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GALVESTON HOSTS 30TH ANNUAL TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

It was a milestone gathering of aviation professionals this year as the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Aviation Division hosted its 30th annual conference. This year's conference was held at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston as the historic seaside city continued its economic and development resurgence, post-Hurricane Ike.

Nearly 500 people attended the conference, including airport sponsors, TxDOT employees, consultants, contractors and exhibitors. The event was co-sponsored by the Texas Airports Council and the Texas Aviation Association. *continued on pg. 3*



National Association of State Aviation Officials President Henry O. Ogrodzinski delivers remarks during the conference. Henry O. was presented with a special TxDOT Career Contribution to Aviation award.



FINALLY!!! NEW FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION:

After a delay of almost five years, Congress has finally passed a new FAA programs reauthorization. Since September 1, 2007, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has been receiving FAA funding piecemeal through a series of continuing resolutions, 27 to be specific. This new four-year legislation will enable the TxDOT Aviation Division to better plan funding allocations for future airport improvement projects.

Highlights of the new legislation include:

- (1) Authorizes FAA funding for a period of four years;

- (2) Establishes a \$3.35B level of funding for the Airport Improvement Program for each of the four years. This is a reduction of approximately four percent as compared to previous legislation;
- (3) Retains the current tax structure that existed in previous legislation. No new taxes were authorized;
- (4) Allows "Thru-The-Fence" access to FAA obligated airports when certain conditions are met;
- (5) Permits diversion of revenue from airport mineral rights to other local governmental needs under certain conditions;
- (6) Increases the federal participation for construction of "non-fed" towers from \$1.5B to \$2.0B;
- (7) Allows 16 new non-stop commercial airline flights to Washington Reagan National Airport from points in the western region of the United States.

If you have any questions regarding this new legislation contact the Aviation Division at 1-800-68PILOT.

WELCOME TO TWO NEW MEMBERS OF THE AVIATION DIVISION STAFF:

I am pleased to announce the addition of two new individuals to the Aviation Division family: Molly Lamroux and Barbara Linzey. Molly came to us following several years with the Michigan Aviation Division and will be working in our Planning Section primarily handling environmental issues. Barbara came to us from the Motor Vehicle Department and will be working in our Grants Section. We are very pleased to have both of these ladies join our Aviation Team.♦



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David S. Fulton

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GALVESTON HOSTS 30TH ANNUAL TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE *continued from pg. 1*

Aviation Division Director David Fulton began the conference by welcoming the gathered dignitaries in attendance, including members of the Aviation Advisory Committee. He then introduced Teri Bruner, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Southwest Region Administrator, who spoke about the recently passed FAA reauthorization bill.

Fulton then delivered his annual State of the Aviation Division address.



Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton during his opening address.

"Despite the continued economic downturn, the Aviation Division did about \$90 million worth of airport work last year," said Fulton. "It's exciting to me to see that we still have the opportunity to implement our programs, and continue to make Texas the best airport system in the nation."

Fulton also announced recent personnel changes—Greg Miller replaces the recently departed Scott Gallagher as director of planning and programming, and Molly Lamroux replaces Josephine Jarrell as environmental coordinator.

Fulton then addressed the recently passed FAA reauthorization bill.

"After 23 continuing resolutions extending FAA legislation from five years ago, we now have a reauthorization bill," said Fulton. "Overall we came out good. There was a very slight reduction in money in the four-year act that's authorized for the airport improvement program. There may be partisanship in Congress, but I believe both sides of the aisle believe in the airport improvement program."

According to Fulton, the two resolved issues causing the delay in the FAA reauthorization bill were:

- 1) an amendment to the perimeter rule, which states that no flight could travel more than 1,250 miles nonstop from Reagan National, that guaranteed Dulles all the cross-country traffic and
- 2) a resolution on union voting procedures.

Finally, Fulton noted that the non-primary entitlement program will continue with the maximum dollar amount of \$150,000.

