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2016**

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

PEARLAND REGIONAL AIRPORT CONTINUES ITS MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS



Hangars under construction at Pearland Regional Airport.

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Located approximately seven miles south of Houston's Hobby Airport, Pearland Regional Airport (KLVJ) is ideally located for its Reliever Airport designation. Soon, the airport will have even better capabilities to serve business aviators seeking alternatives to the busy airspace between Hobby and Ellington Field.

In fall 2013, Texas Aviation Partners (TAP) assumed responsibility for management of the airport, including FBO operations. Within the first year, TAP worked diligently to lead an airport-wide facelift to make Pearland Regional Airport a more attractive alternative for local and transient pilots. ➔

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DAVE'S HANGAR



FAA MEDICAL REFORM BECOMES A REALITY!

On July 15, 2016, the president signed into law the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016. This legislation extends current FAA programs through Sept. 30, 2017, and includes funding for the Airport Improvement Program. In addition to federal funding for our grant program, the statute contains several other important measures, one of which is the long awaited third class medical reform.



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THIRD CLASS MEDICAL REFORM EXPLAINED

For several years, the general aviation community has been pursuing changes to the FAA medical requirements that currently exist. The current system can be time consuming, costly, and has been shown to have little, if any, positive impact on flight safety. Beginning July 15, 2017, the vast majority of general aviation pilots who have held a valid medical certificate 10 years prior to the date of the act (July 25, 2016) will no longer need the FAA approved medical examination. The 10-year lookback applies to both regular and special issuance medicals.

There are a few conditions which apply: (1) pilots who have never held an FAA medical certificate, including student pilots, will need to go through the process one time only; (2) after meeting the initial requirements to fly under the reforms, pilots will need to visit a state-licensed physician at least once every four years and take a free online course on aeromedical factors every two years; (3) pilots whose most recent medical was revoked, suspended, withdrawn or denied will need to obtain a new FAA medical certificate before they can operate under the reforms.

A pilot meeting the above requirements will be permitted to fly non-commercial VFR or IFR flights in aircraft weighing up to 6000 pounds, having no more than 6 seats, no higher than 18,000 feet and at a maximum airspeed of 250 knots. For more information, visit TxDOT Aviation Division's website at <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/aviation.html>.

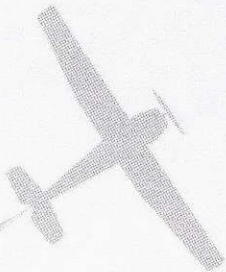
Other important measures included in the FAA Extension, Safety and Security Act of 2016 are:

- Direction for the FAA to establish marking requirements for covered towers between 50 and 200 feet in height in non-urban areas.
- Formation of a "Working Group on Improving Air Service to Small Communities".
- New unmanned aerial system (drone) safety provision.
- Security reforms in the wake of the two recent major airport attacks.
- Provisions aimed at easing security wait times at airports. ♦



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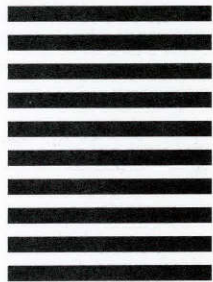


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continued from pg. 1

"We were brought on to operate and manage the airport and make it self-sustaining," said TAP Partner Stephen Alexander. "We've done a lot of improvements in the way of making it a safe aeronautical facility. The airport lighting, rotating beacon and perimeter fencing were all in poor shape. We wanted to clean up the entire airport. In order to set the table to make the airport self-sustaining, you have to have a clean kitchen before you can serve a good meal."

One of the current projects underway at the airport is a feasibility study to determine a better route and new location for an airport entrance. The project also includes funding for upgrades to airport and airfield safety and security. The project was funded by a non-primary entitlement program grant (awarded in 2015) through the Texas Department of Transportation's Aviation Division.

According to Alexander, the airport hopes to achieve two things from the feasibility study: 1) parlay the findings and the results of that grant study to identify the best entrance into the airport, and 2) ensure appropriate coordination of airport improvements with government officials and community partners. "Once you get to the airport, it's easy to get around," noted Alexander. "But finding us from existing highways is difficult. So we identified it as a big need to have better roadway access."

The Texas Aviation Partners' recent accomplishments include:

- Extensive remodel of FBO facility.
- Successfully renegotiated fuel contract to increase airport profitability.
- Secured several much-needed amenities such as full service Jet A fuel and on-site rental cars.
- Performed airport-wide cleanup that included major repairs and improvements.
- Designed airport website to include new logo and branding, as well as monthly newsletters.
- Acquired new Community Hangar.
- Launched Phase I of new hangar development.

