

# U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES

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### FAA/AAAE/USCTA SPONSOR CONTRACT TOWER WORKSHOP



David Dobbs, DOT IG's Office

More than 60 airport executives, FAA officials and ATC contract company representatives participated in the annual FAA/AAAE/ U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA) Contract Tower Workshop, July 27-28 in Washington, D.C. Willie Card, manager of FAA's contract tower program, and other FAA officials presented a detailed

update of the contract tower program and discussed current challenges and future plans. Topics discussed at the workshop included the benefit/cost criteria for



contract towers, liability insurance, airways facilities and building maintenance costs, cost-sharing for airports below the eligibility criteria, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) lawsuit against FAA on the program, case studies from airports with contract towers and the perspective of the program from the DOT Inspector General's Office, the Senate aviation subcommittee and general aviation.

Speakers included Ron Morgan, acting associate administrator for air traffic services at FAA; Sam Whitehorn, Democratic counsel for the Senate aviation subcommittee; Glenn Januska, A.A.E., manager of Waukesha County (Wis.) Airport; Joe Frasher,

### U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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THE U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER is published by the American Association of Airport Executives, the largest professional organization for airport executives in the world.

### GIVE US A CALL!

We're looking for feature news about your contract tower to publish in this newsletter. Do you have anecdotal information about safety or economic development issues relating to your contract tower, or stories about individual air traffic controllers at your airport? Please contact Barbara Cook at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 133, or e-mail [barbara.cook@airportnet.org](mailto:barbara.cook@airportnet.org).

A.A.E., executive director of Greenville (S.C.) Downtown Airport; Ted Soliday, A.A.E., executive director of Naples (Fla.) Airport Authority; Steve Stockam, manager of Joplin (Mo.) Regional Airport; Steve Christmas, director of ATC operations for Serco Management Services, and Jim Coyne, president of the National Air Transportation Association.

USCTA also held a policy board meeting during the two-day workshop.

AAAE/USCTA would like to thank Midwest Air Traffic Control Services and Serco for their financial support of the workshop.

### **FUNDING FOR CONTRACT TOWERS EXPECTED TO INCREASE**

Funding for FAA contract towers is expected to increase in fiscal year 1999 as part of the DOT appropriations bill. The President's budget request for 1999 included \$47.3 million for the contract tower program, an increase of over \$4 million from 1998. Funding for contract towers comes from the FAA operations account, which is proposed to be funded at \$5.53 billion in the House appropriations bill and \$5.58 in the Senate version. The Clinton Administration requested \$5.58 billion for FAA operations in 1999. The 1999 budget request would fund 187 FAA contract towers (currently there are 158 FAA contract towers).

AAAE and USCTA appreciate the significant efforts made by airports with contract towers to encourage their congressional delegations to support full funding of the contract tower program for 1999. Your calls, letters, faxes and visits have made a positive impact on Capitol Hill.

### **COST-SHARING PROPOSAL MOVES FORWARD IN CONGRESS**

Recent activity in Congress raises the prospect that airports with towers failing to meet FAA's benefit/cost

ratio may still participate in the agency's contract tower program through a cost-sharing plan.

The House before recessing for the rest of August approved H.R.4057, the 1998 Airport Improvement Program (AIP) reauthorization bill, which renews FAA and its programs for one year and expands the agency's contract tower program by allowing for cost-sharing between FAA and the airport sponsor to bring the benefit/cost (b/c) ratios to at least 1.0.

Language in the bill provides that DOT shall establish a program encompassing not more than 20 Level I towers that do not qualify for the present contract tower program. If the cost of operating a control tower exceed the benefits, the airport sponsor or state or local government with jurisdiction over the airport must agree to pay the portion of the costs that exceed the benefits.

Priority to participate in the new program must be given to towers that have been notified that they will be terminated from the existing contract tower program because their b/c ratio is less than 1.0; to towers that were closed as a result of the 1981 controllers strike; to towers that are located at airports that receive service from an airline under the Essential Air Service program; to towers located at airports that are prepared to assume responsibility for tower construction and maintenance costs, and to towers that are located at airports with safety or operational problems related to topography, weather, runway configuration or mix of aircraft.

