



Watsonville Pilots Association

"Serving Aviation and the Community"



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Our 22nd Year, Issue 9 September 2009

Watsonville Pilot Association Meeting August 26, 2009

Meeting Notes

Rayvon Williams opened the meeting at 7:05. Treasurer Sarah Chauvet reported that there are no outstanding bills and that the accounts are in balance. Dan Chauvet reported that the WPA Board of Directors, Mike McIntyre, Pres.; John Cowan, Vice-Pres.; Charlene McIntyre, Sec'y.; Sarah Chauvet, Treas.; Hal Zamora, Sec'y. for Legal Affairs; and Dan Chauvet, Asst. Sec'y for Legal Affairs met on Monday August 17, 2009. Items on their agenda included: SB 737, Watsonville Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, new officers and the newsletter.

A number of announcements were made at this month's meeting:

In the near future, John Cowan will conduct an informal survey to find out how much the newsletter is read and the members opinion of it.

There is no new information to report regarding the WPA lawsuit; the final Appeals Court opinion is expected in early 2010.

The Watsonville Regional Airport Promotion PAC will hold its annual dinner Nov. 7, 2009. See page 3 for more details.

The Watsonville Airport Open House has been rescheduled for October 17, the 20th anniversary of the Loma Prieta Earthquake.

The business meeting was closed at 7:20.

Rayvon Williams then explained Wings Program changes and introduced the speakers for the evening. For the 4th year in a row, Jim Babcock, Air Traffic Manager, Monterey Airport, brought his expertise and humor to the safety meeting. He was joined by David Green, Salinas Airport Tower Manager. Together they answered 25 written questions compiled by Rayvon Williams during the July WPA meeting and garnered from his flight students. There was standing room only for the presentation, with nearly sixty people present. One of the liveliest discussions concerned light signals and lost communication procedures.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

The September meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, the 30th. The safety program presentation will be on Emergency Landings.

LOCAL AIRPORTS – STAGING AREAS FOR FIRE FIGHTING AIRCRAFT

Watsonville Airport was the staging area for fire fighting helicopters combating the recent Lockheed Fire north of Santa Cruz. At least six large helicopters were at the airport, including Sikorsky Sky Cranes. In 2008 the airport was the staging area during the Martin Fire north of Santa Cruz and Trabing Fire just west of Watsonville Airport. Last year's fires burned many homes and other buildings to the ground.

Without Watsonville Airport no doubt many more structures would have burned. During the Trabing Fire, along Larkin Valley Road the fire rapidly approached a home and a big helicopter arrived and doused the flames, saving the house.

A staging area is where refueling, maintenance, and planning take place. That can include large tanker trucks for reloading water, plus a resting area for pilots. Watsonville Airport provided jet fuel, including single-point fueling, for the turbine powered aircraft.

Needless to say, the advantage of having an airport with support facilities in close proximity to a fire allows more drops of water or fire retardant per unit time, greatly enhancing fire suppression. How much money was saved by aerial containment efforts, keeping the fire smaller? Flying time (dollars per hour) is reduced by using local airports. So far, the Lockheed Fire has cost 26.5 million dollars. That's why airports like Watsonville are so essential during emergencies.

Aircraft Critical to Suppression Success

As a lead plane pilot for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service on numerous fires up in Idaho, I have seen first hand what suppression aircraft can accomplish. The coordinator with me was experienced in fire behavior and suppression. Our function was fire observation and coordination of fire fighting activities. We were the continuous eye in the sky. Aerial observation can provide early safety warnings to ground crews when retreat is prudent.

We communicated with approaching retardant bombers to provided drop instructions. In addition, we acted as a "lead plane" making low passes over the drop area. The following bombers usually were told "right here" as we made a low pass. Often the low pass was not needed as the bomber pilots could see for themselves where the drop was needed. Safety in air operations is highest priority. Drops need to be made flying level or downhill. Avoidance of smoke columns is mandatory. In making a shortcut from one side of a large fire to the other we flew through an updraft smoke column. At 2000 feet above the fire a burning sagebrush (*Artemisa tridentata*) went up in front of the nose —no more shortcuts through smoke columns.

Drops were usually coordinated with the Fire Boss or ground crews. Most water and fire retardant drops are along fire breaks constructed by ground crews. Drops allow ground crews to hold their containment lines.

