U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

FAA Federal Contract Tower Program

"The Government/Industry Partnership Dedicated to Air Traffic Safety"

Volume 15, Number 3 December 2011

CONGRESS FULLY FUNDS FAA CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

Congress has approved $117.3 million for FAA's fully funded contract tower program plus $10.3 million for the agency's contract tower cost-sharing program for fiscal year 2012.

Further, Congress has capped at 20 percent the amount an airport pays to participate in the cost-share program.

According to FAA, this dollar amount will fully fund the contract tower program in fiscal year 2012, including the addition of three non-towered airports to the program: Hernando County, Fla., Charlotte County, Fla., and Frederick, Md.

DIFFERENCES REMAIN BETWEEN HOUSE, SENATE VERSIONS OF FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Although the House and Senate have passed separate bills reauthorizing FAA programs, the Senate Commerce and House Transportation and Infrastructure committees have not resolved the differences in the two bills.

FAA is operating under its 22nd extension of authorization, which runs through Jan. 31, 2012.

Specific provisions in the House bill that affect FAA Contract Towers are:

• DOT is required to extend the contract tower program to FAA-staffed, low-activity VFR towers, if requested by a qualified entity (as determined by the DOT secretary), a state, or a subdivision of the state.

• A local airport has a grace period of 18 months before paying its share of a new cost-share tower.

• FAA may use unspent cost-share tower funds for fully funded contract towers, if needed.

• The bill caps the cost-share payment by a local airport to 20 percent for FAR Part 139 airports with annual passenger enplanements of fewer than 50,000 (i.e., if a benefit/cost ratio for a contract tower is .75 at a qualifying airport, FAA would pay 80 percent of the tower operating costs and the local airport would pay 20 percent.) This cap sunsets Sept. 30, 2014.

• The cost-share program is authorized at $8.5 million annually.

• The federal share in a contract tower construction program is increased from $1.5 million to $2 million.

• Regular FAA safety audits of contract towers are required.

The Senate version of the reauthorization bill contains the following provisions for FAA Contract Towers:

• A local airport has a grace period of 18 months before paying its share of a new cost-share tower.

• FAA may use unspent cost-share tower funds for fully funded contract towers, if needed.

• The bill caps the payment by a local airport to a maximum of 20 percent for all cost-share contract towers, including general aviation airports with cost-share towers.

• The cost-share program is authorized at $9.5 million for fiscal year 2010 and $10 million for 2011.

• The federal share in a contract tower construction program is increased from $1.5 million to $2 million.

• Regular FAA safety audits of contract towers are required.

GAO CALLS FOR INCREASED OVERSIGHT OF TERMINAL AREA SAFETY

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued a study on aviation safety that calls for FAA to "develop and implement plans to track and assess run-

(continued on following page)

way excursions and extend oversight to ramp safety.

The nation's aviation system is arguably the safest in the world, but close calls involving aircraft or other vehicles at or near airports are common, occurring almost daily, GAO said. While FAA provides oversight of the surface areas of airports and has taken action to improve safety, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and others have called on FAA to take additional steps to improve its oversight, GAO added.

GAO recommended that FAA (1) extend oversight of terminal area safety to include runway overruns and ramp areas, (2) develop risk-based measures for runway safety incidents, and (3) improve information sharing about incidents.

To view the GAO study, Aviation Safety: Enhance Oversight and Improved Availability of Risk-Based Data Could Further Improve ATC Safety, go to http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-24.

SIXTEEN AIRPORTS PARTICIPATE IN CONTRACT TOWER COST-SHARING PROGRAM

Sixteen facilities were participating in FAA's contract tower cost-sharing program as of Dec. 1, 2011.

They are: Rogers Municipal (Ark.), Springdale (Ark.), Williamson County (Ill.), Bloomington (Ind.), Muncie/Delaware County (Ind.), Garden City (Kan.), Jackson (Mich.), Jefferson City (Mo.), Joplin Regional (Mo.), Central Nebraska/Grand Island (Neb.), Lea County/Hobbs (N.M.), Ardmore Municipal (Okla.), Williamsport/Lycoming Co. (Pa.), Fort Worth-Spinks (Texas), Grand Prairie (Texas) and Walla Walla Regional (Wash.).

HERNANDO COUNTY, FLA., AIRPORT JOINS U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

Hernando County (Fla.) Airport is the newest member of the U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA).

