

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES

Volume 3, Number 5

September-October 1999

DOT IG FINDS BENEFITS IN EXPANDING CONTRACT PROGRAM

DOT Inspector General Kenneth Mead told FAA Administrator Jane Garvey that he has "immediate concerns" with FAA's conclusion in a draft report that there would be no net savings related to further expansion of the agency's contract tower program.

"We believe this conclusion is based on flawed assumptions and ignores several key factors that should have been more fully considered," Mead said in a Sept. 27 letter.

He pointed out that the agency's program has, so far, been "extremely successful" in provide ATC services to low activity airports at a savings of about \$250,000 per tower annually. "In addition, we have found that the quality of service provided by contract towers is comparable to the quality of service by FAA-operated towers," he said.

FAA currently operates 71 visual flight rules (VFR) towers and was directed by Congress to determine whether additional savings could be achieved by ex-

panding the program to other FAA-operated towers without radar capability.

Although FAA, in its draft study, concluded that it could realize annual savings of \$787,000 per tower if the program were expanded, a significant part of that savings would be from lower personnel costs. However, the agency said, there would actually be no savings from expanding the contract tower program because a July 1998 agreement between FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) prohibits a decrease in the number of FAA personnel.

Mead disagreed with that conclusion, saying that the baseline staffing level of 15,000 controllers mandated under the FAA-NATCA agreement misinterprets the authority of Congress, which has sole power to appropriate federal funds and determine the terms and conditions under which those monies may be used. "While the agreement with NATCA may represent an expression of policy between the signatory parties and reflect their objectives, Congress is not bound by its terms," Mead said.

Further, Mead said that although FAA's draft study recognizes that FAA controllers from the converted VFR towers would provide the agency with a skilled labor force to replace retiring controllers and supplement staffing at larger facilities, this benefit was not adequately considered in reaching the study's final conclusion. "Contracting out VFR towers would provide the agency with an opportunity to realign its limited resources in a more efficient and effective manner and help to reduce overtime at understaffed facilities," he stated.

Finally, Mead said that FAA's study "erroneously assumes that the air traffic control infrastructure will remain static." While there are no current plans to expand the existing number of FAA facilities, he noted that air traffic demands may require additional air traffic infrastructure in the future. "FAA's study should give greater merit to the potential impact that controllers from contracted VFR towers could have in offsetting potential fu-

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

Editor **Barbara Cook**

Charles M. Barclay, A.A.E.

President, AAAE

J. Spencer Dickerson,

Executive Director, USCTA

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

ture increases in system demands," he told Garvey.

FAA has a responsibility to operate in a cost-effective manner, Mead stated. "By stating that no net savings related to further expanding the contract tower program will occur, FAA is denying itself an opportunity to reduce operations costs and/or offset potential cost increases associated with future demand for air traffic control services." He urged Garvey to revise the study's conclusions "and recognize the substantial savings that expanding the federal contract tower program offers."

FAA CONVERTS 22 TOWERS ON OCT. 1

FAA on Oct. 1, 1999, converted 22 agency-operated VFR control towers to the contract program. They are: Kenai Municipal, Alaska; Capital City, Pa.; Lancaster, Pa.; Trenton, N.J.; Bloomington/Normal, Ill.; Danbury, Conn.; Lebanon Municipal, N.H.; Grand Junction, Colo.; Medford, Ore.; Missoula International, Mont.; Renton, Wash.; Spokane Felts Field, Wash.; Smith Reynolds, N.C.; Macon, Ga.; Melbourne, Fla.; Opa Locka, Fla.; Rio Grande Valley International, Texas; Lawton Municipal, Okla.; Chico Municipal, Calif.; Kona/Keahole, Hawaii; Redding Municipal, Calif., and San Diego/Brown Field, Calif.

A total of 186 towers are now in the program.

CONTRACT TOWER COST-SHARING FUNDED FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

FAA's contract tower cost-sharing program will be funded at \$5 million in fiscal year 2000 as part of the DOT appropriations bill signed by President Clinton.