Similar language is contained in the Airline Service Improvement Act, H.R.2748, which is still pending in the House.

The Senate Commerce Committee on July 14 cleared the way for S.2279, the 1998 AIP reauthorization bill, to be brought to the floor after the August recess. The legislation also contains a proposal for cost sharing at contract towers, similar to the House language

In its report to accompany the DOT fiscal year 1999 appropriations bill, the Senate Appropriations Committee endorsed a \$6 million cost-sharing program and noted DOT's Inspector General has found the contract tower program has provided Level I ATC services at a lower cost for 110 towers previously operated by FAA, as well as supplied ATC services at 50 towers FAA could not have afforded to staff. "The committee believes that this new program will enable small airports to have their tower staffed with an FAA

#### **DOT IG REPORT NOW AVAILABLE**

The DOT Inspector General's report on the FAA Contract Tower program is now available on the USCTA home page on the Internet at <http://www.airportnet.org/cta/>

certified air traffic controller, thereby ensuring the safe and efficient movement of people and goods," the report stated. Further, the committee report directed FAA to continue operation of the Greenville, Miss., contract tower, as well as towers at Kinston Regional Jetport in North Carolina, the Joplin Regional Airport in Missouri and the McKellar-Sipes Regional Airport in Jackson, Tenn. The report also directed FAA to include the towers at New Bern and Hickory, N.C., and at the Cape Girardeau Airport in Missouri under the new contract tower cost-sharing program.

In a discussion of the cost-sharing proposal in the Senate, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), chairman of the transportation appropriations subcommittee, said the contract tower program has proven to be a "very cost-effective" way for FAA and local airports to work as partners to improve air traffic safety in many smaller communities." He added that, "In fact, the Department of Transportation Inspector General recently determined that the program provides quality air traffic control services at a lower cost compared to the FAA. This cost-sharing program would enable some airports that fall just below the eligibility criteria for a contract tower to retain their air traffic control services by paying for a share of the costs. The committee believes that this program will improve aviation safety in small communities at a minimal expense to the FAA."

Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.), chairman of the aviation subcommittee, praised the proposal, noting that it would allow airports in his state, such as Olympia and Felts Field, "to maintain their contract towers and, therefore, not diminish the current level of safety." The next step is for the House and Senate appropriations committee members to conference following the August recess to reconcile their differences.

The House has also passed H.R.4328, the fiscal year 1999 DOT Appropriations Act, which does not contain language for a contract tower cost-sharing program. Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House aviation subcommittee, joined by seven other House members, has written to leaders of the House Appropriations Committee and the transportation appropriations subcommittee, urging them to support separate funding for a cost-sharing program for contract towers that fall below the eligibility criteria as part of DOT's fiscal year 1999 appropriations bill.

The letter went to Reps. Bob Livingston (R-La.), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee; David Obey (D-Wis.), ranking member of the com-

mittee; Frank Wolf (R-Va.), chairman of the transportation appropriations subcommittee, and Martin Sabo (D-Minn.), ranking member of the subcommittee.

The lawmakers requested that during an upcoming House-Senate conference on the DOT spending bill their colleagues support language in the Senate version of the appropriations legislation that includes \$6 million for a contract tower cost-sharing pilot program.

In the letter, the eight congressmen noted that FAA's contract tower program now includes 158 towers across the country and provides "vital safety benefits for airline passengers, shippers and the general aviation community." They pointed out that DOT's inspector general recently completed an audit of the contract tower program and endorsed it as providing cost-effective air traffic control services that enhance safety.

"This cost-sharing pilot program provision is consistent with our national aviation safety goals and is an excellent example of an innovative federal and local partnership initiative that deserves our support," the congressmen added.

Other House members who signed the letter are Reps. George Nethercutt (R-Wash.), Jerry Kleczka (D-Wis.), Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho), Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Michael Crapo (R-Idaho.), Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio) and Glenn Poshard (D-Ill.).

## **FINDINGS FROM IG REPORT OUTLINED AT WORKSHOP**

In a presentation on July 28 to the FAA/AAAE/USCTA Contract Tower Workshop, David Dobbs, program director of DOT's Office of the Inspector General, highlighted a number of key findings from the IG's recent report on contract towers (*see the May-June issue of the USCTA newsletter for a complete summary of this report*).

