

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

N E W S L E T T E R

FAA Federal Contract Tower Program

“The Government/Industry Partnership Dedicated to Air Traffic Safety”

Volume 8, Number 4

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HILL PANELS APPROVE \$93 MILLION FOR CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

Appropriations Committees in both the Senate and House have approved full funding of \$86 million for FAA's Contract Tower Program, as well as \$7 million for the cost-sharing program in legislation funding DOT/FAA for fiscal year 2005.

The House on Sept. 22 passed the spending bill. The Senate version of the bill was still pending at newsletter presstime.

The Senate Appropriations Committee issued report language that stated, in part: “The committee continues to support the contract tower program and the cost-sharing program as a cost-effective way to enhance air traffic safety at smaller airports. For the past 22 years, the contract tower program has enhanced aviation safety by providing essential air traffic services at smaller airports that in many cases would not otherwise have a tower, consistently has received high marks for customer service from aviation users, and has been an incentive to aid small airports with retaining and developing commercial air services and corporate aviation.

“Currently, 223 smaller airports in participate in the program, representing 45 percent of all control towers in the United States. Federal contract towers handle approximately 25 percent of control tower aircraft operations for about 10 percent of FAA's budget to operate all control towers in the national airspace system.

“The safety and efficiency record of the program for the past two decades has been validated numerous times by the DOT Office of Inspector General (OIG) and FAA safety audits, as well as by the National Transportation Safety Board. The OIG also has verified the significant cost-effectiveness of the program. All federal contract controllers are FAA certified air traffic controllers who meet the identical training and operating standards as other FAA controllers. Contract tower controllers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the coun-

try as part of a unified national air traffic control system. The FAA exercises management and oversight over all aspects of the program, including operating procedures, staffing plans, certification of contract controllers, security and facility evaluations.

“Without a federal program that provides financial assistance, sets safety and training standards, certifies operations and monitors all aspects of contract tower facilities, many of these towers would have to close.

“The committee recommends \$86 million to fund the existing contract tower program, the remaining eligible non-federal towers not currently operated by FAA, and non-towered airports eligible for the program. In addition to these resources, the committee has provided \$7 million for the contract tower cost-sharing program.”

The House Appropriations Committee earlier issued bill language that stated in part, “The bill includes \$86 million, an increase of \$6.8 million above the budget estimate, to continue the contract tower base program. The President's budget does not reflect the estimate for new contracts being negotiated during fiscal year 2005, or costs to continue operations at an estimated 15 new towers entering the program during the fiscal year of 2005.

“In addition, the bill provides \$7 million to continue the contract tower cost-sharing program. The committee continues to believe this is a valuable program that provides safety benefits to small communities.”

Spencer Dickerson, AAAE senior executive vice president
(continued on following page)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR JULY 18-19, 2005

The 2005 FAA Contract Tower Program Workshop will be held July 18-19 at the historic Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Program details and registration materials will be available closer to the time of the meeting.

ident and USCTA executive director, stated, “Considering the challenging budget time in which we operate, the solid support from members of Congress for FAA’s Contract Tower Program is a clear endorsement of the safety benefits and value of the program. We thank the Appropriations Committees for their continuing support.”

In particular, Dickerson expressed appreciation to the following congressional leaders for their efforts in supporting increased funding for FAA’s Contract Tower Program: Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), ranking member of the Appropriations Committee; Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), chairman of the transportation appropriations subcommittee; Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), ranking member of the transportation appropriations subcommittee; Rep. Bill Young (R-Fla.), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee; Rep. David Obey (R-Wis.), ranking member of the Appropriations Committee; Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Okla.), chairman of the transportation appropriations subcommittee, and Rep. John Olver (D-Mass.), ranking member of the transportation appropriations subcommittee.

The USCTA Policy Board thanks airports for their efforts in contacting members of Congress in support of this funding level.

FOUR TOWERS ADDED TO FAA CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

Four new air traffic control towers at previously non-towered airports have been added to FAA’s Contract Tower Program. They are New Smyrna Beach (Fla.) Municipal; Donaldson Center Airport (S.C.); Ormond Beach (Fla.) Municipal, and St. Cloud (Minn.) Regional. All four towers are expected to be fully operational by Oct. 15. FAA’s Contract Tower Program now has 227 towers.

“The growth and strength of this important program, which benefits smaller communities, is clear evidence of the FAA’s and industry’s determination to add critical safety benefits to qualified non-towered airports that are experiencing a significant increase in air traffic activity,” commented Spencer Dickerson, AAAE senior executive vice president and U.S. Contract Tower Association executive director. “We thank Congress and FAA for working with these and other airports interested in entering the program, particularly during these difficult budget times.”

22 AIRPORTS PARTICIPATE IN CONTRACT TOWER COST-SHARING

Twenty-two facilities were participating in FAA’s con-

tract tower cost-sharing program as of Oct. 1.

They are: King Salmon (Alaska), Laughlin/Bullhead City (Ariz.), Springdale Municipal (Ark.), South Lake Tahoe (Calif.), Macon (Ga.), Muncie (Ind.), Columbus (Ind.), Bloomington (Ind.), Manhattan (Kan.), Garden City (Kan.), Jefferson City (Mo.), Elko (Nev.), Lebanon Municipal (N.H.), Hickory Regional (N.C.), Concord (N.C.), Kinston (N.C.), Stillwater (Okla.), Latrobe (Pa.), Williamsport/Lycoming Co. (Pa.), Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach (S.C.), McKellar-Sipes Regional (Tenn.) and Walla Walla Regional (Wash.).

For information on the contract tower cost-sharing program, contact your FAA regional representative (listed on page 5 of this newsletter).

IG URGES FAA TO BE ‘AGGRESSIVE’ IN ENSURING REPORTING OF OEs

FAA needs to take “more aggressive steps” to ensure that air traffic controller operational errors (OEs) are more accurately reported, DOT’s Inspector General said.

