

WINGTIPS



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TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Aviation professionals, supporters, exhibitors and enthusiasts converged at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Marcos April 15-17 for the 33rd Texas Aviation Conference. This year's conference, which is sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Aviation Division, set an attendance record with 566 registered guests and 67 exhibitors.

The first day conference activities included the 6th Annual Alton Young Memorial Motorcycle Ride, which traveled through a scenic Hill Country route. Alton Young was a former Aviation Division employee and motorcycle enthusiast who passed away in 2010 after an illness. Other activities included a golf tournament, go-kart racing and a get-acquainted reception in the evening.

On Thursday, the morning began with the traditional presentation of colors by the San Marcos Police Department Honor Guard accompanied by a stirring rendition of the National Anthem by Brandon Kobayashi, eighth grader from Owen Goodnight Middle School.

Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton welcomed the guests and introduced the Aviation Advisory Committee members. Before delivering his annual state of the
continued on pg. 3



Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton, Texas Aviator of the Year award winner Jim Schwertner and TxDOT Executive Director LtGen Joe Weber.

DAVE'S HANGAR



TXDOT'S NEW STATE AERONAUTICAL CHART HAS ARRIVED

The new Aeronautical Chart is now available at no cost to the public. The Aviation Division staff will be distributing copies as they travel around the state. For those of you that signed up for a copy during our conference, they are already on their way to you. Others that would like a copy contact our office and one will be mailed to you.



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2015 TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE

The 2015 Texas Aviation Conference recently held in San Marcos was a huge success. With 550 attendees, the conference was one of the largest in our 33-year history. The highlight of the conference was the banquet featuring the presentation of awards for exceptional service to aviation in Texas.

For the full list of award winners, please see the related cover story.

The 2016 Texas Aviation Conference will be held in Montgomery March 9-11. Please make plans to join us.

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

On February 15, 2015, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released a notice of proposed rulemaking for public comment which would allow commercial drones that weigh less than 55 pounds to be flown in the United States under certain conditions. The proposed rule limits flight to daylight and visual line-of-sight operations conducted by someone who is at least 17 years of age. Flights are limited to a maximum height of 500 feet, flying no faster than 100 miles per hour. The operator is required to see and avoid aircraft, taking action to prevent collisions. Drones cannot be flown over people except those conducting the flight. The operator of the drone must obtain an FAA unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) certificate by passing a knowledge test. Neither a pilot's license nor an FAA medical certificate is required. The proposed rule maintains the existing prohibition against operating in a careless or reckless manner. It would also bar an operator from allowing any object to be dropped from the drone.

The comment period for this rule has now closed. Additional information will be provided as this process moves forward. ♦



Aviation Division address, he noted that due to a recent health problem, Capt. Gene Cernan, retired U.S. Navy Pilot and NASA Astronaut, was unable to attend the conference and deliver the keynote. Fulton was hopeful he could attend next year's conference in Conroe, which is near Cernan's hometown of Houston.

Fulton said, "As I travel around the state, things just keep getting better and better and I think everyone in the room should take a lot of pride in what we've accomplished in the last 20 or so years. We had another great year issuing over \$116 million in grants (for FY14) for airport improvements. Since 1992, TxDOT has invested over \$1.3 billion in general aviation airports in Texas."

Fulton also noted the continued growth of the Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP), which matches local government grants up to \$50,000 for basic improvements such as parking lots, fencing and other airside and landside needs. Two hundred and fifty-five airports participated in the program, nearly all the general aviation airports in Texas.

Fulton then spoke of aviation issues at the state and federal level, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill. The current FAA reauthorization became law in 2012 and expires in September 2015.

"We're hopeful that Congress will get the work done to pass a new bill before the current one expires in September," said Fulton. "I spent several days in Washington, D.C., recently to let them know our concerns and issues, which include the importance of having a funding program in place by September."

Another topic Fulton discussed was a new bill called the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2, which would allow pilots flying recreationally in a wide range of aircraft to no longer need a third class medical certificate. The new bill would allow private pilots to make noncommercial visual flight rules and instrument flight rules flights in aircraft weighing up to 6,000 pounds with up to six seats.

Fulton also noted the issues with unmanned aircraft systems, which since being introduced into the nation's airspace have presented challenges for both the FAA and aviation community.

Fulton rounded out his morning address by recognizing Stinson Airport (KSSF) in San Antonio for reaching its 100-year in business this year. Located along the historic Mission Trails and near the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River, Stinson Municipal Airport is the nation's second-oldest

continuously operating airport. Pointing to the next century for Stinson Municipal Airport, a new air traffic control tower was slated to break ground in late 2014.

Fulton also congratulated Aransas County Airport Manager Gene Johnson for his upcoming retirement and thanked him for his service.

