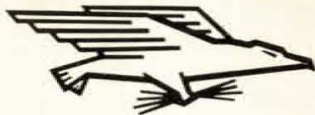


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FAA WORLD

VOLUME I, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1971



FAA IS PEOPLE...
... for their names, see Page 8.



FAA IS PEOPLE...

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JANUARY - 1971

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The Covers: Front and back
Twenty-two views of FAA people from here,
there and everywhere—all members of the
FAA team. For their names, locations, and
jobs, turn to page 8.

It's a new "WORLD"!

THIS is Volume I, Number 1, of the brand new "FAA WORLD", a monthly magazine for employees of the FAA and their families. Welcome to its pages. We hope you read it, enjoy it and share it with your friends.

For your information, the new FAA WORLD replaces the tabloid newspaper Horizons. The new name, format and editorial style are the direct result of a survey we conducted among representative employees a few months ago at several locations. We asked for a frank employee reaction to Horizons, and we got it. FAA employees who were interviewed strongly recommended that the newspaper style be abandoned in favor of a magazine, which we have now done. You urged us to mail the publication home, which we are doing, so that members of FAA families may read it and understand better the range and importance of the FAA. Most of all, you expressed a strong preference for a "people" type of magazine because, after all, FAA is people. For a highlight report on the survey itself and the recommendations which interviewed employees made, see "You Said It!" on page 13.

Employees who were interviewed made a lot of sense. You will find, I think, that the new magazine is dedicated to the policy that FAA is people. On the front and back covers you'll see FAA people from all over, in various kinds of jobs, and every job an important one. In forthcoming issues, the editors of FAA WORLD want to take you behind the scenes in the FAA, so you can see the sort of jobs your fellow-workers perform.

Through forthcoming issues, I hope we can all get to know one another better, to understand each other better. I would like to sit down personally with each of you and talk to you about this new magazine and other topics, and to invite your comments and suggestions. Obviously, this isn't possible, but we hope you will jot down your reactions and give us your ideas for the contents of issues to come, along with your questions. To the FAA people who have already contributed their frank opinions in the survey, my deep thanks. Some of the criticisms were sizzling hot, but we appreciate them and we expect to benefit from them.

So this is your new FAA WORLD, built to the specifications of FAA people. I hope that, over the coming months of publication, it will be a friendly meeting place for all of us in the FAA. We'll appreciate your help in making this possible.

John H. Shaffer
Administrator



Oklahoma City-bound, Jerry and Judy Skeels and their four youngsters—Janay, Janet, Misty and Jolece—leave their Denver home.

Training for Tomorrow

The school bell rang again for Jerry Skeels,
and he liked the sound of it . . .

IT'S back to the classroom for Jerry Skeels, only this time he's taken his wife and four daughters with him. Jerry is one of the several thousand enterprising FAA employees who are stepping into "aviation's technical tomorrow" by acquiring new skills today.

The setting is the FAA Academy at Oklahoma City. Jerry, a journeyman technician at the Denver Center, is getting himself ready for the introduction of the new IBM 9020 computer, a program now in progress in the FAA air traffic control system. He started as a GS-7; he has since stepped up the career ladder to his present GS-12 position, and he hopes his present training at the Academy may boost him higher.

The back-to-school decision was a family matter. Jerry's wife, Judy, was all for Jerry taking the long step back to school, and the Skeels youngsters relished the idea of a temporary shift to Oklahoma City from their former home at Longmont. When Dad's schoolroom stint is finished, they all know the family will be returning to the Denver Center where Jerry's job opportunities will be bigger and his horizons wider. Judy knows that armed with new skills and new perception, Jerry should move farther faster.



Skeels family's tour of Aeronautical Center begins at impressive Administration Building nerve center at "Oke City."

As computers and other refinements begin to enter the air traffic system, Jerry and many other journeyman technicians know that the journeyman's work has become much more exacting. Airway Facility training at the Academy includes courses on equipment not yet fully introduced into the system, so Jerry is breaking new ground. This kind of specialized training carries a high price tag if "purchased" outside the agency. However, there is no cost to FAA students for this training, and they continue to receive full pay throughout their courses.