Contract towers and non-federal towers with benefit/cost (b/c) ratios below 1.0 are eligible for the program, which provides federal funds for contract towers based on the airport's b/c ratio. "We commend Congress for once again including funds for the contract tower cost-sharing program," said Spencer Dickerson, executive vice president of AAE and executive director of USCTA. "This innovative partnership between FAA and local airports enhances air traffic safety in a very cost-effective manner."

Airports interested in applying for the cost-sharing program should contact the appropriate FAA regional office (*see list on page 7*).

The bill also includes language on the controversy of whether the contract tower program should be expanded to the 70 remaining Level II and III VFR FAA-operated contract towers. The final language states, in part, "the draft (FAA) report indicates that

annual savings of \$30 million to \$50 million are achievable (from contracting Level II and III VFR towers) except for a provision in the current labor agreement which requires the agency to employ a minimum level of 15,000 government air traffic controllers. The DOT Inspector General (IG) recently reported, 'FAA has a responsibility to operate in a cost-effective manner. By concluding that no net savings related to further expanding the contract tower program will occur, FAA is denying itself an opportunity to reduce operations costs and/or offset potential cost increases... FAA should revise the (draft) study's conclusions and recognize the substantial savings that expanding the federal contract tower program offers.'"

In the conference report on the legislation that was approved by Congress, the appropriations conferees requested that DOT's IG review the feasibility and benefits of expanding the FAA contract tower program, "notwithstanding the current minimum staffing agreement," and report to the Congress no later than March 1, 2000.

DOT IG INITIATES NEW AUDIT OF CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

In an Oct. 14 letter to FAA, DOT's Inspector General announced the launch of a new audit of the Contract Tower Program.

The new review has two purposes, according to David Dobbs, acting deputy assistant IG for aviation. First, the IG will follow up on previously identified safety concerns regarding staffing at contract towers that were identified in a 1998 report. At that time, the IG concluded that not all contract towers were staffed according to contract requirements.

Second, Dobbs said, the conference report for DOT's fiscal year 2000 spending bill directed the IG to review the feasibility and benefits of expanding the contract tower program, notwithstanding the current minimum staffing agreement between FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

In addition, Dobbs said, the IG will evaluate the accuracy and completeness of FAA's study of expanding the contract tower program to ensure that all rele-

GIVE US A CALL!

We're looking for 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 newspaper stories about your contract tower? Please forward them to Barbara Cook at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 133, or e-mail barbara.cook@airportnet.org.

vant costs and benefits were appropriately identified and considered.

The new audit is to begin on Oct. 25, Dobbs said.

SENATE APPROVES FAA BILL WITH TOWER COST-SHARING

The Senate on Oct. 5 approved by voice vote legislation that authorizes FAA for fiscal years 2000-2002. The bill, S.82, also provides for continuation of the pilot cost-sharing program for contract towers. Language in this measure would authorize \$6 million for a cost-sharing program for Level I towers that are not eligible for participation in the Contract Tower Program.

The bill specifically states that FAA must give priority in selecting facilities to participate in the program to: towers that are participating in the contract tower program now but have been notified that they will be terminated because their benefit/cost ratio is less than 1.0; towers that have a b/c ratio of at least .50; FAA towers that were closed due to the controllers' strike in 1981; towers located at airports that are prepared to assume partial responsibility for maintenance costs, and towers that are located at airports with safety or operational problems related to topography, weather, runway configuration or mix of aircraft.

The Senate bill also requires FAA to develop a national policy and related procedures concerning the Terminal Automated Radar Display and Information System (TARDIS) and sequencing for VFR control towers. This provision was sponsored by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.)

AAAE/USCTA last year urged FAA to adopt a national policy for the installation of TARDIS at VFR air traffic control towers, saying that this program is an example of how FAA and airport sponsors can partner in order to improve ATC services and safety. FAA Administrator Jane Garvey replied that the agency was attempting to resolve issues regarding TARDIS deployment.

The program is on hold with seven installations across the country and some 10 additional sites in the planning stages. AAAE/USCTA told Garvey that the demand for TARDIS is likely to grow, adding that airports want FAA's Air Traffic and Airways Facilities branches to resolve any differences concerning the system's installation.

