



AIRPORT BEACON

A publication of  Muskegon County Airport

From the Airport Manager

Submitted by Marty Piette



Hopefully everyone had great holiday season and is ready to start the New Year. There is plenty on the Airport agenda for 2008, and I am looking forward to working with everyone as projects unfold. The biggest project this year will again be the Runway 14/32 shift and extension project. As you may recall, the project started back in 2000 with design, engineering, land acquisition and environmental work. Construction started in 2006, and we have been moving forward each year since. 2008 is no different and more work will be done. Phase II work that was started in 2007, and put on hold in October because of the impending winter, will start again around mid April. In August, we hope to start Phase III of the project. August is only an estimate, as the start date will rely on the timing of a Federal grant issuance. Phase III could start sooner if funding is received. An update will be in the next newsletter. Two things are for sure: completion of Phase II will take place this spring, and; design of Phase III will continue this winter. Pilots take note - Runway 14/32 will be closed during most of the construction work, so plan accordingly. As you know, with progress comes some inconvenience. But, in the end, we will enjoy a much safer and accessible Airport. Thank you for your understanding.

Out to Compete

Portions taken from a "Muskegon Chronicle" article dated December 6, 2007 by Steve Gunn.

Grand Rapids, Chicago, Detroit. With competition like that, what's a regional airport to do? In Muskegon's case, try harder.

The county airport offers daily direct flight service on two airlines to Detroit and Milwaukee. Passengers can make connections to just about any other destination from Detroit or Milwaukee. As far as ticket prices, there's no way to predict which airport may offer the lowest fares for any trip at any given time. Many variables play a role, including how far in advance a person is booking a flight, the days of the week they are traveling, their length of stay, the time of year, and the availability of seats.

Sometimes when researching fares, initial findings won't favor Muskegon. But Dianne Hoofman, Air Travel Marketing Consultant for Muskegon County Airport, is willing to communicate with airline officials in search of better results. "Maybe there's a fare sale available in Grand Rapids that's just getting started and it's coming our way," Hoofman said. "Or maybe we just got overlooked. (Airline officials) will help me out about 90 percent of the time."

(See Complete on page 4)

Business Profile

Submitted by Therese Liddil, Pratt & Whitney

Pratt & Whitney Component Solutions (PWCS) is a worldwide supplier of new and serviceable turbine engine components for all Pratt & Whitney Canada engines. PWCS is a preferred supplier to industry-leading turbine engine maintenance facilities, operators and airlines worldwide. Among the product offerings are 100% consumable kits built to address specific levels of engine repair for many of the Pratt & Whitney Canada engines.

The utmost level of customer service has allowed PWCS to open and operate Parts Distribution Centers in Muskegon, Amsterdam and Singapore, offering a 24/7/365 call center to address customer needs. Additional distribution centers are planned in the coming years.

PWCS has been serving the aviation market since 1988 and employs 105 people. PWCS is owned by United Technologies Corporation (a Fortune 50 Company) in Hartford, Connecticut, and reports to Pratt & Whitney Canada in Montreal, Canada.



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“JIMMIE DESANTO - BORN TO FLY”

By Joe Mizrahi

“The incredible story of a 24 year old ex-paratrooper who, with only 200 hours in light aircraft, not only soloed a P-38 fighter, without any instruction, but flew directly to Cleveland, entered it in the 1946 National Air Races, and placed fifth in the 150 Mile Speed Dash, barely losing to veteran Earl Ortmann by less than one second. Impossible! Not when you read about the amazing exploits of Jimmie Desanto!”

MKG History

Submitted by Ken Price, Executive Air Transport.

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“Connie II”, a very rare and one-of-a-kind Curtiss P60E, and Desanto at the Muskegon Airport in 1947.

(photos from Ken Price collection).



Desanto in “Greater Muskegon” aka Connie III with old Muskegon Airport Terminal in the background. This aircraft was sponsored by local businesses for the 1948 Cleveland Air Races.

