



AIRPORT BEACON

A publication of  Muskegon County Airport

From the Airport Manager

Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the premier issue of *Airport Beacon*. There are a lot of reasons we decided to start this newsletter, but above all, the main goal of this publication is to pass along information about what is happening at the Muskegon County Airport (MKG). This newsletter will provide information on what is happening today, it will delve into the rich history of the Airport, and it will present the prospects for the future.



First, a little bit of history. MKG has been serving the aviation community from this site since 1929. From the dirt landing strips in the late 1920s to supersonic U.S. Navy Blue Angels demonstrations in the 21st century, this Airport has been here for it all. MKG is owned and operated by the County of Muskegon. The County employs fourteen full time employees and one marketing consultant to handle the day-to-day operations of a 1,300 acre airfield, including everything from runway snow removal operations to multi-million dollar capital project management. Two commercial airlines (Midwest Connect and Northwest/Mesaba) fly into MKG, providing daily service to Milwaukee and Detroit. Over 100 people are employed by the many tenants of the Airport, providing an economic impact of nearly \$46 million per year.

Some of the features you will see each quarter will include: A note *From the Airport Manager*, *Employee Spotlight*, *Business Profile*, *Project Updates*, and *MKG History*. The intent of these features is to bring everyone together and foster a better understanding of how the Airport works and where it is headed. If you would like to submit an article for inclusion in the next newsletter, please feel free to do so. Because this is the inaugural publication, I will be the guinea pig and the Employee Spotlight will be on me.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

New U.S. Coast Guard Hangar

After nine years of operating from a “temporary” hangar facility on the north side of the Airport, the U.S. Coast Guard will kick off their tenth summer in style, performing search-and-rescue operations from a new hangar facility located on the southwest side of the Muskegon County Airport. On October 13, 2005, a groundbreaking ceremony officially began construction of the 8,295 square foot facility.

The new facility was made possible through recent extensive coordination by County officials and staff with Congressman Hoekstra’s office, allowing the U.S. Coast Guard to sign a five-year lease agreement. The County will invest \$1,500,000 to build the new facility, to be recovered through lease payments from the U.S. Coast Guard. Completion is expected by May 1, 2006, giving the U.S. Coast Guard a new home in time for next summer’s search-and-rescue season.

Hooker-DeJong Architects of Muskegon designed the facility, while Lakewood, Inc. of Holland is the building contractor.



January 2006

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Runway 14/32 Expansion Project

In the works since 2000, the extension of the main north-south runway is well underway. The runway is being extended to comply with FAA Runway Safety Area requirements. Runway 14/32 is 5,000' and lacks the FAA required 1,000' Safety Area at the end of the runway. Once the extension of the runway is completed, the length of the runway will be 6,100'. This will make it long enough to handle aircraft expected to fly into MKG. The total project cost is estimated to be \$15,000,000. The project is funded under the Federal Airport Improvement Program, meaning the FAA pays 95% of the cost, the State pays 2.5%, and the County is responsible for the remaining 2.5%.

Although no physical construction has begun, years of preliminary engineering and design are wrapping up. Since 2000, numerous studies have completed justification of the project, over thirty properties have been purchased and cleared, an Environmental Assessment has been performed, and major components of the extension have been designed. Following is a time line of what is yet to come, dependant upon Federal funding:

Spring 2006 - Complete final design components and bid the project through MDOT Bureau of Aeronautics.

Fall 2006 - Begin construction of Phase I. This will include relocation of Grand Haven Road and major utilities, construction of the parallel taxiway and partial perimeter road, and site preparation for the construction of runway extension.

Spring 2007 - Complete Phase I construction and begin construction of Phase II. The major component of Phase II includes construction of the runway extension.

The project will be complete by the end of 2007, which is also the FAA deadline to be in compliance with Runway Safety Area requirements.

Because this is such a large project covering many years, there is more information that cannot be included in this article. Please feel free to stop by the Airport Administration office to view maps and discuss the project in further detail.



The maps depict the runway extension, as well as the relocation of Grand Haven Road.

MKG History

Submitted by Ken Price, Executive Air Transport

A Pennsylvania Central Airlines Boeing 247D is shown below just arriving at Muskegon County Airport. The checkered hangar in the background was originally located at Continental Field, on Getty Street. It was relocated to Muskegon Airport in about 1930. It was most recently occupied by the U.S. Coast Guard until Fall of 2005.



