



**June - July  
2007**

TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE  
**1, 3-5, 8-9**

DAVE'S HANGAR  
**2**

MEA CULPA  
**2**

STEPHENS COUNTY AIRPORT  
HOME OF EZZELL AVIATION  
WARBIRD RESTORATION  
**6-7**

PROFILE: ARLINGTON  
MUNICIPAL AIRPORT  
**10-12**

HALE COUNTY AIRPORT  
MEANS WEST TEXAS  
HOSPITALITY  
**12-14**

CITY OF TEMPLE FIXED-BASE  
OPERATION RECEIVES  
EXXONMOBIL NETWORK TOP  
HONOR  
**14**

FLIGHT SAFETY  
**15**

VIDEO LIBRARY NEWS  
**15**

GRANTS RECEIVED  
**15**

WEB SITES TO VISIT  
**16**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
**16**

## **TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE GOES TO THE BEACH!**

### **ANOTHER TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE, ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GATHERING!**

By Jeff Boroweic  
Texas Transportation Institute

CORPUS CHRISTI – The 2007 Texas Aviation Conference was held on April 18-20, 2007 at the Omni Bayfront Hotel in Corpus Christi marking the first time the conference was held outside of Austin, but perhaps not the last. The conference was a success on many levels and other “firsts” included a fishing tournament and a Bay Cruise on Captain Clark’s Flagship Cruise Boat sponsored by Garver Engineers.

Attendance at this year’s conference was in line with previous record-setting years and totaled 463 participants despite the change in location to the South Texas Coast. Participants included numerous airport sponsors, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) personnel, consultants and contractors as well as other industry representatives. Due to

the increased exhibitor space available at the hotel, conference sponsorship was a record 67 exhibitors attending, ensuring yet another successful conference.

The conference opened on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, with a fishing tournament and a golf tournament. Thirty-four people participated in the fishing tournament. Participants were given a map of local public fishing locations and they were allowed to select their own spot. The catch-and-release tournament rules hinged on the honor system, although there were many photographs available showing proof of the winners. Marla Roth, the wife of TxDOT RAMP coordinator Steve Roth, took home first place in the redfish category →

continued on page 3

Aviation's  
**25<sup>th</sup>**  
SILVER  
ANNIVERSARY  
Conference



*Captain Clark's Flagship Cruise Boat sails by the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay. The USS Lexington is a World War II vintage aircraft carrier decommissioned in 1991.*



**Battle Heats Up Over Future Funding of FAA:**

On September 30, 2007, current legislation for FAA programs will expire. The battle lines are drawn over how aviation taxes should be levied in the future. On one side are the airlines who feel that a significant share of the tax burden should be shifted to general aviation to "pay their fair share for usage of the system." On the other side is general aviation contending that the method of tax collection that has been in place for over 30 years – a tax on airline passenger travel and a tax on aviation fuel – has served us well in the past, represents a fair share of taxes for all segments of the aviation industry and therefore should be continued in the future.

The first reauthorization proposal, offered by FAA Administrator Marion Blakely, would eliminate the airline passenger ticket tax and in its place substitute a cost-based user fee system for FAA services such as air traffic control. It would also increase the tax on general aviation fuel from the current rate of 19.3 cents per gallon up to 70 cents per gallon. Funding for the Airport Improvement Program would

be reduced from a current level of \$3.6B in airport grants nationwide to \$2.75B.

Most in the general aviation community feel that this proposal would negatively affect aviation safety and detrimentally impact the future of general aviation. The FAA proposal, which was strongly supported by the airlines, was not warmly received by Congress and is viewed as having little chance to become law.

SB 1300 developed by Senate Aviation Subcommittee Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV of West Virginia and Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi has much more in common with FAA's current authorization bill, retaining most of its features and providing growth in the airport grant program. The one sticking point for the general aviation community is the levy of a \$25 surcharge for turbine powered aircraft operating within controlled airspace.

Many within the general aviation industry see this as step one on the path toward a total "user based" system of taxes that would someday become a hardship on general aviation. A typical example often cited is a general aviation flight in Europe: a pilot unable to land at his primary destination due to weather, diverts to an alternate airport, and then receives a bill of over \$1,000 for changing his flight plan. Obviously, stories like this alarm those of us in general aviation.

FAA reauthorization still has a long way to go. We all hope that fairness and equity prevail. However, it is somewhat sad to see one segment of the aviation industry pitted against another. We are all interdependent. Most of the pilots flying today for the airlines began their careers in general aviation. Aviation and air transportation are vital for the future of our country. This type of battle can't really be good for anyone. ♦



**DIRECTOR OF AVIATION**  
David S. Fulton

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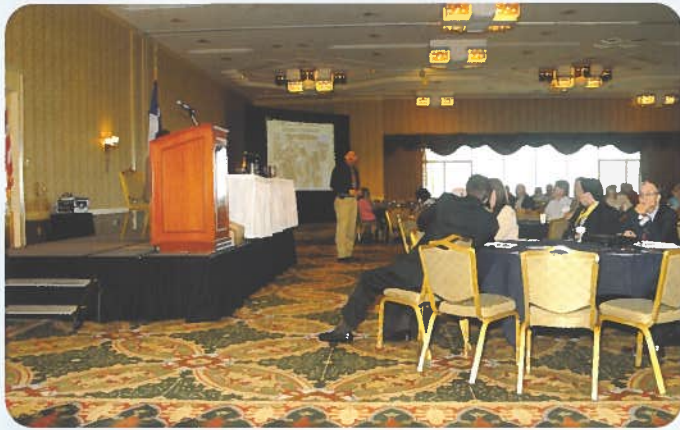
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Copies of this publication have been deposited with the Texas State Library in compliance with the state Depository Law.



**MEA CULPA.**

In the February-March 2007 *Wingtips* issue, page 18, the photograph caption should have read: Robert Lansford and his aircraft, Mooney M20E. We regret the error. ♦



TAC General Session was held in the Solomon Ortiz Center, Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas.

## TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE

continued from pg. 1

while Michael Reagan of TxDOT Tyler District took home first place in the trout category. Rory Hafernick, airport manager at Bay City Municipal Airport, won second place for both redfish and trout. The winners were awarded a new rod and reel.

