



WINGTIPS



Spring
2011

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THE STORY OF THE WOOD COUNTY AIRPORT

By Rick Davenport
Texas Transportation Institute

He's 86 years of age, still flies a couple of times a week and he's a proud member of the United Flying Octogenarians (UFO), which is a 600-member club of pilots over the age of 80. But Wayne Collins is much more than just an old man with a Bonanza. In Wood County, Texas, he's an aviation pioneer — a living legend to the growing number of people here who care about flying and the economy.

Last year, when the Wood County Airport was awarded the General Aviation Airport of the Year, many considered it a tribute to Collins and the personal struggles he endured to make the airport a reality. *continued on pg. 3*



Wayne Collins, Sandra Braden of TxDOT Aviation and Dr. John Wisdom
in front of the Wood County Airport terminal building.



TEXAS AVIATION PIONEER DIES:

Leland Snow, founder and President of Air Tractor, Inc., and the inventor of modern aerial spray aircraft, died Sunday, February 20, 2011, while jogging near his home. He was 80 years old.

Mr. Snow was a graduate of Texas A&M University with a degree in aeronautical engineering. He designed and built his first crop dusting airplane, the S-1, in 1951 and flew dusting and spraying jobs in Texas and Nicaragua until 1957. He followed up the S-1 with the models S-2A and S-2B, which were built when Snow moved his production facilities for Snow Aeronautical Company to Olney, Texas, in 1958.

Snow received numerous aviation industry awards during his career including recognition by the Texas Department of Transportation in 1997 for his contributions to aviation in Texas. He was inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame in 2000.

Leland Snow was a true giant in aviation in Texas and throughout the world.



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

THE 29TH ANNUAL TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE:

Mark the dates of May 25-27 for the 29th Annual Texas Aviation Conference. Early registration for the conference is available at <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac11/>. A lot is happening in the world of aviation and we hope you will be in Austin May 25-27 to discuss many of the important issues with us.♦

TXDOT AVIATION CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

The Aviation Division of the Texas Department of Transportation has asked the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University to help them assess the level of service they provide to their many customers. These customers include 1) airport sponsors (managers and city/county officials), 2) consultants and 3) contractors.

The Aviation Division provides engineering and technical services for planning, constructing and maintaining aeronautical facilities in the state system that currently includes 300 airports. They maintain a statewide airport plan, assist local governments in the development of aviation facilities, provide aeronautical training and information and apply for, receive and disburse federal and state funds.

We would appreciate you taking a few moments to fill out the online survey. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. It can be found at <http://www.AVNCustomerService.org>. If you would rather receive a survey in the mail, you may request one by contacting Jeff Borowiec at 979/845-5200 or by e-mail at jborowiec@tam.u.edu.

If you have not already done so, please complete the survey by **May 14, 2011**. Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Jeff Borowiec at 979/845-5200 or by e-mail at jborowiec@tam.u.edu.♦



THE STORY OF THE WOOD COUNTY AIRPORT *continued from pg. 1*

It seems like a lifetime ago when Collins' business was picketed by angry citizens who thought a new airport would hurt nearby land values.

Back in 1978, Collins was a northeast Texas clothing store owner and an avid pilot who had a dream of having a general aviation airport that could become the industrial hub for Wood County. The area did have a private 3,000' surfaced strip 30' wide with lots of loose gravel with no room for growth and no money for improvement. An airport board was formed and Collins was appointed Chairman. (It's a position he held until two years ago and he still is a board member.)

"We started making progress after an alliance was formed with the cities of Mineola and Quitman and Wood County," Collins recalls. "They all chipped in some money to buy 80 acres of land for an airport site that adjoined county land, but we were still short. A local foundation donated the rest."

But not everyone was happy. Collins was getting angry phone calls and protestors were threatening to picket his clothing store. "I thought I was going to get tarred and feathered," he said of the opposition.

