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CORSICANA AVIATION: HOW ONE MAN MADE A DIFFERENCE

By Rick Davenport
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

The resume of Dr. C. David Campbell reads like some incredible work of fiction: Physician, pilot, council member, mayor, scuba diver, board president, church leader, military veteran, philanthropist, senior aviation medical examiner, high school team doctor for 37 years and winner of the 2014 Aviator of the Year Award. He even has an airport named after him.

But, try to talk to Campbell (his friends call him Dr. Dave) about some of his accomplishments, and he'll modestly change the focus. Instead, he talks about the people he had the good fortune to meet during his 84 years, and simply says "I have been blessed," as if he were an unwitting bystander.

So, in order to realize the impact Campbell made on aviation and his community, you have to talk to the people who know him.

"Dr. Dave has been able to accomplish so many things for Corsicana and its airport because he takes on every project with determination and guts," says FBO Gary Farley, who also has a successful aircraft maintenance and inspection business. Farley gives Campbell the credit for getting him started 18 years ago.



TxDOT 2014 Aviator of the Year Award winner Dr. C. David Campbell by the terminal building at Corsicana's airport named in his honor.

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DAVE'S HANGAR



TXDOT WELCOMES NEW AVIATION DIVISION STAFF

We take a lot of pride in the fact that most employees who join TxDOT's Aviation Division remain with us for their entire career. We believe that is because our staff enjoy their jobs and are committed to the betterment of Texas aviation. However, time marches on and retirements do occur. During the past year, we have added four new employees to our aviation team that we would like to introduce to you.

Megan McLellan joins our Planning and Programming Section as the assigned planner to the West Texas Region



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airports. She graduated from the University of Louisiana at Monroe with a Bachelor's Degree in Aviation Management. Her background includes airport operations and security positions at Air Carrier airports, as well as the planning and development of airport projects for both general aviation and air carrier airports during her time at Louisiana's State Aviation Office. Although she calls Louisiana home, Megan was born in New Mexico and lived in El Paso for 5 years during her self-described "Army Brat" years. She has worked at airports of all sizes and is eager to provide a seamless transition and continued support for her newly assigned airports.

Aaron Ford joined the Aviation Division in December 2013 as our Property Acquisition Specialist, replacing Scott Bryan who has moved on to our Planning and Programming Section. Aaron, an Alabama native, graduated from Faulkner University in Montgomery Alabama and started his career in Land Acquisition and Right of Way in 2005 with the Alabama Power Company. He comes to TxDOT Aviation with several years of experience in property rights acquisition with oil and gas and electrical transmission and distribution companies. Aaron is fully engaged in the land acquisition process and looks forward to working with you to meet your airport expansion needs.

Trudy Hill, a member of our Grants Administration Section, is a Contract Specialist, responsible for overseeing Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Historically Underutilized Business Program compliance. She also administers grant and contracting processes for airport improvement projects in the Atlanta District as well as managing some of our planning projects. Prior to joining the Aviation Division, Trudy worked for a consulting engineering firm dealing with transportation related contacts.

Lisa Maraden is a contract specialist in our Grants Administration Section responsible for administering the Davis Bacon Act regulations in our construction projects. She also assists with the administration of our Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP) and supports internal IT initiatives. Lisa has 10 years of customer service experience



and 7 years of procurement and contract management experience. Her work experience with the public as an employee of the City of Austin and Williamson County and her knowledge of government purchasing, procurement, and contract management make her a great addition to our Grants Management section.

Megan, Aaron, Trudy and Lisa are committed to good customer service and look forward to meeting and working with our airport owners and aviation stakeholders throughout Texas. ♦

CORSICANA AVIATION *continued from pg. 1*

In addition to running a family practice that would span five decades, Campbell's love affair with aviation began when he was a teenager, in Crowell, Texas. His father was a wheat farmer and cattle rancher, who bought a Piper Cub, and later a Cessna 172, to help with business. Campbell, who wanted to be a doctor "since I can remember," learned to fly and instantly fantasized about combining both passions.

"A small plane was not only useful in locating lost cattle and chasing away the sandhill cranes that would eat the wheat crop, I realized that during duck season I could easily find where the birds were roosting," he said with a grin.

After medical school and two years in the Air Force as a flight surgeon, Campbell joined his brother and several other physicians to form a medical clinic in Corsicana. By the time he retired, Campbell's patients often included five generations of the same family.

