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2010**

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2010 AVIATION CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE

by Chris Sasser,
Texas Transportation Institute

With fond remembrances of the past, the 2010 Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Aviation Conference surged forward to the future with a recurring theme of the importance of aviation education in Texas.

This year's conference, held at The Woodlands, had 464 attendees including airport sponsors, TxDOT employees, consultants, contractors and 75 exhibitors. The event was hosted by TxDOT Aviation and co-sponsored by The Texas Airports Council (TAC), and the Texas Aviation Association.

The conference began with a PowerPoint presentation honoring the life of Alton Young, who died of cancer on January 31. TxDOT Aviation Division Director David Fulton then delivered his opening session remarks, which featured welcoming words to the *continued on pg. 3*



(L-R) TxDOT Aviation's David Fulton and Karon Wiedemann plus FAA's Mike Nicely. Photo courtesy of Jay Carpenter.



TXDOT AVIATION WELCOMES TWO NEW EMPLOYEES:

For those of you who work with us closely, you are probably aware that we have recently been operating with a smaller staff than normal due primarily to recent retirements. Fortunately, that is about to change. We have just added two new employees, Paul Slusser and Ed Mayle, to our division that will provide much needed project management relief for our Engineering Section.

Paul, a Kansas farm boy, moved to Austin in 1981 where he worked for the next nine years on residential, commercial, high rise and industrial concrete construction, specializing in placing and finishing super flat and hardened surface industrial concrete floors. He then moved to the Seattle, Washington, area working for the Washington State Department of Transportation in Contract Management, the City of Sea/Tac, Washington, in Contract Administration, and finally for the City of Covington, Washington, as a Construction Inspector/Manager on

development projects and CIPs. As you can easily see, Paul is well experienced in project management and is a welcome addition to our Aviation Division team.

Our other "new" employee, Ed Mayle, is not really new to us at all. Ed has over 37 years of construction related experience, beginning with the Texas Highway Department from 1972 until 1981 at which time he joined a heavy highway construction firm as project manager/estimator. In June 1991, Ed began work with the Texas Department of Aviation which soon became a division within the Texas Department of Transportation. Ed retired from the Aviation Division in August of 2006 and worked in the private sector until May of this year at which time he returned (home) to the Aviation Division. Ed has two daughters and a son, plus two granddaughters, all living in the Austin area. He enjoys spending time with his family along with outdoor activities including, swimming, water skiing and motor cycling.

I am absolutely delighted that Ed chose to come back and work with us in the Aviation Division. He is well liked and highly respected by airport sponsors throughout Texas.

DAVE'S TOP TEN REQUIREMENTS FOR HAVING A SUCCESSFUL AIRPORT.

During our recent Texas Aviation Conference, I mentioned what I felt are the top ten requirements for a successful airport. Since then, I have had some requests for a copy of the list. So here it is. The requirements are listed in order of importance.

1. Good Community and Local Government Support.
2. A Good, Capable On-Site Airport Manager.
3. An Airport Infrastructure Capable of Meeting User Needs.
4. All Weather Capability.
5. A Public Facility Adequate to Meet Local and Transient Needs.
6. On-Site Weather Information.
7. 24 Hour Fuel Services.
8. Availability of Ground Transportation.
9. Secure Aircraft Storage Capability for Based and Transient Aircraft.
10. Maintenance, Charter, Flight Instruction and Other Services.◆



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David S. Fulton

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2010 AVIATION CONFERENCE *continued from pg. 1*

attendees, introduction of the Aviation Advisory Committee members and his state of the aviation address. Fulton also touched on the challenges of the past year, particularly with replacing several key members of his staff.

"The past year has been most unusual with the retirements of our long-time staff members Bill (Fuller) and Linda (Howard)," said Fulton. "I have been lucky, though, in that the right people have always come along at the right time. Bijan (Jamalabad) and Scott (Gallagher) have done a wonderful job of taking over at a difficult time."

In his state of the aviation address, Fulton noted the following:

- 2009 was one of the biggest grant years ever, with over 95 million dollars dispersed to airports throughout the state.
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization is expected with new legislation offering a possible 15 percent increase in airport funding. "The legislation may include a substantial increase in funding for next generation air traffic control systems and other equipment updates."
- New user fees are not anticipated; however there will be an increase in fuel taxes.
- Airports are seeing a 30-40 percent reduction in construction costs over the past year.
- The importance of aviation education is becoming a priority in Texas.
- Keep in mind the top 10 ways of becoming a successful airport in Texas (see Dave's Hangar on page 2).

The morning session continued with presentations from Teri Bruner, regional administrator, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Southwest Region, about her region; Anthony Tranum from the Transportation Security Administration about general aviation security; and Rob Hackman from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association on environmental issues in general aviation.

After lunch, TAC held their annual meeting where new officers were elected. John Happ, Easterwood (College Station) airport director, was elected as the new president of TAC.

The afternoon breakout session featured workshops covering topics in airport management, design, community relations, economic development and the Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP).

Airport and art contest awards were presented at the evening's awards banquet. (See sidebar for award winners.) Another highlight of the evening was a slideshow of photos taken from Karon Wiedemann's 35+ years of service at the Aviation Division. Karon is retiring at the end of August.