Does the FAA encourage trainees such as Jerry to take their family along? The answer is yes. The agency pays per diem for all duty of this kind, and Jerry finds, for the most part, that it covers the added cost of being away from home "even with four gals with hearty appetites." Since Jerry's training lasts more

Each trainee at the FAA Academy gets individual attention. Here Skeels works out a problem with the aid of instructor Joe Brown.



Skeels signs lease for the family's new apartment as Judy and two-year-old Misty chat with new friend—the manager.

than 30 days, he has been reimbursed for the use of his own car in traveling between Denver and Oklahoma City.

Is this Jerry's first training course with FAA? Not by a long shot. Since he joined the FAA back in 1960, he has completed 15 agency correspondence (directed study) courses. "I've got a healthy respect for these training courses," he commented. "Each course I've taken so far has helped qualify me for a better job."

The Skeels family enjoys the atmosphere of the Academy. Jolece, 8, and Janay and Janet, the Skeels' six-year-old twins, are making new friends at school and enjoying the excitement of living in a new place. They walk to the Apollo Elementary School, only a few blocks from their home at Bethany, Okla., a suburb northwest of Oklahoma City.

Because more than 1,500 FAA employees are train-

Every component of the computers FAA will use is studied in detail. Jerry checks circuit board with Instructor Brown.



Classes are small so instructors can work closely with each student, Skeels finds. He's shown at first session of new schedule.

ing at the Aeronautical Center at this time, and many have brought their families to Oklahoma City for the duration of the course, neither Judy nor the girls lack for companionship. "Jerry studies a lot," Judy says, "but that's all part of getting ahead. The girls and I help all we can, chiefly by trying to keep quiet while Dad is studying."

Jerry relishes his FAA training because it rounds out his general technical education. He joined the FAA after two years at Colorado State where he majored in electronics engineering. Most FAA courses he considers more advanced than those encountered in engineering classrooms; some—including his present course—are equal to graduate study, he feels.

Each year about one-quarter of the Airway Facility employees are in resident training. Since this maintenance-oriented technical training was introduced at

Homework! Yes, there's heaps of it—but one doesn't mind it too much if you're working toward a goal as Skeels is.