"There are only two professions that allow you to become intimately involved with a family: a pastor and a physician. It was a privilege, and I loved it," Campbell said.

When he was nearing retirement, Campbell donated a lot of his medical equipment to an acute care facility in Mexico, restored an historic airport building near the terminal and moved his practice there, mainly to conduct aviation physicals. But his regular patients kept coming, too.

One of those long-time patients was Terry Franks, Corsicana's director of Public Works, who Campbell delivered 57 years ago.

"One day while I was getting a check-up, Dr. Dave heard a plane land on the runway. He got me and all the other patients to come outside and talked the stunt pilot into performing various acrobatic maneuvers for us," Franks says. "Dr. Dave has accomplished so much. I simply don't know how one person can squeeze all of that in."

Campbell arrived in Corsicana in 1957, and soon became involved in civic activities. He was elected to the city council, and later as mayor.

Throughout his career on the council, he had a keen interest in the city's airport, where 'there's always something to be done.' Campbell, known for his determination, would simply find a way to accomplish various goals, although finding the money for airport improvements, especially in those days, was not easy.

"Dr. Dave led the effort to get bond issues approved for a terminal and a new runway," Farley says. "He was able to keep the airport viable. Next to his family and his practice, aviation is his favorite thing in the world. Many of the improvements here would have never happened had it not been for him."

So, in 1985, during the dedication of its new terminal building, the city renamed the municipal airport 'C. David Campbell Field' — which was kept a secret from Campbell until the dedication ceremony unveiled a plaque with his name on it.

"It was a great day, and well deserved," Carolyn Pass, one of Campbell's daughters recalls. She and her two siblings, and even her mother, all became licensed pilots, at her father's urging. "We always had a plane growing up. That's how we traveled," she said. One of her fondest memories includes having her father "doctor" his young patients' baby dolls that became ill.

Daughter Cheri Hust remembers her dad flying her to Texas Tech when she began her freshman year. "I learned so many things about human compassion from my father," she says. "Every morning, dad called his patients that were having a birthday that day. He did that every day, and still does."

Campbell retired from his medical practice in 2009. "It was a sad day," Campbell says. "But there is a time for everything."

But he remains active in aviation, still serving as chairman of the airport advisory board.

"I still have my health, so I can do those things. I am a blessed man," he says. ♦

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK, BUT WORTH THE EFFORT: THE WAR EAGLES AIR MUSEUM

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Just across the Texas border in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, resides one of the largest collections of historic military and civilian aircraft, classic automobiles, and aviation and automotive artifacts in the Southwest. The War Eagles Air Museum, located at the Doña Ana County Airport west of El Paso, may not attract much attention with its location near non-descript warehouses and eight miles from Interstate 10, but it is certainly worth seeking out for a visit. Many of the 36 World War II, Korean War and Vietnam-era aircraft on display are of great historical significance. Inside the huge exhibit hanger (an enclosed area as big as a football field), visitors take a trip back in time as they stroll among the professionally restored American, British, German and Soviet aircraft. Many of the aircraft are in flyable condition.

Among the museum's collection include:

- P-51 Mustang,
- P-38 Lightning,
- P-40 Warhawk,
- F-4U-4 Corsair,
- DC-3 transport,
- F-86 Sabre,
- T-33 Silver Star and,
- MIG-15s.

The museum also has an impressive collection of 49 American, British, German, Japanese and Italian automobiles from days gone by, and several U.S. military vehicles, many of which are drivable. In addition to marveling at the beautiful condition and historical importance of the aircraft and automobiles on display, visitors can spend hours examining our hundreds of other artifacts—engines, instruments, weapons, photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, uniforms, scale models and more.

The museum started as a dream of West Texas engineer and oilman John T. MacGuire (1920-2011) and his wife Betty. Pilots themselves, John and Betty began to amass an impressive private collection of warbirds in the 1980s. As the collection grew, the MacGuires looked for a place to build their museum to display their collection to the public. Several cities vied for the honor of hosting what became War Eagles Air Museum, but the MacGuires decided to build it near their home in El Paso. The museum opened its doors in 1989.