Luckily, Collins, along with other volunteers, persisted. They planned and scrimped and made numerous waves of improvements every few years thanks to sheer determination and little to no operating funds in the early years. There has never been a paid employee as the Volunteer Airport Board has operated the facility with the support of the communities for capital improvements. Last year the Airport Board received \$14,290 in operating funds from the communities, the balance of the \$40,000 operating budget was airport income and RAMP participation.

"The Airport has grown into a \$1.6 million annual economic engine," says Gary McKinley, the executive director of the Wood County Industrial Commission. "It's a significant figure considering our size. The airport has indeed developed into our industrial hub."

The airport serves local businesses including the nearby Quitman hospital, area aviators and anglers who fish world-famous bass hot spot Lake Fork (located just five miles from the airport). The airport has also become the reason why numerous pilots made Wood County their home after retirement.

"We like to gauge our success on the economic impact that the airport has locally," says John Wisdom, the current Wood County Airport Board Chairman. "Yes, we are steadily making improvements, but we really like the fact that — considering our budget — we have provided a very safe, attractive and efficient facility."

Recent airport improvements include a fully renovated and expanded terminal building with all the creature comforts, a taxiway expansion and full utilities for all the hangars including electric, water, sewer and high-speed internet. And there are plans in the works for other improvements.

It's a safe bet that Wayne Collins will be a driving force behind the efforts. Being named the General Aviation Airport of the Year has become the culmination of his vision...that continues today.

"This award really means a lot to us," Collins says, who is quick to point to all the other people who have worked on the airport over the decades, including the Aviation Division of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). "Director of Aviation Dave Fulton has been great. If an airport wants to grow, TxDOT Aviation will give them the tools."

Each year, the airport board hosts an appreciation luncheon that is attended by 100 thankful Wood County residents. Yes, 1978 seems like a long time ago.

Visit the Wood County Airport Web site at: <http://woodcountyairport.net/>. ♦

HIGHWAY 62, REVISITED

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

Situated in the seemingly lonesome outposts of deep West Texas are two airports that support the local agricultural-based economies. And a visitor in the middle of the summer might be surprised to find that instead of dusty plains, lush, green fields produce prolific crops of cotton and peanuts, in addition to oil and gas.

Gaines County Airport

Seminole, besides being the state's number one producer of cotton, peanuts and oil/gas, is also the home of the Gaines County Airport (KGNC), located three miles south of town.



The terminal building and Aero Clinic FBO at Gaines County Airport.

Lex Hinds, a second-generation aviator, has been the airport manager since 1981. He is also the owner of Aero Clinic, Inc., the airport fixed-base operator that provides complete aircraft service from painting to avionics. And, like many airport managers throughout the state, he's passionate about providing the best facility he can with the resources he has available.

"About 10 years ago we received a big grant and rebuilt runway 17/35, built the ramp around the hangars with improved water drainage and added lights to runway 8/26," says Hinds. "In the months of March and April we get some pretty strong winds that made for difficult landings at night without runway lights, so that was an important addition."

Gaines County Airport has two lighted runways: a 5,381-foot east/west and a 5,000-foot north/south. The airport also offers a terminal building with a pilot's lounge, fuel and hangar and tie-down services. Their annual economic impact to Seminole is \$1.985 million per year.

"Last summer we met with TxDOT to develop a master plan for the airport," says Hinds. "I'm excited to move forward with further renovations such as replacing the runway lights on 17/35, improved navigational aids for our larger aircraft and building a large hangar for corporate aviation. I've got growing pains out here and am anxious to keep moving forward."

Terry County Airport

About 40 miles up Highway 62 is the Terry County Airport (KBFE) located in Brownfield. As was the case for many of the general aviation airports in Texas, the Terry County Airport saw a dip in its daily arrivals due to the recession. But with recent improvements, such as a recently constructed terminal building, the airport is making a comeback.

For 55 years, the airport was managed by Mr. Pete Harris. The recently retired Mr. Harris began his aviation career in 1946 training GIs to fly, then arrived at the Terry County Airport in 1955. Over that time he has maintained a flight school and crop dusting/spraying business.

His successor, Tommy Hogue, assumed the day-to-day operations last fall. "When I was nine-years-old, my father took me to the airport, and Mr. Harris took me for my very first plane ride," says Hogue.

