

SEC JOURNAL

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LET'S HOPE THIS SALARY DOESN'T BECOME A TREND!

On the face of it, it appears Owens Field (SC) airport manager Jim Hamilton's decision to continue in his position for a salary of \$1-a-month is a good deal for Richland County. Certainly no one knows Owens Field like Mr. Hamilton does. And not only does he know the airport, but he knows the aviation business and he has spent more than 40 years of his life helping in the building of the county-owned airport.

While some feel the deal bodes well for the county, others are concerned that government sometimes gets what it pays for when it asks someone to do a full-time job for a token salary.

No one seems to doubt that Mr. Hamilton intends to give the county his best, but some feel the County council has unwisely allowed Mr. Hamilton to transfer his overly gener-

ous contracts for airport services to Eagle Aviation. Some feel that the County Council should have done all in its power to regain control of the contracts and bid them out in an arrangement that would have allowed the airport to generate more revenue that would have been a benefit to the county—not private business.

Councilwoman Kit Smith said the decision to award the contracts to Eagle Aviation was "in violation of good sense and justice."

Mr. Hamilton originally agreed to take a \$1-a-month salary as airport manager as part of the deal that allowed his company, Jim Hamilton Aircraft, to have a monopoly at Owens Field. He got free rent for the space his company occupied, received 25 percent of the hangar rental revenue and operated the only business

at Owens Field. With that deal now gone, some question whether he will have the incentive to perform as airport manager. While he has agreed to continue to work for \$12 annually, he earlier had requested a full-time salary that was estimated at \$60,000 or more.

Editors at *The State*, the local newspaper, voice their opposition to the move and ask some pointed questions, "It is difficult enough for employers to deal with well-paid contractors who are not directly on their payrolls. As airport manager, Mr. Hamilton is a contract employee, receiving no benefits and no salary to speak of. Can—or will—the county exercise any real authority over someone who is paid \$12-a-year and at that price, what can the county really hold him responsible for?"

Beachwear Required

Ok, start today! Purchase those protein shakes, hit the gym, go swimsuit shopping on the Internet and get ready for the 2007 SEC Annual Conf-

erence to be held April 29 thru May 1, 2007, at the Myrtle Beach Resort at Grande Dunes.

Chuck Henderson,

our conference chairman from Columbia, South Carolina, promises a conference to remember, so mark your calendars now!

CINCINNATI/NORTHERN KENTUCKY No. 1 FOR ON-TIME ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

In the first six months of 2006, arrivals at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport located in Hebron, Ky., were on-time 85.53 percent of the time and departures were on-time 87.31 percent of the time, according to a report released last week by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Airport spokesman Ted Bushelman asked, "You know why its like that? Because we put that third north-south runway in there. Now planes are not waiting to take off. There are three runways to use instead of two. We opened up that third north-south runway and everything is running smooth."

The good news of on-time performance comes on the heels of a report last month that ranked Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky as the costliest major airport in the nation to fly out of in the last quarter of 2005. That Department of Transportation analysis found that passengers at CVG paid 48 percent more than the national average for trips of similar distance and occupancy at other major airports around the country. For airlines operating at CVG, not only are the higher airfares lucrative, but the on-time

performances mean more profitable operations because aircraft are able to get in and out on-time.

Bushelman said, "Someone once told me it costs the airlines \$60-a-minute to wait. They don't waste time. They don't waste money flying in here."

Beyond the runway, airline experts say there are other factors, including improved operational efficiency by the airlines and Delta Air Lines' 26 percent cutback in service at CVG last December that has made the airport less busy. But Bushelman says he believes the new runway made the greater impact because on-time performance really took off once it opened for good about seven months ago. "When that new runway opened up, everything just seemed to flow," he said.

Passengers got an airline-by-airline scorecard on on-time performance as well in a separate Transportation Report called the Air Travel Consumer Report. Among the 20 largest

carriers, the on-time arrival rate for flights stood at 72.8 percent in June, down from both June 2005's 75.2 percent and May 2006's 78.3 percent.

For Delta Air Lines, the month of June saw 74 percent of the airline's flights system wide arrive on-time while 69.2 percent of the flights of its Comair subsidiaries were on schedule.