The Museum's mission is to educate visitors about the history and technology of the aircraft and automobiles on display. For more information about the War Eagles Air Museum, please visit their website at <http://www.war-eagles-air-museum.com/> or find them on Facebook. ♦



A P-40 Warhawk inside the spacious War Eagles Museum hangar.

AOPA AT THE 2014 EAA AIRVENTURE IN OSHKOSH, WI

Yasmina Platt,
AOPA's Central Southwest Regional Manager

"AirVenture Oshkosh 2014 could be one of the best ever" said Jack Pelton, Chairman of the Experimental Aircraft of America (EAA). Attendance, airplane numbers and exhibitors' reactions and enthusiasm are all trending up significantly. Attendance on Saturday, for example, was up 20 percent over 2013. Aircraft arrival numbers were up significantly from a year ago. As of Sunday morning, there were more than 1,000 additional registered aircraft and Tuesday was full for aircraft parking – first time in a long time this has happened.

In addition to the seven AOPA regional fly-ins (www.aopa.org/fly-in), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) had a bigger and better location and presence at this year's AirVenture in Wisconsin. Nearly 20,000 people visited AOPA's main tent throughout the week. Your Association was right on the flight line across from the famous brown arch. AOPA's presence was expanded to include not only the many great AOPA brand experiences, products and services pilots have come to expect at the airshow, but also a new activities tent that 3,000 people visited where safety and educational seminars as well as special gatherings were held. Some of those special events included a Pilot Town Hall with President Mark Baker, a Rusty Pilots seminar with 90 attendees, an Airport Support Network (ASN) Volunteer appreciation dinner, a flying club meeting, and an ADS-B learning session.

AOPA celebrated the organization's 75th anniversary with cupcakes one day and AOPA President Mark Baker held several gatherings to discuss the latest in AOPA initiatives, industry issues, etc with members. Pilots were also able to take a photo and appear on the cover of AOPA Pilot magazine. Disney's "Planes: Fire and Rescue" had an interactive display for kids to play and Jay simulators were available for adults and kids to try. If that was not enough... AOPA also had a new outdoor courtyard area to relax, enjoy conversation and build new friendships. Many took advantage of this area as an airshow viewing area as well.

Couldn't attend Oshkosh this year but wish you could have? You can catch a summary of the week's show and highlights at www.aopa.org/live. Look for the "Live This Week" videos that includes "AirVenture" in the title.

Follow your AOPA Regional Twitter feed at <https://twitter.com/AOPACentralSW> or [@AOPACentralSW](https://twitter.com/AOPACentralSW) for up-to-date information regarding news, developments, initiatives, and issues in Texas. ♦



AOPA's Central Southwest Regional Manager Yasmina Platt riveting the One Week Wonder Zenith aircraft from Mexico, Missouri. Photo courtesy of AOPA.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Mineral Wells Airport	\$867,802	Construction services to replace medium-intensity runway lights Runway 17-35 and Runway 13-31; install precision approach path indicators-2 Runway 17-35 and flight check precision approach path indicator 2 on Runway 17-35 and 13-31.
Fort Worth Meacham International Airport	\$2,064,736	Construction services to roto-mill, overlay, and mark Runway 17-35; overlay portions of taxiway C between Runway 17-35 and taxiway B; replace airfield lighting control and monitoring system; replace 2 precision approach path indicator -4 Runway 17-35; replace medium-intensity runway lights Runway 17-35; and upgrade Runway signage and new regulator.
Higgins-Lipscomb County Airport	\$727,810	Construction services to reconstruct apron and stub taxiway and install segmented circle.
Alice International Airport	\$5,328,740	Construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 13-31 and 17-35; reconstruct south section taxiway A and taxiway B at Runway 17; rehabilitate taxiway A, B, C, D, E; rehabilitate apron; reconstruct fuel apron; construct run-up pad at Runway 31; regrade east boundary drainage ditch; replace medium-intensity runway lights Runway 13-31 and Runway 17-35; install medium-intensity taxiway lights at Runway 17-35 and Runway 13-31; install precision approach path indicator-2 Runway 17-35; install precision approach path indicator-4 Runway 13-31; install new equipment vault and regulators for runway lights and taxiways lights; replace lighted wind cone and install four supplemental wind cones; replace airfield guidance signs and add install medium-intensity taxiway lights on taxiway system.
Marian Airpark	\$1,216,210	Engineering and design for rehab; construct and mark runway 17-35; construct connecting taxiway to runway 17 end.
Reagan County Airport	\$2,677,500	Construction services to construct turnaround Runway 16; pave crosswind Runway 9/27; mark Runway 9/27; install fence; clear and grub 15 acres in runway protection zone Runway 9 and environmental studies.
Cleburne Regional Airport	\$1,638,870	Construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 15-33; rehabilitate terminal apron, hangar area 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; rehabilitate parallel taxiway A and B and cross taxiways; and replace medium-intensity runway lights.
Palacios Municipal Airport	\$156,140	Design and construction services to repair faulting spalling concrete slabs on Runway 13-31; renumber Runway 17/35 and Runway 08/26.
Port Isabel- Cameron County Airport	\$600,000	Design and construction services for new Jet A and 100LL fuel farm system.
Eagle Lake Regional Airport	\$1,107,530	Construction services to construct two nested T-Hangar units; hangar access taxiway; and reconstruct fuel farm apron.
Slaton Regional Airpark	\$759,820	Construction services to construct parallel taxiway.