*(continued on page 4)*

### **USCTA TAKES TO THE INTERNET!**

USCTA has its own Internet home page, which provides association members with the latest in publications, meeting announcements, press releases and Internet links to other valuable web sites. The address is: <http://www.airportnet.org/cta/>. In addition, FAA's Federal Contract Tower Program now has a home page on the Internet. You can find them at <http://www.faa.gov/ats/ato/ato310.htm>.

(Continued from page 3)

Dobbs noted that his office concluded the contract tower program is good for safety, that contract towers are less expensive to operate than FAA-operated towers, that contract towers provide a quality of service comparable to FAA Level I towers and that controllers at contract towers are qualified and trained.

He added, however, that the IG determined that FAA needs to more closely monitor staffing levels at contract towers to guarantee that the contractor-prepared staffing plans are implemented as proposed. Further, he said, FAA must also complete a detailed and comprehensive analysis in response to a March 1998 court ruling that voided on procedural grounds FAA's decision to privatize FAA-operated Level I

towers.

Dobbs related that when his office began the contract tower program audit in 1997, staff investigators were "skeptical" of FAA's ability to operate the program successfully. The staff particularly looked at whether the program is actually saving money and at the staffing levels of the towers and the qualifications of the controllers.

In addition to being satisfied that controllers at contract towers are qualified and appropriately trained, the IG's office found that because contract towers are less expensive to operate, FAA was able to fund 50 towers at locations that had never had them before.

Dobbs pointed out that the IG's staff reviewed avi-  
*(continued on page 7)*

**FOLLOWING IS THE CURRENT LIST OF  
FAA CONTRACT TOWERS  
(AS OF AUGUST 1998)**

AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Bethel	AAL	AK	Meigs Field (Chicago)	AGL	IL
King Salmon	AAL	AK	St. Louis Regional	AGL	IL
Kodiak	AAL	AK	So. Illinois/Carbondale	AGL	IL
Dubuque Iowa	ACE	IA	Waukegan Regional	AGL	IL
Forbes Field	ACE	KS	Williamson County	AGL	IL
Hutchinson Mun.	ACE	KS	Gary Regional	AGL	IN
Johnson Co. Exec.	ACE	KS	Battle Creek	AGL	MI
Philip Billard Mun.	ACE	KS	Detroit City	AGL	MI
Salina Municipal	ACE	KS	Jackson	AGL	MI
Columbia	ACE	MO	Anoka (Minneapolis)	AGL	MN
Joplin Regional	ACE	MO	Minot	AGL	ND
Rosecrans Mem'l/St. Joseph	ACE	MO	Burke Lakefront	AGL	OH
Central Neb./Grand Island	ACE	NE	Ohio State University	AGL	OH
Martin State	AEA	MD	Cincinnati Mun./Lunken	AGL	OH
Washington Co. Reg'l/Hagerstown	AEA	MD	Cuyahoga County	AGL	OH
Ithaca	AEA	NY	Rapid City Regional	AGL	SD
Niagara Falls	AEA	NY	Appleton	AGL	WI
Oneida County	AEA	NY	Central Wisconsin	AGL	WI
Stewart	AEA	NY	Kenosha Municipal	AGL	WI
Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	AEA	PA	Lacrosse	AGL	WI
Charlottesville-Albemarle	AEA	VA	Rock County	AGL	WI
Lynchburg	AEA	VA	Timmerman (Milwaukee)	AGL	WI
Greenbrier Valley	AEA	WV	Wittman Regional	AGL	WI
Morgantown	AEA	WV	Bridgeport	ANE	CT
Parkersburg	AEA	WV	Groton-New London	ANE	CT
Wheeling Ohio Co.	AEA	WV	Hartford-Brainard	ANE	CT
Decatur	AGL	IL	Tweed-New Haven	ANE	CT
			Barnes Municipal	ANE	MA
			Beverly	ANE	MA

AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Hyannis	ANE	MA	Isla Grande	ASO	Puerto Rico
Lawrence	ANE	MA	Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	ASO	SC
Martha's Vineyard	ANE	MA	Greenville Downtown	ASO	SC
New Bedford	ANE	MA	Smyrna	ASO	TN
Norwood	ANE	MA	Jackson	ASO	TN
Worcester	ANE	MA	Alexander Hamilton (St. Croix)	ASO	Virgin Islands
Boire Field/Nashua	ANE	NH			
Eagle County	ANM	CO	Fayetteville	ASW	AR
Friedman Memorial	ANM	ID	Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	ASW	AR
Idaho Falls	ANM	ID	Acadiana Regional	ASW	LA
Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ANM	ID	Esler Regional Reg'l	ASW	LA
Pocatello Municipal	ANM	ID	Houma	ASW	LA
Klamath Falls	ANM	OR	Farmington Municipal	ASW	NM
McNary Field	ANM	OR	Lea County/Hobbs	ASW	NM
Pendleton Municipal	ANM	OR	Santa Fe Co. Mun.	ASW	NM
Redmond	ANM	OR	Ardmore Municipal	ASW	OK
Troutdale (Portland)	ANM	OR	Enid Woodring Mun.	ASW	OK
Ogden-Hinckley Mun.	ANM	UT	Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	ASW	OK
Bellingham Int'l	ANM	WA	Wiley Post	ASW	OK
Olympia	ANM	WA	Brownsville Int'l	ASW	TX
Tacoma Narrows	ANM	WA	Easterwood	ASW	TX
Walla Walla Regional	ANM	WA	Grand Prairie	ASW	TX
Yakima	ANM	WA	Laredo International	ASW	TX
Cheyenne	ANM	WY	McAllen	ASW	TX
		Dothan	McKinney Municipal	ASW	TX
ASO	AL		Redbird	ASW	TX
Brookley (Mobile)	ASO	AL	San Angelo	ASW	TX
Tuscaloosa Municipal	ASO	AL	Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	ASW	TX
Athens Municipal	ASO	GA	Tyler	ASW	TX
Fulton County	ASO	GA			
Gwinnett County	ASO	GA	Chandler	AWP	AZ
McCullum	ASO	GA	Flagstaff Pulliam	AWP	AZ
SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	ASO	GA	Glendale	AWP	AZ
Valdosta Municipal	ASO	GA	Goodyear (Phoenix)	AWP	AZ
Albert Whitted	ASO	FL	Mesa/Williams Gateway	AWP	AZ
Gainesville	ASO	FL	Ryan	AWP	AZ
Hollywood	ASO	FL	Fullerton	AWP	CA
Jacksonville/Craig	ASO	FL	Hawthorne	AWP	CA
Key West	ASO	FL	Lake Tahoe	AWP	CA
Kissimmee	ASO	FL	Modesto	AWP	CA
Lakeland Municipal	ASO	FL	Oxnard	AWP	CA
Naples	ASO	FL	Palmdale	AWP	CA
Page Field	ASO	FL	Riverside	AWP	CA
Panama City/Bay Co.	ASO	FL	Sacramento Executive	AWP	CA
Pompano Beach	ASO	FL	Salinas Municipal	AWP	CA
Stuart/Whitham	ASO	FL	San Carlos	AWP	CA
Titusville/Cocoa	ASO	FL	San Louis Obispo	AWP	CA
Barkley Regional	ASO	KY	Santa Maria	AWP	CA
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	ASO	KY	Whiteman	AWP	CA
Greenville Municipal	ASO	MS	William J. Fox	AWP	CA
Hawkins Field	ASO	MS	Agana	AWP	Guam
Meridian/Key Field	ASO	MS	Lihue	AWP	HI
Kingston	ASO	NC	Molokai	AWP	HI
			Elko	AWP	NV

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*(Continued from page 4)*

ation safety data for 84 contract towers during the audit, looking at the number of controller related incidents two years before the towers were converted and two years after conversion. He said results showed "little difference" in the number of incidents, whether the towers were operated by contract or FAA controllers.

## **USCTA REACHES 63 AIRPORTS, FIVE COMPANIES, STATE OF ALASKA**

Vandenberg Airport in Tampa, Fla., is the newest member of the U.S. Contract Tower Association. USCTA now has 63 airport members, five companies and the state of Alaska.