The golf tournament was held at the North Shore Country Club in Portland where 56 people participated. The winning foursome consisted of Mike Dmyterko, Patrick Taylor, Craig Phipps and Jeff Bilyeu who all took home a dozen golf balls. Last place went to the foursome consisting of Greg Miller, Loli Saldana, Daniel Benson and Charles Riordan. The last place prize was a golf towel, apparently to cry in. The longest drive (#18) went to Tom Ramsey while the straightest drive (#10) went to Melodye Taylor. Closest to the hole on #2 and #16 went to Mike Dmyterko and Rigo Cisneros, respectively.

The first day's events finished up with a *Get Acquainted* reception hosted by the conference sponsors in the exhibit hall. The evening concluded with the cruise aboard Captain Clark's Flagship Cruise boat. The cruise on Corpus Christi Bay provided those aboard with an opportunity to mingle while providing awesome views of both the USS Lexington and the Corpus Christi skyline. And the weather could not have cooperated more fully.

The conference program opened with welcoming remarks by Aviation Division Director David Fulton followed by Texas Transportation Commissioner Fred A. Underwood. Conference co-sponsors also made opening comments. They included George Garrett, president of the Texas Airport Manager's Association and airport director of Weslaco Mid-Valley Airport, and Jay Carpenter, president of the Texas Aviation Association.

The first few opening sessions focused on activities related to the on-going military operations in the Middle East. Conference attendees viewed a video that highlighted the military service of TxDOT employees. The video was first aired at the TxDOT Short Course in College Station on October 2006. This was followed by a captivating presentation by Gilbert Jordan and Lorena Soriano entitled *Runway Repair in a Contingency Environment*.

Rounding out the morning was the introduction of Jay Joseph, the new director of Flight Services for TxDOT Aviation Division, who made a presentation on the men and women who manage, fly and maintain the TxDOT fleet of aircraft. That was followed by Fulton, who reflected on the current state of the Aviation Division and a look back at the past 25 years. Most were amused with the pictures that included several dated photographs of the division's staff, many of whom were in attendance.



Sailboat near a marina restaurant.



TAC participants arriving at the conference.

Before breaking for lunch, the audience heard from Traver Gruen-Kennedy, vice president for community and governmental affairs at Dayjet. His presentation focused on the business model of the air taxi start-up. It included the infrastructure requirements they have at airports when considering locations for their DayPorts or DayBases. Dayjet has taken delivery of three Eclipse 500 very light jets and will start its air taxi operation in the southeastern United States when they take delivery of enough aircraft to optimally run their network. In the next two years, Dayjet expects to take delivery of 300 new Eclipse 500s and hire 1,500 pilots.

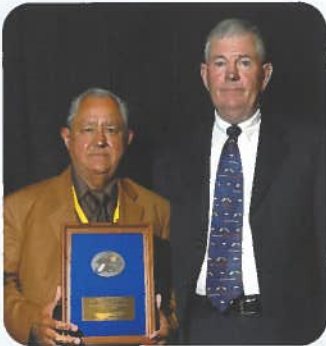
For the first time in many years, lunch was provided at the conference hotel and included a fajita buffet. Also of note was the incredible dessert bar. The in-house lunch gave attendees more time to visit and network and meet new people from across the state. →

The afternoon workshops were well attended and early reviews indicate they, too, were a success. Workshop topics included aviation marketing, new instrument approaches, pavement and fire ant management, airport security and establishing market rates for airport leases.

The day wrapped up with an awards banquet at the Solomon Ortiz Center located on the edge of the ship channel and Corpus Christi Bay. The following aviation awards were presented:

**2007 GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

George Alvarado, T.P. McCampbell Airport, Ingleside



(l-r) George Alvarado, Airport Manager, T.P. McCampbell Airport, Ingleside, Texas and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director

**2007 MOST IMPROVED AIRPORT AWARD**

Fort Worth Spinks Airport



(l-r) Ryan Cox, Airport Manager, Fort Worth Spinks Airport, Fort Worth, Texas and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director

**2007 AIRPORT OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Mineral Wells Municipal Airport



(l-r) Bobby Bateman, Airport Manager, Mineral Wells Municipal Airport, Mineral Wells, Texas and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director

**2007 RELIEVER AIRPORT MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Phillip W. Savko, Sugar Land Regional Airport



(l-r) Phillip W. Savko, Airport Manager, Sugar Land Regional Airport, Sugar Land, Texas and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director

In addition, a new award, *RAMP Coordinator of the Year*, was added this year and will now be given annually. The first recipient was Steve Roth who works out of the Abilene District, but has responded to requests for help across the state.

A *Lifetime Achievement Award*, one not given every year, was also presented this year. The award was given to Gordon Bethune, who retired as chairman and chief executive officer of Continental Airlines in December 2004. He is currently chairman of Aloha Airlines and its parent company Aloha Airgroup. →

**2007 RAMP COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Steve Roth, Abilene District, Abilene, Texas



(l-r) Steve Roth, Design Project Coordinator, TxDOT Abilene District, Abilene, Texas and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director.

**2007 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN AVIATION AWARD**

Gordon Bethune, Chairman, Aloha Airlines, Honolulu, Hawaii

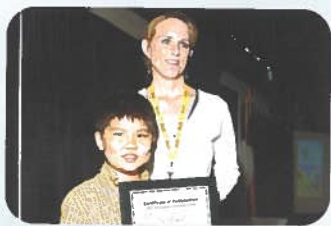


(l-r) Gordon Bethune, Chairman, Aloha Airlines, Honolulu, Hawaii and David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Director.

Also, the 2007 International Aviation Art Contest theme for this year was "Airfield." Texas 1st Place awards were presented to:

**TEXAS 1ST PLACE,  
CATEGORY I (AGES 6-9)**

Patric Liu, 9 years old  
Hayes Elementary School, Katy, Texas



Patric Liu with Becky Vick, TAC  
Coordinator, TxDOT Aviation Division

**TEXAS 1ST PLACE,  
CATEGORY III (AGES 14-17)**

Bindia Patel, 17 years old  
Gatesville High School, Gatesville, Texas



Bindia Patel with Becky Vick, TAC  
Coordinator, TxDOT Aviation Division

**TEXAS 1ST PLACE,  
CATEGORY II (AGES 10-13)**

Amber Wang, 13 years old  
Cook Middle School, Houston, Texas

**PHOTOGRAPH  
NOT  
AVAILABLE**

**NATIONAL WINNER  
FROM TEXAS**

Chang Liu  
Memorial Parkway JHS, Katy, Texas



Chang Liu with Becky Vick, TAC  
Coordinator, TxDOT Aviation Division

The evening ended with a fabulous evening social complete with extravagant desserts, refreshments and live music sponsored by Rodriguez Engineering.

