

SEC JOURNAL

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Special points of interest:

- Are you interested in serving the Southeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives as a member of the Board of Directors? Immediate Past President and Chairman of the Nominations Committee, Bryan O. Elliott, AAE, is seeking such individuals for consideration by his committee. If you are an Executive Member of the Chapter with an interest in serving on the Board of Directors, please submit a letter to Mr. Elliott (boe@gocho.com) expressing your interest along with a letter from your superiors indicating they will support your interest with the time and travel budget required for service on the Board. The Board historically meets three times yearly—at the Chapter's annual conference, the AAAE annual conference and during the economic conference with a fourth meeting sometimes called at the National Airports Conference.

AIR SECURITY—SHORTER WAITS FOR MORE FLYERS?

The Federal Government is poised to launch a major expansion of the Registered Traveler Program in which flyers who submit to iris scans, fingerprints and background checks—and pay an annual fee—can speed through airport screening.

The expanded program, based on a test project in Orlando, Fla., is expected to set off a scramble among private companies interested in running the new checkpoints and signing up frequent travelers. Several private companies, including one run by entrepreneur Steven Brill, are expected to bid for the new business, competing airport by airport.

People familiar with the plans say travelers would sign up and submit to intense background checks in advance of traveling; in exchange, they would be exempt from TSA rules requiring flyers to remove shoes and jackets, remove laptops from cases, and they could jump to the front of the screening line.

The TSA's goal is to prescreen as many frequent travelers as possible, allowing those who pose little threat to move through screening quickly and allow more time for TSA employees to scrutinize others.

According to Tom Blank, former No. 2 at TSA, the program has broad support among the traveling public. Blank recently left his job

with TSA to become a lobbyist with Wexler & Walker. "It would provide convenience to travelers and help focus the screeners on potentially higher-threat individuals," says Blank.

Eventually, the TSA wants to offer the program broadly, perhaps to any airport that wants it. Those familiar with the plan cautioned it isn't final and could change after review by the Department of Homeland Security officials and others in the Bush administration. It isn't clear how soon the expansion could take effect.

Companies would bid for airport contracts, including marketing the service and sending traveler's applications to the government for background checks. Each airport would have one company providing registered travelers with cards containing biometric data, including fingerprints and iris scans. The provider would also operate airport kiosks where travelers would present their cards so the match between the person and the card could be verified. TSA would continue to operate the metal detectors as well as the machines that scan carry-on bags.

establish itself as a middleman among the various companies that would supply cards and kiosks to airports. It must be determined, for example, how one company would reimburse another for its customers' use of the other company's kiosks. Technical issues also must be resolved, including how the traveler's information would be shared among the various companies.

The government, meanwhile, pulled the plug on five government-run test programs last month.

Mr. Brill's company, Verified Identity Pass, Inc., has already signed up about 9,000 people in the Orlando area at \$79.95 each per year and plans to market the program elsewhere. Other companies have expressed interest in becoming card or kiosk operators including Unisys Corp. and Electronic Data Systems Corp.

The American Association of Airport Executives wants to see the Registered Traveler applications funneled through a clearinghouse it has already established for screening airport workers, and it wants to collect the fees one vendor will owe another for using its security kiosk.

It appears a fight over control of the system may be brewing. "No airport has told us that we must go through some clearinghouse," Mr. Brill says.

ENTER AAAE

The American Association of Airport Executives in Washington, D.C., is quietly working to

RETIREMENT ON THE RADAR SCREEN FOR ORLANDO'S JENNINGS

You still have time to get those resumes ready. Orlando International Airport officials made public late last week plans for replacing Executive Director Bill Jennings, who is expected to retire sometime before 2008.

Jeffry Fuqua, Chairman of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, said he would establish a committee to help find candidates for the position.

"I do feel strongly it is time to initiate a process," Fuqua said.

It was the first hint that Jennings' tenure would be coming to a close, opening one of the most powerful positions in Central Florida.

Jennings, 58, oversees the busiest airport in the state, expecting about 33 million passengers this year and a

budget of \$300 million.

He is keeping quiet about exactly when he would make his exit.

"I don't have a date," said Jennings, who was appointed executive director in 2000 and has worked for the airport since 1976. "I'm not going to be here forever, and we have some really significant things coming up."

Jennings' contract expires in 2007 but automatically renews unless he or the board decide otherwise.

Along with a succession plan for Jennings, Fuqua also announced a planned reorganization of airport staff that would put more emphasis on economic development and the negotiation of new lease agreements with

the airlines that would take effect in 2008.

The new airline leases will substantially change the way the airport operates, relieving the beleaguered airline industry of the burden of the airport's budget shortfalls.

