

Federal Aviation Week Is Being Observed in Area Starting Today



Fred Edens, who joined the Medford staff in 1946, is in the tower cab here, copying a flight plan. He briefs the pilot prior to departure.

When planes come in and take off from the Medford airport, resembling silver-winged birds circling the sky, it is not happenstance that they come to earth or leave it in perfect pattern and safety.

In the air and on the ground, the pilot is never alone at the controls. With eyes and ears alert to instruments, dull in appearance compared to the sweep and glisten of the plane's wings in flight, air traffic specialists, high in the tower overlooking the field, are charting his course.

To give recognition to this fact, Federal Aviation Week is being observed, starting today.

This observance, nationally, marks the fifth anniversary of the Federal Aviation Agency, but in Medford it marks a number of anniversaries. Compared to the Medford service, FAA is young, and October seems to be "birthday month" for many important things.

Established in 1929

The original "Airway Communications Station" and low frequency four-course range at Medford was established in 1929.

In October, 1942, the Airport Traffic Control tower was established.

Also, in October, 1942, George Milligan stood the first watch in the new tower. Today he is the only member of that original complement still with the tower.

The station and tower combined was established in 1953.

The October story continues with Richard (Dick) Smith, present tower chief and the fourth to head the Medford facility. He began his career in this service on Oct. 21, 1940, starting with a predecessor of FAA in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. He came to Medford in October, 1959.

Number of Courses

In 1942, the Medford tower had a low frequency radio range for instrument flight navigation. It now has very high frequency omnidirectional range which provides an infinite number of courses on which an airplane can navigate when coming toward or away from the facility.

There were formerly only four courses, aligned generally north, south, east and west.

During the intervening years many installations have been made to assist the Medford combined flight service station and airport traffic control tower crew in keeping planes in the right paths.

On numerous occasions, Smith pointed out, when interviewed in the tower cab, pilots have been assisted to safe landings by the personnel at the Medford facility.

For example, on the afternoon of Jan. 28, 1963, the pilot of a light single-engine air-

craft called Medford Radio to say he was lost in instrument conditions. He requested assistance.

Milligan, the watch supervisor, immediately took a direction finder bearing on the aircraft and gave the pilot a heading to fly which would bring the aircraft over the Medford airport. While attempting to orient the aircraft over the port and obtain a clearance where conditions were favorable for a visual descent, the pilot reported he had lost control of the aircraft. The stall warning indicator in the aircraft was audible in the voice transmission from the pilot.

Milligan, an experienced pilot, realized the aircraft was descending out of control and promptly issued instructions to the pilot in recovery procedures which resulted in his regaining control of the aircraft a few hundred feet above the ground approximately six miles south of the airport.

By use of direction finder bearings the pilot was guided to a safe landing at the Medford airport where visibility had deteriorated to one-half mile in snow and smoke.

Basic Function

The basic function of the control tower is to provide airport traffic control service for the purpose of promoting the safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic arriving, departing and operating in the vicinity of the airport.

Flight Service provides pre-flight pilot briefing, visual flight rules, flight following service and disseminates weather and aeronautical information to "en route" aircraft.

The Medford combined facility's area of service is South Central Oregon west of the Cascades.

For two-way radio communications the facility has 17 transmitting frequencies and 14 receiving frequencies.

Use Navigation Aids

Planes are not coming in "On a wing and a prayer," but on a series of navigation aids. The list includes very high frequency omnidirectional range, low frequency four course radio range, ultra high frequency tactical air navigation facility (omnidirectional-military) ultra high frequency distance measuring equipment, instrument landing system, consisting of six separate radio transmitting components at four separate locations; two 75 megacycle non directional marker beacons, tunable very high frequency direction finder and high intensity approach lights.

The localizer transmitter of the instrument landing system sends out a radio beam which follows the center line extending right down the runway from 25 to 30 miles out. A good

signal is received as far away as Tiller.

A second component of ILS, the glide slope transmitter, is intercepted 10 miles out from the airport and gives the pilot rate of descent guidance.

Marker beacons provide him with check points along his inbound path.

Not Yet Equipped

With all of these aids, however, pilots are not yet equipped for "all-weather" landing as anyone in the Rogue River valley knows. When fog moves in at a certain level planes do not land and they do not take off. When the ceiling is less than 200 feet, and or visibility less than one-half mile, plane travel is paralyzed.

The landings are still manual from the low elevation so weather plays an important role in air travel, Smith em-

phasized. Gazing into the crystal ball, however, he said he could foresee something different for 1966.

"Aviation has through the years moved step-by-step toward the goal of optimum operational capability in conditions of low visibility and no visibility," Smith quoted N. E. Halaby, administrator of the Federal Aviation Agency.