The final morning of the conference began with a lively address from Henry Orgodzinski, president of the National Association of State Aviation Officials. Orgodzinski stressed the substantial economic contribution of general aviation, and spoke of

AVIATION ART CONTEST AWARD WINNERS

Special awards were given out to kids who participated in the 2010 International Aviation Art Contest. The theme for the contest was "Flying with the Sun." There were 904 entries from 64 schools throughout Texas. The aim of the contest is to motivate and encourage children to study aeronautics, engineering and science.

Category I, ages 6-9

First place: Valeria Solis, age 7, Mary Help of Christians School, Laredo

Second place: Tania Rives, age 8, Mary Help of Christians School, Laredo

Third place: Maria Fernanda Campos, age 8, Mary Help of Christians School, Laredo

Category II, ages 10-13

First place: Cayley Tapp, age 13. She is home schooled in Pampa. Cayley was also the 3rd Place National Winner in Category II.

Second place: Victoria Garcia, age 13, Mary Help of Christians School, Laredo

Third place: Juan Pablo Arrigunaga, age 12, Mary Help of Christians School, Laredo

Category III, ages 14-17

First place: Ismael Roman, age 15, Palo Duro High School, Amarillo, Texas. Ismael was also the third place National Winner in Category III.

Second place: Cindy Ibarra, age 14, Clark Middle School, Laredo

Third place: Emily Dunwoody, age 16, Calhoun High School, Port Lavaca

Thanks to the participants and their families and art teachers for coming to the banquet and again congratulations to all.

A special scholarship award was given by the Texas Airports Council board of directors to University of North Texas student Laura Rusnok. The \$1,500 was donated from the Juan Martinez Scholarship Fund.

revising the aircraft size requirements for the Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP). He also addressed the audience about the FAA Reauthorization. Congress has extended present funding for only one more month, but Orgodzinski said that the prospects were good that the long-delayed FAA funding would eventually be authorized.

Steven Brown, president of the National Business Aviation Association, followed with a presentation on the current business climate of aviation.

The morning was rounded out with multiple presentations that stressed the importance of advancing aviation educational initiatives in Texas.

Bobby Waddle, mayor of DeSoto, and Michael Mallonee, representative of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, spoke about the importance of aviation education to the upcoming generation of pilots and technicians.

Michael A. Johnson Sr. of Mountain View College and Steve Swartz from the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton spoke more about the opportunities of aviation education in Texas. UNT currently offers the only four-year degree program in aviation logistics in the state of Texas.

Angie Oakes from the Coyote Flight Centers in Amarillo and Jasmine Gordon from the Calhoun Air Center in Port Lavaca presented recent events they have hosted to introduce kids to

airport and aviation activities. This year, the Calhoun Air Center hosted their own mini-aviation art contest with one of their winners also receiving an award from TxDOT.

"It has been my experience that a lot of kids simply never get the opportunity to have that hands-on experience with aviation," said Gordon. "If you get kids involved at an early age, they are hooked forever."

The conference concluded with a Q&A session by Fulton and Mike Nicely, manager of FAA's Texas Airport Development Office.

"In terms of attendance, presenters, and range of topics covered, this conference was very productive," said Jeff Borowiec, associate research scientist with the Texas Transportation Institute, who also assisted with conference planning. "It's gratifying to see the level of interest in general aviation throughout the state. It is also important that we continue to work with our colleagues to share good ideas and confront new challenges."

Next year's Texas Aviation Conference is scheduled for May 25-27 at the Renaissance Hotel in Austin.

For a listing of the conference presentations, please visit: <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac10/program/>. ♦

TXDOT AVIATION AWARDS

Each year, TxDOT Aviation recognizes five categories which include: General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year; The Most Improved Airport Award; The Airport of the Year; The Reliever Airport of the Year; and The RAMP Coordinator of the Year. TxDOT Aviation Director David Fulton presented the awards.

Airport Manager of the Year

Colonel James F. "Jim" Little - Big Spring McMahon-Wrinkle Airport

"In addition to his contributions to aviation, he is one of the nicest guys I know. He is always looking toward the future and has made his airport the outstanding facility it is today."

Excerpt from the award's citation



2010 General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year Colonel Jim Little and Russ McEwen, Mayor of Big Spring.

Reliever Airport of the Year

Denton Municipal Airport (accepting the award was airport manager Quentin Hix)

"The sponsor city has assisted in efforts to create a new four-year aviation program at a local university which was officially approved and announced last November and will graduate its first student in December. The university is working with flight schools at this reliever to provide flight training as part of the educational program."

Excerpt from the award's citation

Most Improved Airport of the Year

Aransas County — Rockport (accepting the award was airport manager Eugene Johnson)

"Over the past ten years the airport budgeted to match grant funding to completely rehab all the airport pavement, replace runway lighting and approach aids, improve drainage, construct security fencing and gates, and complete a new ALP with an obstruction survey to support improved approaches for all runways."

Excerpt from the award's citation

General Aviation Airport of the Year

Wood County Airport (airport board members Wayne Collins and John Wisdom accepted the award)

"The last year has seen the conclusion of a research project conducted by the United States Department of the Navy. Following a long search for an airfield conducive for a testing ground, the Navy determined this airport had exceptional qualities making the airport an ideal testing ground."