The morning session continued with a presentation on business aviation in Texas by Dr. Dirk Laukien, president and founder of Black Forest Ventures/Galaxy Fixed Base Operations (FBO). Laukien spoke of his aviation background and passion for providing the best customer service for his clients. Galaxy FBO opened in 2014 and is located at Lone Star Executive Airport (KCXO) in Conroe.



Dr. Dirk Laukien, president and founder of Black Forest Ventures/Galaxy FBO.

The morning session concluded with a presentation from Bill Payne, president, of William E. Payne and Associates Inc. about remote towers. These towers involve the monitoring and controlling of air traffic at low-activity airports from a remote facility.

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After lunch, conference goers had the choice of attending breakout sessions throughout the afternoon. Breakout sessions topics included:

- successful FBO management
- airport maintenance 101
- airport manager's roundtable
- improving airport marketing
- managing an airport's encroachment issues
- airport project development
- RAMP and airport consultant sessions

The second day concluded with the Awards Banquet, which was attended and assisted by TxDOT Executive Director LtGen Joe Weber. One of the highlights was the Texas Aviator of the Year award presented to Jim Schwertner, president and CEO of Schwertner Farms Inc., and former member of the Texas A&M Board of Regents and former chairman of the Texas Aviation Advisory Committee.

"This is truly one of the biggest honors I've had in my life," said Schwertner, who was surprised to receive the award. "People like yourselves who are involved with aviation are very passionate about it, and I'm no different. Every time I go up in the sky, it's an amazing experience."

For a complete list of award winners, see the accompanying sidebar.

The final morning began with a presentation on the Seguin Auxiliary Field reopening and airport compliance issues. Then Fulton introduced the new president and CEO of the National Association of State Aviation Officials, Greg Principato, who spoke about his background, the impact of aviation on the country and developments.

The conference concluded with a TxDOT/DOT-FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and listening session.

"Every year we work to provide a wide range of topics that are of current interest to the aviation community," said Texas A&M Transportation Institute research scientist and co-conference organizer Jeff Borowiec. "The fact that we had record attendance is exciting and bodes well for our future as we continue to grow this conference."

Next year's conference is March 9-11 at La Torretta Lake Resort and Spa in Montgomery.

All presentations from the conference are available at <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac15/program.php>. ♦

2015 AWARDS PRESENTATION

Aviation Art Contest Winners:

Category I (Ages 6-9)

1st Place: Ava Liberty Smith, Garden Ridge Elementary, New Braunfels

2nd Place: Haily Zacarias, Dr. Pat Henderson Elementary, San Antonio

3rd Place: Elijah Oestreich, Winnsboro Elementary, Winnsboro

Honorable Mention: Dayna Coates, Dr. Pat Henderson Elementary, San Antonio

Honorable Mention: Celeste Kwi, HJM Elementary, Port Lavaca

Category II (Ages 10-13)

1st Place: Sreeniketan Sai Senapathi, Beckendorff Jr. High, Katy

2nd Place: Avery Pulley, Burnett Jr. High, Wylie

3rd Place: Annie Kingston, Burnett Jr. High, Wylie

Honorable Mention: Alejandro Coronado, Armendariz Middle School, El Paso

Category III (Ages 14-17)

1st Place: Chelsey Wen, Jasper High School, Plano

2nd Place: Daniela Saldivar, JB Anderson HS, Laredo

3rd Place: Geanine Dunovan, JB Anderson HS, Laredo

Honorable Mention: Kayla Justiss, Breckenridge HS, Breckenridge

Airport Awards:

General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year—Clint Goff, Cherokee County Airport