After Fulton concluded his remarks, he introduced an old friend of the conference: National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) President Henry Ogradzinski. Henry O. (as he's affectionately known) delivered his usual enthusiastic message about the background of NASAO, the FAA reauthorization bill and future challenges faced by general aviation. The challenges Henry O. noted include new user fees and the "Ryan Budget," which could potentially eliminate nearly 6,000 FAA positions.

After his session, Henry O. was presented with a special Career Contribution to Aviation award by Fulton and conference coordinator Becky Vick.

Rounding out the morning session was a presentation from a PHI official on their operations in the Gulf of Mexico, suggestions from TxDOT employees Ed Mayle and Greg Miller on how airports can improve their

2012 TXDOT AVIATION AWARDS

RAMP COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR

Mike Taylor, TxDOT Amarillo District

RELIEVER AIRPORT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Joel Jenkinson, Addison Airport

GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Vinicio "Lenny" Llerena, New Braunfels Municipal Airport

MOST IMPROVED AIRPORT OF THE YEAR

Van Zandt County Regional Airport

AIRPORT OF THE YEAR

Uvalde Garner Field Municipal Airport

2012 AVIATION ART CONTEST AWARD WINNERS

CATEGORY 1: AGES 6 TO 9 YEARS

1st place: Alana Lester, San Antonio
2nd place: Madison Applegate, Kingwood
3rd place: Vijeta Revankar, Seabrook

CATEGORY 2: AGES 10 TO 13 YEARS

1st place: Victor Trevino, Groves
2nd place: James Robles, El Paso
3rd place: Emily Merlau, Cedar Hill

CATEGORY 3: AGES 14 TO 17

1st place: Brianna Salinas, Port Lavaca
2nd place: Lacey Worley, Commerce
3rd place: Ismael Roman, Amarillo (also won 2nd place nationally)



Aviation arts contest award winner Brianna Salinas from Port Lavaca and NBAA Regional Representative Steve Hadley.

terminals and entryways and a presentation by Dr. Russell DeFusco on airport wildlife management.

After lunch, conference goers were invited to attend breakout sessions covering various hot topics in the general aviation community.

"Every year we work to make sure we are covering topics that are important to the general aviation community in Texas," said conference program organizer and Texas Transportation Institute Research Scientist Jeff Borowiec. "This year we had an aviation issues roundtable session, which was a result of requests taken from last year's conference evaluations."

Other topics included a session on the Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP), the airport project development process, airport land acquisition and managing airport real estate.

The day concluded with the annual awards banquet (see sidebar for winners). In her remarks, Becky Vick gave special mention to four-time aviation arts contest winner Ismael Roman.

"This was Ismael's last year of eligibility for the arts contest," said Vick. "And he told me in an email that this art contest has inspired him to study aviation and astronomy. It's great to see the impact this contest has had on our youth."

The final day of the conference began with a presentation on airport revenue diversion from FAA Manager Mike Nicely, followed by a talk from city of San Antonio Aviation Director Frank Miller on the value of a statewide aviation association.

Borowiec then concluded the conference by introducing a session that focused on aviation education. Easterwood Airport Director John Happ presented on the James Noel Foundation, and Steve Swartz and Dave Byers updated the conference attendees on the status of aviation educational programs.

"This conference has come to feel like a large family reunion," said Fulton. "Many of the same people come year after year, and they are very loyal. It's something we always look forward to." ♦

TEXANS FOR GENERAL AVIATION

A recently formed organization seeks to tell the story about the importance of general aviation to Texas communities.

Texans for General Aviation (TFGA) is a statewide general aviation (GA) advocacy organization with two specific and related purposes: to promote and protect GA at the state and local level of government and to promote GA careers to students through education and by creating opportunity.

According to TFGA President and Director John White, the idea for a GA advocacy organization at the state level was spawned during the recent economic downturn.

"As we watched the country suffer through this deep, lingering economic depression, it became clear that GA issues may switch from national to state and local levels in scope," says White, who is also director of corporate aviation for Valero Energy Corporation and a member of the Texas Aviation Advisory Committee. "While there is a national caucus, we felt the need existed for the establishment of a Texas caucus to fairly represent GA interests and promote the economic benefits these airports provide."