Excerpt from the award's citation



(L-R): Dr. John Wisdom, Mike Reagan (TxDOT, Tyler District), and Wayne Collins.

RAMP Coordinator Award

Ted Moore, Director of Maintenance, and Tracy Cumby, Assistant Regional Director Support Operations, Lubbock District

"Together, they were responsible for coordinating efforts to improve pavements at seven airports in their district in the last year. They've worked with other airports in their district to provide guidance while planning future projects."

Excerpt from the award's citation

HELPING YOUNG DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT AVIATION EDUCATION GAINS MOMENTUM IN TEXAS

by Chris Sasser,
Texas Transportation Institute

Whether it be traveling with their family on vacation or watching jet trails carve up the sky, the idea of flight has always fascinated kids. Now, thanks to a recent aviation education initiative by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), communities and schools throughout Texas have the resources to develop career paths in aviation.

In response to a 2003 report from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), which documented the need for a comprehensive public education aviation program, the North Texas Aviation Education Initiative kicked off in May 2009. The goal of this initiative was to coordinate with regional industry and academic partners to create and implement a four-year aviation academic program. This initiative addressed the needs at various academic levels including university, community college, trade school, high school and junior high, as well as their combination with existing regional resources and industry outreach efforts.

"Aviation employment in Texas accounts for over 12 percent of the total U.S. aviation workforce, so addressing state aviation education is critical," says Michael Mallonee, senior transportation planner with NCTCOG. "We identified this need in years past and now have the momentum to make things happen in North Central Texas that will also translate on a state wide level."

Working with academic and industry partners, the study group found in their data analysis that there is a possible shortage of pilots and aircraft mechanics forecasted for both the state and region, and that none of the existing collegiate programs in the state are AABI accredited. Recently, the University of North Texas created a four-year program in aviation logistics at their Denton Campus.

"Our goal is to create the career paths for students," says Mallonee. "We want to get them interested in aviation, give them that passion and show how great the industry is. There are so many opportunities for careers not only as pilots or air traffic controllers, but in areas such as engineering, maintenance and manufacturing. We want to get kids excited about aviation and provide them with the educational opportunities they need to get employed in the industry."

"The state is better off, not just the region, from this aviation education initiative," says initiative team member Jeff Borowiec, author of the 2003 report and who is also an Associate Research Scientist with TTI. "Communities can use the materials they developed, especially some of the outreach and strategic planning materials, and start thinking about how they can get some of the kids involved."

Last February, NCTCOG released the results of the study on their Web site, which also includes curriculum and outreach materials for local communities to use. For more information and ways to be involved, please visit <http://www.nctcog.org/aviationeducation>. ♦

"Aviation employment in Texas accounts for over 12 percent of the total U.S. aviation workforce, so addressing state aviation education is critical."

*Michael Mallonee
NCTCOG.*

GRANTS RECEIVED

Georgetown Municipal Airport	\$368,156	Rehabilitate airport roads and construct concrete ribbon curb for airport.
Denton Municipal Airport	\$7,229,330	Extend and mark Runway 17-35; extend parallel taxiway, medium intensity runway edge lights, medium intensity taxiway lights; expand run-up area; upgrade and relocate medium intensity approach lighting system with runway alignment indicator lights and precision approach path indicator-4 Runway 17; replace visual approach slope indicator with precision approach path indicator-4; fencing and install three security gates, declared distance signs and relocate glide slope/localizer antenna.
Pecos Municipal Airport	\$1,708,300	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 9-27 and Runway 14-32; rehabilitate taxiway A, B, C, D, E, F, P; hangar access taxiway and apron.
Castroville Municipal Airport	\$855,900	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 15-33; rehabilitate and mark hangar access taxiways; rehabilitate and mark stub taxiways; rehabilitate apron; rehabilitate and mark parallel taxiway runway 15-33; construct hangar access taxilanes, install precision approach path indicator Runway 15 and Runway 33 end and install run up area pad at Runway 15.
San Marcos Municipal Airport	\$478,320	Install chain link fence, barbed wire fence, fence signs and nine gates; and clear brush along airport perimeter.
Garner Field/Uvalde	\$337,658	Install precision approach path indicators-4 at Runway 15-33, installation of terminal apron area lighting; rewire Runway 33 runway end identification lighting system with medium intensity runway edge lights; install, replace and relocate runway exit/hold position signage; install rack mounted electrical control center near terminal and install lighted wind cone/segmented circle.
Collin County Regional Airport	\$2,285,802	Construct new air traffic control tower.
Limestone County	\$420,000	Construct Terminal Building.
San Marcos Municipal Airport	\$1,666,667	Install air traffic control tower equipment.
Collin County Regional Airport	\$7,279,730	Runway grading/clearing and grubbing.
Bridgeport Municipal Airport	\$350,140	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35; rehabilitate apron; rehabilitate and mark parallel and cross taxiways (taxiways B, B-1, B-2, C, D, E, & F); install precision approach path indicators-2 at Runway 17 end; upgrade six runway exit signs; and install hold signs at hold lines.
Liberty Municipal Airport	\$725,000	Rehabilitate and mark Runway 16-34; rehabilitate parallel and cross taxiways; rehabilitate aprons; drainage improvements and relocate electrical vault.