Phase I of the hangar development project began in December 2015 and includes 23 T-hangars available for lease.

Airport Operations Manager Adam Arceneaux echoed many of Alexander's excited sentiments.

"Our goal is have a first class facility," said Arceneaux. "We want a first time customer to land, be attended to quickly and efficiently, and most importantly feel welcome so that they not only return, but tell their friends about their positive experience."

With the recent improvements, ongoing hangar development projects and new entrance study underway, the airport is seeking to tap into the business aviation market as well. ♦

PEARLAND REGIONAL AIRPORT AT A GLANCE

Website

<http://www.flypearland.com/>

Amenities Offered

- Courtesy car
- Community Hangar*
- Ramp tie-down parking**
- Fresh baked cookies, bottled water and Starbucks coffee
- Wi-fi
- Weather planning station
- Pilot's lounge
- Conference room
- Concierge-style customer service
- Quick turn services

*First night free; \$25/night

**With fuel purchase; 5 night maximum

Runway 14-32 Information

Dimensions: 4,313' x 75'

Surface: Concrete, good condition

Runway Edge Lights: Medium Intensity

Elevation: 43.9 ft.

Traffic Pattern: Left

Runway Heading: 142 magnetic, 145 true (for runway 14); 322 magnetic, 325 true (for runway 32)

GRANTS RECEIVED

City of Tulia/Swisher County Municipal Airport	\$1,236,520	Rotomill, overlay, and mark Runway 18-36 and stub taxiway; rotomill and overlay partial parallel taxiway; rehabilitate and mark apron; rehabilitate and mark t-hangar access taxiways
Kimble County Airport	\$1,835,950	Construct 12-unit t-hangar and apron, and crackseal pavements
Snyder/Winston Field	\$1,246,450	Construct county owned hangar, hangar access taxiway and hangar automobile access road
Georgetown Municipal Airport	\$7,905,590	Rehabilitate Taxiway N, S, E, I and terminal apron; rehabilitate Taxiway A south of terminal apron; construct/realign new parallel Taxiway A, B, C, D, E, F, G and holding area; rehabilitate southeast corporate hangar taxiway; rehabilitate taxi lanes for development north of Runway 11; reconfigure northern terminal apron modify apron tie-down lay-out and taxilane marking; taxilane and drainage improvements between T-hangar J and L; Runway 18-36 and Runway 11-29 shoulder work for FOD control; relocate/replace fuel farm; relocate fire hydrant at building 6; relocate terminal auto parking; west ditch drainage improvements; sign and mark movement area east of Taxiway N; pavement demo and sod; drainage improvements at hangar M, N, and O; install new property line fencing and clear TSS on Runway 11-29 and clearing and grubbing northeast section of airport
Hereford Municipal Airport	\$5,425,590	Reconstruct 3,570 of parallel Taxiway A; construct and mark terminal aprons (north and south); drainage inlet improvements and install taxiway signs
Fort Worth Spinks	\$2,970,916	Reconstruct taxiway C, G and H; construct temporary access to Runway at taxiway D; at taxiway D construct new parallel taxiway to C to allow access to taxiway C; construct a new access taxiway at taxiway J; apron joint seal replacement; construct northwest service road; drainage study at east side development area; drainage improvements to Stone Road, Wing Way Road, building and auto parking at West side; drainage improvements to ditches from terminal apron to south T-hangars; install strip drain East edge apron; and install gate northwest perimeter fence

BRUCE EHLY

SEPTEMBER 28, 1940 - AUGUST 15, 2016

The TxDOT Aviation family lost a friend and former colleague with the passing of Bruce Ehly on Aug. 15, 2016. Following his retirement from Bergstrom Air Force Base in 1989, Bruce was an airport planner in TxDOT's Aviation Division. He retired from TxDOT in 2007. Bruce was a well respected member of the planning and programming section where he worked with many of the state's larger general aviation airports including many relievers.