The organization is still in the process of working out start-up details but already has an eye on the future by creating a legislative caucus to be chaired by Rep. John Kuempel, who represents District 44.

"Something that we support is the formation by the state legislature of a Texas general aviation caucus to maximize the economic impact and job creation values of general aviation."

For more information on Texans for General Aviation, visit their Web site at <http://texansforgeneralaviation.org/>. ♦

SOUTH TEXAS REGIONAL AIRPORT

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

I arrived at the South Texas Regional Airport (formerly known as Hondo Municipal) last summer beaten down from a long drive in the epic heat wave with which we Texans had to contend. When I entered the terminal building and glanced around, I became a bit concerned that Tim Fousse may have forgotten our appointment made several weeks prior. No need for concern, though, as I glanced out the front window and saw Fousse's truck barreling toward the terminal.

And so it goes with Fousse, the enthusiastic, go-getter manager of the Hondo airport who is seldom witnessed sitting still.

"Oh, yes, there's always something going on out here," said Fousse as we began our tour of the expansive airport which covers 3,600 acres. "We were one of the first airports to install self- and full-service aircraft fueling facilities using the Aviation Division's fuel farm program."

Another recent update was the addition of a modern 4,000-square-foot terminal building available to pilots 24 hours a day, with amenities that include:

- visitor's waiting area,
- complete pilot lounge,
- flight planning area,
- restrooms with showers,
- free WI-FI and
- private conference room.



The terminal building at Hondo Municipal Airport

Situated on the southern edge of the Texas Hill Country, the airport uses its favorable location to attract hunters and other commerce.

The airport also has a flight academy run by U.S. Aviation. The academy graduated its first flight academy class in February, and the second in early April. They have an additional 50 students arriving in May and June of this year.

Supported by certificates of obligation backed by the city's Type B economic development sales tax, Hondo has leveraged grant funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to enhance airport facilities. The airport is leveraging its land assets to successfully attract economic development to the city, providing jobs and business opportunities.

"The airport construction done at this facility from 2006 to 2009 is a true testament to TxDOT's ability to provide assistant to an airport sponsor," said Fousse, who saw his efforts pay off by winning the 2009 TxDOT General Aviation Airport of the Year award. "I always believed this airport was a diamond in the rough, and by granting these funds, we were able to see a transformation at this airport." A newly renovated runway and taxiways are further projects completed to upgrade this facility.

In fact, capital expenditures for infrastructure and other airport improvements from 2006 to 2010 generated \$10.9 million in economic activity that created 120 job-years of employment. (A job-year equals one job lasting one year.)

The city of Hondo and the Hondo Economic Development Corporation also funded the development of the rail intermodal facility, and this infrastructure is attracting tens of millions of dollars in private investment to the region. The rail connection serves as a transfer point for high fructose corn syrup and other sweeteners to soft drink bottling plants in San Antonio as well as automotive ethanol trans-loading, fracture sand trans-loading and crude oil collection and shipping. Development of a rail intermodal facility on airport-owned property makes the airport one of only two air-rail intermodal facilities in Texas.

"The airport construction done at this facility is a true testament to TxDOT's ability to provide support to an airport."

Tim Fousse

"This is such a unique community," said Fousse. "We want to provide a good, clean modern environment that our clients can trust and depend on. And judging by favorable comments, I believe we're hitting our mark."

For more information on the South Texas Regional Airport, please visit their Web site at <http://www.airnav.com/airport/KHDO> or <http://www.hondo-tx.org/airport/index.php>. ♦

AIRPORT STATISTICS

The South Texas Regional Airport is a former U.S. Army Air Corps base that was deeded to the city of Hondo after World War II. It has four runways and is situated on about 3,600 acres of land.

Runways:

17L/35R - 6,002 ft. x 100 ft.

13/31 - 5,545 ft. x 150 ft.

8/26 - 3,451 ft. x 75 ft.

17R/35L - 3,224 ft. x 140 ft.

FAA Identifier - HDO

Latitude/Longitude

29-21-32.8700N/099-10-38.9700W

Elevation - 930 ft.