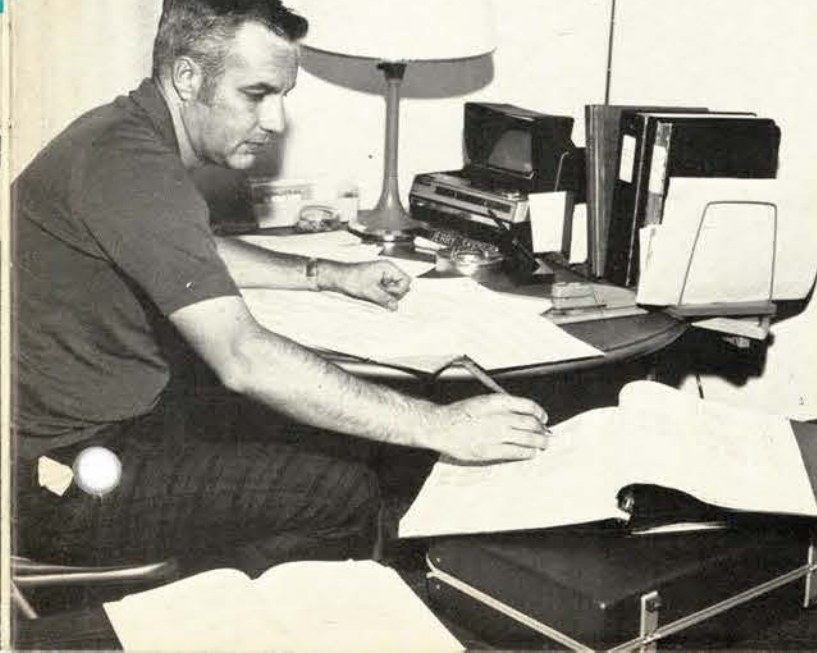
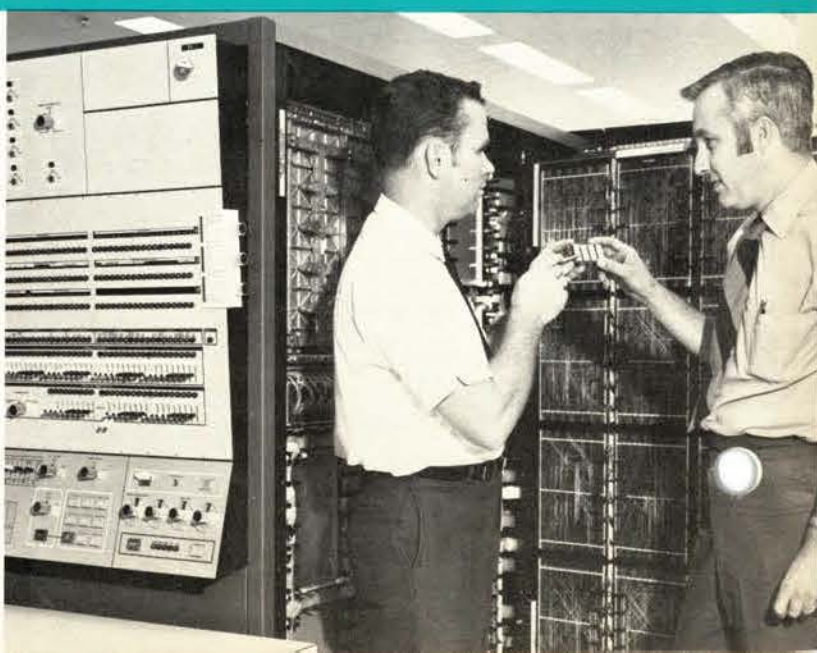
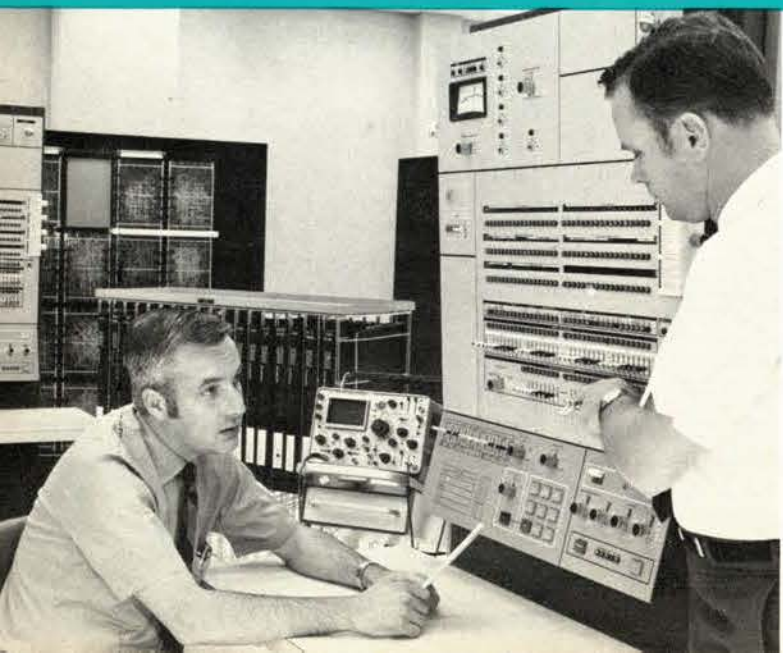
The "inner workings" of automated equipment are carefully explained by Instructor Joe Brown during a laboratory session.

the Academy back in 1946, roughly 60,000 students have participated. With the increased air traffic and the arrival of automation, the pace is certain to accelerate. During the next year more than 1,000 technical employees must be added to FAA's work force. Several thousand technicians are scheduled for training at the Academy in the year beginning July 1, 1971. Of these, about a third will take automation courses—training as Jerry is doing now for the future.

If you have a relative or friend eligible for—and interested in—a brand-new career, get him steered toward FAA. The future looks bright, and Jerry Skeels has five gals in his family to say "Amen" to that.

For details on Airway Facilities training and the future it offers young people interested in FAA careers, contact the Personnel Division in any FAA region or center.

There's time for recreation, too, with the whole family. Fascinating exhibits at Will Rogers Airport are enjoyed by the Skeels.



Getting the teletype back in order is a job that Technician James Brown (left) does in helping Specialist Ralph E. Hill perform one phase of his work—transmission of messages vital to air safety.



An adjustment on direction-finding equipment, carried out by Technician James Blakenbaker—(left) makes it possible for Specialist Ralph E. Hill, Charlottesville FSS, to give a pilot badly-needed guidance.



