

July 20, 2007

FAA Reauthorization - Top of the News

House Releases Details of its Bill and Senate Considers Funding

From the desk of Bob Blouin, GWBAA President: The struggle in Washington, DC over FAA reauthorization and funding for NextGen air traffic control system continues on several fronts.

The House aviation subcommittee (of the transportation and infrastructure committee) released details of its FAA bill at the end of June. The principal provisions called for an increase in taxes for both aviation gas (from 19.4 cents to 24.1) and Jet A (from 21.9 cents to 30.7) for private general aviation, but no changes in fuel taxes for airlines and commercial GA. There are no user fees. The House believes NextGen can be paid for with the existing schedule of taxes and fees (as increased), combined with a continuing contribution from the federal general fund.

By comparison, the Senate bill (written by the aviation subcommittee of the commerce, science and transportation committee and passed in May), includes several departures from the current system. That bill would increase Jet A fuel tax on private general aviation substantially (from 21.9 cents to 49.0) and eliminate the 4.3 cent fuel tax on airlines and commercial GA over a four year period. The most important feature of the Senate bill, however, is introduction of a *\$25 user fee for all turbine flights, commercial or not, except turboprops flying IFR in non-controlled airspace*. This is a user fee by any name and means that a King Air would pay the same as a Boeing 777 for a given flight. Leadership of the aviation subcommittee (Senators Rockefeller (D-WV) and Lott (R-MS)) seek to establish a fund (through the \$25 fee) that the subcommittee can control and apply to NextGen, the money for which is separate from FAA's other funding.

The Senate finance committee had its first hearing on FAA reauthorization in mid-July, to consider how to handle present taxes and whether to make any adjustments – i.e., along the lines of the commerce committee bill, or otherwise. What makes this particularly interesting is that both Senators Rockefeller and Lott are also very senior members of the finance committee, so they will be trying to convince other committee members to agree to what they wrote in the commerce committee bill – principally, the introduction of the new \$25 user fee. Recent remarks by both Rockefeller and Lott indicate they are no friends of general aviation and have been won over by the big airlines.

I suggest readers go to one of two websites (for starters) to read more about how this activity in Washington, DC affects our business: www.nbaa.org or www.aviationacrossamerica.org. The better informed you are about the issues, the more of an active role you can take to influence the outcome.

GWBAA Golf, October 15th, Save The Date!

GWBAA's Third Annual Golf Classic will return to the Herndon Centennial golf course in Herndon, Virginia on Monday, October 15. Breakfast at 7am & tee off at 8am. More information will be coming soon – but mark your calendar now!

Regional News Roundup



Despite various changes proposed by the developers, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors by a 8-1 vote rejected plans for the “Crosstrail” development near **Leesburg Executive Airport**. The Town of Leesburg, which manages the airport, had led the opposition to the plan, arguing that it would threaten the airport’s future as well as have other negative effects such as an increase in congestion. Many had expected a final vote to be delayed until September. It was not immediately clear if the developer, Peterson Cos., would seek to appeal the decision.

Worcester County officials by a 6-1 vote stated their opposition to a proposal to expand **Ocean City Municipal Airport**, citing the need relocate neighboring Route 611 and the existence of nearby Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport. The proposal would extend the north-south runway to 4,160 feet and the east-west runway to 5,000 feet, among other improvements. In addition to the issues cited by the commissioners, opponents also had argued that the expansion would increase noise, displace residents, and destroy wetlands.

Several construction projects are underway at **Stafford Regional Airport**. Now under construction are three T-hangars and a corporate hangar for Oregon-based Vertol Systems, which has signed a 40-year ground lease with the airport. A \$1.5 million apron expansion is also in progress; the 90,000 square feet of pavement will enable four further hangars to be built in the future. The airport also expects design work for a terminal to start next year, with a goal of starting construction in 2009.



