

# The Aviator

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## From the Desk of Arlene Feldman, President, NJAA

As we launch NJAA's new quarterly publication, "The Aviator", I would be remiss if I didn't express our thanks to Jack Elliott, the former aviation writer for the Newark Star Ledger and a founder of NJAA who, over the years, spent many hours providing you with the latest aviation information in the monthly newsletter, "The Final Approach." While he continues to serve on the NJAA Board of Director, Jack's other commitments prevent him from continuing to serve as our editor.

Our new publication will continue to serve as the 'Voice of Aviation' by providing you with information on aviation issues, but will include legislative updates, guest editorials and recognition of members who have made significant contributions to New Jersey aviation.

We have a lot of information to share with you because in recent months, we have made great strides. We have been able to gain access to many of our elected officials. It has provided us with the a better opportunity to advocate for YOU.

We have become active with the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. In addition to attending its meetings, we were invited to participate with its transportation committee in formulating a plan for the future of New Jersey's transportation system, of which aviation is an important component.

We successfully worked with U.S. Senator Lautenberg and Congressman LoBiondo on behalf of NJAA and the "Sound Initiative: A Coalition for Quieter Skies." Our efforts resulted in legisla-

tion that will phase out Stage 2 aircraft and will provide noise relief to communities near Teterboro, Morristown and Trenton-Mercer Airports and not just the commercial service airports. It will demonstrate our desire to be "good neighbors."

We have joined the fight against user fees, supporting the Aviation Across America Alliance, NBAA, AOPA and others by writing letters and personally contacting the offices of the decision makers. We have formed an alliance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection that will enable our airports to receive approval from DEP in a timelier manner and will protect grant money.

Through our efforts, and those of the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Coalition (MAAC), we have been promised that the State Assembly will hold hearings to provide an opportunity for our elected officials to become better educated on the tremendous benefits that General Aviation provides to New Jersey's citizens.

In addition, we have plans underway to hold educational forums, sometime in the near future, that will provide the opportunity for you to interact with our decision makers.

We continue to increase our membership and hope that as you read this, you will consider joining our fight. Your financial support is what enables us to work for YOU, our partners in aviation. ←

Sincerely,  
Arlene Feldman, President, NJAA

## NJAA/MAAC Alliance Gathers Broad Support.

The alliance formed by the New Jersey Aviation Association and the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Coalition has gained the support of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. The groups will speak with one voice when presenting their positions on key aviation issues to policy makers at state, local, and national levels.

From left: Michael Egenton, Vice President for Transportation and Environment, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce; Erin Wright, Eastern Region Representative, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association; Arlene Feldman, President, New Jersey Aviation Association; Robert Checchio, Vice President for Legislative Affairs, Mid-Atlantic Aviation Coalition; and Frank Robinson, Vice President for Transportation, New Jersey Business and Industry Association



## Airport Update

### Somerset Airport

Somerset Airport (SMQ) is a delightful general aviation facility in Bedminster nestled near the second Watchung Mountain in a mixed rural and residential part of Somerset County. The airport was founded by patron George Walker in 1946 and runways were laid out after an extensive study of the prevailing winds. The runway is relatively short, hemmed in by wealthy property owners on either end of the main asphalt runway.

The heirs of George Walker have operated the airport as a good neighbor to the community, but there is an element of that community that has been vocal in wanting it closed. The current effort is aimed at denying the airport the right to allow Medivac helicopters operated by the New Jersey State Police to be based there. However the legal battles that have ensnared the Walker family are only the tip of an iceberg of hostile feelings and actions by very few local residents.

At this writing, nothing has been resolved on the issue of basing Medivac helicopters at Somerset Airport. This battle has been going on since 2001 when the State Police did a survey of potential bases for the operation to determine the most suitable location. Consideration was given mainly to availability of ground support facilities and the proximity to potential accident sites.

The helicopter, owned and maintained by the State of New Jersey, is staffed by medical personnel who operate under the auspices of the NJ University of Medicine and Dentistry hospital in Newark. The move to a more rural location was predicated on reducing patient travel time in order to maximize the potential for saving the lives of trauma victims.

A prolonged series of appearances before the planning board followed Somerset's initial application. The airport requested to allow crew support facilities – room for desks, a bed, chairs, lavatory and microwave oven – to be built inside an existing building where the helicopter was hangared.