Location - 2 miles northwest of Hondo, TX.
Hondo is located west of San Antonio

THE ROAD TO RICHES AND WHY NO ONE IS LAUGHING NOW: THE STORY OF THE VAN ZANDT COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT

By Rick Davenport
Texas Transportation Institute

Years ago, if you stumbled upon the entrance to (what was then) the Wills Point Municipal Airport, you were greeted by a stop sign that dangled from a chain which stretched across two posts of an old barbed wire fence. If you were lucky, you might catch a glimpse of the discolored, cracked runway beyond a 78-acre pasture of overgrown Doveweed and Johnsongrass. Besides that, there was little evidence that you were even at an airport.

Today, the few folks who seemed to care about the airport's potential are no longer embarrassed. They are proud of recent accomplishments and—most importantly—optimistic about its future. Those newfound feelings made statewide news when the Van Zandt County Regional Airport was named the 2012 Most Improved General Aviation Airport at the 30th Annual Texas Aviation Conference in Galveston.

"Several years ago, the airport was dying and it was the subject of ridicule. People pointed to it as an example for other airports of what not to be like," Weldon Massey, a local rancher and flying enthusiast, says. "We've come a long way since then, but more importantly we have a plan in place to make a lot more improvements. There is hope on the horizon."

Back then, the airport was a drain on the city budget. There was no money for improvements and little desire to fix it.

"Because of its reputation, I visited the airport about seven years ago," Mike Reagan, who was the TxDOT Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP) coordinator, says. "I discovered that their runway really had a pretty good foundation, so improvements would not be as costly as they figured. But the biggest positive was the fact that some people—like Massey and Paul Addison—wanted to make things better. And that really got the ball rolling."

Addison, a local business owner and now a Wills Point City Councilman, was among the biggest proponents of airport improvements. "After Weldon Massey's son gave me a plane ride, I was hooked on aviation. I began to realize that if we could somehow turn this blight into a benefit, we could actually attract new business here."

In late 2007, the city turned over the airport to the Wills Point Economic Development Council, which formed an airport advisory board. Massey and Addison were named vice president and president, respectively.

After receiving grant funding, a beautification project got underway and the runway was brought back to life. Striping was added and the dilapidated lighting system was replaced. The airport's old rotating beacon was repaired and restored. The entrance now consists of an electronic gate and keypad. The old, grown up fence row was improved and the barbed wire was replaced with pipe and rail. Lighted masonry signs were added and wildflowers were seeded along FM 64. A parking lot was built last summer and a courtesy car for incoming pilots was donated by the city of Wills Point.

Instead of a liability, the Van Zandt Regional Airport is quickly becoming an asset.

And it's about to get even better. The airport has received a grant for an aviation fuel storage tank. The ability to sell gas to pilots is a boon to the airport.

Also, plans are in the works for a terminal building, new boundary fencing and hangar construction.

"As we've made these improvements, we have been reaching out to the community," says Pam Pearson, who is the administrator of the Wills Point Economic Development Corporation and serves as the airport manager. "Slowly, residents are coming around, knowing that a good airport is good news for our economy." In October, residents will be invited to the first annual Van Zandt County Regional Airport Open House.

By then, there could be hundreds of new Van Zandt County residents since a business has recently announced the start of operations there.

If the newcomers are able to attend the open house, they will never know that the airport was once guarded by an old faded stop sign that dangled from a chain.◆



Representatives from the Van Zandt County Regional Airport receive their award for most improved airport.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Fort Worth Meacham International Airport \$3,180,792 Reconstruct apron A east of taxiway E

Reagan County Airport/
Big Lake \$546,800 Rehabilitate and mark Runway 16-34; rehabilitate apron, stub taxiway, Taxiway B; rehabilitate and mark hangar access taxiways; rehabilitate and mark stub taxiway A; mark taxiways; replace/upgrade lighted windcone and segmented circle; install 20 ft. security gate/controlled access; and install game fencing