Bruce came to the Aviation Division after a distinguished 27 year Air Force career piloting C-130, C-140 and T-39s and which took him to six continents. His numerous medals included the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal with 2 bronze oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with 3 bronze oak leaf

clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with 2 bronze oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor and 4 bronze oak leaf clusters, the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 bronze oak leaf clusters, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Bruce married Theresa Joyce "Joy" Guillory on July 3, 1970. They had met in 1968 when he was a C-130 special operations pilot with the 7th SOS at Ramstein AB, Germany. Joy was a case-worker with American Red Cross at Landstuhl Army Medical Center following her year at the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon. Their only child, Jennifer, was born at the same Landstuhl hospital in 1971. ♦



The completed 1,500-foot runway extension at Conroe-North Houston Regional Airport. The extension brings runway 14-32 to 7,500 feet.

2015 Aviation Division Annual Report

Message from the Director

In my 23 years as director of TxDOT's Aviation Division, I've had the privilege of working with many talented and devoted individuals who share the goal of promoting general aviation across our great state. This is true not only for those within TxDOT and the Aviation Division but those in our communities working to improve their airports and the economic opportunities they provide. The Aviation Division has never been more committed to serving our airport sponsors and supporting general aviation in Texas, which has a total economic impact of \$14.6 billion and supports more than 56,000 jobs with an annual payroll of \$3.1 billion.

The Aviation Division is proud to contribute to the overall success of the transportation model in Texas through our efforts in maintaining and improving the Texas Airport System. Of the 497 miles of runways available for public use in Texas, over 393 miles of runway are utilized for general aviation purposes; from the 24 reliever airports—which reduce congestion to the commercial service airports in our urban areas—to the smaller airports, which provide important services such as agricultural spraying and medical lifeline flights to our smaller communities. These general aviation airports complement our larger commercial service airports that accommodate 403,738 daily commercial passengers flying to and from Texas airports on time while meeting the aviation needs of local businesses and allowing for quick transportation in rural communities when immediate medical attention is required. Air-traffic control towers at 26 commercial and 16 general aviation airports handle 4,509,977 aircraft operations annually or 12,356 a day. Our system comprises not only the active pi-

lots in Texas but also the 71,964 non-pilot airmen certificate holders such as mechanics, dispatchers, ground instructors and flight engineers.

Among the 2015 highlights is the Aviation Division's investment of more than \$20 million in the engineering and construction of a 1,500-foot runway extension at Conroe-North Houston Regional Airport. The extension brings runway 14-32 to 7,500 feet. Also included in the project was the construction of a new taxiway on the west end of the airport.

Our significant projects and programs are represented in this annual report. This format provides readers with a snapshot of the investments made to improve and maintain our airport system that continually make it among the best in the nation.

We know that our work is never done as our system involves **297 airports, 29,612 registered aircraft** and **49,614 active pilots** who flew over **2.0 million hours** in Texas last year alone. We continue to be committed to our vision and work diligently with our local partners. Our progress this year is a tribute to our remarkable staff. It is also a tribute to our airport managers, our stakeholders, and city governmental officials who help make the Texas airport system the finest in the country.

David Fulton, Aviation Division Director
Texas Department of Transportation



Aerial view of the completed runway 13-31, extended taxiway and expanded apron at Cotulla-LaSalle County Airport.

Division Overview

The Aviation Division helps cities and counties obtain and disburse federal and state funds for reliever and general aviation airports included in the Texas Airport System Plan (TASP). The division also participates in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) State Block Grant Program, through which it implements a federal improvement program for general aviation airports.

Division staff responsibilities include oversight for the planning, engineering, and grant management of aviation capital improvement projects across the state. The division also operates a fleet of state-owned aircraft for the transportation needs of state officials and employees.

Capital Investment Highlights

In 2015, over \$43 million was allocated in airport infrastructure from reliever airports to small, rural general aviation airports. These capital investment highlights represent the continued and invaluable support given to the Aviation Division by the Texas Transportation Commission under the leadership of Chairman Tryon D. Lewis, and TxDOT Executive Director James M. Bass. Every project completed this year was presented to and approved by the Commission in 2015.

The \$43 million includes:

- \$21.1 million in maintenance/rehabilitation/reconstruction work to maintain and preserve the existing system
- \$13.8 million in capacity improvements for runways, taxiways, and apron space
- \$6.8 million in airport improvements to ensure they meet FAA standards and safety compliance
- \$1.9 million in master plans, business plans, and feasibility studies
- \$144,000 in environmental studies

Funding the Airport System

The Aviation Facilities Development and Financial Assistance Program is administered by the division. Funding for airports in the TASP comes from federal, state and local sources.

