

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES

Volume 2, Number 2

March-April 1998

USCTA/FAA DEBATE KEY ISSUES IN CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM



Members of USCTA's Policy Board held a high level summit with FAA officials, including Administrator Jane Garvey (*seen in photo at left*), on March 2-3 to discuss aspects of the contract tower program's structure and to develop a consensus on actions that

should be taken to clarify and improve the program.

USCTA members who participated in the summit with FAA representatives from the offices of air traffic

and policy were: Tim Rogers, A.A.E., (Salina, Kan.); Ted Soliday (Naples, Fla.); James Hansford, A.A.E., (Central Wisconsin); Jack Schelter, A.A.E., (Phoenix); Glenn Januska (Waukesha, Wis.); Roger Engstrom, A.A.E., (Mobile, Ala.); Ron Craft (Jefferson City, Mo.); Shane Cordes, (Midwest Air Traffic Control); Richard Baird (Hailey, Idaho); Bryan Elliott (Charlottesville, Va.); Steve Stockam (Joplin, Mo.), and USCTA Executive Director Spencer Dickerson. Several congressional staff members also attended the sessions.

Discussion topics and the recommendations developed for each subject included:

TOPIC: Fair treatment of Part 121/135 operations in the benefit/cost (B/C) formula. Part 121 (fewer than 60 seats) commuter operations should be counted as an air carrier, according to AAAE/USCTA. Commercial aircraft with fewer than 10 seats would be counted as an air taxi. From the AAAE/USCTA perspective, FAA is not consistent with its "one level of safety" for 121/135 operations with 10 or more passenger seats.

The group recommended that for the long term, FAA Order 7210.3, Chapter 14 and appendix 3 should be modified to allow Part 121 commuters to be counted as air carriers. It was also recommended that an interim process be established. FAA's Office of Aviation Policy
(continued on following page)

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 profes-
sional 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 information about special safety or security programs you can share, 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.



USCTA members engaged in dialogue with FAA officials during contract tower summit.

and Plans was assigned the responsibility of adjusting the formula for site-specific verified information.

TOPIC: Using based aircraft to estimate damaged aircraft costs does not always reflect the type aircraft conducting operations at an airport. B/C weights should be assigned in reference to general aviation itinerant operations. The group recommended that an FAA/AAAE/USCTA working group be established to study the ability of airports to report site-specific itinerant operations by aircraft type and FAA's ability to validate the information.

TOPIC: Elements of inconsistency in the B/C ratio from airport to airport (if any) should be defined since the assumptions used in the B/C model have not been widely known. Recommendations called for FAA's Office of Aviation Policy and Plans to find ways to provide the new Windows-based B/C program to airport sponsors, to annually provide a breakdown of the data and assumptions used in the terminal area forecast and the B/C analysis, to obtain input and attempt to reach agreement with airport sponsors on the traffic activity that will be used to compute their B/C prior to funding withdrawal, and to provide a timeline of yearly activities for establishment and discontinuance of towers to AAAE/USCTA.

USCTA ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The first annual report of the U.S. Contract Tower Association is now available. Call (703) 824-0504 for a copy, or visit the USCTA home page on the Internet at <http://www.airportnet.org/cta/>



In a wide-ranging discussion with USCTA members, Administrator Garvey answered questions about FAA policies.

TOPIC: Identify ways that airports can assume Airway Facility costs. AAAE/USCTA agreed to submit a recommendation on this issue by May 1.

TOPIC: The process and time frame for submitting appropriate site-specific data should be determined. While more information concerning B/C is being shared today as opposed to prior years, there is still a great need to provide more information to the airport sponsors at contract towers and potential contract tower locations. The group recommended that airport sponsors should be advised of the three B/C ratios, with supporting data for those sites that have been notified that their tower funding may or will be withdrawn. Further, FAA will have a teleconference with all sites that are notified of the potential withdrawal of funding immediately following their initial notification. Airport sponsors should receive 120 days notice after a final decision is made to withdraw funding and public notification is made. Finally, AAAE/USCTA will submit a recommendation by May 1 on cost-effective alternatives for FAA traffic surveys at airports that have received funding termination notices.