Although the actual extent of under-reporting of OEs is unknown, it appears to be a problem, the IG said in a Sept. 20 report to FAA Administrator Marion Blakey.

An OE occurs when an air traffic controller allows two aircraft to come too close together.

“We found that because of vulnerabilities in FAA’s reporting process at certain air traffic control facilities, operational errors have not been accurately reported,” the

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**U. S. C O N T R A C T T O W E R
A S S O C I A T I O N**

N E W S L E T T E R

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Visit our website at www.contracttower.org

FAA CONTRACT TOWERS

(227 towers as of Oct. 5, 2004. Towers marked with an asterisk are part of the cost-sharing program.)

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Bethel	AAL	AK	Ohio State University	AGL	OH
Kenai Municipal	AAL	AK	Lunken Mun. (Cincinnati)	AGL	OH
*King Salmon	AAL	AK	Cuyahoga County (Cleveland)	AGL	OH
Kodiak	AAL	AK	Rapid City Regional	AGL	SD
Dubuque	ACE	IA	Appleton	AGL	WI
Forbes Field (Topeka)	ACE	KS	Central Wisconsin	AGL	WI
*Garden City	ACE	KS	Kenosha Municipal	AGL	WI
Hutchinson Mun.	ACE	KS	Lacrosse	AGL	WI
Johnson Co. Exec.	ACE	KS	Rock County (Janesville)	AGL	WI
Philip Billard Mun. (Topeka)	ACE	KS	Timmerman (Milwaukee)	AGL	WI
*Manhattan	ACE	KS	Waukesha County Airport	AGL	WI
New Century Air Center (Olathe)	ACE	KS	Wittman Regional (Oshkosh)	AGL	WI
Salina Municipal	ACE	KS	Bridgeport	ANE	CT
Columbia	ACE	MO	Danbury	ANE	CT
*Jefferson City	ACE	MO	New London (Groton)	ANE	CT
Joplin Regional	ACE	MO	Brainard (Hartford)	ANE	CT
Rosecrans Mem'l (St. Joseph)	ACE	MO	Tweed-New Haven	ANE	CT
Central Neb. (Grand Island)	ACE	NE	Waterbury/Oxford	ANE	CT
Martin State (Baltimore)	AEA	MD	Barnes Municipal	ANE	MA
Washington Co. (Hagerstown)	AEA	MD	Beverly	ANE	MA
Salisbury-Wicomico	AEA	MD	Hyannis	ANE	MA
Trenton	AEA	NJ	Lawrence	ANE	MA
Tompkins County	AEA	NY	Martha's Vineyard	ANE	MA
Niagara Falls	AEA	NY	New Bedford	ANE	MA
Oneida County	AEA	NY	Norwood	ANE	MA
Stewart	AEA	NY	Worcester	ANE	MA
Capital City (Harrisburg)	AEA	PA	Boire Field (Nashua)	ANE	NH
Lancaster	AEA	PA	*Lebanon Municipal	ANE	NH
*Latrobe	AEA	PA	Eagle County	ANM	CO
*Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	AEA	PA	Grand Junction	ANM	CO
Charlottesville-Albemarle	AEA	VA	Friedman Memorial (Hailey)	ANM	ID
Lynchburg	AEA	VA	Idaho Falls	ANM	ID
Greenbrier Valley	AEA	WV	Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ANM	ID
Morgantown	AEA	WV	Pocatello Municipal	ANM	ID
Parkersburg	AEA	WV	Gallatin Field (Bozeman)	ANM	MT
Wheeling Ohio Co.	AEA	WV	Kalispell	ANM	MT
Bloomington/Normal	AGL	IL	Missoula	ANM	MT
Decatur	AGL	IL	Klamath Falls	ANM	OR
St. Louis Regional	AGL	IL	McNary Field (Salem)	ANM	OR
So. Illinois/Carbondale	AGL	IL	Medford	ANM	OR
Waukegan Regional	AGL	IL	Pendleton	ANM	OR
Williamson County (Marion)	AGL	IL	Redmond	ANM	OR
*Bloomington	AGL	IN	Troutdale (Portland)	ANM	OR
*Columbus Municipal	AGL	IN	Ogden-Hinckley	ANM	UT
Gary Regional	AGL	IN	Bellingham Int'l	ANM	WA
*Muncie/Delaware County	AGL	IN	Felts Field (Spokane)	ANM	WA
Battle Creek	AGL	MI	Olympia	ANM	WA
Detroit City	AGL	MI	Renton	ANM	WA
Sawyer	AGL	MI	Tacoma Narrows	ANM	WA
Jackson	AGL	MI	*Walla Walla Regional	ANM	WA
Anoka (Minneapolis)	AGL	MN	Yakima	ANM	WA
St. Cloud Regional Airport	AGL	MN	Cheyenne	ANM	WY
Minot	AGL	ND	Jackson Hole	ANM	WY
Bolton Field (Columbus)	AGL	OH	Dothan	ASO	AL
Burke Lakefront (Cleveland)	AGL	OH	Brookley (Mobile)	ASO	AL