Texas, one of 10 states, is a participant in the FAA State Block Grant Program, and takes the lead in carrying out the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) for general aviation and reliever airports in the state. As such, TxDOT acts as the agent for the state and political subdivisions with airports for the purpose of applying for, receiving and disbursing federal airport improvement funds.

The AIP uses Aviation Trust Fund monies to invest in the National Plan of Integrated Airports Systems (NPIAS). Trust fund revenues come from an assortment of aviation user fees and taxes authorized at the national level. In addition, TxDOT provides funding for important non-federally eligible airports in the Texas Airport System Plan.

Combined, the TxDOT Aviation Capital Improvement Program (ACIP) contains specific federal and state eligible projects for development during an upcoming three-year period and implements the program through grants to public entities for the purpose of establishing, constructing, reconstructing, enlarging or repairing airports or navigational facilities. The number of projects in the program at any one time is constrained by available funds and system priorities. Local governments also provide a match for funding airport projects, which is typically 10 percent.

Federal Programs

Hangar/Fuel Program

If all airside needs are met, an airport sponsor may pursue funding for the construction of hangars. Federally eligible airports can use Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) monies for the construction of hangars. Hangars are eligible for 90/10 grant funding, provided airside needs are met. Airports without a fuel-dispensing system are eligible to participate in 75 percent grant funding for the aboveground Fuel Facility Development Program.



The relocated automobile parking lot and expanded terminal area apron at McKinney National Airport.

2015 highlights include:

- Investment of **\$5.2 million** for hangar development
- **One** fuel system was constructed for **\$667,700**

State Programs

Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS)

AWOS can detect and report weather information like surface wind speed and direction, ambient air temperature, dew point temperature, atmospheric pressure, visibility, sky condition and precipitation. The system's "voice" broadcasts local, minute-by-minute weather data from the ground directly to the pilot in the aircraft. This important information improves safety for pilots flying en route and when landing aircraft.

The division's AWOS program began in 1997, and today, 95 systems have been built and maintained. This year, three new systems were installed, and two existing airport systems were upgraded and relocated.

2015 highlights include:

- **\$490,000** invested for AWOS construction

Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP)

RAMP is a cost-share program between the Aviation Division, the 25 TxDOT districts, and the system plan airports in Texas. The program is designed to assist communities with needed maintenance by offering state financial assistance. RAMP funding is a \$50,000 match per airport for each fiscal year. The program includes lower-cost airside and land-side airport improvements. Over the years, the program has grown from 30 participating airports with total expenditures of \$250,000 to more than 200 airports with state grant funds of over \$3.5 million.

2015 highlights include:

- **222** grants issued
- **\$3.8 million** invested for routine airport maintenance with an additional **\$3.8 million** matched by the airport sponsor

Flight Services

TxDOT Flight Services provides low-cost travel to state officials, employees or sponsored contractors traveling on official state business. The Aviation Division operates and maintains the fleet, which is based at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Besides providing transportation, Flight Services also provides maintenance services to a fleet of 43 state-owned aircraft—18 helicopters and the remainder a variety of fixed-wing airplanes—with 13 full-time mechanics. In 35 years, Flight Services has accrued almost 68,000 hours of incident- and accident-free flying.