TOPIC: Cost-sharing pilot program for airports with B/C ratios less than 1.0. The group was unable to make a recommendation on this subject. AAAE/USCTA, however, supports a proposal allowing non-qualifying airports interested in paying a portion of the costs associated with the contract tower program to do so. FAA would pay the qualifying percentage of the costs and the sponsor would fund the remainder.

The group also discussed the follow-on federal contract tower program contract currently being planned by FAA. Airport executives agreed that the



Administrator Garvey talks with industry officials during a break in the contract tower summit.



Summit discussion topics included ways to clarify and improve the contract tower program.

level of customer service provided by the contract controllers is excellent and concluded that the program is a great success since it provides cost-effective air traffic services and safety enhancements at smaller airports. Further, the airport sponsors requested a "hold harmless agreement" with the contractors and to be named as additionally insured on the contractor's liability insurance. The airport officials noted that the \$1 million liability insurance requirement per airport is insufficient and suggested that contractors could be allowed to provide an insurance pool to cover their various locations. To permit more operating flexibility, the airports said they need to have the ability to add tower hours for their purposes, adding that they would fund these additional hours in which the tower would be operating in a non-federal capacity.

AAAE/USCTA recommended to FAA that the cur-

rent national contract for towers be extended beyond Oct. 1, 1998, to ensure that issues raised at the summit about the current contract are resolved before a new national contract is drafted.

Just prior to the summit, the USCTA Policy Board held a meeting in which members reviewed Washington issues, discussed the letter writing campaign to members of Congress, and were briefed on the FAA report on incident data at towered and non-towered airports (*see related story*) and DOT's Inspector General's report on the contract tower program, among other subjects.

COURT RULING THREATENS CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

The U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA) and *(continued on page 5)*

REMAINING LEVEL I TOWERS TO BE CONTRACTED IN FISCAL 1998

Following is the list of the remaining Level I towers scheduled to be contracted out by FAA in Fiscal 1998. A total of 182 towers will be in the contract program by the end of fiscal 1998. The schedule for these facilities may be impacted by the recent court case.

STATE	FACILITY(Location)	FAAREGION
Alaska	Kenai Municipal	Alaskan
California	Chico Municipal	Western Pacific
California	Redding Municipal	Western Pacific
California	SanDiego Brown Field	Western Pacific
Colorado	Grand Junction	Northwest Mountain
Connecticut	Danbury Municipal	New England
Florida	Opa Locka	Southern
Florida	Melbourne	Southern
Georgia	Macon	Southern
Hawaii	Keahole-Kona	Western Pacific
Illinois	Bloomington/Normal	Great Lakes
Montana	Missoula	Northwest Mountain

STATE	FACILITY(Location)	FAAREGION
New Hampshire	Lebanon Municipal	New England
New Jersey	Trenton	Eastern
North Carolina	Smith Reynolds (Winston Salem)	Southern
Oklahoma	Lawton Municipal	Southwest
Oregon	Medford	Northwest Mountain
Pennsylvania	Capital City	Eastern
Pennsylvania	Lancaster	Eastern
Texas	Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen)	Southwest
Washington	Felts Field	Northwest Mountain
Washington	Renton	Northwest Mountain