(photo from All Gods Children Got Wings by Vivian Branyan)

Santa & Mrs. Claus Visit the Airport

Santa and Mrs. Claus made a visit to the Airport on Saturday, December 8, 2007. Children were able to sit on Santa’s lap and tell them what they want for Christmas. All the children were given gifts and candy. We had a very good turnout again this year with around 40 children attending.



Employee Spotlight



Our employee spotlight this quarter is Shawn Caughey, Security Manager for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at Muskegon County Airport. Shawn has security experience dating back to 1988 when he enlisted in the United States Navy. Upon his return to Muskegon in 1992, he worked as a Corporate Security Officer for Prince Corporation in Holland, Michigan and later became

an Executive Protection Officer for a member of the Prince Family from 1994-2002.

“After 9/11, I knew there would be a change to Airport Security in this country and I wanted to be a part of it.” Shawn loved his job, but a chance to go back to work for the U.S. Government was too exciting to pass up. He applied for a Transportation Security Screener position at the Muskegon County Airport (MKG) and was hired in July of 2002. “I will never forget our first day at MKG when 28 Federal Screeners walked into the airport ready to change the world; we sure have come a long way since then.”

Shawn went on the road with the TSA National Security Force in 2003 and was assigned to Grand Forks International Airport in North Dakota and Fort Lauderdale International Airport in Florida. Upon his return, he went to work at Gerald R. Ford International Airport where he worked his way up from a Security Screener to the Security Manager for Muskegon County and Manistee Blacker Airports. “I have had the privilege of serving at each TSA officer position, and it has been an asset to me as I made the transition into management.”

Shawn and his wife, Sharon, have been married for 13 years and have an eleven-year-old boy named Michael. And, surprise, another child is on the way in April. “We have a very active family life that usually revolves around sports. If I’m not coaching, refereeing, or attending one of our son’s many sporting events, I am usually at work.” The three of them are looking forward to the newest member of the Caughey Team this spring.

“I have lived in the Muskegon area all of my life. I remember, back in the early ‘70s, being able to go on the plane to say goodbye to family members who were flying out of Muskegon and the Captain letting me look around the cockpit. Even though the times have changed, there is still a great staff at the Muskegon County Airport who works hard to maintain that small town atmosphere. I am fortunate to be able to work with such a great group of TSA and airport employees.”

Employee of the Month

November 07 Karen Horan, Brownstone
 December 07 Cathy Peterman, TSA
 January 08 Paula Lamb, NW

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In Memory ...

Submitted by Victor Grahn, Executive Air

Executive Air Transport recently lost a very dear friend and co-worker. Mr. William “Bill” Vandenberg passed away unexpectedly on November 30, 2007. Bill had been employed by Executive Air Transport as an Aircraft Mechanic since the mid 1970s. Prior to his employment with Executive Air Transport, Bill worked for Teledyne Continental’s Hangar Service Company. Bill was a highly decorated Vietnam veteran having earned 2 purple hearts and 2 bronze stars.

Bill was an easygoing person which made him a very well liked individual. He always had an interesting story to tell or

some little saying that helped make the work days go by faster. He spent almost 40 years at the Muskegon County Airport in the field of Aircraft Maintenance.



His long career made him many friends and he was respected by all, friends, co-workers and customers.

It was both a privilege and an honor for everyone at the Muskegon County Airport to have worked with this fine man and he will be greatly missed by all.



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Northwest Airlines
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Midwest Airlines
800-452-2022

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Questions, Comments, Suggestions?

Submit to:

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Even if the best fare is out of Grand Rapids, there are many advantages of flying out of Muskegon. Some advantages are:

- Long term parking in Muskegon is \$4 and Grand Rapids is \$8
- Advance flight check-ins are 60 minutes in Muskegon and 90-120 minutes in Grand Rapids
- Muskegon's parking lot is close, no need for shuttle buses to reach the terminal building
- The hassles and perils of driving to distant airports, especially in winter or late at night
- Less time to board and leave a plane and less time to take off
- Quicker luggage retrieval

Dianne Hoofman, Air Travel Marketing Consultant for the Muskegon County Airport, wants to work with customers to see if she can give them a better deal than Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids. She invites anyone to email her at hoofmand@verizon.net with their destination, travel dates, and number of travelers.

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