AOPA has warned its members that **Newnam Field** recently installed an airfield surveillance system designed by Vector-US, Inc. to record the N-numbers of aircraft, a possible first step towards the collection of landing fees – as well as a potential invasion of the privacy of aircraft operators. A similar “FlightRev” system recently was installed at Hanscom Field near Boston. AOPA reports that the airport management is scheduled to meet with tenants to discuss the issue on July 25.

Air Midwest plans to discontinue flights to **Hagerstown Regional Airport** when its \$650,000 annual federal subsidy ends on September 30. The airport management stated it expects to replace Air Midwest and that this transition will not affect its \$61 million runway extension, scheduled to be completed in December.



Tipton Airport board members are reported to have held meetings with state and federal officials to discuss the possible expansion of the airport's 3,000-foot runway to accommodate jets. While the plans are still conceptual, a future expansion would capitalize on the expansion of nearby Fort Meade, which is expected to add tens of thousands of jobs over the next seven years as part of the federal base realignment and expansion process, commonly known as BRAC.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has determined that a church located in the runway safety zone of **Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport** does not merit a historic designation. The congregation of Grove Baptist Church has tentatively accepted \$460,000 to relocate, but have not yet decided, in the wake of Virginia's decision, whether to demolish or attempt to move the existing structure in order to comply with FAA requirements. In other news, Barbara Hutchinson, who has worked at the airport since 1985, has been promoted to serve as the airport's Executive Director.

Officials and activists toured wooded areas near **Carroll County Regional Airport** where approximately 330 trees are designated to be cut down. The officials said the cutting is necessary to allow pilots to see the airport's new approach lighting system. The activists, however, challenged whether the cutting is necessary and questioned whether the plan is connected to the future airport expansion. County officials initially intended to issue a permit to harvest the trees late last month, but opponents encouraged officials to wait.



Upcoming Aviation Events

- **September 1: 16th Annual Louisa County Airshow.** For more information please contact Dawn Pickhardt Howard at (540) 967-0050 or dawnp@firstva.com.
- **September 15: The 2nd Semi-Annual National Capital Region Airline Collectible Expo** will be held at Holiday Inn Washington Dulles Airport, from 8am-3pm. For more details, please visit http://www.specialtyexpo.com/Washington_IAD_Airline_EXPO.html.
- **September 25-27: NBAA's 60th Annual Meeting and Convention** will be held in Atlanta; for details, please visit <http://web.nbaa.org/public/cs/amc/2007>.
- **October 7: Wings, Wheels, and Ducks** at Stafford Regional Airport, 10am-4pm. For more information, visit <http://www.staffordrotary.org/WingsWheelsandDucks.cfm>.
- **October 13: 8th Annual Airfest**, Culpeper Regional Airport, 10am-4pm. For more information, please call Tanya Woodward at (540) 825-8280 or email twoodward@culpepercounty.gov.



- **October 15: GWBAA's Third Annual Golf Classic** at Herndon Centennial golf course in Herndon, Virginia. For more information, see above.

GWBAA Offers Online Benefits

We continue to add member information for GWBAA's electronic membership directory – <http://www.gwbaa.com/directory.html>. This service is available to GWBAA members at no cost. Please contact Bob Blouin (info@gwbaa.com) if you want to post your company's information.

GWBAA Contacts

GWBAA President Bob Blouin (info@gwbaa.com) and GWBAA Secretary Jol Silversmith of Zuckert, Scoutt & Rasenberger, LLP (jasilversmith@zsrllaw.com) write and edit GWBAA News. GWBAA's success and ability to make a difference depends on the breadth of its support and your participation – so please send any ideas or comments for future newsletters, or for GWBAA, in general, to Bob or Jol, or any of the following people:

Mary Miller, Treasurer: mary.miller@signatureflight.com

Cassandra Bosco, Communications Chair: cbosco@tailwindscomm.com

Greg Cirillo, Events Chair: gcirillo@wrf.com

Bob Rockwood, Membership Chair: racersblue@earthlink.net

Jim Lumley, Operations, Safety and Security Chair: jpilot3@aol.com

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