

2016 Annual Report

Antrim County Airport



The Mission of the Antrim County Airport:

“To provide an airport that is safe, modern, attractive and efficient for our community and guests”

Dear Commissioner;

The year 2016 was a good year at Antrim County Airport.



Safety

Due to the nature of our airfield, aircraft operations are conducted in a much wider range of conditions than most airports. We are proud of our positive safety record as regards fuel quality and our field operations. We had another year without accident or injury.

Airport Fees

We continue to increase revenue from Airport fees. This follows from our commitment to shift the base of operating income toward the users of the facility.

Airfield Activity

Fuel sales dropped this year in comparison to our all-time high sales in 2015 and yet were still significant. As per usual, we were busiest in the summer months but due to the extended warmth of the fall we also experienced a higher amount of fall traffic. In order that we can accommodate traffic outside of our normal 10 hour/day by 362 day schedule we have a for fee after-hours service callout program. Our veteran staff of four have been able provide this service.



Airfield Improvement

In 2016, we secured a \$95,000 Federal grant for the engineering design work necessary for rehabilitation of our runway 2/20. The design work resulted in a 2017 Federal discretionary grant of \$1.5 million for actual physical work of the rehabilitation. When accomplished this work will insure a useful landing surface for the next 20 years of operation.

Airport Terminal



It is no surprise that we have one of the nicer terminal buildings in the State. The Crusin' Pirate Car Club held their September meeting at the terminal building. They had an enjoyable time sharing stories, showing their cars and having a nice locally catered meal.

We have a variety of local groups using our meeting facilities: Bellaire Lions, Bellaire Chamber, Bellaire School Board and the Glacier Hills management.

Aircraft Hangars

We continue to experience a strong demand for private aircraft hangars. Available building sites are limited by suitable taxiway apron infrastructure. We anticipate continued pressure for new hangars as more retirees with aircraft relocate to Antrim County.



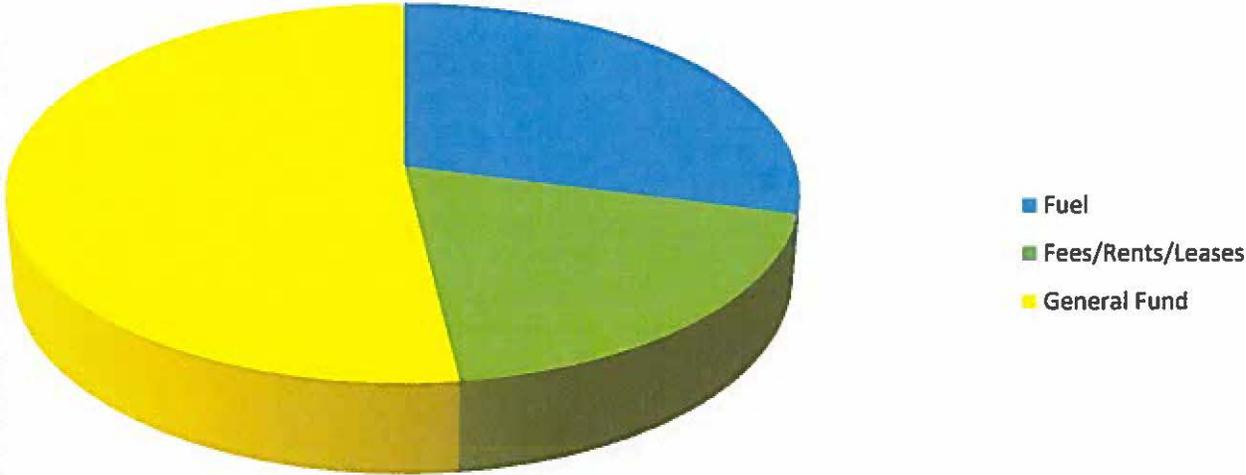
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