Most Improved Airport of the Year—Hemphill County Airport

General Aviation Airport of the Year—Andrews County Airport

Reliever Airport Manager of the Year—Scott Smith, Lone Star Executive Airport

RAMP Coordinator of the Year—Tim Hertel, Wichita Falls District



First place winner (6-9 age group) Ava Liberty Smith and National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Regional Program Director Steve Hadley.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Lancaster Regional Airport	\$421,690	Design and construction services to install self serve fuel farm
Dallas Executive Airport	\$9,380,329	Reconstruct Runway 13-31 from North Runway 17-35 intersection to Runway 31 end; reconstruct 17-35 at intersection 13-31 and reconstruct Runway 13-31 shoulders; reconstruct taxiway A1 and A5; realign taxiway for replacement A3; reconstruct portions taxiway A and D; demolition of taxiway A2; runway shoulder compression joint sealant; install new electrical components for replacement medium intensity runway lights; and install LED lights
Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional Airport	\$600,000	Reimbursement for construction services to expand and repair main entrance parking lot; construct auto parking; construct fuel loop roadway; and construct new entrance road
Burnet Municipal Airport - Kate Craddock Field	\$8,522,910	Repair, overlay and mark Runway 1-19; expand apron; reconstruct and relocate taxiway and connecting stubs; relocate fuel farm and reconfigure terminal area; relocate road Runway 19 runway protection zone; replace medium intensity runway lights, replace electrical vault; relocate utilities; relocate wind cone and segmented circle and supplemental; and install and remove fencing
Castroville Municipal Airport	\$2,808,920	Extend and mark Runway 15 end; extend and mark parallel taxiway to Runway 15 end; reconstruct South apron; construct permanent run-up area; hangar apron pavement to new 8 unit T-hangar; extend medium intensity runway lights Runway 15 end; relocate precision approach path indicators Runway 15 end; relocate County Road 4711; install fencing and gate with new boundary; and install signage
Fort Worth Meacham International Airport	\$1,525,140	Demolish terminal area taxi lane pavement; construct and mark terminal area taxi lane; and relocate utilities terminal area taxi lane
Texas State Technical College -Waco Airport	\$2,387,890	Reconstruct taxiway H to Runway 17R; reconstruct northern portion of taxiway A between taxiway B and H; rehabilitate and mark taxiway B
Port Isabel- Cameron County	\$949,500	Joint seal, crack seal, slurry seal and mark Runway 17-35; mark chevron stub taxiway; seal PCC joints and mark terminal apron; install electric vault building with enviro additions; replace rotating beacon and tower; install emergency generators; install new tie downs on terminal building apron; and install hold signs
McKinney National Airport	\$6,320,930	Reconstruct and expand terminal apron and relocate auto parking
Majors Fields	\$1,674,155	Reconstruction of eastern taxiway K

NEW RUNWAY EXTENSION OPENS AT LONE STAR EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

Lone Star Executive Airport (KCXO) in Conroe celebrated the opening of its new extension of Runway 14-32 during a March 23 ceremony that featured Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal and members of the Montgomery County Commissioners Court.

The new 1,500-foot runway extension, constructed by Webber LLC, accommodates larger aircrafts and caters to more Montgomery County residents, said David Fulton, Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Director.



The Lone Star Executive Airport completed a 1,500-foot runway extension and held a ribbon cutting ceremony March 23.

"This will now provide a capability to handle larger aircrafts and allow them to fly longer ranges to other cities," Fulton said. "It will also bring an economic development impact to Montgomery County as it will allow more people to fly."

The extension brings the airport runway to 7,500 feet. Also included in the project was the construction of a new taxiway on the west end of the airport.

"This will now provide a capability to handle larger aircrafts and allow them to fly longer ranges to other cities," Fulton said. "It will also bring an economic development impact to Montgomery County as it will allow more people to fly."

Fulton said the engineering and construction of the runway extension projects was about \$20 million. The grant funding for the project came from the Federal Aviation Administration's airport improvement program. The program provides grants to airports to make capital improvements.

"The Texas Transportation Commission approved the grant and then the [Texas Department of Transportation] Aviation division managed the grant and construction," Fulton said. "There had to be shown [by Lone Star Executive Airport that] there was a need for construction and now, because of the extension, larger aircrafts can operate at the airport."

The runway extension is one of several major projects the airport manager Scott Smith has undertaken in the last few years.

Among the other notable accomplishments include:

- Overseeing construction of a \$2.4 million customs facility which will enable international flights to fly directly to the airport.
- In January 2014, a new state-of-the-art fixed-based operation (FBO) opened a corporate and general aviation facility located at the south corner of the airport.
- Increased hangar space to 773,000 sq. ft. in 2013 from 174,000 sq. ft. in 1996.

The mission of Lone Star Executive Airport is to serve the needs of corporate aviation and local aircraft owner/pilot population in the North Houston/The Woodlands/Conroe area.

Lone Star provides a facility for locally based businesses and serves as a destination for corporate and business aviation; the airport contributes more than \$33.3 million to the economic development in the region. ♦



The recently-completed engineered material arresting system (EMAS) at the end of runway 15 at the Addison Airport. This EMAS is the first of its type to be installed at a general aviation airport in Texas.

2014 Aviation Division Annual Report

Message from the Director

We are drawn to aviation because of a distinctive culture and environment where airports serve as critical hubs of commerce to their communities, business may be conducted face-to-face around the country in a single day, or ambitious kids choose to pursue their aspirations of flight. The Aviation Division uses these philosophies as inspiration to support our mission of supporting general aviation in Texas, which provides more than 56,000 jobs, with \$3.1 billion in payroll and \$14.6 billion in total economic output.

Our Division is proud to contribute to the overall success of the transportation model in Texas through our efforts with the general aviation (GA) airport system. Of the 497 miles of runways available for public use in Texas, over 393 miles of runway are utilized for GA purposes. GA purposes range from the 24 major reliever airports—which reduce congestion at the commercial passenger airports—to the small airports, which provide important services such as agricultural spraying and medical lifeline flights to smaller communities. The complement of a GA system plan helps keep 388,439 daily commercial passengers flying to/from Texas airports on time, food on our tables, and people transported quickly when they require immediate medical attention.

