

WINGTIPS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
AVIATION DIVISION.



WELCOME TO BRAZORIA COUNTY

TEXAS
GULF COAST
REGIONAL
AIRPORT

p.6




SPRING 2020

TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE POSTPONED

To combat the spread of COVID-19, the 38th annual Texas Aviation Conference has been postponed. We are working with the venue to set a new date and will be in touch with each registered participant once a new date is in place. You will have the opportunity to transfer your registration to the new date and if you are not able to attend on the new date, your registration fee will be refunded.

“Obviously we are all disappointed to postpone the conference this year, but our priority is to keep everyone healthy and safe,” said TxDOT Director of Grant Management and Administration Kari Campbell. “I would like to thank everyone for their support as we navigate this challenging and developing public health issue. I’m confident that we will be able to schedule a new date at the same location and have another successful conference this year.”

As it becomes available, additional information will also be posted on the conference website at <https://events.tti.tamu.edu/conference/tac20/>. 



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NEW TEXAS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS APPOINTED

Three new members of the Texas Aviation Advisory Committee were recently appointed by the Texas Transportation Commission. The Texas Aviation Advisory Committee provides input to TxDOT on its aviation development programs and serves as the representative among aviation users. Committee members also work with members of the Texas Legislature on various aviation issues.

Bob McCreery

Bob McCreery has served as the General Manager of McCreery Aviation for 39 years. McCreery Aviation is a 72-year old full-service, family-owned fixed-base operation at the McAllen Miller International Airport. The company offers services in aircraft refueling, maintenance, parts, avionics, air charter, air ambulance, aircraft sales and flight training. Mr. McCreery is a licensed pilot and lives in McAllen.

Justine Ruff

Justine Ruff is a 1990 graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Business Administration. She has been the Director of Airports for the City of Midland since 2015 and is directly responsible for the operation of Midland International Air and Space Port and Midland Airpark. Prior to assuming the position of director, she was employed for over 20 years with 12 years as deputy director. She lives in Midland.

Robert Dixon Tips

Robert Dixon Tips, also known as Dick, serves as Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and President of Mission Park Funeral Chapels and Cemeteries. For the past four decades, Mr. Tips has devoted himself to building one of the leading family-owned funeral companies in Texas. He is a member of Texas Cemeteries Association and is one of San Antonio's most recognized business leaders. Mr. Tips attended the University of Texas in Austin. ■

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Runway at Angelina County Airport.

EAST TEXAS GEM

Angelina County Airport

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

The entrance road of the Angelina County Airport is quite a sight. Tall live oaks line the entry road, similar to the famous Magnolia Lane entrance to the Augusta National Golf Club. But at the end of this impressive canopy is not a golf course; rather, a jewel of an airport that has garnered several awards over the years.

The 2019 winner of the most improved airport epitomizes true teamwork as airport staff and local government officials utilized their available resources to completely revamp an airport that is popular for business aviation, training and recreational flying.

“It was certainly nice to have that recognition,” said Airport Manager Gary Letney who began his job three years ago. “I was thrilled to death to win the award because of what it means to the airport. It’s been nice with new businesses coming into town to see that award and they love to be associated with us.”

Several years ago, using an airport improvement program grant, the Angelina County Airport began an ambitious project to improve all of the pavement surfaces. The project team removed and reconstructed portions of their taxiway and asphalt around their existing hangars. They performed crack sealing on all remaining taxiway and runway surfaces that were not repaired.

To finish off their new pavement, all taxiways and both runways were remarked. Making sure this work was built to last, extensive drainage improvements were made to ensure this work was built to last. This includes the installation of French drains around the taxiway and T-hangars as well as the replacement of an inadequate drainage culvert on the entrance road with a box culvert to remove water from airport grounds.

The airport also utilized RAMP grants to provide funds for self-service fuel pumps and the replacement of the terminal building septic system. The RAMP grants also provided funds for:

- installation of hangar door rollers
- replacement of rusted-out beams in other hangars
- repair of faulty electronics on the Avgas fuel tank
- security cameras
- runway and taxiway light repair and replacement

"I think that other than mowing the grass TxDOT has helped us out with everything else," chuckled Letney. "They have been stellar partners to work with."