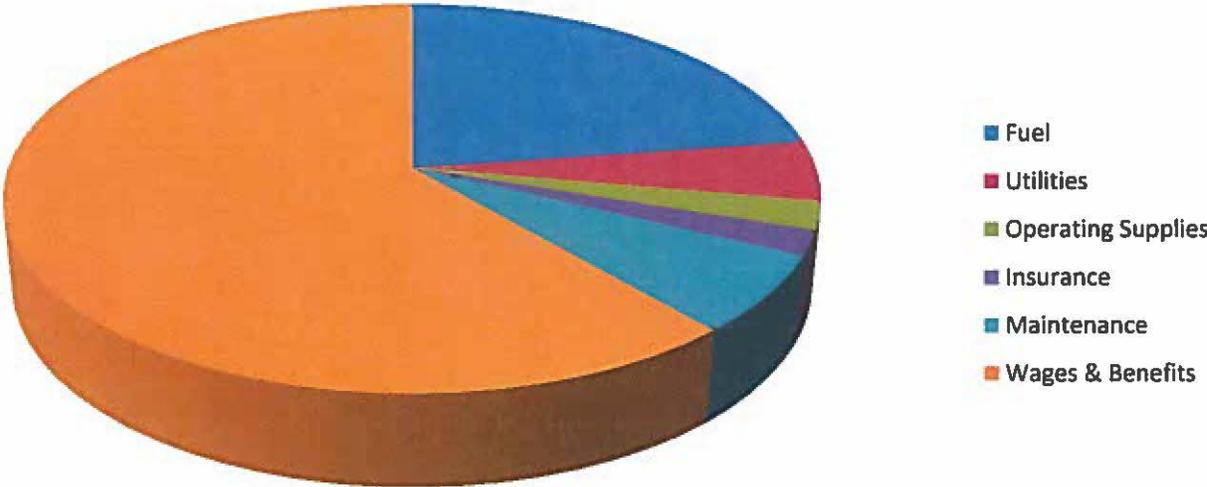
John Strehl

Antrim County Airport, Director

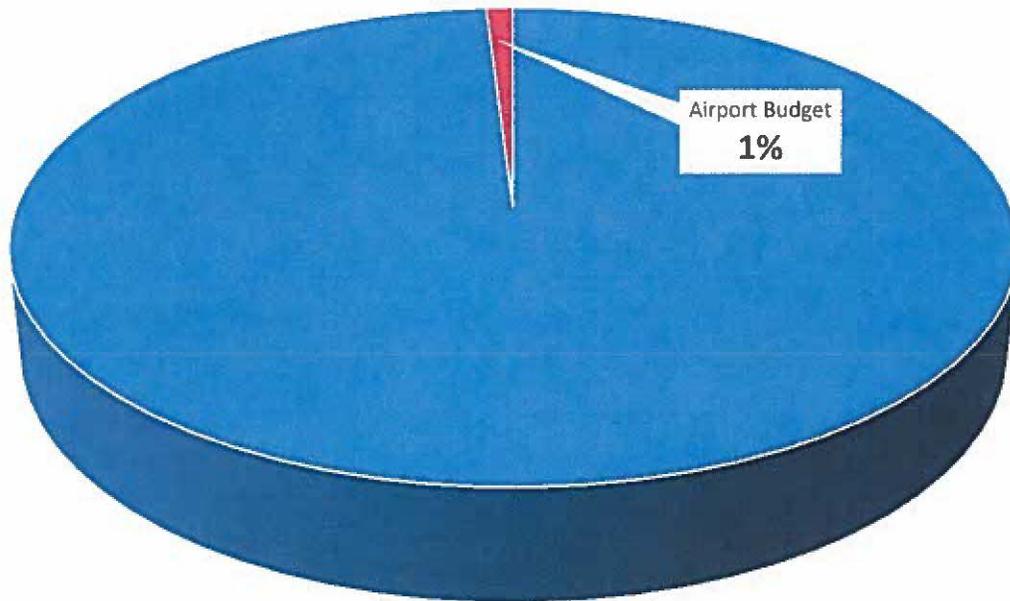
Total 2015 Revenue: \$482,061



Total 2016 Expenditures: \$430,026



**Antrim County Airport Cost
Compared with Total County Budget**



*“A mile of highway gets you a mile, a mile of
runway gets you the world”*

CBA Community Benefits Assessment

Airport Role in Economy

Airport: Antrim County
 City: Bellaire
 Current FAA ARC: B-II
 County: Antrim
 Ownership: Public
 Scenario: Current
 Service Area: Antrim
 Run Date: 3/28/2017 1:26:30 PM

MASP Tier	Tier 2
MASP ARC	B-II

Evaluated for Year: 2016

Airport Features	
Primary Runway Length	5,000
Primary Runway Width	100
Instrument Approach	NPI

Activity Data	
Total Operations:	7,800
Total Aircraft:	15
Total Passengers:	23,400
Total Cargo Tons:	19,500

On-going Contribution to the County Economy

	Jobs		Income (\$)		Output (\$)	
	Local	State	Local	State	Local	State
Direct Effect						
1. Airport (incl. FBO and air related tenants)	11	11	\$553,000	\$553,000	\$140,000	\$140,000
2. Airport Tenants: non-air related	9	9	\$458,000	\$458,000	\$151,000	\$151,000
3. Off-Site: Supported by Visitor Spending	42	42	\$905,000	\$905,000	\$3,104,000	\$3,104,000
4. Off-Site: Staff or Cargo Reliant	27	27	\$952,000	\$952,000	\$5,303,000	\$5,303,000
Supplier and income re-spending effects*						
5. -due to Airport and Related Activities**	1	2	\$16,000	\$55,000	\$67,000	\$186,000
6. -due to Visitor Spending	9	18	\$189,000	\$629,000	\$791,000	\$2,301,000
7. -due to Reliance on Air Transport	15	59	\$379,000	\$1,227,000	\$1,121,000	\$3,270,000
8. Total Impact from Airport Activities	114	168	\$3,452,000	\$4,779,000	\$10,677,000	\$14,455,000

