

# Bluffton Today

## Ridgeland-Claude Dean Airport celebrates SC Aviation Week

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Ridgeland-Claude Dean Airport recently had some visitors who did not fly in, but rather walked around to help clean up dangerous debris from the runways.

A FOD (foreign object damage) walk was organized by acting airport manager Danny Lucas in conjunction with activities being held in recognition of South Carolina Aviation Week, which was Aug.15-22.

“This year’s activities statewide were closed to the public because of COVID-19 and the S.C. Aviation Association chose to focus on aviation advocacy and state legislation in support of general aviation,” Lucas said.

Lucas said the walk was led by Jasper County Sheriff’s Office Chief Deputy Gary Morris and Jasper County Fire Chief Russell Wells as a public safety effort to provide support to the airport. Others participating in the small event included pilots David Pinegar and Lawrie Weinreich, and Jasper County staff members Jeanine Bostick, Renty Kitty, deputy Eric Dodson and Myrtle Weinreich.

“FOD walks are scheduled at many airports to physically remove foreign object debris from runways, taxiways and ramps,” Lucas said. “FOD can damage or destroy propellers, turbine engines and aircraft tires. The removal of FOD on a regular basis serves to reduce an airport’s liability.”

Bostick and Weinreich said the walk should become a regularly scheduled event because it is good exercise and serves to protect aircraft from damage.

According to the 2018 South Carolina Statewide Aviation System Plan and Economic Impact Report, more than 2.6 million visitors to South Carolina arrived by airline flight along with another 532,000 arriving by private aircraft. The report said 122,759 jobs, a \$4.8 billion annual payroll and \$11.5 billion in annual spending accounted for a \$16.3 billion contribution to the state’s economy.

“As part of the aviation community in South Carolina, I want to make every effort to help educate the public on the importance of protecting and growing aviation in South Carolina in an effort to encourage economic development,” Lucas said.

