

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Powell at 9:00 a.m. on February 9, 2011, in Room 783 in the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Rocky Fund - Excused
Representative Kyle Hoffman - Excused
Representative Charlotte O'Hara - Excused
Representative Michael Peterson - Excused

Committee staff present:

Sean Ostrow, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Michael Wales, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Kay Scarlett, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Representative Carl Holmes

Others attending:

See attached list.

Carole Jordan, Director, Rural Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce, provided a fact sheet on the Kansas Broadband Data and Development Program noting it is important to remember that this is a very specific grant, one to each state, for data development. There is no deployment money in it—that all went to private entities, not states, for build out. She also provided a copy of the testimony of Stanley Adams, Broadband Planning Manager, Rural Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce, before the Senate Utilities Committee on January 12, 2011. ([Attachment 1](#))

Hearing on HB 2184 – Including noncommercial aviation use as a recreational purpose for the purposes of premises liability.

Chairman Powell opened the hearing on **HB 2184** and asked Sean Ostrow, Revisor of Statutes, to review this legislation to add noncommercial aviation use as a recreational purpose as it concerns premises liability. Copies of related Kansas statutes limiting liability of property owners to persons entering premises were distributed. ([Attachment 2](#))

Representative Carl Holmes appeared before the committee in support of **HB 2184**, introduced at his request, emphasizing that this legislation would only apply to noncommercial private airports. He explained that the proposed legislation applies to the land or property owner, not the aircraft owner. He noted that Maine, Tennessee, and Idaho have passed similar legislation and that it is under consideration in Montana. His constituent requesting this bill is developing housing and a golf course in a rural area north of Liberal and would like to include an airport if this legislation is passed. ([Attachment 3](#))

There being no other conferees, the Chairman closed the hearing on **HB 2184**.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee is scheduled for February 10, 2011.

HOUSE AG & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
GUEST LIST

DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2011

[illegible]

Raney Gilliland

From: Carole A. Jordan [cjordan@kansascommerce.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2011 2:20 PM
To: Raney Gilliland
Subject: Summary - KS Broadband Activities (3) (2).docx
Attachments: Summary - KS Broadband Activities (3) (2).docx

Raney, here's a fact sheet we put together about our Commerce broadband mapping and planning program. It's important to remember that this is a very specific grant, one to each state, for data development. There is no deployment money in it—that all went to private entities, not states, for build out.

I had given Rep. Tyson some testimony that describes more about what is happening with broadband right now. I will send a copy to you in a couple of minutes.

Carole

Kansas Broadband Data and Development Program
Kansas Department of Commerce

Each state currently has a project enabling it to map broadband availability and plan for future improvements in high speed internet use. In Kansas, the Department of Commerce is working with partner Connected Nation to improve statewide capacity to compete in the digital economy through effective planning for broadband availability and adoption in the following areas:

State broadband planning and capacity building

- Develop plans to support broadband technology growth and adoption
- Conduct gap analysis of availability, adoption and existing capacity of local support organizations
- Convene statewide and regional events to disseminate technical information about broadband
- Improve understanding of and opportunities to enhance broadband in Kansas
- Work to create public-private partnerships to access infrastructure, technical expertise and training
- Broadband task force planning and implementation
- Network deployment cost modeling and analysis
- Business and residential needs assessment and research

Technical assistance support for local and regional communities

- Provide technical expertise to local and regional institutions, non-profits and governments
- Assist with volunteer and non-profits on digital literacy and small business broadband training
- Provide information to communities, businesses and others about efforts to improve access and adoption
- Support capacity building and local regional technology planning team activities by engaging local and state-level surveys of broadband adoption and barriers to adoption
- Develop realistic goals and strategies for broadband deployment and adoption statewide and locally
- Develop an Enterprise Architecture to drive performance improvements in areas such as business processes, use of state assets to drive infrastructure deployment, and cross-collaboration among agencies

Regional technology planning teams

- Benchmark technology use across specified regions and community sectors
- Set goals and develop plans for improved technology use within each sector
- Foster and coordinate local civic and community leaders to improve grassroots technology awareness
- Develop recommendations for web-based applications and demand creation

Data collection, integration and validation

- Broadband inventory, gap analysis and interactive mapping tool to be developed, validated and updated through the year 2014.

