



# Airport Advocate

MAY/JUNE 2010

VOLUNTEERS PROMOTING - PRESERVING AND PROTECTING CALIFORNIA'S AIRPORTS

# CALPILOTS

10

Official Publication of the

28

## CALIFORNIA PILOTS ASSOCIATION

### WATSONVILLE PILOTS ASSOCIATION PREVAILS IN APPEALS COURT

**WATSONVILLE** — Watsonville shouldn't have changed runway safety zones to allow up to 2,200 homes to be built near its airport, a state appeals court ruled Monday.

The ruling upholds a 2008 decision by Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Paul Burdick that also concluded the city did not adequately analyze traffic and alternative options to growth before approving its 2030 general plan.

Monday's ruling means the city will have to rework the plan or appeal the decision to the California Supreme Court.

The city also will have to reinstate the runway safety zones, drastically reducing the number of homes that can be built, as well as preventing nursing homes, day care centers and schools from being built.

"I'm delighted," said lawyer Alexander Henson, who represented Friends of Buena Vista, one of the



*Watsonville Airport*

*Continued page 8*

**CALIFORNIA PILOTS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name..... Home Airport.....  
 Address..... City..... State..... Zip.....  
 Home Phone..... Cell.....  
 E-Mail..... Aircraft..... N#.....  
 Membership Type: Please circle one  New  Renewal  Individual \$35  Lifetime \$500  
 Pilot Organization \$50  Aviation Business \$50  Business Partnership \$250  
 VISA  MasterCard or  Check  
 Card #..... Exp. Date.....  
 Signature..... Date.....

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## GETTING INVOLVED

ED ROSIAK - PRESIDENT  
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The economy has started to recover, which is good (and bad) news. The good news is that more people will be able to fly, giving general aviation the needed shot in the arm it needs. The bad news is that the developers will resume their profit quest, at the expense of our airports, if we allow it. This issue of the newsletter has good news relating to the Oceano and the Watsonville airports.

As you have most likely heard, the Oceano Airport is under attack by a local developer who has a reputation for creating a "what if" development scenario and selling it to a larger developer who would implement against it. That's the bad news about what is currently happening at Oceano airport, with two of the un-requested proposed six meetings completed.

The good news is that two key local people responded immediately to the threat of the un-anticipated announcement by the developer. Locals Jolie Lucas and Mitch Latting quickly went to work notifying local government (the developer already knew that the County Supervisors were not interested in selling off the airport), local aviators, AOPA and CALPILOTS - basically everyone who would listen.

In a matter of days they had a plan to rally their new group, "The Friends of Oceano Airport". The first meeting was well attended by pro-aviation people, who by the way represented the majority of the meeting attendees.

Same thing happened for the second meeting which I attended. Jolie and Mitch are on the watch as are many other aviators' from local and neighboring communities, and some as far

away as Livermore. They all make us proud.

A little further north, the Watsonville Pilots Association (WPA), led against their airport threat by Dan Chauvet and Hal Zamora, won the appeal of their lawsuit decision in March. This after the City of Watsonville gambled that WPA couldn't afford a court action.

The city lost its bet and a *five year battle* when the judge again found for the WPA, and the other groups who took part. The city has one other possible recourse, but it is a long shot.

In both cases listed here a few determined and hard working individuals were able to rally many and lead the fight to protect one of their community's infrastructure assets, their airports. The good news is that we have dedicated people such as these to lead the way for the rest of us.

To be honest, at times I am at a loss with the lack of interest and involvement in the protection of the state's GA airports by the majority of the state's GA pilots. The benefits seem so obvious. Frankly, we continue to hear a lot of excuses.

Through our three tiered defense strategy, CALPILOTS has been calling for every pro-aviation person in the state to belong to their local, statewide, and national airport/pilot organizations - but it is *very* slow to happen. .

All it takes however, is to meet dedicated people like Jolie, Mitch, Dan, Hal and many more we have had the pleasure of working with, and hope is renewed. Our work toward the protection of our state's general aviation airports continues.

How about you - what have you done for your airport lately? How about stepping up and joining us, and the movement to protect GA airports - we can use your help.

