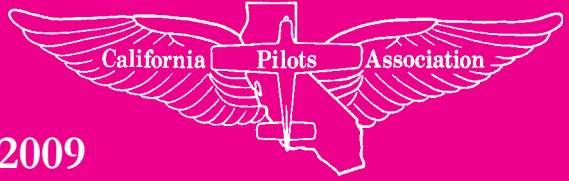


CALPILOTS

July/August 2009



Volunteers Promoting - Preserving and Protecting California's Airports

Airport Advocate



Official Publication of the



CALIFORNIA PILOTS ASSOCIATION



NOTICE - CALPILOTS Annual Meeting **- Save the Date Saturday October 10th 10:00 AM**

We are holding the California Pilots Association's Annual Meeting at the Hiller Aviation Museum which is located on the San Carlos Airport (SQL) in the San Francisco Bay area, located just east of SFO (under Class B Airspace).

Here's your chance to plan a nice weekend with your spouse and family with plenty to do and see for all. We are currently planning a fun and educational meeting for you. You will come away much better informed of how to protect your airport and you will be able to participate in a questions and answers session too. And you can visit a wonderful aviation museum too. Watch our web site in the next few weeks for more details.

Museum Information

Founded in San Carlos, the Hiller Aviation Museum chronicles the future and past of aviation. Over 40 aircraft and 100 exhibits in this 53,000 square foot museum represent the 130-year history of flight. Future prospects for air travel are touted in terms of hypersonic aircraft, vertical take-offs and landings, and the possibilities of robotic air travel. Step back in time or jump into the future by viewing the fascinating displays that define old and new ideas dealing with the concept of flight. The museum web site <http://www.hiller.org/> The museum address is 601 Skyway, San Carlos, CA 94070-2702 Telephone number is 650-654-0200. We hope to see you there.

SLOW PROGRESS

**ED ROSIAK - PRESIDENT
CALIFORNIA PILOTS
ASSOCIATION**



It may seem like the “Win Some” side of the phrase “Win Some, Lose Some” is missing from General Aviation these days. With the TSA busily trying to justify their existence by cluelessly implementing new restrictions on general aviation, but I assure you we are making some progress. Here are some good and not as good points.

- Even though the TSA implemented the new Super Secret Security Directive -8G, I'll bet they look at it as a loss, since they didn't get 8D as planned. Why, because our national aviation organizations, as well as many state organizations wouldn't allow TSA to ignore GA. Further, pilots were calling and writing their representatives screaming about the arrogance of the TSA. It's about time too!

Now *before* TSA is allowed to implement any more “what if” restrictions on GA they need to include what they call “Stakeholders” – that would be GA, the people who actually use and understand what we do in aviation, in the process, including cost analysis. What a concept.

The rest of us are not off the hook on this issue either. Not by any means. All of us need to step up our communication to our elected representatives as well as the national organizations we belong to. While AOPA is better at making waves than say the EAA, neither did a stellar job on SD-8D.

Having said that, I think both AOPA and EAA along with NBAA all learned from this latest power grab by the TSA. AOPA had been part of the process long before the membership ever knew about SD-8D. Once they figured out that their memberships were NOT HAPPY

about it, all three organizations took a tougher stance and managed to get the TSA to change it to the still unacceptable, SD-8G.

I am not really criticizing AOPA, EAA or NBAA here. All of us own SD-8G getting implemented. In the future, AOPA, EAA, NBAA, CALPILOTS and every one of us needs to play a bigger part in protecting GA from the bureaucrats. The alternative is simply unacceptable.

- Speaking of bureaucracy, it seems that the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) figured out that it was really - really, stupid pulling guns on an unsuspecting pilot and his passengers in Long Beach as they were about to depart on a flight to Mexico. AvWeb jumped on this one, and received a statement from CBP stating “the drawing of weapons in the ramp inspection of an aircraft in Long Beach, Calif., last month was justified but not “normal.” No - it's not. We all know that, and I doubt CBP will make that mistake again.

- During our June CALPILOTS Board Meeting we heard from the Manager of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. We were very impressed with her presentation, and it was uplifting to know that in an area as important as San Diego, someone in government is watching over airport encroachment and doing an excellent job of it too. We salute her for all of her hard work and dedication on this very difficult task.

