



### County Grand Jury criticizes Watsonville Airport decision

**Watsonville** — Count the county grand jury among those critical of a controversial decision related to Watsonville Municipal Airport's secondary runway. In its 2005-06 Final Report, scheduled for release today, the jury recommends establishing an independent countywide commission to ensure airport viability and safety as the city plans for new housing.

The grand jury report is bound to be used as ammunition in an ongoing dispute over development in the Buena Vista Road area. Jury foreperson Maxine McNamara acknowledged the topic was a hot-button issue, but said the uniqueness of the city-owned airport sparked the inquiry. As the county's only airport, it plays vital role in the economy and could be critical for emergency response in a disaster.

"We were concerned about safety and what would happen if the airport closed," McNamara said. "The airport is really a countywide resource rather than just a city resource. ... A land use commission would represent the whole county rather than just one part of it." Airport land use commissions are common elsewhere in California. But in Santa Cruz County, the Watsonville City Council fulfills the role. Its rulings haven't always been popular.

Most recently the council's decision to change the designation of the airport's secondary runway to low activity raised the ire of airport friends and development foes. The change eliminates some required safety zones on the ground, clearing the way for the potential construction of hundreds of homes near Buena Vista Road.

Pilots say the change will make flying more hazardous for them and for people on the ground because the existing open space allows for emergency landings.

Citing two studies that contradict take off and landing figures the city used to support the designation change, the Grand Jury found the decision was made "without adequate documentation to support the critical change."

Earlier this year, Mary Frederick, acting chief of the state Division of Aeronautics, also criticized the runway decision, citing safety and noise concerns. She said she'd push for the formation of a commission if the city didn't heed her words.

Dan Chauvet, a pilot and staunch airport advocate, said for the city to act as airport land use commission is a conflict of interest since its focus is on development. He favors an independent land use commission, which he said would be more knowledgeable and focused on airport planning. But Chauvet said a commission is subject to politics.

"In a lot of places, a commission is a good thing. In some places it's corrupt," Chauvet said. "It's not a panacea."

City Manager Carlos Palacios hadn't seen the Grand Jury's report, and said he wanted to review it before commenting. But he took issue with the suggestion of conflict of interest.

"The airport is owned by the city of Watsonville," Palacios said. "It's almost entirely within the city of Watsonville boundaries. The City Council takes very seriously its charge to maintain the economic vitality of the airport and safety of residents around it. This is another voice in what's bound to be long ongoing debate."

The Grand Jury report will be available online at [www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury) and at libraries countywide.

*By Donna Jones -Sentinel Staff Writer-*

### Meigs Field Closing Costs Keep Rising

More than three years after Mayor Richard Daley ordered a late-night hit on Meigs Field, the cost of his venture continue to rise. Chicago has paid more than \$500,000 in legal fees to battle the Federal Aviation Administration over the March 2003 closing of the airport at Northerly Island, according to figures provided by the city.

The city is challenging a \$33,000 fine for shutting down Meigs without giving the FAA a required 30-day notice. Lawyers on the city's clock are preparing to fight the FAA on another front: The agency is investigating whether Chicago improperly used \$2.9 million in airport development funds to close Meigs. The FAA could fine the city up to \$8.7 million if it finds the funds were misused.

Bottom line: The mayor's surprise decision to bulldoze the airport's runway while most people were asleep already has cost the city millions of dollars, and the tab could top \$10 million.

The mayor told only a handful of people about his decision to close Meigs before sending a demolition crew to carve six giant X marks on the runway. Daley said he ordered the airport closed because terrorists could use it to launch a small plane attack on downtown. Few people bought that explanation.

The city eventually prevailed against lawsuits that sought to keep Meigs open. But the city's battles with the FAA have continued.

The FAA says the city violated its regulations by closing the airport without sufficient notice; the city counters that FAA

regulations say it can close an airport for security reasons. The city fears that if it concedes to the FAA on the notice issue, it will have a weaker case on the question of the use of airport funds. A fine in one case can be considered in other enforcement proceedings against the city. We don't know if the FAA or the city will prevail. We do know that the taxpayers' costs for the midnight raid on Meigs Field keep rising, thanks to a mayor's belief that he can do whatever he wants.

*-- CPA -- The Chicago (IL) Tribune--*

### Lockheed Martin Flight Service Web Site Now Live

Are you put on hold for several minutes when you call 800/WX-BRIEF? You shouldn't be. Are you getting detailed security and weather briefings when you call? You should be. That's part of Lockheed Martin's promise to pilots while it is modernizing the FSS system, which it took over from the FAA on October 4 last year. If those promises aren't being kept, you now have a way to report service difficulties to Lockheed Martin--through its new Web site (<http://www.afss.com>). The site provides pilots with a means to report any difficulties they experience with flight service, along with updates on the progress of the modernization, known as FS21, and information for flight planning.

*- AOPA -*

### Flying Below The RADAR

With the exception of California International Airshow spectators or those eating at the Landing Zone restaurant, the airport is a spot that can easily fly under the radar of anyone without a pilot's license. It might come as a surprise that the Salinas airport, according to a 2003 Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments study, annually generates an estimated \$42 million for the local economy.