Members of the USCTA Policy Board in 2011-2012 are: Walt Strong, A.A.E., administrator, Max Westheimer Airport, University of Oklahoma, chair; Steve Stockam, manager, Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.); Russ Chandler, manager, Cecil Field (Fla.); Jerry O'Sullivan, A.A.E., manager, Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.); Richard Baird, manager, Friedman Memorial Airport Authority (Idaho); Anthony Ware, director of operations, Chennault International Airport (La.); Richard Lewis, director, Concord Regional Airport (N.C.); Tim Whitman, general aviation manager, Oklahoma City Department of Airports; Scott Driver, C.M., director of Ryan Airfield and Flight Line Services (Ariz.); Vinicio Llerena, C.M., director, New Braunfels Municipal Airport (Texas); Gary Johnson, C.M., director, Stillwater Regional Airport (Okla.); Keith Kaspari, C.M., manager, Sawyer International Airport (Mich.); Doug Kimmel, manager, Williamson County Airport Authority (Ill.); Bryan Rodgers, director, University Park Airport (Pa.); Rex Tippetts, A.A.E., director of aviation, Grand Junction Regional Airport (Colo.); Richard Howell, A.A.E., general manager, San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (Calif.); Scott Musser, general aviation airports manager, Okaloosa County (Fla.); Luis Elguezabal, A.A.E., director, San Angelo Regional Airport (Texas); Bill Mitchell, director of operations and maintenance, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport; Shane Cordes, president, Midwest ATC; Steve Christmas, vice president, aviation, Serco; Charles Dove, president, RVA; Brian Lally, president, CTBX Aviation; Peter Deeks, president, AJT Engineering; John Root, program manager, Wolen; and Dave Byers, president, Quadrex.

Members of USCTA are: the State of Maryland, Hawaii Department of Transportation, South Carolina Division of Aeronautics, Oklahoma Airport Operators Association, Dothan Airport (Ala.), Mobile Downtown Airport (Ala.), Tuscaloosa Regional Airport (Ala.), City of Phoenix Aviation Department (Ariz.), Chandler Municipal Airport (Ariz.), Phoenix-Mesa Gateway (Ariz.), Flagstaff (Ariz.) Laughlin/Bullhead

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NEWSLETTER

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Airport, Gainesville Regional Airport (Fla.), Jacksonville/Craig (Fla.), Cecil Field (Fla.), Flagler County Airport (Fla.), Kissimmee (Fla.), Lakeland Linder Regional Airport (Fla.), Martin County Stuart/Whitham Airport (Fla.), Melbourne International Airport (Fla.), Naples Municipal Airport (Fla.), New Smyrna Beach Municipal Airport (Fla.), Ocala Regional Airport (Fla.), Okaloosa County (Fla.), Destin (Fla.), Ormond Beach Municipal (Fla.), Panama City-Bay County International Airport (Fla.), Punta Gorda Charlotte County Airport (Fla.), Valdosta Regional Airport (Ga.), Cobb County McCollum Airport (Ga.), Gwinnett County Airport (Ga.), Friedman Memorial Airport (Idaho), Idaho Falls Regional Airport (Idaho), Pocatello Regional Airport (Idaho), Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport (Idaho), Decatur (Ill.), Joliet (Ill.), Southern Illinois Airport, St. Louis Regional Airport (Ill.), Waukegan Regional Airport (Ill.), Williamson County Regional Airport (Ill.), Monroe County Airport (Ind.), Delaware County Airport (Muncie, Ind.), Columbus Municipal Airport (Ind.), Gary/Chicago International Airport (Ind.), Dubuque Regional Airport (Iowa), Manhattan Regional Airport (Kan.), Metro Topeka Airport Authority (Kan.), New Century (Kan.), Manhattan (Kan.), Salina Municipal Airport (Kan.), Garden City Regional Airport (Kan.), Paducah Airport (Ky.), Alexandria International Airport (La.), Chennault International Airport (La.), Shreveport Airport Authority (La.), Easton Airport (Md.), Frederick Municipal Airport (Md.), Hagerstown Regional Airport (Md.), Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico (Md.) 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Va.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Raleigh County (W.Va.) Memorial Airport, Chippewa Valley Regional Airport (Wis.), Kenosha Regional Airport (Wis.), Milwaukee Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, LaCrosse Municipal (Wis.), Central Wisconsin Airport (Wis.), Waukesha County Airport (Wis.), Cheyenne Airport (Wyo.), Jackson Hole Airport (Wyo.), Oklahoma Airport Operators Association, South Central Chapter/AAAE, Southwest Chapter/AAAE, AJT& Associates, CI2 Aviation, CTBXaviation, Dynamic Science, Inc., Leo A Daly, Lockheed Martin TSS, Marsh USA, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services Inc., Quadrex Associates, Robinson Aviation (RVA), Sensis Corp., Serco Management Services, Harris ATC Solutions, Air Traffic Control Association and Wolen LLC.