Air traffic control towers at 26 commercial and 16 general aviation reliever airports handle 4,563,277 aircraft movements annually or over 12,500 a day. Our system not only benefits the active pilots in Texas but also the 70,974 non-pilot airmen

certificate holders such as mechanics, dispatchers, ground instructors, and flight engineers.

Among the 2014 highlights were the Aviation Division and the town of Addison investing more than \$6.4 million in the design and construction of the engineered material arresting system (EMAS) at the end of runway 15 at the Addison Airport. The EMAS consists of 2,436 blocks made of a homogenous mixture of cellular cement. Its purpose is to stop an aircraft overrun with no human injury and minimal aircraft damage. This EMAS is the first of its type to be installed at a general aviation airport in Texas.

Our significant projects and programs are represented in this annual report. This format provides readers with quick access to a broad spectrum of our work.

We know that more work remains and that we can continue to improve the **297 airports** in our system that serve the **29,075 registered aircraft** and **49,616 active pilots** who flew over **2.2 million hours** in Texas. However, we are committed to our vision, and we have the resolve to see it through. Our progress this year is a tribute to our remarkable staff. It is also a tribute to our airport managers, our stakeholders, and local governmental officials who help make the Texas airport system the finest in the country.

David Fulton, Aviation Division Director
Texas Department of Transportation



Construction crews put the finishing touches on runway 4/22 at Hemphill County Airport in Canadian.

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 2014, over \$100 million was invested in airport infrastructure from reliever airports to small, rural general aviation airports. This number includes:

- \$57.5 million in maintenance/rehabilitation/reconstruction work to maintain and preserve the existing system
- \$18.6 million in capacity improvements for runways, taxiways, and apron space
- \$23.1 million in airport improvements to ensure they meet FAA standards and safety compliance
- \$1.5 million in master plans, business plans, and feasibility studies
- \$22.5 thousand in environmental impact 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 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, however, the Aviation Division has a degree of latitude in selecting projects for this program. Local governments also provide a match for funding airport projects, which is typically 10 percent.

Federal Programs

Hangar/Fuel Program

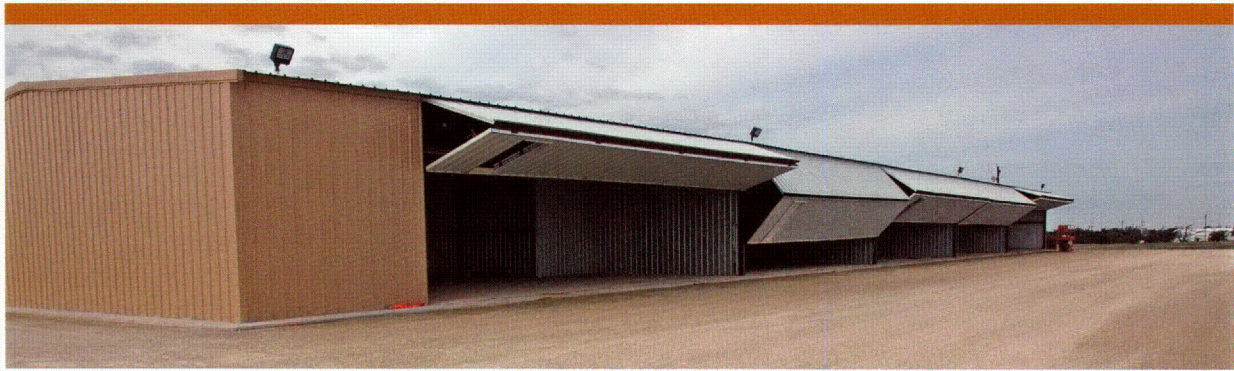
If all airside needs are met, an airport sponsor may pursue funding for the construction of hangars. Federally eligible airports can use Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) monies for the construction of hangars. Hangars are eligible for 90/10 grant funding. Airports without a fuel-dispensing system or that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

2014 highlights include:

- Investment of **\$8.6 million** for hangar development
- One fuel farm was constructed for **\$571.6 thousand**

Air Traffic Control Towers

In 2003, following the passage of a federal funding bill, the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) Program offered 90 percent grants up to a maximum of \$1.5 million to qualifying sponsors for construction of air traffic control towers and associated communications equipment. Beginning in 2012, the ATCT Program maximum funding amount was changed to \$2 million.



A 10-unit T-hangar and new hangar access taxiway under construction at the Goldthwaite Municipal Airport.

2014 highlights include:

- **\$1.7 million** was approved for the construction of the Stinson Municipal Airport control tower

State Programs

Airport Terminal Grant Program

The TxDOT Aviation Division Airport Terminal Grant Program provides 50 percent matching funds up to \$500,000 to sponsors of eligible publicly-owned airports for construction of new terminal buildings or remodeling existing terminal buildings, as well as up to \$100,000 in matching funds for appropriate vehicle parking and entrance roads.

