

Public hearing on Apple Valley Airport expansion on September 21



Neighbors Against Apple Valley Airport Expansion held a public meeting August 8 to update community members on

the status of Mike Applebee's proposal to establish the airport as a commercial enterprise. Approximately 50 people at-

tended the meeting, including many new faces, according to NAAVE co-leader David Bratton. "Word is finally getting around and being recognized that the airport will have a big, long-term impact, with relentless flying everyday," Bratton stated.

Applebee had submitted an application last year that was deemed incomplete by the county. He let the deadline for that application expire and submitted a new application on June 9, 2006. That application was deemed complete on June 28, and the hearing to decide on the application will be held September 21.

Applebee's application includes the following:

- Storage of up to 10 aircraft,
- Helicopter, fixed wing and commercial flying instruction of four or more students daily,

• Agricultural flights in and out of Apple Valley, including pre-dawn and post-dusk,

• 10-20 flightseeing tours per weekend day,

• A total of 3016 or more flights per year.

NAAVE has concerns about how such an expansion will affect the surrounding area and communities. When the airport was initially approved in 1988, it was for low-level, personal use only because of the airport's location in an environmentally sensitive wetland area. Applebee's application asserts that there will be no significant impact on surrounding properties. NAAVE asserts that there will be noise disturbances, wildlife disturbances, security and safety issues, a decrease in property values and environmental degradation. Concerns rise especially from helicopter instruction which involves lots of hovering and low-level flight.

NAAVE members will host a booth at the Banks Barbecue, August 19 and 20, to inform area residents of issues surrounding the airport expansion. They continue to fundraise and meet with Attorney Ed Sullivan. The next public meeting will be held September 7, at the Banks Community Library. Testimony will be gathered at that time for the September 21 hearing. As many people as possible are expected to attend the hearing to testify against the expansion.

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