March 5, 1939
(Photo Courtesy of Carl Pitcher)

Also pictured is a Vultee taking off on the main runway, which today is called taxiway Delta.

February 1947
(Photo Courtesy of Ken Price)



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Employee Spotlight

Our Spotlight Employee this quarter is Marty Piette. Marty is the Airport Manager and has been employed by the County since February 2003. Marty has moved around quite a bit since childhood, but considers himself a Cheesehead (Wisconsin native). He has loved aviation since his first airplane ride at the age of 8 and began taking flying lessons as a senior in high school. To pay for the flying lessons, Marty had an after-school job at a movie theater where he met his future wife, Kim. He went on to get his pilot's license his first year of college while attending the University of North Dakota. He graduated in 1995 with a degree in Airport Administration and received his Accredited Airport Executive (AAE) designation in April of 2002. Since graduating, he has worked at General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport in Gulfport, MS, and now here in Muskegon. "In the airport management business, you have to move around to move up," says Marty. Married since 1997, Marty and Kim have a 2 year old son, Preston. They are expecting their second child in March of 2006.

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Movie: Uncle Buck

Favorite Quote: For the aspiring professional:
"Dress for the job you want, not the job you have."

Employee of the Month

October 2005	Laura Huffman, Mesaba
November 2005	Jason Bowler, Skyway
December 2005	Gail Anderson, Airport

"Name the Newsletter" Contest

The *Airport Beacon* was submitted anonymously. If it was you, call the Airport Administration office to claim your prize of a \$20 Chamber of Commerce gift certificate.

Thank You!

Thank you and welcome home Jeff Simmons! Jeff, from the TSA, served as a Sergeant with the 1436th Engineering Co. of the Michigan National Guard and spent more than a year in Iraq. Jeff returned home on December 10. Thank you, Jeff!

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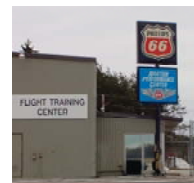
Business Profile

Submitted by Rex Vanderlinde, Executive Air Transport

The year was 1959 and a Muskegon-based flight crew who provided pilot services to several local companies decided the Muskegon County Airport was in need of a full service Fixed Base Operation (FBO) and incorporated Executive Air Transport, Inc. in the fall of that year. Mr. Vince Dostert and Mr. Muriel (Brownie) Brown, with the help of a local investor, started the company that today, over 47 years later, provides services to the commercial airlines, U.S. Government, corporate aircraft, and privately owned aircraft big and small.

Currently, the company is owned by Mr. Rex Vanderlinde, who originally started with the company as a line boy at the age of 17, in 1979. Prior to Mr. Vanderlinde owning the company, Executive Air Transport had two other owners since 1970 when Mr. Dostert and Mr. Brown sold the company. Over the years, Executive Air Transport has developed a very comprehensive and well respected aircraft maintenance facility, sales, leasing and aircraft management divisions, and a partnership program with Baker College to provide 2 and 4 year college degree programs in aviation.

The company provides services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The company currently operates from its office located just east of the main terminal at 103 Sinclair Drive and maintains over 55,000 square feet of hangar facilities. Executive Air Transport is one of the oldest aviation support providers in the state of Michigan. The employees of Executive Air Transport pride themselves on taking great care of the customer and have received numerous awards for outstanding customer service. For example, the title of "Aviation Performance Center" was awarded by Phillips 66, and President George W. Bush sent his thanks



and appreciation after his September 2005 visit to Muskegon.



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Interesting Facts

At airports across the U.S., 87% of luggage theft or loss happens at the curbside check-in station.

There is nearly 7 miles of 10' fence around the Airport perimeter.

The average tenure of a County Airport employee is 13 years.

Less than 2% of flights originating at MKG were canceled in 2005.

Midwest Connect carried 22,554 passengers in 2005 - **up 28%** over 2004.

Northwest carried 48,960 passengers in 2005 - **up 2%** over 2004.

Total passengers of 72,336 in 2005 - **up 9%** over 2004.

Transportation Committee

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Questions, Comments, Suggestions?

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