The final day of the conference began with the breakfast tacos that attendees became accustomed to; once again, attendees were not disappointed. Before the day's activities began, the attendees were treated to the premiere of the new "Destination Texas" video. The video is used during the regional planning meetings which are held every year across the state and serves as a great tool for conveying the significance of general aviation airports. The video was produced under the direction of Daniel Benson of the Aviation Division's Planning and Programming section with the help of TxDOT's Travel Division. The video is great for showing to city and county officials, economic development officials and civic/community groups. If you did not get a copy, call the Aviation Division at 1-800/68-PILOT and request one.

The early morning sessions focused on reauthorization and the current administration's budget proposal that would impose a series of user fees on general aviation. Henry Ogradzinski, the president of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), spoke about reauthorization, the importance of general aviation and NASAO's recent activities, including the nationwide general aviation alliance they were instrumental in creating. Stephen Hadley of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and Shelly Lesikar deZavallos of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) spoke more directly about user fees, their potential impact on general aviation and how to unite and take action against them.

The late morning sessions began with a review of some of the current and future trends emerging in general aviation. The presentation, made by Dr. Peter Dittmer, director of the Airway Science Program at Texas Southern University in Houston, highlighted, among other things, some of the growth areas in general aviation and what they may mean for our industry.

Dr. Dittmer was followed by a session on storm water permitting which continues to be an area of interest to many airport operators. Norm King of the Ecological Resources Management Branch of TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division addressed the group with a session entitled "Airport Responsibilities Under the Multi-Sector Stormwater Permit." Rick Compton of the FAA's Texas Airport Development Office in the Southwest Region followed King. Compton's session on the operational impacts of drilling oil and gas wells on airports was both interesting and informational. The conference concluded, as usual, with the listening session staffed by David Fulton and Mike Nicely, manager of the FAA's Texas Airport Development Office.

The conference was very well received by participants in terms of the number of exhibitors, the quality of the program, the fun activities and the picturesque bayside location. Next year the conference will return to Austin on April 15-17, 2008 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. No determination has been made on conference locations beyond next year, so be sure to let the Aviation Division know your thoughts about this year's conference in Corpus Christi and those down the road. If you have program or activity ideas for next year's conference, pass those along as well. They would love to hear from you!

Additionally, we appreciate and thank the art contest judges: Mel Brown, Texas Aviation Artists, and Michelle Hannah, TxDOT Aviation Division, for their assistance in selecting the art contest winners for the State of Texas.

Finally, we value our co-hosts and their contributions each year and encourage others to participate in our efforts to disseminate information to the aviation community through TAC. Thank you! ♦

**2006- Texas Aviation Conference Co-Hosts**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| All Weather, Inc.                     | Tymetal Corp - Southwest Division           |
| ABT, Inc.                             | The C.T. Brannon Corporation                |
| QT Technologies                       | Cement Council of Texas                     |
| Clough, Harbour & Associates          | GRW Engineers, Inc.                         |
| Connectric Control Solutions          | Flight Light                                |
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| O'Malley Engineers, L.L.P.            | Dynatest Consulting, Inc.                   |
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| Stay-Tuff Fence Manufacturing         |   |

# STEPHENS COUNTY AIRPORT HOME OF EZELL AVIATION WARBIRD RESTORATION

By Lee Jay Carpenter  
Texas Aviation Association

BRECKENRIDGE – Located 90 miles west of Fort Worth is Breckenridge, Texas. This remote town, population 6,000 more or less, is sprinkled with inns, cabins and several friendly bed & breakfast lodgings. Its claim to fame is being the Mural Capital of Texas. Despite its size, there is a lot to do and enjoy in and around Breckenridge. If you enjoy fishing, Hubbard Creek Lake offers superb options, or you can take in the rich history of the downtown scene. Then, there is the Stephens County Airport for those who want to fly in. Also, aviation enthusiasts will find and enjoy the Breckenridge Aviation Museum and Ezell Aviation, which specializes in warbird restoration.

Stephens County Airport (KBKD) is a modern facility that has two long runways. Runways 17 and 35 are just two feet short of 5,000 feet in length by 100 feet wide. These runways are crisscrossed by four others. Runways 13 and 31 are 2,400 feet long as are runways 04 and 22. There is one GPS (Global Position System) instrument approach for runway 35. As the name implies, the airport is owned by Stephens County and managed by County Judge Gary Fuller.

The center of the airport houses a unique company called Ezell Aviation which is run by Nelson Ezell and his family. This is not your typical repair shop, unless you have a vintage WWII P-51 fighter that needs restoration. Or perhaps you have the hull and landing gear of a P-38 Lightning sitting in your back yard. If so, then Ezell Aviation is the one you want to contact.

For over 20 years Nelson Ezell and family have been in the warbird restoration business. Warbirds are aircraft that were manufactured mainly during and following World War II. The aircraft that Ezell Aviation specializes in include B-25 bombers and various fighters of the era. When I visited Ezell Aviation earlier this spring, they were busy completing the restorations of a Lockheed P-38 Lightning, a North American P-51 Mustang, a Chance Vought F4U Corsair and a British built Hawker FB-11 Sea Fury.



A British built Hawker FB-11 "Sea Fury" ready to roll out to a new customer.

I caught up with the owner of Ezell Aviation, Nelson Ezell, and he gave me a tour of his facility.

I asked Ezell how he got started in restoring warbirds. He replied that he was living in Florida in the 1980's when a friend called him to come to Texas to help repair a Sea Fury whose landing gear was



Owner Nelson Ezell (left) and employee working on engine housing of Lockheed P-38.

damaged. During the commute to North Texas he found the area to be ideal for the beginning of his future aircraft restoration business.

Ezell explained that when he receives the airplanes, almost every part is already there. However, most of these planes are in need of parts and skin replacement. He basically takes the plane apart to get to the bent and damaged parts, repairs those items, and then puts the plane back together to its original condition.

"We have the blueprints for the Corsair. Sometimes we can get prints for a particular aircraft from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C., but for the Sea Fury we don't have any prints at all." I asked him where the project planes come from. "In 1979, 23 Sea Fury's were obtained from Baghdad and brought to Florida. They were being used for the Iraq Air Force when we got them," said Ezell. "Others come from third world countries like Honduras and other locations all around the globe."