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

AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Bethel	AAL	AK	Lacrosse	AGL	WI
King Salmon	AAL	AK	Rock County	AGL	WI
Kodiak	AAL	AK	Timmerman (Milwaukee)	AGL	WI
Dubuque Iowa	ACE	IA	Wittman Regional	AGL	WI
Forbes Field	ACE	KS	Bridgeport	ANE	CT
Hutchinson Mun.	ACE	KS	Groton-New London	ANE	CT
Johnson Co. Exec.	ACE	KS	Hartford-Brainard	ANE	CT
Philip Billard Mun.	ACE	KS	Tweed-New Haven	ANE	CT
Salina Municipal	ACE	KS	Barnes Municipal	ANE	MA
Columbia	ACE	MO	Beverly	ANE	MA
Joplin Regional	ACE	MO	Hyannis	ANE	MA
Rosecrans Mem'l/St. Joseph	ACE	MO	Lawrence	ANE	MA
Central Neb./Grand Island	ACE	NE	Martha's Vineyard	ANE	MA
Martin State	AEA	MD	New Bedford	ANE	MA
Washington Co. Reg'l/Hagerstown	AEA	MD	Norwood	ANE	MA
Ithaca	AEA	NY	Worcester	ANE	MA
Niagara Falls	AEA	NY	Boire Field/Nashua	ANE	NH
Oneida County	AEA	NY	Eagle County	ANM	CO
Stewart	AEA	NY	Friedman Memorial	ANM	ID
Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	AEA	PA	Idaho Falls	ANM	ID
Charlottesville-Albemarle	AEA	VA	Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ANM	ID
Lynchburg	AEA	VA	Pocatello Municipal	ANM	ID
Greenbrier Valley	AEA	WV	Klamath Falls	ANM	OR
Morgantown	AEA	WV	McNary Field	ANM	OR
Parkersburg	AEA	WV	Pendleton Municipal	ANM	OR
Wheeling Ohio Co.	AEA	WV	Redmond	ANM	OR
Decatur	AGL	IL	Troutdale (Portland)	ANM	OR
Meigs Field (Chicago)	AGL	IL	Ogden-Hinckley Mun.	ANM	UT
St. Louis Regional	AGL	IL	Bellingham Int'l	ANM	WA
So. Illinois/Carbondale	AGL	IL	Olympia	ANM	WA
Waukegan Regional	AGL	IL	Tacoma Narrows	ANM	WA
Williamson County	AGL	IL	Walla Walla Regional	ANM	WA
Gary Regional	AGL	IN	Yakima	ANM	WA
Battle Creek	AGL	MI	Cheyenne	ANM	WY
Detroit City	AGL	MI	Dothan	ASO	AL
Jackson	AGL	MI	Brookley (Mobile)	ASO	AL
Anoka (Minneapolis)	AGL	MN	Tuscaloosa Municipal	ASO	AL
Minot	AGL	ND	Athens Municipal	ASO	GA
Burke Lakefront	AGL	OH	Fulton County	ASO	GA
Ohio State University	AGL	OH	Gwinnett County	ASO	GA
Cincinnati Mun./Lunken	AGL	OH	McCullum	ASO	GA
Cuyahoga County	AGL	OH	SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	ASO	GA
Rapid City Regional	AGL	SD	Valdosta Municipal	ASO	GA
Appleton	AGL	WI	Albert Whitted	ASO	FL
Central Wisconsin	AGL	WI	Gainesville	ASO	FL
Kenosha Municipal	AGL	WI	Hollywood	ASO	FL

AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Jacksonville/Craig	ASO	FL
Key West	ASO	FL
Kissimmee	ASO	FL
Lakeland Municipal	ASO	FL
Naples	ASO	FL
Page Field	ASO	FL
Panama City/Bay Co.	ASO	FL
Pompano Beach	ASO	FL
Stuart/Whitham	ASO	FL
Titusville/Cocoa	ASO	FL
Barkley Regional	ASO	KY
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	ASO	KY
Greenville Municipal	ASO	MS
Hawkins Field	ASO	MS
Meridian/Key Field	ASO	MS
Kingston	ASO	NC
Isla Grande	ASO	Puerto Rico
Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	ASO	SC
Greenville Downtown	ASO	SC
Smyrna	ASO	TN
Alexander Hamilton (St. Croix)	ASO	Virgin Islands
Fayetteville	ASW	AR
Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	ASW	AR
Riverside	ASW	CA
Acadiana Regional	ASW	LA
Esler Regional Reg'l	ASW	LA
Houma	ASW	LA
Farmington Municipal	ASW	NM
Lea County/Hobbs	ASW	NM
Santa Fe Co. Mun.	ASW	NM
Ardmore Municipal	ASW	OK
Enid Woodring Mun.	ASW	OK
Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	ASW	OK

AIRPORTNAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Wiley Post	ASW	OK
Brownsville Int'l	ASW	TX
Easterwood	ASW	TX
Grand Prairie	ASW	TX
Laredo International	ASW	TX
McAllen	ASW	TX
Mesquite	ASW	TX
Redbird	ASW	TX
San Angelo	ASW	TX
Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	ASW	TX
Tyler	ASW	TX
Chandler	AWP	AZ
Flagstaff Pulliam	AWP	AZ
Glendale	AWP	AZ
Goodyear (Phoenix)	AWP	AZ
Mesa/Williams Gateway	AWP	AZ
Ryan	AWP	AZ
Fullerton	AWP	CA
Hawthorne	AWP	CA
Modesto	AWP	CA
Lake Tahoe	AWP	CA
Oxnard	AWP	CA
Palmdale	AWP	CA
Sacramento Executive	AWP	CA
Salinas Municipal	AWP	CA
San Carlos	AWP	CA
San Louis Obispo	AWP	CA
Santa Maria	AWP	CA
Whiteman	AWP	CA
William J. Fox	AWP	CA
Agana	AWP	Guam
Lihue	AWP	HI
Molokai	AWP	HI
Elko	AWP	NV

AAAE expressed disappointment over a court ruling that threatens the viability of FAA's contract tower program.

U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aldrich ruled in a lawsuit brought by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association that FAA did not comply with Office of Management and Budget regulations that require federal agencies to first determine whether services should be performed in-house by federal employees before contracting them out to private parties. Aldrich remanded the case to FAA for further proceedings.

Spencer Dickerson, AAAE executive vice president and executive director of the USCTA, stated that FAA's contract tower program "has a proven 16-year record of absolute safety and cost effectiveness and has received nothing but positive reaction from a

broad cross-section of the aviation industry." Noting that FAA has contracted out ATC services at 160 smaller airports, Dickerson said the primary advantage of the program "is enhanced safety through the provision of ATC services at airports that might have otherwise lost their towers." Every controller working in a contract tower, Dickerson noted, has been certified by FAA and is subject to the same training requirements and oversight as FAA controllers.

Dickerson said AAAE and the USCTA will work with FAA to address the points raised in the court's decision "to ensure that the safety benefits of this program for the flying public continue."

John Rogers, director of FAA aviation policy and plans, told delegates at the agency's annual forecast

(continued on page 7)

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conference recently that he is "fairly confident" the agency will resolve the court case and be able to continue using private vendors to provide ATC services at designated towers.

The National Air Transportation Association (NATA), which represents aviation businesses, also expressed disappointment over the court ruling, saying it threatens to undue the significant progress that has been made since the beginning of the program. "IF the court's ruling is allowed to stand, the big loser will be small American airports that will no longer benefit from the enhanced safety only a control tower can provide," NATA said in a statement. Officials from the Air Transport Association and Regional Airline Association also expressed support for the value and effectiveness of the program.

The following dialogue on the future of the contract tower program occurred during the March 18 House aviation subcommittee's hearing on the recommendations of the National Civil Aviation Review Commission. Rep. Edward Pease (R-Ind.), in a question and answer session with FAA Administrator Jane Garvey, noted that, "A number of members in Congress who have small airports in their district believe we benefit from the FAA contract tower program. I understand that there is some litigation on this program." He asked, "Where is FAA going on this program?"

Garvey responded that, "We believe it is a program that has worked well. We had a summit a couple of weeks ago with airports that have contract towers and it was a very positive, good discussion. There are a lot of issues where we agree with the National Association of Air Traffic Controllers and controllers but on this one we have a differing point of view. We have looked at the court's judgment and will go back for further clarification. There is enough ambiguity in what we have seen that it is the opinion not only of the FAA but DOT and Justice that we need to ask for more clarification."

USCTA REVIEWS STUDY COMPARING AIRPORT SAFETY RECORDS

USCTA has responded to an FAA study that compared the safety record of towered and non-towered airports that receive commercial air service. In that study, FAA found no evidence that current recommended practices, procedures and services to prevent aircraft collisions at non-towered airports are systematically inadequate.

During the five-year period 1991-1995, there were only two fatal runway collisions involving commercial operations and both of those occurred at airports

with operating towers, the agency said.