Paris Cox Field \$1,507,200 Crack seal Runway 14-32, taxiways A-1, B, C and apron; overlay and mark parallel taxiway A; and reconstruct headwall and culvert at terminal building

Scholes International Airport/Galveston \$2,903,900 Drainage improvements

Wharton Regional Airport \$787,300 Rehabilitate Runway 14-32, parallel and cross taxiways; rehabilitate apron and hangar access taxiways; construct new south entrance taxiway to terminal apron; widen north entrance taxiway to terminal apron; and upgrade/replace nine taxiway culverts

Gillespie County Airport/Fredericksburg \$1,468,600 Rehabilitate and mark Runway 14-32; rehabilitate north apron, hangar access taxiway, and terminal apron; rehabilitate and repair parallel taxiway and taxiway B, C and D; construct helicopter parking ramp; replace medium intensity runway lights at Runway 14-32; relocate and upgrade AWOS to south end for apron expansion and access road; and install a game proof fence

San Saba County Municipal Airport \$1,250,000 Extend and mark Runway 13-31; rehabilitate Runway 13-31, terminal apron, hangar access taxiways and taxiways; construct turnaround Runway 31 end; construct turnaround Runway 13 end; install precision approach path indicator 2 Runway 13-31; replace existing and extend medium intensity runway lights runway 13-31; replace wind cone rotating beacon and tower and install signage

Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport \$424,300 Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35; rehabilitate stub taxiway, apron, and turnaround Runway 35; rehabilitate and mark partial parallel taxiway to Runway 17; and remove PSIL and install precision approach path indicator-2 at Runway 17-35

Avenger Field/ Sweetwater	\$999,020	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35 and Runway 4-22; rehabilitate taxiway A, B, C and D; rehabilitate T-hangar access; rehabilitate north public apron and terminal apron; and improve drainage
Stephens County Airport/Breckenridge	\$657,000	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 4-22 and all airfield pavements; construct concrete fueling apron; replace medium intensity runway lights Runway 17-35; replace lighted wind cone and segmented circle; and replace rotating beacon and tower
Floydada Municipal Airport	\$257,700	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35, stub taxiway and apron; replace rotating beacon and windsock and rehabilitate; repair segmented circle and rehabilitate fuel containment slab
Georgetown Municipal Airport	\$1,275,270	Improve runway safety area and Runway 36 and improve runway safety area southwest side Runway 36; rehabilitate north hangar access area; rehabilitate mid hangar access area; rehabilitate corporate taxiway; and widen taxiway to T-hangars E, F and G and relocate fire hydrant
Arlington Municipal Airport	\$8,249,864	Widen taxiway; construct three connecting taxiways to new west side taxiway; runway shoulder repair; construct west parallel taxiway/runway; realign south cross taxiway to new west stub taxiway; install runway exit/hold signs; install medium intensity runway lights; install west side electrical vault; install taxiway a guidance signs; relocate ASOS; relocate segmented circle; adjust underground utilities; thermoplastic marking; drainage improvement; and memorandum of agreement for ASOS
Dimmit County Airport/ Carrizo Springs	\$334,400	Airfield lighting rehabilitate; replace lighted wind cone; install apron safety/security lighting
Live Oak County Airport/George West	\$151,280	Install game proof fencing
Aransas County Airport/Rockport	\$900,000	Construct deer/hog resistant fencing with cattle guard
Victoria Regional Airport	\$1,212,200	Replace AvGas and Jet A fueling system in south terminal area

COULTER FIELD HOSTS EDUCATIONAL AIR FAIR

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

Nearly 80 fifth graders from Johnson Elementary in Bryan, Texas, participated in a unique, hands-on educational experience at Coulter Field Airport on April 11.

The air fair promotes a practical application of math and science through aircraft- and aviation-related meteorological projects. The Doctor James Noel Foundation sponsored the day's events along with support from the Bryan school district, Coulter Field and academic departments from Texas A&M University and the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI).

"The goal of the air fair is to not only expose kids to aviation, but to apply STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] concepts in an aviation environment," says Brian Heckman, vice chairman of the Dr. James Noel Foundation Board of Directors and event organizer. "A few days before the air fair, we visited Johnson Elementary and with the help of Texas A&M students, conducted several teaching exercises to prepare them for their airport visit. We want this to be a meaningful learning experience for them."

