

The Airport Report

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New Leadership

“...We’re glad Stephanie Morgan accepted the offer to be part of our future. She’s a proven leader with experience in the operation and marketing of Air Carrier Airports.”

- William V McCann, Jr.
Authority Chairman

After a nationwide effort to find the best and brightest, the search is over. The Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport Authority Board announced it has hired a new Airport Manager. Effective May 1, 2017, Stephanie Morgan will take the leadership role of the region’s largest, busiest airport. She brings to the job years of experience at large and small airports and the airline industry as well. A recent MBA graduate from the University of Phoenix, her education, training, and accomplishments include a private pilot’s license with an instrument rating, athletic achievements through the United States Military Academy at West Point, and a Bachelor of Science degree through Parks College of St. Louis University.



Stephanie Morgan

Air Posse Turns 60

In the old “wild west,” bad guys had a nasty habit of coming to town, getting liquored up, then burning down some poor, backcountry, settler’s house. When things couldn’t possibly get worse, the posse rode to the rescue and everyone lived happily ever after. Today, there’s still plenty of trouble to be found in the backcountry. But the following rescue doesn’t involve six-shooters and settlers, and this Posse doesn’t come to the rescue on horses.

May 15th, 2016, three people, a young man and two young women were in a backwoods vehicle accident. Their SUV

was stuck, they were lost, and then cell service gave out. Ground search teams were dispatched with little luck. Then the Nez Perce County Sheriff’s Air Posse was called.

“Frank Maresca and I had the search and rescue aircraft airborne within 30 minutes,” said Jim Finley, Posse Commander.

They began searching the usual places: Deer Creek, Hoover Point and the surrounding ridges. After several passes, Jim noticed a Hillcrest helicopter below. He grabbed the microphone and radioed for help.

Hillcrest joined the posse, taking the low altitude while the Posse plane kept watching from

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Airport Competition?

There's been a lot of printer's ink dedicated lately to the concept of competition between the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport and the Pullman-Moscow Airport. Understandable, because there's been a lot of attention paid to the Pullman airport's plans to bring itself into compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety standards. That's probably newsworthy if for no other reason than it has become one of the most expensive airport projects ever in the Northwest Mountain Region. We think it's a good thing Pullman finally did something about their airport, and we congratulate them for finding enough money in the FAA coffers and local taxpayer's pocket to pull it off. Safety standards are not something to be trifled with. We're just not sure the amount of tax money being spent in an effort to make the airport more like the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport is competition. The *Lewiston Morning Tribune* reports the Pullman project will cost on the high side of \$120 Million. There are also reports they don't know yet where all the local match will come from, so the final price tag is not settled. Residents of the two Palouse cities still need, also for the sake of FAA safety standards, to buy land from Washington State University, one of the Airport's board members. It isn't vacant land, and it won't be cheap. And when all the money is spent and the fog settles in, the Pullman-Moscow Airport will still be the Pullman-Moscow Airport.



Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport



Meanwhile, the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport is just beginning to grow, already pumping more than \$54 million annually into the regional economy! In the past 5 years alone, eight, large corporate hangars have been constructed with private funds. Lifeflight, the largest medical evacuation helicopter service in the Pacific North-



west opened its own facility. That's in addition to the two other helicopter businesses that already call LWS home. And one of the existing fixed based operations—ironically the oldest one—recently announced it is expanding its business to include executive aircraft fuel sales and transient services. Improvements are on the drawing board to make airline passenger screening more user friendly with the latest technology. A new airport operations building is ready for bid, and engineering is underway to resurface one of the two runways and install state of the art lighting systems. LWS is also home to the region's premier aerial search and rescue operation, the Nez Perce County Sheriff's Air Posse which is on the cutting

edge of technology, using drones in addition to traditional aircraft for its life-saving operations. Two of the nation's largest and best air cargo companies have daily flights in and out, feeding business across a three-state area. The Airport Board of Commission-

ers welcomed a new flight instruction operation to the airport business community. And HUGE news...two new private developers are set for groundbreaking an antique aircraft-oriented complex on the airport's south side, a happening which could very well change the look of local aviation for the next twenty years and bring on a totally different branch of tourism than the Region has ever seen. Competition? LWS is already a dual runway, all-weather, precision instrumented, air traffic controlled facility with a full range of aviation services. It's also moving toward the FAA's often-stated, seldom taken serious goal of being self-sufficient. The only competition LWS has is itself, being better every day than it was the day before.



Air Posse Turns 60!



say—is history.

The Posse has always been based at the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport, but it never had a permanent home until about 45 years ago, when the members themselves built a hangar. Using lum-

“It’s the only “dial-a-plane” hangar I’ve seen,” said Jim Finley. “Members are allowed to park their aircraft in the hangar with the understanding that they pay rent and must be willing to use their aircraft for missions if necessary.”