RAMPING UP CYPRESS RIVER AIRPORT

by Jeremy Smith,
Texas Transportation Institute

If you would have asked people in Jefferson, Texas, about Cypress River Airport a little over 10 years ago you may have gotten a lot of blank stares. Unfortunately, at that time this general aviation airport had essentially been abandoned and was on the verge of being completely forgotten. No planes were flying out or in and the grass growing on the runway stated that things had been that way for awhile.

Now, it's been said that, "One man's trash is another man's treasure," and for Cypress River Airport the saying certainly holds true. Jefferson native Ray Keasler, a retired airline pilot, experienced his first plane ride at Cypress River back when he was ten-years old and has literally been flying ever since. According to his mother, he's been flying ever since he saw his first airplane. Fortunately, Keasler's history with Cypress River and lifelong passion of planes and flying lured him into becoming the airport's manager just about nine years ago.

"When Mary and I first began managing the airport it was really little more than a hayfield," explains Keasler. "Between the run-down mobile home that served as the terminal building and the grass growing on the runway, the airport was practically unusable."

From his experiences as a pilot with the Air Force, Texas Air National Guard and Braniff International Airways, Keasler knew what pilots needed and wanted out of airports. He had also been involved with the development of Northwest Regional Airport in Roanoke, Texas, as it went from an airport with a 1,800-foot runway to a runway of 3,500 feet, so revitalizing the dying Cypress River Airport was right up his alley.

Knowing that he would need more than just himself and Mary to turn the airport around, he reached out to Doug Reiter, TxDOT RAMP coordinator and engineering specialist for the Atlanta District. As the local RAMP coordinator, Doug explained all that the routine airport maintenance program (RAMP) could do to help Keasler improve the airport.

"When I first met Ray, I was pulling up to the airport and I saw Ray and Mary both out in the field installing a wind sock," states Reiter. "Needless to say, it didn't take long to see the passion and drive Ray had to improve the airport."

With assistance from Doug and the RAMP program, Keasler has been able to overlay the runway and taxiway, obtain a historical airway beacon tower and most recently constructed a brand new terminal building. Equally as impressive is that all of this has been accomplished with minimal costs to the county (Marion County).

The RAMP program is a \$50,000 maximum per airport per fiscal year grant program that requires the local government to match 50 percent of actual costs. Known as a dollar stretcher, Keasler worked to find donations and great deals on all that he could and also worked by hand to build the terminal building.

And by hand means he literally built a large portion of the terminal building with his own two hands. It took 15 months from concept to completion because throughout the process Keasler was gathering donations, such as a

CYPRESS RIVER AIRPORT PROFILE

FAA Identifier: 24F

Runway length: 3200 ft

Runway surface: asphalt, in good condition

Wind indicator: yes

Runway lights: low intensity

Note: wind indicator and runway lights are lit from dusk until dawn

dishwasher, cabinets and even countertops, and recruiting help from the Marion County Airport Volunteers (MCAV) for things like plumbing and hanging sheetrock.

"The cabinets that were donated from the mayor of Jefferson had actually been cabinets that were pulled out of another job," explains Keasler. "Instead of perfectly good, new cabinets going to waste, they were donated to us. In order to make them work, I took them apart and put them back together to fit our layout."

That creative and "can do" attitude is how Keasler was able to provide the county's portion of the funds for the building without the county having to spend any extra money. When all said and done, the RAMP program, Keasler's hard work and the hard work and generosity of others (that Keasler recruited), landed Cypress River Airport a \$75,000 terminal building for a total expenditure, including the RAMP program, of only \$38,000.

Equipped with an improved runway and taxi area, airway beacon and brand new terminal building, the airport is now having about four planes per day fly in.

"Five to six years ago no planes were flying in, but we knew what it would take to change that and with the RAMP program were able to make the necessary improvements," explains Keasler. "We would not have been able to do this without the RAMP program though. It is a fantastic program that is a tremendous benefit for this and other general aviation airports in Texas."

Despite the improvements that have already been made, Keasler is far from done with the airport. He plans to have fuel at the airport by the end of 2010 and has longer term goals of lengthening the runway from 3,200 feet to 3,650 feet, adding hangars and even building an aviation museum at the airport.

"Ultimately, I hope that this airport can be a multi-million dollar asset for the county," states Keasler. "We obviously aren't there yet, but I'm not done yet either."

In the meantime, the airport is helping to boost the local economy as more and more people fly in to visit the historical town and stay at some of the local bed and breakfast locations. A few of the bed and breakfast locations have even added the airport's information onto their Web sites.

As a final note, Reiter says, "I wouldn't doubt any of Ray's plans for this airport; what he, Mary and the MCAV have done so far is truly amazing — they rescued this airport." ♦



(L-R) Ray and Mary Keasler and TxDOT RAMP Coordinator Doug Reiter stand in front of the new terminal building for the Cypress River Airport.

WINGTIPS PROFILES

AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER MIKE COLLIER

This is one of a continuing series of profiles featuring members of the Texas Aviation Advisory Committee. The six members are appointed by the Texas Transportation Commission for six-year terms and assist the Texas Department of Transportation with its aviation development programs. Committee members also work with the legislature on various aviation issues. Members must have at least five years of experience in the field of aviation and a strong interest in supporting Texas' general aviation program.