In her response, Garvey also noted that while TARDIS is being used in some low-activity VFR towers as an aid to controllers in visually locating aircraft, the system is not certified for provision of radar services. "Since TARDIS interfaces with terminal and en route

surveillance systems, security of surveillance and flight information questions surrounding the integrity of the interface have arisen." Garvey pledged that FAA is making every effort to resolve these issues "and provide the air traffic control work force the tools needed to provide safe and efficient services."

An FAA reauthorization bill passed earlier in the year by the House (H.R.1000) also provides for continuation of the pilot cost-sharing program for contract towers with a \$6 million authorization for Level I towers. Language in the House bill would require FAA to give priority to the following characteristics when selecting towers to participate in cost-sharing: towers already participating in the contract tower program that have a benefit-to-cost ratio of less than 1.0; towers that have a b/c ratio of at least .85; FAA towers that were closed as a result of the 1981 controllers' strike; towers located at airports at which an airline is receiving compensation from DOT's Essential Air Service program; towers located at airports that are prepared to assume partial responsibility for maintenance costs, and towers located at airports with safety or operational problems related to topography, weather, runway configuration or mix of aircraft.

The House and Senate must now reconcile the differences in the two versions of the FAA reauthorization bill.

USCTA GAINS NEW AIRPORT MEMBERS

The newest airport members of USCTA are Lebanon (N.H.) Municipal, Rogue Valley (Ore.) International, Spokane (Wash.), Glacier Park (Mont.) International, and Tucson (Ariz.) Airport Authority.

USCTA receives oversight from a Policy Board comprised of Bryan Elliott, A.A.E., executive director of the Charlottesville, Va., Albemarle Airport Authority, as Chairman, and James Hansford, A.A.E., airport manager of the Central Wisconsin Airport, as Vice Chairman.

Other USCTA policy board members are: Jack Schelter, A.A.E., deputy director of aviation at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport; Tim Rogers, A.A.E., executive director of Salina, Kan., Airport Authority; Ted Soliday, executive director of the Naples, Fla., Airport Authority; Rick Baird, manager of Freidman Memorial Airport in Hailey, Idaho; Steve Stockam, manager of Joplin, Mo., Regional Airport; Ron Craft, airport division director of the Jefferson City, Mo., Municipal Airport; Roger Engstrom, A.A.E., director of Mobile, Ala. Airport Authority; Glenn Januska, A.A.E., manager of

Waukesha, Wisc., County Airport; Shane Cordes, executive vice president of Midwest ATC; Jim Chappell, manager of Salinas, Calif., Municipal Airport; Jim McCue, A.A.E., manager of Glendale, Calif., Municipal Airport; Richard Howell, A.A.E., director of S.W. Georgia Regional Airport in Albany, Ga., and Jon Mathaisen, A.A.E., director of Rio Grande Valley International Airport in Harlingen, Texas.

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 Bearman & Caldwell; Patrick McCann of the Wexler, Group and Larry Barnett of AB Management Associates.

The following are the members of the association: 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, Chandler Municipal Airport (Ariz.), Laughlin/Bullhead City, (Ariz.) International, Tucson (Ariz.) Airport Authority, Sacramento (Calif.) County Department of Airports, 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.), Redding (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Salinas (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Eagle County (Colo.) Regional, Boca Raton Airport (Fla.), Craig (Fla.) Airport, Kissimmee (Fla.), Martin County Airport (Fla.), Naples Municipal Airport (Fla.), Titusville-Cocoa Airport (Fla.), Page Field (Fla.), Lakeland (Fla.) Linder Regional Airport, Vandenberg Airport (Fla.), Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, Glynco Jetport (Ga.), Friedman Memorial Airport (Idaho), Pocatello (Idaho) Regional Airport, Waukegan Regional Airport (Ill.), Meigs Field (Ill.), Quincy (Ill.) Municipal Airport, Southern Illinois Airport, St. Louis Regional Airport (Ill.), Williamson County Regional Airport (Ill.), Columbus (Ind.), Municipal Airport, Delaware County Airport (Muncie, Ind.), Johnson County Municipal Airport (Kan.), Salina Municipal Airport (Kan.), Manhattan (Kan.) Regional Airport, Garden City Regional Airport (Kan.), Barkley Regional Airport (Ky.), Hagerstown (Md.) Regional Airport, Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico (Md.) Regional Airport, Martin State Airport (Md.), Westfield Barnes Airport (Mass.), Worcester (Mass.) Regional Airport, Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission (Anoka County Airport), Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.), Jefferson City Memorial Airport (Mo.), Cape Girardeau Regional (Mo.), Glacier Park (Mont.) International, Gallatin Field

