



## AWOS Enters the Modern Age More Unique Services for Pilots Than any other AWOS

**www.SuperAWOS.com**

The Coolest Darn Thing for Airports and Heliports  
In conflict with FAA? What? You're kidding, right?

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### FAA PALACE INTRIGUES

Yes, we and our high tech SuperAWOS gismo are in a tussle with FAA bureaucracy: We have done something terrible, we have delivered proven, reliable, accurate, and low maintenance weather and advisory services to pilots, beyond the technical standards of the 1980's.

In a word, we've innovated. Even worse, we have delivered better results than the FAA's own programs, and that is unforgivable.

Why would certain people at FAA be so pissed off at us? There are really a few underlying issues:

#1 - SuperAWOS has proven that modern AWOS requires no more 'maintenance' than a digital clock. We use modern advanced technology to do it better and cheaper, under continuous remote surveillance. Welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Yes, I know we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but with Federal bureaucracy you take small steps).

#2 - The AWOS 'industry' has wrapped its business model around high-profit, labor-intensive AWOS maintenance, and a distorted Federal procurement process. They can give the AWOS boxes away, *if they can hostage the airports into high-priced maintenance contracts forever after.*

#3 - Modern low-maintenance technology makes AWOS affordable for smaller communities, by eliminating high-cost technicians. The FAA bureaucracy overseeing high-priced AWOS contractors (some of whom are FAA retirees) is not happy about facing the dustbin of progress, is fighting back, and is using the bureaucracy to do it.

#4 - FAA received a \$10 million earmark to develop its own version of an airport weather station, the result over \$700,000 a copy installed. You

can bet that FAA program office isn't going to accept a simpler better solution from outside to compete with its own (bloated) solution.

Visualize FAA's Microwave Landing System program office blocking people from using GPS to navigate.

### IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME

I find it amusingly coincidental that when the Wright brothers made their first flight, the US Government had already spent about \$10M with Langley, funding a series of flying contraptions which all failed. When those darn bicycle-makers actually flew, the Government's initial reaction was to deny the Wright brothers accomplishment, because they had just shown up a major Federal program.

### HOW TO EFFECT CHANGE

My periodic conflicts with various Government agencies always seem to come about because I am doing something which makes sense. Sooner or later common-sense contradicts accepted but severely outdated and/or misguided practices.

*The moment the indefensible becomes obvious, the bureaucracy feels most compelled to defend it.*

Thus, if I continue practicing common-sense I am found in contradiction to 'accepted' practice. If I abandon common-sense and agree to revert back to accepted nonsense, then the bureaucracy can happily declare me 'in compliance.'

The problem with collaborating with nonsense is that the same nonsense keeps coming up, over and over. Somebody has to break the cycle.

I have been through this enough times with enough government agencies to know that whenever these little tête-à-têtes arise, inevitably higher authorities are

forced to come into play, to breakup the brawl. Once that happens, the Government agency and I end up moving forward together in common-sense ways on common ground.

*And thus is progress achieved.*

To outsiders these events appear cataclysmic, and sometimes they are. In reality they are the grinding sounds of policy shifting out of the status quo into a forward gear.

If anyone can come up with a less painful way to overcome the status quo, please let me know.

### FAA'S INDUCED CRISIS

There have never been any issues of SuperAWOS accuracy or unreliability. In fact, our reliability shames other systems.

The current debate is really about 'process.' Certain individuals at FAA want to hammer tomorrow's technology back into yesterday.

*"We are determined to prove that buggy whip inspectors are essential for safe driving"*

But c'mon folks, it's 2012. How can any adult justify FAA forcing small airports to pay \$5,000-\$10,000 per year to maintain what amounts to some nifty meteorological sensors, a computer, and a transceiver? Not only is that indefensible and unnecessary, *it is ridiculous.*

I appreciate FAA's oversight role, I really do. But, under a false pretense of 'safety,' just to defend bureaucratic make-work for new FAA hires and retired FAA contractors, all to be paid on the backs of small communities, *is a costly lie paid at the public's expense.*

FAA vaguely refers to 'safety concerns' which are in fact nothing more than the bureaucracy trying to flex its muscles to defend its outdated status quo.

To be blunt.

Before you think, *"that's just Dave,"* here are some of FAA's actual "demands" and 'safety concerns.'

Judge for yourself.