In this issue, we profile Committee Member Mike Collier, who was appointed to the committee in 2009.

Like most pilots, Mike Collier's interest in aviation started early. He was six-years old when the 1949 movie about World War II pilots, called *12 O'Clock High*, inspired him to fly one day. But, becoming a pilot seemed unlikely. He was growing up in the small Texas town of Marlin, and no one he knew was a pilot.

Fast forward to 1984.

Collier just took off from Andrau Airpark in Houston in an F4 U Corsair. He was climbing, but under 300-feet of altitude, when the vintage World War II era, single-engine lost power. For the first time in 19 years of flying, Collier was forced to look for a soft place for an emergency landing. Luckily, no homes were built yet in the planned housing development below him. Upon impact in a muddy field, the plane broke in two. Collier required surgery, but it was successful in stopping the internal bleeding. For the next two weeks, he called a Houston hospital home. Thirty days later, he was back in the cockpit — of all things — performing acrobatics.



Texas Aviation Advisory Committee member Mike Collier from Lakeway.

"Yes it was a serious 'close call,' but it didn't keep me from flying," Collier said. "I never had anything like that happen before that time or after. It was just one of those things."

Collier began taking flying lessons while attending Baylor University in the 1960's while he earned his bachelor of business administration degree. He and his parents — Melvin and Mildred Collier — had to scrimp and save for the lessons, because all the funds were going towards educational expenses.

After graduation, he joined the Army National Guard and eventually became a company commander of an Airborne Infantry Unit before retiring. Collier also spent 24 years working in real estate. During that time he married school teacher, Joan Wright, and had two children. (Despite his successes, Collier says his family is the most important part of his life: son and daughter-in law, Ryan and Andrea Collier and daughter and son-in law, Courtney and Chris Steele, and grandson Collier Michael Steele.)

It was in 1983 that Collier became very active in air shows. He was assigned a Bell P-63 King Cobra owned by the Confederate Air Force (CAF), which is currently being restored. He and a fellow pilot founded the very successful "Wings Over Houston Air Show" on behalf of the CAF. He's a current member of the Lakeway Airpark Board of Directors. Collier holds an "All Makes and Models High Performance Piston" rating and owns an L-19 Birddog.

"I will continue flying until it's not fun anymore," Collier says. "But right now, I can't imagine that happening." Collier still thinks back to the days of *12 O'Clock High* and how it changed his life. "You should rent the movie.... it's on DVD."

Wingtips: How important is aviation to you?

Collier: Aviation has been the third most important thing in my life, next to my family and my career. Some people play golf, travel, race cars or other things for a pastime. Mine has always been aviation. It's the feeling of freedom that is the key for my love of flying. The warbird flying is especially important so that I might help the world see a part of history that few know about or have experienced. I have also been fortunate to meet many of the people who flew these machines.

Wingtips: What was your motivation in accepting the appointment on the Texas Aviation Advisory Commission?

Collier: My motivation for accepting the appointment is really very simple. Not many people get the chance to do something really important and make a real difference in something. I see that opportunity here. I especially am interested in educating our youth about aviation.

Wingtips: Was there a memorable experience that you can share that has occurred during your term?

Collier: Since I have only been on the Board for a short time, the realization of the many things that it is involved in has been a real eye opener for me. I guess I always thought that they just flew airplanes. I am also very impressed with the other Board members and their aviation backgrounds. I am just excited to be a part of this.

Wingtips: What are the biggest challenges you see for general aviation going forward?

Collier: The list of challenges is probably too long to name them all here. The top ones on my list for general aviation probably include availability of avgas in the future, insurance costs and availability of general aviation airports and facilities.

Wingtips: What would you like the public to know about general aviation in Texas and why non-pilots should care about it?

Collier: Every Texan should be interested in general aviation in Texas. It plays an important part in all our lives. The size of Texas alone dictates how important aviation is in travel and commerce in our state. The old saying of "time is money" is especially important in our state where people or products may need to leave El Paso and be in Texarkana the same day when commercial aviation is not available. Only aviation can make that happen. If you ever had the experience of driving from one end of the state to the other, one would never ask how important aviation is. ♦

RATTLESNAKE BASE HISTORY RESTS IN WEST TEXAS ROAD STOP

by Rick Davenport,
Texas Transportation Institute

Miles from civilization, driving a lonesome and desolate stretch of Interstate 20, you wonder if it's a mirage up ahead on the flat and barren West Texas landscape.

On either side of the highway there's a sprawling, museum-like structure — resembling a 1940's era air base complete with hangars and a control tower — buzzing with sightseers who were drawn to this place like a magnet.

For now, it's fantasy. But for Andy Keith, the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) Safety Rest Area Program supervisor, it's a premonition — a clear vision of reality two years in the future.

"I fully expect this project to be built," Keith says with conviction as he looks over artist depictions of this extraordinary rest area. "The tourist and visitor center will be a great accomplishment for Texas and national historians, but especially for the 2.5 million motorists who travel this stretch of highway each year."