BARNSTABLE (MASS.) MUNICIPAL AIRPORT OPENS NEW AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER

Barnstable (Mass.) Municipal Airport on Nov. 2 transitioned management of all flights to the airport's new FAA contract tower facility.

"It went smoothly and without any hitches," said Airport Manager Roland "Bud" Breault. "At 10 p.m. Monday, we ceased operations at the old tower and, at 6 a.m. today, began work in the new one."

Because controllers are up higher than before, Breault said, they have a full view of the entire airfield, increasing the margin of safety for passengers and flight crews. "Our upgraded communications equipment and security features are state of the art," he added.

The $6.96 million tower was designed by CTBX Aviation Of Cocoa Beach, Florida, built by Suffolk Construction Co. of Boston, and placed into operation in 15 and one-half months.

The new tower includes Energy Star-rated heating, ventilation and air conditioning, along with an energy-efficient elevator. Those design elements are expected to earn the airport a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification, meaning that the tower was planned and built to meet high conservation standards.

The old tower, in use since the 1950s, will be demolished later this year once all hazardous materials are safely removed.

SIX-YEAR EFFORT RESULTS IN NEW RADAR FEED FOR SALINA (KAN.) AIRPORT

A six-year effort on the part of the Salina (Kan.) Airport Authority, Fort Riley and FAA successfully resulted in a new radar feed to Salina Airport's FAA Contract Tower in early November.

Salina Airport Authority partnered with Fort Riley in 2005 to secure federal funding for the North Central Kansas Radar Project. The result was funding for a new ASR-11 radar. This radar facility has been constructed on Fort Riley and is streaming data to Marshall GCA, Salina tower and the Kansas City traffic control center.

"The data streaming to Salina air traffic control eliminates the radar gap they'd been dealing with north of the airport and at low altitudes in Salina's airspace," explained Tim Rogers, A.A.E., executive director of the Salina Airport Authority. "The new radar feed allows Salina ATC to more easily sequence in traffic for landing and provide better separation for military and civilian traffic in the area."

Salina ATC also receives data from the radar facility located south of Hutchinson Airport. This feed provides valuable traffic information south of Salina's airspace but its range does not include lower altitudes farther north of the airfield. Prior to the new Fort Riley radar feed, aircraft needed to be at an altitude of roughly 4,000 feet before they could be seen. Controllers are now provided a better overall radar picture from the time initial contact is made until the aircraft is 400-600 feet above the ground for landing.

TUCSON'S RYAN AIRFIELD TOWER WINS COMMUNICATION FACILITY AWARD

Tucson's Ryan Field control tower has received the 2011 Arizona Air Traffic Communication Facility Award, given by the Aviation Safety Advisory Group and FAA's Scottsdale Flight Standards District Office.

In the nomination, tower staff were credited with helping pilots with the phrase "line up and wait." According to the nomination, "The tower personnel of Ryan Air Field have taken the task of inmproving the pilots' communication skills by their role of communicators to make sure that the pilots understand the basic aviation language and one another and are able to fully communicate."

In May 2010, the Ryan tower was recognized for 2 million error-free operations. Tower personnel are also active participants in community events. Each year they host the Experimental Aircraft Association Young Eagles' flights and the United Indian Mission flights. They also host tours for 4-H, home school groups, Boy Scouts and others. Ryan's tower is man-

aged by Serco Management Services Inc.

CI2 AVIATION CONTROLLER RECOGNIZED FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Carlos Barreto, an air traffic controller employed by CI2 Aviation, Inc., in the Borinquen FAA Contract Tower at Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, was recognized for outstanding air traffic control emergency services, which includes directing the search and rescue efforts to locate an aircraft that force-landed in the ocean. Barreto received the Andy Pitas Memorial Award.

According to CI2 Aviation, on Oct. 27, 2010, while working the local control position, Barreto received arrival information from San Juan Combined Center and Radar Approach Control concerning a twin-piper aircraft from the west of Aguadilla. The aircraft was experiencing engine problems and receiving emergency handling. Barreto initiated local emergency response procedures and provided all known information.

Barreto's dedication to providing the very best professional service and his quick thinking efforts to utilize all available resources, quite likely, averted a loss of life, CI2 Aviation said, adding, "We commend Mr. Carlos Barreto for his exemplary work and contributions to the successful outcome of this potentially grave incident."