In its detailed review of the study, USCTA concluded:

- The scope of the study was limited to accidents involving at least one Part 121 or scheduled Part 135 operation, making it a narrowly focused review.
- The more appropriate question is how to improve aviation safety, not simply to determine whether or not there is an apparent difference in accident/incident rates at towered versus non-towered airports. It has been a long-standing principle that air traffic control towers are a clear aviation safety enhancement.
- The data used raises questions about the quality of the comparison. It is apparent that obtaining more reliable activity data would be beneficial.
- The study indicates that nearly 30 percent of accidents covered by the review occurred at non-towered airports, an indication that this appears to offer an opportunity for a safety improvement. USCTA strongly encouraged FAA to undertake a more in-depth review of the accident data at non-towered airports.
- The number of incidents at non-towered airports continues to increase, again reinforcing the need for overall safety improvement through the benefits of the contract tower program. The study also notes that of the 746 airports receiving scheduled commercial service, 58 percent of these facilities have no air traffic control tower. Further, the study data indicates that among the nearly 5,400 public use airports, only 639 or 12 percent have towers.

USCTA concluded that, "Keeping in focus national aviation safety goals and AAAE/USCTA objectives seeking cost-effective airport and air traffic control system safety and efficiency improvements, this study provides considerable data illustrating the importance of finding meaningful new benefits through the FAA Contract Tower Program."

AIRPORTS URGED TO SUPPORT CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM IN LETTERS TO CONGRESS

Airports concerned about the growth of FAA's con-

(continued on following page)

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

tract tower program are urged to send letters to their individual members of Congress urging them to support the program as part of the DOT/FAA appropriations legislation now under consideration.

Due to increasing competition in the federal budget, it is sometimes easy for programs that don't have a great deal of vocal backing from their supporters to end up losing funds to more popular programs. With the limited airport grants that are available to smaller airports, it is vital that airports that now benefit—or hope to benefit—from the contract tower program make known to their senators and congressmen the economic and social value impact this program has in their home states and districts.

Members of Congress pay very close attention to letters from their constituents, especially letters that make an economic case for the importance of a program. Your letter will count to ensure that the contract tower program continues as a vital part of the U.S. aviation system.

Your letters should underscore the following points:

- It is imperative that Congress fully fund and expand the contract tower program as requested in President Clinton's fiscal year 1999 budget request. Specifically ask your senators and congressman to communicate the importance of the program to your community to leaders on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. If your House member is a Republican, ask him or her to contact Rep. Bob Livingston, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Frank Wolf, chairman of the House transportation appropriations subcommittee. If your House member is a Democrat, ask him or her to contact Rep. David Obey, ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Martin Sabo, ranking Democrat on the House transportation appropriations subcommittee.

If your senators are Republicans, ask them to contact Sen. Ted Stevens, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Sen. Richard Shelby, chairman of the Senate transportation appropriations subcommittee. If your senators are Democrats, ask them to contact Sen. Robert Byrd, ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Sen. Frank Lautenberg, ranking member of the Senate transportation appropriations subcommittee.

- Emphasize that the contract tower program enhanc-

es safety, provides significant savings to the agency and increases productivity at airports nationwide.

- Stress that the contract tower program plays a key role in the enhancement of regional airline service and the overall economic development of small communities across the country. Cite examples of ways the program specifically benefits your community.

Send copies of your letters to Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater at 400 7th St., S.W., Washington, DC 20590, and to FAA Administrator Jane Garvey at 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20591. Also, please send copies to Spencer Dickerson at AAEE.

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS URGED TO SUPPORT FUNDING FOR CONTRACT TOWERS

In letters to the chairmen of House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over DOT/FAA appropriations, the U.S. Contract Tower Association has urged the panels to provide full funding for the contract tower program.

The program has benefitted from consistent bipartisan backing in Congress, USCTA pointed out, as well as solid support from participating airports and aviation users. USCTA pointed out that the average annual cost to operate a contract tower is \$271,000, while it costs an average of \$508,000 for an FAA-operated Level I tower. In fiscal year 1998 alone, the contract tower program saved FAA approximately \$30 million, USCTA said.