No broadband infrastructure, deployment or end-user service provision components are included in any of these efforts. All deployment of broadband services and infrastructure build out is through the private sector. Initiatives are funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA program. This initial grant (announced Dec., 2009) provided funding for 18 months. It was later amended through 2014 with additional grant funds.

Approved Grant Summary

Original Award:	\$1,974,083
Supplemental Funding:	\$4,397,431
Total Award:	\$6,371,514 <i>[through 2014]</i>

Budget Allocation Summary

Data collection and mapping	\$3.3M
Planning and capacity building	\$1.5M
Technical Assistance	\$0.5M
Regional planning teams	<u>\$1.1M</u>
	\$6.4M

Senate Utilities Committee
Stanley Adams
Broadband Planning Manager, Rural Development Division
Kansas Department of Commerce
January 12, 2011

Good afternoon Chairman Apple and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting us here today to update you on the Kansas Broadband initiatives. In the past year we have greatly expanded our efforts to address broadband accessibility issues in un-served and under-served communities across the state. Our goal is to foster economic growth in Kansas by leveraging universal broadband (high speed Internet) availability and adoption, and to provide information for policymakers.

Today I will be speaking to you about our Broadband mapping and planning grant; where we have been and where we have plans to go; sharing some of the early data that have been collected; and setting the stage for a technical demonstration of the Broadband map by our mapping designee, Connected Nation.

Where We Have Been

The Department of Commerce has coordinated the state's broadband initiatives since 2009 when we formed planning groups of state agency partners and broadband providers. We began engaging other stakeholders from communities across the state to guide our initial work. Economic development, health care, education and electronic governmental services are key areas of focus.

We received a federal grant under the State Broadband Data Development (SBDD) program in December 2009. This allowed us to accelerate our broadband work. No state dollars have been used to directly fund this effort. Through the federal grant, we began to conduct detailed data collection and research to build an interactive map of broadband service availability. The non-profit organization, Connected Nation, leads our data collection and mapping efforts and has recently launched the interactive map, Broadband Stat. This new tool is highly sophisticated and comes with a wide range of useful features; representatives from Connected Nation will present Broadband Stat to you next week.

The initial SBDD grant also funded other broadband planning efforts. Elements covered under the approved plan include: commissioning a network deployment cost model and analysis that will improve our ability to support our small and independent broadband service providers in identifying additional feasible markets to expand to un-served areas; and creation of a senior-level Broadband Task Force last summer, on which Chairman Apple serves. Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your active engagement in the task force and are looking forward to working with you in 2011. The plan also included funding the recruitment and hiring of a dedicated resource to coordinate the State's broadband efforts and develop an integrated broadband plan – I am pleased to serve in that capacity now and to be able to provide you with this update today.

Our grant also called for convening a statewide Broadband Summit with a goal of building increased awareness of broadband services and the efforts underway, and engaging stakeholders in dialogue across key private and public sectors (i.e., health care, education, government and economic development). The summit was this past October in Wichita and was attended by more than 200 people. Presentations addressed the key areas of focus previously identified and built on our ability to engage at the regional and local community level. We had a wide range of local, regional and national presenters to take up key broadband issues important to Kansans.

Some of the sessions included:

- Kansas Broadband Landscape and Mapping
- The Way Forward: Connecting Kansas
- Harnessing Bandwidth to Spur Economic Development
- Telemedicine, HIT and Future Broadband Implications
- Digital Accessibility in a Fully Connected Kansas
- National Broadband Plan and Implications for Kansas
- Driving Productivity through Broadband Speed
- Broadband and Government Services
- Building a Sustainable Broadband State Focus

Other components of our plan include development of an Enterprise Architecture program, additional research and surveys to understand the needs of local business and residents, and identification of and promotion of best practices in addressing un-served and under-served communities. These are only some of the specific elements of our initial broadband planning program and, as you can tell, we are advancing our efforts on multiple fronts.