CONTRACT TOWERS IN THE NEWS

Associated Press
Oct. 19, 2011

MEDFORD, Ore. (AP) - The planning commission in Medford, Ore., has voted against a proposal to put corporate signs on the control tower at Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport.

But the airport's director, Bern Case, isn't giving up. He says he's going to make a pitch to the city council for what he called "branding." He says the deal could bring in about $300,000 over 10 years.

Case says a corporate sponsor has proposed putting signs on each side of the airport's 100-foot tower. Case hasn't yet identified the business, but he says it is tied to the aviation industry. The signs would require an exception to the city's standards.

According to the Medford *Mail Tribune*, Case told the commissioners, "We plan on it being tasteful …We are not talking neon signs or strobes." The newspaper said planning commission members on Thursday were unanimously against the idea. One said government buildings shouldn't be advertising mediums. Another said government shouldn't compete with private sign and advertising companies.

Hernando County Adds Contract Control Tower

Airport Improvement Magazine
September 2011
By Rebecca Douglas

With private contractors operating towers at nearly 250 U.S. airports, air traffic control isn't a strictly FAA function as the traveling public often assumes. Last year, contract controllers manned fully 45% of U.S. towers and managed more than one quarter of all controlled domestic operations. Such towers cost the FAA a fraction of what it spends to operate fully federal towers with similar traffic volumes.

Hernando County Airport in Brooksville, FL, will soon join the growing cadre of airports with contract towers. In July, the general aviation facility just 30 miles north of Tampa International was preparing to break ground for a 74-foot tower that's expected to be complete by February 2012. The airport had also just received a guaranteed maximum price of $2.5 million for the project from Peter Brown Construction, the construction manager at risk it contracted in March.

Airport manager Don Silvernell is eager to add air traffic control service at the two-runway field. "It will be a big improvement for the airport," Silvernell emphasizes. "Occasionally, corporate clients cringe when they hear that we don't (currently) have a tower; and we know insurance companies give breaks to aircraft based at controlled airports."

The new tower will also eliminate a negative factor on pilot checklists for three airport tenants with safety management systems.

Not surprisingly, the field's corporate clients unanimously support the tower project. Conversely, Silvernell estimates about 40% of the airport's private operators have concerns - mostly regarding cost and the possibility of increased taxi times. Ninety signed a petition officially opposing the tower.

"As a private pilot, I understand their reservations," he says. "I've flown from Washington to Florida without ever talking to a controller, and it was great. But I listened in a lot."

While Silvernell appreciates the unfettered hop-in-your-aircraft-and-go nature of uncontrolled operations, he considers adding a tower a significant safety enhancement for Hernando County Airport. Its traffic levels are beginning to require one, he explains.

With 180 aircraft based at the field, Silvernell estimates annual operations at 70,000 to 75,000. "We'll see how close we are once the tower is done," he muses.

Other statistics demonstrate the airport's growth more definitively: Since 2007, fuel sales have more

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FAA Contract Tower List (as of Dec. 1, 2012)

248 TOWERS AS OF DEC. 1, 2012. 16 TOWERS MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK ARE IN THE COST-SHARING PROGRAM.

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
Bethel	AK
Kenai Municipal	AK
King Salmon	AK
Kodiak	AK
Brookley (Mobile)	AL
Dothan	AL
Tuscaloosa Regional	AL
Fayetteville	AR
Northwest Arkansas Regional	AR
*Rogers Municipal-Carter Field	AR
*Springdale	AR
Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	AR
Chandler	AZ
Flagstaff Pulliam	AZ
Glendale	AZ
Goodyear (Phoenix)	AZ
Laughlin/Bullhead City	AZ
Phoenix-Mesa Gateway	AZ
Ryan (Tucson)	AZ
Castle	CA
Chico	CA
Fullerton	CA
Hawthorne	CA
Mather (Sacramento)	CA
Modesto	CA
Oxnard	CA
Palmdale	CA
Ramona Airport	CA
Redding Municipal	CA
Riverside	CA
Sacramento Executive	CA
Salinas Municipal	CA
San Carlos	CA
Brown Field (San Diego)	CA
San Luis Obispo	CA
Santa Maria	CA
Vandenberg Air Force Base	CA
Victorville	CA
Whiteman (Los Angeles)	CA
William J. Fox (Lancaster)	CA
Eagle County	CO
Front Range	CO
Grand Junction	CO
Bridgeport	CT
Danbury	CT
New London (Groton)	CT
Brainard (Hartford)	CT
Tweed-New Haven	CT
Waterbury/Oxford	CT
Albert Whitted (St. Petersburg)	FL
Boca Raton	FL
Cecil Field (Jacksonville)	FL