Issues erupted over whether or not helicopters could use an airport. The basing of the operation was seen as a 'change in use' of the property when all that ever happened was that the helicopter took off and landed as helicopters have been doing for decades. Site surveys and wetlands delineation was ordered.

The airport has won every battle to date. Most recently the State Supreme Court turned down a request by the objectors to hear an appeal which had been decided unanimously in favor of the airport by a three judge panel in the State Appellate court.

This issue has cost the Walker family hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend. That is probably why the suits continue. The objectors are fighting a pyrrhic battle to wear the family down.

Money and power can achieve wonderful tools when properly applied to remedy society's ills. But money and power wasted on meaningless legal challenges to good public policy is stupidity bordering on evil. NJAA asks the Corzine Administration to direct by executive order that the Medivac operation be allowed to base at Somerset Airport and go about its business of saving lives. ←

### Dear NJAA Members,

In my time as a legislator in New Jersey I have realized the importance of the aviation industry to our economy and have defended the rights of small airport owners. Since 1952 New Jersey has lost on average one airport per year, and if this trend continues, it will become harder for businesses to thrive in our state. That's why I will continue to support the aviation industry in New Jersey and use my leadership position to enact legislation that protects the interests of airport owners across the state.

Currently I have sponsored Assembly Bill No.2024 which will "prohibit local governments from acquiring by condemnation any airport that has had its development rights purchased." This bill is meant to ensure that local airports remain accessible to small aircraft and are not otherwise subject to unwanted economic development. Airports are a vital asset in attracting new businesses to New Jersey and creating jobs for New Jersey residents and this bill will ensure that airports are protected from development.

Once these airports are developed it is an irreversible process, and that economic asset will be lost for New Jersey. I want to thank the New Jersey Aviation Association for their hard work on behalf of the industry and ensure their members that I will continue to fight in the State Legislature to protect airport owners in New Jersey.

*Assemblyman Alex DeCroce  
District 26, Assembly Minority Leader*

### Trenton-Mercer Airport Receives Tower Award

Trenton-Mercer Airport, and the Trenton-Mercer Airport Air Traffic Control Tower were selected for the 2007 Willie F. Card Contract Tower Service Award. The Willie F. Card Contract Tower Service Award is named after former FAA Contract Tower Branch Manager Willie F. Card, who operated the office from 1998 until his death in 2002.

This nationally recognized award is given to the "contract tower" that most exemplifies a high standard of safety and customer service so valued by Willie F. Card. Included in the judging criteria is a requirement to have a documented system of measuring safety and customer service performance.

"This is a great honor, and it recognizes our long standing commitment to safety, customer service, and great communication with our tower management", said Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes.

Added ATCT Manager Jim Pate, "This is awesome. It confirms something we've always known: we do it right at Trenton-Mercer!"

The winning airport/contract tower was selected by a group of judges who represented the FAA's Contract Tower Program Office, the US Contract Tower Association Policy Board, the National Business Aviation Association, the National Air Transportation Association, and the Regional Airline Association.

Airport Manager Justin Edwards, and ATCT Manager Jim Pate were in Washington, DC on June 17, 2007 to accept the award. ←

## *NJAA Meets with Adam Zellner, Deputy Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection*

Recognizing that there is a problem with the approval process, the NJAA met with Adam Zellner, the Deputy Commissioner of NJDEP to attempt a resolution to the difficulties that airports face when dealing with DEP. The NJAA requested that there be a General Permit for safety and maintenance related projects because at the most basic level, airports must maintain a safe infrastructure as part of New Jersey's and the region's transportation system.

It was recommended that NJAA provide the language for a General Permit and serve as the focal point for that effort. NJAA will be in a position to contact each airport to determine what specific issues should become part of that permit.

It is important that New Jersey airports do their part to better the relationship and work within the system. Mr. Zellner and his staff have already spoken to the FAA about this very same issue and have appointed an aviation point person within the Land Use Regulation board.

It was noted that airports need to show what they are doing for the environment and the community beyond what the regulations require. Airports should view themselves as "large developers" and come to the table with an environmentally beneficial package

for the NJDEP to consider. The next 20 years will particularly be geared toward air quality. The community-at-large feels that airports contribute heavily to air pollution. They would like to see ways in which airports will be improving air quality and reducing the carbon footprint.