In the past five years, the airport has undergone several improvements, including the construction of a roomy terminal building with plenty of space for tired aviators to stretch their legs and plan their next flight. The terminal was constructed using matching funds provided by TxDOT Aviation Division's Routine Airport Maintenance Program.

"TxDOT has been very helpful in our improvement process," says Mr. Harris. "They have flown in and met with members of our chamber of commerce. Whatever we've needed, they've been there."

Other improvements include the installation of a self-service, modern fuel system, resurfaced main runway and a new hangar to replace one that was destroyed during a storm. "Really all we lack is a little maintenance on our ramps and crosswind runway," notes Hogue.

With the recent improvements and a surging economy bolstered by local clients from Birdsong Peanuts, John Deere, Cooper Natural Resources and Kodak, the Terry County Airport is a busy place, reflected by their annual economic impact to Brownfield of \$3.571 million per year.

"I try not to work very much," Mr. Hogue chuckled. "But it seems like I stay busy every day, especially on the weekends."◆



Terry County Airport Manager Tommy Hogue with his fully restored 1946 ErCoupe.

GRANTS RECEIVED

| | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| Calhoun County Airport/ Port Lavaca | \$2,062,000 | Reconstruct and widen taxiway F; rehabilitate apron; overlay and mark parallel taxiway; construct parking area drainage improvements, terminal building drainage improvements and expand aircraft parking apron. |
| Palacios Municipal Airport | \$943,540 | Remark and reduce width runway 17-35; spall and crack repair runway 17-35; joint sealant runway 17-35; rehabilitate culverts and inlets; regrade shoulders; recut ditches for drainage improvements for runway 17-35 and install security fencing at terminal area. |
| Kimble County Airport/ Junction | \$741,810 | Rehabilitate and mark runway 17-35; rehabilitate apron, stub taxiway, parallel taxiway and turnarounds; reconstruct north portion of parallel taxiway on runway 17 end; construct auto parking at terminal building; construct new stub taxiway to T-hangars; construct auto access to new T-hangars; install precision approach path indicator-4 at runway 17-35 and drainage improvements. |
| Mesquite Metro Airport | \$194,561 | Install 6-foot chain link fencing and 20-foot sliding gate. |
| Kickapoo Downtown Airport/Wichita Falls | \$2,516,545 | Expand and reconstruct apron; rehabilitate hangar access taxiways; relocate fuel facility; and drainage improvements. |
| Texas State Technical College-Waco | \$1,661,873 | Construct new air traffic control tower and install cab equipment. |
| Garner Field Uvalde | \$2,461,960 | Rehabilitate and mark Runway 15-33; rehabilitate Taxiway C east and west side; rehabilitate and mark parallel taxiway to Runway 15-33; reconstruct/rehabilitate west side apron; rehabilitate Taxiway D; rehabilitate Taxiway B east and west side; rehabilitate west and east side hangar access taxiways; rehabilitate Ag apron; rehabilitate terminal apron; replace medium intensity runway lights Runway 15-33; relocate/replace electrical vault; install game fencing; install security fence Sul Ross Drive; clear/grub land at south end of airport; and extend Howard Langford Drive. |
| Addison Airport | \$11,600,000 | Repair runway weak areas prior to overlay; overlay Runway 15-33 and groove; mark Runway 15-33; runway safety area improvements; install precision approach path indicator-4 on Runway 33 and replace FAA's visual approach slope indicator Runway 15 with precision approach path indicator; install runway guard lights; replace medium intensity approach lighting system with runway alignment indicator lights; FAA memorandum of agreement for medium intensity approach lighting system with runway alignment indicator lights; replace medium intensity runway lights with high intensity runway lights and guidance lights; and drainage improvements along Runway 15-33. |

29th TEXAS Aviation CONFERENCE

Sponsored by: The Texas Department of Transportation
Co-Sponsored by: Texas Airports Council and Texas Aviation Association