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
Gainesville	FL
Hollywood	FL
Craig (Jacksonville)	FL
Key West	FL
Kissimmee	FL
Lakeland Municipal	FL
Leesburg International	FL
Melbourne	FL
Naples	FL
New Smyrna Beach Mun.	FL
Ocala	FL
Opa Locka (Miami)	FL
Ormond Beach Mun.	FL
Page Field	FL
Palm Coast/Flagler County	FL
Panama City/Bay Co.	FL
Pompano Beach	FL
St. Augustine	FL
Stuart/Witham	FL
Titusville/Cocoa	FL
Athens Municipal	GA
Fulton County	GA
Gwinnett County	GA
Macon	GA
McCollum	GA
SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	GA
Agana	Guam
Kalaeloa	HI
Kona/Keahole	HI
Lihue	HI
Molokai	HI
Dubuque	IA
Friedman Memorial (Hailey)	ID
Idaho Falls	ID
Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ID
Pocatello Municipal	ID
Bloomington/Normal	IL
Decatur	IL
So. Illinois/Carbondale	IL
St. Louis Regional	IL
Waukegan Regional	IL
*Williamson County (Marion)	IL
Columbus Municipal	IN
Gary Regional	IN
*Monroe County/Bloomington	IN
*Muncie/Delaware County	IN
Forbes Field (Topeka)	KS
*Garden City	KS
Hutchinson Mun.	KS
Johnson Co. Exec.	KS
Manhattan	KS
New Century Air Center (Olathe)	KS

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
Philip Billard Mun. (Topeka)	KS
Salina Municipal	KS
Barkley Regional (Paducah)	KY
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	KY
Acadiana Regional	LA
Alexandria	LA
Chennault	LA
Houma	LA
Shreveport Downtown	LA
Barnes Municipal	MA
Beverly	MA
Hyannis	MA
Lawrence	MA
Martha's Vineyard	MA
New Bedford	MA
Norwood	MA
Worcester	MA
Easton	MD
Martin State (Baltimore)	MD
Salisbury-Wicomico	MD
Washington Co. (Hagerstown)	MD
Battle Creek	MI
Detroit City	MI
*Jackson	MI
Sawyer	MI
Anoka (Minneapolis)	MN
St. Cloud Regional	MN
Branson	MO
Columbia	MO
*Jefferson City	MO
*Joplin Regional	MO
Rosecrans Mem'l (St. Joseph)	MO
Saipan International	MP
Golden Triangle Regional	MS
Greenville Municipal	MS
Hawkins Field (Jackson)	MS
Meridian/Key Field	MS
Olive Branch	MS
Stennis International Airport	MS
Tupelo Regional	MS
Gallatin Field (Bozeman)	MT
Kalispell	MT
Missoula	MT
Concord	NC
Hickory Regional	NC
Kinston	NC
New Bern	NC
Smith Reynolds (Win.-Salem)	NC
Minot	ND
*Central Neb. (Grand Island)	NE
Boire Field (Nashua)	NH
Lebanon Municipal	NH
Trenton	NJ

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
Double Eagle II	NM
Farmington Municipal	NM
*Lea County/Hobbs	NM
Santa Fe Co. Mun.	NM
Henderson (Las Vegas)	NV
Francis F. Gabreski	NY
Tompkins County	NY
Niagara Falls	NY
Rome-Griffiss	NY
Stewart	NY
Bolton Field (Columbus)	OH
Burke Lakefront (Cleveland)	OH
Cuyahoga County (Cleveland)	OH
Lunken Mun. (Cincinnati)	OH
Ohio State University	OH
*Ardmore Municipal	OK
Enid Woodring Mun.	OK
Lawton-Ft. Sill Regional	OK
Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	OK
Stillwater	OK
Wiley Post	OK
Klamath Falls	OR
McNary Field (Salem)	OR
Medford	OR
North Bend	OR
Pendleton	OR
Redmond	OR
Troutdale (Portland)	OR
Capital City (Harrisburg)	PA
Lancaster	PA
Latrobe	PA
University Park	PA
*Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	PA
Isla Grande	Puerto Rico
Rafael Hernandez Airport	Puerto Rico
Greenville Donaldson Center	SC
Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	SC
Greenville Downtown	SC
Hilton Head Airport	SC
Rapid City Regional	SD
Millington	TN
Smyrna	TN
McKeller-Sipes (Jackson)	TN
Arlington Municipal	TX
Brownsville Int'l	TX
Denton Municipal	TX
Easterwood	TX
*Fort Worth-Spinks	TX
Galveston	TX
Georgetown	TX
*Grand Prairie	TX
Laredo International	TX
Lone Star Executive (Conroe)	TX