The county also pitched in to the airport improvement effort by donating a courtesy car for visitors and a truck for maintenance, replacing hangar flooring and repairing asphalt at the ramp entrance gate. The county also played a large role in helping the airport prepare for a large airshow that numbered 12,000 attendees by preparing roads and fields for attendees. Finally, funds were supplied for a tractor and chain saws were purchased to help trim the 300 trees along the entrance road.

"The support of local county officials made all this possible," noted Assistant Airport Manager Claude Riddle. "We've always had excellent support from the city of Lufkin and surrounding communities."

Also contributing to the airport's overhaul was the Experimental Aircraft Association, who provided funds for tool and oil storage buildings and built three pavilions for public use, such as enjoying lunch at the airport café while watching planes. The Experimental Aircraft Association also provided funds for the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster memorial.

The aforementioned café is a popular destination for both aviators and the local community who keep the place hopping while enjoying their delicious cheeseburgers. The café is open 7:00AM-2:30PM Monday through Saturday and offers excellent views of the field.

Next up for the airport is future hangar development and taxiway construction to address the demand for hangar space and a game fence.

But perhaps the greatest point of pride for the Angelina County Airport is that it is completely self-sufficient.

"Politically, it's always great to tell someone about our \$26 million a year economic output, and that we don't take any local taxpayer money," said Letney. "When you think about what a tremendous asset that is—it's all about the local community and businesses who drive that economic growth. We want to provide first class facilities so that we continue to attract businesses to use our airport." ■

Angelina County Airport
Assistant Airport Manager
Claude Riddle and Airport
Manager Gary Letney.





A STORY OF SERVICE AND RESILIENCE

Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

As Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport Manager Jeff Bilyeu stared down yet another flooding event from Hurricane Harvey in 2017, he had to wonder when his airport was going to catch a break. After all, in 2016, historic flooding in central Texas made its way downstream to the airport. When the Brazos River finally crested, it was at record levels causing flooding at the airport and the eventual closure for over a week. The airport entry road was underwater for a week. But it's not in Bilyeu's nature to back down from a challenge; he and his staff banded together to surge into the future. Their efforts were rewarded by being named the 2019 Airport of the Year at the Texas Aviation Conference.

"The most important thing is the dedication of our staff to get us up and going again," said Bilyeu. "They are an amazing group of people to work with. They make everything out here happen whether it's a beautiful day or weather events such as floods, they

keep everyone safe. Four of the past five years we've had some type of flooding and it's just characteristic of this area when we see significant rainfall in this area's watershed."

To help mitigate and prevent such future flooding, the airport and Brazoria County paid for realignment of drainage and construction of drainage ditches. The airport receives remarkable support from county officials.

"We're in a unique location in that the airport serves our two immediate cities," explained Bilyeu. "We're growing relationships with Lake Jackson on the utility side and on the land use side. And their industrial development corporation is now interacting with us for future development."

Many aviation businesses operate out of the airport, including Dow and Bucee's, with both having based aircraft at the airport.



Runway at Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport.

Being a vital hub of commerce, the airport has undergone many improvements in the past few years including:

- a master plan update
- a runway reconstruction project
- the design and construction of a new terminal building
- the installation of wildlife fencing
- a wildlife hazard assessment
- apron and ramp reconstruction
- FBO hangar construction
- city water plant and sewer construction

The airport is also home to the Runway Café, a busy onsite restaurant that serves up delicious local food for both flyers and the community who know where to find the best fried shrimp around.

Bilyeu believes in mentoring to the next generation of aviation professionals. He has a continued relationship with Texas Southern University and has mentored at least five students in the past three years. Those students have completed three month-long onsite internships in an effort to help them learn as much as possible at this airport. He has helped them to learn the importance of

networking for job placement and led them to be involved in aviation organizations. He also speaks every year at multiple elementary schools and junior highs on Career Days in an effort to educate young people about the career options that are available for young men and women within aviation.

“The airport is the front door to the County for many business people and visitors to our area,” notes Bilyeu. “It’s important that we offer a professional first and last impression for folks traveling to and from our County” 🍷



Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport Manager Jeff Bilyeu.