USCTA receives oversight from a Policy Board comprised of the following members: Roger Engstrom, A.A.E., (Mobile, Ala.), Jack Schelter, A.A.E., (Phoenix, Ariz.), Ted Soliday (Naples, Fla.), Richard Baird (Hailey, Idaho), Tim Rogers, A.A.E., (Salina, Kan.), Ron Craft (Jefferson City, Mo.), Steve Stockam

### **REP. JOHN DUNCAN (R-TENN.) DISCUSSES CONTRACT TOWERS**

Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House aviation subcommittee, in a recent interview with AAAE's ANTEN Digicast discussed his support for the contract tower program and outlined his reasons for proposing that cost sharing be included in FAA's contract tower program:

"That's been a very popular program in the locations where it's been put into effect. And it's been a very cost-effective program and so it was my intention to try to support that program in the best way that I possibly could at this point. I know that's something that your association has also worked on. I think that's a good way to go. I've always believed in contracting out wherever possible, but that doesn't mean I believe in government contractors making excessive or exorbitant profits and it doesn't mean that I want to do away with the whole federal government. It just means that on some things it makes sense to do things like the contract tower program. It's been a good program and has worked well. And I'm glad that AAAE's supporting it."

(Joplin, Mo.), Steve Brian (Brunswick, Ga.), Bryan Elliott, A.A.E., (Charlottesville, Va.), Glenn Januska, A.A.E., (Waukesha, Wis.) and James Hansford, A.A.E., (Mosinee, Wis.). Shane Cordes of Midwest ATC serves as an ex-officio member of the Policy Board. Spencer Dickerson, executive vice president of AAAE, serves as executive director of the USCTA. Consultants to the association are Linda Hall Daschle and Bert Randall of Baker, Donelson; Patrick McCann of the Wexler, Group and Larry Barnett of AB Management Associates.

The following are the members of the association, in addition to Vandenberg: state of Alaska; Mobile Downtown Airport (Ala.), City of Phoenix Aviation Department (Ariz.), Mesa/Williams Gateway (Ariz.), Glendale Municipal Airport (Ariz.), Flagstaff (Ariz.) Pulliam Airport, San Carlos 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.), Salinas (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Eagle County (Colo.) Regional, Boca Raton Airport (Fla.), Martin County Airport (Fla.), Naples Municipal Airport (Fla.), Titusville-Cocoa Airport (Fla.), Page Field (Fla.), Lakeland (Fla.) Linder Regional Airport, Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, Friedman Memorial Airport (Idaho), Pocatello (Idaho) Regional Airport, Columbus (Ind.) Municipal Airport, Waukegan Regional Airport (Ill.), Meigs Field (Ill.), St. Louis Regional Airport (Ill.), Williamson County Regional Airport (Ill.), Johnson County Municipal Airport (Kan.), Salina Municipal Airport (Kan.), Manhattan (Kan.) Regional Airport, Bowling Green (Ky.), Barkley Regional Airport (Ky.), Martin State Airport (Md.), Westfield Barnes Airport (Mass.), Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.), Jefferson City Memorial Airport (Mo.), Cape Girardeau Regional (Mo.), Gallatin Field (Mont.); Central Nebraska Regional Airport; Henderson (Nev.) Executive Airport, Kinston Regional Jetport (N.C.), Hickory Regional Airport (N.C.), Ohio State University in Columbus; Bolton Field (Ohio); Burke Lakefront Airport (Ohio), Cuyahoga County Airport (Ohio), Max Westheimer Field (Okla.), Redmond Municipal Airport (Ore.), Greenville Downtown Airport (S.C.), Jackson-Madison County Airport (Tenn.), Smyrna Rutherford County (Tenn.), Stinson Municipal Airport (Texas), Laredo International Airport (Texas), Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport (Va.), Walla Walla Municipal Airport (Wash.), Olympia Airport (Wash.), Wheeling-Ohio

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## NEWS ARTICLE RECOUNTS ISSUES FACING CONTRACT TOWERS

*The Olympian (Wash.) newspaper ran the following article on July 26, which explains the issues facing Olympia Regional Airport and its contract control tower.*

It's a busy morning at the Olympia Regional Airport, and air traffic controller Paul Schulz talks non-stop into his radio link with pilots.