- Finally – we are ready to cutover to our redesigned web site which will be much easier to use, and more interactive. In the not too distant future you will be able to renew/join online, as well as express opinions on the articles, and opt to receive this newsletter electronically in PDF format and much more. We are very excited about it and we look forward to your feedback.

LIFE AS DIRECTOR OF AIRPORTS

CARL HONAKER - DIRECTOR OF AIRPORTS SANTA CLARA VALLEY

Q: *You're a pilot, can you tell us a little about your aviation background?*

A: I got hooked on aviation as an early teen. I mowed lawns for a few extra bucks and one of my customers owned a Bonanza. He offered to take me flying one day and he showed me my house from the air...what an experience! When I got a Navy ROTC scholarship to attend the University of Nebraska I knew that this was my chance to become a Naval Aviator. I had a wonderful Navy career flying P-3 Orions worldwide during the cold war and a number of other aircraft in between tours in P-3 squadrons. My best shore tour was at the Beech factory in Wichita accepting new T-34C Turbo Mentors and UC-12s (King Air 200) into the fleet. I got to fly just about everything Beech made in the early '80s and I was there for their 50th anniversary and got a chance to fly in a Staggerwing and see versions of many antique aircraft they had created in those 50 years. I kept flying and teaching other Navy pilots to fly the C-12 which eventually led to an ATP and type rating in the Lockheed Electra. With over 4,000 hours I have had a lot of fun in the sky. My last tour in the Navy was as the Executive Officer at NAS Moffett Field. Our neighbors at NASA were kind enough to offer rides in their T-38, YO-3 and the Cobra helicopter they used for aeronautical flight testing. I also got a chance to run a couple of air shows (including the last Navy show) while there, so I also got bit by the air show bug and now have a lot of friends in the industry. I still dabble in GA flying when I can and still hold the dream of owning my own aircraft one day.

Q: *What is the biggest issue that you face as Director*



Carl Honaker

of Airports (RHV, South County and PAO)?

A: It's hard to pick just one issue. I think the biggest challenge that faces GA airport managers is the juggling act of keeping the myriad responsibilities we have in the air and not dropping the ball. Our job is to balance the following priorities: Provide safe and efficient airports for the flying public; Provide good customer service for our tenants and on-site businesses, Comply with the needs and requirements of the bureaucracies and politics within the County or City that owns the airport(s) and the various external regulatory agencies (FAA, State, EPA etc) that we deal with; Keep the airport on good terms with neighboring communities; Find the resources needed to improve or sustain the operations, infrastructure and facilities on the airport, and probably most important but least identified is; The need to lead and motivate the staff that makes it all happen. Unfortunately some of these priorities are diametrically opposed to each other some of the time. On many occasions I've found it difficult to simultaneously please both the County leadership and our tenants due to conflicting operational requirements or philosophies. I guess you could say we serve two masters, the government agencies who provide oversight and governance, and the tenants who provide us with our revenue and enable us to pay the bills. I try to ensure that the front line staff doesn't have to worry about this "Two

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Airport Director continued...

Boss Dilemma”, and I emphasize that their job is to provide good customer service and keep the airports safe.

Q: *What challenges do you and other airport managers face as a result of the downturn in the economy?*

A: Many airports (both GA and Commercial Service) are struggling with the loss of revenue due to the recent downturn in the economy. Many rural GA airports that rely on general fund support from their community are dramatically trimming back on their services, staffing and projects due to city, county or state cutbacks. Most commercial service and reliever airports are fortunate to be self-sufficient financially, and do not receive funding from their sponsor County or City general fund to make ends meet. During good times this is relatively easy to maintain, but when pilots reduce their flying, sell their aircraft or quit buying products and services from on-site businesses, revenue doesn't always keep up with the cost of managing the airport(s). Our neighbors at SJC are facing layoffs this year due to the loss of airline traffic, and we are finding we don't have the resources we would like to have for proposed capital improvements. Although the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP) is well funded for the foreseeable future, airports still need to provide matching funds for the grants, and need to have the ability to cover unforeseen construction costs. In addition, many non-airfield related airport improvements like hangars, terminals and landscaping are not FAA grant eligible and you need to have a diversified revenue program to weather the vagaries and cycles of aviation industry. Those airports that have large corporate airparks or other commercial and retail operations that pay rent to the airport are doing better financially than those, like ours that are almost 100% reliant on aviation for their revenue stream.