(Mont.), Missoula (Mont.), Central Nebraska Regional Airport, Henderson (Nev.) Executive Airport, Lebanon (N.H.) Municipal, Lea County Airports (N.M.), 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.), Rogue Valley (Ore.) International, Greenville Downtown Airport (S.C.), Hilton Head (S.C.), Smyrna Rutherford County (Tenn.), Jackson Madison County Airport (Tenn.), Stinson Municipal Airport (Texas), Laredo International Airport (Texas), Harlingen Valley International (Texas), Brownsville/South Padre Island International (Texas), Grand Prairie Municipal Airport (Texas), Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport (Va.), Spokane (Wash.), Walla Walla Municipal Airport (Wash.), Olympia Airport (Wash.), Wheeling-Ohio County Airport (W.Va.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Milwaukee Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, LaCrosse (Wis.) Municipal, Central Wisconsin Airport (Wis.), Waukesha County Airport (Wis.), Cheyenne (Wyo.) Airport, Jackson Hole (Wyo.) Airport, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services, Inc., COMARCO Airport Services, Serco Management Services, RVA Inc., Hoyle, Tanner and Associates Inc., and Unitech.

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

USCTA COMMENTS ON NON-FEDERAL TOWER PROCEDURES

USCTA has responded to FAA's draft Advisory Circular 90-93A concerning operating procedures for non-federal air traffic control towers.

Among other recommendations, the association stated that an air traffic manager should not suspend airport operations without specific authorization from airport management. Instead, USCTA said, language in the circular should state that the air traffic manager, upon becoming aware of conditions that are hazardous to safe operations, should immediately notify airport management.

USCTA also suggested that the air traffic manager be provided with a current copy of the airport certification manual or specifications and the current airport emergency plan as approved by FAA, and that communication should be required between the non-federal tower and the specific agency that serves as the primary emergency response organization for the airport.

FOLLOWING IS THE CURRENT LIST OF
FAA CONTRACT TOWERS
(as of October 1999)