2014 highlights include:

- **\$2 million** for terminal building

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, 93 systems have been built and maintained. This year, one new system was installed, and two existing airport systems were upgraded and relocated.

2014 highlights include:

- **\$140,000** 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 over 200 airports with state grant funds of over \$3.5 million.

2014 highlights include:

- **225 grants** issued
- **\$3.9 million** invested for routine airport maintenance with an additional **\$3.9 million** matched by the airport sponsor

Flight Services

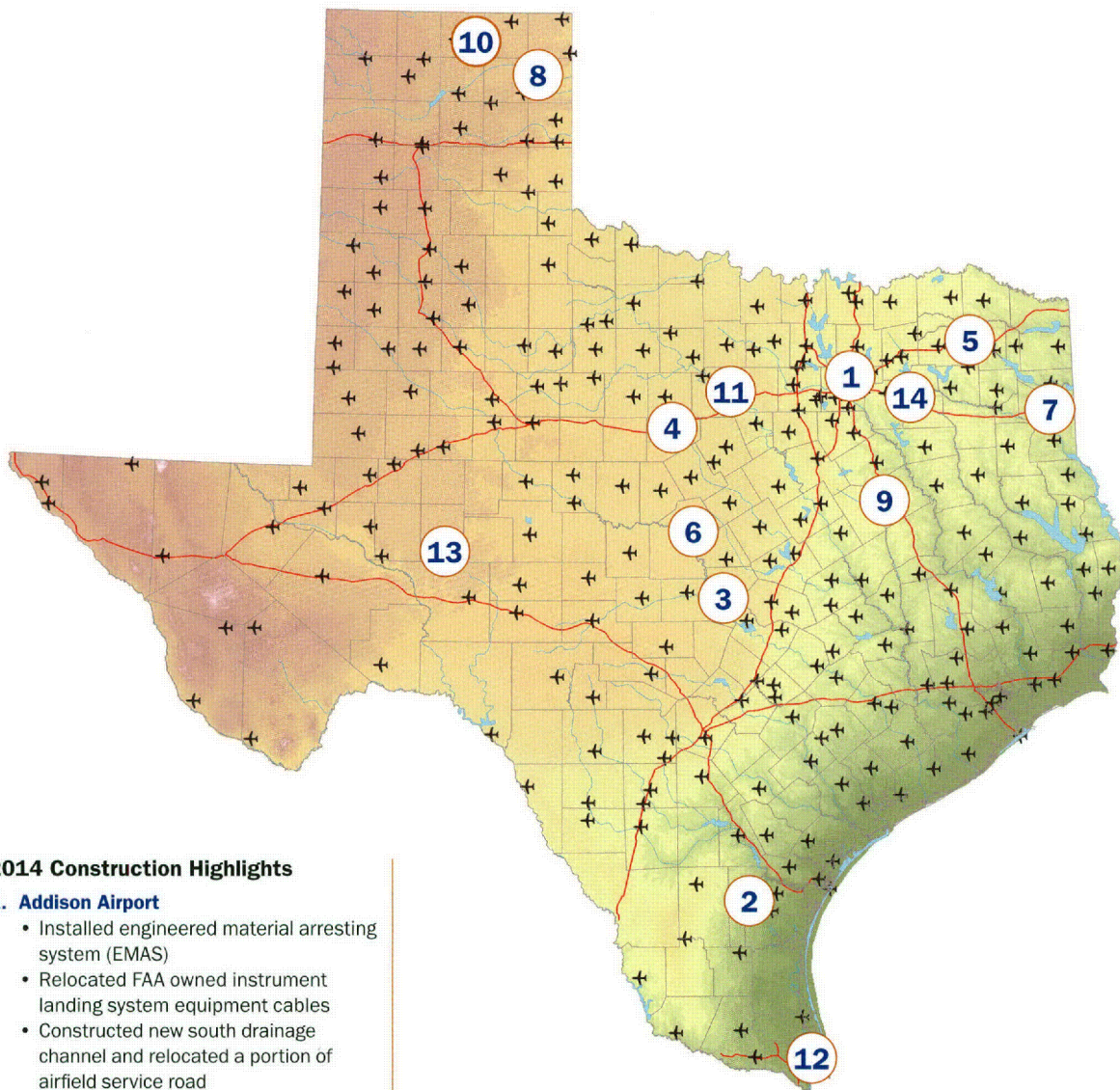
TxDOT Flight Services provides low-cost travel to state officials, employees, or sponsored contractors traveling on official state business. The Aviation Division operates and maintains the fleet, which is based at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Besides providing transportation, Flight Services also provides maintenance services to a fleet of 48 state-owned aircraft—18 helicopters and the remainder a variety of fixed-wing airplanes—with 13 full-time mechanics. In 33 years, Flight Services has almost 67,500 hours of incident- and accident-free flying.