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 25, 26, 27, 2011

Renaissance Austin Hotel

9721 Arboretum Blvd.

Austin, Texas 78759

Conference Registration

Pre-registration is recommended and will help us in planning and preparing a better conference. If you pre-register, your name tag and program packet will be ready when you arrive at the hotel. The fee is \$225. **A \$75 fee will be added for all on-site registrations. You are encouraged to register online.** If paying by check or money order, register online and make payable to **TTI-Avtn2011** Event Management Planning (EM&P) at the address listed below. You may pay your registration fee by check, money order or credit card. **The registration fee covers conference handouts, break refreshments Wednesday's get acquainted reception, Thursday's breakfast, luncheon, award's banquet and social and Friday's breakfast.** Note: TxDOT employees are exempt from the registration fee, but must register in advance.

Hotel Reservations

The Renaissance Austin Hotel is holding a block of rooms for our use at the nightly rate of \$209 for single or double occupancy. After May 3, 2011 rooms are subject to availability and may be at a higher rate. To receive this rate, please call the Renaissance Austin Hotel at 512/343-2626 or 1-800/468-3571. Remember to mention the **Texas Aviation Conference** to receive the conference rate. The hotel has both self parking and valet parking for a fee. Please visit their website for additional information.

Special Activities

Wednesday, May 25:

- **2nd Annual Alton Young Memorial Motorcycle Ride.** Kickstands up at 10:00 a.m. Destination to be determined. Please contact Karen Smith with TTI at 979/862-1219 or Karen-s@tamu.edu register and for further details.
- **14th Annual Golf Tournament** at *The Balcones County Club in Austin.* **There will be a \$45 fee;** you can pay online with your conference registration. *All golfers must be registered to attend the conference.* There will be a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m. Event Management and Planning (EM&P) will contact you two weeks before the event.
- **4th Annual Bowling Event, Planes and Lanes,** sponsored by Garver. From 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the **Highland Lanes.** *Participants are not required to be registered for the conference.* The event will consist of two hours of bowling with lunch included. There will be a \$10 fee; you can pay on-line with your conference registration. A map will be located in the foyer of the hotel. If you have further questions please contact Perry Havenar at 972/377-7480 or pilhavenar@garverusa.com.
- A get acquainted reception is planned for Wednesday evening from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The reception will be located in the Exhibit Area with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

Thursday, May 26:

Evening Awards Banquet located at the hotel. All participants are encouraged to attend. Guest tickets are also available for \$35. Tickets can be purchased online when you register for the conference. A social, sponsored by Rodriguez Engineering, will follow the banquet.

Shuttle Service

If you need transportation from Austin Bergstrom International Airport, Super Shuttle is available. Upon arrival proceed to the lower level and collect your luggage, follow the signs to the Super Shuttle ticket counter located next to Baggage Carrousel 1. Tickets can be purchased one-way or round trip.

Special Needs

In compliance with ADA requirements, participants with special needs can be reasonably accommodated by contacting EM&P phone: 979/862-1219, toll free 1-888/550-5577 or fax 979/862-1225, at least five working days prior to the conference.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Aviation Division at 1-800/68-PILOT.



Aviation 2011 CONFERENCE

2011 TENTATIVE CO

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2011

- 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Alton Young Memorial Motorcycle Ride**
(Sponsored by C.T. Brannon)
- 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Golf Tournament**
- 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Planes and Lanes Bowling Event** (Sponsored by Garver)
- 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Exhibitor Set-up**
- 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Registration/Check-in**
- 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. **Exhibits Open**
- 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. **Get Acquainted Reception**

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2011

- 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Registration Desk Open**
- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. **Continental Breakfast** (in Exhibit Hall)
- 8:30 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. **Welcoming Address and Words from the Sponsors**
Dave Fulton, Director, TxDOT, Aviation Division
John Happ, President, Texas Airports Council
Jay Carpenter, Texas Aviation Association
- 8:50 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Introduction of Aviation Advisory Committee**
Dave Fulton, Director, TxDOT, Aviation Division
- 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. **State of the Aviation Division Address**
Dave Fulton, Director, TxDOT, Aviation Division
- 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **General Aviation Update**
Craig Fuller, President, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- 10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Coffee Break**
- 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **General Aviation Airport Security**
*Brian Delauter, General Manager of General Aviation,
Transportation Security Administration*
- 11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. **Current Issues in Airport Planning and Programming**
*Scott Gallagher, Director, Planning and Programming,
TxDOT, Aviation Division*