## OCEANO AIRPORT - UPDATE ON DEVELOPER TARGETING AIRPORT

BY WWW.SANLUISOBISPO.COM

Los Osos developer Jeff Edwards' desire to see the Oceano County Airport closed and redeveloped has caused a groundswell of opposition from local pilots, about 50 of whom showed up to a meeting Wednesday in Grover Beach to protest any change to the airport.

Edwards organized the meeting to discuss options for the 58-acre county-owned airport. In an interview at the Rabobank in Grover Beach, he said that his plan is more than building commercial and residential development but also about creating a town center in Oceano and creating jobs.

He envisions the county leasing the property to private developers, not selling it, for uses other than aviation.

However, the county Board of Supervisors has made it clear the board has "no interest in selling the airport," as Chairman Frank Mechem said at the board's March 2 meeting.

Richard Howell, airport manager for the Oceano and San Luis Obispo County

Regional airports, added Wednesday: "And just for the record, we're not interested in leasing it either."

Edwards said that he's not discouraged by the supervisors' statements.

"This is not a decision," he said of the meeting. "It's about information."  
Prior to the meeting, Edwards hand picked a



*Oceano Airport*

group of Oceano residents and pilots from around the county to attend, and a Costa Mesa attorney presented a general overview of the process of closing a general aviation airport. That selection process outraged many of the pilots and prompted someone to call Grover Beach police and complain that the meeting was not being held properly.

"I have a vested interest in the airport," Tom Pecharich, who is working on an application that includes an aircraft maintenance facility at the Oceano airport, told Julie Tacker, a Los Osos resident who accompanied Edwards to the meeting. "I should be able to hear what you have to say."

He was not allowed inside.

Later, Pecharich said: "It's disappointing that they've asked for a public meeting and then won't let people with a vested interest at least hear what the proposal is. To hear that there's an unsolicited proposal to shut the airport down is very disconcerting to me."

Grover Beach Police Chief Jim Copsey, who showed up shortly after, said the meeting room could not exceed its capacity but recommended a larger facility be reserved if another meeting were to take place. The city had no involvement in the meeting.

Twenty-four people at the meeting listened as Steven M. Taber, an aviation and environmental law attorney, discussed various aspects of closing an airport, from environmental to liability issues.

He noted that if the county were to lease the airport to commercial or residential developers, it could take some of the money from that lease and put it toward the airport in San Luis Obispo.

Since 2000, the Oceano airport has received \$2.3 million from the Federal Aviation Administration and is applying for another \$450,000 grant to complete the environmental work required for the upgrades.

Planned upgrades for the airport include building additional hangars, creating additional aircraft parking and upgrading the facility's electrical system.

If the county ever wanted to close the airport, the FAA would have to determine whether the county would be released from the assurances the airport agrees to when it accepts funding. The general aviation airport – known to pilots by its FAA identifier of “L52” – has five commercial tenants, 14 stored aircraft and 30 spots for pilots to park and tie-down their aircraft, according to Howell. It was built in the 1950s. Edwards has organized five additional meetings featuring various experts such as a geolo-

gist, an ecologist, an economist, a climate change expert and a Coastal Act specialist, according to a news release he distributed last month.

His next meeting to discuss the airport's economic impact and its development potential will be held April 21.

“I can assure you that we'll be at these meetings and we'll oppose you all the way,” said Bill Dunn, vice president of local airport advocacy for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, who flew out from the association's headquarters in Frederick, Md. The association represents about 415,000 members in the United States, including about 50,000 pilots in California.

At the end of the meeting, Edwards was pressed on who was part of a volunteer ad hoc committee to explore various options for the airport. He told the group: “This is the committee right here.” To that, Dunn asked the room to raise their hand if they wanted the airport closed. No one did.

Later, Edwards said that the committee would be comprised of anyone wanting to participate. It also includes four Oceano residents who couldn't attend the meeting. He declined to give their names.