Ezell then showed me a data plate on the radiator housing of one of the P-38 engines. The plate listed part numbers and model numbers. Below the data was the company name Winchester Firearms. "What?" I exclaimed. "Winchester was building radiators for aircraft engines?" Ezell explained that during WWII every company was involved in the war effort. Companies like Maytag built alternators; General Motors was building aircraft. Everyone cooperated and did what the government asked to assist in war time production.

Ezell Aviation is very much a family operation. Nelson's oldest son, Ashley, is a machinist and his number two son Chad does all the painting. His wife Dude runs the office. Beyond that, Ezell hires 15 employees, most of whom hold an A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) rating, commonly called a certified aircraft mechanics. Ezell →

Aviation has become so famous that they often subcontract out work to other restoration companies manufacturing parts for aircraft that someone else is working on.

Ezell said that a project like the Corsair can take up to 15,000 man hours to complete. By the time the work is finished, some aircraft will have over a million dollars invested in the restoration project. I asked him who can afford such high prices for an individual aircraft. "Most of my customers are private collectors," he replied. "Some are starting their own aviation museums. Others just want to fly vintage aircraft in the same way that other folks want to sail expensive boats." Even though the restoration costs are high, these aircraft increase in value over time, therefore they are considered an investment. "This particular Corsair investor," Ezell said, pointing to the disassembled fuselage in the corner, "will have one million dollars invested in the project. However, the plane can bring two million on the open market. Five to six years ago, Mustangs were valued at six to seven hundred thousand dollars. Now the average price for one is between \$1.5 to 1.6 million. Some have even sold for two million."

When asked what the customer requests as far as customized accessories, Ezell replied, "The trend nowadays is to restore the aircraft exactly like it was when it came off the assembly line. The same instrumentation, guns (of course, they are fake) and markings on the wings are exactly the same as when they went to war." He said he might install a modern GPS navigation radio, but that device would be hidden out of sight behind a blank panel cover.

There are some exceptions such as the current P-38 Lightning project, which is owned by Red Bull GmbH, located in Austria. Ezell explained that since the Germans lost the war, they are not quite as much a stickler when it comes to originality. "They'll want every whistle and bell, including modern avionics and an auto pilot installed on this aircraft," he said. Ezell's deadline for completion of the P-38 is July 2007. "We've been burning the midnight oil to get this plane completed. The plane will be flown to Europe via Greenland and Ireland," he said.

Future projects for Ezell Aviation include another Corsair and a Grumman F8F Bearcat. Normal restoration for a Corsair is three and a half to four years. "We've compressed that time down to two and a half years," said Ezell. I asked him why it takes so long and he replied that the Corsair is a very complex aircraft. Ezell explained further that, "Unlike the Mustang, which is simple in its design and we could easily build from scratch, the Corsair is a very complicated airplane. If there was a hard way to do it, the original designers at Chance Vaughn figured out how to put it in their design."

I asked Ezell if he gets to fly any of the aircraft he restores. He said that he does fly most everything they work on. Ezell makes sure that the props are balanced and the aircraft is well trimmed before they deliver any aircraft to the owner. Besides being a pilot, Ezell holds an

IA (Inspection Authority) rating which allows him to "sign off" on all finished aircraft to be certified by the Federal Aviation Administration either in the "Experimental" or "limited" category. The Experimental Category certification is a special airworthiness certificate issued by the FAA to operate an aircraft that does not have a type certificate. The Limited Category certification is specifically for military aircraft that have been converted to civilian use.

"The FAA out of their Fort Worth office has been cooperative," said Ezell. "They come and inspect the final restoration which I have signed off." I asked how his company gets along with the owners of Stephens County Airport, the county government, and he replied that Judge Fuller and the county commissioners are very supportive of the airport, General Aviation and his own business.

When asked about the future of warbird restoration, Ezell was optimistic. "As long as the economy is strong, this business will do well. There are just so many of these planes left and their value continues to increase. Investors know that, and they'll continue to purchase aircraft in remote places around the world, and then have us restore them to their original condition." Ezell added that business is so good that they were experiencing growing pains and would like to expand into an adjoining building.

If warbird restoration was not enough to keep Nelson Ezell busy, another project that he is working on is a through-the-fence airpark that he would like to develop on 96 acres adjoining the Stephens County Airport.



*A North American P-51 Mustang on maiden take off after restoration.*

A through-the-fence operation is where the owner of a public airport permits access to the public landing area by independent operators offering an aeronautical activity or by aircraft based on land adjacent to, but not a part of, the airport property. Through-the-fence operations include businesses or individuals that have access to the airport infrastructure from outside airport property, or that utilize airport property to conduct a business, but do not rent business space at the airport. Ezell hopes to develop houses with hangars on lots in the adjacent property.

Commonly called "airparks," these developments are rapidly spreading throughout the country. One can eat breakfast in their house and then walk to the adjacent hangar, get in their airplane and be off to distant points across the country. No more long commutes from home to the airport. You live at the airport!

You can contact Ezell Aviation at 254/559-3051 or e-mail them at [info@ezellaviation.com](mailto:info@ezellaviation.com). Visit their Web site at: [www.ezellaviation.com](http://www.ezellaviation.com). Their mailing address is P.O. Box 1793, Breckenridge, TX 76424.

For more information about Stephens County Airport go to: <http://www.airnav.com/airport/BKD>. ♦

# TEXAS AVIATION ANOTHER SUCCESS



# AN CONFERENCE SUFUL GATHERING!



## PROFILE: ARLINGTON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

By Cheryl Williams  
Austin, Texas

First they came by stagecoach, then by train and now by plane! Arlington has a long history of being ideally located to serve its community and surrounding area. During the westward expansion in the 1800's, Arlington was the site of a trading post that became a regular stop for stagecoaches, mail, politicians and other travelers on their westward journey. The post was such a perfect location that when the Texas and Pacific Railway decided to build a rail through the area they established a stop in Arlington (then called Johnson Station) to serve all the small settlements that were quickly developing in the region.

So, it would seem that Robert Porter, airport manager at Arlington Municipal for 18 years, is right that, "It's going to grow in spite of itself; no matter what kind of attitude that anybody has about this airport, because of our surface access and our air access." The airport is right in the middle of the Metroplex. He continues, "If you



Robert "Bob" Porter, Airport Manager, Arlington Municipal Airport.

are flying in, it is relatively easy because we are located beneath the 3,000 foot level of the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) Class 'B' airspace." And, it is conveniently located to both I-20 and SH 360, so the location has helped them enormously.