"Cessna 75844, how do you read me? Cessna, how do you read me?" he says, as two small planes taxi toward each other on a narrow runway.

The airport handles 63,000 takeoffs and landings a year; and as many as 300 flights on a really busy day.

But that's not enough for the airport to keep federal funding for its control tower.

The Federal Aviation Administration evaluated the airport last year and found it fell below the traffic required to get federal funding.

The FAA now pays \$250,000 a year to provide air traffic control service here.

Without federal funding, airport officials say they might not be able to maintain the service at the airport.

That would affect both the safety of the airport and its ability to attract new business and commercial air service. In recent months, airport officials have scrambled to keep the funding.

They have asked the FAA to re-evaluate the airport.

The Olympia airport has been included in an FAA budget authorization bill that would give it some funding, even if it falls below the traffic threshold.

This week, airport manager Doug Sandau will spend time in Washington, D.C., lobbying FAA officials and congressional members on the airport's behalf.

"We've thrown everything at them but the kitchen sink," he said.

The funding issue comes at a time when local traffic is increasing slightly.

In February, corporate carrier Trajen Inc. signed a long-term lease, one sign of the growing business travel at the airport.

Corporate flights still make up less than 5 percent of all airport traffic.

But the corporate jets are much larger and faster than the training planes that make up 70 percent of the airport's traffic. The remaining traffic comes from private pilots and military flights.

Because of the airport's mix of corporate and train-

ing planes, pilots say the control tower is important to sort out traffic.

"With the type of equipment I operate, it's a really good service having a tower available to help us fit in around the training and the privately owned planes," said Dick Smith, chief pilot for the Peninsula Group, one of the airport's corporate users.

Flight instructor Donn Minoggie said pilots all over South Sound use the Olympia airport for training because it has a control tower.

"They feel safer because of the facility," he said. Without the control tower, many of those pilots might go elsewhere, Sandau said.

Port of Olympia officials say losing federal funding would also be a blow to their plans for the airport.

The port owns the airport and leases the adjacent industrial land.

Port officials are trying to develop the airport into a hub for corporate and commercial travel. Two firms now have offices at the airport and use the runway: the Peninsula Group, which builds and runs Super 8 Motels, and Olympia Airport Office Ltd. Without air traffic control service, it would be difficult to attract others or bring in any kind of commercial service, commission president Steve Pottle said.

"It's hard enough to get someone here because we're not part of the hub-and-spoke system at Sea-Tac," he said. Pottle said he didn't know if the port would run the control tower from its own budget if federal money dried up. "We have never discussed it," he said. "I can't rule it out...the bottom line is that it could cost us more money."

Olympia is not the only airport facing cuts. It is one of 26, including Felts Field in Spokane, slated to lose FAA funding next year.

All are among the smallest control towers funded by the FAA, said Spencer Dickerson, executive vice president of the American Association of Airport Executives.

Dickerson said the AAAE opposes eliminating funding at smaller airports because it would compromise safety. "We ought to be erring on the side of safety," he said.

But FAA officials say it is not cost-effective to fund control towers at all airports. "It comes down to whether there is enough traffic at the airport to make it worthwhile to have a federally operated control tower there," FAA spokesman William Shumann said.

Olympia became a contract tower in 1995. That

year the FAA evaluated it and gave it a 1.01 rating. The agency funds control towers for airports rated higher than 1.0.

But when the airport was reevaluated in 1997, its rating dropped to 0.84. Sandau said several factors hurt the airport, including the loss of Harbor Air, a carrier that provided shuttle service to Sea-Tac airport for about a year. Because commercial service weighs heavily in the evaluation, the loss of Harbor Air hurt the airport, Sandau said.

The airport hasn't added commercial service since its last evaluation. But traffic has rebounded from a low of 52,700 operations in 1996 to 65,500 in the past 12 months.

If the airport's current evaluation comes in too low, it may have one last chance to get federal funding.

An amendment to a FAA funding authorization bill now before Congress would allow airports rated lower than 1.0 to get partial funding.

Now airports either qualify for funding or drop off the list. Under this amendment, the FAA will pay a percent of the cost based on the airport's rating. If Olympia gets a 0.84 rating, for example, the FAA would pay 84 percent of the cost with the airport pick-

ing up the remaining 16 percent. "That would be significantly less than we were looking at a month ago," Sandau said.

