



## Routine Airport Maintenance Program Approved!

Although insufficient funding for airport capital improvement and major maintenance projects is a major obstacle in efforts to build and maintain an adequate general aviation airport system in Texas, lack of proper routine maintenance continues to present a major challenge. As a result, the Aviation Division has seen a significant reduction in useful life of pavements and other facilities at many of our state's airports.

With the Texas Transportation Commission's recent approval of a proposal to create a state airport maintenance program, designed to assist local governments in the repair and maintenance of general aviation airports, we can now begin to meet this challenge.

"We know local governments are strapped financially and they are having a hard time taking care of their many airport maintenance needs," said Bill Burnett, TxDOT's Executive Director.

The program will begin on a pilot basis in 55 counties in TxDOT's Abilene, Amarillo, Lufkin, Pharr and Tyler districts.

These five districts will offer publicly owned airports an opportunity to be included in their annual maintenance work programs for routine maintenance work items such as crack repair, seal coats, herbicide application, and pavement striping. TxDOT will provide airport owners with an estimated cost for each work item. Sponsors electing to participate in any or all of the work items in the program will execute an agreement with the

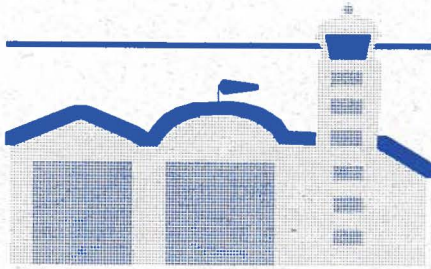
Department for the work desired and will be charged only for actual costs incurred.

TxDOT's Aviation Division will set aside state funds to be used as a 50% match for routine maintenance conducted through the Department for publicly-owned airports located within the pilot program's districts. Funding of up to a \$10,000 maximum per year will be provided for each airport.

"Not only will the pilot program enhance our overall aviation efforts, but it's also good business," said Tom Griebel, TxDOT's Assistant Executive Director for Multimodal Transportation. "An aggressive maintenance program will help to protect the taxpayer's investment in our airport system."

The Routine Airport Maintenance Program will enhance TxDOT's ongoing aviation program, optimize the use of available resources and enhance communication and coordination with local officials, all of which are goals of TxDOT's strategic plan.

Details are being worked out to assure the success of this pilot program. Communities with airports in the five "pilot program" districts will be contacted soon to discuss application procedures and the details of the program such as unit costs for work elements, work scheduling and coordination. Pleased with the approval of this program, Aviation Division Director David Fulton said, "This program is a major step toward making all of TxDOT's resources readily available to the general aviation community."



## Dave's Hangar

- David S. Fulton, Aviation Division Director

### Technical Assistance Program

Because providing federal and state funding for airport development is a major responsibility of the Texas Department of Transportation's Aviation Division, it is often overlooked that the Aviation Division's available services extend beyond funding for airport improvements. In our role as agent to some 256 general aviation airport sponsors, we have a responsibility to assist communities in promoting and developing their airports. One way to do this is by providing technical assistance or advice upon request whether or not financial assistance is involved. For example, our division will provide planning assistance in determining sites for hangars, fuel or other airfield facilities. We will also provide technical support for establishing instrument approaches, engineering support for airfield pavement condition evaluation and developing preliminary construction cost estimates, assistance in attracting commercial air service, as well as other types of technical assistance. These services are normally provided at no cost to the airport owner. Give us a call at 1-800-PILOT if you need some assistance.

### Regional Planning Meetings

TxDOT's Aviation Division will conduct its first series of Regional Planning Meetings in March. While meeting locations have yet to be confirmed, the dates and airports to be discussed are as follows:

3/20/96	Calhoun County Jackson County Bay City Municipal Palacios Municipal
3/21/96	Cuero Municipal Gonzales Municipal Hallettsville Municipal Yoakum Municipal Victoria Regional
3/22/96	Sealy (New) Robert R. Wells, Jr. Eagle Lake Fayette Regional Air Center Wharton Municipal

### 1996 Texas Airport Operator's Conference

The TxDOT Aviation Division and the Texas Association of Airport Executives (TAAE), will again co-host the Texas Airport Operator's Conference (TAOC). The conference will be held April 24, 25, and 26, at the Austin Red Lion Inn. The conference will provide presentations and workshops that are designed specifically for airport sponsors and operators of general aviation airports.

To kick off the conference, exhibitors will host a Get Acquainted Reception in the Exhibit Area from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., Wednesday.

A hangar party is tentatively planned for Thursday night. We plan to have music, food, and fun!

As in the past, aviation awards will be presented at a luncheon banquet on Friday. Awards will be presented for Airport of the Year, Airport Manager of the Year, Most Improved Airport, an award for Community Involvement, and for Aviation Career Contribution. We will also present awards to the Texas winners of the International Aviation Art Contest.

This conference provides a tremendous opportunity to interact with a variety of professionals in the general aviation industry, and to find solutions to common challenges. For more information call 1-800-68-PILOT. We hope to see you there!

### 1996 Pilot Town Meetings

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, (AOPA) has planned a series of twenty-seven "Pilot Town Meetings" to be conducted in sixteen different states this year. Three of these meetings are planned for Texas in early November.

At these meetings, Phil Boyer, AOPA President, will provide a multimedia presentation on the latest news in general aviation. Pilots gain from these meetings in two ways. They get a reliable update on developments in Washington, DC, that affect all of us in general aviation. And they have an opportunity to give Phil Boyer and the AOPA staff direct feedback on what most concerns them as pilots and aircraft owners. There will be question and answer sessions, and AOPA materials will be available.