Where We Are Going

The initial grant request, approved for \$2 million, was to cover a period of approximately two years (some elements of the program started immediately, others did not, so the actual window of funding varies slightly). Last fall, the NTIA approved our supplemental grant request for an additional \$4 million. This secondary award, in part, covered the extension of funding programs from the initial grant through 2014. For example, this included additional data collection required to refresh the interactive mapping tool, and provides funding for the broadband manager position.

The approved supplemental grant request also created the opportunity to build a more robust program that will allow us to more aggressively engage and support local community efforts to improve broadband service. Our plans call for deployment of seven regional technology teams, focused on identifying key people in under-served or un-served areas and providing technical assistance needed to access and use broadband services.

Summary of key funded initiatives that will be implemented through 2014:

- Network deployment costs model
- Task force establishment and composition
- Dedicated broadband staff coordinating efforts
- Broadband summit
- Regional technology planning team implementation
- Technical assistance support for local and regional efforts
- Enterprise architecture development

Kansas Broadband Landscape

Today, broadband service is available to approximately 95 percent of households, nationwide. It seems an impressive figure, but it masks wide geographic, economic and demographic disparities. Here in Kansas, much work is yet to be done to develop and implement actionable plans to ensure broadband service is available – in a manner no different than is the case with electricity or basic landline telephone service. On the whole, Kansas compares favorably in many key respects to national averages. Our research shows that 72 percent of Kansas households surveyed access broadband services at home, compared to the national average of 65 percent.

There are many varieties of broadband, and the range of differences in quality, accessibility and affordability are considerable. Generally, to be considered broadband, a minimum download connectivity speed of 768 Kbps is required. However, data used in developing the National Broadband Plan identified that the median connectivity speed in 2009 was much higher, at 4 Mbps.

Broadband services are typically provided by cable, wireline and wireless telephone, and satellite providers, among others. In order to ensure all Kansans are able to have the benefits of broadband, it's likely that the solution will take the form of a combination of technologies; time and technological innovation will tell. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for the variety of un-served and under-served issues present throughout the state.

There are a great many implications involved in ensuring a fully connected Kansas. Broadband represents one of the greatest competitive game changers since the jet age – effective deployment and adoption of Internet technologies will allow Kansas business to compete globally on a whole new level.

Two core underlying issues are being addressed by our broadband initiative:

- 1) Availability – ensuring there is adequate **supply** of quality, affordable broadband service that can be accessed statewide by Kansans, especially in rural communities, often last to benefit from commerce and innovation driven by high density population centers.
- 2) Adoption – where broadband services are currently available (approximately 95 percent of Kansas households), but not subscribed to, fostering a higher rate or percentage of households actually with broadband service (**demand**).

To address these two core underlying issues, two major programs were launched last year by the Federal government: the Broadband Improvements Program (BIP) and the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). These two, much larger programs (compared to SBDD) funded the majority of broadband grants and are targeted to the private sector to improve infrastructure and availability.

The USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) administers BIP, which extends loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas. Grants are used to fund applications proposing to exclusively serve remote, un-served, rural areas. Applications that would serve non-remote or under-served areas would be funded by loans or loan/grant combinations. RUS favored applications

that proposed a higher percentage of loan funds, and applicants could request 100 percent loan funding if desired.

The U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) administers BTOP, which made grants available for broadband infrastructure deployment in un-served and under-served areas. The three primary categories were:

- Broadband Infrastructure – projects that deliver broadband through last mile or middle mile facilities.
- Public Computer Centers – projects that expand publicly accessible computer centers, such as community centers, community colleges and public universities.
- Sustainable Broadband Adoption – projects that promote broadband demand, including broadband education, awareness, training, access, etc.

Several BIP and BTOP awards were made to Kansas-based companies. The administering federal agencies made final evaluation of applications from the private sector and determination of their actual grants and loans.