Team in Tandem...

In the wilds of Alaska a VOR—an instrument that sends out signals to help a pilot fix his location—goes "on the blink."

In the Midwest, a long-range radar serving one of the world's heaviest-traveled airline routes develops a "bug."

Technical trouble on a microwave link interrupts radar service to the Denver Center.

Such difficulties are reported each day as part of the agency's national telephone briefing on the state of the system (NASCOM). And whenever there's such trouble, agency technicians go into action.

The Air Traffic controller and the flight service station (FSS) specialist depend on the airway facilities technicians to keep vital navigational aids functioning. Air traffic and airway facilities personnel work "in tandem"—day in and day out to keep air traffic moving smoothly. Without the round-the-clock contributions made by each segment of these "teams in tandem," the other segment could not function.

Photos on these pages show electronics technicians and air traffic control specialists working closely together in towers, flight service stations and centers.

At the Kansas City Tower, Controller Ronald Jablonski is dependent on finely-tuned, constantly-functioning equipment to do his job properly. That need is filled by the other team member—Robert E. Tolbert, an electronics technician with the Kansas City Airway Facilities Sector.

Another typical "team in tandem" consists of Wendell E. Ogletree, controller and A. O. Wall, electronics technician at the Jacksonville Center. A typical flight service station team is that of Ralph E. Hill, specialist at the Charlottesville, Va., FSS and one of the men who helps keep that facility functioning smoothly—James Blakenbaker, electronics technician stationed at Charlottesville.

Throughout the country, there are literally thousands of such "teams in tandem" working together, depending on each other and serving the aviation public.

All are vital to FAA's worldwide mission.



A segment of the control panel at the Jacksonville Center has to be removed by Electronics Technician A. O. Wall so it can be promptly repaired. Getting the position back in operation in the shortest possible time is a technician's prime objective.



This is the same air traffic control panel shown at left—only it's back in action now with Controller Wendell E. Ogletree on duty. In countless similar instances throughout FAA, airway facilities and air traffic employees work as teams.



With Kansas City's busy airport in the background, Electronics Technician Robert E. Tolbert repairs equipment essential to controllers at Kansas City Tower. "Down time"—the time equipment is out of service—is kept to a minimum.



Equipment recently repaired by "team" member Tolbert in photo at left is put to use by Ronald Jablonski, controller at Kansas City Tower. Electronics technicians keep constant watch on functioning of equipment at FAA facilities.

FAA Faces & Places

For outstanding service to aviation, Van Nuys tower gets award from Jim Perry (center) of Airport Operators Council. Accepting are Chief Controller Howard Peterson (left) and Watch Supervisor Richard V. Tarantino.



A typical cross section of the new "sky marshal" force the agency will use in its anti-hijacking effort is shown during training session conducted at the special training center at JFK Airport.

Air traffic control a man's world? Don't you believe it. Georgene A. McDonough (standing, right) is one of the very hard-working members of the Chicago FSS located at DuPage County Airport.

Winston-Salem, N. C., Air Carrier District Office claims to have the oldest Operations Inspector in the agency aboard—R. H. "Bat" Taylor, a very young 70.



Getting the top segment of a navigational aid set in place isn't difficult if an Army chopper helps. Technicians C. A. Thompson and M. D. Lamb do positioning at Norcross, Ga., TACAN.



The shrimp boats are going! Tiny plastic strips used to keep track of aircraft movement—they're known as "shrimp boats"—will be replaced by alphanumeric tags under automation program.



What better way to begin a new addition to the Los Angeles Center than with a boost from two beauty queens? Hard hats are worn by (from left) Lancaster Mayor Bob Grant, Western Region Dep. Dir. Lee Warren and Palmdale Mayor Larry Chimbole.

FAA Is People . . .

The faces on the WORLD covers . . .