The planned Ward County Tourist and Visitor Center is not like any Texas rest stop you visited as a kid, with the exception of having restrooms and parking areas. On both sides of I-20 — located 50 miles west of Odessa and two miles east of the town of Pyote (population 130) — the facility calls for interactive exhibits, an interpretive center, nature trails, picnic arbors and covered play areas. The buildings that surround you are designed after the original Pyote Army Air Base, known as the "Rattlesnake Bomber Base" (see sidebar).



An artist rendition of the proposed Ward County rest area.

"What most people don't realize is the significant historical value of this part of Texas," says Gary Law, the director of Transportation Planning for TxDOT's Odessa District. "It really will be similar to a museum, a permanent structure that preserves and shares with people from all over the world the crucial things that happened right here that helped shape who we are as a nation."

Ten years ago, the Ward County project was just a concept, but ballooned following a community meeting organized by TxDOT and attended by the public and government officials. Field trips to the Pyote Air Base followed and valuable input was received from West Texas historians.

Support for the estimated \$13 million project will likely come from the Transportation Enhancement Program and stimulus funding secured through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Ground breaking is expected soon and construction will take about 18 months.

"I fully expect this project to be built," Keith says with conviction as he looks over artist depictions of this extraordinary rest area. "The tourist and visitor center will be a great accomplishment for Texas and national historians, but especially for the 2.5 million motorists who travel this stretch of highway each year."

"Obviously, this is much more than a rest stop," Keith says. "Besides the historical elements that will dominate the visitor center, keep in mind that the main goal of rest areas is to provide a safe location for weary travelers. This one just happens to do that with a lot of history thrown in." ♦

THE WAR EFFORT FROM WEST TEXAS

In the early 1940s, the population of Ward County, Texas, exploded as thousands of military and civilian personnel from around the country were assigned to the newly established Pyote Army Air Base.

The war was underway and this barren, 2,700-acre site belonging to The University of Texas was selected to train replacement crews for B-17 and B-29 bombers. Construction personnel had to build the base from scratch.

It did not take long for the field to be known as the "Rattlesnake Bomber Base," since construction crews uncovered numerous dens of diamondbacks. The snakes were common though unwelcomed companions.

Two 8,400-foot runways, five large hangars and hundreds of buildings were constructed for the military operation — the largest bomber installation in the country. The training crews set numerous records for flying hours, and the 19th Bombardment Group was the first Air Corps unit to bomb Japanese targets.

After the war, the base was used to store 2,000 aircraft, including the Enola Gay — the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb. Later, the Rattlesnake Bomber Base was used as a radar station. In 1966, the facility was closed.

Today, only memories remain of the historic impact that Pyote Army Air base had on the people of West Texas and its key role in winning World War II.

BRINGING THE OLD TO LIFE

PIONEER FLIGHT MUSEUM'S COLLECTION TRACES BACK TO THE BEGINNINGS OF FLIGHT

by Chris Sasser,
Texas Transportation Institute

// Every project begins with research," said Roger Freeman, historic aviation expert, collector, restorer and founder of the Pioneer Flight Museum in tiny Kingsbury, Texas, as he produced a binder stuffed with photos and documents. Based on his vast archive of historic aircraft plans and photos, if anyone would understand the value of research, it's Freeman.

In 1996, Freeman decided to take on the ambitious challenge of building an exact replica of the first plane to ever fly in China: a 1910-model Farman aircraft. The catch? He had only a handful of existing photos to go by. The payoff? The plane would hang in the terminal building of the new Hong Kong International Airport.

"England had a similar-type plane that I was able to study," said Freeman. "From the existing photos and that plane, I drafted a set of plans that the customer in Hong Kong accepted."

On November 18, 1997, Freeman piloted the plane in Hong Kong and it was then transported to its current position above the southern arrivals and departures area.

As impressive as this feat is, it is only a small part of the historic legacy that Freeman and volunteers throughout his community are undertaking with the Pioneer Flight Museum.

"The museum was established to preserve the memory of aircraft from the early days of flight, specifically dating from the years before World War II," said Freeman. "Many of the museum's aircraft are flyable, and others are projects being restored or built to flying status."

Among the flyable aircraft include a 1909 Bleriot XI, Curtiss Canuck, Fokker Dr.I and D. VII, 1941 Meyers OTW and the jewel of the collection, a Thomas-Morse S-4C Scout.

"This is the only S-4C still flying, and one of only a handful that have survived from the days of the Great War," noted Freeman.

The museum also has project aircraft which are worked on and maintained by volunteers, and several period vehicles. These include an Indian motorcycle and sidecar, a Nash Quad truck and several Ford Model Ts with various bodies built on them.

The museum also hosts community events such as air fairs and fly-ins several times a year.

"I want this to be a living museum," said Freeman. "When people visit, I want them to hear the history of these aircraft and the stories behind them."

The Pioneer Flight Museum is open 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Weekends are also available by appointment. For more information, please call 830/639-4162 or e-mail info@pioneerflightmuseum.org. ♦



A Fokker Dr.I triplane. This was one of the most famous fighter planes of World War I due to its association with the feared German ace, Baron Manfred von Richthofen.