Read more: <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2010/03/17/1070847/dozens-protest-oceano-airport.html#ixzz0ipEyeCMp>

## AIRPORT ACCESS FEEDBACK - HEADS-UP

Read online *“I have never carried my pilot's license in my wallet, but I needed it yesterday. Returning to my plane at San Luis Obispo Airport, I couldn't get back on the tarmac without a driver's license ID and a pilot's license. I said my license was in the plane. They said that TSA would allow them to escort pilots to their planes without verification of license, so I got a ride in a golf cart. San Luis Obispo is Class D. Imagine what you have to do to get back to your plane at SFO”.*

## **CALPILOTS ACTION - OCEANO AIRPORT**

**Date:** March 12, 2010

**To:** Supervisors Frank Mecham, Bruce Gibson  
Adam Hill, Katcho Achadjianames Patterson

**Subject:** Oceano Airport (L52)

Honorable San Luis Obispo County Supervisors,

The California Pilots Association (CALPILOTS) is a state wide non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to promoting, preserving and protecting California's airports. We are aware of the recent unsolicited effort being made by a developer to replace the Oceano Airport with a condo/commercial development project. And, as is the usual case, the developer is using the same old strategy trying to convince the community that it would provide the county with a greater level of remuneration.

CALPILOTS is also aware of the fact that you, as County Supervisors, have opposed the concept for "redeveloping" Oceano Airport, and we wish to applaud you for your vision and support.

There are many reasons to continue to support and protect our community airports. Oceano Airport remains one of California's small jewels. It is a unique airport capable of bringing tourists to a location that is within walking distance to the beach. As you are aware, tourism pays off in the form of revenue that is distributed throughout the community.

Another important reason is community open space. The last thing that any community needs is to become another LA or San Diego with little open beach space left due to over devel-

opment. Further, due to the very unique location of the Oceano Airport, it offers less noise and safety issues than poised by a potential huge increase of cars and trucks operating in the proposed redevelopment area.

There is however, more to an airport than just bringing in tourists. Airports also provide jobs to the community, both on and off the airport. Whenever an economic study on an airport is done, it shows that the airport provides an economic boost to the community in the form of jobs and business. Added jobs will probably be a part of any redevelopment proposal that is presented to you, but these airport related jobs are more than everyday service jobs. And, they are not as dependent on consumer spending as retail related jobs.

One of the more important services that an airport provides is emergency services such as medical evacuation. Our experience is that developers will always *err* on their side of the equation stating that these services can be provided by the larger airport, San Luis Obispo airport in this case, but I ask you what you would prefer if one of your family members were in trouble at the beach, immediate access via the airport, or a wait for an ambulance. Having airport access convenient to the public insures that a person requiring immediate medical care will have a better chance due to rapid evacuation via airplane or helicopter.

Finally, as airport sponsor, you know that Oceano Airport has accepted federal funds from the FAA's Airport Improvement Projects. Acceptance of federal funds incurs an obligation to maintain the airport for a period of no less than 20 years thereafter. Only rarely has this obligation been waived, and it essentially requires an act of Congress to do so.

Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of your community and your airport. If there is anything that we can do to assist in the ef-

fort to keep your community asset, your airport, open please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely  
Edward Rosiak – President  
Carol Ford – VP Region 3  
Jack Kenton – VP Region 4  
California Pilots Association

cc:  
Richard Howell - Airport Manager  
Gary Cathey - Chief CALTRANS Division of Aeronautics  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)  
San Luis Obispo Pilots Association (SLOPA)  
[www.calpilots.org](http://www.calpilots.org)

## OCEANO UPDATE

Success starts with determination, and a plan driven by the desire to achieve positive results. The organization Friends of Oceano Airport was created as a result of a threat to the airport, and were the first to react to the ill advised plan of a local developer. His plan is to test the waters to determine how the community might react to his un-requested proposal to close the Oceano Airport and replace it with commercial and housing development. It just so happens that the Oceano Airport is walking distance from the beach. It is also a known fact that if left up to some developers, they would pave the entire west coastal beach areas to make a profit.



*Jolie Lucas and Mitch Latting  
Leaders of Friends of Oceano Airport*



*FoOA Organizers pass out protest signs*

While this story isn't over yet, the attack on the airport is now defensible due to the hard work of Jolie Lucas and Mitch Latting. In a matter of days these two were contacting their county officials, and organizing local pro-aviation people to the threat on the airport. They also contacted AOPA and the California Pilots Association. Bill Dunn of AOPA made a trip to attend the first in the series of six meetings called by the developer. CALPILOTS attended the second meeting which was even better attended by pro-aviation people than the first.