Many people who fly in to the airport are usually going to both Dallas and Fort Worth because the cities are so easily accessible by vehicle from there; and, companies like Wal-Mart fly in and then drive all over both cities. Arlington also draws thousands of people to its family-oriented area attractions like Six Flags Over Texas and Hurricane Harbor/Fun Sphere Water Park. Furthermore, it is the home of Major League Baseball's Texas Rangers, the University of

Texas at Arlington and the future home to the Dallas Cowboys' football team in 2009.

### AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The airport was first established in 1962 with a 350-acre land swap deal. The federal government had a piece of property as surplus and the city also had a piece of property on hand, so they agreed to swap properties with a small amount of money being transferred. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) then funded a 4,000-foot runway and the excavation for a parallel taxiway, which was paved a couple of years later. Then, in 1967, Bell Helicopter built a test pilot facility at the airport for their research and development department. Still, the airport in 1969 had a 4,000-foot runway, one 20,000 square foot private hangar, three Thangars and a trailer for a terminal building. But, by 1973 two more Thangars were added and in 1982 the city built the current terminal building. More private development was later added to the airport in the 1980's.

In 1988, when Porter started working at Arlington Municipal, the city had already obtained a grant from the FAA to extend its runway; consequently, it was the first project that he managed there and was completed in 1990. Shortly after Porter arrived, he wrote the minimum standards guidelines for Arlington Municipal in anticipation of much needed private development. With someone at the airport actually working on economic development, by the early 1990's the outcome was that a couple of major private developments occurred. Additionally, the city gave up fuel sales and being an FBO in order to entice more development. Moreover, by 2002 a 6,080-foot runway was completed.

### THE AIRPORT

Arlington Municipal Airport is a full-service, general aviation reliever airport owned and operated by the City of Arlington; and it generates considerable revenue for the city. Porter said, "We currently offset 80 to 90 percent of our operations costs with direct revenues." The minimal shortfall is funded by the city's general fund.

The airport is a safe, well-maintained, well-managed, busy airport with over 300 based aircraft, including 20 aviation-related commercial operators. Harrison Aviation is the only full-service, fixed-base operator (FBO) at the airport. The city owns and manages 96 Thangars, a 10,000-square foot maintenance hangar, 140 tie-down spaces, as well as an attractive but aging 7,000-square foot terminal building with administrative offices and a brand new air traffic control tower – certified operational on September 1, 2006.

There are five flight schools at Arlington Municipal, which was an overwhelming reason why they needed a control tower. Porter →

said, "Our mix is unbelievable. We've got DC-9s and 727s bringing in freight to the General Motors plant, and we've got five flight schools doing touch and go's at the same time. Then, when you add all the itinerant aircraft in, the corporate jet activity and whatnot, it makes for a busy traffic pattern. You know, I'm looking backward at the last few years wondering how we survived without a tower. It is so nice now and it is such a relief to have controllers here to handle it all for us."

Arlington Municipal participates in an FAA-contract tower program. The FAA is using Robinson Aviation, Inc. to staff this airport. The FAA pays for all the salaries and liability insurance, and the city pays for the management of the building and maintenance of the equipment and utilities.

Porter remarked, "The tower controllers came to me on October 1, [2006] and said the numbers for the very first month of operation were 10,033, and this is only from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. So, we will easily hit 130,000 to 140,000 operations annually! And you know it is going to pick up. I mean, we aren't even on the charts yet that we have a tower, and we still have more development coming to the airport."

### **AIRPORT QUICK TOUR**

This airport has it all! They provide 24-hour professional line service; Jet A and 100LL Avgas; flight instruction; charter aircraft; aircraft maintenance, storage, rentals, sales, parts; pilot supplies and services; transient tie-downs and hangars. They also have a computerized flight planning room, executive conference room, courtesy cars, major and minor repair facilities, and will even make hotel, limo and rental car reservations.

Porter mentioned that their FBO is looking to double its size and are considering whether to move south, which is where the city's T-hangars are located or north. He explained, "If the FBO moves north, it will achieve a mutual goal: the city needs a new terminal building and the FBO wants more land adjacent to their current lease site to expand their facilities."

He continued, "We have had 100 percent occupancy in all our hangars since the day I walked through this terminal door, as it was before me. This airport has always had a need for more hangar space." He said they have a waiting list of about 175 names and it is at least a three-year wait to get into a hangar!

Arlington Municipal has a self-service island for fueling. Porter said, "We want to be the corporate airport of choice, but we don't want to forget those that brought us here." So the FBO and the city are providing the opportunity for cheaper gas. "We put in an EPA-approved wash rack a hundred years ago, before anybody thought of it and it has paid off tremendously. We actually provide the water for free to entice the tenants to wash their aircraft where there is proper drainage."

According to Porter, Bell Helicopter "Xworx" test flight facility located at the airport conducts secretive research and development for military aircraft that they retrofit or manufacture. The test flying and

engine testing for most of their new prototypes are also done here. In March 1989, the V-22 Tiltrotor flew its maiden flight and now Bell is testing their corporate version, the '609' Tiltrotor here, also. Porter stressed, "What I like about it is that it gives Arlington Municipal a niche for Bell's operations, so there's no fear that they will pull this project (Xworx) out and combine it with their Amarillo plant - where they actually build them - because here is where they test fly them and are doing their specialty security work as well.

With all these helicopters around the airport, Porter commented, "I flew one once and I flew fixed-wing for a long time. I've had the opportunity to fly a lot of airships because we get a lot of blimps here. It's exciting because when they come in on occasion, there will be four or five seats available, if you want to take a ride. And if the crew finds out that you are a pilot, they sometimes invite you to come aboard and fly the airship. And, that's a unique opportunity to get that kind of deal."

Another draw that will increase operations at Arlington Municipal is the new Dallas Cowboy football stadium being built in Arlington and scheduled to open in 2009. Porter remarked, "On opening day of the Ranger's baseball season we have had heavy iron stuck in every corner of this airport. There just wasn't enough space for all the jets. In the future, whenever the Cowboys are at Arlington, we are going to see a lot of activity. Of course, if we were to get a chance to have a Super Bowl at the new stadium, it would be all over with! We would have to use every airport in this area to accommodate all the aircraft, similar to what they do for NASCAR weekend in Fort Worth."