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Tuscaloosa Municipal	ASO	AL	Lea County/Hobbs	ASW	NM
Albert Whitted (St. Petersburg)	ASO	FL	Santa Fe Co. Mun.	ASW	NM
Boca Raton	ASO	FL	Ardmore Municipal	ASW	OK
Cecil Field	ASO	FL	Enid Woodring Mun.	ASW	OK
Gainesville	ASO	FL	Lawton Municipal	ASW	OK
Hollywood	ASO	FL	Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	ASW	OK
Craig (Jacksonville)	ASO	FL	*Stillwater	ASW	OK
Key West	ASO	FL	Wiley Post	ASW	OK
Kissimmee	ASO	FL	Brownsville Int'l	ASW	TX
Lakeland Municipal	ASO	FL	Denton Municipal Airport	ASW	TX
Melbourne	ASO	FL	Easterwood	ASW	TX
Naples	ASO	FL	Grand Prairie	ASW	TX
New Smyrna Beach Municipal	ASO	FL	Laredo International	ASW	TX
Opa Locka (Miami)	ASO	FL	McAllen	ASW	TX
Ormond Beach Municipal	ASO	FL	McKinney Municipal	ASW	TX
Page Field	ASO	FL	Redbird	ASW	TX
Panama City/Bay Co.	ASO	FL	Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen)	ASW	TX
Pompano Beach	ASO	FL	San Angelo	ASW	TX
St. Augustine	ASO	FL	Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	ASW	TX
Stuart/Witham	ASO	FL	Sugar Land	ASW	TX
Titusville/Cocoa	ASO	FL	Tyler	ASW	TX
Athens Municipal	ASO	GA	Waco TSTC	ASW	TX
Fulton County	ASO	GA			
Gwinnett County	ASO	GA	Chandler	AWP	AZ
*Macon	ASO	GA	Flagstaff Pulliam	AWP	AZ
McCollum	ASO	GA	Glendale	AWP	AZ
SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	ASO	GA	Goodyear (Phoenix)	AWP	AZ
Valdosta Regional	ASO	GA	*Laughlin/Bullhead City	AWP	AZ
Barkley Regional (Paducah)	ASO	KY	Mesa/Williams Gateway	AWP	AZ
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	ASO	KY	Ryan (Tucson)	AWP	AZ
Golden Triangle Regional	ASO	MS	Chico	AWP	CA
Greenville Municipal	ASO	MS	Fullerton	AWP	CA
Hawkins Field (Jackson)	ASO	MS	Hawthorne	AWP	CA
Meridian/Key Field	ASO	MS	Mather (Sacramento)	AWP	CA
Tupelo Regional	ASO	MS	Modesto	AWP	CA
*Concord	ASO	NC	Oxnard	AWP	CA
*Kinston	ASO	NC	Palmdale	AWP	CA
New Bern	ASO	NC	Ramona Airport	AWP	CA
Smith Reynolds (Winston-Salem)	ASO	NC	Redding Municipal	AWP	CA
*Hickory Regional	ASO	NC	Riverside	AWP	CA
Isla Grande	ASO	Puerto Rico	Sacramento Executive	AWP	CA
Donaldson Center Airport	ASO	SC	Salinas Municipal	AWP	CA
*Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	ASO	SC	San Carlos	AWP	CA
Greenville Downtown	ASO	SC	Brown Field (San Diego)	AWP	CA
Hilton Head Airport	ASO	SC	San Luis Obispo	AWP	CA
Millington	ASO	TN	Santa Maria	AWP	CA
Smyrna	ASO	TN	*South Lake Tahoe	AWP	CA
*McKeller-Sipes (Jackson)	ASO	TN	Vandenberg Air Force Base	AWP	CA
Henry E. Rohlsen (St. Croix)	ASO	Virgin Islands	Victorville	AWP	CA
			Whiteman (Los Angeles)	AWP	CA
Fayetteville	ASW	AR	William J. Fox (Lancaster)	AWP	CA
Northwest Arkansas Regional	ASW	AR	Agana	AWP	Guam
*Springdale	ASW	AR	Kalaeloa	AWP	HI
Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	ASW	AR	Kona/Keahole	AWP	HI
Acadiana Regional	ASW	LA	Lihue	AWP	HI
Chennault	ASW	LA	Molokai	AWP	HI
Houma	ASW	LA	*Elko	AWP	NV
Alexandria	ASW	LA	Henderson (Las Vegas)	AWP	NV
Shreveport Downtown	ASW	LA	Saipan International	AWP	MP
Farmington Municipal	ASW	NM			

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IG said. "Specifically, at the facilities that handle the most air traffic, FAA relies on supervisors and controllers to self-report when errors have occurred and does not have a system in place to verify that this reporting process is reliable."

The IG stated that at facilities where OEs are self reported, 22 percent of the errors that occurred in fiscal year 2003 were initially reported by outside parties and were not identified by facility controllers or managers. During a recent two-year period, the IG and FAA's hotline center combined received 120 complaints concerning aircraft that came too close together, or potential OEs, the IG said. Further, during a current investigation at one air traffic facility, "We identified five errors that had not been reported by facility personnel or managers," the IG said. "Prior to our review, the facility had only reported two errors."

FAA has set reducing OEs as a goal and, to its credit, has made some progress in that direction, the IG said. "However, FAA must continue its efforts because on average three OEs occur daily and one severe error takes place every nine days." A severe error is rated as high risk of an accident.

The IG pointed out that in 2003, FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association agreed to tie a portion of controllers' salary increases to national goals for improving safety and capacity. As part of that agreement, controllers each year will receive a 0.2 percent pay raise if serious OEs are reduced by at least 3 percent.

While this agreement is an important step, the IG said FAA needs a system that ensures accurate reporting of OEs at all ATC facilities. FAA has an automated system that identified when OEs occur at its 20 enroute facilities in the U.S., the IG noted. The agency needs additional controls to ensure the integrity of OE reporting at Tracon and tower facilities where there is no automated system to signal when OEs occur. For example, the IG said, the parameters for AMASS (the Airport Movement Area Safety Systems), which are set to identify when a vehicle or aircraft inappropriately enters an active runway, could also be used to identify unreported OEs.

TUPELO REGIONAL AIRPORT GAINS STARS SYSTEM

Tupelo (Miss.) Regional Airport now has a fully operational STARS (Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System), which Executive Director Terry Anderson described as "an immense improvement to safety, awareness and sequencing for the controllers."

Tupelo in February 2002 acquired TARDIS (Terminal Automatic Radar Display and Information System) to as-

sist the tower controllers with safety and traffic sequencing. However, Columbus Air Force Base was scheduled to receive STARS in fiscal year 2004, which would have interrupted and possibly eliminated Tupelo's feed for TARDIS from the base, Anderson explained. So FAA mandated that the airport was to receive whatever it needed to maintain its level of service. "A remote tower STARS system was the answer," Anderson said. "And, of course, it fit very nicely in our airport instrument upgrade efforts." Since STARS is a replacement system, there was no cost to the airport.