NEW HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION REQUIRES AIRPORTS TO TAKE ACTION

Senate Bill 1219 took effect of September 1, 2019. The following outlines the key provisions of the bill.

- Human trafficking signs detailing assistance available to victims of human trafficking are to be displayed at “transportation hubs,” including in buses, at bus stops, in trains, at train stations, in rest areas and at airports.
- The Attorney General (AG) is in charge of the design and content of the sign regarding services and assistance available to these victims, and the AG’s office by rule will prescribe the hubs required to display these signs. Here are some of the pieces of information that must be included:
 - The telephone number and Internet website of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center
 - The key indicators that a person is a victim of human trafficking
- The AG will also prescribe the manner in which the sign must be displayed at the hub and any exceptions. The AG is also responsible for enforcement. ■

AVIATION DIVISION RETIREMENTS

The Aviation Division has had several high profile retirements over the past few months.

Director of Planning Greg Miller retired in October 2019 after 27 years of service. Miller began his career at the Aviation Division by designing a software application before working his way up to planning director. His colleagues, family and friends gathered on December 5, 2019, at a luncheon to celebrate Miller’s career.

“I hope that you look back on your time here with fond memories and a great source of pride,” said Director of Grants Kari Campbell. “You will certainly be missed.”

Miller’s retirement plans include lots of traveling with his wife, Mary. His colleagues presented him with gifts which included a signed model airplane.

“You are an amazing group of people,” said Miller. “I will miss everyone a lot—it has certainly been my pleasure to work with each and every one of you.”

Long-time Director of Flight Services and Division Deputy Director Jay Joseph also retired in September after joining the Aviation Division in the Fall of 2006. Prior to joining the Aviation Division, Joseph retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Colonel after 29 years of service, including a tour with the Navy Blue Angels, and also was a pilot for U.S. Air for 21 years. Among Joseph’s accomplishments were his efforts to upgrade the TxDOT fleet, which came to fruition in 2019. ■



Former Aviation Division Director David Fulton, Newly Retired Planning Director Greg Miller, Director of Grants and Administration Kari Campbell and Director of Engineering Eusebio Torres.

NATIONAL AVIATION HALL OF FAME PRESENTS INDUCTION MEDAL TO THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

On January 8, 2020, a presentation was conducted at the Stinson Municipal Airport in San Antonio. The National Aviation Hall of Fame (NAHF) induction medal – posthumously presented to Katherine Stinson last year – was placed on permanent display at Stinson Municipal Airport for the inspiration of all who read of Stinson's impact on the nation's aviation history.

Making the presentation to City Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran and Thomas Bartlett, Interim Director for the San Antonio Airport System, was a delegation from the National Aviation Hall of Fame. Included in the group was 2009 NAHF Enshrinee Colonel Eileen Collins, USAF (Ret) who presented Katherine Stinson for enshrinement. Col. Collins is the first woman to command a space shuttle and was the Commander on STS-114, the first Return-To-Flight Mission after the loss of the Columbia.

"The origin story of the Stinson School of Flying is special because of who started it and how it came about. Born from Katherine Stinson's pioneering vision of teaching aviation to anyone who wanted to fly, today Stinson Municipal Airport remains an enduring legacy to the woman who dared everyone to soar greatly," said Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran, District 3.

Katherine Stinson was inducted into the NAHF for a number of pioneering aviation accomplishments. Among them include: becoming one of the first females in the United States to earn a pilot's certificate, founding the Stinson School of Flying (1915), training World War I military pilots and becoming the first woman to carry airmail and the first woman to exhibit as a circuit pilot. Stinson also set multiple distance and endurance records.

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IN REMEMBRANCE

Phil Savko

Sugar Land Regional Airport director of aviation Phillip Savko died in December 2019 at the age of 63 after complications from a prolonged illness. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Savko is survived by his brother Randy Savko and two sisters, Sue Morotto and Amy Filakovsky, as well as multiple nieces, nephews and grand-nieces.

Savko served as the director of aviation at the Sugar Land Regional Airport for 21 years. During his remarkable tenure, he oversaw an expansion of the airport that resulted in the airport's frequent recognition by industry professionals as one of the top corporate aviation facilities in the country.