TOP ROW: Gloria Pate, Mail Room, Long Island, N. Y.; Ralph W. Thomas (right), Principal Operations Inspector (Jet Specialist), Burbank, Calif., General Aviation District Office; Herbert Willis, Airports Engineer, Miami; Carroll F. Walker, Jr., Controller, Kansas City Center; Herman C. Bliss, Airport Engineer, Kansas City; James L. Tartt, Electronics Engineer, Miami; Theodore C. Abbot, Fireman, NAFEC;

CENTER ROW: Gerald Aksami, Electronics Technician, Kansas City; Edwin W. Anderson, General Facility Equipment Technician, Anchorage; Richard Maxwell, Air Traffic Control Specialist, Reno; William (Bud) Byerly, (right) Chief, Combined Station-Tower, Medford, Ore.; Max R. Baskett, Flight Inspection Pilot, Fort Worth; Gertie M. Mosaly, Air Traffic Control Specialist, Wichita; Mary C. Early, Switchboard Operator, Aeronautical Center; David Nixon, Electronics Technician, Kansas City.

BOTTOM ROW: Paul H. Blumenauer, Manager, Electronic Tracking Unit, NAFEC; Connie Ho, Payroll Clerk, Hawaii; Roy Layton, Controller, Salt Lake City; James O. Price, General Attorney, Fort Worth; Carl Berry, Packer, Aeronautical Center; Robert H. Ahlers, Engineer, NAFEC; Allen D. Tahbonemah, Aircraft Mechanic, Aeronautical Center.

The largest tower cab in the world is built in mockup at NAFEC so equipment placement can be planned. The new cab is for the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport tower. Planning for the cab is under Project Manager J. R. Bradley (left.)



Tom A. Hawk—the friendly bird that set up residence at DuPage County Airport near Chicago—has migrated. Controllers Harry Marks and Bob Aippersack and other tower personnel hope the friendly hawk will come back.

Flying Nowhere... For Safety

By Theodore N. Maher
Associate Editor, FAA WORLD

THEY fly high. They fly low. Time after time, they approach the airport for a landing, but they don't land. They pour on the coals, gain altitude and come around for another approach.

They're FAA flight inspection teams. They rack up impressive totals of flying time. And, because of their skill and the precision work they do, they are among the best instrument pilots in the world.

The flight check aircraft is their "office." Flying from here to nowhere and back the year around is their lot. They roam the nation's airways to check the accuracy of the enroute and terminal navigational aids (navaids) on America's "highway in the sky." In so doing, they help assure that other pilots will fly truly and safely to their destinations.

Let's go along on a day's flight with a crew from the Atlantic City Flight Inspection District Office. The plane commander is John Allegra. Seward McGinnis is the pilot. The technicians are Don Wallace and Alex Friedman. Friedman will operate the theodolite from the ground.

We take off from NAFEC to check terminal facilities at the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton (ABE) Airport at

Allentown, Pa. Our plane is a DC-3, one of 43 such aircraft used in inspection work. Most of the seats have been removed to transform the old workhorse's interior into what amounts to an electronics laboratory. Racks of equipment line the walls. Above the pilots are eleven radio controls, ranging from low to high through ultra-high frequencies.

After takeoff, we find that the crew does not just fly idly to Allentown. As the plane drones over the flat New Jersey pine barrens, the inspection team is already at work checking enroute navaids that form the airway to ABE. These operational checks are not part of the day's specific mission—they are a kind of extra dividend.

After landing at Allentown, the real work begins. Unit Chief Vincent Walp and Technician Nicholas J. Begovich from the Allentown Airway Facilities Sector meet the plane and help Friedman unload and set up the ground equipment.

The theodolite the technicians use resembles a civil engineer's transit. It is set to the glide slope angle and provides another way to precisely fix the plane's position in space as it moves down the glide slope. Instru-



The airway inspection team's flying "front office" is paneled with electronic gear. Technicians Friedman and Wallace trace

course on a map while Plane Commander Allegra and Pilot McGinnis fly airway centerline.



On way to work, flight inspection crewmen enter their "office"—a DC-3. Team members, from Atlantic City FIDO, are Technicians Don Wallace and Alex Friedman, Pilot Seward McGinnis and Plane Commander John Allegra.



Before leaving the aircraft to operate the theodolite from the ground, crew member Alex Friedman checks equipment in the aircraft.

ment readings from the theodolite are radioed to the plane to double-check the glide slope's accuracy.

Friedman keeps in contact with the plane by radio as the series of passes over the runway begin.

"I've got the survey spot," he reports.

"O. K., we're about to run in now," Allegra's voice comes back.

In the plane, precise measurements are being recorded on a roll of paper moving through the inspection instruments.