GA LEGEND EMMA BROWNING DIES

Legendary pilot, FBO owner and general aviation promoter, Emma Browning passed on Friday, April 23, 2010, after a short illness. Browning was 99. Emma Carter was born on October 26, 1910. In 1929, she paid \$1 for her first airplane ride and had been in love with aviation ever since. She married her husband, Robert Browning Jr. in 1930. In 1939 she soloed and soon obtained her pilot's license. A true aviation historian, Browning often told stories of meeting Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh, who both landed in Austin with plane trouble.

Browning sold the aerial services company in 1987, but remained active in the aviation community. The Texas Department of Transportation gave her its lifetime achievement award in 2003, honoring her for running one of the first companies to train pilots in the area. ♦

TSTC SELECTED FOR FAA AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PROGRAM

The Federal Aviation Administration recently announced its approval for the Air Traffic Control Program at Texas State Technical College (TSTC).

Of the 36 schools in the country that offer the Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative, TSTC is now the only public college in Texas to offer the program.

"This is great news for Texas State Technical College and for the students of Texas, who now have expanded opportunities to train for critically needed air traffic control jobs," said Gov. Rick Perry.

The air traffic control program adds to TSTC's wide variety of aviation and aerospace fields of study. TSTC currently offers aircraft pilot training, aviation maintenance technology and avionics technology curricula.

"Texas has a rich history of aviation," U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison said. "This announcement designating Texas State Technical College Waco as an Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative school continues this storied tradition while broadening the number of innovative educational programs for our students. With more than 40 percent of air traffic controllers hired from Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative schools, this designation will not only open the door to more job opportunities for these graduates but it will ensure that Texas continues to play a critical role in safe, efficient air travel in our state and across America."

The new facility will have a formal groundbreaking ceremony in May with construction expected to be completed in the fall of 2011. Students already can register for the program which begins this fall.

"I'm very pleased to report that TSTC has been approved as an air traffic collegiate training initiative school — one of only 36 in the country and the only public college in Texas," said Jeff Beene, Director of Aerospace Technologies at TSTC. "Our first class will enter this fall, and registration is open now."

For more information, please visit their Web site at http://www.waco.tstc.edu/apt/air_traffic_control/index.php. ♦

TEMPLE AIRPORT RUNWAY EXTENSION COMPLETE

Temple's Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional Airport celebrated the completion of their 700-foot runway extension to their precision approach Runway 15/33 with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, April 30, 2010.

With the new 7,000-foot runway, the Viper West F-16 Demo Team from Ogden, Utah, was able to land for the first time ever in Temple for our Central Texas Airshow and put on a special demonstration after the official red ribbon was cut at the nose of the F-16. TxDOT Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton was the guest speaker.

"TxDOT Aviation played an instrumental role in this project coming to life," said airport director Sharon Rostovich. "This is the largest improvement project undertaken at our airport and we are very proud of the end result — a beautiful 7,000-foot runway capable of serving our flying customers well into the future!"

The construction began August 21, 2009, and the runway opened for business on April 16, 2010, with a total budget of \$4.3 million. The project was a successful partnership between FAA, TxDOT Aviation, Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, FT Woods Construction, H-S Systems, Inc. and airport customers.

"The airport not only serves major businesses in our community, but also our medical, biomedical research facilities and our military," said Rostovich. "The airport is the front door to our city for businesses looking to locate in Temple and currently provides service to high performance jet and general aviation aircraft seven days a week from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m." ♦



TxDOT Aviation Director Dave Fulton speaks in front of an F-16 at the Temple Airport runway ribbon cutting.

COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY BENEFITS LOCAL AIRPORT

When the First Baptist Church in Gilmer recently organized a community service day, they needed ideas for worthy projects in their town. Church staff canvassed the community seeking worthy service projects and contacted Mike Catron at city hall for ideas.

One of the service opportunities Mike identified for the city of Gilmer was at Fox Stephens Field/Gilmer Municipal Airport, which was in need of a little sprucing up. The volunteer work crews cleaned and repainted the segmented circle around the windsock, while another crew cleaned and repainted the visual approach lights.

"Fox Stephens Field enjoys a great rapport with the community," commented Mike Catron, city of Gilmer staff member assigned to airport operations. "Community support is a key ingredient for a successful local airport." ♦

ARLINGTON BREAKS GROUND ON AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

Construction on the new terminal at the Arlington Municipal Airport began in April.

The city-owned airport broke ground on a two-story, 17,000-square-foot expansion the afternoon of April 1 and is expected to cost about \$5.1 million. The terminal was originally estimated to cost \$4.5 million.

The turning of the dirt ceremony was attended by Congressman Joe Barton, who presented a check for \$637,000 in FAA facility and equipment funding for construction and installation of advanced lighting and landing system equipment.

The terminal expansion is necessary to accommodate the increased traffic associated with events at Cowboys Stadium. Airport officials said there is an average of 50 to 80 planes arriving at the airport when the Cowboys play at home, compared to the normal number of 10 to 15 per day.

The expansion, which is expected to be completed in December, just months before the 2011 Super Bowl in Arlington, will feature a large community room, lobby and expensive office space that will be available for lease.

The terminal will be Arlington's first LEED Silver Certified building. That certification will make it one of the "greenest" facilities in town. ♦

SUGAR LAND REGIONAL AIRPORT TOPS SURVEY AGAIN



An exterior shot of the Sugar Land Regional Airport.