One of the classroom exercises was to construct a Whitewing glider, which the kids took out to Coulter Field to test. Other learning stations at the air fair included a weather balloon launch, cockpit tours of various aircraft, including a medical evacuation helicopter and a fly-by, and a water droplet distribution experiment using the United States Department of Agriculture's Aerial Application Research Unit's high technology Air Tractor.

A few days after the air fair, the volunteers returned to Johnson Elementary to analyze the data students collected from the Air Tractor, glider flights and the weather balloons, answer questions and discuss what they learned.

"This event provides students an opportunity to interact with pilots, engineers and college students outside of the classroom," says TTI Research Scientist Jeff Borowiec. "It was a great day for aviation education."

About the Noel Foundation

Dr. Jim Noel was an educator, teacher and friend to hundreds of students and pilots in Central Texas and around the country. As a professor at Texas A&M University, he influenced the lives of his students not only by his ability to explain subject matter, but by his concern for them as individuals.

He instituted the idea of Air Fairs to introduce young people to that same idea: to release them from the bonds of gravity and help them soar to unimaginable heights of achievement. It was all part of his life's philosophy: to expand the horizon of his students' imaginations and inspire them to take themselves further than they thought possible.

"The Noel Foundation believes that enabling students to interact and experience technical concepts in action sparks the fire of imagination and, perhaps, generates interest in future career paths," says Chairman John Happ. "In our previous programs, teachers have reported extremely positive results that can be related directly from their students experiencing our course." ♦



Students learn about water droplet distribution during the Coulter Field air fair.

PILOTS PLIGHT TO SAVE PUPS

Being a pilot is much more than about having a passion for flight. True aviators and aviatrixes enjoy the opportunity to utilize their passion to help others. In this case, local pilots are taking flight to complete a very special mission and help two organizations, Pilots N Paws and Great Escape Rescued K9s.

Each year, the volunteers of Pilots N Paws save thousands of lives. Those lives come in the form of any animal that can be transported using a plane.

The flight began at Calhoun County Airport (KPKV) with pilots Dianna Stanger and Mike Solomon departing into a clear beautiful sky on an IFR (Instrument flight rules) flight plan. The mission: to transport a German Shepherd that was four years old named Sista to Cleburne Regional Airport (south of Fort Worth) and transport a second dog, Buddy, who was rescued from a kill shelter in Arlington on the return flight.

Cheryl Burris, co-founder/co-director of Great Escape Rescued K9s, brought the German Shepherd to the Calhoun County Airport.

"We started Great Escape last summer when we were made aware of the plight of hundreds of German Shepherds being killed in 'kill' shelters in Los Angeles, California," said Burris. "We decided we were going to try to help save some."

Since then they have rescued 50 Texan and 39 Californian dogs. They also rehabilitate the rescue dogs in order to help them find a great forever home.

"Sista was a very sweet girl who seemed to sense that any journey she was on was taking her to a better place than the list she had been on to be euthanized. The little girl who got Sista will have a friend for life, as Sista touched everyone the day we moved her," said Stanger.

Stanger also noted with a smile that their return passenger, Buddy, was "a sweet little guy who took the back seat over and then insisted on trying to join us in the cockpit while flying to his new family back in Victoria."

As this was the first time for both pilots to fly for Paws N Pilots, it is easy to see that it will become de rigor in Calhoun County.

"It's something I hope to do often. It's doing something I love and at the same time helping bring a deserving animal, that would otherwise face euthanasia, to a loving family," said Solomon. "Who wouldn't want to do that?"

For more information about this event please contact Jasmine Gordon at 361-746-8846 or via email at jasmine@calhounaircenter.com. ♦



(L-R) Mike Solomon, Dianna Stanger and Cheryl Burris along with "Sista."

