

# PALO ALTO AIRPORT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## ***PALO ALTO AIRPORT***

www.paloaltoairport.aero



**JANUARY, 2017**

A Member Organization of the California Pilots Association

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

If your plane has been tied down and survived the holiday in good shape, well and good. Some years ago mine took a bullet in the top of the wing inches from the fuel bladder. Obviously it was fired into the air by an exuberant celebrant on New Year's Eve. Remarkably, what goes up comes down—somewhere. Fortunately, such incidents are much rarer now as the East Palo Alto Community has been diligent at tamping down this behavior. Still, consider checking your aircraft for damage from errant falling rounds at the next preflight.

### **IT'S THE NEW YEAR AND TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

It's that time of year again, so don't hesitate—please just do it right away. Dues are just \$20, but consider an additional donation to help keep the organization going. If you received this in the mail you can use the enclosed envelope to send in your dues. If you don't have the envelope, send your check to:

PAAA

P.O. Box 60275

Palo Alto CA 94306

If you prefer to renew online, go to [www.paloaltoairport.aero](http://www.paloaltoairport.aero) select RENEW and click on the DONATE button with your desired amount shown. You will be directed to PayPal for payment.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

As the saying goes, many hands make for light lifting. We need, in no particular order:

A webmaster

A newsletter editor

A membership chair

A new President (Ralph will be retiring after serving for a decade and a half in that role! - Thanks!!!!)

Board volunteers

Airport Day chair

And others....

None of these jobs is particularly burdensome. A couple require specific skills, others just some time, a commitment to help ensure the vitality of your airport and interest. As an all-volunteer group, we need YOU to help promote and protect the airport.

The Association has a three-plus decade record of defending the airport against mismanagement (County) and misinformed local citizens. We have advocated for airfield improvements, instrument approaches and the early return of the airport to City management. The Association has held meetings with public agencies (City, County, State and Federal) and works closely with the AOPA and California Pilots' Association (of which we are a chapter) on our behalf. We have always been mindful of our location in the Baylands and have been careful to consider and support conservation values in the surrounding parkland.

The Association presents Airport Day open house annually to show our community the function and value of the airport. We are still surprised by the number of people who are unaware that Palo Alto even has an airport.

Be a part of the effort! Thank you!

### **AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS ARE UNDERWAY**

The first critical item for the city was the runway, completed last year with a minimal levelling and resurfacing. This was the first major maintenance item after none being done for the final 10 years of County management. The FAA has been increasingly concerned with pedestrian runway incursions and general airport security. Accordingly, it issued a grant for the installation of the perimeter fencing now under

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construction. The fence will be 10 feet high, topped with barbed wire. Entry will be by the use of proximity cards to be issued to airport tenants and users. These cards activate the entry device (electric gate or lock) when held adjacent to the reader and must be used for both entrance and exit. While many of us are used to easy access since the airport's beginning, this step simply puts PAO in line with other similar airports.

The next project is rebuilding the airport apron; i.e. taxiways and parking areas. This requires a substantial change in the airport layout, as the FAA insists that these areas meet standards as a condition of the grant. Taxiways will become wider and tiedown configuration will change, resulting in a lower density in the existing areas. The design consultant has worked out a new layout that can be viewed in the terminal building. Substantial reconstruction of the underlying base for the pavement will be done to ensure that the result will be durable in the bayside tidal environment. Electrical raceways will be installed to accommodate future lighting and communication needs. Work should begin on the first phase of this project in July. However, this is a multi-year project subject to grants being released in phases. Obviously there will have to be repeated relocation of aircraft as the project proceeds.

Other projects are in the early planning stage; among them is the installation of an Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS), perhaps by 2020.

## **CURRENT FACILITY LEASEHOLDS REVERT TO CITY IN APRIL**

Airport facilities constructed over the years since the airport's inception at the Baylands (1935) and subject to various changes in ownership and leasing arrangements were consolidated under the County of Santa Clara's lease with the City of Palo Alto 60 years ago. At the termination of this lease, all these improvements were to revert to the city. The county lease would have ended in April 2017, but the city and county agreed to return the airport to the city earlier. The city, in turn, agreed to honor the provisions of the county's lease with the owners of the improvements until what would have been the end of their leases with the county. April marks the end of that agreement and the city acquires ownership of the improvements. The city intends to lease directly to the business operators and to manage the individual hangars directly with the occupants, as it does with tiedown tenants. Thus there will be no more "middle man" managing the property. The result will be

very much larger income for the city's Airport Enterprise Fund. The enterprise fund is expected to meet all operating and capital improvement expenses for the airport, net of FAA and possible (but not likely) state grants. Analyses, first by the Palo Alto Airport Working Group appointed by Mayor Kleinberg in December of 2006 and subsequent reports by consultants hired by the city, confirm that income after April should meet this goal. Because of maintenance backlog and transition expenses, the city has loaned the Enterprise Fund money from the General Fund with the understanding that this will be returned over time once operating income increases.

## **AIRPORT SAFETY ON THE GROUND**

The primary driver for the installation of the airport fence is to reduce the probability of incursions into the movement area by unauthorized persons and vehicles. The movement area is technically just the runway and adjacent taxiways and run-up areas, but from a practical point of view, any vehicle operator or pedestrian on the airfield is expected to understand procedures and use appropriate caution. With the issuance of a proximity card, training will be provided as to regulations that must be observed while on the field. *There have been a few serious runway incursions by pilots' failing to observe a "Hold Short" instruction even after reading it back.* Be sure to note ANY instruction when you read it back and if unsure ask for a repeat or clarification.

## **AIRPORT DAY SET FOR SEPTEMBER 10**

Put Airport Day on your calendar for Sunday, September 10. Please plan ahead to volunteer for the day and perhaps Saturday afternoon to help set up for the event.

## **NOISE CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE**

The *Sky Posse* is actively trying to reduce noise over Palo Alto, which is mostly from SFO arrivals. Mention is made from time to time about PAO planes, which actually represent a minimal average amount of noise. Nevertheless, a single loud airplane is noticeable and can be annoying and disruptive. Reducing RPM by a couple of hundred lowers the noise on the ground by a lot. Please consider doing this when flying over Palo Alto and East Palo Alto.

## **DON'T PROCRASTINATE--RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY AND MAKE OUR TREASURER'S JOB A BIT EASIER!**