Tax Generated by Aviation-Related Activity

	At-Airport	Off-Site
9. State Income Tax	\$27,000	\$64,000
10. State Sales Tax	\$29,000	\$642,000
11. Tax generated by fuel sales	\$12,285	

Annual Capital Expenditures					
		Total	Federal \$	State \$	Local \$
2015	Budget:	166,667	150,000	8,333	8,334

2017 MASP Goals:	
Serve Significant Population Centers	Tier 3
Serve Significant Business Centers	Tier 2
Serve Significant Tourism/Convention Centers	Tier 2
Provide Access to the General Population	Tier 3
Provide Adequate Land Area Coverage	Tier 3
Preserve Regional Capacity	Tier 3
Serve Seasonally Isolated Areas	Tier 3
Inclusion in NPIAS	

Other Attributes

* on the Service-area economy as defined by the user
 ** Supplier and income re-spending effects pertain only to air-related and air support activities

ARC = Airport Reference Code
 NPIAS = National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems
 Average visitor spending (per visitor): \$398.00
 Visitor spending source: visitor Survey

An Informal History of the Antrim County Airport

This Informal history is based on information obtained from the Bellaire Museum, newspaper articles presented by Bev Johnson and reminiscence of Bud and Rose Beckett, Herb and Florence Reiley, Betty Hoover, and John Strehl, current airport director. Compiled by Carol Hoadley

When the Wright brothers had their flying machine take to the air at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina Dec. 17, 1903, it not only made history, but ushered in a new era which would change the world forever. In the early days, pilots were called bird men, or aviators, and their craft were aeroplanes or flying machines. There were no runways, but take-off was from rails or from fields, and landings were where-ever the craft came to earth.

By 1908, aircraft had made immense progress and the Wright brothers met the army standards at Fort Meyer of carrying two men for more than an hour with a speed of up to 42 miles per hour for a distance of 125 miles. With these improvements and the love of flying, it is no wonder that in 1910, Bellaire reported having two landing areas and the start of air shows at the Antrim County Fair.

The Bellaire Independent reported Oct. 1, 1914 about the County Fair – “The chief attraction of all, however, the one they have traveled miles to see is the Rodgers Aviation Company’s aeroplane in which Mr. C. Livingston Wiggins makes two flights each day, one at the noon hour and the other at about four o’clock in the afternoon. Starting from the east end of the grounds Mr. Wiggins travels in wide circles until he has attained a height of approximately a mile from which he descends in a sharp spiral in spectacular manner which causes his audience to catch their breath in fear of an accident.”

The flights lasted about a half hour and he once flew accompanied by a large, curious eagle. It goes on to state there were four thousand paid admissions that Thursday (School Day) and all children under 10 were admitted free.

“ The machine used by Mr. Wiggins is the smallest and lightest machine of its kind in America. It is a Wright bi-plane built by Orville Wright especially for the wonderful transcontinental flight made by Mr. C. F. Rogers.”