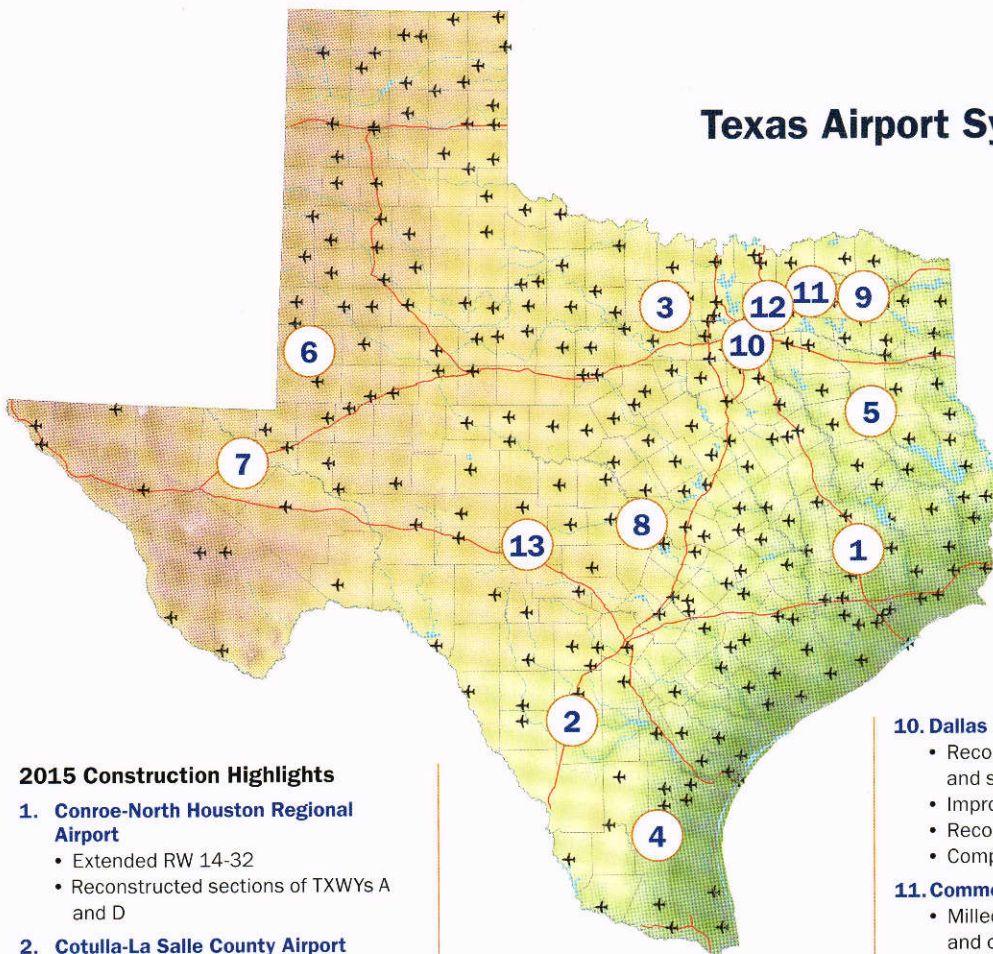
2015 highlights include:

- Providing services for **40** different state agencies
- Transporting over **3,200** passengers
- Flying approximately **1,150** total hours

**Aviation in Texas—Facts and Figures
Number and Types of Airports**

- 26 Commercial Service—Public airport with a minimum of 2,500 passenger boardings each year; has scheduled passenger aircraft service
- 24 Reliever Airports—Very high levels of activities with many jets and multiengine propeller aircraft; around 200 based aircraft
- 67 Business/Corporate—Jet-capable runways with high levels of activity with some jet and multiengine propeller based aircraft
- 108 Community Service—Business access to smaller communities; 20 based aircraft and around 6,000 operations
- 68 Basic Service—Typically lower activity levels providing additional convenience for clear-weather flying and training operations
- 3 Heliports—Used by individuals, corporations, and helicopter taxi and medical services

Texas Airport System



2015 Construction Highlights

1. Conroe-North Houston Regional Airport

- Extended RW 14-32
- Reconstructed sections of TXWYs A and D

2. Cotulla-La Salle County Airport

- Extended runway (RW) 13-31
- Extended parallel taxiway (TXWY) to end of RW 13-31
- Expanded apron

3. Bridgeport Municipal Airport

- Extended RW 18-36
- Installed PAPI-2 on RW 18-36
- Relocated parallel TXWY
- Removed Chevron pipeline

4. Brooks County Airport, Falfurrias

- Milled and overlaid northwest section of apron and TXWY to RW 14-32
- Rehabilitated RW 17-35
- Rehabilitated parallel, cross and midfield TXWY for RW 17-35

5. Cherokee County Airport, Jacksonville

- Rehabilitated RW 14-32 and TXWYs
- Marked airfield pavements
- Rehabilitated apron

6. Gaines County Airport, Seminole

- Replaced medium intensity runway Lights (MIRL) and TXWY exit lights
- Replaced electrical vault, service modifications and vault equipment
- Replaced airfield guidance signs

7. Pecos Municipal Airport, Pecos

- Installed 12-foot LED wind cone with LED obstruction light
- Installed security camera system
- Replaced perimeter fence
- Constructed new box hangar

8. Lago Vista-Rusty Allen Airport, Lago Vista

- Rehabilitated RW 16-34
- Rehabilitated TXWYs
- Marked RW 16-34
- Rehabilitated apron and widened taxiway
- Reconstructed hangar access taxiway