"This system is another set of eyes," Anderson said. "It adds awareness well beyond just the visual limitations of a human controller."

Although STARS was just installed at Tupelo, Anderson said there are many success stories about TARDIS, its predecessor. For example, he said TARDIS prevented potential midair collisions by identifying well in advance flight tracks that might come too close to each other.

The controllers at Tupelo, which is an FAA contract tower, are employed by Robinson Aviation (RVA).

AIRPORT STRENGTHS LISTED IN COMPETITION FOR CARD AWARD

Williams Gateway (Mesa, Ariz.) Airport and the airport's FAA Contract Air Traffic Control Tower received the 2004 Willie F. Card FAA Contract Tower Service Award presented by AAAE and USCTA at the May 24-25 Contract Tower Workshop in Washington, D.C.

The award is presented annually to the airport and FAA contract tower that best exemplify excellence in customer service and safety in the contract tower industry. The award is named in honor of former FAA Contract Tower Branch Manager Willie F. Card, who managed the FAA program from 1998 until his death in June 2002.

As part of the award nomination process, the contract tower must have a documented system in place to measure safety and customer service performance.

Other airports that were nominated for the 2004 award and a summary of their nomination letters and supporting documents follows.

Waukegan (Ill.) Regional Airport: Waukegan focuses on safety first for all seasons and all weather conditions. Communication in the air and on the ground is always professional with an appropriate sense of priority for all operations at all times. Air traffic controllers handle inquiries regarding aircraft in a very courteous and timely manner. Based and itinerant pilots report that the tower does an excellent job. Tower personnel also conduct safety presentations for airport tenants. Airport op-

erations are about 100,000 annually. Midwest ATC operates the tower.

Grand Prairie (Texas) Municipal Airport: Tower personnel have established procedures for reviewing logs and tapes to ensure safety and quality of service to the community. Communication with local businesses improves community relations and provides excellent customer service. This customer service orientation has helped to all but eliminate noise complaints from residents near the airport. The tower is open to the public for tours whenever staffing and workload allow. Tower personnel assist students participating in flight training at the airport. The tower is operated by Midwest ATC.

Central Nebraska Regional Airport: Tower personnel have strong technical and operational knowledge of the tower equipment and provide professional customer service to pilots and ground personnel. The tower staff received 100 percent positive feedback from surveys of air traffic services. Personnel also received praise from local pilots and race participants on their professionalism during the 27th annual Air Race Classic. In September 2003 the facility was recognized by FAA for six years without any operational errors/deviations. The tower is operated by Midwest ATC.

Cincinnati (Ohio) Municipal Airport-Lunken Field: The airport operates as the primary reliever to Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International and accommodates a high volume of aircraft operations in a safe and efficient manner. Tower personnel play an important role in the airport's community outreach program. The tower manager evaluates trends and publishes a letter explaining how or why specific situations could have been better handled. On some occasions a pilot involved in misunderstandings between ATC and himself/herself is invited to an informal meeting with the facility manager and the controller involved. Results of this forum have been outstanding. Midwest ATC operates the tower.

Chandler (Ariz.) Airport: Chandler has evolved into the busiest FAA contract tower in the country and now serves four flight training schools, among other customers. The tower has established great working relationships with all its customers and deals with problems as a team effort. Controllers have conducted seminars for flight personnel to familiarize them with using the radio to communicate with the tower. Serco Management Services operates the tower.

Idaho Falls Regional Airport: Tower personnel participate in at least six fire department training meetings annually and train firefighters on radio communication procedures and airport familiarization. They also participate in career days at local schools, churches and youth organizations, in Drug Awareness Week activities, and in

USCTA PRODUCES BROCHURE HIGHLIGHTING PROGRAM VALUE

The U.S. Contract Tower Association has produced a brochure that airports with FAA contract towers may distribute to airport tenants and local government officials to highlight the importance of the program to the aviation community.

Copies of the brochure have been mailed to airport directors with FAA contract towers. If you need additional copies of the brochure now or in the future, e-mail sdickerson@airportnet.org, or call Spencer Dickerson at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 130.

We would like to thank Midwest ATC, Robinson Aviation (RVA) and Serco Management services for underwriting the costs for AAAE to produce this brochure.

numerous pilot/user meetings annually. Controllers work closely with airport management and participated in developing the airport driver training program. The tower is operated by Serco Management Services.

Ryan Airfield (Ariz.): A GA reliever located west of Tucson, Ryan Field handles a large number of experimental aircraft and a considerable amount of flight training activity. The tower's vigilant emphasis on safety is evidenced by its record of no operational errors for more than six years. Controllers are enthusiastic partners in the airport's mutual aid agreement with a neighboring fire district. The tower personnel are involved in stakeholder outreach and have a formal customer feedback system to measure safety and satisfaction. The airport had 132,356 operations in 2003. Serco Management Services operates the tower.

Palmdale (Calif.) Regional Airport: A joint use facility with the U. S. Air Force, Palmdale is used by military production flight test pilots and test pilots for major aircraft manufacturers such as Boeing. Tower manager Deena Petersen developed a successful campaign to educate all FBOs and improve airfield safety by reducing runway crossings by 84 percent. Controllers are working to accommodate airfield construction projects by attending preconstruction meetings and working with contractors. Serco Management Services operates the tower.

Westfield-Barnes (Mass.) Municipal Airport: FAA recognized the tower for having completed 10 consecutive years without an operational error or deviation. 2004 marks the 11th error-free year. The airport recently completed a large taxiway construction project, which required comprehensive coordination among the tower, airport operations and the contractor. Tower personnel participate in aviation career days at local schools and support local Boy/Girl Scout organizations with aviation-

related projects and tower visits. The tower is operated by Robinson Aviation (RVA).