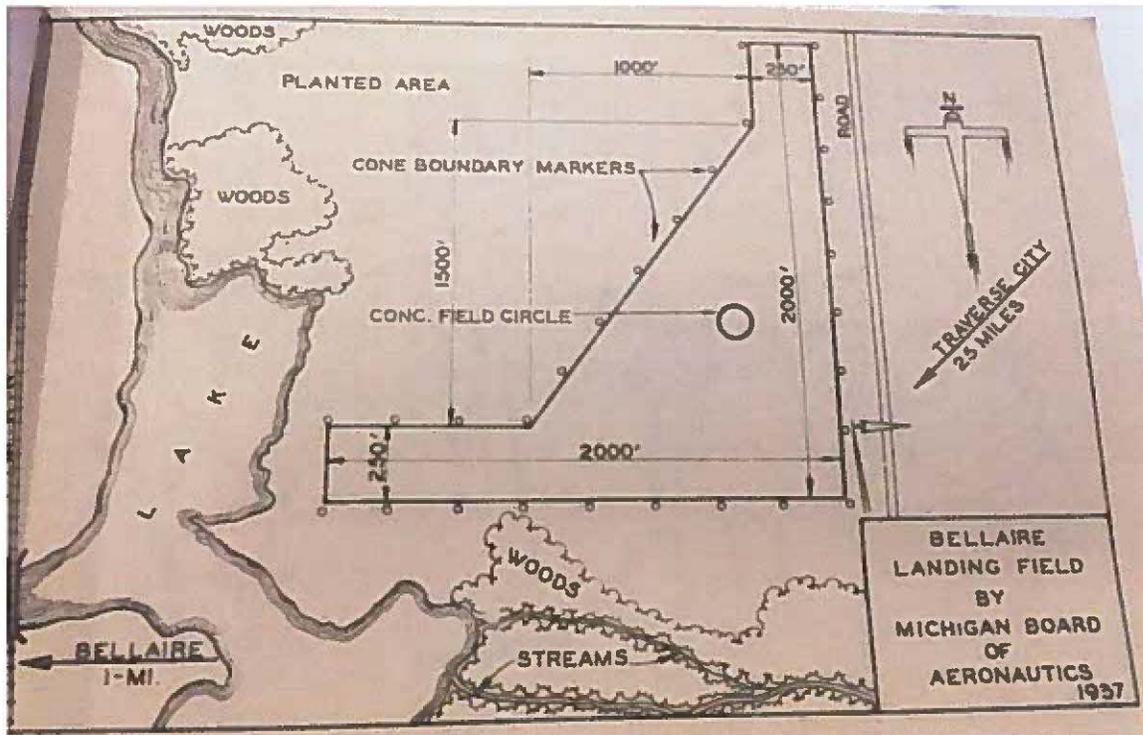


How many pilots flew in this area and where they took off and landed is unknown. But this was the start of a long interest in flying at Bellaire which would eventually lead to a Bellaire “Air Port” and later, the Antrim County Airport.

The land which would become the Antrim County Airport saw many different uses. In 1897, the land was owned by W. W. Phelps and in 1910 by Henry Richardi, with C. C. Potter owning the area north of Eddie School Road. Sometime around 1900, Herb Reiley's grandfather was contracted to log the airport area. By 1926, potatoes were being grown on the field in the areas not used for flying. The north end of the property had buildings, one of which was a butcher shop known as "Limmeau's Meat Market".

By 1928 it had East -West and North-South grass runways which were located at the southern end of the field (near Lamina) and much closer to the road. This however, did not end its other uses. When Antrim County acquired the land, in 1935, they used it for dumps. One was located near where Lamina built, and the other was out by the current runway, more in the middle of the area. In 1938, trees were planted as a school project. This continued for several years and Herb Reiley, Florence (Lessard) Reiley, and Betty Hoover remembered participating in the plantings under the watchful eye of County agent Walter Kirkpatrick. These trees later had to be cut down to make way for the new runway.

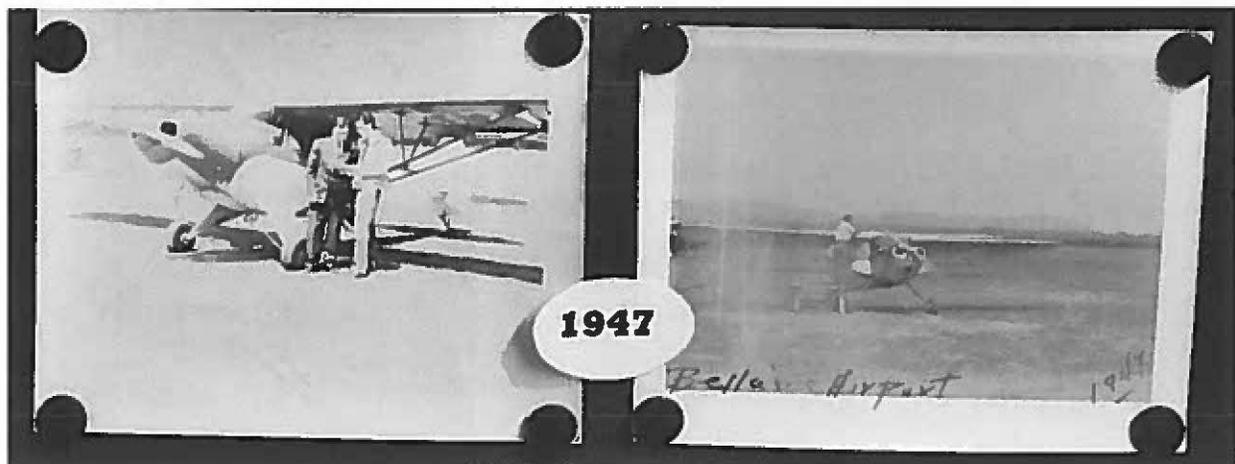
The 1930's saw a lot of activity at the airport. Art Davis, an aerobatic instructor at Michigan State, gave airplane rides at the airport. Frank Lyon, from Clam Lake, wrote in his journal, "July 04, 1934 – Rosa, Ellen & I take an Air ride in a Cabin Plane. Seven including the pilot took the trip from the Bellaire Air Port." In 1935 there was an air show held there. Perhaps the most telling of the activity is the recognition of the field by the Michigan Board of Aeronautics in 1937.