Highlights of broadband private sector BIP and BTOP grants and loans in Kansas:

	Grant	Loans	Private Inv.	Total
H&B Communications, Holyrood	\$4.6M	\$1.97M	\$1.6M	\$8.19M
JBN Telephone Company, Holton	\$7.8M	\$6.5M	\$3.7M	\$16.9M
South Central Wireless, Medicine Lodge	\$558K	\$560K	\$576K	\$1.7M
South Central Tele. Assoc., Medicine Lodge	\$871K	-	\$3.6M	\$4.4M
Rural Telephone, Hays	\$49.6M	\$51.6M	-	\$101.2M

In total, when considering all the broadband projects, grants, loans and private investments, the total projected broadband investments in Kansas is approximately \$245 million.

Increasingly, state and local governments are able to save costs and deliver improved services to those utilizing broadband connections. We are in the midst of a dramatic shift in how commerce is conducted, with more business being transacted via the Internet.

Our preliminary research shows several key factors particularly relevant to understanding broadband adoption in Kansas. There is a correlation between adoption and computer ownership. Generally, households that invest in a computer recognize its value in accessing the Internet. In the future, we expect this correlation to lessen with the rapid emergence of mobile device connectivity.

Kansas adoption rates are also positively correlated to higher income levels and higher education. For example, 91 percent of households with income over \$75,000, and 88 percent of households with college graduates, subscribe to broadband services in Kansas.

As one might expect, our research also shows a sharp drop off in adoption rates when looking at senior citizen households; only 34 percent ages 65+ compared to 85 percent ages 18 – 34.

Many factors go into determining why households don't subscribe to broadband service. In fact, it is more complicated than it may seem at first. Research shows that the primary reason for low adoption rates among residential respondents relate to not understanding the value of having it. Like other new technologies, initially broadband has not yet become fully recognized as a necessity (41%). Another

reason closely related to the awareness issue is the lack of a computer in the home (37%). Interestingly, cost came in a distant third as the reason respondents did not have home broadband service (25%).

Broadband initiatives are sprouting up at the local level in several communities across the state. Typically, the challenges faced are a combination of limited or no availability and quality of service (speed). Kansas is fortunate in that a wide range of independent rural broadband providers are aggressively working to build out their markets with high quality broadband services. In Emporia, business and education leaders have formed their own task force to develop a strategy to bring affordable, quality broadband service to their entire community. They are looking at what can be done so that businesses, suppliers, as well as some of the nearby rural areas have access where currently it is still limited or not available at all. A common theme we are hearing is that people who are living in relatively populated areas (like Emporia, or even here in Topeka) have limited or no reliable broadband service.

In Chanute, there is a strong grassroots effort to create an innovative broadband solution for the community, leveraging fiber technology, and they are promoting their efforts to Google in hopes of bringing in their expertise and funding for high speed Internet.

As we continue our efforts to build awareness of the various broadband initiatives, we are learning about other local efforts underway, and about areas that have great need of support in developing broadband technical solutions for their individual communities. We have taken this into consideration as we developed our broadband plans.

In addition to preliminary research conducted on residential issues, we have also been able to quantify some key indicators for how broadband service (or lack thereof) is affecting the Kansas business community.

For example, broadband availability issues for *rural* businesses track closely to the *general* business community in Kansas; 93 and 94 percent respectively, report available service. Also, our research shows that businesses are increasingly accessing Kansas state websites for services and information; 30 percent reported visiting state websites several times per month. This information is preliminary, but it does confirm that, just as we are seeing in the residential sector, the business community appears to have similar trends in terms of both availability and adoption. Additional work will be done to ensure we are forward-thinking about the needs of the business community, especially our small businesses in rural areas. We anticipate that, as new innovations and trends develop online, Kansas businesses will need to be in an environment that fosters growth through connectivity.

We still have much work to do as we assess the precise nature of gaps in availability and adoption across the state. What we do know, however, is that too many Kansans, especially in rural communities, still rely on slow, narrowband Internet access or do not use the internet at all. The Kansas Department of Commerce has been proactive in setting the stage for a fully connected Kansas. Our efforts are dedicated to ensuring that all Kansans have quality, affordable access to broadband Internet services.

As Governor Brownback has stated, it is critical that we ensure all Kansans have access to quality, affordable broadband service, especially in our rural communities.

We look forward to working with you in the future, and to answering any questions you might have.