As if all this weren't enough, according to Porter, they have some exciting opportunities with a new revenue source. Apparently, the airport property just happens to be sitting on the vein of natural gas that runs north and south of them. Natural gas drilling on the airport could provide them with the capital they need to make them completely self-sufficient. He continues, "We are looking for ways to set this up for the future so we don't use it all up in the beginning, since we know that natural gas doesn't last forever. We want a situation that will make this last for a very, very long time. This way the airport won't be a burden on the taxpayer and we will have a nice revenue stream coming in. But who would have ever thought? This is just so exciting to see what royalties we could end up with if this works out the way we think it will!"

### **AIRPORT MANAGER**

Robert Porter has a bachelor of science degree in aerospace technology and business management and is an accredited airport executive; as well as, a commercial/multi-engine rated pilot. He says, "I had three interests when I was growing up. One was flying, and one was being an attorney of all things, and the other was being an engineer. This airport manager job gives me the experience in these three different areas that I really enjoy." Certainly, dealing and reviewing leases, working with engineers in airport construction projects and his love of aviation have realized his early career interests. →



Robert "Bob" Porter, a pilot, has been airport manager at Arlington Municipal Airport for 18 years.

He credits his management success to the support and successful working relationship with city officials, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Aviation Division personnel and the FAA Project Manager assigned within the region.

### **FUTURE**

Bob can't stop smiling as he continues, "What we are seeing in the near future for Arlington Municipal is a wonderful thing." They have two major private development proposals. One of them will be for 24 medium-sized jet aircraft and the other one is for two 25,000 square foot hangars with door openings that will fit the G-4 category aircraft. We are really excited about what is happening with the private development projects that are before the city council."

With the completion of the control tower this year and the Instrument Landing System (ILS) that is coming in 2007, the airport is where they wanted it to be. Porter indicated, "We have achieved many of the goals in the mission we had set, which was to be the corporate airport of choice in the Metroplex. Now, we need to be sure that since we've got all the facilities and the infrastructure that we get the amenities and the private development that goes along with it. So, there's some exciting times coming up. Fortunately, we have a new airport master plan in the works, which will help guide us with the future development at the airport."

Wow! And, it all started with a little trading post that became a regular stop! ♦

## **HALE COUNTY AIRPORT MEANS WEST TEXAS HOSPITALITY**

By Lee Jay Carpenter  
Texas Aviation Association

PLAINVIEW – In this "hustle to get things done" society that we live in, many common courtesies are overlooked. We often forget to open a door for someone with arms full of packages or to help a child cross a busy street. In business, many personal services are overlooked in order to make the all-mighty dollar as fast as possible. As a result, good manners often take a back seat to "progress." The good ol' days when folks talked slower and took the time to make sure a customer was completely satisfied seem to have all but vanished. However, common courtesy and good manners are still alive and well in Plainview, Texas.

When planning a cross-country flight, I'm always on the lookout for an airport along the way where I can refuel my single engine Grumman Tiger. One day while flying to Dimmitt, a remote town located southwest of Amarillo, my wife said, "Look, what's that airport?" I realized then that we were crossing Hale County Airport in Plainview, Texas. Since Dimmitt does not have AvGas for sale, we decided to land and refuel in Plainview.

Hale County Airport is located about 35 miles north of Lubbock. The facility has four runways. Runways 13-31 measure 4,000 feet in length and runways 04-22 are just three feet short of 6,000 feet. Runways 04-22 both

have GPS (Global Position System) instrument approaches and runway 04 has a VOR (VHF Omnidirectional Range) instrument approach. Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Aviation recently resurfaced the runways, thus providing an excellent facility.

I was surprised to find that unlike most airfields, Hale County Airport (KPWW) has two airport managers. What's more, these two managers are competitors for your business. Mike Hutcherson runs Hutcherson Air Service on the southeast side of the field and Tim Hardage operates Rocket Aviation (formerly Miller Flying Service) on the north side. Together, these two friendly competitors operate the airport with excellent efficiency that emphasizes West Texas hospitality.

Hale County Airport has a rich history of great service, long runways and down-home friendly people. This facility has the kind of folks who make sure your every need is met, no matter what time of day. Piston and Jet-A Fuel are available along with services that include engine repair, aircraft rental/sales, hangar rent, pilot's lounge, flight planning rooms and rental cars. OK, most airports offer similar services, but do they furnish that service 24-hours a day, for no extra charge? Courtesy cars are available if you want to drive into town to eat. However, if time is really short, you can radio in a request for hamburgers from your arriving aircraft and by the time you land, Hutcherson said that he would have a hot meal waiting for you. Try to find that kind of service in other areas!

The state motto of Texas is "Friendship." Plainview certainly lives up to that boast. Everyone smiles in Plainview. They wave, too, even to strangers. A friend of mine once remarked that he thought there might be something in the water that makes everyone so friendly. I explained that this is West Texas →

where friendship, common courtesy and manners live and thrive. If your needs cannot be met, any citizen will go out of their way to see that someone can help you out.

The local newspaper, *The Plainview Daily Herald*, posts "Plane Talk," a regularly featured column that lists visiting pilots, business persons and even student pilots that receive their ratings. The City of Plainview supports General Aviation with pride. I sat down and talked with the two managers of Hale County Airport.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Claude Hutcherson, Mike Hutcherson flies all over the United States in a King Air among other aircraft including one of his favorites, the Beechcraft Bonanza. He continues the tradition of supporting the Wayland Baptist University girl's basketball team. Claude Hutcherson, along with coach Harley Redin began flying the team in their aircraft to games and tournaments around the country. The team became known as the "Flying Queens." This team soon became famous because of their win records and the fact that they flew to most out of town games. The Flying Queens moved into their home court named, what else, Hutcherson Center in 1971.

Among the plaques and awards on Hutcherson's wall of fame are pictures of the "Flying Queens." Still, he is humble and doesn't wear his acclaims on his sleeve. Instead, he is willing to take time to make sure each and every customer who visits Plainview feels welcome. Hutcherson gave me a wooden nickel. No, not like the nickel that is worthless. He explained that when I visited Plainview again, to present this wooden nickel and I would receive five cents off on each gallon of AvGas that I purchased; that definitely got my attention. This sales pitch continues a long tradition of promotion started by his father, Claude.



Mike Hutcherson standing next to his wall of fame featuring the Wayland Baptist University's "Flying Queens."

Back in the 1960's, Claude used to give away billfolds to potential aviation customers. Inside the billfold was a dollar bill with a note saying that this bill would buy one airplane ride over Plainview. It was said that this promotion attracted more non-flying people to General Aviation than any other device. He knew to sell aviation first, and then sell the airplane. This personal touch with customer satisfaction continues with his son, Mike.