Bowie Municipal Airport	\$953,510	Construction services to reconstruct south parallel taxiway Phase 2; concrete drainage slope at hangar taxilanes; replace runway exit signs; and mark striping at fuel facility.
Mid-Way Regional Airport	\$2,343,510	Construction services to construct new north apron and new middle apron; expand south apron and construct automobile parking lot.
Franklin County Airport	\$871,330	Construction services to overlay and mark Runway 13-31.
Midland Airpark	\$1,245,000	Design and construction services to construct two 6-unit T hangars and improve drainage for two new T-hangars.
Albany Municipal Airport	\$367,120	Construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35; rehabilitate apron, parallel taxiway and stub taxiways; and replace wind cone.
Giddings-Lee County Airport	\$1,102,400	Design and construction services to construct T-Hangar access and construct 10 unit T-hangar.
Goldthwaite Municipal Airport	\$1,089,316	Construction services to construct T-hangars and T-hangar apron; and construct access road.
Perry Lefors Field	\$4,507,080	Construction services to rehabilitate and mark Runway 5-23; overlay and mark Runway 17-35; rehabilitate hangar access taxiways; rehabilitate parallel and cross taxiways for Runway 5-23; rehabilitate terminal area apron and hangar access taxiways; and overlay parallel and cross taxiways for Runway 17-35.
Mid Valley Municipal Airport	\$4,713,070	Construction services to overlay and mark 13-31; widen existing runway to 75 feet; rehabilitate east side hangar access taxiway and terminal apron; overlay east side taxiway; extend medium-intensity runway lights Runway 13; relocate utilities; improve drainage and install fence.
Major Samuel B. Cornelius Field	\$2,055,850	Construction services to construct concrete fueling pad; reconstruct hangar access taxiways and fuel apron; reconstruct public apron; reconstruct, rehabilitate and mark taxiway A; rehabilitate and mark Runway 2-20; rehabilitate and rehabilitate and mark taxiway B and C.
Fort Worth Spinks Airport	\$2,836,500	Design and construction services to reconstruct taxiway C, G and H; construct temporary access to Runway at taxiway D; construct new parallel taxiway to C to allow access to taxiway C; construct a new access taxiway at taxiway J; apron joint seal replacement; construct northwest service road; drainage study at east side development area; drainage improvements to Stone Road, Wing Way Road, building and auto parking at West side; drainage improvements to ditches from terminal apron to south T-hangars; install strip drain East edge apron; and install gate northwest perimeter fence.
Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport	\$4,186,800	Construction services to construct terminal apron; relocate portion of cross taxiway E and G; install medium-intensity taxiway lights and signs for taxiway E and apron.

LOCATION, STATE-OF-THE-ART FBO, HISTORY, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS: LONE STAR EXECUTIVE AIRPORT HAS IT ALL!

By Chris Sasser
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

After several major upgrades and more on the horizon, a bustling facility with a historic past is poised to become the premiere reliever airport serving the north Houston area.

Lone Star Executive Airport (KCXO), located about 25 miles north of George Bush Intercontinental Airport, is in a prime location to take advantage of the area's booming economic growth. This fact was not lost on Airport Manager Scott Smith.