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
McAllen	TX
McKinney Municipal	TX
Redbird	TX
Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen)	TX
San Angelo	TX
San Marcos	TX
Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	TX
Sugar Land	TX
Tyler	TX
Victoria	TX
Waco TSTC	TX
Ogden-Hinckley	UT
Provo Muinicipal	UT
Charlottesville-Albemarle	VA
Lynchburg	VA
Henry E. Rohlsen (St. Croix)	Virgin Islands
Bellingham Int'l	WA
Felts Field (Spokane)	WA
Olympia	WA

AIRPORT NAME	STATE
Renton	WA
Tacoma Narrows	WA
*Walla Walla Regional	WA
Yakima	WA
Appleton	WI
Central Wisconsin	WI
Chippewa Valley	WI
Kenosha Municipal	WI
Lacrosse	WI
Rock County (Janesville)	WI
Timmerman (Milwaukee)	WI
Waukesha County Airport	WI
Wittman Regional (Oshkosh)	WI
Greenbrier Valley	WV
Morgantown	WV
Parkersburg	WV
Wheeling Ohio Co.	WV
Cheyenne	WY
Jackson Hole	WY

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FAA CONTRACT TOWER MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST

This list details the requirements for any new/future FAA Contract Tower facilities. It serves as a guide for items recommended in existing contract towers. Listed items should be projected for installation in existing towers in a reasonable time frame to be determined by the airport sponsor.

a. Voice switch communication equipment capable of radio and telephone ATC communication as appropriate. This must include the capability of headset use and instructor/student override capabilities.
b. One headset per controller and one handset per position with appropriate spares.
c. Very High Frequency (VHF) radios for ground to 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.
d. Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radios for ground to air communication, as required, to support military operations. Handheld radios are not authorized as primary units.
e. Landline communication system with direct access line to controlling instrument flight rules facility.
f. Tunable emergency backup transceiver with battery backup supply.
g. A multi-channel, multi-line digital voice recorder system, for continuous unattended recording of each position used for receiving/transmitting ATC clearances, control instructions and coordination between internal/external control positions. Capabilities must include: remote alarm, synchronized recording of time, playback without recording interruption, re-recording in a digital format, and automatic archiving. The internal storage media must be configurable to preclude the retention of data older than 45 days.
   Appropriate storage media must be provided (one for each of 45 days, plus spares).
   Recorder must be capable of split (stereo) tracks to record voice on one track and a time source on the other channel.
   Note: Capability to upload digital voice files in .wav format to the FAA KSN site.
h. Back up power source for essential equipment, i.e., radios, voice switch, cab HVAC, etc.
i. Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS)
j. An FAA-approved Automated Weather System with ATIS interface device. Must have an Operator Input Device (OID) located in the tower cab.
k. 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 approaches and 25 miles for non-precision approaches.
   Note: Must be independent from ASOS/AWOS)
   Re: FAA Order 7210.3, Section 8 and FAA Notice 7210.477: aircraft altimeters are not acceptable.
   Note: DASI requires documentation to validate traceability to the National Institute of Standards (NIST). If manufacturer cannot provide it, DASI cannot be used at LAWRS sites.
l. Temperature and Dew Point Equipment
   Note: must be independent from ASOS/AWOS
m. Two direct reading wind information indicators
   Note: must be independent from ASOS/AWOS
n. Two pairs of operable binoculars (7x50 or greater).
o. Signal light gun with a back-up power source.