When asked about having two managers at the airport Hutcherson explained, "Plainview is only big enough for one FBO (Fixed Base of Operations), but we don't have trouble sharing the duties." He said that each business has their regular loyal clients but that most of the airport's customers are from out-of-town. He continued, "PWW is a good half way point between the east coast and the west coast. Business jets traveling across the country find that Plainview is just about halfway between the borders and they will stop here for the convenience, competitive prices and good service that we offer."

Across Runway 04-22 is the Rocket Aviation FBO, which is owned and operated by Tim Hardage. Hardage recently purchased the business from Marlin Miller of Miller Flying Service. For many decades, the Miller family has nourished aviation in West Texas. Marlin's father, James Miller, began acquiring Taylorcraft airplanes in the '30's and 40's and encouraged his friends to learn to fly. After World War II, James Miller bought some land near town and helped to open the Hale County Airport with Miller Flying Service as the manager. James Hardage and his business partner Marge Mitchell ran Miller Flying Service and became the Bellanca Aircraft dealer selling the popular and fast flying Super Viking.

Later, the business was taken over by James' son, Marlin Miller. Miller continued the tradition of excellent service, and maintaining the airport in proper shape. He said, "Dad was the famous Bellanca dealer and he would usually make 50 phone calls a day to make deals. I took over his tradition of doing business as a gentleman. Back in the 70's we were selling 30 airplanes a month." Miller, now 74, has agreed to sell his business to Tim Hardage. He said that he will remain at the airport indefinitely as Hardage's spokesman, helping to make the transition. His mother Elvie Miller is moving back from Houston and he'll be taking care of her. "She is 98 years old," said Miller.



Marlin Miller sold his business, Miller Flying Service, to Tim Hardage who changed the name to Rocket Aviation.

Tim Hardage learned to fly at the Hale County Airport. "I learned to fly over at Hutcherson's and worked for Mike Miller from 1986 to 1989 while I attended college. I flew charter flights and taught flight instruction, so we get along very well," said Tim. Tim also became a spray pilot in 1997. He sold his spraying business in 2004.

In addition, Hardage worked for and flew Pete Laney, former Texas Speaker of the House, on government and personal flights. Laney resides in nearby Hale Center and is a big supporter of General Aviation. Laney has taken over Tim's position on the board of directors of the Hale County Airport Advisory Commission.

Tim Hardage and his father, Bill Hardage, had talked to Miller about the sale of Miller Flying Service on several occasions. Two weeks after agreeing on the terms, Bill Hardage was killed in an accident while flying a Mooney Cadet airplane that he had just purchased in California. He was on his way back to Texas when the accident occurred.

"I was bitter," said Hardage. "That crash took my partner and my best friend." He explained that the emptiness in his life after losing his father made him contemplate giving up the flying business. He had been a spray pilot for nine years and thought that perhaps this was a sign that his flying career was over. "However, after a while I decided that the flying business is →

still what I wanted to do," said Hardage. "After I discussed the situation with my wife Stacie, I decided it was best for me to press on and complete the purchase of Miller Flying Service."

"My goal is to increase the business and become more pro-active," said Hardage. "I plan to go out and find airplanes to buy and sell. Dad and I were doing this anyway. We had five airplanes." Hardage presently owns a Vans RV4 experimental homebuilt aircraft that he calls the "Red Rocket." However, he is looking to buy Miller's inventory which includes two Piper Cherokees and three Bellanca Super Vikings.

When asked about the name change from Miller Flying Service to Rocket Aviation Hardage replied, "I didn't want my name on it. I wanted to keep the Miller name but my lawyers said, "No." His lawyers explained that liability issues could rear their ugly head. "I am not a Miller although Marlin Miller said many times that I'm the son he never had." Rocket Aviation will continue with the same employee staff, service and reputation developed by the Miller family. "Nothing will change except the name," said Hardage.

Currently, Tim and Stacie Hardage are remodeling the old Miller FBO building. A new metal roof, pilot's lounge, flight planning room and large new windows are being installed to make visitors more comfortable.

Hardage also spoke of the continuing economic impact that the airport will provide for Plainview. The nearby Wal-Mart Distribution Plant has a facility with over one million square feet and there is a new 24-hour Wal-Mart Superstore. Also, there are plans for a new ethanol plant to be constructed east of Plainview. Cargill, also, has a meat packing facility here and there is new interest in oil and gas exploration in the area. All of this new commercial activity will entail extensive use of the Hale County Airport for business travel.

Both Hutcherson and Hardage explained that long-range plans for the airport include extending Runways 04-22 to 7,000 feet in length. This would allow the most modern business jets to land and take off with full fuel. This project, along with the great service that Hardage and Hutcherson provide, would



Tim Hardage standing next to a Bellanca Super Viking.

further boost the local economy. "We own the land, but some buildings will have to be purchased," said Hardage. "TxDOT Aviation needs justification that traffic would increase and I believe it will. We have cross-country business jets arriving regularly and we try to provide the best service so that they will return. These pilots have choices. Many choose to land here as opposed to Lubbock because of our lower fuel prices and 24-hour service."

Hardage explained that he lives just three minutes from the airport and he will give quick and personal service, if he knows that a pilot is arriving. "It's all about customer satisfaction. Once pilots receive our personal service, they'll return," he said.

The future for Hale County Airport looks bright. With the new commercial development taking place in Plainview, air traffic is expected to increase. Both personal and business aircraft will be welcomed by professional and courteous personnel at the airport. The next time you're in West Texas, drop by and visit the friendly folks at Hale County Airport. They'll have a pot of coffee on and a warm smile to greet you. ♦

## **CITY OF TEMPLE FIXED-BASE OPERATION RECEIVES EXXONMOBIL NETWORK TOP HONOR**

By ExxonMobil  
News Release

FAIRFAX, VA – May 29, 2007; ExxonMobil Aviation is pleased to announce that the City of Temple's Fixed Base Operations (FBO) at the Draughton-Miller Municipal Airport (TPL) scored second highest in ExxonMobil Aviation's 2006 PremierSpirit program and received recognition as one of the nation's best general aviation facilities in the ExxonMobil Aviation FBO network. This is the fourth consecutive year the City of Temple has been recognized as a PremierSpirit award winner.