"What we see is business increasing on the north side of Houston, both domestic and international," said Smith. "There are several businesses in the Woodlands area that have international connections, and that is driving our desire to have a customs facility."

The \$2.4 million customs facility at Lone Star will enable international flights to come directly to the airport, which is located about 17 miles from the growing business corridor in The Woodlands. The closest customs facility to The Woodlands now is at George Bush Intercontinental Airport, about an equal distance away.

The customs facility is one of several major upgrades that the airport is undergoing that will further modernize the facility.

Galaxy FBO

In January, a new state-of-the-art, fixed-based operation (FBO) — Galaxy FBO — opened a corporate and general aviation facility located at the south corner of the airport.

The new facility occupies 15 acres just at the end of Runway 14-32. Located at



A view of Lone Star Executive Airport from their air traffic control tower.

2971 Hawthorne Drive, it uses the new South Entrance of the airport on North Loop 336.

The massive construction broke ground in October 2012. More than 13,000 truckloads of fill were imported to raise the ground elevation; 45,000 yards were excavated for onsite drainage and detention; and 21,000 tons of cement-stabilized, crushed concrete were used for the base for the apron/ramp.

"The new facility will provide visitors with an impressive gateway to Montgomery County — Conroe, The Woodlands and surrounding North Houston destinations — as well as a great experience for the flight crew," said Jeremy Gee, vice president of Galaxy FBO. "Award-winning Galaxy FBO has been conducting business at the Lone Star Executive Airport since 2006, and the new facility will allow us to efficiently grow our business as we improve service levels to exceed customer expectations."

Features of the new Galaxy FBO facility include:

- A three-story 45,000 square-foot building
- Two 40,000 square-foot hangars
- Arrival/departure canopy measuring 168 feet wide x 101 feet long
- 45,000 square yards of apron/ramp space with 24 three-point concrete imbedded tie-downs
- Phillips 66 fuel service

The Galaxy FBO facility occupies a 17,000 square-foot space — the entire first floor of the three-story office building — which houses pilot and VIP lounges, conference rooms and offices. Approximately 5,000 square feet of the second floor is leased to Wing Aviation, a regional Private Aircraft Management and Part 135 Charter services company, for its North Houston operations.

Two identical hangars provide adequate space for approximately 38,000 square feet of aircraft storage, with 28 feet of door clearance height (42 feet 6 inches eave height). Each hangar has more

than 12,000 square feet of additional space for parking, tug storage and other aircraft-related equipment. The hangars' 296-foot width accommodates any private aircraft on the market today. One of the hangars will be used as a 'community' hangar for Galaxy FBO transient and base customers, and the second hangar is available for lease to a flight department.

Located on the third floor of the Galaxy FBO, the Black Walnut Café Conroe features a patio view overlooking Runway 14-32.

Runway Extension

In 2013, the airport sold 1.2 million gallons of fuel and is on track to sell more this year. That compares with 1.1 million gallons in 2006 and a low of 673,500 gallons in 2009.

Hangar space increased to 773,000 square feet this year from 174,000 square feet in 1996. Smith said \$42 million have been invested in capital projects and operating costs at the airport since 2007. Citing more than 360 jobs on-site and 21,000 visitors annually, he estimated that the airport contributes \$33 million to the local economy.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council estimates that economic impact will increase to about \$50 million by 2030.

To meet anticipated demand, Smith said, a new taxiway is being built and the runway is being extended to 7,500 feet, a \$17 million expansion project set to be completed by November. "A longer runway can carry more passengers or fuel to get to a destination," said Smith. "It will put us where we should be to serve the market we have."

Remembering Where They Came From

While Smith is obviously excited about the potential for new corporate customers, he is quick to point out the importance of maintaining what he refers to as "grassroots aviation" — recreational pilots who fly for sport.

"Smaller, general aviation planes are a vital part of this airport," said Smith. "We have a rich history that is important to embrace."

Part of the airport's history is General Aviation Services, a family-run business at Lone Star since 1981. General Aviation is one of the airport's three FBOs.

The recently remodeled General Aviation now features a concession area behind a wooden bar, a living room-type area for pilots to use between flights, and apron space to fuel aircraft. A new room sectioned off on the second story overlooks the runways, and has a conference table to accommodate the influx of corporate business.

Owner Bob Covington noted, "The economy's improved and there are a lot of things going on. Come help yourself to a fresh cookie when you stop in!"