Q: Can you give us an idea of how many

people are employed at your airports?

A: The County Airports staff consists of a total of 15 people. We have 5 administrative positions, 2 airport operations supervisors and 8 airport operations workers at the three airports. We work for the County's Roads and Airports Department and a number of the people in other divisions of the department provide services to the airport system including fiscal, administrative, engineering and management. There are approximately another 200-250 people directly employed by private businesses at the three airports, over 20 FAA employees that work in the Air Traffic Control Towers, and literally thousands of people whose jobs are impacted by the economic engines that our three airports provide to the surrounding area.

Q: *Everyone knows the issues that RHV has been faced, such as closure threats etc. Is the threat passed, or should we continue to remain alert?*

A: Reid-Hillview has been through a number of public debates regarding its future and has weathered several efforts to close it over the last 20 years. The issues of safety, noise, economic vitality, land use and long range viability have all been met with affirmation that the airport is still an essential element of the transportation system in the County and the State. Aside from its critical role as a reliever airport for SJC, the airport continues to be the biggest bread winner for our entire airport system. RHV's large customer base and busy flight training businesses have kept the airport in the top 100 GA airports in the nation based on operations. Most urban GA airports seem to have similar issues related to community compatibility and the constant effort to close or modify the airport's footprint or operations. RHV's struggles have become an industry example of what it takes to survive in an urban setting. There will continue to be new efforts by politicians and community members to question the airport's existence, so the aviation community must maintain a dialogue with

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Airport Director continued...

elected officials and community leaders, stay in tune with local issues and ensure that the airport's positive attributes remain in the front of everyone's minds.

Q: *Do you feel that an aviation background is a positive, a negative or neutral benefit as Director of Airports?*

A: I truly believe it's a must for any airport manager to have some background in aviation to understand the needs and thoughts of their customers. You can't really get a good picture of your airport's relationship to the surrounding area from the ground level...you have to be able to also see it from the pilot's perspective. Many small airports are managed part time by a community's public works or administrative department staffer and as a result are operated much like any other city or county resource. Airports are pretty unique places with some rather technically challenging problems. One compliment that I've heard at a number of industry conferences from large commercial service airport managers is that a GA airport manager is truly a "Jack of All Trades" individual who has to know everything about how the airport runs and is financed. This is primarily due to the fact that there really isn't anyone to delegate the job to at a GA airport, unlike a big airport with a staff of hundreds that make them run smoothly.

Q: *As an airport director/manager what advice would you give pilots regarding their airport?*

A: In addition to remaining informed about on-airport issues and supporting the local airport pilot association, I would recommend that they stay in touch with local community issues, land use planning around the airport and elections. A supportive County Board or City Council can change directions dramatically with only a few changes in elected officials. Be aware of all political candidate platforms and aviation policies during elections. And of course pilots should always feel comfortable

providing feedback to their airport manager and staff. We value your opinions and ideas, so keep them coming.

Q: *What are the biggest challenges you face being the interface between your aviator tenants and on the other side, your management chain?*

A: To further my discussion of this subject in the answer above, the two biggest issues that cause friction between our customers and our management are fees and regulations. Of course I understand that pilots would like to have the ultimate freedom to do their own thing with their aircraft (and their hangar) and not have to pay much for the privilege, but management's responsibility is to make ends meet and ensure compliance with an ever increasing number of federal, state and local laws and regulations. An unpopular government policy or a need to raise storage fees to balance the budget are not the things I like to talk to pilots about, but I believe its essential and necessary for me and my staff to explain the reasons for the change to the tenants in as calm and informative a manner as possible.

