

Frustrated Illinois Valley Airport users seek new direction

(Continued from page 1) suggested that possible fuel options be placed on the agenda for a future board meeting.

“Its a big deal for this airport,” Hill said.

The Lingerin Issue

Grossi has managed the county’s two airports for more than nine years. He’s seen three different sets of advisory boards formed in that time, with many of the same issues left unresolved.

During a Tuesday, Dec.

A series of rumors has spread about the possible installation of a 6-foot-high perimeter fence around Illinois Valley Airport off Hwy. 199 between Cave Junction and O’Brien.

During a Josephine County Board of Commissioners meeting Thursday, Dec. 17 with county legal staff, Commissioner Sandi Cassanelli stated that she heard a rumor that the fence materials already had been purchased and stored.

But county Airports Manager Alex Grossi said that is simply not the case.

He said that the county has received two grants for a fence. The first was for engineering, and another was for the first phase of construction.

A third grant would go toward completion of the project, Grossi said, adding that materials for the fence have not been purchased.

The fence proposal is in the engineering-and-design phase, Grossi said. It also is being examined by the I.V. Airport Advisory Board.

“It’s stagnated there while the committee puts in its input,” Grossi said. “It was further along, but the advisory board wanted to re-address the issue and take a closer look at it.”

While the advisory board can make recommendations on the fence and its design, Grossi said that the Federal Aviation Administration ultimately will be charged with making those decisions.

“FAA is the funding source, and they do have the final word on what they will spend the money on,” Grossi said. “They do take citizen input, but a secure perimeter is the objective.”

The proposed fence already has caused some consternation, as Grants Pass attorney Jim Dole has written a letter to the county on behalf of two clients regarding the layout of the enclosure.

Dole is representing I.V. Airport tenants Kurt Krauss and George Savord.

Krauss, who owns and leases ground at the facility, said that his biggest concern is that he does not want the fence to be built near the two hangars that he utilizes, as that would restrict his access.

it’s responsible for stifling growth and development at the valley site.

“You have to have a base of aircraft that would utilize the fuel,” he said. “There’s only so long you can keep fuel, quality-wise.

“If you don’t have a base of users, you’re betting on all your fuel sales, or most, coming from outside sources. But without an attraction of some type — a business, tourism, or even a restaurant — you can’t attract aircraft just for fuel.”

Museum Advocates Continue Work

Providing an attraction to the airport is exactly what Roger Brandt has been working on during the past four years.

He is among those who have sought to establish a smokejumper museum at the airport to commemorate its past as the Siskiyou Smoke-jumper Base.

The efforts of Brandt and other museum advocates have gained some traction as of late. A lease agreement for the use of two airport buildings has been drafted and submitted to county officials.

At this point, the lease would be for five years.

Grossi said that the smokejumper group has made some proposed changes to the original lease document, which will have to be reviewed by the county legal department and board of commissioners.

“It would be a given that as long as its not costing the airport money, it could benefit the airport greatly,” according to Grossi.

During the Dec. 28 airport advisory board meeting, museum advocate Gary Buck stated that this is the third time that group has submitted

a lease to the county.

Other Problems Persist

Longtime Illinois Valley resident Kurt Krauss spent nearly a decade operating his business, Krauss Craft, adjacent to the airport. But for several years, his firm has been headquartered at the North Valley Industrial Park in Merlin.

Krauss said that several factors led him to relocate his business. Among them is the cost of transporting goods to and from the valley, which is somewhat remote being approximately 30 miles from Interstate 5.

“That’s a big hindrance,” he said. “When you talk about industry, it’s too tough to deal with it out there.”

The Merlin location gives Krauss Craft immediate access to I-5, which Krauss said is important to his operations.

“Being on the interstate is huge,” Krauss said.

He said that other issues include a limited workforce in Illinois Valley, as well as the overall lack of space at the airport. To put it simply, Krauss Craft outgrew what was available.

“We’ve quadrupled our size since we were out there,” Krauss said.

All those factors forced Krauss to move his business, though he said that wouldn’t have been his first choice.

“I still have a lot of ties to the valley. I still own a house out there and have a lot of family out there,” he said. “I love the valley, and I’m supportive of it. But all the things we needed weren’t there.”

Other companies once based at the airport that have since left include Associate Air, and Sky Research, now located at Ashland Airport.

Visions for the Future

Russell admits that he has been somewhat agitated throughout the years at the airport lack of development.

“The airport should grow,” he said. “It should be busy and happy, and it’s not.”

Last summer, smokejumper museum volunteers repainted and resurfaced the airport parachute loft building. Russell said it took nine years of pleading with county officials to finally make it happen.

“Why did it take that long?” Russell said. “Why are enthusiastic volunteers thwarted and frustrated? I don’t get it.”