The on-time performance at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky for both Delta and Comair was better in June with 81.5 percent of Delta's flights arriving on-time and 80.8 percent of Comair's flights on schedule.

Kate Marx, spokeswoman for Comair, said the weather was largely to blame for the airline's late arrivals. "June was particularly challenging for Comair because of poor weather throughout our network and especially in the Northeast," which accounts for more than one-third of the airline's operations, Marx said.

DELAND AIRPORT TOWER STARTS TO TAKE WING

Plans to build a controversial air traffic control tower at DeLand Municipal Airport are taking off while the city and the skydiving industry work to find common ground.

Members of the Airport Tower Advisory Group met last week to hammer out what they hope will be a happy medium between the skydiving community and the tower operations. "I have felt pretty much all along that the tower was inevitable," said Bob Hallett, owner of Sky-

Dive DeLand. "Now that they are proceeding with it, we are going to try to make it work."

The city accepted 80 percent funding for the estimated \$1.2 million tower from the Florida Department of Transportation in June and hired Jacksonville-Based Earth Tech Consulting to design the tower, said Keith Riger, public services director. "Funding is in place," he said. "I'd say we are pretty much on-track."

The Federal Aviation Administration will also cover 2.5 percent of the tower expense and provide grants to cover 90 percent of the estimated \$230,000 tower equipment costs.

The local skydiving community objected to the tower's construction in early June contending that potential delays could discourage jumpers and drive off an estimated \$33 million in local revenues.

ATLANTA UNVEILS BAGGAGE SCREENING SYSTEM

With suitcases piled on a luggage cart before them, TSA employees Lisa Brandt and Cassandra Frederick help each other hoist large black-wheeled bags onto the ramp of a baggage screening machine at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

They move another and another and another.

In a single work shift, TSA Officers like Brandt and Frederick can hoist up to 800 such bags—many weighing 50 pounds—onto explosive detectors. The constant heavy lifting, that can jar backs and injure toes and feet, has left the TSA with the highest injury rate in the federal government.

But federal officials said last week that a new baggage screening system at the airport—costing \$175 million and mostly automated—will help reduce TSA injuries and save time for air travelers. The new system, that sends checked baggage underground for screening, began operating July 6 at the airport's North Terminal.

Next month, a similar underground screening center will begin functioning at the South Terminal,

where Delta's check-in gates are located and where Brandt and Frederick do their work. A third underground screening center will open next spring for international flights at the airport. TSA personnel whose jobs are replaced by the new system will be retrained to perform passenger screening, TSA officials said.

The system is already in place at a half-dozen other airports around the country including Denver, Dallas-Fort Worth, Oakland, San Diego, Tampa and Jacksonville, Fl. (See Jacksonville to Improve Baggage Handling below.)

"This will bring the pre-9/11 convenience to the traveling public but with post-9/11 security," said Willie Williams, the TSA's Atlanta federal security director.

The convenience, Williams said, comes from saving up to seven minutes in check-in time. That's because passengers will no longer have to drag checked luggage to a baggage screening machine. The new system allows travelers to leave their checked luggage at the check-in counter. The bags are then taken via

conveyor belt to the underground screening machines.

Kathy Shearer, 40, of Phoenix, waited in line last week to drop off her checked suitcase at a baggage machine. She said Williams' promise of time savings sounded good. "When you travel three to five times a month, it adds up from an aggravation standpoint," the pharmaceutical saleswoman said. "An extra seven minutes can be a soda or chai tea or an extra five minutes to check your emails. I'll take it."

Once underground, the bags go through one of the North Terminal's nine screening machines. Fifteen are planed for the South Terminal and twelve more for the international flights' screening area. If the machines do not detect anything potentially dangerous, the bags are released on a conveyor belt that returns them to the airline. Bags deemed potentially dangerous are sent on another conveyor belt while a TSA screener decides whether they need to be screened by hand.

Radioisotope Treatment Can Trigger Airport Alarms

A case report illustrates how someone being treated with radioisotopes may be sufficiently radioactive for several weeks and capable of setting off radiation detectors at airports.

"Patients receiving radioactive isotopes should be warned that they

may trigger radiation alarms," says Dr. Kalyan Kumar Gangopadhyay and colleagues from City Hospital in Birmingham, UK.