As an approach is made, glide slope and course indicator needles on the instrument in front of Allegra and McGinnis seem glued to the "on course, on glide slope" position.

On a later pass, they leave the safe centerline of the glide slope on purpose. They fly under the glide slope "envelope" because they want to be sure—by doing it themselves—that if a pilot flew the lowest margin of the approach, he would still be clear of the highest obstacle on the ground.

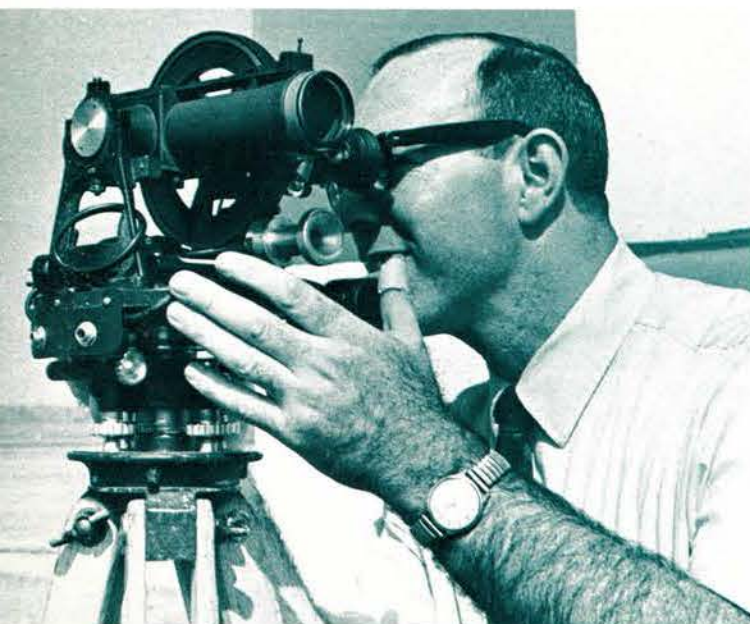
Allegra explained that this is part of a periodic check they do on the ABE instrument landing system. He added that in addition to the "periodic" check, they fly three other basic missions—to check and double-check.

In the history of a facility, the first check is the "site evaluation." Navaid equipment is set up in a moving van and the site is thoroughly checked to deter-



As agency DC-3 makes a low pass over runway, plane's exact position is checked through theodolite operated by team member Alex Friedman.

Long hours of flying time are racked up by FAA flight check pilots in the interest of aviation safety. Repeated "passes" are made over the same facility to insure that it is functioning with maximum fidelity. Teamwork of all crew members is vital for accomplishment of this task which pays off in terms of greater safety for all who use the airways.



Crew member Alex Friedman is on the ground, providing a precise "fix" on the flight inspection DC-3 as it begins to move down the glide slope. He maintains constant contact with plane via radio. Instrument used for this exacting operation is a theodolite.

This is how the airport approach looks from the cockpit of one of the agency's flight inspection aircraft. The flight inspection job is never really done—facilities are checked again and again to insure that they are functioning with full accuracy at all times and in all weather.



mine if the location is suitable before a permanent structure is built.

Next comes the "commissioning" inspection. Nothing is taken for granted when the new, thoroughly tested equipment is first set up. Pass after pass is flown to make sure the equipment is ready for public use.

After commissioning, the facility is given regular periodic inspections. Whenever a system has been modified or there is any indication of a malfunction, FAA crews fly special checks.

Following the mission, Atlantic City FIDO Chief William Frank explained that crews manning the three DC-3 inspection planes based at NAFEC go up into the sky to check and recheck the nav aids so that pilots depending on the FAA facilities can do so with full confidence. Frank pointed out that the agency's flight inspection fleet is made up of 43 DC-3s, two KC-135s, four Convair 580s, five Sabreliners and three Convair T-29s.

The agency's airspace system inspection pilots—the men who "fly nowhere for safety"—are a proud segment of FAA's work force.

In their hands lies the safety of the millions who fly America's airway each year.

You Said It!

"NOTHING ever comes out of these opinion surveys!" That's what representative FAA employees remarked to an outside survey team assigned to secure employee views of FAA employee communications.