Sometimes one aircraft can stop a fire in its tracks. We found a fire started by lightning, perhaps 15 miles from the closest road. We called for a retardant aircraft. A Boeing B-17 bomber (with four tanks) showed up. "I'll take care of it." The B-17 made drops on four sides. From the air the reddish pink retardant looked like tic-tac-toe, with the fire in the middle. The next day we flew to the remote location to check on the fire. It was out, the burn area square shaped, contained by retardant. No need for ground crews and equipment, a huge savings.

Fire suppression aircraft save millions of dollars by reducing fire size and saving homes. It can't happen without airports. Local airports like Santa Rosa and Hollister provide bases; and other airports like Watsonville are staging areas close to a fire.

Dan Chauvet

Watsonville Regional Airport Promotion—9th Annual PAC Dinner November 7, 2009

President of the California Pilots Association, Ed Rosiak, has agreed to be the feature speaker at this year's annual WRAP dinner, Saturday November 7th at 6:00 pm at the Green Valley Grill, upstairs in the banquet room. President Rosiak will be addressing what's going on now with CA airports. Does that include Watsonville Airport? Oh, yes.

Prior to his presentation Kathy Lynch, a lobbyist working for aviation interests, will discuss some legislation "from the 30,000 foot level" and then come down for some lower altitude particulars. You will hear a unique perspective of state goings on. Arrive at 6:00 pm and you can visit with Ed and Kathy. Q&A? Of course.

Dinner will be served at 7:00 pm. Fare is Tri-Tip of Beef, Grilled Chicken Breast, and Wood Grilled Alaskan Halibut. Select one, two, or three. Put November 7th on your calendar.

The purpose of the WRAP dinner is twofold. #1 is to have an interesting, informative program. #2 is to raise funds for the PAC. WRAP supports local candidates for public office that will support, protect and keep Watsonville Airport safe.

Yes, it's kind of a dress up affair, with men wearing a sport coat and tie, and women wearing the usual, anything they want. Dinner is \$50.00 per each. There are no tickets, just an attend list.

If you are not already on the attend list, get on it by calling

Chairman Dan Chauvet at 831-724-8256 or the CFO, Hal Zamora 687-0719.

Or better yet, send a check made out to "WRAP" to: 147 Mesa Verde Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076-0949.

We need to know projected attendance ahead of time, by at least seven days. Thanks for supporting KWVI.

Dan Chauvet, WRAP Chairman

Grant Wrathall, Vice Chairman

Hal Zamora, CFO/Treasurer

WATSONVILLE AIRPORT 16th ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED

Due to scheduling difficulties, Watsonville Airport's 16th Annual Open House has been rescheduled to Saturday, October 17, 2009 which is the 20th anniversary of the Loma Prieta Earthquake.

There will be Dime-A-Pound Airplane rides, display aircraft, and emergency services providers Sponsored by Watsonville Airport, Monterey Bay 99s, EAA #119 and WPA

Coming Events 2009

September 16-20 Reno Air Races
September 30 WPA Meeting
Safety Meeting: Emergency Landings
Oct 3 Young Eagles
Oct 6 EAA 119 Meeting
Oct. 17 WVI Open House
October 28 WPA Meeting
Saftey Meeting: Ramp Check

NO WPA MEETINGS
November and December

WPA Officers

Mike McIntyre	President
John Cowan	Vice-Pres
Charlene McIntyre	Secretary
Sarah Chauvet	Treasurer
Hal Zamora	Sec. Legal Affairs
Dan Chauvet	Assist. Sec Leg. Aff.

Committee Heads

Dan Chauvet	WAAG
Richard Lippi	Web Site
Randy Pesce	Field Security
Rayvon Williams	AOPA/WINGS
John Cowan	Public Relations
Brian Moffet	Video & Media
Airport Manager	Don French
Feedback	wpanews@yahoo.com

WPA Airport Legal Fund

Please help WVI with your Tax deductible Contribution
Write check to "WPA" or Watsonville Pilots Association. On the memo line note "legal fund"
Mail to:
PO Box 2074, Freedom, CA 95019
Thank you for your support

WPA
PO Box 2074
Freedom, CA

NEXT MEETING

7:00PM Wednesday Sept 30, 2009
At EAA-WAEC Building
60 Aviation Way, Watsonville Airport

SAFETY SEMINAR 7:30
Emergency Landings