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Luncheon

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Texas Airport

- Approval of r
- Election of 20
- TAC Goals fo
- General Disc

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

I: Airspace Fi Update

Bill Gunn, TxDOT
Glenn Boles, TxDOT

II: Candid Ca Bijan Jamalaba

III: Airport Pl Plan, Busine *Dave Byers, Ass Jason Milewski,*

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Break in Exh

3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

I: Airport De *Greg Miller and*

II: Maintaini *Matt Singel, Ce Tom Freeman, T System*

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Break in Exh

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

I: RAMP Ses *Megan Caff Tom Dodson Gilbert Jordan,*

TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Council Meeting

Reports from previous meeting
Officers

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

II: Airport Consultant Session

Bijan Jamalabad, Director, Engineering and Project Management, TxDOT, Aviation Division

Awards Banquet

General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year, Most Improved Airport, Airport of the Year, Reliever Airport of the Year, RAMP Coordinator of the Year and Aviation Art Contest Winners

Workshop for Airport Construction/General

8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Evening Social (Sponsored By Rodriguez Engineering)

Aviation Division

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2011

Workshop: Is this your airport? (In Pictures)

Ed Mayle, TxDOT, Aviation Division

8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Exhibits and Registration Desk Open

Workshop: Planning Studies: When to do a Master Plan and Development Plan

*Professor, University of Nebraska at Omaha
Managing Director, Prautes Corporation*

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Airport Sponsor Grant Assurances

Stacy Swigart, FAA

Workshop

Challenges

Snodgrass, TxDOT, Aviation Division

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Washington Update

Henry Ogradzinski, President, National Association of State Aviation Officials

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Airport AWOS Weather Observations: A Big Pay Back for the Airport and the Community

*Troy M. Kimmel Jr., Chief Meteorologist, KEYE-TV (Austin)
Senior Lecturer, University of Texas at Austin*

Workshop: Our Pavement

*Council of Texas
Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University*

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

TxDOT/DOT-FAA AIP Program and Listening Session

*Dave Fulton, TxDOT, Aviation Division
Steven Cooks FAA Airports Development Office, SW Region*

Workshop: Surveillance Technology for Small Airports: Applications for Traffic Counting and Vehicle Occupancy Warnings to

Consultant, Patriot Technologies

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Prize Drawings

Workshop

*Program Manager, TxDOT, Aviation Division
Project Manager, Garver
RAMP Coordinator*

29th AVIATION TEXAS CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Register on-line at <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac11/>

You are encouraged to register online. If paying by check or money order, register on line and make check payable to TTI-Avtn2011, and send to Event Management and Planning, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University System, 3135 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-3135. Phone: 979/862-1219 and Fax 979/862-1225. NO PURCHASE ORDERS ACCEPTED. ONLY VISA, MASTER CARD AND DISCOVER CREDIT CARDS WILL BE ACCEPTED. ONLY CHECKS FROM U.S. BANKS ARE ACCEPTED. **TxDOT employees are exempt from the registration fee, but must register on-line.** If paying by check or money order, you may register on-line and then mail your payment. Only cancellations received in writing to EM&P by 5:00 p.m. April 13, 2011 will be refunded less a \$50 handling fee.

WOMEN OF AVIATION WORLDWIDE WEEK CALHOUN AIR CENTER SOARS ABOVE AND BEYOND

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, the aviation community proclaimed the entire week to be Women of Aviation Worldwide Week. Calhoun Air Center embraced the main goal of the event, which was to show females worldwide that they are capable of achieving their dreams; specifically that a career in aviation is an advantageous outlet for them.