Russell blames what he calls “special interests” and “bureaucracy” for the lost potential. Instead of the status quo, Russell said, he would like to see the site develop into an “aviation recreation destination.”

Most pilots fly for fun, Russell said, adding that the fastest-growing segment of aviation is the flying of sport aircraft. FAA has created a category between Cessna and ultralight aircraft to reflect that trend, Russell said, and I.V. Airport is positioned to benefit from it.

“People come from Iowa to learn how to fly here,” Russell said.

Another trend identified by Russell is that of “air camping.”

“That’s a big thing for pilots,” he said. “They love to fly someplace where there’s not a strip mall and camp under the wings of their airplanes.”

Krauss said that despite the setbacks, I.V. Airport does have some advantages. The weather is more consistently clear than it is at the Grants Pass Airport, he said, adding that building more hangars at the facility may attract more pilots to base their aircraft there.

The advisory board’s next meeting is set for Jan. 25 at 5:30 p.m. in Cave Junction City Hall. During that gathering, board members will allow members of the public to sound off of on what the vision, goals and mission for the airport should be.

“Public input is always welcome and appreciated,” Grossi said. “The advisory board is kind of a focus group to organize all those thoughts and basically be a voice of the community to aid the commissioners and myself in the management of the airports and to establish policies based on public input.”

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~ Ellen Glasgow ~

Obituaries

Betty Ann Scott

Betty Ann Scott, 78 of Newport, Ore., died Dec. 21, 2009 at her home.



She was born in 1931 to Ray & Lorene Nickerson in Modesto, Calif.

Her occupations ranged from bookkeeping in the commercial real estate and insurance industries, to managing a commissary in Saudi Arabia. For the past five years, she especially enjoyed working at the front desk for Elizabeth Street Inn in Newport.

She loved and appreciated her time with her family, her extensive worldwide travels connected to her husband Jack’s employment, and living in Newport where she grew numerous friendships. She particularly enjoyed her involvement with the Red Hat Society.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ray & Lorene Nickerson.

She is survived by her husband of more than 54 years, Jack L. “Lee” Scott; sons, Loren, of Sacramento,

and Tyler, of Greer, S.C.; two sisters, Patricia Verstegen, of Joseph, Ore., and Jeanne Brosseau, of Cathlamet, Wash.; one granddaughter; two grandsons; two great-granddaughters; and numerous nieces and nephews.

No memorial service is planned.

(Sponsored Memorial)

Sharon Coots

Sharon Billman Coots, 68, of Cave Junction, died Monday, Dec. 28, 2009 at Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass.

A service was held on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010 at the RCC Belt Bldg. in Kerby.

Helen G. Loban

Helen Gertrude Loban; 92; died on Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010 in McMinnville, Ore.

A memorial service will

lences, visit macyand-son.com. Memorial contributions can be made to Hospice or United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Loban, daughter of Harry & Dama Duncan Floyd, was born on Jan. 15, 1917 in Kerby. She graduated from high school in Kerby in 1935. She also attended the San Marina School for Girls in Los Angeles before moving back to Holland, Ore.

She worked as a telephone operator in Cave Junction. On Nov. 6, 1949 she married Lawrence Loban in McMinnville where she has resided since.

She was a member of the United Methodist Church and Loyalty Circle; life member

of Eastern Star in Kerby, Knowles Chapter #12 in McMinnville; 50 year member of Daughters of Nile; Zuleima Temple #13 and longtime member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. She enjoyed knitting, reading, bird watching, boating and sewing.

Mrs. Loban is survived by her son John Ulrich of Lakeside, Mont.; daughter Laura Hornibrook, of Tigard; two nephews and several cousins. She was preceded in death by her husband, Lawrence in 2003; grandson Dean Ulrich in 1998; and brother Richard Floyd.

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Saturday - 4:30 to 5 p.m.

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Saturday Worship 11 a.m.
Prayer/Praise 7 p.m. Tuesday
Pastor Verne Hyland
Church 592-3218
Madrone Adventist School
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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
209 S. Junction Ave., CJ
Sacrament Meet - 9 a.m.
Sunday School - 10:20 a.m.
Priesthood, Relief Soc. - 11:10 a.m.
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1st Counselor
Larry D. Hammersmith
(541) 592-3919
2nd Counselor Dan Fiske
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CAVES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Pastor Jeremy Nehf
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Email: nehffilim@gmail.com
Sunday Service - 10:30 a.m.
Lorna Byrne Middle School
Gym, 101 S. Junction Ave., CJ

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East River Street
& Lewis Court, CJ
Pastor Don Torala
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Sunday Worship - 10 a.m.
Tuesday Youth group - 6 p.m.
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Wednesday Bible Study
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