

SEC JOURNAL

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Memphis Wins Honors</i>	1
<i>SW Florida Breaks Records</i>	1
<i>Blackshear Vision at RIC</i>	2
<i>Service on the SEC Board</i>	2
<i>FAA Causes Uproar</i>	3
<i>Noise Dispute in Chesapeake</i>	3
<i>Venice Nixes Airport Hotel</i>	4

YOUR SEC-AAAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Timothy M. Doll, AAE,
Immediate Past President
Little Rock, Arkansas

David N. Edwards, AAE,
President
Asheville, North Carolina

Lew Bleiweis, AAE,
President-Elect
Louisville, Kentucky

Tommy Bibb, AAE,
Secretary-Treasurer
Nashville, Tennessee

Directors

Kim Wade, AAE
Michael Landguth AAE
James Bennett, AAE
William Marrison, AAE
Scott Brockman, AAE
Bill Hogan, Corporate Rep

AIRPORT WINS FOR DELIVERING FLAVOR OF MEMPHIS

Memphis International Airport has brought home top national awards for its new concession lineup, a double dip of all things Memphis, from barbecue to Sun Studio.

The airport received the traveling Richard A. Griesbach Award of Excellence for concession programs in airports of all sizes, first-place honors among medium-sized airports for the quality of its food and beverage program and second place for its specialty shops.

The awards were recently presented in Seattle to Richard White, director of properties at the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority, at the annual concessions conference sponsored by Air-

ports Council International and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

The awards cap a two-year, \$25 million update of the airport's concessions areas finished this year that includes a \$10 million sun-filtered atrium with shops fanning off in all directions.

"We ripped every piece of retail and food and beverage out to the wall and built it back," said White. "If you didn't have a piece of the local Memphis/Mid-South flavor, you weren't getting in here. I wanted everybody that got off the plane to know they were in Memphis, Tennessee, and there is a lot to be proud of here."

The main award, named in honor of the de-

ceased long-time head of the concessions program for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, was initiated in 1998.

Airports were judged on the mix of concessions, design, passenger flow, price and revenue performance according to Charles Chambers, ACI vice president of security and economic affairs. "The Memphis airport does a very good job of tying itself to the theme of the city. If you are going through the airport, you'll know from looking at the concessions where you are," he said.

The ability to give passengers a taste of the city they are in is the newest concept in airport imaging.

SW Florida International Sets New Records

Southwest Florida International Airport accommodated more than 7.6 million passengers during 2006, making it the busiest year in the airport's 23-year history. Overall, passenger traffic for the year was up about 1.7 percent compared to 2005. Nationwide, traffic was down 0.5 percent for the year according to the Air Transport Association.

In the month of

December, 725,909 passengers traveled through the airport which was a 7.7 percent increase compared to December 2005. Those numbers made December 2006 the busiest December on record. December 2006's passenger traffic was up more than 9.9 percent from the previous month which was the busiest November on record. The Air Transport Association reported that nationwide, traffic was up 2.2 percent for the

month of December 2006.

"We knew it was very busy at the airport this holiday and now the numbers really prove it—over 725,000 passengers traveled through the airport in December. We normally don't see numbers like that until season, which starts in January," said Robert M. Ball, A.A.E., executive director for the Port Authority.

BLACKSHEAR VISION COMES TO FRUITION AT RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

He was a man driven.

The phone would ring at 10:00 pm and he would start a conversation as if you were sitting at your desk. In fact, *he* was sitting at his desk putting together the plans necessary to bring full potential to a fairly quiet little airport in Central Virginia.

He came from New Orleans where he had put similar long range plans in motion. He brought with him a Cajun humor that was misunderstood by many and unappreciated by some.

In his office hung a framed motto stating the Six Steps To Any Project:

1. Unbounded Enthusiasm
2. Total Disillusionment
3. PANIC!
4. Frantic Search for the Guilty
5. Punishment of the Innocent
6. Promotion of the Uninvolved

Intended for amusement, the anecdote would eventually prove to be prophecy.

He would do his yard work at first light starting at around 5:00 am. He needed to get it out of the way so he could get to the airport. The neighbors must have loved that.

The long hours and the

stress finally landed him in the hospital. Cardiac arrest. His wife, Sue, drove him to Chippingham Hospital where he literally died on the sidewalk at the emergency entrance to the medical facility. Doctors and a trusty external defibrillator brought him back to life. Defibrillators, attached to the walls of the terminal, would become common sights at the airport. Over time, they would be called upon and credited with saving the lives of passengers and employees.