Calhoun Air Center airport manager Dianna Stanger offered free helicopter rides to 104 passengers—98 of which were females. "It was an eye opener to many of the girls to ride in a helicopter," said Stanger. "They had the opportunity to fall in love with flying and it was heartwarming to share my love of aviation with so many others who could do it, too."

The air center emphasized the multiple options available to kids and girls. "The main goal of the event was to give back to those young women who are volunteering their time to better themselves and their communities and to introduce them to a portion of society that is severely under populated by female participants," said flight school manager, Steve Plunkett.

Many of the girls and women had never been on a helicopter and for some, it was an unforgettable experience. Michele Kuester treated her daughter, McKinsey, to a ride.

"She is in complete awe of the whole experience," said Kuester. "Dianna was so inspiring, so encouraging and the love she has for flying just radiated from her. When we drove away from the airport McKinsey said, 'When I grow up I want to be just like Miss Dianna and fly helicopters, too!' Not only did it open my daughter's eyes to a whole new career option it was literally a once in a lifetime experience." ♦



Brianna Bordovsky, Hannah Huddleston and Jessica Calzado wait to see Port Lavaca in a whole new perspective with helicopter pilot, Dianna Stanger.

FROM THE GROUND UP: GOLDTHWAITE AIRPORT NOW ACCEPTING AIRPLANES

By Chris Sasser
Texas Transportation Institute

A few years ago, the parcel of land wedged between the Goldthwaite golf course and two city reservoirs was an empty field. Now it's an airport with a 3,200-foot runway, nearly complete terminal and economic benefits that are already paying off for the community.

The Goldthwaite Municipal Airport officially opened for air traffic last November. According to City and Airport Manager Robert Lindsey, the airport was a long time coming for the town located in the heart of the Hill Country.

"The community and its leaders had a strong desire to have a landing strip, so TxDOT came out and helped us submit a grant application," says Lindsey. "We were approved, and lo and behold, here we are."

In addition to the terminal building, an 85 by 65-foot privately owned hangar is under construction. Self-service fuel is also in the works.

The neighboring golf course is also being reconfigured to tie into the airport and terminal building. Access to the golf course will be via the airport entrance, and the golf course manager will serve as the assistant airport manager. The golf association is building new cart sheds west of the terminal building.



Persistence pays off. The nearly complete terminal Goldthwaite Municipal Airport sits in the background of this photo.

Even though the grand opening is a month away, the airport is already generating income.

"There is increased tax revenue to the school and county as a result of private development," says Lindsey. "And it didn't take long for hunters to find this place. I know of two very expensive white tail hunts that were sold as a result of their ability to land at the airport."

Other economic generators include:

- Fort Hood exercises in May and July
- LCRA renting the terminal building to bring in a group along with their board for tour of the upper basin of the river
- additional hangars and
- the creation of short-term construction jobs.

For Robert Lindsey and the City of Goldthwaite, the airport is a case of, "If you build it, they will come."

"This airport is an economic magnet for this community," says Lindsey. "It is the most valuable one-mile of paved road in the county." ♦

FOR AUSTIN A FIRST-CLASS RELIEVER RON HENRIKSEN BUILT THE HOUSTON EXECUTIVE AIRPORT FROM SCRATCH; NOW HE'S APPLYING WHAT HE LEARNED IN THE TEXAS CAPITAL

By John F. Infanger
Airport Business

AUSTIN, TX — In the April 2008 edition of *Airport Business*, we featured Ron Henriksen, a self-made millionaire and corporate pilot who decided to invest his millions into his professional and personal love — aviation. At that time, he was just finishing up his creation of the Houston Executive Airport in Brookshire, on the far western outreach of the nation's fourth largest city.

His success there led general aviation interests in the state capital, Austin, to seek him out for relief to their plight — a lack of adequate facilities since the opening of Austin-Bergstrom International, which led to displacement of hundreds of GA aircraft with the closure of the previous commercial airport, Mueller. Henriksen's now on airport number two — a different airport, a different challenge.

At that time, he had purchased the remnants of a once-vibrant small general aviation airport, known as Bird's Nest Airport, located some 15 miles northeast of downtown Austin.