The general aviation community will be watching the outcome of the next four meetings to determine how much of a threat this locally known developer poses to the Oceano Airport.

This is another positive example of what one or two people can do. And it begs the question - *what have you done for your airport lately?*

*Watsonville continued*

plaintiffs in the case. “I did not understand why the city appealed at the time. I’m still mystified and the taxpayers of the city should be mystified as well.”

The City Council approved the 2030 general plan, a blueprint for city growth for the next two decades, on a close vote in 2006. The plan included a controversial expansion into a rural area north of the airport around Buena Vista Road and relied on reducing or eliminating safety zones around a secondary runway to clear the way for development.

The Watsonville Pilots Association, Friends of Buena Vista, a neighborhood advocacy group, and Sierra Club filed a lawsuit.

The issue has generated interest in the aviation community, which is concerned about the fate of small airports in the face of de-

velopment.

Pilot Dan Chauvet said news of the victory spread quickly. There’s a whole lot of happy people all over this state and in Oregon and Arizona ,” he said.

Chauvet said city leaders were warned they were putting pilots, residents and the airport’s future at risk when they reduced or eliminated safety zones associated with the secondary runway.

City officials argued safety provisions in a state aviation handbook were merely guidelines, not mandates.

The pilots maintained the city traded away its discretionary power over the handbook provisions to be exempted from state law requiring countywide commissions to oversee land-use decisions near airports. For Watsonville , they said, the guidelines are mandatory.

**Editor’s Note:** *Watch for an article on how these groups were successful and learn what you can do to insure your airport is safe.*

## **BILL INTRODUCED TO CORRECT FAA’S TTF POLICY**

The “Community Airport Access and Protection Act of 2010” was introduced March 11 to Congress by the Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa) to correct the FAA’s recent policy to prohibit “through the fence” access at any airport receiving Airport Improvement Grant funds. Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.) has introduced a similar bill on the Senate side.

The FAA prohibited “through the fence” (TTF) access in its Airport Compliance Manual Order 5190.6b, which was released last September without any public or alphabet group input. In addition, a Freedom of Information Act request made by the group ThroughTheFence.org revealed that no data,

studies, or non-FAA personnel’s opinions went into the new order, according to Brent Blue, ThroughTheFence.org’s founder.

The recently introduced bills allow off-airport through the fence access and prevents the FAA from considering an airport to be in violation of its grant assurances because of such access agreements. The legislation requires off-airport users to pay access charges similar to airport tenants and maintain their properties compatible with safe airport functions.

“This correction of FAA policy will help maintain the viability of small airports by encourage use while supporting safety and security.”

ThroughTheFence.org is encouraging all pilots and others interested in general aviation to contact their senators and representatives to support this important legislation for airports.

*For more information: [Throughthefence.org](http://Throughthefence.org).*



## GRAPHICAL-AIRMET SAFETY TOOL

The G-AIRMET was created to provide hazardous en-route weather information in a condensed and higher resolution product than had previously been available, according to Murphy. The new product may be used by itself or in conjunction with other in-flight products such as the legacy text AIRMET that has been produced for decades. Responses from a survey of pilots held from July 2007 to March 2010 showed a high pilot preference for the new tool.

In addition to providing forecasts on en-route weather hazards in graphic form, which is more readily interpreted than text, the G-AIRMET is depicted every three hours for up to 12 hours into the future. G-AIRMETS are routinely issued every six hours and updated as often as meteorological conditions warrant. G-AIRMETS provide information on several en-route aviation weather hazards including:

- \* Instrument flight Rule conditions (IFR)
- \* Mountain Obscuration
- \* Icing
- \* Freezing Level
- \* Turbulence
- \* Low Level Wind Shear (LLWS)

### \* Strong Surface Winds

G-AIRMETS are available in a variety of formats recommended by the World Meteorological Organization, including the “Binary Universal Form for the Representation of Meteorological Data” (BUFR) format. BUFR allows service providers and end users to customize G-AIRMET displays to individual specific applications and unique system configurations. G-AIRMETS are also available as Graphics Interchangeable Format images and in a java-based Internet website display that can loop and overlap different weather hazards. They can also be found on the Aviation Weather Center website.