"I think it would be good to have my replacement here before we get to that so they can have the benefit of some of the negotiations," said Jennings, who earns more than \$215,000 annually.

Jennings reports to a board made up of Orange County Mayor Rich Cotty, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer and five other people appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush. Fuqua, a leading national fund raiser for the Bush family, leads the board.

AIRPORT HAS NEW MANAGER

Partick A. Ryan is the new airport manager at Outlaw Field in Clarksville, Tenn., and he has quite a job ahead of him. He is assuming the challenging task of running the airport from the previous manager, Mark Davis, who left his keys on his desk September 6, walked out and never returned.

The Airport Authority, which hired Ryan last week, is a defendant in a lawsuit filed by fixed base operator Robert O. Wyatt. The Airport Authority is about \$400,000 in debt with about half that amount owed to the city. It also owes \$150,000 for installation of never-used fuel tanks, which is related to Wyatt's lawsuit, and another \$400,000 is

outstanding for runway paving.

Ryan has the credentials for the job. He worked for the East Hampton, N.Y., airport for 30 years with 17 of those as airport manager and another nine as assistant manager. He told the authority he applied for the job because the inactivity associated with retirement had not suited him.

The Airport Authority is trying to turn things around at the airport before the city and county governments decide they made a mistake in 1998 by switching from a city-county

airport board to a regional airport authority.

According to locals, Ryan deserves some time to get acquainted with the job and work to turn things around for this important community asset. But he needs to know the public's patience with that process won't be limitless, either.

Note to Mr. Ryan:

Leave keys on desk, run like hell.

Ed.

DRIVING IN CIRCLES ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT

Albemarle County and the Charlottesville-Albemarle County Airport recently celebrated what local officials billed as Central Virginia's first publicly built roundabout.

"This is a wonderful new entrance to the community for the thousands of visitors who enter through the airport," said Dennis Rooker, chairman of the Albemarle County Board of Supervi-

sors, during a brief ceremony.

Rooker was joined by Airport Executive Director Bryan O. Elliott, AAE, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission Director Harrison Rue, county spokeswoman Lee Catlin, and Chuck Proctor of the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Elliott said the roundabout is

a "signature gateway" for those traveling through the airport, and landscaping and a sign would be added in the coming months. The roundabout is part of a greater group of airport entrance road improvements. Pedestrian crosswalks and bike lanes will also be added to the roundabout in the future.

AIRPORT BOARD KEEPS LAW FIRM BY 4-3 VOTE

The Melbourne Airport Authority, in a 4-3 vote, agreed last week to keep the GrayRobinson law firm as its legal counsel. The discussion leading to the vote resulted in a few testy comments from GrayRobinson attorney Donald Nohrr, who seemed irritated at subtle suggestions that his, and his firm's, ethics were being questioned in the discussions.

Considering new legal counsel for the airport became a charged issue earlier this year when Melbourne Mayor Harry Goode, also an airport authority member, suggested looking for another law firm to represent the airport.

Specifically, Goode worried that Nohrr, who has attended most of the airport meetings to provide legal counsel, was too

closely linked to former airport executive director James Johnson. Authority members forced Johnson to retire in February because of ethical questions surrounding his mixing of personal and airport business.

On October 3rd, a selection committee consisting of airport executive director Richard Ennis, airport director of land development Lawrence Wuensch, acting director of operations Richard Cloutier and authority member Jack Ryals recommended keeping GrayRobinson in a 3-1 vote.

Ryals, though, recommended the airport use Melbourne-based McClelland, Jones, Lyons & Lacey for its legal services. He said selecting the firm

would allow the airport to move beyond any unethical perceptions left over from Johnson's tenure as executive director. Choosing McClelland, Jones, Lyons & Lacey "is an excellent opportunity to do just that," Ryals said.

Nohrr said he thought that was an implication he and GrayRobinson may have been in some sort of ethical cloud with Johnson. "I do resent any suggestion that there is an issue of ethics with myself or this law firm," Nohrr said.

Ryals said he wasn't questioning Nohrr's or GrayRobinson's ethics.

A REGIONAL AIRPORT IN LAWRENCE COUNTY, ARKANSAS

It has more land area than Memphis Airport and it could eventually become the Northeast Arkansas Regional Airport. "The infrastructure is already in place, the runways are already there, and we feel we have the growth ability and we just think it is an excellent location," said Ernest Briner, Walnut Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce member.

Representatives from 9 counties in Northwest Arkansas are supporting a resolution for a feasibility study to make the 1,800 acre Walnut Ridge Regional Airport the area's regional airport. "The whole region will benefit by this becoming the regional airport

because everyone will buy into it and everyone will be a part of the airport," said Briner.