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Bethel	AAL	AK	Burke Lakefront	AGL	OH
Kenai Municipal	AAL	AK	Ohio State University	AGL	OH
King Salmon	AAL	AK	Cincinnati Mun./Lunken	AGL	OH
Kodiak	AAL	AK	Cuyahoga County	AGL	OH
Dubuque Iowa	ACE	IA	Rapid City Regional	AGL	SD
Forbes Field	ACE	KS	Appleton	AGL	WI
Hutchinson Mun.	ACE	KS	Central Wisconsin	AGL	WI
Johnson Co. Exec.	ACE	KS	Kenosha Municipal	AGL	WI
Philip Billard Mun.	ACE	KS	Lacrosse	AGL	WI
Salina Municipal	ACE	KS	Rock County	AGL	WI
Columbia	ACE	MO	Timmerman (Milwaukee)	AGL	WI
Joplin Regional	ACE	MO	Waukesha County Airport	AGL	WI
Rosecrans Mem'l/St. Joseph	ACE	MO	Wittman Regional	AGL	WI
Central Neb./Grand Island	ACE	NE	Bridgeport	ANE	CT
Martin State	AEA	MD	Danbury	ANE	CT
Washington Co. Reg'l/Hagerstown	AEA	MD	Groton-New London	ANE	CT
Salisbury-Wicomico	AEA	MD	Hartford-Brainard	ANE	CT
Trenton	AEA	NJ	Tweed-New Haven	ANE	CT
Ithaca	AEA	NY	Barnes Municipal	ANE	MA
Niagara Falls	AEA	NY	Beverly	ANE	MA
Oneida County	AEA	NY	Hyannis	ANE	MA
Stewart	AEA	NY	Lawrence	ANE	MA
Capital City	AEA	PA	Martha's Vineyard	ANE	MA
Lancaster	AEA	PA	New Bedford	ANE	MA
Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	AEA	PA	Norwood	ANE	MA
Charlottesville-Albemarle	AEA	VA	Worcester	ANE	MA
Lynchburg	AEA	VA	Boire Field/Nashua	ANE	NH
Greenbrier Valley	AEA	WV	Lebanon Municipal	ANE	NH
Morgantown	AEA	WV	Eagle County	ANM	CO
Parkersburg	AEA	WV	Grand Junction	ANM	CO
Wheeling Ohio Co.	AEA	WV	Friedman Memorial	ANM	ID
Tompkins County	AEA	NY	Idaho Falls	ANM	ID
Bloomington/Normal	AGL	IL	Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ANM	ID
Decatur	AGL	IL	Pocatello Municipal	ANM	ID
Meigs Field (Chicago)	AGL	IL	Gallatin Field/Bozeman	ANM	MT
St. Louis Regional	AGL	IL	Missoula International	ANM	MT
So. Illinois/Carbondale	AGL	IL	Klamath Falls	ANM	OR
Waukegan Regional	AGL	IL	McNary Field	ANM	OR
Williamson County	AGL	IL	Medford	ANM	OR
Gary Regional	AGL	IN	Pendleton Municipal	ANM	OR
Battle Creek	AGL	MI	Redmond	ANM	OR
Detroit City	AGL	MI	Troutdale (Portland)	ANM	OR
Jackson	AGL	MI	Ogden-Hinckley Mun.	ANM	UT
Anoka (Minneapolis)	AGL	MN	Bellingham Int'l	ANM	WA
Minot	AGL	ND	Felts Field	ANM	WA
			Olympia	ANM	WA
			Renton	ANM	WA

(continued on following page)