The reports describes a man treated with radioactive iodine for an

overactive thyroid who traveled to Orlando international Airport six weeks later where he was detained, strip searched and subjected to sniffer dogs for activating security alarms at the airport.

JACKSONVILLE TO IMPROVE BAGGAGE HANDLING

A Michigan company has been awarded an \$11 million contract to upgrade baggage handling and screening systems at Jacksonville International Airport, Fl. Jervis B. Webb Company will install in-line baggage screening, including new conveyors, baggage

make-up devices, electrical controls and a baggage handling computer system capable of monitoring and reporting malfunctions. The new system, expected to be completed in February 2007, is expected to enable the Transportation Security

Administration employees to screen checked baggage more efficiently.

Jervis B. Webb has worked on baggage handling systems at Philadelphia, Atlanta, Toronto and Beijing.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations go out to Southeast Chapter member Jean Garrison who was promoted to Staff Vice President for the W. D. Schock Company in April of this year. Jean, like her boss Bill Schock, began her aviation career with the Nashville International Airport. She has been with the W.D. Schock Company since August 1989 where she started as a Project Manager. She began her consulting career at the company's headquarters in Nashville and she has been with the company longer than any other employee—other than Bill Schock himself, of course.

Jean is currently heading airport projects at Mobile (AL), Sanford (FL), and Charlottesville (VA) as well as three highway projects for the Tennessee Department of Transportation in addition to being the W.D. Schock self proclaimed "Booth Babe."

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge her husband Richard—a popular and regular attendee at SEC-AAAE Annual Conferences. Richard is with the Federal Express Corporation and has become quite the hit with all the regular conference attendees.

SHORT TAKES

Lexington, Ky.—A three-person airline crew escaped uninjured last week when a jet bridge malfunctioned and became stuck on the door hinge of a 50-seat Continental Airlines regional jet, lifting the aircraft three-feet off the ground. There were no passengers aboard at the time of the incident. Airport spokeswoman Amy Caudill said the plane was lowered to the ground about three hours after it got stuck. Passengers who were scheduled to depart on the aircraft were booked on another flight.

Ft. Myers, Fl.—The number of passengers traveling through Southwest Florida International Airport fell slightly in June 2006 compared to June 2005. Airport officials reported that 505,252 passengers used the airport, which is down about 1 percent from the previous June. Activity for the month was down 4,179 passengers from June 2005. Year to date, passenger traffic is up about 1 percent. Nationwide, passenger traffic declined 2.4 percent for June and has declined 1 percent for the first six months of the year.

Memphis, Tenn.—Northwest Airlines, who operates one of its three U.S. hubs from Memphis International Airport where 80 percent of the airport's passenger capacity is generated by the legacy carrier, flew fuller planes but fewer miles in July 2006 than July 2005. The Eagan, Minn.-based airline flew 7.3 billion revenue passenger miles (RPM) this past July, down 9.4 percent from last year's RPM total of 8 billion.

BUSINESS LEADERS CHEER TRI-STATE (W.VA.) AIRPORT

The Tri-State Airport in Huntington, West Virginia, contributes an annual \$50.4 million in direct spending to the area's economy, including \$21.1 million in income to more than 800 full-time-equivalent employees of the airport and related agencies and \$3.5 million in tax revenues.

The Marshall University's Center for Business and Economic Research released the figures in an economic impact study on the airport during a press conference prior to a luncheon meeting of local business leaders last week.

"The numbers are accurate and the numbers are high," said SEC-AAAE executive member and airport director Larry Salyers. "We need to get the message out to the public about the economic importance of the airport to the Tri-State area, in addition to the benefit of air service—which the public already knows."

U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., and ranking member of the Senate Aviation Subcommittee, also stopped by to plug a new program called Travel Partners to encourage more local business leaders to fly to and from

Tri-State Airport instead of using facilities in other cities.

Mark Bugher, president and CEO of the Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce asked, "What would a community do to get a \$50 million industry employing over 800 people to locate there? We are always looking at how to attract large economic impact industries to the community. But as a chamber of commerce, we also recognize that we need to be mindful of those industries that are already here and are contributing to our economy."