

State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

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NEWS RELEASE
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Northway Airport reopens today to small aircraft *3,300 feet restored to resume general aviation this winter*

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) completed restoration work on 3,300 feet of the Northway airport runway this weekend. After inspections by DOT the airport was officially reopened at 8:00am today, Monday, November 25, 2002, to general aviation. The November 3rd earthquake, which registered at a 7.9 magnitude, badly damaged the airport over three weeks ago.

“This repair went exactly the way we planned—quickly and cost effectively,” said DOT Commissioner Joe Perkins. “It was important to get this airport back up and running—for medivac flights, customs, and general aviation. The community can’t be without it and neither can the rest of Alaska.”

The Northway airport serves as an important customs airport for light aircraft entering Alaska from Canada. According to U.S. Customs, approximately 700 airplanes land there each year, about half of all flights entering Alaska. The restoration cost was approximately \$500,000.

The earthquake, centered nearly 100 miles away from Northway, created crevices all over the 5,100 foot paved surface, an eight inch drop along the centerline, and one foot heaves along the length of the runway. DOT&PF contracted with Wilder Construction to turn the shattered surface into a useable and maintainable gravel runway. A reclaimer, a machine that chews up asphalt into small pieces, was used to create a base for the finer gravel surface. DOT&PF will likely do additional temporary work in the spring to repair uneven settling on the surface. A permanent repair will be developed in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency over the winter.

For more information contact Shannon McCarthy, Information Officer, DOT&PF Northern Region, at (907) 451-2240.