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58-3201. Limiting liability of property owners to persons entering

58-3201.pdf

Search Terms: 58-3201

◀58-3201▶. Limiting liability of property owners to persons entering premises for recreational purposes. The purpose of this act is to encourage owners of land to make land and water areas available to the public for recreational purposes by limiting their liability toward persons entering thereon for such purposes.

History: L. 1965, ch. 559, § 1; July 1.

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58-3203. Limited liability of property owners; owner's duty of care.

58-3203.pdf

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Search Terms: 58-3203

◀ **58-3203** ▶. Limited liability of property owners; owner's duty of care.

Except as

specifically recognized by or provided in K.S.A. 58-3206 and amendments thereto, an owner of land

who makes all or any part of the land available to the public for recreational purposes owes no duty

of care to keep the premises, or that part of the premises so made available, safe for entry or use by

others for recreational purposes, or to give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure or

activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes. An owner of land who does take

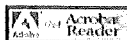
actions to keep the premises safe or to warn persons of a dangerous condition, use, structure or

activity on the premises shall not be deprived of the protection which this law would provide had

the owner not taken such actions or given such warning.

History: L. 1965, ch. 559, § 3; L. 1995, ch. 167, § 1; Apr. 27.

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 **58-3204. Same; owner's responsibility. Except as specifically recognized**
58-3204.pdf

Search Terms: 58-3204

58-3204. Same; owner's responsibility. Except as specifically recognized by or provided in K.S.A. 58-3206, and amendments thereto, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits any person to use such property, or any part of such property, for recreational purposes or an owner of nonagricultural land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such property, or any part of such property, for recreational purposes does not thereby:

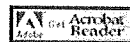
(a) Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose.

(b) Confer upon such person the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed.

(c) Assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such persons.

History: L. 1965, ch. 559, § 4; L. 1988, ch. 198, § 2; L. 1995, ch. 167, § 2; Apr. 27.

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HB 2167
HB 2184

Testimony of
Representative Carl Holmes
125th District

Chairman Powell & Committee members

Favor these two bills (same)

I am a current active Pilot

This type of legislation favored by AOPA

Noncommercial aviation activities

Proposed legislation applies to land or property owner, not aircraft owner

FAA requires prior permission of property owner before landing on private airports except in an emergency

State of Maine has passed similar legislation (same wording as this proposal)

Tennessee has same type of legislation (different wording –same meaning)

I believe Idaho has passed similar legislation

Montana considering same type of legislation

iPad has map - showing type of airports addressed by this legislation

Person requesting this legislation is developing a housing and golf course in rural area in my county

Would like to include airport if this legislation is passed

Airport would probably be grass landing strip

Airport would be about 3 miles north of Liberal airport and could serve as emergency landing strip pilots with mechanical problems taking off to the north

Thank you

I'll try to answer your questions

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Limit Liability for Certain Noncommercial Aviation Activities

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 14 MRSA §159-A, sub-§1, JB, as amended by PL 2001, c. 113, §2, is further amended to read:

B. "Recreational or harvesting activities" means recreational activities conducted out-of-doors, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, environmental education and research, hiking, recreational caving, sight-seeing, operating snow-traveling and all-terrain vehicles, skiing, hang-gliding, noncommercial aviation activities, dog sledding, equine activities, boating, sailing, canoeing, rafting, biking, picnicking, swimming or activities involving the harvesting or gathering of forest, field or marine products. It includes entry of, volunteer maintenance and improvement of, use of and passage over premises in order to pursue these activities. "Recreational or harvesting activities" does not include commercial agricultural or timber harvesting.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the landowner recreational liability law to include noncommercial aviation activities in the definition of "recreational or harvesting activities." A landowner who allows recreational or harvesting activities on the landowner's property is not liable for injuries or property damage that happens to those members of the public taking part in that activity.

Maine pilot proves that one man can make a difference

By Jill W. Tallman

Private landowners in Maine who don't charge pilots who use their airstrips for recreational purposes would be protected under legislation signed by Gov. John E. Baldacci.