2014 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



2014 Construction Highlights

1. Addison Airport

- Installed engineered material arresting system (EMAS)
- Relocated FAA owned instrument landing system equipment cables
- Constructed new south drainage channel and relocated a portion of airfield service road

2. Alice International Airport

- Rehabilitated runway (RW) 13-31
- Reconstructed fuel apron
- Replaced lighting on both runways

3. Burnet Municipal Airport

- Repaired & overlaid RW 1-19
- Relocated fuel farm/reconfigured terminal area

4. Eastland Municipal Airport

- Constructed new terminal building

5. Franklin County Airport, Mount Vernon

- Level-upped, overlaid, and marked RW 13-31

6. Goldthwaite Municipal Airport

- Constructed 10-unit T-hangars and apron

7. Harrison County Airport, Marshall

- Constructed 8-unit t-hangar, jet pod, and apron hangar-access taxiway

8. Hemphill County Airport, Canadian

- Reconstructed cross-wind runway and milled and overlaid main runway

9. Limestone County Airport, Mexia

- Constructed new south aircraft apron
- Constructed cross taxiway and partial parallel taxiway to RW 36

10. Major Samuel B. Cornelius Field, Spearman

- Reconstructed public and fueling apron and rehabilitated taxiway alpha
- Constructed concrete fueling pad

11. Mineral Wells Municipal Airport

- Replaced MIRLs on RW 17-35 and 13-31
- Installed PAPI-2 RW 17-35

12. Port Isabel - Cameron County Airport

- Installed new 20 tie-downs on TB apron
- Replaced rotating beacon and tower

13. Reagan County Airport, Big Lake

- Paved crosswind RW 9/27
- Installed gameproof fence

14. Van Zandt County Airport, Wills Point

- Overlaid RW 17-35
- Overlaid/repared apron



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CLEBURNE REGIONAL AIRPORT READY FOR TAKEOFF

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

After several years of upgrades, the Cleburne Regional Airport (KCPT) is ready to meet the needs of a growing city. Respected airport manager Sharlette Wright took over management of the airport several years ago after stints at Brownwood and La Grange.

"When I interviewed for this position, I told City Manager Rick Holden 'just hand me the keys and don't worry about it I'll take care of it,'" said Wright. "Even though I knew this airport had more and different types of traffic than Brownwood, I felt very confident that I could do this job."

One of the first needs Wright identified was improving the condition of the pavement, which was cracking.

"There was quite a bit to do in terms of pavement rehabilitation," said Wright. "We overlaid and marked the runway, taxiway and hangar access areas. We still have some thin areas of asphalt but we'll get there."

The airport installed LED runway lights and a few years ago constructed a perimeter fence and gates.

Wright also went to work on the hangars by repairing the doors, seal-coating roofs and replacing the roof of one that houses a paint shop. The paint shop is planning to begin construction on a \$2 million facility this year.

"Hangar space is an issue here as we've had several people contact me wanting to come here but I have nowhere to put them," said Wright. "I'm hoping that getting the facilities we have refurbished and also building new hangars will attract more corporate traffic."

The airport has seen an increase in traffic and fuel sales; they are selling a load of fuel once a month compared with a load quarterly in past years. According to a 2011 economic impact of general aviation report, the airport generates over \$7 million in total economic output and is home to 94 employees.

Wright also works with the community to show off the airport by hosting field trips, fly-ins, summer camps and getting kids involved with the everyday operations of the airport.

"I feed off their energy—the kids come out and get all excited. It keeps me going for a week!" said Wright. "I try to reiterate constantly to the community that this is your airport, come out and visit us. You don't have to have a pat down to come see our planes." ♦



Aerial view of the Cleburne Regional Airport.

MINERAL WELLS AIRPORT BOASTS HOME GROWN SUCCESS STORY

By Rick Davenport
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Bobby Bateman can't seem to make a clean break from the Mineral Wells Airport (KMWL). At 69, he semi-retired last year, but continues to work half-time as the city's airport supervisor — a position he's held since 1997. Bateman owes his career to the city where he grew up, and to the U.S. Army's helicopter pilot training school. Because of the military presence in his community, Bateman was exposed to aviation at an early age.

"I got hooked when I took a ride aboard a helicopter as part of the Civil Air Patrol club I was in during high school," he said, describing how his life was shaped by that one event more than 50 years ago.

The Mineral Wells Airport was the product of World War II when the Army developed nearby Fort Wolters, now an industrial park but once the largest infantry replacement training center in the United States. The Army built a support runway on city property, which became the foundation for the airport after the war.