Since acquiring Bird's Nest, Henriksen has acquired adjacent properties, realigned and expanded the runway, and is now in the process of building a first-class business aviation hangar/terminal complex along with associated T-hangars and sunshade facilities.

What Henriksen is doing is creating a business aviation airport with a 6,045-foot concrete runway just northeast of the city center. The airport rests on some 575 acres, with farmland/ranches on the adjacent property. A new tollway that circumvents the city — state highway 130 — abuts the airport, and the city is creating a tollway exit directly to the airport, to accommodate anticipated economic development.

Comments Henriksen, "We hope to have 100 airplanes based here."

His investment stands at some \$33 million. "It's a lot to get back in fuel, isn't it?" he says. In Houston, Henriksen invested some \$31 million. Over time, he projects that the Austin airport could prove to be the better economic generator.

When opened, Austin Executive will have a corporate hangar/terminal complex, three rows of T-hangars, 13 shadeports and some 15 acres available for development. The fuel farm will offer 20,000 gallons of jet-A; 20,000 gallons of 100LL; and a split tank for autogas and kerosene for tractors. Says Henriksen, "We built a concrete pad and bought the tanks; they're Garsite tanks with a stainless steel liner in them. It's a real advantage because with the other tanks you have to go in there every 15 years or so and refurbish."

Creating his Austin airport has actually been a bigger financial challenge, says Henriksen, though the economic times have had an influence.

Relates Henriksen, "This land probably cost twice what it did in Houston. We've got 1,900 acres in Houston; we have 575 here. We started in Houston with an up economy, and halfway through the project we weren't even sure if the contractors wanted the job because they were so busy. In the last half of construction, you could get anybody you want.

"Here we had a lot of people who wanted to build; we only took bids from three top-shelf firms. It was good for us because we're getting it built fairly inexpensively; it's great for the contractor because they've got something to do."

Regarding his future in the building of airports, Henriksen says, "This is the last airport I'm building. I'm pretty sure." But he admits he still has some money in the kitty for perhaps one more. ♦

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AIR TRACTOR FOUNDER LELAND SNOW DIES

AVIATION LEGEND LEAVES BEHIND A 53-YEAR LEGACY OF AIRCRAFT INNOVATION

By Judith McGinnis
Wichita Falls Times Record News

Leland Snow, who spent a lifetime of pursuing excellence in aeronautical engineering and supporting agriculture around the globe, died while jogging near his Wichita Falls home. Snow was 80 years old.



Leland Snow died February in Wichita Falls.

Described by friends as unpretentious, down-to-earth and soft spoken, Snow was born May 31, 1930, in Brownsville and earned his degree in aeronautical engineering at Texas A&M University. He designed his first aerial spray plane, the S-1, in 1951, then sprayed and dusted crops from the Rio Grande Valley to Nicaragua until 1957.

Flying by the seat of his pants financially, in 1958 Snow opened an aircraft production company in Olney.

He sold it to Rockwell-Standard in 1965 then bought it back in 1970 and devoted the next two years to developing what would become known as the Air Tractor.

Many models followed. Turbine engines made them more powerful and larger tanks let pilots cover more acreage per flight. In the early '90s, the company began aggressively pursuing global markets; in 2010, Air Tractor delivered its 2,500th aircraft to an agricultural operator in Brazil.

Air Tractors have fought forest fires and locust plagues, cleaned up oil spills and hauled fuel in North and South America, North and South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Saudi Arabia and South Korea, among other countries.

"Leland knew what had to be done for agriculture and technology. That knowledge was something that took the company worldwide," said David Ickert, Air Tractor's financial officer. "Today more than 50 percent of our production now goes outside of the U.S. But Leland built more than a company. He was a remarkable engineer, but he also built his employees and took pleasure in watching them grow and achieve their goals as a team."

An avid runner and fitness enthusiast, Snow competed twice in the New York marathon. After the loss of a highly regarded plant manager to a heart attack in 1989, he instituted free health screenings for all Air Tractor employees.