9. Franklin County Airport, Mount Vernon

- Rehabilitated and marked connecting taxiway, west hangar access taxiway and apron
- Reconstructed east hangar access taxiway
- Completed drainage improvements
- Regraded ditches and installed concrete headwalls

10. Dallas Executive Airport, Dallas

- Reconstructed portion of RW 13-31 and shoulders
- Improved drainage along runway
- Reconstructed TXWY B-2
- Completed LED electrical improvement

11. Commerce Municipal Airport

- Milled and overlaid RW 18-36, apron and old turnaround
- Installed new MIRL, guidance signs, rotating beacon and PAPI-2 on RW 18-36
- Constructed new stub taxiway and turnaround

12. McKinney National Airport, McKinney

- Relocated auto parking
- Reconstructed and expanded terminal area apron
- Installed apron lighting

13. Kimble County Airport, Junction

- Constructed 12-Unit T-hangar and apron
- Expanded aircraft parking apron
- Installed security apron lighting
- Cracksealed pavements



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TEXAS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROVIDES GUIDANCE, LEADERSHIP

The Texas Aviation Advisory Committee provides input to TxDOT on its aviation development programs and serves as its representative among aviation users. Committee members also work with members of the Texas Legislature on various aviation issues.

The current members of the Texas Aviation Advisory Committee include:

- James Schwertner, Chairman
- Peter C. Huff, Vice Chairman
- Gordon B. Richardson
- Michael L. Collier
- Michael Schnell
- John V. White



The Texas Aviation Advisory Committee. (L-R) Gordon Richardson, Peter Huff, James Schwertner, Michael Collier, Michael Schnell and John White.

James Schwertner, Chairman

James Schwertner is a graduate of Texas Tech University. In 1974 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. Schwertner is president and chief executive officer of Capitol Land & Livestock and chairman of the Board of Schwertner State Bank. He is an airplane and helicopter pilot and holds the Aviation World Speed Record (Piper Navajo). In 2015 he was awarded the Texas Aviator or the Year Award.

Peter C. Huff, Vice Chairman

Peter C. Huff is an accomplished general aviation pilot holding a Commercial Pilot Certificate and Instrument Rating. He is a graduate of Rice University with bachelor's degrees in liberal arts and engineering. After graduating from Harvard Business School in 1962, he returned to Texas to build his own engineering and manufacturing company. After 36 years, he sold DYNAMCO to a New York Stock Exchange company and now serves the people in his community and in Texas.

Gordon B. Richardson

Gordon B. Richardson, of Caldwell, Texas, began his career as an insurance agent, establishing a business in 1967. He has achieved Chartered Life Underwriter and Accredited Estate Planner designations as well as numerous insurance industry awards. Richardson's aviation career began in 1971 as a pilot and includes service as a member of the Seaplane Pilots Association, the Experimental Aircraft Association Warbird Community, the Commemorative Air Force and flying vintage aircraft with 3,000 hours as a pilot.

Michael L. Collier

Michael L. Collier is a graduate of Baylor University where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a private pilot certificate. Collier enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard and was eventually promoted to company commander before his retirement from the military.

Michael Schnell

Michael Schnell is a 1975 graduate of Southern Methodist University and serves as chairman and CEO of First State Bank in Spearman, Texas. His public service extends to many local civic and charitable organizations including over 25 years on the Spearman Airport Board, serving as its chairman for the last ten. He is also serving in his third term on the Spearman City Council.

John V. White

John V. White is the retired vice president of aviation at Valero. He holds an Air Transport Pilot License (ATP) with nine type ratings, a Commercial Glider License and an Airframe and Power plant Mechanic license (A&P). White has more than 17,000 flight hours over 46 years and has landed in all fifty states and on five continents. ♦

BRIDGEPORT MUNICIPAL OPEN FOR BUSINESS

ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED

Last spring, aviation enthusiasts from Wise County along with Bridgeport city officials gathered at the municipal airport, celebrating extensive improvements that have been in the works for years.

Finally, the airport's only runway was extended from 4,000 to 5,000 feet, the parallel taxiway was relocated, the apron and cross taxiways were overlaid and improved runway lights were installed.

The multi-million dollar grant project allows Bridgeport — with a current population of about 6,000 — to provide a runway long enough for jet traffic, now and in the future.



Dignitaries cut the ribbon to officially open the new runway at Bridgeport Municipal Airport.