Currently the airport is governed by a local commission, but control could eventually be handed over to a port authority. "The City of Walnut Ridge would relinquish control of the airport forever once it was done it would be a done deal," said Walnut Ridge Regional Airport Manager Ken Newcom. By establishing a port authority, the town of Walnut Ridge would be handing over control of the airport to the port authority which would consist of 9 members from the participat-

ing counties in Northwest Arkansas.

"The only difference is who you change the administration to, you either keep here local under the City of Walnut Ridge or you give it away to other counties and other towns in the surrounding area," said Newcom.

And the timetable to establish this regional airport? "You are probably looking at 5 to 7 years down the road but we got to start somewhere," said Briner.

SECURITY PLAN FOR ST. CLAIR COUNTY AIRPORT

The St. Clair County Airport Authority (Ala.) is putting together an airport security plan and should have it finalized before the end of the year. Terry Capps, project manager for the authority, told authority members recently that the county airport in Pell City received a letter from the Alabama Department of Transportation stating that airports across the state are required to submit a security plan to ALDOT's Aeronautics Bureau. He informed au-

thority members it was vital to submit the plan to ALDOT before the end of the year so new airport projects can move forward.

The ALDOT letter notes "several recent and well publicized incidents that called into question how securely our smaller airports are being operated and maintained by local officials." And the letter goes on to state, "However, the recently publicized incidents that

received national media attention are not the only consideration; the Aeronautics Bureau is aware of other recent security breaches at airports that have not been widely publicized..."

"After 9-11, we did some things," said airport authority member Mike Fricker. "There are still some things I think we need to do."

Southeast Chapter Journal

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Airport Needs Additional \$500,000 for ILS

Ozark Regional Airport is a half-million dollars away from offering commercial flights between Mountain Home, Arkansas, and St. Louis, Missouri. Airport Commissioners, county officials, aviation consultants and congressmen learned last month that the Federal Aviation Administration needs an additional \$500,000 to get the airport's instrument landing system under way.

John Clabes with the FAA communications department says the project is still active, but the additional funds are needed soon. In 2003, Congress appropriated \$1 million for the ILS. Some setbacks have caused the project cost to increase to \$1.5 million. "There are several issues such as real estate, glideslopes and funding," Clabes said.

The airport plans to acquire two plots of land for the approach equipment. One owner has agreed to sell his land but negotiations are still underway with the other owner.

Airport Commission Chairman Richard Sheid recently approached the Baxter County Quorum Court requesting \$275,000 in loans from the county to pay for the land. He said the money would be fully refunded in 90-days by the federal government. He said the property needs to be in the county's name by Nov. 3 for the ILS to be installed.

County Judge Dan Hall said in a telephone interview Tuesday he is confident the properties can be acquired. "Negotiations are going well and I think we will be able to wrap this up soon," he said.

Vesta Rea-Gaubert, aviation consultant for Baxter County, said she will be traveling to Washington, DC, to meet with congressional representatives about obtaining the additional \$500,000 for the ILS. Rea-Gaubert said all parties involved in the project thought enough money had been secured to put the ILS in place. She said FAA officials noted \$1 million would cover all costs, but in September they said more money would have to be acquired. "This was a huge surprise to us in September," she said. "We made sure they (FAA) had the money and they said they did."

COME FLY AND ENJOY THE STYLE

The most recently completed phase of the Montgomery Regional Airport is a combination of tall glass doors, flat-screen TV's Greco-Roman columns and pop art styling of Auburn and Tuscaloosa doorways.

It's a bright, shining addition to an airport that is growing, according to several of the speakers at the recent grand opening—so bright that Montgomery Airport Authority Chairman Chester Mallory donned a pair of sunglasses during his remarks. "My outlook for the Montgomery Regional Airport Authority growth

and development is so bright...that I have to wear shades," Mallory joked.

Besides putting the casual flyer more at ease, the additions increase the business value of Montgomery, said Mayor Bobby Bright. "People doing business in the City of Montgomery, they land here," Bright said, "and they usually come to Montgomery by way of our air service. This is going to be another shining example of our growth."

The newly renovated portion of the airport will be dedicated to Alice Reynolds and her

son, Jimmy Reynolds, officials said. By Thanksgiving 2006, airport officials said another phase of construction would be complete and a fourth stage is already in early planning.

The airline industry is so chaotic right now, the new additions probably won't immediately attract new airlines or flights to the airport, said Phil Perry, executive director of the Montgomery Regional Airport Authority. "Many area residents still travel to Birmingham to catch flights to the west. That's probably not going to change anytime soon."