

## Glenda Wiles

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**From:** Mary Compton <mpottercompton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 6, 2014 4:38 PM  
**To:** dan@rpa-hln.com; Glenda Wiles; drh29@bitterroot.com; csr@choiceaviation.com  
**Subject:** Ravalli County Airport Improvement: IT'S A MATTER OF SAFETY!

As a pilot who regularly uses Ravalli County Airport, I'd like to offer another perspective as to why improving the airport is critical to the surrounding community: **SAFETY!**

*Of course* a longer runway makes it safer for pilots landing and taking off; however, longer runways make the **local community** safer, too!

Our airport can be a critical rallying point for airborne medical, fire relief and disaster relief. Having a longer runway will ensure that the providers of these services could land **locally**, nearby to where an emergency situation may be requiring us to receive aid, should we need it.

It's easy to dismiss the value of a local airport when we're not in the midst of a catastrophe. But when you look at relatively recent history, you can see how important having an accessible airport is. For example, during Hurricane Katrina, private/non-commercial pilots made valuable contributions by flying relief missions to help evacuate people to safer locations. Another example is during Haiti's devastating earthquake, pilot-volunteers brought in supplies and aid workers to help with those facing the catastrophe.

Private pilots also volunteer as "Angels" by transporting patients who couldn't otherwise afford travel to/from life saving medical treatments. Pilot-volunteers do this free of charge; they donate their time, airplanes, and piloting skills. As an "Angel Flight" pilot, I've had the honor of flying those in need of medical care to places where they can receive the treatments they require. I believe that having a longer runway will help encourage pilots to offer these volunteer flights locally, out of Ravalli County Airport.

Another way pilots contribute is by offering free transportation to our nation's veterans through the Veteran's Airlift Command organization. Again, a longer, safer, runway will only encourage pilots to provide these volunteer services.

I encourage our community to remember the importance of a longer runway and how that adds insurance to the community safety.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Compton

"You haven't seen a tree until you've seen its shadow from the sky." -  
Amelia Earhart