Q: *Have the airport/pilot organizations been helpful to you?*

A: We are blessed to have three active and involved CALPILOTS affiliated airport/pilot associations (RHVAA, PAAA, SCAPA), and I feel we have a good working relationship with all three groups. In addition we work closely with the EAA, CAP, the '99s, and the Santa Clara County Airmen's Association. The RHVAA has valiantly risen to the closure threat several times in the last 20 years. The SCAPA organization has grown substantially in the time I've been with the County and has taken a leadership role in the community around the South County/San Martin airport. The PAAA is a well connected group that is currently working with the City of Palo Alto to transfer responsibility of that airport from

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POLITICS AND TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT

RICK TAVAN
AOPA ASN VOLUNTEER FOR TRK



Truckee Tahoe Airport, once a jewel of Sierra Nevada aviation, has fallen prey to aviation opponents who took over the airport in the 2004 election with a declared mission of “mitigating the negative impacts of the airport.” TRK used to be a great airport with a few angry neighbors. Now it is a declining airport, still with a few angry neighbors, but they now trust the airport board to punish pilots for impinging their right to silence. In this report I will summarize how it happened.

As AOPA's Airport Support Network volunteer for TRK and a former director of Friends of Truckee Tahoe Airport, I attend most meetings of the Airport District Board and occasional meetings of its committees and the Town Council. I have come to understand the benefits and detriments of TRK's unusual governing structure. It is one of about nine airports in California that are chartered as special districts, akin to school and utility districts. Voters in Placer and Nevada Counties created the Airport District (TTAD) in 1958 to bring the benefits of aviation to the North Tahoe/Truckee region. The District has a board of five directors whose sole legal charter is to manage the airport.

In a typical airport owned by a county or municipality, local government has much more to do than manage airports, so it tends to delegate airport supervision to an appointed committee and paid staff. In an airport district, the board's only focus is to run the airport. Unfortunately, here at Truckee Tahoe Airport, this has led to micro-management of staff and a plethora of punitive measures that harm aviation without benefiting anyone.

For about 45 years, the TTAD Board consisted almost entirely of pilots. The pay is minimal, thanks are rare, and hours are long. The directors were essentially volunteers, donating their considerable efforts to the good of the airport. They had disagreements, of course, but there was rarely cause to question their dedication to aviation and the purpose for which the District was created.

Like most airports, TRK suffered encroachment by residential developments and some nearby homeowners came to resent the fact that airplanes make noise. Although airport staff was pretty good about taking the calls, there was little they could do to overcome the laws of physics or the FAA. In cooperation with neighbors they developed noise abatement procedures. Compliance, especially by locals, was pretty good. We received trucked fuel at the self-serve price in exchange for staying abreast of noise sensitivities, a practice the Board has since discontinued.

However, some neighbors were not impressed and began to crank up their cries to “Do Something about the unsafe nuisance” in their midst. Unfortunately, some of the pilot directors were not exactly *cum laude* graduates of Charm School. When confronted by naive complaints, some Directors tended to dismiss them peremptorily, citing FARs that gave us the “right” to do things that the neighbors disliked. They were a small minority – most of the directors were conscientious public servants – but it only takes one nasty remark to incense a citizen.

Not surprisingly, some neighbors did not take put-downs lying down. They organized a group of airport detractors called CARE and began canvassing for aviation opponents to take over and possibly close the airport. They recruited the most powerful politician in the region, an

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Truckee Airport continued...

individual who lived under the jet departure path, who promised to work toward “reducing airport utilization year after year.” Another candidate on their slate had declared at an earlier public meeting that “Aviation is too dangerous for our town. Airplanes shouldn’t be allowed to fly over Truckee.” In 2004, after a bitter and divisive campaign that often took the form of “Close the Airport!” rhetoric, their slate of three became the first non-pilot majority in TRK history. Two of them plus a 2004 campaign supporter won again in 2008.

An early action of the 2004 Board was to suspend FAA grant writing and hire a noted anti-aviation attorney to advise them on possibilities for “de-Federalizing” the airport. Annoyed that Federal grant money came with obligations such as keeping the airport open and being non-discriminatory, they asked if they could refuse the money and start instituting things like mandatory curfews and jet bans. To his credit, the attorney explained not only what they would have to do (a lot) but also how much it would cost (millions), how long it would take (decades), and the probability that it would succeed (near zero). He may also have helped the newly elected aviation neophytes to understand their legal responsibilities. To the Board’s credit, they dropped the de-Federalization idea and resumed accepting Federal grants.