USCTA Executive Director Spencer Dickerson also wrote to several organizations that represent aviation, manufacturing and state government, urging them to write letters to key players on the appropriations committees in support of continued funding of the contract tower program in fiscal year 1999. Associations that were contacted were the Regional Airline Association, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, National Business Aviation Association, National

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>.

Association of State Aviation Officials, Air Transport Association, (CAA) and the National Air Transportation Association.

USCTA MEMBERSHIP REACHES

63 AIRPORTS, SIX COMPANIES, STATE OF ALASKA

A total of 63 airports, six companies and the state of Alaska are now members of the U.S. Contract Tower Association.

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 (Joplin, Mo.), Steve Brian (Kinston, N.C.), 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 of Baker, Donelson; 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, Texarkana Regional Airport (Ark.), 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, Bradley International Airport (Conn.), 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, Meigs Field (Ill.), Columbus (Ind.) Municipal Airport, Waukegan Regional Airport (Ill.), St. Louis Regional Airport (Ill.), Williamson County Regional Airport (Ill.), Salina Municipal Airport (Kan.), Johnson County Executive Airport (Kan.), Manhattan (Kan.) Regional Airport, Bowling Green (Ky.), Barkley Regional Airport (Ky.), Houma-Terrebonne (La.) Airport Commission, Martin State Airport (Md.), Westfield

(continued on following page)

MEMBER VIEWPOINT

By Shane Cordes

Director-Marketing/Contracts

Midwest Air Traffic Control Services Inc.

The practice of contracting services for VFR control towers is not a new concept. Contract towers have been in existence since the 1960s and have been funded by a variety of sources, not just federal. Over the years, contract ATC facilities have proven themselves to be very safe, efficient and cost-effective.

Moreover, there is no dispute that contract air traffic control towers have received steady accolades over the years as the flying community repeatedly expresses appreciation for the level of service provided by the many contract air traffic controllers nationwide.

But another often unnoticed example of the benefits of this program is the operating flexibility that the ATC companies bring to the contract tower airports. For example, at Joplin (Mo.) Regional Airport, Midwest ATC agreed that its air traffic staff would assume responsibility for weather reporting services during the hours that the tower is open. This meant FAA went from a 24-hour contract for weather reporting

services to an 8-hour contract at an estimated annual savings of between \$80,000-\$100,000. This assumption of responsibility by Midwest ATC may also prove to be a benefit to Joplin Regional Airport in that this savings could be recognized as a "value added credit" when determining the airport's benefit/cost (B/C) ratio.

Companies such as Midwest ATC feel a responsibility and dedication not just to their employees but also to the airports they serve. If operating costs for a tower continually increase, the airport's B/C may subsequently drop, creating a potential situation where FAA withdraws funding for the service. This would impact both safety at the airport and the employment of these contract workers. Contract ATC companies in their negotiations with FAA and airports must continually evaluate the financial impact of their agreements, recognizing their dual responsibilities to FAA and the airports and to their own employees.

In future issues of the USCTA newsletter, we intend to share other airport-specific examples of situations in which the contract tower program offers added benefits to airports and to the national airspace system.

**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
AIRPORT EXECUTIVES**

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March-April 1998

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barnes Airport (Mass.), Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.), Jefferson City Memorial Airport (Mo.), Cape Girardeau Regional (Mo.), Gallatin Field (Mont.); Henderson (Nev.) Executive Airport, Kinston Regional Jetport (N.C.), Hickory Regional Airport (N.C.), 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 County Airport (W.Va.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, LaCrosse (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, Walker Air Traffic 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.

**JUVENILE RECEIVES PROBATION
IN AIRPORT HACKING INCIDENT**

A Massachusetts teenager who tapped into and then crippled telephone system computers that routed signals from the control tower of the Worcester, Mass., airport to a radio tower that communicates with aircraft has pleaded guilty to criminal charges, the first juvenile to be prosecuted under federal antihacking laws. The incident, which forced air traffic controllers on March 10, 1997, to use a radio backup system to land planes, caused delays, but could have been more serious if it had occurred at night or in bad weather, prosecutors said.