The bill has been approved by committees in both houses of Congress and should reach a final vote in September.

Back in the tower, Schulz separates the two Cessnas.

One heads off the runway to refuel and the other taxis to the end for takeoff. While he listens to his radio link, Schulz also keeps an eye on the traffic in the air.

A corporate jet has just taken off and several training planes buzz around the tower, practicing maneuvers. The control tower doesn't have radar, so the controllers have to separate the traffic visually and by using their radio contact with pilots.

Still, that's better than having the pilots sort out the traffic while trying to land, air traffic manager Dean Madson says.

"They have the benefit of a big eyeball going around," he says. On busy days, that eye can be essential.

"Sometimes we have as many as a dozen flights at one time," Madson says. "This place can get very busy."

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County Airport (W.Va.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Milwaukee Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, La-Crosse (Wis.) Municipal, Central Wisconsin Airport (Wis.), Waukesha County Airport (Wis.), Cheyenne (Wyo.) Airport, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services, Inc., COMARCO Airport Services, Serco Management Services, RVA Inc. and Hoyle, Tanner and Associates Inc.

Airports and companies interested in joining the organization should contact Spencer Dickerson of AAAE at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 130.

## **AAAE/USCTA PROPOSE PROCESS TO IDENTIFY FACILITY COSTS**

AAAE/USCTA have forwarded to FAA's Contract Tower Program Office a recommendation concerning FAA's proposal to assign building maintenance and airway facilities costs to the benefit/cost ratios of contract towers.

The recommendation stems from a list of action items developed at the March contract tower summit (see the May-June issue of the USCTA newsletter for

*details on other recommendations).*

AAAE/USCTA recommended a two-step process to identify airway facilities costs being assigned to contract towers, pointing out that "only reasonable, identifiable and justifiable FAA building maintenance and airway facilities costs that are directly associated with the operation of the control tower should be assigned to the cost side of the benefit/cost criteria for contract towers, subject to negotiation between FAA and local airports."

The identification of these reasonable and direct airway facilities costs should be coordinated closely with each individual airport, AAAE/USCTA said. Once these costs have been approved by FAA and the local airport, they should be assigned to the b/c ratio of each FAA contract tower. Should the b/c ratio of a contract tower continue to be above 1.0 after the assignment of building maintenance and airway facilities costs, FAA should

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Airports or ATC companies interested in joining the USCTA should contact Spencer Dickerson at the AAAE/USCTA offices at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 130.

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assume building maintenance and airway facilities costs along with other operational costs for the tower. However, if the b/c ratio of a contract tower falls below 1.0 after assignment of building maintenance and airway facilities costs, AAAE/USCTA recommended that the responsibility for building maintenance and/or airway facilities costs should be transferred to the local airport if the assumption of these costs improves the b/c ratio to at least 1.0.

The airports noted that it is clear that most airport directors with contract towers that have b/c ratios below 1.0 are open to assuming reasonable costs, if it ensures continuity of air traffic control services. However, if an airport assumes any costs from FAA, it would be appropriate to expect that FAA be required to show tangible evidence of the recognized savings.

Further, the airports said, the local airport could assume these building maintenance and airway facilities costs directly or contract these services through a process agreed to by FAA and the local airport to provide these services at a reduced cost.

**COMPANY OFFERS ANALYSIS  
OF FAA B/C CALCULATION**

Quadrex Associates, in connection with USCTA, is offering a consulting service to airports with contract towers that provides a detailed analysis of the information used by FAA to calculate the tower's benefit/cost ratio. The service also offers a method to improve the numbers to qualify the facility to remain in FAA's Contract Tower Program.

The \$795 cost for Quadrex Associates' Basic Service is reduced to \$495 for members of USCTA. The service includes a detailed report on how FAA determined the current b/c analysis at the client airport. General recommendations on what information should be reviewed, how to respond to FAA and other observations are also included. Technical assistance is also available beyond the basic program.

For information, contact David Byers, President, Quadrex Associates, at (800) 231-7025, or e-mail [adastra@localnet.com](mailto:adastra@localnet.com).