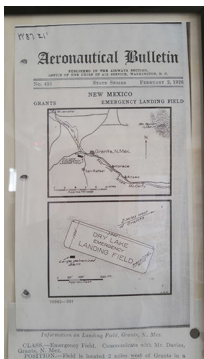


Grants to Celebrate 92 Years of Aviation History

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 03 November 2017 10:59



Cuts ribbon for new \$4 million runway

GRANTS, N.M. – City of Grants officials are requesting your presence. On Nov. 17, at 2 pm,

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they will be celebrating 92 Years of Aviation History at the Grants-Milan Municipal Airport with an Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the City's brand new \$4 million runway upgrade. The project also includes new state-of-the-art LED lighting.

According to Airport Manager Ray Jenkins, the February 1926 issue of the *Aeronautical Bulletin* listed an emergency landing field at Grants. The emergency landing field was a 1320' by 3960' rectangular field (a dry lake bed) located less than a mile south of the current airport.

"This community has provided aviation services in the area for 92 years," Jenkins emphasized. "That's a long time. I've been in the industry for 60 years, from flying to now managing my second airport and the remodeling of the terminal building and the new runway has been a high point in my career." Jenkins has managed the airport since 2015.

"The airport is a benefit and an asset for the city and region. Communities need an airport to prosper," Jenkins added. "Large corporations have representatives who need to come and go. The Grants-Milan Airport experiences about 4,000 operations annually."

Today, thanks to a \$4 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Jenkins and City of Grants officials are excited with their recently remodeled airport. The upgraded 7,171' runway provides a safe operating environment for all types of airplanes, from the tiniest propeller airplane up to medium sized corporate jets. Between the remodeling of the interior of the terminal building and just prior to the runway project, the city invested some dollars in beautifying the outside of the terminal building of which the airport manager is also proud of.

"We are so proud of all the upgrades," said Jenkins. "This airport is a community treasure. We are very proud of what we've accomplished in recent times. We are ready to get back to servicing the public."

The airport has been closed since late August while the runway was totally reconstructed. The project was engineered by Armstrong Consultants and constructed by Mountain States Constructors.

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Congressman Steve Pearce will be the guest speaker at the Nov. 17 ceremony. According to Jenkins, in addition to Representative Pearce, local State Representatives Eliseo Alcon and Harry Garcia, and Senators Clemente Sanchez and George Munoz, most County, City and Village of Milan leaders are expected to attend.

Joining the celebration is the airport's next door neighbor, The Western New Mexico Aviation Heritage Museum. It is dedicated to telling the story of the 1929 transcontinental airway that passed over Grants. At that time, there were no navigational aids, only cement arrows on the ground. Lighted "on-course" beacons were soon added, followed by radio navigation aids for night operations, according to Jenkins. The museum will be open for special tours during the event.

Jenkins noted that following the ribbon cutting ceremony a "mix and mingle" time will provide the attendees an opportunity to visit with area and state government leaders -- donuts and coffee will be provided.

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the airport will not reopen until later in the month. Once open, a discount of aviation gas for \$4.65 a gallon will be offered for two weeks, according to Jenkins.

For additional information call the Grants-Milan Airport manager at (505) 287-4700.

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