All pilots and interested citizens are invited to attend. The meetings are free, and no registration is required. For more information, contact Janette Prince, 301/695-2155.

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## Gainesville Community Celebrates Success

Over 400 people recently gathered at the Gainesville Municipal Airport to celebrate the city's success in completing significant projects at the airport. The highlight of the celebration was the dedication of a new terminal, with Dave Fulton, Director of Aviation for the Texas Department of Transportation, as guest speaker. "I applaud the people in this community for understanding and supporting the value and contribution of the airport. Many times communities think that the local airports are just a play thing for some of the wealthy people in town who happen to own an airplane. They don't realize what an economic contribution that an airport like the Gainesville Municipal Airport can make."

City officials have made the development of the airport a high priority and, in turn, accomplished quite a bit in the past year. In May, the Council committed more than \$90,000 toward an automated fueling system. That system has been fully operational for a few months now and fuel sales are increasing.

In August, the city hired Airport Manager, Mike Shahan, who had previously served as Operations Project Coordinator at the Addison Airport.

In addition to the construction of the new terminal, the airport is in the process of building hangars.

"I would just say that you've accomplished the three things I think that it takes to make any airport successful," Fulton said. "A few years ago you lengthened the runway to 5,000 feet so you could attract

business corporate aircraft. Now, you have a beautiful facility serving as a front door to your community to welcome those people who use this airport. And finally, you now have professional airport management on the airport. Those three things are vital to the success of any airport."

Not only did the lengthening of the runway help enhance the attraction of potential businesses, another key move was shutting down all but one runway to allow businesses to build their operations near the airport.

"There are numerous businesses that are looking at Gainesville and if we get a third of these businesses... Gainesville will double in 10 years, I'll assure you," said Mayor Jim J. Hatcher.

"While many prospective businesses wish to remain anonymous when inquiring about Gainesville, they are plentiful," Shahan said.

Acknowledging the work and persistence of several individuals and businesses who contributed to the construction and development of the airport, Hatcher added, "Without their persistence, this place would not be. I also want to thank the citizens of Gainesville for your support on this project."

"I'm pleased that I was invited to be here today to help celebrate this beautiful facility, which we kind of view as a model of what we would like to see at the other 250+ airports in the state," Fulton said.

- excerpted from Gainesville Register

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## San Angelo Welcomes Conquest Back

Conquest Airlines now provides direct air service from **Mathis Field** to Austin and Abilene.

San Angelo residents have also gained quick connections available to San Antonio, Laredo, Tyler, Beaumont, Corpus Christi and McAllen.

Conquest is focusing its business plan on expanding its Austin hub. "We need an airline that goes to Austin and that's where they (Conquest) are going," Airport Manager John Schwab said, praising the airline's addition to Mathis Field. The airline will offer two direct flights a day from San Angelo to Austin, and two other

San Angelo-to-Austin flights a day with a stop in Abilene. Schwab said, "The schedule will allow San Angeloans to leave for Austin early in the morning and return at the end of the workday."

Conquest provided flights from San Angelo to Austin once before, but quit service in August 1991 because it wasn't making enough money. Shortly thereafter, Continental Express, which provided flights to Houston, also quit service. Schwab predicted that without the competition from Continental Express, Conquest would do well in San Angelo this time around.

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## McKinney Municipal Opens New Control Tower

Collin County's only public airport now has a control tower. The City of McKinney purchased the control tower from the Federal Aviation Administration for about \$75,000 and moved it from Alliance Airport to McKinney last year.

While FAA certified controllers are currently operating the tower on advisory status, by March 1, a dedicated air traffic control tower frequency for the Class D airspace will be established. The controllers will operate the tower from 7 a.m. To 7 p.m. daily.

In McKinney Municipal's short 16-year history, the airport extended its original 4,000-foot runway to 5,200 feet in the 1980's, then to 7,000 feet in 1993, when it also added an instrument landing system, and now it has a control tower.

"As the airport and McKinney area have grown, airport activity has increased", said Ms. Patricia Doyle, the city's airport manager and assistant city manager. "McKinney Municipal had an estimated 120,000 to 130,000 takeoffs or landings last year. Almost 90,000 operations were recorded in 1989, the last time an official count was made", she said.

McKinney Municipal, the closest airport to a half million people, will be the eighth in the Dallas area with flight-control operations. "One of our goals is to get

corporate jets to this area, and a control tower is one of the things you need to have," Ms. Doyle said.

"To lure corporate jets to the airport, the city also offers 10-year, 30 percent tax abatements on some planes based at the airport and on construction of hangars for them", said Mr. George Schuler, president of McKinney Exec Air, the airport's operator. "A controlled field creates a situation of safety and efficiency. We've had several companies tell us, 'Once you have a tower, we'll come.'" he said.

"Planes in hangars at the airport are taxed, and a jet valued at \$20 million can bring in about \$250,000 in city, school and other taxes, while requiring no city services. The city also gets 6 cents for every gallon of fuel sold at the airport." Schuler said.

"Looking ahead, the city's airport board is updating the airport master plan, hoping to build a second runway parallel to the existing one. The city is considering development of 50 acres it owns near the airport. The next city fire station also may be built near the airport in a move to provide emergency services there", Ms. Doyle said.

"The airport serves as a backup for Love Field and Addison airports, sometimes easing congestion at those facilities. More order and efficiency in the sky over McKinney can improve air traffic flow throughout the area", said Ms. Doyle and Mr. Schuler

**Submit articles for WINGTIPS**

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