p. At least one 24-hour clock with seconds display, i.e., digital LED.
q. Alert system to notify airport emergency equipment operator.
r. Airport lighting controls including on/off switch for rotating beacon.
s. Window shading as prescribed in FAA regulations for all tower cab windows (adjustable). FAA specification E 2470.
t. Mechanical or electronic traffic counting device.
u. Position lighting (to support established operating positions with rheostat control).
v. Electro Static Discharge (ESD) resistant controller chairs of appropriate height for the conduct of tower operational duties.
w. Floor covering must be ESD resistant.
Note — U and V: other floor grounding apparatus may be necessary dependant upon specifications of the electronic equipment installed.
x. Administrative telephone with handsets in the operating and administrative quarters.
y. Appropriate non-operational space and equipment will also be provided. This must include:
Lockable Air Traffic Manager's office with appropriate furniture and locking file cabinet.
Restroom one floor below the tower cab
Appropriately equipped training room including table and chairs
Break room including full size refrigerator, microwave and sink with garbage disposal
Personal locker for each controller
Small refrigerator, microwave and drinking fountain in the tower cab
Storage room for supplies with installed shelves
z. Telco requirements to sustain high speed internet communications, to include the following:
FTI Mission Support connection and Router
Local Area Network consisting of a network switch, a Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), a rack with patch panel, and network cabling to the wall jacks
This is the network infrastructure that needs to be installed inside the tower. The UPS provides uninterruptible temporary power source (model specified at time of planning by IT Operations) in the event of a power surge or loss to protect the equipment in the rack. The patch panel is located with the switch and is the termination point for all network wiring to and from the rack. Short patch cables are used to connect from the patch panel to the switch and router. The network Switch (model specified by IT Operations at the time the planning) is used to connect all wiring together within the tower and to the router. The FTI Router, Switch, UPS, and patch panel should all be mounted in a single rack.
Notes:

* Towers must comply with relevant security requirements.
** This list details the requirements for any new/future FAA Contract Tower facilities. It serves as a guide for items recommended in existing contract towers. Listed items should be projected for installation in existing towers in a reasonable time frame to be determined by the airport sponsor.

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than doubled to 600,000 gallons, and the number of flight plans filed has increased 10% to 12% every year during the same period.

The diverse nature of the airfield's traffic — everything from ultralights and small homebuilts to large business jets and Blackhawk military helicopters — was another factor supporting the addition of air traffic control.

After Silvernell presented the case for a tower, six out of seven aviation authority board members and four out of five county commissioners supported the project.

The airport authority raised the prospect of building a tower shortly after Silvernell was hired in 2003. In 2005, it contracted David Byers, senior development professional for Quadrex Aviation and Ph.D. of aviation science. "Dr. Dave," as he's known in the industry, performed a cost/benefit analysis to help determine whether the airport would qualify for the Federal Contract Tower Program and associated ongoing operating funds. Although the FAA's initial answer was "no," Byers trusted his preliminary research indicating otherwise. Erring on the side of caution, however, Silvernell did not proceed with hiring engineers for the project. "We needed confirmation from the FAA before we did anything else," he explains.

When Byers reviewed the data, he discovered that the FAA hadn't included the airport's military traffic in its calculations. Without military flights, the airport's benefit/cost ratio was .95 — just below the FAA's 1.0 threshold for a contract tower. When its regular military traffic was included, however, the airport qualified easily with a "B/C ratio" of 1.81.

If an airport's B/C ratio drops below the 1.0 threshold during subsequent recalculations, it can continue to participate via a cost-sharing provision that was added in 1999. An airport with a 0.8 benefit/cost ratio, for instance, can remain federally funded, but must pay for 80% of the tower's operating costs. Last year, 16 airports shared costs to operate their contract towers.

Hernando County's experience applying to the program was not unusual, relates Byers. "There are often vagaries in the data, and sometimes information is missing or out-of-date," he explains. "Fortunately, the FAA has been very reasonable and receptive about accepting counter proposals. The burden of proof is on the airport, but the FAA is open to listening."

With official qualification for the contract program in hand, the airport opted for a construction manager at risk process to keep its county purchasing department comfortable. It also decided against using the FAA's in-house site selection process, opting instead for an accepted alternative siting process. Choosing its own consultant shaved three to four months off the schedule and saved roughly $180,000, estimates Sivernell. Working as a subcontractor under prime engineer Clough Harbour & Associates, AJT Engineering completed site selection in about seven months for roughly $65,000.

Delivering water and sewer service to the site cost about $300,000. "It was the logical site, but not the easiest," explains Silvernell. The recent infrastructure improvements open opportunities for property development in a previously inaccessible location, adds Byers.

Unexpected funds from the Florida Department of Transportation will cover 80% of the project cost, and the airport will pay for the remaining 20% out of its capital reserves. "We went in with no state funding, but when another airport couldn't come up with matching funds for their project, the money fell to us," he explains. "I hate to see another airport not get their project; but we'll certainly put the funds to good use. As an enterprise field, we put money away every year for projects like this."

The airport, in fact, recently finished $300,000 of joint repairs on its secondary 5,000-foot runway and $650,000 in roadwork at its industrial park.

With water and electric services in place for the new tower, footing and piling work is next on the schedule. Vertical construction is expected to begin in September. "It should go pretty quickly from there," Silvernell anticipates. "They'll set the concrete panels, build the cab and lift it into place in about six weeks."