Following that ride on a Hiller OH-23, Bateman decided to join the Army. He became a helicopter pilot, serving in the Vietnam War. He continued as a pilot in the private sector and returned



Mineral Wells Airport Supervisor Bobby Bateman.

home to Mineral Wells, serving as a member of the airport board. He became the logical choice for airport supervisor.

"His career path has certainly followed the history of our community," said Mineral Wells City Manager Lance Howerton, who hired Bateman 18 years ago. "He is a fixture at the airport. As a pilot, member of the board and supervisor, he has served this community well. And I do not get the sense that he is ready to retire for good."

During Bateman's tenure, the Mineral Wells Airport has undergone a series of extensive improvement projects, including a runway extension, pavement rehabilitation, an instrument landing system installation, terminal remodeling, LED runway lighting and security fencing. TxDOT recognized the priority the city placed on aviation and named Mineral Wells Airport of the Year in 2007.

As for its future, the airport is destined for more improvements.

"We are the only general aviation airport between here and Fort Worth," Howerton said. "The Metroplex continues to grow this direction. There is no question that the airport plays a vital role in our local economy because it's relied upon by oil company executives, the equine industry which is big here and the growing number of corporate executives who travel here for business."

Nearby Possum Kingdom Lake and its prime real estate has also attracted wealthy homeowners, many of whom have the need for Mineral Wells' lengthy runway.

The airport houses several avionics businesses which employ about 200 people. In fact, the Mineral Wells Airport is home to several autopilot manufacturers and is known in the industry as the autopilot capital of the world.

One of those companies is anticipating a major expansion and will need additional hanger space, according to city officials.

"Mineral Wells has certainly made aviation a significant part of its plans," Bateman said. "That attitude has certainly made my job easier, but harder to leave. My retirement will surely happen someday. Right now, I just can't imagine when that day will be." ♦

FROM THE GROUND UP

GOLDTHWAITE AIRPORT MAKING STRIDES

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

After opening for business in 2011, Goldthwaite Municipal Airport (T37) continues to build upon its humble beginnings. Goldthwaite is located in Central Texas, about 40 miles southeast of Brownwood.

The airport recently completed construction on 10 T-hangars, a hangar apron, access road and garage storage area for a courtesy car.

"After we initially opened the airport, we heard from the pilot community that we needed fuel, we needed lights and we needed hangars," said Goldthwaite City Manager Robert Lindsey. "The first thing we wanted to do was solidify our partnership with the golf course (which sits adjacent to the airport) and create a fly-in golfing experience to attract visitors to our area. We also built our terminal building in 2011, which is a multi-use facility, with support from TxDOT Aviation. It's used for golfing events and other community activities. People who fly in have access to a clean facility with Wi-Fi, restrooms and a kitchen we are finishing. We want to expose non-aviation people to aviation and vice versa."

Currently, the airport has commitments for six of the hangars with interest in three more.

"Obviously the commitments to the hangars before the project was complete shows that the demand was here," said Lindsey. "The next steps for the airport are self-service fuel and lights, which will logically occur when we rehabilitate our 3,200-foot runway in a few years."

In addition to golfers, the airport also sees air traffic from hunters and other private pilots who enjoy visiting the Hill Country.

Any advice for other towns looking to build an airport from the ground up?

"Stay patient, gather community support and use your available resources," said Lindsey. "This airport is an economic magnet for this community. It is the most valuable one-mile of paved road in the county." ♦



A 10-unit T-hangar and new hangar access taxiway under construction at the Goldthwaite Municipal Airport.

AOPA'S REPORT

GENERAL AVIATION INITIATIVES IN 2015'S TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

By Yasmina Platt,
AOPA's Central Southwest Regional Manager

The 84th Texas Legislature is in full swing and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), along with other aviation stakeholders, is working on several initiatives to promote and protect general aviation in the state. We are tracking about 50 bills in Texas. Below are some of the ones we are most interested in, including the bill numbers and a brief summary. If you are interested in seeing the progress of a specific bill search <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>.

- **HB 946 / SB 505 – Marking/Registration of Meteorological Evaluation Towers (MET Towers)**

MET towers are temporary structures used to measure wind speed and direction to identify locations for future wind turbines. They pose a continuing hazard to low-altitude aviation operations, such as agricultural, helicopter flights, and search and rescue. These towers are below the 200-foot Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) threshold for evaluation, are very difficult to see from the air, and are usually erected overnight and without notice. Both the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the FAA have published documentation encouraging the states to mark and register these towers. These bills follow the research and recommendations of both of those agencies.

- **HB 1458 / SB 798 – Tax Exemption on the Maintenance of General Aviation Aircraft**

Tax exemptions for general aviation maintenance help to increase aviation activity, generate jobs and raise revenue for maintenance businesses. Only operators using aircraft as a certificated carrier of persons/cargo, for flight training, or for agricultural use are currently exempt from the sales and use tax (including both parts and labor) when repairing, remodeling, or maintaining aircraft. This bill would include all general aviation aircraft and activities. Texas aircraft are often flown to other states which do not apply sales taxes to obtain cheaper maintenance. This means local companies are losing business.

