill in the gaps I often find when using FSS (now Lockheed Martin).

This month one of our new members (Spokane Chapter at least), John Townsley, will discuss temporary flight restrictions (TFRs). John has recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service and relocated to Spokane from the Okanogan area. John is the State WPA Legislative Director plus he is an FAA FAAST team member and has arranged for WINGS credit for the May program.

John's program will describe temporary flight restrictions (TFR's) including those frequent and pesky forest fire TFR's, and how to include TFRs in flight planning. He will also discuss who can fly into a TFR and if TFRs go away at night. Learn about TFRs and how best to deal with them while flying by joining us at this month's meeting.

John will also describe how to set up your individual FAAS Team profile on the FAA system and assist members in this process to obtain WINGS credit.

It should be a good meeting and program. Please join us.

Gary

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Lower Granite Update



There have been a few improvements at the Lower Granite Airport (00W) this spring. A crew from the Washington State Department of Transportation/Pomeroy Maintenance shed installed a new gate, hung a new wind sock, and finished the segmented circle paint project.

Hopefully the gate will deter some of the locals from using the airstrip as a popular drag race location and gravel "doughnut" spinning spot.

The WSDOT team finished up what our own team of Bill Jackman and Jerry Baur started on the segmented circle around the windsock last May. According to Larry Batterton, WSDOT Maintenance Superintendent from Walla Walla, the WSDOT had some heavier equipment and was able to complete the job.

Stay tuned for our Spokane Chapter work party scheduled for a little later this spring as we do some cleanup work at our "adopted" airport.

The President's summer challenge

In a discussion I had with one of the board members, I decided on a plan for November's general meeting. Often, many of us visit unusual or interesting places with our aircraft. November's meeting will be a cavalcade of member's trips over the summer.

Many of the chapter members use their aircraft for pleasure and sometimes, a little business use. Have you flown to a wonderful destination with your spouse or significant other for a great romantic get away? Have you crossed the Cascades on one of those days you can see from Oregon to British Columbia? Did you fly into Westport, go on a salmon charter and come home with the "big one"? Did you fly into the Idaho backcountry, set up camp and didn't see another soul until you returned home? Have you discovered the ultimate airport restaurant, the one where after the meal you're now over gross weight? How about that hole-in-one on the perfect fly-in golf course?

Here's my challenge. Make a camera one of your required pieces of equipment in your pre-flight. Think of your camera, like hikers think of the "Ten Essentials".

Snap those photos in flight, at your destination and maybe, on your way home. Once you've returned, consider preparing a short (less than 3 minutes) presentation for the November meeting. You may e-mail your digital photos to me (gcwhite1@earthlink.net) or send me color prints (copies) and I'll scan them for you. I will compile a cavalcade of places to fly and things to do with your airplane in one PowerPoint presentation. You will have the opportunity to narrate your trip when that portion comes up in the November meeting. If you have "mike fright" or don't like speaking before groups, jot down a narration, and one of the board members will present it for you. I promise I won't make this a version of Survivor (voted off the center table) or American Idol (you won't have to sing).

I think all of the members would really appreciate learning about new places that they haven't explored yet. I know on some nice weekends I've wondered where would be a great place for a quick escape. The only way this meeting will work is with your help. So, take your camera, capture those memories and bring them to the November meeting. May you always have blue skies and tailwinds.

Gary White-Chapter President



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Pilots gather for airport news and runway tips in April

Nearly 75 pilots packed into the Moody Aviation classroom for a multi-faceted presentation in mid-April.

Larry Deschaine from Felts Tower had some advance tips for local pilots. Starting in May, there will be changes in how pilots ask for taxi instructions. Pilots will need to ask for their preferred taxi route to the active runway.

Neal Sealock, Spokane Airports Director also reminded those in attendance that Felts is a contract tower and, in these tight budget times, we pilots need to keep reminding our elected officials just how important this service is.

Bruce Fisher from the FAA Runway Safety Program. Bruce went over examples of runway incursions and tips on how to avoid them. The top runway incursion locations at our airports: At Felts it's the intersection where 3R, Alpha and Bravo come together plus the 3R Approach hold short line. At GEG it's where runways 7/25 and the Alpha and Charlie taxiways come together. Bruce's challenge to pilots: take the runway safety course and quiz. It's online at: www.faa.gov/runwaysafety.



Ethanol continued from page 1

Incredibly, this process has taken place quietly. No major news stories, nothing on the EAA or AOPA websites, in their weekly e-mail updates, in their association publications, or even major magazines such as Flying or Plane and Pilot. Even the major seller of supplemental type certificates for unleaded fuel use in certificated aircraft, Peterson Aviation, makes no mention of this situation on their website. (Although, when contacted by this writer, Todd Peterson said he'd get something up quickly.)

By the way, this has nothing to do with clean air. Here in the Spokane, Washington area, we had mandated "oxygenation" with a 10% ethanol requirement for a decade or so. This requirement was dropped in 2005. During that October through February period, airplane and boat owners would purchase their gasoline outside of Spokane County to avoid the dangers of ethanol in their equipment.

One a side note, it's very possible that aircraft owners in the Spokane metro may not even notice the new "May contain up to 10% ethanol" stickers as many of the gas pumps still sported the "October through February oxygenated gasoline" stickers from three years ago.

Aircraft owners with supplemental type certificates to use unleaded automotive fuels in their airplanes are in trouble. Plus, unless they have been vigilant in testing their fuel purchases prior to filling their tanks, may have already introduced this corrosive material into their delicate fuel systems. Many of these, having switched to the unleaded fuel to reduce lead fouling and stuck valves, may be forced back to the leaded aviation gasoline. Light sport aircraft, designed for unleaded automotive fuels may be totally out of luck, along with many ultralight category airplanes.

The bottom line? Even though it's still legal for non-ethanol gasoline to be available for aircraft use...there's virtually no where to to buy it.

One shining star is Interstate Aviation at the Pullman airport. Mogas is still available from a pump on the field.

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