"A lot of people think it's boys and their toys," said Lori Atkinson, a service manager for Cal Pacific Aeromotive, a business that restores World War II-era planes. "But there is a lot of commerce."

By comparison to Monterey Peninsula Airport and Watsonville Municipal Airport -- which generate \$575 million and \$662 million respectively -- Salinas Municipal might seem like small peas. But Salinas has its niche: Roughly 77 percent of the traffic coming into the airport are business trips, the largest percentage of business-related activity of any airport in the region, much of it related the area's agricultural industry. Ranging from helicopters which apply pesticides to fields to the personal jets and planes of some of the larger companies that fly executives to Yuma, Ariz., and the Imperial Valley, Salinas Municipal Airport plays a key role in local ag.

"It's vital to our existence," said Margaret D'Arrigo-Martin, executive vice president of sales and marketing for D'Arrigo Bros. Co. "It's a great way to be able to do business." D'Arrigo Bros., she said, has been flying out of the airport for more than 25 years. The company has its own plane and a pilot on staff. Otherwise, the company would be flying commercial. During the winter, when lettuce is growing in Yuma, D'Arrigo-Martin said the company flies once a week down south. In the off season, she's using the plane for sales trips. "A lot of business gets done," she said.

From flight training to fuel retailers to the helicopter ambulance operator CALSTAR, at least 15 major businesses at the airport also generate 203 jobs and a total payroll of \$4.9 million.

With a new airport manager and several potential development projects around the airport property likely to be built in the next couple of years, the focus on the future direction the airport has gained some momentum. One potential development on the horizon is Hartnell College's East Campus, which would be on 140 acres adjacent to the airport. Also potentially on deck is the development of about 12 acres in front of the airport's terminal.

Lori Atkinson, the chairwoman of the Salinas Airport Business Association, says, "There's a lot of business that could be brought into the area if we were allowed to expand on the airport's business base." "In order to expand on that business base, we have to build out parts of the airport." Much like gas stations and their food shops are to cars and drivers, businesses at airports can attract planes and pilots, offering products and goods. The more traffic, the more business, the more businesses, the more traffic. This model was obvious when the airport was without a restaurant several years ago.

We felt a huge economic impact," Atkinson said. "People didn't come out. They planned their trips and they wouldn't stop for gas. They wouldn't stop for lunch." The Landing Zone restaurant, opened four years ago, has brought the airport back to life and serves as a community center of sorts for the airport, Atkinson said.

*Salinas Municipal Airport • constructed by the Army during World War II • costs about \$800,000 to operate annually paid for by an enterprise fund • 230 airplanes based at the airport • \$42 million total economic impact on local community • 203 jobs directly generated by airport; \$4.9 million payroll*

*By Dania Akkad / Herald Salinas Bureau*

**WPA meeting minutes of June 28, 2006**

Meeting of the Watsonville Pilots Association was called to order by Rayvon Williams at 7:12p.m. Current officers of the chapter serving until the next election were confirmed by the membership. They are:

- Chairman: Mike McIntyre**
- Vice-Chair John Cowan**
- Secretary: Charlene McIntyre (alternate Chris Olmsted)**
- Treasurer: Sarah Chauvet**

Chapter members were asked to remain for the business meeting after the safety program. Rayvon introduced Jack Hocker from the San Jose FSDO who spoke about the Wings program and then introduced Carol Jewett who gave a great talk about the medical aspects of an off-airport landing. She also addressed the best way to handle an in-the-cockpit medical emergency. Carol noted that we are all trained to handle how to get the airplane on the ground in an emergency but what do you do then if you or your passenger(s) need medical help. Carol will present a 4-hour program on this topic on July 29, 2006 at the WAEC building at Watsonville Airport if there are enough sign-ups. Cost of the course is \$25.00. Call 440-1651 or sign up by e-mail at cjnurse@aol.com. At 8:50 Vice-Chair John Cowan called the members to order and resumed the business meeting. Chairman Mike McIntyre, Secretary Charlene McIntyre and alternate Secretary Chris Olmsted were absent. A quorum of the membership was present. The Treasurer reported sufficient funds for the chapter needs are available and there are no outstanding bills. Minutes from the April meeting were noted to be incorrect and will be presented for approved at the next meeting with the necessary corrections. John then turned the meeting over to member John Randolph who led a discussion of the current status of the City of Watsonville's General Plan 2030 and its effect on runway 8-26. The membership was asked to support and concur with the actions taken by their Board of Directors on June 1, 2006 whereby;

(1) The firm of Wittwer and Parkins, LLP was retained as council for the WPA regarding the legal action pertaining to the Watsonville General Plan 2030 and the associated EIR. Sam Bishop moved to approve the motion and Rayvon Williams seconded it. All members present voted to approve.

(2) The WPA creates the elective office of Secretary for Legal Affairs and the elective office of Assistant Secretary of Legal Affairs. The Duties of these officers shall be to represent the Association in all legal affairs. John Cowan moved to approve the motion and Curtis Spittler seconded it. All members present voted to approve.