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Tacoma Narrows	ANM	WA	Farmington Municipal	ASW	NM
Walla Walla Regional	ANM	WA	Lea County/Hobbs	ASW	NM
Yakima	ANM	WA	Santa Fe Co. Mun.	ASW	NM
Cheyenne	ANM	WY	Ardmore Municipal	ASW	OK
Dothan	ASO	AL	Enid Woodring Mun.	ASW	OK
Brookley (Mobile)	ASO	AL	Lawton Municipal	ASW	OK
Tuscaloosa Municipal	ASO	AL	Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	ASW	OK
Albert Whitted	ASO	FL	Wiley Post	ASW	OK
Gainesville	ASO	FL	Brownsville Int'l	ASW	TX
Hollywood	ASO	FL	Easterwood	ASW	TX
Jacksonville/Craig	ASO	FL	Grand Prairie	ASW	TX
Key West	ASO	FL	Laredo International	ASW	TX
Kissimmee	ASO	FL	McAllen	ASW	TX
Lakeland Municipal	ASO	FL	McKinney Municipal	ASW	TX
Melbourne	ASO	FL	Redbird	ASW	TX
Naples	ASO	FL	Rio Grande Valley International	ASW	TX
Opa Locka	ASO	FL	San Angelo	ASW	TX
Page Field	ASO	FL	Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	ASW	TX
Panama City/Bay Co.	ASO	FL	Tyler	ASW	TX
Pompano Beach	ASO	FL	Chandler	AWP	AZ
Stuart/Whitham	ASO	FL	Flagstaff Pulliam	AWP	AZ
Titusville/Cocoa	ASO	FL	Glendale	AWP	AZ
Athens Municipal	ASO	GA	Goodyear (Phoenix)	AWP	AZ
Fulton County	ASO	GA	Laughlin/Bullhead City	AWP	AZ
Gwinnett County	ASO	GA	Mesa/Williams Gateway	AWP	AZ
Macon	ASO	GA	Ryan	AWP	AZ
McCollum	ASO	GA	Chico	AWP	CA
SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	ASO	GA	Fullerton	AWP	CA
Valdosta Municipal	ASO	GA	Hawthorne	AWP	CA
Barkley Regional	ASO	KY	Modesto	AWP	CA
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	ASO	KY	Oxnard	AWP	CA
Greenville Municipal	ASO	MS	Palmdale	AWP	CA
Hawkins Field	ASO	MS	Redding Municipal	AWP	CA
Meridian/Key Field	ASO	MS	Riverside	AWP	CA
Kingston	ASO	NC	Sacramento Executive	AWP	CA
Smith Reynolds	ASO	NC	Salinas Municipal	AWP	CA
Isla Grande	ASO	Puerto Rico	San Carlos	AWP	CA
Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	ASO	SC	San Diego/Brown Field	AWP	CA
Greenville Downtown	ASO	SC	San Louis Obispo	AWP	CA
Smyrna	ASO	TN	Santa Maria	AWP	CA
Alexander Hamilton (St. Croix)	ASO	Virgin Islands	Whiteman	AWP	CA
Fayetteville	ASW	AR	William J. Fox	AWP	CA
Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	ASW	AR	Agana	AWP	Guam
Acadiana Regional	ASW	LA	Kona/Keahole	AWP	HI
Esler Regional Reg'l	ASW	LA	Lihue	AWP	HI
Houma	ASW	LA	Molokai	AWP	HI
Alexandria	ASW	LA	Elko	AWP	NV