The tower, which will be staffed by Robinson Aviation, is expected to operate from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days per week.

Cost savings is one of the driving forces behind the Federal Contract Tower Program. FAA towers generally cost about three times more to operate than contract towers, says Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and executive director of its affiliate, the U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA).

"Last year, contract towers handled 27% of all U.S. tower operations, but accounted for just 9% of the FAA's overall budget allotted to air traffic control tower operations," Dickerson elaborates.

The last major study on the subject, released by the inspector general in 2003, reported the average annual operating cost of an FAA tower at $1.74 million vs. $365,600 for a contract tower. Results of an updated study are expected this fall. In the meantime, Byers' estimates paint a similar picture: $1 million to $1.5 million for an FAA-run tower vs. about $450,000 per contract tower.

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Some of the cost variance is attributed to different personnel policies: Unlike contract control companies, the FAA can't hire part-time controllers, deploy controllers at multiple towers or flex staffing levels for seasonal changes in traffic.

"The Department of Transportation has looked at the program for more than two decades and always comes to the same conclusion: Contract towers have great safety records and they're much less expensive to operate," summarizes Dickerson. "It's really hard to find any faults with the program. Consequently, it receives good bi-partisan support on the Hill and within the FAA."

Silvernell has no reservations about contract controllers operating the tower being built at Hernando County Airport. "When you look at the raw data - not what the air traffic controllers' union presents - you find the safety record at contract towers is as good, and often better, than federal towers," he explains.

Notably, none of the sleeping controller incidents that captured national headlines earlier this spring occurred at contract towers.

Dickerson considers contract towers effective hybrids: They're not federal operations, but they aren't "privatized" either. Although the controllers are employed by private companies, the FAA decides which companies can perform the work. Three companies - Midwest ATC, Robinson Aviation and Serco Management Services - currently hold contracts. In addition, the Department of Transportation establishes salary levels and benefits for contracted controllers, and they're required to train and operate according to FAA rules and procedures. In addition to certifying private controllers to the same standards as its own controllers, the FAA approves staffing plans for contract towers.

"If it's not the most successful industry/government partnership, it's at least in the top two or three," says Dickerson.

In early August, AAAE/USCTA and several other aviation organizations officially urged the House Appropriations Committee to support the Federal Contract Tower Program with overall funding of $121.8 million plus $10 million for the cost-sharing portion during fiscal year 2012.

The Federal Contract Tower Program emerged as an outgrowth of the 1981 strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). After President Reagan fired thousands of unionized controllers and banned the FAA from rehiring them, controllers at smaller airports and those not participating in the strike were hired to fill the empty slots at large airports. "The process took longer than everyone thought," recalls Byers, "and a few airports (including Lakeland Municipal and Greenbriar Valley Regional) got legislation enacted that allowed them to hire their own controllers."

A handful of individual contracts were issued to reopen towers at small airports caught in the ripple effect of the strike, and a program evolved that eventually encompassed 27 airports in 1993 and 150 the following year. As it was originally conceived, the program is currently limited to low-activity (Level 1) visual flight rules airports.

Some consider the evolution of the Federal Contract Tower Program a historic point in U.S. labor relations. During its development, elements of the program were challenged in the courts. Decades later, the topic still inspires controversy.

The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), a union formed after PATCO was de-certified after the strike, opposes expansion of the Federal Contract Tower Program, citing concerns about safety, traffic delays and possible user fees.

Others consider contract towers an effective way to provide control service at low-activity airports despite current budget constraints. "The FAA simply doesn't have money to build new towers these days," explains Byers. "The contract tower program allows local communities that need service to build their own towers and have contract controllers operate them. Before, it often took a legislative earmark to get a new tower; now municipalities can initiate the process themselves."

Byers estimated that more than 60 new locations have joined the contract tower program this way. "It provides service at airports that wouldn't otherwise have it," he concludes. Only three airports have elected to close their towers during the past several years of the program - Elko Regional in Nevada, Valdosta Regional in Georgia and Lake Tahoe Airport in California.

Of the current 246 airports with contract towers, Dickerson estimates 100 would not maintain control service without the program. "That's a lot of added aviation safety, and it's provided at a fraction of the cost," he notes.

Some speculate that expansion of the contract tower program has been thwarted by NATCA suggesting the program will lead to full privatization of the air traffic control system. In its role representing contract tower airports, USCTA works to counteract charges that the FAA awards controller service contracts on a low-bid basis and assuage the associated safety concerns.

Four new towers are expected to be added to the program this year and next.