“Our staff was quick to grasp the time saved by graphical depictions of weather phenomena,” Murphy said, “and the G-AIRMET is another in a growing line of en-route weather safety tools designed to take advantage of web-based and glass-cockpit technologies that allow pilots to see conditions at a glance rather than having to glean that information by reading lines of text. Pilots are telling us the G-AIRMET is proving to be a popular tool and one that will help improve aviation safety.”

For more information: NOAA.gov.

### AIRPORT ADVOCATE

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## LIVERMORE AIRPORT UPDATE

BY PAUL PETERSON  
LIVERMORE, CA



March 2010 - On Monday evening the Livermore City Council held a public meeting to review, discuss, and act on several different airport resolutions. There was a nice showing of concerned pilots from the aviation community. Of the nine citizens who addressed the City Council regarding the airport issues, all but two spoke in favor of supporting the airport resolutions. The main concern of those two who had concerns pertained to noise.

In considering the airport resolutions, the City Council had relatively few questions. The City Council was appreciative and complimentary of the excellent work that went into the resolutions from City staff. All of the resolutions passed with unanimous votes.

There were four separate airport resolutions reviewed and approved:

1. 5.01A This resolution set forth policies that would guide the Airport Commission and City staff in operational and development activities at the airport. An example of one of the policies is that the City does not intend to extend the existing runways.
2. 5.01B This resolution rescinds the 1975 Airport Master Plan. With the rescission of this Master Plan, the development at the airport would be governed by the General Plan Amendment and Airport Zoning Districts (5.01C), and the Airport Operational and Development Policies (5.01D).
3. 5.01C This resolution deleted references to the 1975 Airport Master Plan in the General Plan, and established two new zoning districts for the airport.

4. 5.01D This resolution focused on Airport Rules and Regulations. As an example the new rules and regulations address the proper use of hangars, project aircraft, lease terms and parking.

The City Council did ask City legal counsel for a brief "history" on the challenges and legal aspects that other airports have faced when considering curfews for night time operations at airports. It was the thought of Council Member



*Livermore Airport*

Jeff Williams that this information could be of use in future discussions regarding curfews.

At this public meeting there was no discussion regarding the pending "Livermore Airport Initiative." This initiative would require:

- A public vote for city or private airport expenditures in excess of \$100,000.
- Voter approval any time Livermore applies for a federal airport grant for the airport.

Organizers of this initiative have until May 19 to collect 4,500 signatures in order to qualify it for the next general election. I do not know how successful organizers have been to date in collecting signatures.



## 2010 CALIFORNIA AIRPORT LAND USE PLANNING HANDBOOK UPDATE

BY: RON BOLYARD - DIVISION  
OF AERONAUTICS

The California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook 2010 update is well under way. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been established and is made up of a wide group of airport stakeholders including ALUC Staff, Airport Managers, Noise experts, Attorneys and Caltrans personnel. The TAC has met twice so far.

We have sent out announcements to potential stakeholders including every City and County Planning department, airport, and ALUC in the State of California seeking involvement and assistance in the update process. Stakeholder meetings were recently held in Sacramento, Fresno, and Ontario. Along with discussion about noise and safety, we received some new concerns that are around many of the State's public-use airports. One of those concerns has to do with energy projects. We are receiving comments and concerns about solar panel projects, wind farms, and thermal plumes from power plants and cooling towers.

The consultant team is consolidating these comments as well as gathering and analyzing accident data. A draft of the Handbook will be available in June.

The Handbook is expected to be completed in December 2010. If you have any questions please contact

Ron Bolyard at [ron.bolyard@dot.ca.gov](mailto:ron.bolyard@dot.ca.gov)

### **Editor's Note:**

*DOA has been very beneficial to California and nationwide general aviation over the years. If you have never visited it I suggest that you check out the California Division of Aeronautics website. You will find a large resource of aviation information there.*

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/>

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