"This very important goal will be within reach when a safe, reliable, efficient all-weather landing system becomes available to the aviation community.

Ready for Use

"FAA technical experts predict that a system will be ready for airline use, after extensive flight test evaluation, in 1966."

The average number of daily landings and takeoffs at

the Medford tower is 150. The peak day for the fiscal year of 1963 listed 455.

Flight service reports that average monthly aircraft contacted number 800, average monthly flight plans filed total 300. During a peak month there were 1,643 aircraft contacted and 552 flight plans filed.

There are 12 air traffic control flight service specialists serving this station. Total personnel is 27 and the approximate annual payroll is \$210,000.

Medford Mayor James J. Dunlevy has proclaimed Federal Aviation Week and open house will be held from 1 until 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2.

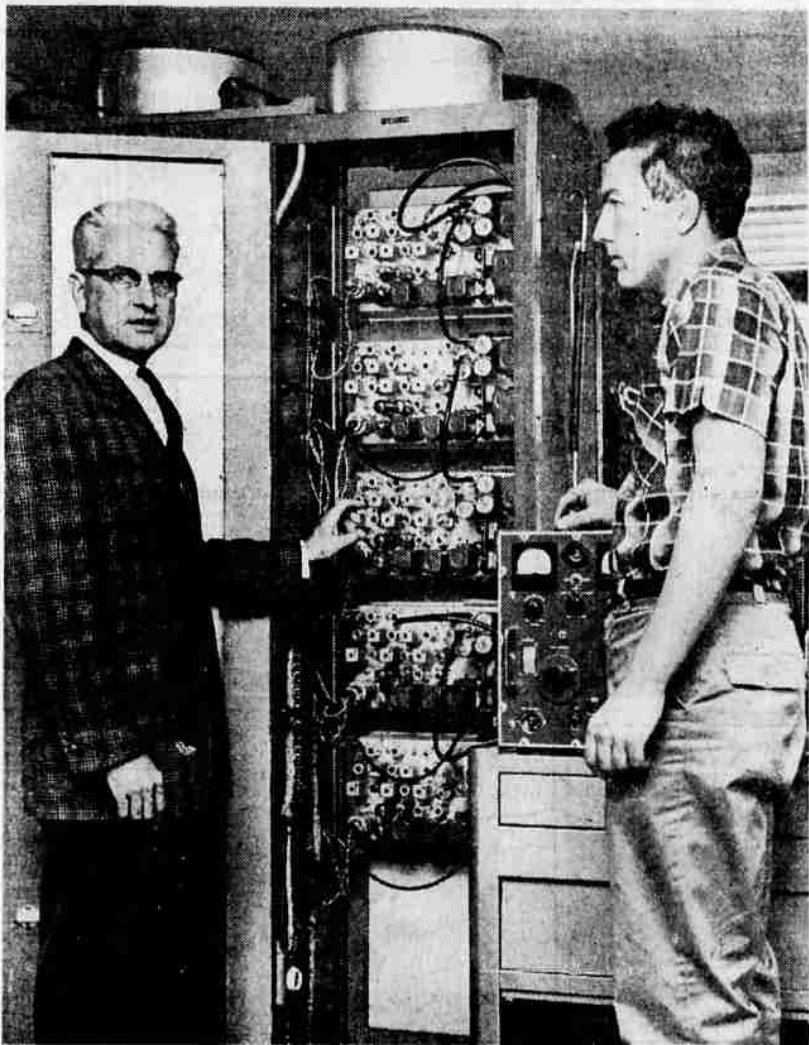
During that afternoon, Smith said, air carriers and operators at the airport will have their facilities open for public inspection.

Features

Sports

MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE

SECTION B MEDFORD, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1963 PAGES 1 to 8



Russell Roseborough, chief technician at the Medford Station, and Duane Easton, maintenance technician, discuss alignment of the very high frequency receiver in the equipment room beneath the tower cab.



Tower Chief Richard Smith and Assistant Controller Dave Lawton are shown discussing a simulated instrument approach problem in the training room on the second floor of the administration building.



In this photo Dave Lawton, who came from El Toro, Calif., just 2 1/2 months ago as assistant controller at the Medford facility, leaves landing instructions to an aircraft approaching the Medford airport.



George Milligan makes adjustments to the very high frequency direction finding equipment. This equipment is now installed in only a few facilities across the nation but will be placed in approximately 400 within the next two years. It is activated by a transmitted signal from the aircraft, portrayed on a cathode ray tube, which tells the controller the direction of the aircraft in relation to the tower.