

Compass Rose Painters Finish Airport Project

This past weekend the Luce County Airport got some new direction thanks to the talent and dedication of a regional group of female pilots.

Members of the Northwoods chapter of the Ninety-Nines, comprised of women throughout the Upper Peninsula and Canada, descended on the local airport in Newberry to paint a “compass rose” on the concrete tarmac at the facility.

When the name of an airport is painted, “air marking” helps pilots to identify airports from the air. A compass rose, measuring 80 feet from point to point, is used by pilots on the ground. They align their airplane over the graphic to swing their compass to correct it for magnetic north. The rose has graduated markings found on the traditional magnetic compass.

The process began with the



Wielding paint rollers are Ninety-Nines and friends (front row, left to right) Lynn Sykes, Sheryl Rains, Colette Miller, Dee Dreger and Bill Dreger; (back row) Jay Rains, Pam Trask, Pat McKiddie, Terri Wolski and Jeffrey Dohrenwend. Not pictured are Scott Trask, Bill Landry and Bob Dohrenwend.

assistance of a surveyor to indicate true North, South, East and West. Utilizing the precise orientation, the crew snapped lines to begin the outline of their blue and white compass rose.

To add a little local color, a large moose head was added

in the middle of the Luce County compass.

Compass roses already have been painted at airports in Escanaba, Tomahawk, WI and the Soo; next year the plan is to visit Iron Mountain.

The Ninety-Nines, now an international organization,

was founded in 1929 by 99 licensed women pilots for the mutual support and advancement of aviation through “education, scholarships and mutual support, while honoring our unique history and sharing our passion for flight.”

The group has been actively “airmarking” since the 1930s.