Salina (Kan.) Municipal Airport: Controllers now occupy a new tower constructed by FAA and the controllers' input on design issues was invaluable. Through hours of preparation and training, the controllers ensured that they were prepared for the transition to the new tower. Further, the airport completed construction of a new 4,300 foot runway and the controllers worked closely with airport users to assist with many design issues. The new runway was constructed without any runway incursions or safety incidents. The tower had more than 86,000 aircraft operations last year. The airport has not recorded an operational error in over six years. Midwest ATC operates the tower.

Cobb County Airport-McCollum Field (Ga.): A reliever for Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International, McCollum Field has a tremendous mix of aircraft using the space, ranging from G-3s to homebuilt experimentals. The controllers have taken a proactive stance to consistently work with the pilots. The controllers in 2002 were instrumental in organizing and participating in the airport's first full scale emergency drill exercise. The control tower has accepted the role of issuing and tracking all airport NOTAMS since the airport has a small staff. The controllers maintain a high level of commitment to customer service. The tower is operated by Robinson Aviation (RVA).

Martin County (Fla.) Airport: Airport controllers have had no operational errors and have maintained a Customer Service Survey Index Score of 980-996 out of a possible 1,000 for four consecutive years. They participate in numerous meetings, workshops and programs and are often called upon to meet with airport officials, local community members and, on an occasional basis, politicians to explain the intricacies of the area airspace. Controllers conduct training classes for vehicle operators who work at the local FBOs on rules and procedures for operating on the Movement Area. The tower is operated by Robinson Aviation (RVA).

CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION GAINS NEW MEMBERS

New members of the U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA) are Florida Airports Council, Panama City-Bay County International (Fla.), and Lone Star Executive Airport (Texas).

Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of AAE, is executive director of USCTA.

Consultants to USCTA are Linda Hall Daschle and Bert Randall of Baker, Donelson Bearman Caldwell &

Burkowitz; Patrick McCann of McCann Capitol Advocates, and Larry Barnett of AB Management Associates.

Tim Rogers, A.A.E., executive director of the Salina (Kan.) Airport Authority, is chair of the 2004 Policy Board. Other members are: Bryan Elliott, A.A.E., Charlottesville, Va.; Ted Soliday, Naples, Fla.; Steve Stockam, Joplin, Mo.; Michael Covalt, Flagstaff, Ariz.; Lynn Kusy, Mesa, Ariz.; Walt Strong, C.M., Norman, Okla.; Russ Chandler, Jacksonville, Fla.; Michael Feeley, city of Fort Worth, Texas; Russ Johnson, Manhattan, Kan.; Jack Schelter, A.A.E., Phoenix, Ariz.; Bill Gatchell, C.M., Hobbs, N.M.; Jerry O'Sullivan, Greenbrier, W. Va.; Richard Baird, Hailey, Idaho; Robert Bryant, Salisbury, Md.; Steve Harvey, Chennault, La.; Scott Carr, Titusville, Fla.; Scott Driver, Tucson, Ariz.; Cliff Nash, Tunica, Miss. Ex-officio members are Shane Cordes, Midwest ATC; Pete Dumont, Serco Management Services; Will Mowdy, RVA, and Brian Lally, PBS&J.

The following are members of the association: Hawaii Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Aviation, Mobile Downtown Airport (Ala.), City of Phoenix Aviation Department (Ariz.), Chandler Municipal Airport (Ariz.), Mesa/Williams Gateway (Ariz.), Flagstaff (Ariz.) Pulliam Airport, Laughlin/Bullhead City, (Ariz.) International, Tucson (Ariz.) Airport Authority, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, Hawthorne Municipal Airport (Calif.), San Luis Obispo County Airport (Calif.), Modesto City-County Airport (Calif.), Los Angeles County Aviation Division (Calif.), Ramona Airport-County of San Diego (Calif.), San Diego (Calif.) Brown Field, Redding (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Salinas (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Santa Maria Public Airport District (Calif.), Southern California Logistics Airport; Front Range Airport (Colo.), Greeley-Weld County Airport (Colo.), Boca Raton Airport (Fla.), Gainesville Regional Airport (Fla.), Jack-

CONTRACT TOWER CONSTRUCTION/ EQUIPMENT AIP ELIGIBLE

FAA in August 2003 finalized the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Program Guidance Letter regarding funding of contract tower construction and equipment.

If your airport is interested in using AIP funds for (1) equipment for a contract tower; (2) construction of a new or replacement contract tower, or (3) reimbursement of construction and/or equipment of a contract tower built or equipped since Oct. 1, 1996, you should carefully review this document. It is available on the CTA website at www.contracttower.org.