Covington's other claim to fame is being a stunt pilot in the 2001 war film Pearl Harbor. He has a fully restored Japanese Type 00 Carrier Fighter (known as a "Zero") and is a member of the Commemorative Air Force.

The airport's third FBO, Wing Jet Center, is operated by John and Brian Wing (father/son). Wing Jet Center opened in 2002 by building a 40,000 sq. ft. hangar with FBO facilities and

three aircraft paint hangars which they have since converted to corporate hangars, and recently added a fourth.

"Wing Jet has substantially invested in the airport and is a vital part of the services we offer," said Smith. "They are the military contract fueler as well and service some important corporate-based clients."

Control Tower and Beyond

In May 2009, the airport opened an air traffic control tower that was constructed at a cost of \$2.4 million. TxDOT funded 90 percent of this amount through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Montgomery County provided the remaining 10 percent on the 20-month project.

In his remarks during the opening ceremony, TxDOT Aviation Division Director David Fulton noted the importance of the new tower.

"You'll see the biggest benefit through jobs and new businesses," Fulton said. "It's hard to attract that if you don't have a quality airport. You've got one here."

Fast-forward five years to the current day, and Smith is realizing the fruition of his, and the surrounding community leaders', efforts.

"We are actually getting down to the point where there are just a couple of



The new Galaxy FBO building at Lone Star Executive Airport.

small parcels left on the west side of the airport," said Smith. "There's still developable area near the Galaxy building. Our long-term goal is to grow our corporate business."

Additional Airport Facts

- Lone Star provides a facility for locally based businesses, and serves as a destination for corporate and business aviation. The airport contributes more than \$33.3 million to the economic development in the region.
- The FAA has designated Lone Star as a "reliever" airport to George Bush Intercontinental Airport, and recognizes Lone Star as an airport of national significance for its role in handling non-airline traffic.

- Local taxing entities receive more than \$1 million annually through property, business/personal property, and aircraft taxes.

For additional information, please visit:

Lone Star Executive Airport, http://www.mctx.org/dept/departments_a-b/airport/index.html

Galaxy FBO, <http://galaxyfbo.com/>

General Aviation Services, <http://generalaviationfbo.com/about.htm> ♦

CREATING JOBS, SAVING LIVES

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

While driving down Highway 67 from Marfa to Presidio, it's easy to be mesmerized by the scenic landscape. The route crosses the Chinati Mountains, passes the ghost town of Shafter, then descends into the Rio Grande Valley at Presidio. It's a marvelous drive through rolling hills. It's also easy to get a sense of the remoteness of Presidio.

The Chihuahuan Desert isolates Presidio. The nearest commercial airline connections are in El Paso and Midland, each around a four-hour drive.

"For a town our size, we are considered the most remote city in the continental United States," said Chase Snodgrass, airport manager for Presidio County, which includes Marfa Municipal and Presidio Lely International.

It was this remoteness that led Snodgrass, a retired Border Patrol station chief and aviator, to work with city officials toward improving the Presidio Lely International Airport (KPRS).

Recently, a new global positioning system (GPS) instrument approach procedure was installed at the airport. The installation of the system increases medical and tourism flight access to the airport by enabling pilots to improve their preflight planning.

"It wasn't an easy process," chuckled Snodgrass. "I finally told the company I was working with that if planes could fly into Telluride (Colorado), then they should be able to fly into Presidio."

According to Snodgrass, the area around Presidio, which sits at the foothills of Big Bend State and National Parks, attracts many biking enthusiasts from across Texas and the country.

The road that connects Presidio to Big Bend is FM 170, known to locals as the "River Road" as it runs adjacent to the Rio Grande River. Much of the route passes through Big Bend Ranch State Park where the road becomes more mountainous with sharp curves and steep grades.

"All it takes is an unfortunate crash or someone getting bitten while hiking," said Snodgrass. "And the need for immediate medical attention is apparent since it's almost two hours by land to the closest hospital in Alpine."

In the past, if someone required attention for a traumatic injury beyond what the Alpine hospital could handle, that patient would be driven to Alpine and then flown to El Paso. With the new GPS instrument approach procedure in place, critical care patients can be flown to trauma centers from Presidio — saving time and lives. And save lives it has. In the nine months since the equipment installation, mortality rates have dropped from 30 percent to less than 1 percent. Plans also are on the drawing board for an emergency medical services (EMS) station at the airport since city and county officials have identified air ambulance service as a critical need for Presidio.