1. FAA insists the pressure sensors *could* go out of temperature range.

*...But wait, didn't FAA notice the thermostatically controlled heaters and insulation which keep those sensors in range to -40F below, or more, exceeding FAA requirements?*

2. FAA insists we install grounding aerals over the equipment at each site.

*...But wait, each unit's antenna is a grounding aerial, tuned solid metal rods connected directly to ground; which become an RF radiator only at the design frequency. Hit the antenna with lightning a million times and nothing will ever happen!*

3. FAA insists we wrap insulation around the battery chargers.

*...But wait, chargers get HOT when charging; wrapping with insulation would induce overheat failures!*

4. FAA insists the 'maintenance technician' **MUST** have an FCC General Radiotelephone operator's license. (Huh? What's that?)

*....But wait, didn't FAA claim that costly practice was due to FCC regulations? Didn't FCC then explicitly waive those regulations for our equipment, at the request and with the support of FAA's own VP of Technical Operations?*

*...Don't we already perform the radio tests FAA tries to perform annually, except we do it remotely every day?*

5. FAA insists our Netlink wireless data link 'MUST be removed because it is an FCC Part 15 device.

*...But wait, the data link is non-critical to the equipment; it only provides free remote connectivity of non-time or flight critical information, backed by satellite. Didn't FAA's own office of spectrum policy just affirm 'no objection' on this in writing?*

And so it goes. Once the juggernaut has acted, it doesn't want to be bothered or even listen to any inconvenient facts.

If you would like to see a point-by-point discussion of FAA's alleged 'safety concerns' (and bizarre actions), see my work in progress at:

[www.superawos.com/april\\_madness.html](http://www.superawos.com/april_madness.html)

**PROGRESS MUST BE STOPPED AT ALL COSTS!**

To give you a sense of the political motivations behind this, a few months ago a friend briefed the Secretary of Transportation about how SuperAWOS *finally offers a practical and sustainable solution for remote Alaska.*

We have had a demo unit in remote Alaska for two years without a bureaucrat or contractor involved.

The local villages, hunting lodges, US Army and Coast Guard have all been using it. We also watch it remotely using global satellite. As with all our systems, NOAA statistically compares the data from each system against multiple independent nearby sources. We, NOAA, and anyone else who wants to go online can see it is accurate and reliable.

An FAA representative at that meeting apparently insisted *'...of course all the sites would all have to be maintained by FAA personnel.'*

Are you getting the picture yet?

**TAX DOLLARS AT WORK**

I admit it *is* possible my little videos playfully depicting FAA as medieval monks clutching ancient scrolls; airport maintenance agreements as contracts with the devil; and maintenance contractors as pirates, *may have got some noses bent out of joint.* When the truth is most painful, that is the most important time to chuckle about it.

[www.superawos.com/pilots](http://www.superawos.com/pilots)

[www.superawos.com/global](http://www.superawos.com/global)

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

When I politely called FAA to task for its initially arbitrary and capricious actions, FAA's initial reaction was predictably to circle its wagons, then repeat and defend its mistakes.

*"Oh, we didn't do anything wrong. We're the Government; we never do anything wrong. Now we have to defend what we did at all costs"*

Even the DOT Inspector General has been 'impressed' by the run-around we've been getting. It's a pattern they see all the time, and they have no shortage of work.

**TOWARD RESOLUTION**

While we and FAA wrestle these matters to the ground, FAA's actions have negatively impacted small communities' access to emergency service and commerce across the USA. FAA needs to hear from pilots and airports as to the impacts of its actions.

The good news is calmer heads at FAA have already become involved, and are looking more closely at FAA's own actions and policies. *FAA has agreed to work closely to review this matter to develop a common-sense solution.*

**FAA DENIES PETITION TO THIRD CLASS MEDICAL**

About the same day FAA appropriations were approved (FAA programs thus less at risk); FAA denied my petition to eliminate the third class medical.

A lead Congressional staffer noted this as FAA's way of ducking responsibility for any action, instead kicking it over to Congress to *tell* FAA what to do.

Getting rid of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class is therefore now entirely political, and must be handled legislatively by Congress. A Congressional leader must step forward to enact legislation *telling* FAA what to do, or nothing will happen.

**AOPA & EAA EXCEPTION**

I was frankly dismayed at AOPA and EAA's weak-kneed 'exception' to the 3<sup>rd</sup> class, which will only to benefit some 200+ recreational pilots. AOPA explained part of their reasoning was concern "I was asking for too much." That FAA has already 'conceded' the recreational pilot.

This brings to mind the opening scene of Dickens' "Oliver Twist." However, instead of an orphan child asking for more porridge, I asked FAA to give us back our freedom. *What an outrage!*

I can't help but wonder if AOPA has in some part lost its way, putting the vast potential revenues of 400,000 members paying in \$99/year into AOPA's 'Medical Services Plan' ahead of its members' real interests? *For whom do they truly advocate?*

And so begins another year in Washington DC, fraught with intrigue and adventure!

*David Wartofsky*