When Disaster Strikes, Will You Be Ready?
By: Kevin Ryan

Following the devastating magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the question of emergency preparedness is once again a rising concern for many public and private-sector leaders. The General Aviation pilot community has a long history of offering to fly disaster relief aid following catastrophic events, and realize that organizing and marshaling volunteers in a meaningful way is key to successful disaster planning. The California Pilots Association (CalPilots) has created a wonderful resource to address this issue and has generously consented to allow the Division of Aeronautics to publish their guide *EarthQuake Airlift! How to Do It* on our web site. Their booklet can help get you started with, or add to, your own airport disaster response planning. It came from lessons learned from pilots who voluntarily participated in disaster relief in the San Francisco Bay Area, and offers practical tips, check lists, and other ideas to help connect this volunteer resource to disaster relief efforts in your community. *EarthQuake Airlift! How to Do It* is available on the Division of Aeronautics website at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/document/EarthquakeAirliftBook.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/document/EarthquakeAirliftBook.pdf). Printed copies are available directly from CalPilots. Their contact info is: California Pilots Association, P.O. Box 6868, San Carlos, CA 94070-6868, Phone: 800-319-5286

The Lost Isle Seaplane Base
By: Carol Glatfelter and Don Haug

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a regional, state, and national treasure. It is a unique and valuable estuary, the hub of the state’s water supply system, and important to recreation and tourism. The Delta supplies water to 25 million people and irrigates more than 7 million acres of the most productive agricultural land in the nation. It also supports communities, transportation, energy, communications, and infrastructure.

The Caltrans Division of Aeronautics (Division) is currently under contract with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to complete “5010” airport safety inspections and airport master record updates for all noncommercial public-use airports. This includes a handful of seaplane bases. In early October, it was time to conduct a safety inspection of a remote landing strip along the Delta. After landing at the Stockton Airport in the early morning, Mr. Joseph Cecchini, Chairman and CEO of the Western Marina Insurance Services Corporation and one-time owner of Hog Island, provided Division staff with transportation to the landing area, known as Lost Isle Seaplane Base.

Continued on page 3
The Division of Aeronautics, Office of Airports staff, have been busy developing “dataplates” to display pertinent information for each of the approximately 150 permitted Hospital Heliports in California. We believe the dataplates will be useful to State and local governments, planners, and emergency response agencies, along with organizations and pilots that fly helicopter medical evacuation missions. To the right of this article is a sample of a dataplate, which includes the following information:

- Hospital Heliport Name and Geographic Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude).
- Location – with street address, County, and FAA Location ID and Site Number (if the facility is in the FAA Airport Master Record database).
- Facility Information – type of Trauma Center (if applicable) and general contact telephone number.
- Heliport Data – including TLOF and FATO dimensions, weight limits, elevation (AGL & MSL), lighting, design Helicopter type (& Maximum Rotor Diameter), and any specific notes for that Heliport.
- Map showing the Heliport location relative to nearby cities and major roads.
- Aerial photograph of the Heliport that depicts the permitted Approach/Departure paths.

Please note: Although these dataplates may resemble instrument approach plates, they are NOT intended or authorized for navigational use.

The Hospital Heliport Dataplates will be accessible via a map on the Division of Aeronautics website (see example to the right). The dataplates can be found by “hovering” over a heliport icon, to get the facility name, and clicking on the icon. There will also be a “drop down” menu to zoom to a region of the State or a specific county. We’re on track to complete the project, and have the dataplates available, by the time you read this (or soon thereafter).
Continued from page 1

Driving through the Delta’s fertile grounds about twelve miles from the airport, Mr. Joe Cecchini (Mr. Cecchini) explained how as an ecosystem, the Delta is unique as the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast. Moreover, the Delta is home to more than 500,000 people, a major recreation destination and a crossroads for Northern California infrastructure. We were informed of the seasonal flooding, a future of climate change and sea level rise, and the specter of earthquakes and invasive plant and animal species. And yet, in the midst of all this potential turmoil, lies a peaceful little waterway located between the levee road and Spud Island where seaplanes fitted with floats can land safely, and more frequently, ultra lights with smaller pontoons or floatable devices. The landing area is casually referred to as the Twenty-one Mile Cut, (even though the strip only about one mile long).

We anticipated a view of a picturesque plane splashing down on the “runway” and docking at a crowded marina filled with family vacationers; however, upon inquiring about the frequency of landings, making sure we were “camera ready” to snap at the first sign of a landing, we were informed that in the past 40 years, Mr. Cecchini had seen few planes land.

Less than a mile northwest of the landing area, barely afloat, are two large barges laden with debris from years past and listing severely, an obvious eye-sore, and a danger to the surrounding environment, but not affecting the landing strip yet, so we continued on.

Arriving at our destination, although a peaceful and harmonic location with a soft breeze and hopeful fisherman dotting the landing strip, as a seaplane base it was lackluster and unexciting without landing activity. However, the landing area proved to be safe and sound and beautiful. Although rarely used by aircraft, if a pilot were to attempt a landing, the boaters and fisherman would have to relocate. Once a seaplane has landed, there is no destination to provide services. The closest marina has been closed for some time, with only hopes of reopening in the future.

Mr. Cecchini – who is also currently representing the California Delta Habitat & Education Foundation, informed us that a large grant was received to build a “Model for Education in the California Delta”. This facility will increase the awareness of the history, nature, environment, recreation, commerce and contribution of Native Americans in the California Delta for visitors, with an emphasis on youth and families. Once this facility is realized, this location may be abuzz with activity and boaters back and forth to the island, which could require procedural changes for use of the seaplane base. Once completed, the Division of Aeronautics staff will keep tabs on the seaplane base as part of the “5010” safety inspection process.
Meteorological Towers
By: Jeff Brown

Meteorological towers have become a concern in the aviation community. Please see the graphic below, which contains excerpts from an FAA safety brochure. Contact your local FAASTeam for additional information (note: California does not have a tower registry system).

Upcoming Events


Visit us on the web!!! www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics

Mailing Address:
Department of Transportation
Division of Aeronautics, MS 40
P.O. Box 942874
Sacramento, CA. 94274-0001

Do you have something noteworthy to suggest for future issues of the CalAERO Newsletter?
Send suggestions to: Rosa Romero rosa.romero@dot.ca.gov
Call: (916) 654-4848 or Fax: (916) 654-9531