"We would not have been able to do this without the help of TxDOT," Bridgeport Airport Manager Ryan Nolting says. "We needed these improvements to make sure we stay competitive. We have to continue to look forward, otherwise we fall behind." Currently, 56 planes are housed at the airport, meeting the needs of local aviators.

Because it has only one runway, the airport was closed for business for nearly a year, as renovations were underway — mostly because of severe weather.

"Since we've reopened, we've already seen an increase in traffic. And we don't want to stop here. We've got other plans for the future." Nolting says.

Now, the primary goal is an upgraded and expanded fuel farm that will include jet fuel.

Pointing to available hangar space, a pilot lounge and a courtesy car, Nolting wants aviators to come visit Bridgeport, and make it their home. "We now have what corporations need to consider us, and we are optimistic that we will grow. We want people to come and enjoy our area," he says.

rnolting@cityofbridgeport.net ♦

BILL GUNN RETIRES

TxDOT Aviation Education and Information Program Coordinator Bill Gunn recently announced his retirement. His colleagues, family and friends gathered at a retirement reception in his honor on August 26 at TxDOT Flight Services. Gunn joined TxDOT in 1991.

Gunn was known throughout the state for his expertise in general aviation airport compliance issues. His presentation at the annual aviation conference was always among the most popular sessions.

A 21-year United States Air Force veteran, Bill flew RF4C aircraft in the Vietnam War and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with eleven Oak Leaf clusters. He is an Airline Transport Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor, Instrument Instructor, Multi-Engine Instructor and former FAA Safety Team counselor. →



Bill Gunn with his wife Jill.

Gunn flew as a professional air show pilot in the United Kingdom from 1976 to 1979. In March of 2001, Bill represented the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Air Safety Foundation in Australia at test flight instructor clinics. He also helped start the Texas Aviation Association, an aviation advocacy group that supports general aviation in Texas.

Gunn is a current aircraft owner and flies regularly for work and pleasure, including precision formation air show venues with the Falcon Flight demonstration team all across the USA.

Gunn lives in Lakeway, near Austin, Texas, has two grown sons and is married to Jill.

"There is no one better known in Texas general aviation than Bill Gunn, and that's a fact," said Aviation Division Director David Fulton at Gunn's retirement reception. "His level of expertise in compliance issues is unmatched. To say he will be missed is an understatement." ♦

HISTORIC CRESTING OF BRAZOS RIVER FLOODS TEXAS GULF COAST REGIONAL AIRPORT

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport Aviation Director Jeff Bilyeu knew it was coming.

"For weeks leading up to the flood, we knew the river was rising because of the rainfall Central Texas had received," said Bilyeu. "Even though we had prepared our airport and tenants, it's hard to truly be ready for what happened."

What happened was a historic flooding event that saw the Brazos River cresting at 52.56 feet on June 5, but taking nearly two weeks to fully recede to safe levels. The level was the third highest crest on record for northern Brazoria County.



Gulf Coast Regional Airport during the recent record floods.

The airport was A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) closed on June 6. Even though, the airport hangars, runway, taxiways, terminal building and restaurant remained above water, many of the access roads on the airport and virtually all fields were covered in water.

"To reopen the airport, we needed a safe entry road and safe utilities," explained Bilyeu. "To get back to truly normal operations, including during darkness, we needed dependable phones and airfield lighting."

The entry road (County Road 220B) was underwater for a week. To get to the airport to assess damage, Bilyeu relied on local officials to ferry him via airboat.

"Obviously it was important to keep our tenants and the public apprised of the airport's current status," said Bilyeu. "So we posted continuous updates, along with photos and video, to our Facebook page."

The airport reopened for day use on June 13; 10 days after initially closing and surprisingly sustained little damage beyond the cleanup.

"Our runway, terminal building, hangars—every structure stayed above the water," said Bilyeu. "As bad as this situation was, it could have certainly been much worse. I'm thankful for the support of our local officials and tenants in getting us operational as quickly as possible." ♦



Texas Department of Transportation

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AVIATION DIVISION



The City of Edinburg and the Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) on July 21, 2016, proudly celebrated the Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security – Customs and Border Protection – “User Fee” Facility for Federal Inspection Service at the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg (KEBG). Built at a cost of \$1.3 million, the 4,500 square foot facility was a joint partnership between the city and EEDC as a matter of convenience for passengers and as an added opportunity for continued trade and commerce growth. (Photo courtesy of Edinburg Public Information Office)