



# Sanford<sup>TM</sup> Seacoast Regional Airport

M. Allison Rogers  
Airport Manager

Sherry A. Lord  
Assistant Airport Manager

## **As the Beacon Turns Manager's Report December 2013**

Here's a taste of what's happening at SFM:

- There is always a lot that goes on in the background before, during, and after events, construction, or changes at the airport. The **MDEP Minor Revision Application has been completed and sent in for the move of SMA's fuel farm** (all 54 pages of it!). Once I receive their approval a lease can be drafted up for the parcel of land the tanks will occupy. All that's left at that point is the construction of concrete pads and the placement of the tanks. We are one big step closer. Having all of the tanks in one location will improve safety since fuel trucks will not need to be traveling back and forth across Runway 14/32 many times a day as they are now.
- I will be **training the maintenance staff on the new Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan, and Notices to Airmen this month**. I have talked about the two pollution plans before, but haven't mentioned NOTAMs.

Imagine you are about to go on a flight... How do you know what's out there before you go to take off? How do you know what the conditions will be at your destination airport? Notices to Airmen, commonly referred to as NOTAMs, are notices of time-critical aeronautical information which is of either a temporary nature or not sufficiently known in advance to permit publication on aeronautical charts or in other operational publications. Things like navigational aid outages, pavement conditions during snow storms, events that affect airspace and cause partial or total closures of the airport would be cause for the airport staff to issue a NOTAM. The information is immediately dissemination via the National NOTAM System where pilots and traffic controllers can access it by phone, radio, or online. In the interest of efficiency, the messages are not written out in plain language as I am writing now, instead there are very particular formats for different areas of the airport affected and special contractions used. All time is measured in universal coordinated time so that every pilot is going by the same clock. Universal coordinated time (UTC or Zulu time) is the time in Greenwich, England.

A NOTAM I issued this morning:

ISFM 12/001 SFM RWY 7/25 FICON 1/8IN WET SN OBSERVED AT 1312011430. 1312011451-1312011600EST

Basically, Runway 7/25 has an 1/8" of wet snow on it – but as you can see, there is a lot going on there!

This system is being updated and changed constantly, so training is needed to keep in step. Relatively new to the scene is the ability to issue NOTAMs online and that will be the main focus of the training. You can look up NOTAMs at <https://pilotweb.nas.faa.gov/PilotWeb/>. Under location type in "SFM" for our current NOTAMs.

- Progress has been made regarding the **new airport sign**. The easement has been signed! On my to-do list is the purchase/ construction/ installation process. I aim to have the sign installed once the cold weather clears in 2014 and have made it one of the airport's goals. Once again, one step closer in the background of progress.
- I am pleased to announce that we will be **installing the GARD (General Audio Recording Device) Airport System Plus at the airport in the next couple weeks**. I'll explain!

*First of all, how does communication at the airport work?*

SFM does not have a control tower with personnel directing and monitoring activity on the field. This is not cause for alarm; the vast majority of airports are non-towered, and even airports with control towers may operate with the tower shut down during off-hours, typically during the night. At non-towered airports, communications are transmitted over a Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) and broadcasts include location, call sign, position, and intentions. Procedures are standardized and each airport has its frequencies and special procedures published in multiple documents for pilot access. Our CTAF at SFM is 123.075. As each pilot, ground vehicle, or other operator on the airfield and in the air broadcasts his or her information a "picture" is formed through situational awareness and knowledge of procedures and each individual acts accordingly. At towered airports precise records and recordings are kept; at non-towered airports there are no such official recordings. The GARD provides a solution.

*What is the GARD?*

Almost exactly one year ago a general aviation aircraft struck a pickup truck on the runway at Knox County Regional Airport located in Owls Head, Maine. The three young men in the aircraft lost their lives in the crash. There is no record of radio communications. Did the pilot make the appropriate calls? Did the ground vehicle do likewise? It will never be known for certain. The need for a new system was recognized.

The GARD was developed in Maine by the airport manager of the Augusta State Airport, John Guimond, and Ron Cote, an innovative electronic hobbyist and computer programmer who works with several Maine airports repairing electrical components. Together they formed Invisible Intelligence, LLC and have continued to develop, promote, and install GARDs in Maine and across the country. It is widely recognized that this new technology has great potential for training and preventing accidents like this in the future. Their company is called Invisible Intelligence, LLC. Check them out at <http://www.invisibleintelligence.com/>

The GARD is not only for safety and liability. The computer software portion of the device sorts transmissions and compiles reports that break down operations at the airport. For instance, each pilot typically calls five times for each landing and four times for each takeoff. Using this information, the software can determine operational counts much more accurately than guesstimates previously submitted for airport totals. Reports can include peak months, weeks, days, and even hours in the form of numbers as well as in graphs and charts. We will be able to view data from year to year. This information can translate into determining staffing hours, maintenance schedules, and other time and money saving ideas.

*Cost*

The cost of the GARD Airport System Plus which includes the software, attenuating box, laptop, scanner, 1 TB external backup hard drive, and installation usually over \$3,000, but with some negotiation and a grant from MDOT the total cost to SFM will be \$1,000.00. I will take this money

from the FEMA grant money we received as a result of the winter storm in February of this year. I believe that since the system is intended for safety and training, especially with regards to ground vehicles (e.g. snow removal equipment) operating on the airfield the money will be appropriately spent.

The license for the software costs 15% of the purchase price per year. This will equate to \$300.00 annually and includes keeping the software up to date. It also includes the installation of any new developments and improvements. This would be part of the operational budget for the airport in years to come. What a deal!

As each month goes by I meet more great people, learn more about the history and current situation at the airport, and become a little more settled. The budget for FY 14/15 is due this week and if there is any way to learn really quickly what needs to be addressed in a business – prepare its budget!

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season.

Your airport manager,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alisen" with "SFM" written in smaller letters underneath.