His visionary leadership included the airport's first-ever airport business plan in 1999 that outlined plans for the airport's role as a corporate business executive airport supporting the local community's needs for general aviation. Savko continuously adjusted and executed the 1999 plan over the course of the next two decades.

Savko is credited with transforming the airport into the economic powerhouse that the airport is known for to this day. The airport attracts international travelers and businesses alike by offering state-of-the-art amenities and concierge services. The business plan outlined the airport's strategy for increased development and improvements in addition to airport branding goals.

Sugar Land City Manager Allen Bogard said the following of Savko's legacy: "We are all mourning the loss of Phil, and there really are no words to fully capture what Phil has meant to our organization and our community. From the beginning, Phil saw a vision for the airport and worked tirelessly to not only grow the airport, but to also leave a lasting impression. His attention to detail and commitment to excellence for the airport was the driving force behind every enhancement and accomplishment." ■

GRANTS RECEIVING TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION APPROVAL

Skylark Field/Killeen

\$1,337,070

Design and construction services to construct nine unit t-hangar complex.

Center Municipal Airport

\$1,129,360

Rehabilitate Runway 17/35 and taxiway D.

Clifton Municipal/Isenhower Field

\$350,640

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 14-32, taxiways, and aircraft parking.

Mineral Wells Airport

\$1,312,220

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 13-31 and taxiway D; remove, relocate and mark taxiway C.

Roy Hurd Memorial Airport/Monahans

\$2,678,997

Reconstruct Runway 12-30; markings and electrical work.

Big Spring McMahon-Wrinkle Airport

\$500,000

Runway 17-35 joint seal repair.

Bay City Regional Airport

\$872,730

Construction of medium intensity runway lights; relocate and replace precision approach path indicators-2 system; replace airfield signs; replace rotating beacon; electrical vault replacement.

LaPorte Municipal Airport

\$3,243,412

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 5-23 and Runway 12-30; rehabilitate taxiway A, B, C and D; rehabilitate hangar access taxiway at Runway 12; rehabilitate and mark apron 1, 2 and 3; install airport drainage improvements.

Decatur Municipal Airport

\$736,600

Design and construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35, apron and taxiways.

Olney Municipal Airport

\$591,000

Design and construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35, parallel taxiway and apron areas.

Pleasanton Municipal Airport

\$508,000

Design and construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 16-24; apron and taxiways.

Winnsboro Municipal Airport

\$463,500

Design and construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 1-19, apron and taxiways.

Fox Stephens Field/Gilmer Municipal Airport

\$679,060

Design and construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 18-36; partial parallel and stub taxiway; central hangar access taxiways; north hangar access taxiways; rehabilitate apron.

Seymour Municipal Airport

\$3,159,470

Seal and Mark Runway 17-35; repair depth patches for Runway 17-35; grade and herbicide Runway shoulders, seams and cracks.

Lampasas Municipal Airport

\$1,185,000

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 16-34 and stub taxiway; rehabilitate north hangar access taxiway, south apron, and partial parallel taxiway; replace medium intensity runway lights; install precision approach path indicator 2 Runway 16-34; replace signage panels.

Chambers County-Winnie/Stowell Airport

\$2,625,200

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35; expand apron and construct connecting stub taxiway; rehabilitate apron; rehabilitate and edge repairs parallel and cross taxiways; replace medium intensity runway lights and signs; replace precision approach path indicators- 2 Runway 17-35; replace segmented circle, lighted wind cone and rotating beacon; install wildlife fencing; regrade ditches; reconstruct apron.

Cypress River Airport/Jefferson

\$469,300

Replace low intensity runway lights; install precision approach path indicators-2's Runway 5-23; install lighted wind cone, segmented circle and runway guidance signs; install electrical rack and box.

Post-Garza County Municipal Airport.

\$1,133,140

Repair dip and mark Runway 17-35; pavement repair on Runway 24; regrade ditches; replace medium intensity runway lights and install precision approach path indicators-2 Runway 17-35 ; replace lighting Runway 6-24; obstruction survey.

Cochran County Airport

\$522,900

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35.

McKinney National Airport

\$400,000

Design and construction services for erosion repair between Taxiway D and E.



Texas Department of Transportation

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AVIATION DIVISION

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