But it takes more than FAA grants and user fees to fund an airport. The 1958 establishment vote had committed a tiny fraction of real estate tax revenue to aviation, corresponding roughly to transportation funds allocated by counties and municipalities to support their airports. Since 2005, however, the hostile directors have limited the percentage of tax revenue that may be used for aviation purposes. If the State goes through with a threatened tax grab against special districts, what remains could be insufficient. Then fees will increase

even more and, ultimately, only the rich will be able to base at TRK.

Nonetheless, the Board settled in, coined some harmless euphemisms, chartered a new community liaison group (ACAT) and conducted a survey of community attitudes toward the airport. (The survey, seeded with some pretty hostile questions and over-weighting the closest neighbors, showed 79% were positive or neutral about the airport. Take that, NIMBYs!) It began to look like the Board would do its job and the airport would be OK.

But it was too good to be true. As they acclimated to their roles, the Board began to look for loopholes in limitations to their authority. They found a big one: TRK had previously established a voluntary curfew. Compliance was pretty good but not good enough for these directors and their preferred constituents, the near neighbors. Although the courts and the FAA had prohibited mandatory curfews, TTAD invented a pernicious legal fiction. First, they hired a consultant to evaluate operations costs and coerced him to make hangars appear more costly than they are. So armed, they levied a huge increase in hangar rent and offered a slight “discount” to tenants who sign a pledge to observe the curfew. This created a cash flow situation equivalent to levying a fine for curfew violation. But since it was presented as a voluntary discount, it appears to be legal.

Adding insult to injury, they informed us that we had better not press arguments like safety or legality too hard because, if we prevail, they will simply discontinue the discount program, leaving the big rent increase in place. This would further harm all tenants, even those who can not or will not ever fly at night. Worse, this only impacts pilots who rent hangars here, exactly the demographic who historically best observed the original, voluntary curfew! The transient jets responsible for much of the traffic and the large majority of noise complaints

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Truckee Airport continued...

are not influenced by the curfew scam. The fiscally unnecessary rent increase, “voluntary discount” and stiffened curfew hours don’t actually reduce nighttime noise. But the neighbors are pleased that the bureaucrats are “Doing Something,” especially something that makes aviation more expensive.

It got worse. While engaged in a years-long study of how to improve the already extensive noise abatement procedures, ACAT recommended that the airport procure a sophisticated flight tracking

system to gather data about the paths that pilots actually fly. (Manual observation seemed too informal, inaccurate and inexpensive to be credible. Asking pilots where they

fly was a non-starter since the Board considers pilot testimony inherently unreliable.) After extensive research, some on-airport trials and lobbying FAA and FCC to issue precedent-setting authorization for a ground-based transponder interrogator, the Board decided to spend \$2,000,000 on a surveillance system (10 year lifetime cost estimate) that would provide very accurate tracks, not only of aggregate operations but also of individual flights.

Supplemented by surveillance cameras (another gift from the Board), the system would be technically sufficient to enforce mandatory NAPs. Of course, they acknowledge that *de jure* enforcement of flight paths by an airport is illegal. But in a chilling echo of the curfew scheme, airport staff stated in a newspaper interview their intention to offer “incentives” to pilots who faithfully observe the airport’s flight path wishes.



Truckee Airport facing NW

The curfew legal fiction was bad, but at least pilots make curfew decisions peacefully on the ground. We decide NAP deviations – say to avoid weather or traffic – in the air under high workload. We don’t need financial pressure complicating flight decisions.

Although the Board conceded, under pressure, a two year post-installation moratorium on enforcement incentives, the possibility remains that they will eventually create financial pressure to observe locally specified, locally policed, non-AIM procedures. It remains to be seen whether the Board applies the same

implementation criteria they demanded for the curfew – “No staff discretion, no leniency.” Preventing eventual financial pressure to fly specific paths regardless of weather and traffic is one of our most important current challenges.

Ironically, we are not worried about the few pilots who totally refuse to follow NAPs of any kind. They are rude at best but no amount of pressure is going to change their behavior. The frightening prospect is well-intentioned pilots who might be so diligent in their incented politesse that they fly into each other or something on the ground.