NJAA will provide DEP with a "triage" list of funded projects from all the airports in the State of New Jersey. We will ask them to include what their current operations are and what kind of growth they anticipate accommodating in the future. The best way for an airport to get their projects through the department would be to show them the airport's anticipated ultimate build-out on an acreage level, without necessarily knowing what exactly could or would be built and how and where they can mitigate for wetlands and stream encroachment. DEP would then expect the airports to buy the properties or mitigate the properties that are in their plan.

NJAA is in the process of scheduling meetings between airports and an official from DEP so that there can be a clear understanding of what is needed by each to move projects forward and prevent the loss of funding. We will provide additional updates in our next newsletter. ←

## *Small Airport Report*

New Jersey's larger airports have their share of problems with neighbors and noise. However Teterboro, Morristown, Trenton Mercer and similar facilities that accommodate larger corporate aircraft are generally owned by governmental entities and protected with FAA grant assurance agreements. With a few exceptions, they are not threatened with closure or operational constraints.

Most of the State's public use airports are privately owned. Privately owned airports pay exceptionally high property taxes, among the highest in the country. The runways, taxiways, ramps and safety areas - all the public use portions of the airports are not exempt from property taxes.

The State has been helping to preserve some smaller facilities through outright purchase and by the acquisition of airport development rights. Unfortunately, preservation money has only gone so far despite the willingness of the owners of private/public use airports to participate in the program.

Acting individually or in concert with one another, the private owners do not have the financial and political resources to fight entrenched opponents. 1/5 of 1 percent of New Jersey's citizens are pilots. The vast majority of state residents live near an airport, yet few of those neighbors have any knowledge of the benefits that General Aviation contributes to the State..

Small airports are used by business, too. A tremendous amount of commerce occurs at small general aviation airports because small businesses can use a local airport with a piston single engine aircraft. Many of those small aircraft are flown by vendors and others with business interests that are based outside this region. The reverse is true, too. Our airports link us to the rest of the nation.

NJAA is committed to representing those who use General Aviation in pursuit of their business. This column will keep you posted on threats and our responses to small airports issues. ←

## *FAA to TTN: You're Perfect!*

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes announced that Trenton-Mercer Airport (TTN) received a "perfect score" on their Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 139 annual inspection, performed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on August 9 and August 10, 2007. This annual inspection is required for all airports with commercial air carrier passenger service, as mandated under FAR Part 139.

"Needless to say, I am pleased by the results of this vigorous two-day inspection. The FAA's findings underline the high level of safety and professionalism at which Trenton-Mercer Airport operates," said County Executive Hughes.

The inspection focused on various facets of airport operations, including training, record keeping, airfield markings, airfield maintenance, navigational aids, and emergency response. If a facility is found to have deficiencies, and these deficiencies are left unabated, a facility can face fines and possible discontinuation of commercial airline service.

"Let no one doubt that the FAA means business on these inspections. They are very thorough and very particular. A perfect score bodes well for the staff at TTN. It shows a commitment to our users, our tenants, and our visitors, not just for the course of the two-day inspection, but every day, 24-7, 365-days a year", said Aaron T. Watson, Director of Mercer County Transportation and Infrastructure.

Concluded the County Executive, "Trenton-Mercer Airport is an important part of County government. It is a major vehicle for economic growth in Mercer County, as well as a key transportation hub for our area residents and visitors. We intend to keep it that way. This perfect score is reflective of that commitment." ←



## NJAA Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Web Site \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Dues

Individual Membership — \$25

#### Corporate Members with turbine aircraft —

1 A/C — \$250       2 to 5 A/C — \$500

6 to 9 A/C — \$750       10 or more — \$1,000

#### Corporate Members without aircraft, including FBOs and airport owners —

Annual gross revenue Up to \$3M - \$250

Greater than \$3M to \$10M- \$500       Over \$10M - \$750

Please make check payable to NJAA and mail with application to:  
NJ Aviation Association, P.O. Box 7407, West Trenton, NJ 08628

NEW JERSEY AVIATION ASSOCIATION

*The Aviator*



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