FAA CONTRACT TOWER REGIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT:

Alaskan Region

222 W. 7th Ave., Number 14
Anchorage, AK 99513

Hank Williams, AAL-510
(907) 271-5828
(907) 271-2850 fax

Norman Gommoll, AAL-540J
(907) 271-5887
(907) 271-2850 fax

Patricia Norsworthy, AAL-422J
(907) 271-5834

Great Lakes Region

O'Hare Lake Office Center
2300 East Devon Ave.
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Lea Bell, AGL-510.3
(847) 294-7556
(847) 294-8101 fax

Denise Mason, AGL-540
(847) 294-7549
(847) 294-7230 fax

Jim Soper, AGL-470
(847) 294-8480
(847) 294-7417 fax

Southern Region

1701 Columbia Ave.
College Park, GA 30337-2745

Sandy Byrom, ASO-510
(404) 305-5546
(404) 305-5523 fax

Darrell Dudley, ASO-540
(404) 305-5611
(404) 305-5631 fax

Teresa Burkett, ASO-423.2
(404) 305-6589
(404) 305-6553 fax

Central Region

601 E. 12th St.
Kansas City, MO 64106

John Mayorga, ACE-510D
(816) 426-3400
(816) 426-2302 fax

Charles Raymond, ACE-541B
(816) 426-3048
(816) 426-2187 fax

Scott Luechert, ANI-521
(816) 426-2242

New England Region

12 New England Executive Park
Burlington, MA 01803

Bill Tobin, ANE-510
(781) 238-7515
(781) 238-7598 fax

Mark Olsen, ANE-540
(781) 238-7544
(781) 238-7597 fax

Steve Wojcicki, ANE-473
(781) 238-7497
(781) 238-7459 fax

Southwest Region

2601 Meacham Blvd.
Fort Worth, TX 76137-4298

Lawrence Perkins, ASW-510J
(817) 222-5516
(817) 222-5979 fax

Susan Ruddy, ASW-540.9
(817) 222-5552
(817) 222-5433 fax

August Riccono, ASW-472AMR
(817) 222-4722

Eastern Region

JFK International Airport
Fitzgerald Federal Building
Jamaica, NY 11430

Joe DeDonatis AEA-511.5
(718) 553-4515
(718) 995-5692 fax

Patricia Reilly, AEA-541.16
(718) 553-4578
(718) 995-5709 fax

Ed Salvesen, ANI-251D
(718) 553-3468

Northwest Mountain Region

1601 Lind Ave., SW
Renton, WA 98055-4056

Wes Price, ANM-510.1
(425) 227-2522
(425) 227-1510 fax

Dan Cunningham ANM-540
(206) 227-2544
(206) 227-1557 fax

Herbert Zwygart, ANM-470
(425) 227-2489

Western-Pacific Region

15000 Aviation Blvd.
Hawthorne, CA 90009

Tom Monahan, AWP-540.9
(310) 725-6583
(310) 536-8410 fax

Craig DePauw, AWP-540.3
(310) 725-6543
(310) 725-6829 fax

Celinda Bruns, AWP-470
(310) 725-3439

FAA Headquarters**Contract Services Branch**

800 Independence Ave., sw, Rm.
635

Washington, DC 20591
Willie F. Card, manager,
ATO-140
(202) 267-9336
(202) 267-5305 fax

NEW TOWER AT SALISBURY, MD., DRAWS COMMENT FROM USERS

A newly constructed and dedicated control tower at Salisbury, Md., is drawing compliments from the pilot community, according to press reports (*see July-August USCTA newsletter for story on the tower's opening.*) The following story is reprinted from the publication *Flyer*.

The new control tower here at Salisbury Airport (SBY) represents an aviation first, but you'll never hear about it with a 320-channel radio.

"It's the only airport tower in the country that has frequencies with three digits to the right of the decimal point," said Airport Manager Bob Bryant.

Indeed, the tower frequency is 119.425 and ground is 123.775.

Since closure two years ago of an auxiliary flight service station (FSS) on the field that formerly provided airport advisories to local traffic, some airport users—particularly Piedmont Airlines, which uses SBY as the maintenance hub for its Dash-8 fleet—have been calling for a control tower.

"Then what really capped the decision," said Bryant, "was the accident in Quincy, Illinois, where the regional airliner and King Air collided on the runway."

Bryant describes the tower as "a very basic construction," 40 feet to the cab floor and 54 feet in total height. Half the \$700,000 cost was borne by the state's Aviation Division, \$100,000 was paid by neighboring Worcester County, and the rest came from Wicomico County, where SBY is located. Operational from 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily, it's staffed by contract controllers that are paid for by the FAA.

Dignitaries attending the formal dedication in July included Senator Paul Sarbanes and recently retired Maryland Aviation Administration Executive Director Ted Mathison. (David L. Blackshear has now taken over the directorship.)

Not all users were pleased about the upgrade in services.

"At first there were concerns by some of our long-term, single-engine hangar tenants," Bryant said, "the word 'control tower' led some to believe that there would be restrictions imposed on their operations from the airport."

One major concern was pilots' ability to get out of the airport during conditions when visibility restrictions make it illegal to fly in controlled, but not uncontrolled, airspace. Pilots were mollified "once 'special VFR' was explained to everybody, how that could be received," Bryant said.

Pilots with old 360-channel coms have adapted in various ways.

"Some upgraded to 720 (channel receivers); others purchased handhelds," Bryant said. And some have tried to contact the tower using their old 360-channel coms.

"One of the frequencies assigned to Baltimore Control is 119.4 We've had incidents of pilots with 360 radios dialing in, hoping they would bleed over (to our .425 frequency) and calling Baltimore Tower."

The tower frequencies were not the first on the field to require a 720-channel receiver. The airport has an ASOS (Automated Surface Observation System), which also uses a frequency from the 720-channel band. Though still uncommissioned, the system has been in place for four years.

"The ASOS does an excellent job of monitoring weather at the location of the ASOS," Bryant said, when asked about the system's performance. "If there are beginnings of low-lying ground fog at the ASOS, the ASOS will report fog around the airport. We've experienced that, but in situations like that, controllers can override the ASOS."



USCTA AGREES ON LIST OF MINIMUM TOWER EQUIPMENT

USCTA recently wrote to Willie Card, manager of FAA's Contract Tower Program, to state that FAA's advisory circular on minimum equipment standards for contract towers is adequate.

USCTA noted, however, that, "Some airports may add more equipment based on their own unique circumstances, but USCTA believes the current advisory circular is an appropriate list of minimum equipment that should be required for contract towers."

Minimum Equipment List For ATC Services For Contract Towers. (This list is taken directly from Advisory Circular-90-93.)