The 1940's started out with the usual activities. Judge Brown cut the grass on the runway in 1940. Herb Reiley rented a Cub and took Florence for an airplane ride. But then, World War II broke out and there was no civilian flying during the war. Instead, everything was geared toward the war effort. There was a watchtower in the Village of Bellaire which was manned 24 hours a day, keeping watch for any flights, in case of enemy invasion.

After the end of the War, flight operations resumed at the airport. Lou Ritt, who had been a prisoner of War in Germany, returned to the area with his wife who was also a pilot. They managed the airport and built the first hangar in 1945. They brought in fuel and acquired some planes – two J-3 Cubs and one Piper Cruiser (3 place plane). Soon, it was a busy place.

Many people were using their GI benefits to learn to fly. Around 20 – 30 people took advantage of this opportunity at Bellaire. Bud Beckett learned to fly in 1946 and soon became a flight instructor. He taught at Bellaire and Boyne City during daylight hours. He estimates he had over 400 students. In 1949, he was under contract to fly the mail from Pellston to Beaver Island. He used a Cessna T – 50. The runways at Bellaire were not plowed in the winters of 1946 – 1949, so some planes landed on skis.



Piper (left) and Cessna airplanes at the Bellaire Airport.

Many changes came in the 1950's. Lou Ritt returned to the Air Force and Jim Rickney became airport manager. Lamina Dies and Tools, Inc. leased the Southern portion of the airport from Antrim County for ten years from Nov. 1, 1952 "to be occupied for an airport landing strip. It is understood and agreed by and between the parties hereto that the leased property shall be open to the general public for the landing and taking off of airplanes and other air vehicles, and no charge shall be made to any person for the use of the said leased premises when used for the purposes so designated."

During the 1950's, Herb Reiley, as a student at Michigan State in agriculture engineering, designed and made a V-plow for a jeep or tractor to plow snow. While it did not work well on the tractor, he used it on a jeep to plow Lamina and the runway, which, at this time, was parallel to, and very near the road.

1955 was a year of vast improvements to the airport. The Jan. 20 issue of the Antrim County News announced construction of two sod runways which would later be blacktopped. Airport manager Jim Rinckey stated that trees had already been cleared and that a NE – SW runway 3500 feet long and 300 feet wide and a SE – NW runway 2200 feet long and 300 feet wide would be constructed by the County road commission and that they would plow the runways in winter.

Then in July, Fred Waite, Chief of the Education division of the State Aeronautics Department announced Federal Funds for airport construction would give Michigan at least \$1,765,00 a year. "Our aim is to have at least one good concrete strip runway in each county," he said. Encouraged by this good news, in August the airport committee petitioned the government for \$40,000 to improve the Antrim County airport. However, September brought the bad news that "The county airport has been refused a license and been placed on an emergency basis...The standing jeopardizes the Board of Supervisors' recent application for federal assistance." Soft spots on the field had resulted from the county's recent development work in the area and M. J. VandeBunte, chief of the licensing division of the Michigan Department of Aeronautics stated repairs must be made before it could be re-licensed.

**Petition For \$40,000
Airport Improvement** Aug 11 55

BELLAIRE—The airport committee met at the court house on Monday night and passed a motion to petition the government for \$40,000 with which to im-

Antrim County News Aug. 11, 1955

**County Airport
License Out;
Aid Threatened**

BELLAIRE—The county airport has been refused a license and been placed on an emergency basis, it was revealed this week by James Blackey, airport manager.

Sept. 8, 1955

Fortunately, the repairs were made and the airport re-licensed.

By 1959 things were very active again. Lou Ritt was back as manager of the airport and