(3) The membership hereby elects Hal Zamora as Secretary of Legal Affairs and Dan Chauvet as Assistant Secretary of Legal Affairs. Ann Ainsworth moved to approve the motion and Sam Bishop seconded it. All members present voted to approve.

A request was made to revise and update the Chapter by-laws to bring them into conformity with the needs of the Chapter today. For Example: Day and time of the meetings has changed; officers hold office for 2 years not one etc. Donna Crane-Bailey moved to have the by-laws revised and brought back to the membership for consideration in September. Hal Zamora seconded it. All members present voted to approve.

John Randolph suggested that the Chapter reimburse the Board of Directors for the cost of a dinner meeting whenever they deem it necessary, Hal Zamora moved that the Chapter allow \$100 per meeting to cover

the cost of a Board meeting dinner meeting. Don Wollesen seconded it. All members present voted to approve.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25p.m.

**Additions and corrections to the April 26, 2006 WPA Minutes**

Addition: John Cowan accepted the position of Vice -Chairman  
Correction: The Sierra Club and the Friends of Buena Vista say the EIR is inadequate. (not the ERA)

*Minutes by Sarah Chauvet*

**EAA Guest Speaker**

You are invited to attend the August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the EAA 119. The speaker that evening is expected to be Officer Randy Pesce of the Watsonville City Police Dept. Officer Pesce was involved in the capture of the criminals who burglarized several hangers at WVI earlier this year. His ability to speak at the August EAA 119 meeting should be confirmed by our regular July meeting time. The EAA 119 meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7 P.M. in the EAA hanger.

**Events**

- Jul 24 - 30 — Oshkosh, WI.** Wittman Regional (OSH). EAA Airventure 2006. The world's greatest aviation celebration takes place every summer in Wisconsin! Daily airshows -- exhibitors -- aircraft displays -- and more.
- Aug 11 - 13 — Santa Monica, CA.** Santa Monica (SMO). Palms to Pines Women's Air Race. 37th Annual Palms to Pines Women's Air Race from Santa Monica to Bend, Or.(770 miles) Prizes, awards, banquets, etc.. Contact Claire Walters, 310/397-2731
- Aug 12 — Susanville, CA.** Susanville municipal Airport (ksve). Annual Susanville Lassen County Airfair. Pancake and ham breakfast 7am to 10am. Air show, aircraft static display. Food and Fun for all.. Contact Steve or Ed (ksve), 530-257-2030;
- Aug 19: --Camarillo Airport, CA.** The 26th Camarillo Air Show. Contact: (805) 383-0686 [www.camarilloairshow.com](http://www.camarilloairshow.com)

**Fuel Prices**

At the WVI Fuel Island, 100LL is \$4.36 and Jet A is \$3.30  
*(07/08/2006)*  
At 301 (Gustine Airport), SS 100LL is \$3.80 *(6/292006)*

**WPA Airport Legal Fund**

Please Help WVI with Your Tax Deductible Contributions. Checks should be made to "WPA" or "Watsonville Pilots Association". On the memo line note: "legal fund". Send your contribution to: 137 Falmouth CT., Aptos, CA 95003  
***Thanks for Your Support***

**Local Events**

- July 26 --** WPA regular Wed. night meeting begins at 7 PM
- August 1 --** EAA Chapter 119's regular Tuesday night meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Regular meeting place: the WAEC Building, 60 Aviation Way, Watsonville Airport
- August 5 --** Young Eagles Rally, Saturday between 10AM & 1PM
- August 13 --** Northern CA Aerobatics Club IAC38 Chapter meeting 2 – 4 PM at Attitude Aviation. (LVK)
- August 16 --** Monterey Bay 99s Chapter Meeting starts at 7pm at the EAA Hanger, Watsonville.
- Civil Air Patrol Squadron 13** -- meet in the National Guard Armory at Watsonville Airport every Tuesday evening, beginning at 6:30 PM

**WPA Officers**

- Mike McIntyre: Chairman
- John Cowan: Vice-Chairman
- Charlene McIntyre: Secretary
- Sarah Chauvet: Treasurer
- Hal Zamora: Secretary of Legal Affairs
- Dan Chauvet: As. Sec. of Legal Affairs

**Committee Heads**

- Dan Chauvet: WAAG
- Richard Lippi: Web Site
- Randy Pesce: Field Security
- Bob Olmsted: Newsletter Editor
- Chris Olmsted: News Ed./As.Sec.
- Rayvon Williams: AOPA/WINGS
- John Cowan: Public Relations
- Brian Moffet: Video & Media
- Airport Manager: Don French
- Feedback: [rolmstud@yahoo.com](mailto:rolmstud@yahoo.com)

WPA Newsletter  
PO Box 135  
Brookdale, CA 95007-0135

**Next Meeting**

7:00 PM, Wednesday, **July 26**  
at the EAA-WAEC Building  
60 Aviation Way, Watsonville Airport