1. Operable two-way radio equipment with a backup power source, consisting of a minimum of one transmitter and receiver for each frequency published.
2. One operable backup two-way multi-channel transmitter and receiver with a reliable backup power source.
3. Wind indicator system certified by either the FAA or the National Weather Service (NWS).
4. At least two aneroid altimeter setting indicators (ASI) or one ASI and a mercurial barometer.
Note—a digital ASI (DASI) system is considered as one aneroid ASI.
5. Visibility charts, prepared and maintained by the ATM, in conjunction with the NWS, where an ATCT takes weather observations.
6. A voice recorder system that, during the period the ATCT is in operation, continually records the synchronized time with the recording of each radio frequency and interphone line used for receiving/transmitting ATC clearances, or instructions.
7. A minimum of one signal light gun, with a reliable back-up power source.
8. Accurate facility drawings of the wiring and layout of the equipment.
9. Two sets of 7 x 50 power binoculars.
10. An airfield lighting control panel, if applicable.
11. A telephone/interphone system to communicate with the parent Approach Control Facility/Air Route Traffic Control Center.

USCTA DISPUTES CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

(The following letter from J. Spencer Dickerson, USCTA executive director and AAAE executive vice president, was sent to The Pacific Flyer in response to a Letter to the Editor that was critical of the FAA Contract Tower Program from Chris Meyer, an FAA air traffic controller in Arizona, that was printed in the publication's September issue.)

To The Editor:

I am responding to the Letter to the Editor from

Chris Meyer, an FAA air traffic controller in Arizona, that was printed in your September issue.

Mr. Meyer makes four points in support of his opposition to the FAA's Contract Tower Program (CTP), which currently includes 186 towers.

Mr. Meyer's Point Number One: Congress is "getting a lot of their information from the special interest lobby, which stands to benefit by the CTP."

Fact: Members of Congress point to a comprehensive audit conducted by the Department of Transportation's Inspector General (IG) in 1998 that found the contract tower program provides comparable service to FAA-operated towers and is an important contribu-

tor to safety. The IG reviewed aviation safety data at 84 contract towers and concluded that there was little difference in the number of incidents in towers operated by contract or FAA controllers.

Mr. Meyer's Point Number Two: "If we contract out a tower, what we are doing is throwing away money to a contractor's profit that could otherwise go toward staffing, wages, equipment, etc."

Fact: The reason there is bipartisan support in Congress for the Contract Tower Program is that it saves money, approximately \$30 million annually, without degrading the safety of the flying public. This also was verified by DOT's Inspector General.

Mr. Meyer's Point Number Three: The profit motive of the contract tower operator results in controllers that are understaffed and underpaid.

Fact: The Department of Labor establishes the wage rate the controllers are paid, and I'd be willing to bet that most people would believe the wages are anything but unfair. If, in fact, the wages offered could not support a controller, there would be a shortage of controllers and the wages offered would have to increase. It is called a free market system and it seems to work pretty well in both the private and public sectors. Further, the contract tower operators are

held to the same standards and comply with the same safety regulations as FAA facilities, with continuous FAA oversight.

Mr. Meyer's Point Number Four: Air traffic control operations are inherently governmental services that cannot afford to be degraded.

Fact: Airports, fixed base operators, air carriers, regional airlines and pilots express very high satisfaction with the quality of contract tower services, many saying the level of service is higher than at FAA facilities. Moreover, in the contract tower program, the FAA contracts out controller services, not the tower or equipment. At airports where someone other than the FAA owns the tower and equipment, the FAA has established tower construction and equipment standards. The simple fact is that, under the contract tower program, the only thing that has changed is who is employing the controllers. The National Business Aviation Association, Air Traffic Control Association, National Air Transportation Association, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, Regional Airline Association, Cargo Airline Association, Air Transport Association and National Association of State Aviation Officials all support the contract tower program. Contract tower controllers are as committed to the safety of the flying public as are the controllers on the FAA's payroll.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
AIRPORT EXECUTIVES
4212 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302



First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1034
Alexandria, VA