In 2008, Snow transferred ownership of Air Tractor to its employees through a stock ownership plan. That same year he finished his autobiography, *Putting Dreams to Flight*.

Passionate about the safety of agricultural aviators, that same year Snow introduced the AT-504, a craft specifically designed for on-the-job training. He also helped establish the Student Outreach Assistance Resource scholarship fund for children of agricultural pilots who died on the job.

Snow is survived by his wife, Nancy, and daughters Kristen and Kara, all of whom have been involved in the operation of Air Tractor.

Memorial donations may be made to the Professional Aerial Applicators Support System (PAASS), which is a safety program for pilots sponsored by the National Agricultural Aviation Association (www.agaviation.org).◆

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"Today more than 50 percent of our production now goes outside of the U.S. But Leland built more than a company. He was a remarkable engineer, but he also built his employees and took pleasure in watching them grow and achieve their goals as a team."

David Ickert, Air Tractor's financial officer

FAA AWARDS MUZYCZYN WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Since 1961, Mike Muzyczyn has been a certified A&P aircraft mechanic. On March 1, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recognized his 50 years of service to the aviation community with the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award. The ceremony took place at Butch's Steak House in Kingsville.

But becoming the 1,498th recipient (there are over 300,000 licensed mechanics in the U.S.) of this award is only a small part of Muzyczyn's amazing journey.

Born in the Ukraine in 1939, Muzyczyn and his family evaded the invading Nazi army for five years, before being captured along with 3,000 of their countrymen. The group was placed on trains and told they were being sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. When word of their destination spread to each railcar, the brave group overpowered the German troops and bolted to the nearby forests. The Muzyczyn family spent days in the forest without eating before finally reaching a safe house.

In 1950, the family boarded a U.S. Navy transport ship and headed to America, enduring a hurricane along the way. The family settled in New Jersey.

Mike Muzyczyn graduated high school in 1955, and then attended the Teterboro School of Aeronautics, where he graduated with an A&P mechanic's license in 1961. He then joined the navy and spent his career stationed at Corpus Christi. He received an honorable discharge in 1965.

In 1965, Muzyczyn started Mike's Aircraft Shop at Cuddihy Field, plying his trade until that field closed in 1983.

"I loved South Texas, and searched for a new location," says Muzyczyn. "Kleberg County Airport proved to be perfect, and I'm very happy to be here today."

The Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award is named in honor of Mr. Charles Taylor, the first aviation mechanic in powered flight. The award recognizes the lifetime accomplishments of senior mechanics. Mr. Taylor served as the Wright Brothers' mechanic and is credited with designing and building the engine for their first successful aircraft.

"He's an immigrant who came to America to pursue the American dream and always had a real strong work ethic," said Muzyczyn's wife Judy. "We are proud of him and all our clients love him to pieces." ♦

ATTENTION PILOTS!!

As part of a General Aviation Tourism analysis for TxDOT Aviation, the Texas Transportation Institute (Texas A&M University) would like to hear from you. We would like to put together a list of scenic flights for our state. Please send us your favorites and tell us why you like them and what makes them enjoyable. Let us know the airports involved and any attractions, museums, restaurants, etc. that are associated with it. Whether it is across the Hill Country, over the lakes, around the Bend or along the coast, we want to hear about Texas' Scenic Skyways. This is an opportunity to share information with other pilots while promoting Texas tourism and general aviation airports.

Please contact Jeff Borowiec at jborowiec@tamu.edu or by phone at 979/845-5200. ♦



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2011 Texas Aviation Conference

29th TEXAS
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Make plans to attend the **29th Annual Texas Aviation Conference** to be held on **May 25, 26, 27, 2011** at **The Renaissance** located in Austin, Texas.

Be sure to check our Web site at www.txdot.gov or <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac11/> for up-to-date events.

Social activities will include our annual golf tournament; Alton Young memorial motorcycle ride; Planes and Lanes Bowling sponsored by Garver; get acquainted reception; awards banquet and a fun evening reception sponsored by Rodriguez Engineering.

We are working to make this year's conference better than ever.



Texas Department of Transportation