The bill (L.D.889) amends the state's landowner recreational liability law to include noncommercial aviation activities in the definition of "recreational" activities, meaning that any private airport owner who allows recreational activities on his property would not be liable for injuries or property damage to members of the public participating in that activity.

In practical terms, the bill will give Maine's private airport owners the latitude to open up their airports for increased public use. For AOPA member John Nadeau, it is an opportunity to continue to share aviation with everyone & was something he has done since he purchased Old Acton Airfield in 1997.

Nadeau, who lives in North Chelmsford, Mass., hadn't known about the airport, even though it was less than a mile from his vacation home in Acton. A resident who knew that Nadeau was a pilot told him that it would be auctioned, and suggested that he bid on it. To Nadeau's surprise, he won the property, which includes a 2,400-foot turf runway.

Nadeau opened the airport to the community of 2,000 residents in 1998 by hosting a field day, providing free airplane rides, hamburgers, and hot dogs. The annual event became so popular that eventually it drew nearly half the townspeople out to Old Acton Airfield, and more than 100 airplane rides were given. Nadeau said he hosted the field days "to let everyone experience the fun of aviation." He also allowed local pilots to use the airfield and purchased a private insurance policy to protect himself against civil liability exposure. The premiums became so expensive that Nadeau discontinued the policy, but allowed pilots to keep using the airfield. "Aviation is a lot more fun in a group," he explained.

In 2007, Nadeau read a news story in "AOPA ePilot" about a new Montana liability law for privately owned airports, so he asked State Sen. Richard Nass to support similar legislation in Maine. Nass and his wife, State Rep. Joan Nass, were among the hundreds of people who came to Old Acton Airfield to enjoy the field day. Now, after a lot of dedication and hard work, Nadeau's idea to help Maine's private airports has become law.

Passage of the liability legislation means that Maine's private airport owners probably will be more willing to open their airstrips to pilots and aircraft owners, Nadeau said, adding, "It is my hope that this story will inspire some other pilots to make a difference in their states."

May 20 2009

From AOPA ePilot

SENATE BILL 3011
By Jackson

HOUSE BILL 3314

By Cobb T

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 70,
Chapter 7, relative to landowner liability for private
airstrip and related activities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 70-7-102, is amended by designating the existing language as subsection (a), and is further amended by adding the following language as subsection (b):

(b) The landowner, lessee, occupant, or any person or entity in control of any land or premises used for a private airstrip and related activities owes no duty of care to keep such land or premises safe for entry or use by others for aviation purposes and related activities. Such landowner, lessee, occupant, or other person or entity shall not be required to give any warning of hazardous conditions or activities on such land or premises to any person entering or using such land or premises for such purposes, except as provided in § 70-7-104.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

Liability protection could open grass strips to public

By Alyssa J. Miller

Private airfields in Tennessee could get the protection they need to open to the public, a move that AOPA hopes many other states will follow. A bill to provide liability protection to private airfield owners is awaiting Gov. Phil Bredensen's signature.

"The fun of flying is no better than at a small grass strip," said AOPA Southeast Regional Representative Bob Minter. "I think a lot of these airfield owners would love to let their fields be used as a catalyst to interest young children in flying."

T-Top Airfield owner and AOPA member Ken Franks spearheaded the renewed effort for liability protection and mobilized more than 200 other private airfield owners and enthusiasts in the state.

The protection could limit the personal liability of more than 125 private airfield owners, allowing them to open their fields for recreational use. The bill places the same duty of care on the "landowner, lessee, occupant, or any person in control of land" that is used for "recreational noncommercial aircraft operations or recreational noncommercial ultralight vehicle operations" as the landowners whose land is used for recreational hunting, fishing, camping, boating, skiing, and other activities.

State Rep. Ty Cobb and State Sen. Doug Jackson sponsored the measure in their respective houses and played an instrumental role in getting the protection passed.

Minter recently met with a group of private airfield owners and said that many are not only looking forward to opening their strips to the public but also to sparking an interest in aviation among today's youth.

"I think this is going to open a lot of doors," Minter said. "They'd love to have events at their airport to attract the community."

May 6, 2010