"PremierSpirit is a highly competitive and extremely beneficial program as it challenges our FBOs to deliver the highest caliber of customer care in the general aviation industry. To win four consecutive years is quite an accomplishment and speaks volumes to Sharon Rostovich (Temple Airport

Director) and her staff's commitment to professionalism and customer service," said Melissa Overbay, ExxonMobil Aviation's market and program development manager.

In its 18th year, the PremierSpirit program asks customers (pilots and schedulers) to rate FBOs in four areas: customer service, image, quality control and business performance. Customers returned over 13,000 surveys in 2006 from which the award winners were chosen. These winners represent the top 15 percent of ExxonMobil Aviation-branded FBOs in the United States who participated in the PremierSpirit program.

"PremierSpirit winners are an asset to the airfields and communities they serve. Local citizens and visitors from around the world know they can count on receiving stellar service and dependable fuel when they visit a PremierSpirit winner," Overbay continued.

ExxonMobil Aviation-branded FBOs provide fueling and other services for corporate and general aviation aircraft, crews and passengers at over 200 airports nationwide and 700 airports worldwide.

To learn more about ExxonMobil Aviation and its premier network of FBOs, visit [www.exxonmobileaviation.com](http://www.exxonmobileaviation.com) or [www.avitat.com](http://www.avitat.com). ♦

# FLIGHT SAFETY

## COMMON NIGHT ILLUSIONS

Visual illusions are perhaps the greatest source of danger pilots confront when flying at night – especially if they are proficient on instruments. That proficiency can lull them into thinking a night flight is just like a day flight, when in fact it's anything but.

Some common visual illusions:

- The ability to estimate distance fades with the light. Humans are used to judging distance by comparing the size of one object with another or by noting something's size, color or clarity. Because it's common for closer things to be brighter, the tendency is to accept this at night as well – but of course it depends on the power of the light.
- Beware the false horizon. A few lights on the ground can appear indistinguishable from the twinkling of stars. A pattern of lights on the ground can appear to be a horizon. Moonlight on the edge of a cloud can create a false horizon.
- The movement of lights can fool you. If you bank away from lights, it may appear they are farther below you and moving away. If you bank toward them, you may feel like you are descending. If you are nose-down, you may think you're lower than you are. Pitching up will "fix" your perceived attitude, but you may still be descending."
- Don't undershoot dim runways. Dim objects are perceived to be farther away, and that means you may think you're higher and farther from the runway than you are – prompting you to land prematurely. Conversely, if the runway lights are particularly bright, you may think they're too close and land long.
- Moisture means trouble. Fog, haze, mist or light rain can lead to variations in the perceived brightness of the runway environment and make you unsure of whether you're above or below your desired flight path. The illusion may change every few seconds. Use guides such as the VASI or an ILS to help. ♦

SOURCE: *Aviation Safety* 2003



The Aviation Division continues to serve the public throughout the state by providing lending services to patrons by mail.

**POLICY:** Any resident of Texas can check out three DVD/Video tapes at a time for two weeks at no charge. Only return postage is necessary

**MEMBERSHIP:** To enroll in our database, write to TxDOT Aviation Division, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701; give your name, address, telephone number, as well as your driver's license number. After membership enrollment, a video catalog of tapes will be sent to you for your review. You can then place your order at your convenience by calling our 800 number.

**AUSTIN PATRONS:** Office Hours - Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Donald Brown at 1-800/68-PILOT.

### INTERESTING DVDs/VIDEOS:

- d1053 The Restorers – Giving History a Future
- d1054 The Barnstormers – Pioneers of the Skies
- d1206 Runway Safety – Listen Up Read Back Fly Right
- d1306 Practical Risk Management for Pilots Course
- d1307 Practical Risk Management for the Weather Course ♦

## GRANTS RECEIVED

Livingston Municipal Airport	\$1,400,000	Rehabilitate runway 12-30, mark and stripe runway 12-30, rehabilitate, mark and stripe stub taxiways and turnaround, reconstruct apron improvements, replace rotating beacon and beacon tower, install 2-Box PAPI on runway 30 and install erosion/sedimentation controls.
Beeville Municipal Airport	\$386,000	Lighting improvements, runway 12-30 and install new rotating beacon and tower.
Palestine Municipal Airport	\$275,000	Install medium intensity runway lighting (MIRL) and new precision approach path indicator (PAPI) circuit.
Fabens Airport/Tahoka	\$528,020	Airport lighting improvements.
Hondo Municipal Airport	\$200,000	Install 12,000-gallon Jet-A fuel system, install 12,000-gallon AVGAS fuel system and install credit card terminal to serve fuel system.
Denton Municipal Airport	\$2,377,481	Construct an airport terminal building, an air traffic control tower and an auto parking lot.
Arlington Municipal Airport	\$3,074,074	Rehabilitate and reconstruct pavement.
Presidio-Lely International Airport	\$1,342,750	Construct runway, taxiway and apron improvements.
Hutchinson County Airport	\$333,334	Replace medium intensity runway lights (MIRL), runway 3-21.
Lone Star Executive Airport	\$585,852	Construct south Thangar taxiway.

## WEB SITES TO VISIT

Aircraft Dispatcher Training  
[www.agschools.com](http://www.agschools.com)

Arizona Soaring  
[www.azsoaring.com](http://www.azsoaring.com)

Be a Pilot Program  
[www.beapilot.com](http://www.beapilot.com)

Best Fares  
[www.bestfares.com](http://www.bestfares.com)

North American Top Gun  
[www.natg.com](http://www.natg.com)

Travel Safety Warnings & Notices Worldwide  
[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Aug 13-18** 31st Annual Convention, Black Airline Pilots, Houston, Texas
- Sep 22-23** Amigo Airsho, El Paso, Texas
- Sep 29** Hilltop Lakes Annual Fly-In, Hilltop Lakes, Texas
- Oct 6-7** Wings Over Houston Airshow, Houston, Texas
- Oct 19-21** Texas Yamboree Festival, Gilmer, Texas
- Oct 20** The Moonlight Fund Airshow, New Braunfels, Texas

Editor's Note: For most recent entries, visit our Texas Aviation Calendar of Events at our Web site: [www.dot.state.tx.us/avn/calendarofevents.htm](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/avn/calendarofevents.htm) and *Wingtips* newsletter: [www.dot.state.tx.us/publications/aviation.htm](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/publications/aviation.htm)

Deadline for article submissions for the Sep-Oct 2007 *Wingtips* is August 4, 2007.



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