sonville/Craig (Fla.) Airport, Kissimmee (Fla.), Martin County Stuart/Whitham Airport (Fla.), Miami-Dade County Aviation Department (Fla.) (Opa Locka Airport), Naples Municipal Airport (Fla.), New Smyrna Beach Municipal Airport (Fla.), Titusville-Cocoa Airport (Fla.), Page Field (Fla.), Florida Airports Council, Panama City-Bay County International (Fla.), Lakeland (Fla.) Linder Regional Airport, St. Augustine Airport (Fla.), Ormond Beach Municipal (Fla.), Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, Cobb County-McCollum Field Airport (Ga.), Gwinnett County Airport (Ga.), Valdosta Regional Airport (Ga.), Barrow County Airport (Ga.), Friedman Memorial Airport (Idaho), Idaho Falls Regional Airport (Idaho), Pocatello Regional Airport (Idaho), Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport (Idaho), Decater (Ill.), Waukegan Regional Airport (Ill.), Quincy (Ill.) Municipal Airport, Southern Illinois Airport, St. Louis Regional Airport (Ill.), Williamson County Regional Airport (Ill.), Delaware County Airport (Muncie, Ind.), Columbus Municipal Airport (Ind.), Dubuque Regional Airport (Iowa), Johnson County Municipal Airport (Kan.), Metro Topeka Airport Authority (Kan.), Salina Municipal Airport (Kan.), Manhattan (Kan.) Regional Airport, Garden City Regional Airport (Kan.), Paducah Airport (Ky.), Shreveport Downtown Airport (La.), Alexandria International Airport (La.), Chennault International Airport (La.), Hagerstown Regional Airport (Md.), Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico (Md.) Regional Airport, Martin State Airport (Md.), Martha's Vineyard Airport (Mass.), Worcester (Mass.) Regional Airport, Metropolitan Airports Commission (Anoka, Minn.), St. Cloud Regional Airport (Minn.), W.K. Kellogg Airport (Mich.), Sawyer International Airport (Mich.), Jackson Municipal (Miss.), Meridian Regional Airport (Miss.), Olive Branch Municipal Airport (Miss.), Stennis International Airport (Miss.), Tupelo Regional Airport (Miss.), Columbia Regional Airport (Mo.), Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.), Jefferson City Memorial Airport (Mo.), Rosecrans Memorial Airport (Mo.), Glacier Park (Mont.) International, Gallatin Field (Mont.), Missoula (Mont.), Central Nebraska Regional Airport, Elko Municipal Airport (Nev.), Henderson (Nev.) Executive Airport, Nashua (N.H.) Airport Authority, Lea County Airports (N.M.), Double Eagle II Airport (N.M.), Concord Regional Airport (N.C.), Craven Regional Airport (N.C.), Hickory Regional Airport (N.C.), Smith Reynolds Airport (N.C.), Bolton Field (Ohio), Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport (Ohio), Cincinnati Municipal-Lunken Airport (Ohio), Ohio State University Airport (Ohio), Ardmore Municipal Airport (Okla.), Max Westheimer Field (Okla.), Stillwater Municipal Airport

(Okla.), Wiley Post Airport (Okla.), Redmond Municipal Airport (Ore.), Arnold Palmer Regional Airport (Latrobe, Pa.), Capital City Airport (Pa.), University Park Airport (Pa.), Greenville Downtown Airport (S.C.), Rapid City Regional Airport (S.D.), Millington Municipal Airport (Tenn.), Smyrna Rutherford County (Tenn.), Jackson Madison County Airport (Tenn.), Arlington Municipal Airport (Texas), Denton Municipal (Texas), Galveston Municipal Airport (Texas), Laredo International Airport (Texas), Harlingen Valley International (Texas), Brownsville/South Padre Island International (Texas), Grand Prairie Municipal Airport (Texas), Lone Star Executive Airport (Texas), Grayson County Airport (Texas), Collin County Regional (Texas), Spinks Airport (Texas), Stinson Municipal Airport (Texas), Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport (Va.), Lynchburg Regional Airport (Va.), Spokane (Wash.), Walla Walla Municipal Airport (Wash.), Olympia Airport (Wash.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Wheeling-Ohio County Airport (W. Va.), Chippewa Valley (Wis.) Regional Airport, Kenosha Regional Airport (Wis.). Milwaukee Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, LaCrosse Municipal (Wis.), Central Wisconsin Airport (Wis.), Outagamie County Regional Airport (Wis.), Waukesha County Airport (Wis.), Cheyenne Airport (Wyo.), Jackson Hole Airport (Wyo.), CI2 Aviation, Engineering & Installation Services (EIS), Northrup Grumman ES Denro Systems, Lockheed Martin TSS, Marsh USA, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services Inc., PBS&J, Quadrex Associates, Raytheon Company-Air Traffic Management Systems, Robinson Aviation (RVA), Serco Management Services, SolaCom Technologies, Washington Consulting Group, Weather Services International, Infinite Computer Technologies, National Air Traffic Services (U.K.) and AJT& Associates.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT FAA'S CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

Mead Faults Reporting Of Operational Errors Aviation Daily, Sept. 15, 2004

U.S. Transportation Dept. Inspector General Kenneth Mead said he is about to release a report outlining his concerns over deficiencies in the reporting system for controller operational errors.

Operational errors, which include violations of aircraft separation standards, are "not even close to being reported accurately, and it is something the FAA needs to look at now," a staff member from Mead's office said. The IG report is likely to be released this week.

Mead said many operational errors at towers and ter-

minimal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities are not appearing on the self-reporting system. Mead said an independent checking system needs to be put in place instead.

FAA told Mead the introduction of an automated reporting system is not yet feasible. Mead said that in the interim, FAA evaluators should conduct periodic spot checks of facilities and radar data to look for missed reports, so controllers "know they are being watched."

The IG's office is conducting a separate investigation of an allegation that FAA managers at the Dallas/Fort Worth TRACON are aware of errors not being reported at their facility. The allegation was referred to the IG by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, which handles whistleblower complaints.

There were 620 of the most serious types of operational errors reported up to Sept. 13, according to FAA data. It appears likely that FAA will exceed its performance limit of 629 operational errors for Fiscal Year 2004. The agency will probably have slightly fewer errors than in FY2003, however.

Mead said his office will soon release a report on the deployment of the standard terminal automation replacement system, and another on FAA's postponement of its controller-pilot data link communications program. IG staffers are also working on reports on FAA's oceanic ATC modernization program, and on the FAA's review of the Chicago O'Hare Airport expansion plan. -AS

Air Traffic Control Tower

Set to Open In November After Delays

St. Cloud Times, 21 September, 2004

(Editor's note: St. Cloud will be in FAA's Contract Tower Program)

The final touches on a new air traffic control tower at St. Cloud Regional Airport are almost complete.

City Council members voted 7-0 to approve some final changes to the construction order for the tower, which added about \$22,400 to its estimated \$2.2 million construction cost.

The tower's opening has been delayed for several months, setting back the date when controllers will coordinate the growing amount of air traffic at the airport to increase safety and spur growth.

Delays first arose because of delays in finding and training the controllers who will direct air traffic once the tower opens.

The latest delay comes because of difficulty installing two direct telecommunications lines with a Minneapolis Federal Aviation Administration center, said Bill Towle, airport director.

