

Medford Airport Improvement Attests Military Value

\$120,000 PROJECT JUSTIFIES CITY'S LONG CONTENTION

Payroll From Various Agencies at Field Over \$50,000 Year; Use Increases

Recent war department approval of a \$120,000 WPA improvement project again centered attention on the Medford municipal airport, considered by city and Jackson County Chamber of Commerce officials as one of the community's greatest assets.

Along with other uses and values, the airport now is recognized as having military importance. That is how the war department's approval of the improvement project is interpreted. If the airport, it was pointed out, were of minor or no value as a military field, the war department would not be interested in spending any money on it, for the department is not guided by sentiment in expending defense funds.

Long Effort
The war department's approval is viewed as a justification of the contention of the city and the chamber of commerce that the municipal airport is strategically situated from a military point of view. For several years the city administration and the chamber of commerce have been trying to bring the war department around to this point of view.

The military value, however, is considered only a part of the entire value of the airport. Important values, officials emphasize,

Army and Commercial Planes Use Port



An important place on the air map of the Pacific Coast is held by Medford with one of the West's finest municipal airports. Military and commercial planes are accommodated on the spacious runways. United Air Lines maintains a Medford office with daily service employing the latest type passenger equipment. The United States army has established a servicing station in Medford and this city is the location of Department of Commerce Airways radio, teletype and range beacon, as well as United States weather bureau office and aerological station.

size, are intangible but nonetheless concrete. Of real monetary value is the payroll provided by the various agencies utilizing the airport facilities. It is estimated that this payroll aggregates more than \$50,000 a year, practically all of which, except that part put in savings, is spent here for food, clothing, shelter and professional services.

Many Agencies
This payroll is provided by the U. S. weather bureau, which employs seven men at the airport; U. S. army air corps, nine men; civil aeronautics authority five men in the airport office and one field man who makes his home here; United Air Lines, five men. The city itself employs two men at the airport, the superintendent and a janitor.

There soon will be increased employment at the airport, for work is to start in the near future on the army's \$15,000 project which includes construction of a radio operations building and the laying of a cable from the building to the transmitter on Crater Lake highway. City officials are hopeful also that the \$120,000 WPA improvement project will be actually under way before long. Because the war department has sanctioned this project as a defense measure, the city will be required to put up only a small proportion of the cost.

Another thing the airport has done for the city is that it has put Medford on the exclusive commercial air transport map, Portland and Pendleton being the only two other Oregon cities so designated. It has made Medford a center of the most modern form of transportation, United Air Lines passengers coming here to board the big 21-passenger Mainliners from all parts of southern Oregon and northern California. Month after month, United has been setting new traffic records here.

Valuable Services
The airport has also made airmail and air express available to Medford. That this is a valuable service is indicated by consistent and substantial increases in airmail.

Useful in the government's civilian pilot training program, the airport is now being used by a class of 30 student pilots enrolled in the course being conducted here and at the Southern Oregon College of Education in Ashland. One class of ten student pilots has already completed the initial course.

Situated three miles north of the center of town and comprising 288 acres which cost \$27,400, the airport was built in 1929. To finance purchase of the land and development of the field, the citizens voted a \$120,000 issue of 5 per cent, ten-year serial bonds. Retiring \$12,000

each year, the city has liquidated the bonds and there is now no outstanding bonded debt against the airport.

As originally developed, the airport was ample for the demands made upon it until 1933 when larger planes made it necessary to lengthen and widen the runway and to install a cross runway.

Large Investment
To keep the airport up to date, the city has invested an additional \$26,700, mostly in contributions toward federal grants. This additional sum, however, spread over a period of years, has come out of the general fund, there having been no further funded debt created since the original bond issue, it was emphasized by Fred W. Scheffel, city superintendent.

Thus it will be seen that the city itself has \$148,700 invested in the airport. Federal agencies, such as the WPA, have put \$188,000 into development of the airport. Mr. Scheffel's records show, if the present army-sanctioned WPA project is carried out, another federal investment of \$120,000 will be made, bringing the combined city-government total to \$454,700 of which the city itself has put in \$148,700. The companies and government agencies using the airport have themselves made substantial investments in equipment but these sums, of course,

have nothing to do with the development of the airport itself.

Self Payment Goal
Mr. Scheffel's records show total operating income of \$47,997.55 from the time the airport was put into use in October, 1929 to July 1, 1940. Operating expense for the same period is shown as \$42,337.15, leaving a net operating income of \$5,660.40. This does not mean, however, Mr. Scheffel pointed out, that the airport is paying for itself, for the figures do not take into account the retirement of the original bond issue, nor do they reflect reserves for depreciation, depletion and obsolescence or other charges. Revenue comes from rentals, storage and concession fees and a percentage on gasoline sales.

A self-paying airport, however, gives the city administration a goal to strive for. Whether that goal is ever attained, city officials are of the belief that the airport has proved a sound investment that amply pays for itself in many ways not shown in account books.

JOBLESS BENEFIT PAYMENT SHRINKS

Salem, Aug. 13.—(P)—The state unemployment compensation commission paid out \$276,790 in benefits during July, a drop of \$10,000 from the previous month, the commission said today.

Benefits paid during the first seven months of 1940 totaled \$3,093,288, compared with \$2,987,435 and \$4,313,614 in the similar periods of 1939 and 1938, respectively. The commission's reserve fund reached \$9,520,147, an all-time high and almost \$3,000,000 more than the fund of a year ago.

GERMANY FORBIDS FILMS BY M. G. M.

Berlin, Aug. 13.—(P)—Motion pictures of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer will be banned from German screens beginning tomorrow in what informed sources said was a countermeasure against the making of alleged anti-German films by the company in the United States.

Officials said the company had been asked to cancel distribution contracts with German motion picture theatres and to withdraw all of its films by tomorrow. Similar measures were taken earlier against Fox.

Closing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.

SOCIAL SECURITY EXTENSION SOUGHT

Washington, Aug. 13.—(P)—Senator Wagner (D-N.Y.), senate sponsor of the original social security act, introduced legislation today to extend benefits of the law to millions of workers not now covered.

Included would be agricultural and domestic workers, employees of state and local governments, non-civil service employees of the federal government, and employees of non-profit, religious, charitable and educational institutions, except ordained ministers and members of religious orders performing their duties in such orders.

CHURCH APPOINTED SAFETY DIRECTOR

Portland, Aug. 15.—(P)—Secretary of State Snell appointed Stanley Church, Portland, director of traffic safety education today.

He succeeds Hugh Rosson, former University of Oregon graduate manager, who resigned before the primary election to manage Ralph Cake's successful campaign for Republican national committeeman. Rosson is assistant to Kern Crandall, state Republican central committee chairman.

Church has been associated with radio broadcast activities in Portland.

Port in Distress
Seattle, Aug. 13.—(P)—The Puget Sound tug boat company reported today the storm-battered ferry Lake Tahoe, under tow from San Francisco to Seattle, was in distress and partly

waterlogged 25 miles north of Eureka, Calif. The tug Commis- sioner was standing by after taking off the ferry's crew of seven and cutting the tow line last night.

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