"We don't have a doctor in Presidio," said Carlos Nieto, special projects coordinator for the City of Presidio. "With a population our size (5,106) that is aging and our location, this airport is a vital part of our community."

Nieto, a lifetime resident of Presidio who served as school board president for several decades, is quick to point out the necessity of the continued revitalization of the airport.

"This airport sat virtually dormant for many years," said Nieto. With the help of Dave Fulton and the Texas Department

of Transportation (TxDOT), we are well on our way toward becoming a destination airport. This airport is an asset, and we want to spread the word to our community and beyond.”

Recently the airport installed an improved fuel system. The project was paid for using local government entity funds, half of which TxDOT’s Routine Airport Maintenance Program will match.

According to Snodgrass, the upgraded pumping system increases the volume of fuel from 15 gallons per minute to 100 gallons per minute, which will also help to attract more business to the airport.

“It was a much-needed upgrade,” Snodgrass said. “We had the old system for about 15 years. It worked, but we were losing business. Pilots of larger aircraft didn’t want to wait around for 45 minutes while they refuel.”

The new system, Snodgrass explained, will be an asset to EMS aircraft.



Chase Snodgrass, airport manager for Presidio County, which includes Marfa Municipal and Presidio Lely International and Carlos Nieto, special projects coordinator for the City of Presidio.

During the 2008 flood, for example, military Chinook helicopters were forced to refuel in Alpine due to the lack of a system capable of filling them. Snodgrass estimates that the amount of jet fuel used at that time at around 50,000 gallons.

“There was not only a loss of revenue at the airport, but a delay in time for the helicopters to get to where they were needed,” said Snodgrass.

Along with increasing the system’s pumping capabilities, the upgrade also includes the installation of longer fuel hoses that allows larger aircraft to refuel, and an improved filtration system. The airport also recently added an Automated Weather Observing System, further enhancing the airport’s safety and amenities.

Future plans include the rehabilitation of the main runway, ramp and taxiways.

After a delicious lunch at El Patio, Nieto drove me around Presidio and proudly showed off the community’s schools and baseball field (baseball is the Number 1 sport for Presidio youths).

“Even though we are a poor school district, we are very proud of our excellent teachers,” said Nieto, who has a master’s degree in Public Health in Health Care Administration from the University of California at Berkeley.

In 2012, CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman visited Presidio to report on the Presidio Rocket Club, organized by science teacher Shella Condino. In his report, Hartman noted that “Presidio probably has more aspiring aeronautical engineers than any other town in America.” (To view this story, please visit <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/for-texas-rocketry-club-and-their-inspirational-teacher-the-sky-is-just-the-beginning/>)

As I prepared to leave Presidio, I received directions to River Road and Nieto asked if I had plenty of gas and water. While asking this question, he peered through the window to see for himself. Meanwhile, Snodgrass advised me to “stop at the top of Big Hill overlooking the Santana Basin for the same view Kevin Costner had in Fandango.”

“You are welcome here any time,” said Nieto. “Bring your kids with you next time you come.”

And there will definitely be a next time visit to this historic and memorable place. ♦



Texas Department of Transportation

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2015 INTERNATIONAL AVIATION ART CONTEST – WORLD AIR GAMES

This year's theme is "World Air Games." Artwork is judged, at least in part, for its creative use of this year's theme in relation to the aviation world.

All children in the age groups shown below are encouraged to participate in the contest, even if they are related to officials or employees of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale or any of its member organizations.

Junior Category, born between Jan 1, 2005 and Dec 31, 2008

Intermediate Category, born between Jan 1, 2001 and Dec 31, 2004

Senior Category, born between Jan 1, 1997 and Dec 31, 2000

Entries in each age group are judged and state winners and runners-up are selected. Winners receive a certificate and recognition from their state. The top three entries in each age group are forwarded to Washington, D.C. to be judged in the national competition.

Return entries to:
Texas Department of Transportation
Aviation Division
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
Attn: Becky Vick

Entries must be postmarked by Friday, January 23, 2015.
For more information, contact Becky Vick at
becky.vick@txdot.gov or 512-416-4508.