A second category of problem pilot has also emerged. In their pique over increased surveillance, a number of pilots have threatened to foil the system by flying low and turning off their transponders. Of course, this will also foil traffic alerting devices in other aircraft, compromising safety for us all. It could also violate FARs. It seems incredible that any pilot would be so naïve, but some are getting increasingly angry at this hostile Board and grasping at straws in senseless protest. It could be that noise and safety will both be compromised by flight tracking, even before it is de-

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Truckee Airport continued....

ployed.

It hasn't been all bad. In addition to spending millions of taxpayer dollars on surveillance, the Board also forgave \$8,000 in rent to sponsor a quieter prop for the busiest glider tow plane. This tiny revenue concession made a significant reduction in total airport noise signature and was the most effective action ever taken here in the name of noise reduction.

The Board has also spent millions buying up land in the airport vicinity, preserving a public golf course and a lot of open space and slowing the growth of potential airport opponents. They offered tepid support to resurrect the very popular Truckee Air Show, although that has not yet materialized. They threw a nice community picnic to mark the airport's 50th anniversary. And they have definitely improved relations with near neighbors and aviation detractors.

Some of the neighbors have calmed down somewhat, perhaps trusting that any board that aggressively persecutes pilots must be OK. The ACAT community group has continued positive dialog among pilots and non-pilots, although it was responsible for the outrageous flight tracking recommendation. And the chief non-pilot director graciously agreed to allow two hand-picked, polite pilots to win the 2006 election for the minority seats. Those two pilots have served nobly, winning some helpful

concessions, although they are unable to prevent the most egregious expenditures, excessive fees and gratuitous paperwork fostered by the majority.

So there you have it. A healthy airport annoyed the public which voted control over to a hostile board. That board is dedicated by charter to run the airport but appears more inclined to run it into the ground. Could this have happened at a municipal or county airport? Maybe. However, it seems unlikely in this age of State tax grabs that a city or county would take the time to consider, let alone decide to spend two million dollars on, a surveillance system of questionable utility.

I reach no conclusions here. TRK continues to operate and fulfill its mission of bringing the benefits of aviation to our beautiful region. But it is under attack by a shrewd, dedicated board that has sufficient time, resources and determination to find new ways each year to make aviation less affordable, less safe and less useful. Where will it all lead? That depends on whether we succeed in getting the Board and a few of our own under control.

CALPILOTS would like to thank Rick for writing this article. Rick is doing an excellent job reporting on the Truckee Airport and has been very active in watching over the airport and issues as they arise. We need many more like him in the state.

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the County back to the City. PAO has the good fortune to also have a Joint Community Relations Committee to assist with noise and other airport issues with the surrounding communities. We used that model to create a JCRC at RHV and hope to have the committee formulated in the near future. We also created a FBO/Users Group at RHV and at E16 to regularly meet with FBOs and various airport businesses and tenant groups to discuss airport and FAA air traffic control issues.

Go to the CALPILOTS web site to read the entire interview.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT



The California Pilots Association has been working with one of the distributors of the SPOT Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) to provide our members with a limited time discount on the SPOT PLB.

As you know, as of February 1, 2009, the international COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system discontinued satellite-based monitoring of the 121.5/243-MHz frequencies, in part because of a high number of false signals attributed with these frequencies. The replacement 406KHZ ELT can be very expensive, making a PLB an attractive option for some.

SPOT works much like OnStar but with added abilities. Say you're late getting back to the ramp and don't want your family to worry. Press "OK" and SPOT sends an "I'm OK" message along with your position pinpointed on a Google map to up to 10 cellular and e-mail contacts. Designate your favorite towing service to receive a "Help" message to initiate their services while your other contacts monitor the situation. In an emergency, press the "911" button to notify SPOT's 24/7 emergency-response office. SPOT updates your position every five minutes while they begin the work of notifying the rescue workers to bring you home safely.

Details will be available on the new web site in about a month. Pricing will be reduced from \$149 to \$109, plus annual coverage subscriptions. Please note: the offer will be available only through SPOT's distributor in Portland Oregon.

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