"We had a tough time getting the specifications for the

telephone circuits and then finding someone who could install it," he said. "The technology is pretty dated but it's what they use."

The control tower should begin directing air traffic at the airport by Nov. 1, Towle said.

It was originally scheduled to open this spring. Construction was finished this summer.

Half of the tower's cost is covered by a \$1.1 million federal grant, with the Minnesota Department of Transportation picking up about \$914,000 of the cost.

St. Cloud is paying the remaining \$238,000 from local tax dollars. The changes approved Monday have already been done, Towle said.

Staff had authority to approve them on site for Shingobee Builders, the project's construction manager, he said. They are technical adjustments due to minor floor-plan changes, he said. The delays have been mildly frustrating, but not significant, City Council member Steve Gottwalt said. "I don't know that it's caused us to miss anything or increase our costs significantly," he said.

Airport Tower Axed By 3-2 Vote

Tahoe Daily Tribune, Sept. 22, 2004

(Editor's Note: South Lake Tahoe is in FAA's Contract Tower Cost-Sharing Program.)

Capping a somber meeting, the South Lake Tahoe City Council decided Tuesday to close the Lake Tahoe Airport tower because of budget constraints going into the next fiscal year.

The airport will remain open, but the tower will no longer be manned by four contractors with Serco Management of Murfreesboro, Tenn., the company that monitored Tahoe Valley skies for the Federal Aviation Administration. The closure is set for Oct. 1 unless the city discovers the FAA needs a 30-day notice. "I'm under the understanding they don't," City Manager Dave Jinkens said after the meeting.

The 3-2 vote, with Mayor Tom Davis and Councilwoman Judy Brown opposing, culminated a series of meetings in and out of the city in which the council struggled with where and how to get the money to offset the city's rising shared expense imposed by the FAA. In the end, the council also agreed it would explore forming a joint powers authority to help pay for manning the tower if the city were to reopen it at a later date. In a meeting last week between city and FAA officials, the federal agency gave the city the green light to do so and even questioned why the city wants a tower without commercial service. The agency insisted the city determine its long-term vision.

The FAA doubled the city's portion to pay for the tower contractor because of a new federally imposed for-

mula. After it raised landing fees, implemented ground transportation fees and agreed to reorganize the transit department, the city over the last few months had scraped an estimated \$103,000 to be saved in the 2004-05 budget. However, Public Works Director Brad Vidro told the council the city would still be short \$122,000.

That was a hard number to swallow for a city facing a \$3.1 million shortfall and imposing 10 percent cuts in all city departments to help balance the budget. It's due in its final form for a special meeting slated for 9 a.m. next Tuesday. But public safety and economic potential had Davis and Brown holding on to the possibility of temporarily subsidizing the tower - until perhaps a funding solution could be developed. "This is a sad day," Davis said.

"We've just potentially opened the city up to the biggest lawsuit," Brown said after the meeting. She was referring to the possibility of a plane crash without the tower.

After yesterday's long oration leading up to the \$222,000 decision, no one could really nail down the economic impact on the community with or without the tower.

But insiders, like airport restaurant owner Mike Weber - who's running for one of two seats on the council - agreed to try to help gather information. And Mindy Johnke of Superior Aviation - the flight base operator - shared figures showing a 400 percent increase in landing-fee revenue in the last year.

For different reasons, council members showed they were running out of patience. Council members Hal Cole and Kathay Lovell - who serve on the airport plan subcommittee - have long expressed discomfort with taking money from the general fund to pay for the tower. Minden and Truckee's airports are often cited as not having one, despite precarious weather conditions. This time, it was Councilman John Upton sharing frustration over the unknowns. "The frustration is the lack of hard, attributable economic data.

The bottom line is - in terms of who the customers are - for whatever reason, I don't have the knowledge of those numbers," Upton said, partly addressing Airport Manager Mike Dikun. In the city reorganization, Dikun would be without a job. He shared no comment Tuesday about his plans.

Former airport worker Janis Brand criticized the council for making these kinds of major decisions without an airport manager.

Brand has been circulating a petition in favor of forming a Lake Tahoe Airport District, a board of specialists to govern the entity. She's collected about 300 signatures to present to the council.

CONTRACTOR NEWS

RVA Controllers Honored By Gainesville (Fla.) Airport

The Gainesville-Alachua County (Fla.) Regional Airport Authority on July 15 honored Robinson Aviation (RVA) employees at the Gainesville FAA Contract Air Traffic Control Tower.

On behalf of controllers, Air Traffic Manager Ted Lane received a plaque that read, "In Recognition of the Air Traffic Control Tower for Their Continued Outstanding Performance and Excellent Public Relations Operating the Air Traffic Control Tower at Gainesville Regional Airport." Approximately 50 members of the airport community, the press and the airport authority were in attendance for the presentation.

PBS&J Selected For Work On Georgetown, Texas, Tower

PBS&J has been selected by the city of Georgetown, Texas, and the Texas DOT for the siting, design, and construction supervision of the new Georgetown Municipal Airport contract tower. Construction is expected to begin by May 2005 and the tower's opening is targeted for January or February 2006.

The host office for this project will be PBS&J's Austin location. The project managers are Brian Lally, Bryan Petersen and John Root.

PBS&J has over 60 offices nationwide and specializes in towers and complete aviation services. This year, the firm has completed the design of the Henderson (Nev.) Executive Airport tower, which is now in construction; completed the total equipment package installations at New Smyrna Beach and Ormond Beach Airports in Florida, and has begun the final design phase of the Oshkosh tower at Wittman (Wis.) Regional .

Pilot Praises Vigilance Of Serco Management Services Controller

A pilot using Hawthorne Field, a California airport with an FAA contract tower staffed by controllers from Serco Management Services, sent a letter to the company to praise Tower Manager David Vance for quick action that averted a potential accident.

