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To:           Subscribers:  
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From:         C. Bruce Entwistle  
              Chief, Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch

Subject: Soliciting Comments on Experimental Graphical Forecasts for  
Aviation over Alaska through September 30, 2021

From December 10, 2020 through September 30, 2021, the NWS will be soliciting comments on Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation (GFA) over Alaska. The Experimental GFA is designed to provide meteorological information in a graphical format equivalent to the text Area Forecast (FA) and expands this information over Alaska, the Bering Sea, the Chukchi Sea and portions of the Arctic Ocean.

This product includes observations and forecasts valid for Alaska and the Alaska Flight Information Regions overlaid on high-resolution base maps, which are data critical for aviation safety. The Experimental GFA is available at:

<https://testbed.AviationWeather.gov/gfa>

Observational data in the Experimental GFA are time-synchronized and are available by the hour for the current time and the previous 14 hours. Hourly model data are available up to 15 hours into the future. Wind, icing and turbulence forecasts are available in 3,000-foot increments from the surface up to 30,000 feet mean sea level (MSL) (FL300) and in 6,000 foot increments FL300 (30,000 feet MSL) to FL480 (48,000 feet MSL). Turbulence forecasts are also broken into LO (below 18,000 MSL) and HI (above 18,000 MSL) graphics. Maximum icing graphic and maximum wind velocity graphics (regardless of altitude) are also available.

Data including Observations/Warnings, Thunderstorms, Clouds, Flight Category (Ceiling and Visibility), Precipitation, Icing, Turbulence and Winds are available in this product. These data are combined into categories that the user can select using the top-level buttons within above the display. For details of each category, see the Product Description Document (PDD):

[https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD\\_Exp\\_GFA\\_Alaska\\_2020.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_Exp_GFA_Alaska_2020.pdf)

NWS developed the Experimental GFA in anticipation of a formal request by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to discontinue production of the FA for Alaska. The underlying meteorological information in the GFA is equivalent to the information in the text FA. The FAA, pursuant to Title 49 United States Code (Section 44720), established requirements for this weather information and service. These requirements are necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of operations in the National Airspace System (NAS).

Based on comments received on the Experimental GFA and in coordination with established FAA processes, NWS plans to discontinue production of the FA for Alaska once the Experimental GFA product is approved as operational and when all concerns identified within submitted comments have been addressed. Expanding the GFA to Alaska is intended to replace the text FAs upon completion of a formal product termination review and notification process. The FAs for Alaska will not be affected at this time.

Users can find additional information on the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation at:

<https://testbed.aviationweather.gov/gfa/help>

NWS is accepting comments through September 30, 2021 on the implementation of the Experimental GFA as a replacement for existing text FAs over Alaska, via the following survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ExpGFAExpansionAlaska>

If you have any questions regarding the Experimental Graphical Forecasts for Aviation, contact:

Dr. Joshua Scheck  
Chief, Aviation Support Branch  
Aviation Weather Center  
Kansas City, MO  
816-584-7204  
[joshua.scheck@noaa.gov](mailto:joshua.scheck@noaa.gov)

or

Kevin Stone  
Meteorologist  
Aviation and Space Weather Services Branch  
Silver Spring, MD  
301-427-9363  
[kevin.stone@noaa.gov](mailto:kevin.stone@noaa.gov)

National Public Information Statements are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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