AIRPORT IN UVALDE "GARNERS" AIRPORT OF THE YEAR AWARD

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

The Garner Field Airport in Uvalde has been named the 2012 General Aviation Airport of the Year during a ceremony at the 30th Annual Texas Aviation Conference in Galveston.

Garner Field, which generates more than \$55 million in annual economic activity, was honored for preserving its past, maintaining its long-standing relationships and keeping an eye on the future.

The airport was developed in the 1940s when the site opened as a training field for the U.S. Army Air Corps. One of the original hangars from that era is still being used—housing an Aviation Museum. The local community has also encouraged the establishment of a WWII aircraft restoration business at the airport.

Several businesses at Garner Field have been tenants for more than 20 years, making the airport a one-stop-shop for state of the art modifications to a wide variety of private, corporate and military jet aircraft. In the past year, the city has supported the expansion of these businesses by investing over \$2 million in infrastructure improvements, new hangar construction and renovations to existing hangars, while the tenants invested over \$1 million in hangar expansion alone.

In addition to those businesses, Garner Field supports a section of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Operations. The city of Uvalde has accommodated their growth and expansion on the airport with \$750,000 in hangar improvements.

The award-winning airport had a critical role during last summer's record drought by housing the Texas Forestry Service aircraft during drought season for fire surveillance and firefighting activities. To support airfield business expansion as well as overall safety, one of the airport's industries purchased a small aircraft rescue and firefighting truck and worked with the community to certify five of their employees as volunteer firefighters. These cooperative efforts created the airport fire department, a requirement for emergency

response for military contracts. When combined with a resident Air Life helicopter, and the city's fire department three-minute response time, this facility has outstanding airport emergency services.

Garner Field is also considered one of the premier soaring sites in the world, attracting pilots from across the globe as it hosts the World Gliding Championships. Glider operations are difficult to coordinate with powered aircraft, but this airport has mastered the task.

Congratulations to TxDOT's 2012 Airport of the Year!◆



The terminal building at Garner Field Airport in Uvalde.

TSTC-WACO OPENS STATE-OF-THE-ART AEROSPACE CENTER

By Jim Rank

Texas Aviation Association Board of Director Member

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) has a strong aviation program. Students are offered five different aviation tracks: aviation maintenance, aircraft pilot training, avionics, aircraft dispatch and air traffic control.

On May 3, TSTC Waco cut the ribbon to its newest building, the Col. James T. Connally Aerospace Center. The program consisted of:

- Welcome by Dr. Elton E. Stuckly Jr., President of TSTC Waco
- Remarks by Mr. Mike Reeser, Chancellor of TSTC
- History of Aviation at TSTC, Jim Rowland, Director of Aerospace Division of TSTC

I toured the building and saw labs and classrooms for students of airframe and powerplant mechanics, avionics, pilot training (including labs for flight simulators), aircraft dispatch and air traffic control.

Classes began in the new building on Monday, May 7.

The 82,000-square-foot building will house state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, simulators and a public airport terminal. The new building is located adjacent to the TSTC Waco Airport, the largest airport in the U.S. owned and operated by a two-year, public education institution.

“We envision the new Aerospace Center as a hub of the TSTC Airport, not only for our students, but also for the general aviation and business aviation communities of Texas,” said Dr. Elton Stuckley, President of TSTC.

The new facility provides space for ongoing proficiency training for general aviation pilots and aviation professionals, pilot continuing education and recurrency training, FAA-sanctioned aviation safety training, educational and community conferences, aircraft and avionics maintenance and historical displays to honor the rich history of the airport.

The 82,000-square-foot building will house state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, simulators and a public airport terminal.

The new center will address the future needs of the college’s industry partners in areas such as composite materials, air logistics, aircraft interior and aerospace operations.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.waco.tstc.edu/airport/>.◆

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NEW FAA REPORT AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD – GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS: A NATIONAL ASSET

General Aviation Airports: A National Asset documents an 18-month study of the nearly 3,000 general aviation (GA) airports, heliports and seaplane bases identified in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). This in-depth analysis highlights for the traveling public the pivotal role GA airports play in our society, economy and the aviation system.

http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/ga_study/media/2012AssetReport.pdf