The pilot reported that after takeoff on July 15, he was alerted by Vance "to a stream of fuel spilling from my port wing. This finding was not in my visual scan as I was monitoring for traffic ahead and cleaning up the plane during climbout. Since I was still in the airport environment, it was easy to return and correct the cause before it became an enroute problem. It is reassuring to know that the tower personnel are vigilant for such problems, despite their many other responsibilities."

FAA Federal Contract Tower Program

“The Government/Industry Partnership Dedicated to Air Traffic Safety”

FY '05 Congressional Appropriations Request

To maintain the current program, the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and its affiliated organization, the U.S. Contract Tower Association, request \$86 million in the FY '05 DOT Appropriations bill for FAA's base line Contract Tower Program in addition to \$7 million for the continuation of the cost-sharing program.

Background

- The FAA Federal Contract Tower Program has provided essential air traffic safety services since 1982. Currently, 223 airports in 46 states participate in the program. This represents 45 percent of all control towers in the U.S. In addition, federal contract towers handle approximately 25 percent of control tower aircraft operations for about 10 percent of FAA's budget to operate all control towers in the U.S. Several non-towered airports are expected to enter the program, subject to available funding.
- The safety and efficiency record of the Federal Contract Tower Program for the past two decades has been validated numerous times by the DOT Inspector General (IG) and FAA safety audits, as well as by the National Transportation Safety Board. The IG also has verified the cost-effectiveness of the program to taxpayers.
- All federal contract controllers are FAA certified air traffic controllers who meet the identical training and operating standards as FAA controllers. The vast majority of federal contract controllers are retired military or FAA controllers. Approximately, 99 percent have FAA or military air traffic control experience.
- FAA controls and oversees all aspects of the federal contract tower program, including operating procedures, staffing plans, certification of contract controllers, security and facility evaluations.
- As a result of this 22-year government/industry partnership, the Federal Contract Tower Program: (1) enhances aviation safety at smaller airports that in many cases would not have a tower; (2) saves local airports and communities up to \$80 million annually; (3) consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users (pilots, airlines, FBOs, flight schools and corporate flight departments), and (4) helps airports with retaining and developing commercial air service and corporate aviation.
- Federal contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system. A case in point was September 11, 2001, when FAA contract controllers from 219 airports worked closely with the FAA controller workforce to safely land thousands of airplanes that day. Additionally, federal contract controllers work closely with FAA and the Department of Homeland Security on in-flight aviation security issues.
- In summary, without a federal program that provides financial assistance, sets safety and training standards, certifies operations and monitors all aspects of contract tower facilities, many of these towers would have to close.

For further information on FAA's Federal Contract Tower Program, please contact Spencer Dickerson of the AAAE office at 703/824-0500, ext. 130 or email at sdickerson@airportnet.org or visit www.contracttower.org

FAA CONTRACT TOWER MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST

The USCTA website (www.contracttower.org) now contains the following information from FAA Order 7210.54.

APPENDIX B. FCT MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST

1. Voice switch communication equipment capable of radio and telephone ATC communication as appropriate. This shall include the capability of headset use and instructor/student override capabilities.

2. One headset per controller and one handset per position, with appropriate spares.

3. Very High Frequency radios for ground/air communication, as required, to support level of traffic; i.e. Local Control, Ground Control, Automated Terminal Information Service, Clearance Delivery, and Emergency. One transmitter and one receiver for each frequency. Handheld radios are not authorized as primary units.

4. Ultra High Frequency radios for ground/air communication, as required, to support military operations. Handheld radios are not authorized as primary units.

5. Landline communication system with direct access line to controlling instrument flight rules facility.

6. Tunable emergency backup transceiver with battery backup supply.

7. Dual deck, multi-channel, voice recorder system, for continuous unattended recording of each position used for receiving/transmitting ATC clearances, coordination, and instructions. Capabilities must include: synchronized recording of time, playback without recording interruption, re-recording to suitable portable storage media and/or a portable recorder with re-recording capability, any internal storage media must be configurable to preclude retention of data older than 15 days, remote alarm. Appropriate storage media must be provided (one for each of 15 days, plus spares)

8. Back up power source for essential equipment, i.e. radios, voice switch, cab HVAC, etc.

9. Two altimeter setting indicators. A certifiable Digital Altimeter Setting Indicator (DASI) is preferred and required if ASOS/AWOS or a "traceable pressure standard" is not available within 10 miles for precision ap-

proaches and 25 miles for non-precision approaches. Re: FAA Order 7210.3, Section 8 and FAA Notice 7210.477. Aircraft altimeters are not acceptable.

10. Two direct reading wind information indicators.

11. If AWOS/ASOS is available on the airport, locate ASOS/AWOS Operator Input Device (OID) in the tower cab. If tower is ATIS equipped, provide an ASOS/ATIS interface device.

12. Two pair of operable binoculars. 7x50 or greater.

13. Signal light gun with a backup power source.

14. At least one 24 hour clock with seconds display, ie: digital LED.

15. Alert system to notify airport emergency equipment operator.

16. Airport lighting controls.

17. Window shading as prescribed in FAA regulations for all tower cab windows (adjustable). (FAA specification E 2470)

18. Mechanical or electronic traffic counting device.

19. Position lighting (to support established operating positions with rheostat control).

20. Electro Static Discharge (ESD) resistant controller chairs of appropriate height for the conduct of tower operational duties.

21. Floor covering shall be ESD resistant.

Note for 20 and 21: Other floor grounding apparatus may be necessary dependant upon specifications of the electronic equipment installed.

22. Administrative telephone with handsets in the operating and administrative quarters.

23. Appropriate non-operational space and equipment will also be provided.

This must include: **Lockable Air Traffic Managers office; Restroom one floor below the tower cab; Training/breakroom, and Appropriate desk, chairs, table, locking file cabinet.**

**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
AIRPORT EXECUTIVES**

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and information on FAA's contract tower
program. Membership information is
available by calling Spencer Dickerson
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e-mailing sdickerson@airportnet.org.