



## Annual Report 2024

The **Eastern Slope Regional Airport (IZG)** was created by joint legislation in Maine and New Hampshire in 1961 to serve the Mount Washington Valley and Western Maine. Funding for the airport comes largely from its own operations with support from towns in the region, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), and NH DOT.

The municipality of Fryeburg owns the property and contracts the operation, maintenance and administration of the airport to the **Eastern Slope Airport Authority (ESAA)**, a Maine non-profit. A Board of Directors, comprised of eleven locals who volunteer their time, oversees a full time Operations and Maintenance Manager, Dave Cullinan, and a part time Airport Director, Allison Navia. Several seasonal part time employees help with mowing and snow removal. The mission of ESAA is to foster financial self-sufficiency while maintaining and developing the airfield to best serve the region.

The airport is a year-round economic hub for **businesses, tourists, flight training, emergency services, weather information and education**. Forty-five aircraft call IZG home base, some of the pilots moving to the area and contributing to the tax base because of the availability of a nearby location for their aircraft. In 2024 a **local ski area** made IZG its hub for fueling operations as helicopters were used to construct a ski lift. **Summer camp traffic was up**, providing benefit from direct and indirect revenues to the airport and region. **Subsonic Properties** has improved a hangar building to provide aircraft storage services, contributing tax revenue to the Town of Fryeburg. **White Mountain Valley Scenic Air Tours** completed its second year of operation. IZG serves as the home of the **Eastern Slope Aviation Academy** which hosts **annual Aviation Day** and several **STEM Aviation Camps** for middle school students. The Academy provides ground school and flight training both in the air and in an FAA approved simulator. The **Conway School District received a \$500,000 workforce development grant** from the FAA to use for aviation curriculum. See the sky in real time at the Airport from **IZG's weather camera** by visiting <https://weathercams.faa.gov> and searching "IZG".

In 2024 there were several months with all-time records for the number of take offs and landings, particularly August, September and October. A **solar eclipse** boosted itinerant traffic in April. The annual total is **8,739 operations**. Approximately 150 are military like the **US 524<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron** performing missions and training, and about 200 are air charter or air taxi, hired to bring people to the region for business, tourism, and/or to enjoy the amenities towns in the region have to offer. Of the pilots based at IZG, 44% are from NH, most residents of Conway/ North Conway, a few from neighboring states and the remainder are from Maine.

The airport is a vital **portal for emergency services in the region. Life Flight, charitable pet relocation, medical patient treatment flights, organ transportation, Civil Air Patrol, law enforcement and military training, aerial fire fighting operations and search and rescue missions** all take place at IZG. It is important to note that even if emergency aircraft are not landing directly at IZG, they are still using the airport for weather reporting, instrument approaches, and alternates. Every helicopter trip – and there are thousands over the years- to Bridgton's hospital and Memorial in North Conway uses IZG for those purposes. The availability of jet fuel, 24 hour call-in services, and the ability to hangar aircraft in inclement weather and for passive de-icing with the addition of the newly completed large aircraft hangar make IZG even more of a factor for emergency services.

The **Canadian 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron** completed their bi-annual mountain rescue training and treated the public to aircraft tours. Their visit always brings out the community and engenders a lot of enthusiasm for aviation. The Squadron is scheduled to return March 1, 2025.

**Pine Tree Helicopters offered rides again at the 2024 Fryeburg Fair.** They added a bird and were able to operate almost continuously with coordination from the Airport to keep them fueled up, providing a staggering 2,800



helicopter rides! People waited in line for up to two hours at times for the incredible experience. Several people flew in with their bicycles as cargo, then rode the trails to the fairgrounds for the day. What a way to beat the traffic and have fun doing it!

**Aerobic Camp Voltige** was back again for the second year to practice their routines and get ready for competitions. We kept track and the multi-day event injected about \$13,000 into the local economy between fuel, hangars and parking, hotels, restaurants, and car rentals. **Propelling the Gospel had their 6th annual “fly-out”** August 11-13. The organization had a good time and expressed their appreciation to the airport and to Don Thibodeau for allowing them to camp at TIB field.

The Airport maintains several obstruction lights on towers in the area. These lights provide guidance for aircraft avoidance at night and during inclement weather. The primary powerline to the **Bald Peak obstruction beacon** was repaired in the fall. The 21 year old **14’ plow** has been replaced with a new one just in time to tackle the 24/25 winter. The **roof of the Fixed Base Operations hangar was repaired** and the conference room was renovated in order to be used by airport businesses, tenants, and the Airport Authority for meeting and gatherings. The roof will need to be replaced in the near future. Our picturesque little terminal building received a fresh coat of paint and the National Weather Service fixed up the gas shack with a new door, windows, stairs and air conditioner for the weather reporting equipment housed there.

Current projects include construction of an 802’ **extension to the runway** to accommodate aircraft safely in all weather conditions year-round. This development will also bring **taxiways and airfield lighting up to current standards. Demand is up for more hangars** along with continual maintenance and tenant improvements to airport-owned hangars. ESAA will work with hangar developers through **public-private partnerships to construct between 4-8 new units in 2025**; design is underway. The new hangars will increase based aircraft, fuel sales, tax revenue, and inspire additional development. Planning for the increased demand will take place through a comprehensive **Master Plan Update in 2025. Lyman Drive**, the airport entrance road built in 1961 and not well maintained since, now desperately needs to be reconstructed. The Town is working on this using a phased approach to lessen financial impact.

The following Board members of the Eastern Slope Airport Authority thank the Town and its citizens for continued support:

Don Thibodeau, Chairman – Fryeburg, ME  
Gene Bergoffen, Treasurer – Fryeburg, ME  
Eric Meltzer, Pilot Liaison – Fryeburg, ME  
Steve Steiner - Conway, NH  
Elbridge Russell - Fryeburg, ME

Carl Thibodeau, Vice Chairman – Conway, NH  
Ron Briggs, Secretary - Chatham, NH  
David Sorensen - Eaton NH  
Carmen Lone - Bridgton, ME  
Barry Kallander - Denmark, ME

*Respectfully submitted, Allison Navia, Airport Director IZG*