Standing vigil at the hospital with other airport employees and aviation officials, I eventually convinced a nurse I was a family member and I was allowed entry into ICU for a brief visit. Tubes and wires seemed to penetrate every part of his body and the room, smelling of antiseptics, was filled with strange clicks and beeps. Raising his right hand just above the sheet, he made a writing motion in the air. I reached for my Waterman and writing pad and placed the pen in his hand. Thinking I was about to receive a note saying, "I'm OK", or something similar, I was surprised to get back a "To Do List" whereupon I was dispatched back to the airport to begin checking off the completed items.

I remember thinking not only had he pushed himself to a

heart attack, maybe he was a carrier.

He always stood up for his employees even when he probably shouldn't have. Allegiance to staff, unfortunately, did not always seem to be repaid with equal loyalty. That lack of loyalty coupled with embattlement with a 14-member airport commission probably accelerated his exit.

Today, three-million passengers cross the threshold at Richmond International Airport and enter a beautifully upgraded and modern airport facility befitting a capitol city. It is long overdue. And the Six Steps have been completed.

Like him or not, understand him or not, appreciate him or not, I was there and I know some of the personal and professional sacrifices he made to give a community the airport facility it so richly deserves.

And now you know, too.

To deny a man his due is simply wrong.

Many thanks to Troy Bell for inspiring this commentary.

Ed.

EVER CONSIDERED SERVICE ON THE SEC BOARD?

Have you given any consideration to serving on the Board of Directors for the Southeast Chapter-AAAE? Each year, at least one Executive Member is placed on the Board and next year it could be you. All that is required is a letter to the Chairman

of the Nominations Committee stating your interest and a letter from your superior stating that your airport will support you with the time and travel expenses required to attend the meetings. Currently, there are three to four

meetings held during a given fiscal year.

This year's Chairman of the Nominations Committee is Tim Doll, AAE. You can contact Tim at tdoll@littlerockairport.aero for a full description on Board service.

FAA CAUSES UPROAR OVER TAX

Most airline travelers pay their 7.5 percent ticket tax and continue about their travels. Little do they realize that throughout U.S. aviation, people are gearing up for a knockdown, drag-out fight over whether and how to replace the ticket tax that generates most of the money in a \$10.2 billion aviation trust fund.

Back when major airlines dominated the industry and people paid full fare for business travel, the ticket tax easily supported air traffic control and airports. Now, the Federal Aviation Administration sees travelers migrating to low-fare carriers, regional carriers and private aircraft. The FAA wants to overhaul its funding processes to support this new mix of air traffic.

To explain the trend in the simplest terms, 300 people who used to cross the sky in one big plane are now likely to be divided up between the majors, the regional carriers and possibly a private aircraft or two. For the FAA and its air traffic control system, that means more blips on the radar screen, but the income source to support the work—resulting from the per passenger ticket tax—remains about the same.

The FAA has been watching this trend for years but is pushing Con-

gress for a change now because its taxing authority expires September 30.

"It is *the* issue for airports and aviation in general," said Frederick Piccolo, chief executive officer for the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

The potential overhaul has pitted small aircraft owners and business pilots against the airlines. The airlines want a new financing scheme that will redistribute the tax burden and allow air traffic to safely handle more aircraft. Independent aircraft owners and pilots, who pay excise taxes on fuel, tires, and oil, say the burden created by small aircraft is overstated. They have vowed to fight any new schedule of fees that they say would make the flying of small planes and jets an elitist enterprise.

The FAA has not yet made an official proposal, but the rhetorical war is well underway.

For example, Phil Boyer, president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, told his 409,000 members in a New Year's letter that one of his resolutions is to "Stand by to smash user fees." "User fee" is the catch-all reference to a proposal by the Air Transport Association to

end the ticket tax and redistribute the burden among all types of aviation users. The ATA wants a system of charges that "directly and proportionally" links system use with system costs.

Right now, anyone that gases up a piston-engine plane or jet for private use pays a fuel tax, while charter or fractional jet service providers collect and pay the ticket tax. Although the smaller aircraft do pay, each blip they create on the radar screen comes with fewer passengers and fewer tax dollars to support the system.

Now the National Business Aviation Association has joined the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association in the fight against user fees.

Their message is reaching members like Larry Harvell, a private pilot who flies a single-engine plane out of Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

"Most pilots are aware of it and are dead-set against it," said Harvell.