ANTRIM COUNTY AIRPORT

80/87 —
100/130 Oct.
Gas
Unicom
Rental Cars
Sod Runways—
4,280 - 2,600

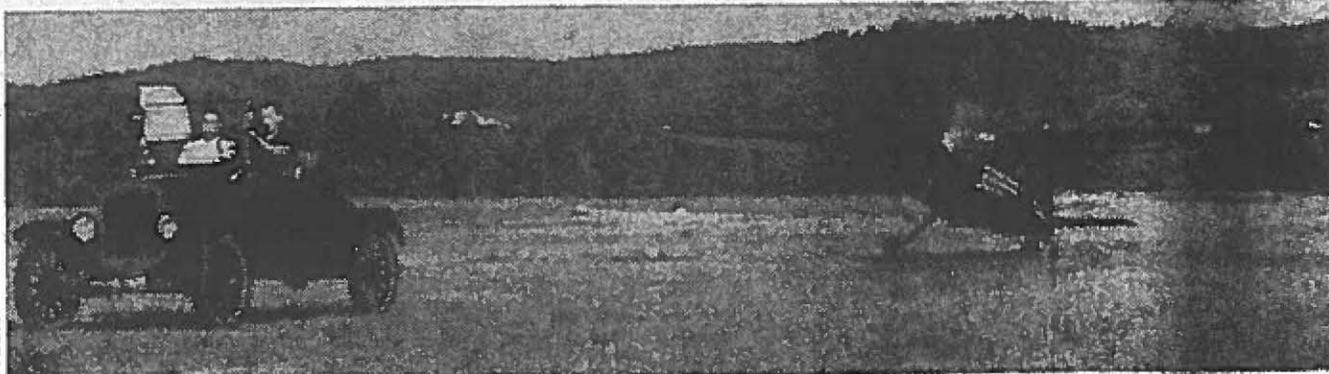
CHARTER SERVICE — SIGHTSEEING TOURS
Connections with Capital Airlines, Traverse City

- HUNTING
- TROUT PONDS
- CAMPING
- BEAUTIFUL LAKES
- INDUSTRIAL SITES

JE 3-3644 JE 3-6148 **1959**

a Fly-In was held the 4th of July which included a pancake breakfast, excursions to Ellsworth for the Ox Roast, American Legion carnival and fireworks at Bellaire, an appearance by a former "Miss Denmark" (Greta Thyssen), sightseeing plane trips for \$3 a person, prize drawings, and entertainment by the Jacobs band. August was also busy as airplane rides were given at night, August 18th during the full moon. The County also built a block building for airport operations.

Oct. 14, 1959, Circuit Judge Charles L. Brown made the first night landing using the new runway lights.



TWO KINDS OF PUDDLE JUMPERS—Ted Somerville of Bellaire in his Model T Ford conducts Stinson 165 aircraft to tie-up position at Antrim County Airport. Photo by Howard Runyan, Jr., Bellaire

Antrim County News Thursday, August 6, 1959

The 1960's saw continued improvements at the airport. The runway was paved in 1962 and many other ideas were being planned, including an airport terminal and a hangar.

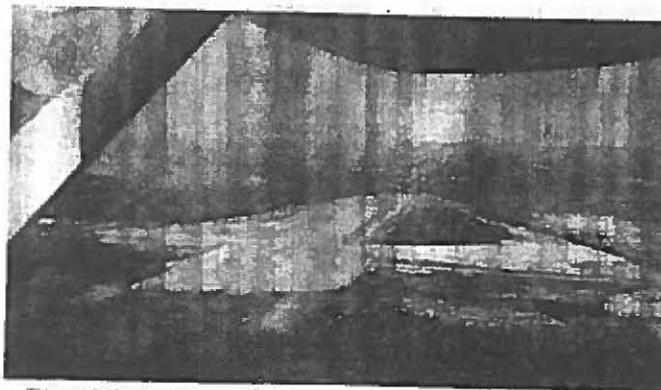
Speaker Sees Antrim Airport Boosting Economy In Area

Antrim County News Nov. 23, 1967

Robert Peckham, consulting engineer for the airport projects, had been involved since the mid-1950's. While there were many who did not believe the site was suitable for a modern airport because of the hills and cross-wind runways, Mr. Peckham used his engineering skills to prove them wrong. In 1967, he addressed the Chamber of Commerce meeting held at Shanty Creek and presented plans for airport expansion. Federal funds could be used to help with construction costs estimated to be \$496,000. This would be for two runways, one 5000 feet and the other 2500 feet long, taxiways, a terminal ramp and parking lot, medium intensity lights, a rotating beacon, and wind cone. The new runways would be paved and able to accommodate jet aircraft. He said many businesses and industries were interested in using the new facilities when completed. Shanty Creek, with its new convention facilities, was especially interested in utilizing the airport.

Photo by Bill Huckle

In July, 1969, Lou Ritt announced that regular scheduled flights between Bellaire and Detroit would be flown by Trans-Michigan Airlines planes which could carry 18 passengers on the flights. There would be three flights weekdays, and would begin July 22 at a ticket cost of \$26 one way.



Antrim County Airport 1967

Break Ground For New Airport Building



Antrim County News -- April 16, 1970

The 1970's saw the erection of the new terminal. Bill Apfel of Bellaire was awarded the contract for construction of the \$113,000 terminal building. Paul Hazelton was the Architect of the 4,600 square foot building.

In the 1970's "Woody" was the Fixed base operator (FBO) with a Cessna 414.

March 8, 1973, the Antrim County News reported that a \$500,000 Upper Great Lake Reg. Commission for Michigan projects had awarded a grant to the area. Around 1973 Antrim County became a Certificated Airport.