Granted, it took time to complete the study, to interview hundreds of employees, summarize their opinions and to create a new publication—but here it is: Volume I, Number 1 of the new FAA WORLD, born from the ideas, opinions and suggestions of FAA people from all over the country.

The communications study was built essentially around the bi-weekly Horizons and the weekly Intercom. Here are typical comments made during the survey which influenced changes in the editorial policy:

You said: "Change Horizons to a magazine but keep Intercom much as it is." (We did both).

You said: "Horizons is slanted too much toward management interests. It lacks material of general human interest. (We've tried to make Volume I, Number 1 a "people" issue and therefore high in human interest. Only time and our readers will tell us if we are doing it right or not. But give us credit for trying).

You said: "You've lost all touch with the field." (If we have, it wasn't intentional. However, a roving reporter-photographer will be "making the rounds" as soon as it can be arranged, and hopes to be touching base with you as often as possible in his travels).

You said: "A picture job description would be interesting to my family. Show pictures and describe various jobs within the FAA." (For starters, see "Flying Nowhere—For Safety", a photo report on Flight Standards inspection on pages 10-11).

You said: "I think the editors should balance the content according to a division ratio so all segments are fairly represented." (You'll find an effort to balance content in this issue—training at the Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City; teamwork between controllers and technicians, with representatives from towers,

centers and FSSs, Flight Standards, and a double-page spread of news pictures from many locations, including Van Nuys, Calif.; Norcross, Ga.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Winston-Salem, N.C.; New York City, Los Angeles and Dallas, Texas.

You said: "We want to know what employees look like—not the bosses." (Pretty rough on the bosses, fellows, but look at the front and back covers. Brass-free, we'd call it).

You said: "I think we ought to have a real good article on the regional reorganization plan, so we all understand it." (The entire March issue will feature it).

You said: "I'm sure that if copies of the publication were mailed to the homes, our families would read it." (A great many employees said the same thing. Beginning with this issue of the FAA WORLD, each employee will receive the magazine by mail at his or her home).

You said: "I think we should have an official message in **each** issue from management regarding FAA policy or administration attitude. Also let's have **important** news from Washington **related** to the FAA." (You're getting both. Administrator John H. Shaffer will comment monthly on FAA news of interest to employees. Editor Cliff Cernick will cover the Washington "beat" compactly—see page 14, this issue).

You said: "Downward communication—from management to employees—is pretty good, but you don't seem able to get a viewpoint back up to management." (We are introducing a Letters-to-the-Editor column in our next issue. This is in addition to our Direct Line Department. We invite you to send in questions, article ideas for the FAA WORLD, comments, etc. We hope to improve the magazine each month by adopting some of your suggestions. So keep them coming).

THE editors of FAA WORLD want to hear from you. Your comments, inquiries and suggestions are welcome. Send them to the Editor, FAA WORLD, 800 Independence Ave., Washington, D.C. 20590. You need not sign your name if you don't wish to do so.

What's New at HQ



WHERE WE'RE AT--LEGISLATIVELY. . . This page--the last thing that "goes to press" in FAA WORLD--will keep you up to date on the progress of legislation affecting your job--your paycheck--your retirement. We'll give special attention to bills affecting the most employees--but won't ignore the others, of course. Because of the brief, pre-holiday session of Congress just winding up as we went to press, and the uncertainty concerning the fate of such key legislation as the pay bill, specific progress data could not be included this month. However, now that the new session is in full swing, look for monthly, comprehensive rundowns on all important legislation affecting FAA employees.

ON GETTING AHEAD. . . A better job. . . a fatter paycheck. . . is this your dream? If it is and you're in a lower-grade position, the chances for changing dream to reality appear to be improving. A Civil Service Commission team is currently looking for new ways to help Federal workers in lower grades move upward through training. We'll keep our eyes on this CSC project and keep you informed.

AND TALKING ABOUT TRAINING. . . If you're in the supervisory ranks or headed in that direction, there is an intensified training program in your future. Beginning in May of this year, all new and current supervisors and middle managers will be required to attend management training. Planned are a three-week basic supervisors' course and a three-week middle managers' course. Fundamentals of management and supervision will be stressed and simulation is "cranked in" to help you apply the things you learn. Even non-supervisors are expected to benefit from this training. They'll be on the receiving end of better management techniques which will help things go smoother, more efficiently for everyone.