At 60, some organizations have a little difficulty accepting new ideas. The Posse embraces them. And one of those is the use of technology for their Search and Rescue mission. One camera-equipped drone is already in the inventory, and another is on the wish list.

Only Posse members certified under FAA rules and regulations are allowed to use any of the Air Posse’s equipment.

If you happen to see any of new Posse, tell them thanks for their 60 years of service. And wish ’em Happy Birthday.

above. Until someone spotted footprints. And an SUV.

Does the scenario sound familiar? Probably. We wrote about it last year. For the folks who were lost, it wasn’t the nightmare scenario after all. The Air Posse and the Hillcrest Aircraft Company turned a nightmare into a dream come true.

Sheriff Bob Huddleston is generally credit with being the creative thinker behind the Air Posse. That was 1957, and he recognized the unique ability of aviation as an adjunct partner. He found nine, community-oriented, aviation enthusiasts who were willing to be deputized and serve. And the rest—as they

ber and siding materials donated from a grain storage facility, the aviators constructed a most unique facility—a round hangar with a turn table which rides on a rail from the railyards near the Clearwater Paper Company.



Coming soon...to an airport (LWS) near you!

✂ Changes to the airline security checkpoint, enhancements to allow the latest in screening technology. We’re not guaranteeing you’ll NEVER get another embarrassing pat-down, but those moments will become far fewer and farther between!

✂ Sidewalks! From the overflow parking area all the way to the

terminal building. No more tripping over river rock, no more slogging through the snow while dodging traffic.

✂ A new backup generator power transfer switch (keep your fingers crossed) to improve the reliability when that squirrel tries to make lunch out of that power line.

✂ A new life for an old friend. Did you know runway 12-30 has been here since World War 2? Design is underway to rehabilitate this venerable piece of pavement. It has served us well, but is in sad need of reconstruction. Late 2017 or early 2018 is the Authority’s target.

State of the ARFF (Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting)

Not sure if this is a Chicken and the Egg parable or not, but first came the need to replacing the aging Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting (ARFF) truck. That's the bad news. The good news was that the FAA would help with 90% funding. But the bad news was that the new generation fire fighting equipment wouldn't fit in the old building. Good news? Because the facility anticipated continued joint use with the City of Lewiston, there were more partners around to share the costs.

Then—you guessed it—bad news.

Geography and geology drove the costs of a joint use facility on the airport's north side out of sight. Having exhausted all alternatives, the Airport Authority Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to cut the strings on the shared-facility concept and set out on their own.

Instead of a joint-use facility, the Authority plans call for a multi-purpose facility to house aircraft rescue & fire fighting equipment, snow control equipment, and eventually, airport administration offices. The FAA recently approved the architectural/engineering plans for a facility on

the airport's south side.

When will it be built? And what about the equipment need that started all this?

Well...you see...there was this election thingy last year, and...ahm...er... well...the tax on your airline tickets continues to flow to the Federal government, but the Congress once again needs to pass legislation to return it the airports.

Chicken or the Egg? Not sure, but an omelet would taste mighty good right now.



Dreams and Opportunities

Dreams are not the singular domain of aviators and opportunities are not given only to those who fly. But at the same time, it's only fair to remind everyone that the landscape of aviation and indeed the modern world would look far different than it does today had it not been for aviators with dreams that created opportunities.

Such is the case with Airport Authority Board's announcement last week that local business entrepreneurs Gary and Jillyn Peters will soon begin construction of an aviation complex on the airport's south side. With a view toward tailoring the development toward antique aircraft, the dream includes a museum-like facility with adjacent buildings designed to period motif.

The Peters development isn't totally about their dream. It has the potential to

create it's own opportunities, bringing antique aircraft owners in from all over the western United States.

"These aren't hangar queens," said Jim Finley, Authority Board Vice Chairman. "We're talking vintage, flying aircraft that you don't see every day."

Aviation Dreams, LLC and Aviation Opportunities, LLC are the twin companies Peters founded to get the process rolling, and it's been over a year in the making.

Gary Peters thanked the subcommittee the Authority created to help work out the details. He thanked former airport manag-



er Chris Hayes, and the entire Board for their patience while working through the FAA's approval process.

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LEWISTON-NEZ PERCE COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT



Feedback.....

It isn't something we put up with. The Authority Board and Staff appreciate input and suggestions—not just about this newsletter, but about ways we can improve our airport and the services provided

**LEWISTON-NEZ PERCE COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT
AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

William V. McCann, Jr., Chairman

Jim Finley, Vice Chairman

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Meetings

For up-to-date information on schedules, check the Public Meeting section of the Lewiston Morning Tribune.

