

## AWOS relocation bolsters access to Colorado airport



Photo courtesy of Brett Schreckengost Photography

*Telluride Regional Airport sits atop Deep Creek Mesa at 9,070 feet above sea level and maintains the highest elevation for a commercial airport in the U.S. Scheduling and logistic complications prompted the unscheduled relocation of the airport's AWOS. The challenging project resulted in a higher airport classification, increasing access and ultimately attracting new traffic from larger types of commercial aircraft.*

*"We are located seven minutes from the towns of Telluride and Mountain Village. Now that our airport improvements are complete, getting to and from Telluride is even easier! We've given travelers an option to bypass the \$75 shuttle ride associated with the region's other airport facilities. Our traffic is up, but more important – so is traveler satisfaction!"*

*Richard Nuttall,  
Airport Manager,  
Telluride Regional Airport,  
Telluride, CO*

### Challenge

- The airport was under a tight deadline to close the runway for complete reconstruction and reopen it in time for the scheduled reopening of the airport
- After the new runway was complete, the FAA and Telluride made a last minute decision to relocate the AWOS

### Solution

- Assisted the FAA in selecting the new AWOS location
- Engaged in an intense collaborative effort with the Wyoming DOT Aeronautics Division, who provided a new snow platform at a moment's notice
- With just a few week's notice, we relocated, rebuilt and re-commissioned the AWOS one day before the scheduled reopening of the airport

### Benefits

- The airport improvements will eventually increase Telluride's airport classification, which ultimately will lead to new types of commercial traffic
- The runway reconstruction and the new AWOS location means easier accessibility and increased safety for pilots and other airport users
- Completion of all airport improvements will result in improved economic conditions for local business, travelers and the community



Photo courtesy of Brett Schreckengost Photography

## A valuable resource in jeopardy

Telluride Regional Airport is located amid some of the country's most popular ski resort facilities. Providing travelers with safe, secure access in and out of the region creates a critical resource for the local travel and tourism community. However, the existing runway grades did not meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) runway design criteria, so this gave high priority to a runway reconstruction project with the FAA and the Colorado Division of Aeronautics.

## An unscheduled AWOS relocation

Phase II of this project began in April 2009, which involved closing, removing and reducing the grades of their existing runway, which lowered its elevation by nearly 10 feet. The result is a runway that now meets FAA standards and ensures safety and operational efficiency.

Throughout this phase of the project, the existing Vaisala AWOS III PT was to stay in its current location temporarily. However, based on the current position of the AWOS and the elevation of the new runway, the FAA and Telluride made a last minute decision to relocate the AWOS. Airport manager Richard Nuttall knew the unsafe AWOS location meant it needed to be moved sooner rather than later: "I knew the safety of the airport users would be compromised, so we needed to act fast. This relocation was basically done at the 11th hour."

## Obstacles gave way to teamwork and determination

The decision to move the AWOS came just weeks before the runway reconstruction was complete and the scheduled reopening of the airport. And it was imperative the AWOS be operational and re-commissioned in time for the reopening. The airport's prime contractor immediately hired

us to relocate the AWOS. Our Field Service Engineers dismantled and stored the system while a new site was being selected. During this process, it was discovered that the system's existing snow platform was in poor condition and needed to be replaced. The Vaisala team collaborated with the Wyoming Department of Transportation (DOT) Aeronautics Division, who provided a spare snow platform from their Wyoming Mountain Pass Vaisala AWOS Program, within a moment's notice.

Upon FAA approval of the new site, the contractor installed foundations and electrical at the site and our Field Service Engineers installed the snow platform, AWOS and satellite uplink. The AWOS was re-commissioned on November 3, the day before the scheduled reopening of the Airport. Nuttall, the operations staff and the local business community were relieved and impressed with the expertise and quick turnaround time: "Everyone worked together really well and the final project ended without a hitch," stated Nuttall. "Vaisala was extremely resourceful and did a great job getting the AWOS back online in time."

## A vital community resource adding value to the region

Upon completion of all airport improvements, Telluride Regional Airport will eventually be classified as a higher category airport, which will open the facility to new, bigger and different types of commercial aircraft traffic for commercial service. Increased traffic ultimately results in improved economic conditions for local business, travelers and the community at large.

# VAISALA

For more information, visit [www.vaisala.com](http://www.vaisala.com) or contact us at [aviationsales@vaisala.com](mailto:aviationsales@vaisala.com)

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