- **HB 1605 – TxDOT Airport Directories**

TxDOT-Aviation prints the Texas Airport Directory every few years for use by the public and the aviation community. The directories include information about all public use airports (approximately 400) in the state. By state law TxDOT charges \$6 per airport directory but, as a state resource, it should be available to the public for free from public facilities, the Texas highway maps. This bill would offer the directories for free. TxDOT-Aviation will be printing an aeronautical chart this year and they could be distributing both resources for free at the same time.

- **HB 3287 / SB 1396 – Texas Sales/Use Tax**

In 2014, the Texas Comptroller attempted to change the tax rules and standards that impact the ownership and operation of aircraft in Texas. The proposed rule tried to change when operators could qualify for the "sale for resale" exemption through aircraft leasing. This legislation would recognize the leasing of aircraft as a legitimate transaction eligible for resale exemption, allowing aircraft to be brought into the state for completions without being subject to tax. The bills also would address out of state use and related party transactions and exempt fractional programs from sales/use tax.

- **HB 3077 / SB 1493 – Emergency Medical Air Transportation Account**

These bills would create the above mentioned account and the commissioner of State Health Services could use the appropriated funding to fund and reimburse emergency medical air transportation.

- **HB 3901 / SB 1133 – Repossession of Aircraft**

A repossession agent may file a petition for a writ of assistance for the repossession of aircraft in a justice court.

You can get more updates about these and other developments in our region, by visiting <http://www.aopa.org/Advocacy/Airports-and-State-Advocacy.aspx> or following me on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/AOPACentralSW> or @AOPACentralSW). ♦

AIR RACE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM AWARDS \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIP TO FEMALE PILOT

The Racing Aces, Dianna Stanger and Joyce Wilson who won the 2014 Air Race Classic, awarded a \$2,500 scholarship on Saturday, May 16th at the Southeast TX Fly-In to Yasmina Platt, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) Regional Manager of the Central Southwest Region.

The purpose of the Racing Aces Aviation Aces Scholarship for women is to provide funds to further the recipient's pursuit of a career in aviation. The Racing Aces seek to empower women to contribute to the future of aviation through access to education.

Yasmina was born in the beautiful Canary Islands, Spain. Raised in Zaragoza, she has called the United States home for over ten years. Since childhood, she dreamed of becoming a pilot.

Platt is a commercial pilot with instrument, multi-engine land, single engine land and single engine sea ratings as well as a Certificated Flight Instructor (CFII and CFI). She enjoys teaching and sharing her love of flying with others. She especially likes to introduce flying to young people who, like her, have dreamed of becoming a pilot. Yasmina holds a B.S. in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and a M.S. in Transportation Planning and Management from Texas Southern University. She is also a Certified Member (C.M.) of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE).

Her passion and commitment for aviation is evident in the number of professional credentials that she holds as well as the number of awards she has obtained. Her focus is aviation safety, outreach, research, education, and the promotion and protection of aviation.

In addition to representing AOPA member interests with state and local government officials, she hopes to stimulate and encourage greater involvement among pilots and aviation enthusiasts.

Platt is also an Adjunct Aviation Professor at Utah Valley University (UVU) having taught classes in aviation logistics, private pilot flying, business aviation, and aviation management. She lives in Houston, TX with her husband Jared, an airline pilot and GA supporter.

"It's very important for our team to award these scholarships," said Stanger. "The female pilot population is very low — only 6 percent! We're doing our best to pay it forward and promote aviation. Yasmina is an excellent role model for any girl wanting to learn to fly. She is always willing to volunteer her time when we host aviation events."



Yasmina Platt (left) accepts the \$2,500 scholarship from Dianna Stanger.

The team has awarded \$12,500 in scholarships since 2012. ♦



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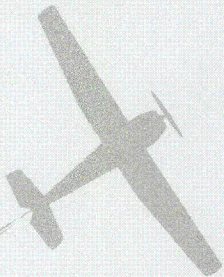


Happy retirement Gene! Local officials and other dignitaries gather for a group photo at the sign project dedication and retirement ceremony for Gene Johnson (middle with green shirt), long-time manager of the Aransas County Airport.



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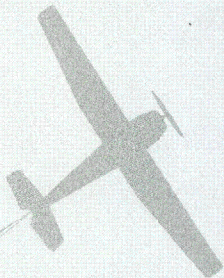
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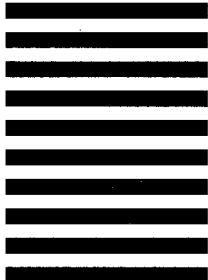
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