During the 1970's aircraft instrument approaches were made using the Traverse City VOR or a NDB (Non Directional Beacon) located just off Mancelona Highway East of Crystal Springs Road.

In 1991, Lou Ritt retired and John Strehl became the airport manager. In the early 90's Dan Hemp worked as a mechanic. The airport received an \$18,000 grant from the Michigan Aeronautic Commission to install and test a microwave landing system (MLS). This was an experimental approach system and the Antrim County Airport was one of a few test sites in the country. Wide spread adoption of the MLS was not to be, as GPS navigation made precision approaches possible at much lower cost.

During the 1990's the County made it possible for individuals to lease land at the airport and build a hangar. This not only produced an income but encouraged more usage of the airport by general aviation. During this period, it was not unusual for the airport to sell between 200 and 300 gallons of fuel each weekend during the summer as pilots were eager to take their friends and neighbors flying in the area. This activity showed the need for airport improvements and expansions.



Airport manager, John Strehl, applied for Federal grants to make needed changes. New signs helped direct pilots to ramp and parking areas. Improvements were made to the lights and the rotating beacon. In 1993 an equipment hangar and snow removal equipment was acquired. This allowed for a faster, more reliable way to keep the runways clear than using the old Army surplus plow. The hangar could also be used to make mechanical repairs to planes and equipment. Additional grants through the years have allowed for equipment upgrades to keep the airport usable through the Michigan winters.



Having deer run across the runway was a definite problem for safety. Fencing in the entire 350 acres of the airport would not only be expensive, but could create a deer park. Around 1996, the airport installed almost 5 miles of fencing to secure the airport. Only the cleared areas around the runways, taxiways, and ramp were fenced and a 4 foot fence laid on the ground keeps animals from digging under, thus keeping the airport safe for aircraft. The outlying wooded areas act as a buffer. The installation of an electric gate made it easy for pilots to drive to their planes, but kept animals and unauthorized persons out. Passengers could easily gain access through the terminal.

The need to make improvements to the now aging terminal were becoming obvious. Besides needing a new roof, the interior needed some changes. Federal and County grants available would not allow for all the needed changes, so Private donations were sought. Because of these generous donations, a beautiful interior was created. The Matthew Feko Flight Resource Center and the Jerry Roude Pilot Center were created to honor the memory of these area pilots and give current flight personnel areas and resources to plan flights or relax during down time.



This beautiful oak mirrored cabinet displays a collection of airplanes in the Jerry Roude Pilot Center. It is one of many beautiful shelves and built in cabinets made by airport manager, John Strehl.

Renovations to the airport terminal were completed in 1997.

During the 2000's, even more changes occurred. While the airport still had some small planes, more jets and passenger charter planes were coming. With the economic down turn, fewer people were learning to fly, and the older pilots in the area were less active. Fewer people were coming to golf in the area and Dura, the main business utilizing the airport, saw business declining, and it eventually closed. Changes needed to be made.

While the number of airport workers remained constant, four people who worked year round and an additional person to be a grounds keeper in summer to mow, the airport still needed to be open seven days a week, from 7AM to 5 PM and workers were on call 24/7 to assist with airport functions. New sources of revenue were needed to defray the high cost of operation and maintaining equipment.



With the increase in jet traffic and commercial charters, a new system of user fees was enacted. Business and charter aircraft were charged fees for landing, parking, and utilizing the ramp. Another Federal grant was received for installing a new "fuel farm" in 2007. The old jet fuel delivery system could only pump 35 gallons a minute, which required long fueling times for the larger jets coming to the airport. The new system can pump 100 gallons per minute and the fuel is filtered when it is delivered into the tank, and again when it is pumped into the jets, minimizing the risk of contamination. A fuel containment area for the fuel truck was constructed to protect the environment from any fuel leaks.

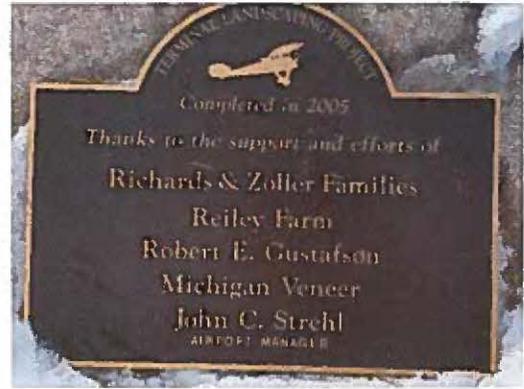
A donation of a large tug to move jets around was received. It is also capable of providing electrical power for starting jets.

More land was leased so more, larger hangars could be built. The airport made more space in their hangars available for renting to aircraft for storage and repair.



The airport was adapting to meet the changes required.