Sugar Land Regional Airport's city-owned and operated FBO once again took the top spot in the Aviation International News FBO survey. The airport and the FBO enjoy some distinct advantages that combine to boost its popularity, including strong support from the city of Sugar Land, a dedicated long-term team running the airport, an impressive FBO terminal and a strong relationship with the field's neighbors. The airport's unique "airport academy" invites local citizens to learn more about their airport and is a strategy that many airports would do well to consider, especially those having trouble persuading neighbors of the importance of their airports.

Sugar Land Regional Airport has been among the top 10 FBOs in AIN's annual survey since 2007, when it shared seventh place with another FBO. The city, which operates the airport, touts the absence of airline traffic as a major draw for business aircraft operators.

The first move Phil Savko made when he took over as general manager of Sugar Land Regional Airport west of Houston 12 years ago was to develop a business plan for the airport. The city owns the airport and has elected to run FBO services itself, instead of inviting interested companies to form independent FBOs at Sugar Land. Savko used to run a similar setup at city-owned and -operated Naples Municipal Airport in Florida.

The city bought what used to be Hull Airport in 1991, renamed it Sugar Land Municipal and in 1994 doubled the 4,000-foot runway to 8,000 feet. Savko helped the city council members realize that renaming the airport Sugar Land Regional would help boost traffic and pull new customers away from nearby Hobby Airport and George Bush Intercontinental. "We saw traffic starting to head this way," he said. West Houston's new energy corridor was rising out of what used to be empty prairie and there was an opportunity to develop the airport to serve the oil companies and other firms building facilities in the area.

Sugar Land's absence of airline traffic is another big advantage over Hobby and Bush airports. "You can get downtown more quickly than from Hobby," said Adam Scott, assistant aviation director, when taking into account delays caused by airlines at the other airports. U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents have been housed in their own building at the airport for the past three years, so travelers arriving from outside the U.S. can use Sugar Land as a port of entry; the agents come to the Sugar Land ramp to clear arriving customers. ♦

TWO PILOTS 'FLYING ACROSS AMERICA' TO PROMOTE GENERAL AVIATION

by Jay Carpenter

Jason Schappert and Vincent Lambercy recently flew their Cessna - 152 from Daytona Beach, Florida to Catalina Island off the coast of California and back this summer to help raise awareness of general aviation. Along their journey they stopped in Texas including Houston, Sweetwater, El Paso and Georgetown.

Jason Schappert is a 1500 hour Certified Flight Instructor and was awarded AOPA's Top Flight Instructor Award at NIFA 2008. He currently works as a flight instructor in the central Florida area and operates Schapp Aviation. Vincent Lambercy is a Swiss private pilot, now living near Frankfurt (Germany). He learned to fly in Geneva, Switzerland, where he earned his IFR rating.

Earlier this year Jason and Vincent used Twitter to communicate their common interests and soon became close internet friends. They agreed to make this trek across America to help raise awareness about the benefits of general aviation. The pilots started on June 18th and ended their long journey on July 17. Their first stop in Texas was June 23rd at Houston Hobby airport. On June 27th they landed in Sweetwater and visited El Paso on June 29.

TXAA hosted their return visit at the Georgetown Municipal Airport on July 10th with a safety day at the new Aero Centex FBO.◆

Story courtesy of TXAA

TXAA HOSTS GEORGETOWN MUNI SAFETY DAY

by Jay Carpenter

On Saturday, July 10, 2010, the Texas Aviation Association hosted a Safety Day at the Georgetown Municipal Airport (GTU). The venue was at the grand opening of the new Aero Centex Fixed Base of Operations. Over 70 pilots and aviation enthusiasts attended the four hour seminar which featured experts in aviation safety.

At 1000 local time, the fly-in / drive-in safety event started under cloudy skies, cool for a Texas July day. The color guard, represented by the Air Force Junior ROTC from Leander High School, presented the American Flag while being over flown by Falcon Flight, a group of four RV aircraft led by Stu McCurdy.

Among the guest speakers was Bill Gunn, safety director for the Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Division. Bill gave the most recent updates about the new fuel coming to general aviation, emergency locator devices and how funding works between the FAA, TxDOT Aviation and community airports.

NBAA regional representative Steve Hadley also spoke. Hadley's presentation was focused on the importance for owner operators of a professional standard of performance and the importance of maintaining a more frequent routine of proficiency training to aid in maintaining safety for them in the use of their aircraft.

The rest of the program was shared by GTU tower chief Shannon Thomas, Carol Jensen who specializes in simulation training and had her new Cirrus simulator at the FBO, and Gary Stamper who is from the Federal Aviation Administration's Flight Safety District Office in San Antonio.◆

Story courtesy of TXAA

2010 TEXAS AIRPORT DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE

The 2010 Texas Airport Directory is now available for purchase from the TxDOT Aviation Division. The directory contains aeronautical information for approximately 400 Texas airports that are open to the public. Airports are listed alphabetically by city or town. The graphics are based on information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) facility records, airport owners and TxDOT Aviation Division.

The 412-page directory costs \$6.00. Call 800-68 PILOT (800-687-4568) to order.◆