Piccolo, Chairman of Airports Council International, says the airport association is still working on its position.

Dispute Over Noisy Planes Nears End in Chesapeake

A long-standing fight between the Chesapeake Regional Airport and its unhappy neighbors is winding its way to conclusion in the courts.

Airport officials contend they have done everything possible to keep airplane noise down in the area over the West Landing Estates subdivision. Homeowners who have sued the airport authority fume that low flights have destroyed the tranquil, rural atmosphere of their community.

After a seven-day trial before Circuit Judge Randy Smith in December, attorneys for both sides wrapped up their presentations of evidence in the lead case *Osipovs vs. Chesapeake*

Airport Authority. A ruling could come by spring.

Neighbors claim that the airport is no longer a stagnant landing strip and has essentially taken an air easement over the homeowners property without just compensation. They filed their suits in the summer of 2004.

"The flights directly and immediately interfere with the petitioners' use and enjoyment of their property," the lawsuit states. "These flights occur at all hours of the day and night and on all days of the week."

Although the trial ended in

December, several stages remain in the civil process.

Patrick O'Donnell, the attorney for the Airport Authority, filed post-trial briefs this month. Attorneys from the property rights law firm of Waldo & Lyle, representing the homeowners, recently filed a response.

Both sides will get 30 minutes to make oral arguments this month. If the court rules that the homeowners' property was unlawfully taken, a jury will be selected to determine just compensation.

Southeast Chapter—AAAE

Robert C. Brammer, Editor
SEC-AAAE
8712 Caspiana Lane
North Charleston, SC 29420

Phone: (843) 425-3878
Fax: (843) 225-1799
Email: secaaaae@aol.com

We're on the Web at
www.secaaae.org

SEC-AAAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives will hold a regularly scheduled Board Meeting during the course of the 2007 SEC-AAAE Annual Conference to be held April 29-May 1, 2007 at the Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, SC.

The Board of Directors' Meeting will be held at 9:00 am in the Tides A&B Conference Rooms on April 29, 2007.

For future conference information, go to the Chapter website at www.secaaae.org and click on the tab that reads "Conference Calendar."

2007 SEC-AAAE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Chuck Henderson, AAE, Deputy Airport Director at Columbia Metropolitan Airport in Columbia, S.C., and Chairman of the 2007 SEC-AAAE Annual Conference, has been working night and day to ensure the success of your annual conference. The event is only about two months away (April 29-May 1, 2007), and Chuck says we should make our hotel reservations at the Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, S.C., as soon as possible

Because this is a beachfront resort, the rooms are expected to go quickly. The Chapter has been given a discount rate of \$159 per night if reservations are received before March 1, 2007. You can reach the Grande Dunes Reservations Desk at 1-800-644-2881. Ask for the "SEC Airport Executive Group Rate."

Chuck is also finding new ways to recognize our sponsors and give them the credit they so richly deserve. *If you are interested in being a sponsor for the 2007 SEC-AAAE Annual Conference*, please do not hesitate to call Chuck at (803) 822-5017. Chuck looks forward to hearing from you and he looks forward to seeing you on the beach!

VENICE NIXES AIRPORT HOTEL

The City of Venice, Fla., has nixed a proposal for an airport hotel, but the rejection is because the building site is environmentally sensitive, not because the city has decided a hotel is not an appropriate use of airport land.

City Manager Marty Black has informed representatives of WalVan Investments LLC that the city has no interest in discussing that company's proposal to build a hotel and conference center at "the southwesternmost portion" of the Venice Airport property.

The unsolicited proposal, that came in November 2006, was to

build a 130-room hotel with meeting room space on the beach in what is known as the Brohard Park area. It was one of seven conceptual proposals the city has received in recent months involving various locations around the airport.

Black advised WalVan that the area it targeted for development is in an "environmentally sensitive coastal area" designated in the city's comprehensive plans for parks and public use. For that reason, it is not appropriate for any other type of development.

The recent response to WalVan was the city's first formal

answer to a developer regarding concepts for the use of airport property. The fact that the Brohard Park location and zoning would prohibit the proposed use made it realitively easy for the city to respond with a denial.

That may not be the case with some of the other airport development proposals already in hand, or yet to be received, as the city continues its review of the various possibilities.

Other concepts include renovating the old circus arena, erecting a hotel/marina facility on other parts of the property and establishing a National Guard Armory.