Private donations were again received for improving the appearance of the airport and grounds. A beautiful patio was built on the western side of the terminal so passengers and pilots could relax and watch the ramp activity. Landscaping included a vegetable garden and attractive plantings. But perhaps the most impressive addition was made in 2005 when the front entrance to the terminal was redone. A beautiful garden with a small waterfall and stream were created and a whimsical bear greets visitors with a smile.

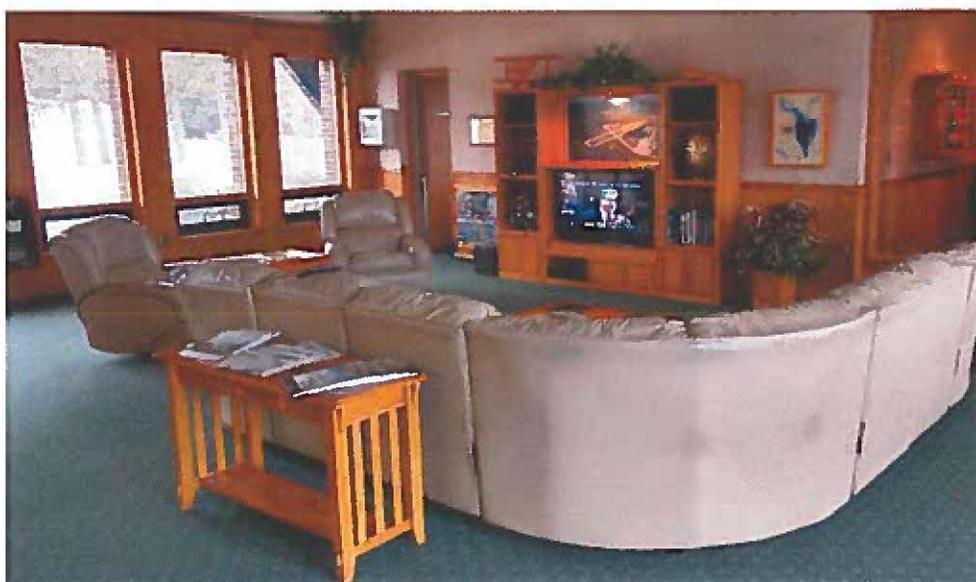


In 2016, more grants were received making it possible to replace the old signs with new ones. Another grant allowed installation of LED lights on the taxi ways and on the ramp. This not only saved money by using much less electricity, but provided brighter lights and more security at night, especially on the ramp area.



In 2017, more grant funds will be used so the runway can be ground up and replaced. This will be done in the fall after the busy summer activity is over, as the runway will need to be closed for 21 days to accomplish this.

None of these improvements would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the airport managers and workers. Lou Ritt brought the airport from sod runways to paved, brought in fuel pumps, landing lights, and a block building for flight operations. He spent long hours plowing the runways and manning the radio. Jim Rinckney managed the airport through a difficult time when damage to the runways by county trucks working on expanding the runway caused it to temporarily lose its license. John Strehl used his skills to obtain almost 40 different grants which enabled expansion, upkeep, additions of equipment, and improvement of the airport, all the while doing the daily management of the airport, plowing runways, pumping fuel, greeting planes, and being the “friendly face” of the airport. His woodworking and landscaping abilities helped turn it into a place of beauty, making it a place of pride for Antrim County.



While it is obviously important to pilots and passengers, the benefits the airport brings to the community are not always apparent. While pilots use the weather facilities provided by the AWOS tower on the field, local and visiting persons can access the current weather and forecast on their computers, smart phones, and local radio and tv weather reports. The parking lot is used by local driving instructors for training students, and by driving examiners in testing the parking abilities of prospective drivers.

The economic benefits to the community are somewhat harder to determine. While the airport only employs 5 people, many more find employment in businesses that support the airport. While fuel and related airport services are easily brought to mind, local businesses hire people to work in restaurants, shops, and resorts to serve the many passengers who come to the area. Real estate agents help find rental units and homes for those who choose to reside in the area. This in turn, creates the need for local people to be hired to clean, maintain, shop for, and garden at these homes and rental units, creating even more employment. Passengers looking for entertainment cause a need for more employment at Marinas, golf clubs, and other business which provide activities and entertainment.

The Federal grants bring in money and workers to complete the work. This means more business for local workers, if not to do the actual work, then to provide food, housing, and supplies for those who do. This in turn means more local employment and tax dollars going to local government.

Income from rental hangars and property taxes from rental units and purchased homes create more tax revenue to fund local schools, roads, and local projects.

Having an attractive airport encourages tourism and awareness of our beautiful area and natural resources. Many tourists not only return to the area, but also invite their friends to come and many choose to retire here.



This sign greets all who come to the airport

Antrim County is indeed fortunate to have a modern airport facility like this which benefits both the community and those who fly. Many thanks to the dedicated workers who have developed it into the success it is today.