LOOKING AHEAD. . . Each month in this section we'll try to keep you fully informed on new programs, policies and technical developments. This month let's take a look at automation that's moving on stage very rapidly. This month, the Boston Center goes operational with NAS 9020A computer with Computer Update Equipment (CUE) capability, for automated flight data processing. In April, Los Angeles Center and NAFEC will receive the first of the new-generation 9020D computers. By this summer, the new Automated Radar Tracking System (ARTS-3) is scheduled to go into operation at the first of 62 terminals to get the equipment--Chicago O'Hare International tower. (ARTS-3 automatically tracks transponder-equipped aircraft and projects their altitude and identity on radar scopes alphanumerically.) Other terminals to get ARTS-3 in the next few months are, in delivery sequence: Washington National, Boston, Miami, Detroit, Denver, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland. On the horizon: expansion of ARTS-3 technology so controllers can be provided with primary radar targets--aircraft without transponders--is underway. Research in this field is being conducted by UNIVAC under an FAA contract.

ANY QUESTIONS? If there's some particular piece of legislation or some subject you'd like covered on this page, just drop a line to the Editor, FAA WORLD, and we'll try to oblige.

FAA'er wants to know how to detour around a communications bog-down . . . What's the score on repromotion? . . . A no-no on recording phone conversations . . . Travel vs. annual leave? . . . When illness strikes the family . . . and other matters on your minds.

DIRECT LINE

Q. I have tried on two separate occasions to discuss various problems by letter with my regional branch chief and unit chief. The former promised me a visit. The latter failed to reply. To whom can I address myself with some assurance that I can air my opinions or receive a polite reply?

A. Try your regional personnel office or, if you haven't done so, ask your superior for a specific appointment. We've already advised Headquarters of this communications bog-down but withheld your name as you requested. Good luck this time!

Q. In an R. I. F. (reduction in force) situation, I was moved from a supervisory position to non-supervisory with no loss in pay or grade. Am I entitled to re-promotion consideration under Ord. 3330.1A, para. 32, pg. 12?

A. Sorry, but the answer is no. Your re-assignment involved no loss in grade. The rule specifies that an employee should be given priority consideration for re-promotion to his former grade; not to a former position. Suggest you study that rule again.

Q. What is the FAA position on recording a telephone conversation?

A. Except under certain prescribed circumstances, it's strictly out. If you're interested, it's covered in Agency Order 1600.24A, dated May 3, 1968.

Q. An employee goes on home leave. Immediately afterward he goes into travel or annual leave enroute to his overseas assignment. Does his second tour of duty begin when he goes into travel or annual leave status, or does it begin when he physically arrives at his overseas duty station?

A. His second tour of duty begins on the date of his arrival at his overseas duty station. Happy tour to you!

Due to the serious illness of a member of my family, it was necessary for me to use up all my accrued

annual leave plus some advance annual leave. I have been advised by the family doctor that the illness could recur and this would necessitate my taking leave again. The maximum amount of annual leave I can earn by the end of the year is 25 hours. I have over 1,300 hours of sick leave accrued. Under these circumstances, if the illness recurs, would it be possible for me to be granted sick leave instead of annual leave? If it becomes necessary to go on leave without pay, what would be the effect on my retirement, health and life insurance?

A. Sorry to tell you, but--under the circumstances you describe--you can't use sick leave instead of annual leave. Sick leave may be used only when the employee is physically incapacitated or for such reasons as exposure to a contagious disease that would endanger co-workers; the presence of contagious disease in his immediate family which requires his personal care and dental, optical or medical examination or treatment. If you must go on leave without pay, you'd receive credit of six months for each year toward retirement, and eligibility for continued coverage of health and life insurance for up to one year without cost to you. Hope things get better in your family, meanwhile if this doesn't completely answer your questions, suggest you visit the regional personnel office.

In the course of our employee communications survey, FAA men and women rated "Direct Line" the most popular department in the newspaper Horizons, now the new FAA WORLD. Accordingly, it was decided that "Direct Line" should be continued in the new magazine. In the course of the survey, friendly critics of this department suggested that: (a) Questions ought to be of broad interest to many readers, not of restricted interest to only a few, and (b) responses in general should be briefer, more specific, less windy. Thanks for the advice--we'll try to benefit from it!

—The Editors