

# Mendocino County's Little River Airport

A Valuable Community Resource That Needs Your Support

August 3, 2005



# Valuable Community Resource

- Largest coastal runway between San Francisco and Eureka
- Given to the Community by the US Government, with the stipulation that it be maintained as a local aviation resource
- Emergency and Safety Resources
- Services for Coast Guard, Fire and Medical Transportation
- 20 fixed-wing medical evacuations last year from Little River



*Coast Guard C130 lands regularly at Little River to train for emergency use of the airport*



# Services Available

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- Thousands of visitors each year
- Private aircraft
- Local businesses
- Telecommuters



# Recent Valuable DOT Accomplishments

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- 1997: Replaced outdated fuel tanks with card-lock tank
- 1999 Crack- and fog-sealed runway
- 2002: Updated Airport Layout Plan for Federal funding
- 2003: Secured \$450,000 grant
- 2004: Acquired parcel at runway 29 end



# LRAAC Recommendations

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- Stalled projects
  - Some already funded
  - Entitlement funding exists for some, grant application needed
  - The hangar project needs a spec for RFP, then will be funded by a loan from CalTrans
  - Paving is subject to competitive funding
  - DOT staff time needed
  - Set DOT staff priority appropriately



# More Recommendations

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- Security Issues
  - Recent incursions & vandalism
    - Vandals also trespass on neighbors' property from the airport, causing damage and leaving the airport open to liability.
    - Sheriff's response policy unclear
  - Empower DOT to work with the DA and Sheriff to create a joint policy
  - Use interagency agreements to get help when needed



# Funding Available

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- \$150,000 per year entitlement
- Entitlements can be rolled over for up to 3 years
- Timely grant applications required
- Projects in Capital Improvement Plan and ALP (Airport Layout Plan)
- Remaining AIP funding is competitive
- 95% Federal funds, 4.5% State match
- CalTrans low interest loan program for hangars





# Stalled Projects



# GPS Approach



- Approved in 1998
- Finances secured (part of \$450,00 FAA grant)
- Tree removal requires DOT time, oversight



# GPS Approach: Recent Progress

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- DOT has begun a stop-gap project to clear some of the trees to allow more time to work out a plan to remove the rest.
- Still need to complete
  - Tree removal
  - Land swap with Nature Conservancy
  - Avigation easement from Little River Inn



# 16 County-Owned Hangars

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- Approved in 2000
- Financing available from CalTrans low interest loan program, repaid by hangar rents
- Needs engineering time to complete specification and generate RFP
- Will eventually provide a much-needed income stream to the airport



# Other ALP/ACIP Projects

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- We have been accumulating annual \$150,000 entitlements since the last grant
- These entitlements will be lost without timely action
- Existing entitlements need timely grant application to be committed:
  - Automated Weather Observation System
  - Security fencing for runway 29



# Subject to Competitive Funding

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- Pavement maintenance is a high FAA priority
  - Pavement overlay
  - Runway lighting system replacement
    - Lighting system is near end of life
    - Runway will be narrowed, requiring lights to move
- If pavement maintenance is deferred too long, the costs increase dramatically.



# Consequences of Inaction

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If Mendocino county:

- fails to execute existing grant obligations, or
- loses entitled funding due to lack of timely grant applications, or
- fails to maintain the runway

Then...

the county will be seen as poor stewards of the airport and may not win competitive funding



# Stalled Projects: Low Cost, High Value

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- Total ACIP project value: \$2,613,000
- Total cost to county:  
\$6,533 plus staff time



# Stalled Projects: LRAAC Advisory

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- Some funded, some entitled, all in CIP
- Hangar project eligible for CalTrans low interest loan to be repaid by hangar rents, eventual revenue source for the airport
- DOT staff time needed
- Set DOT staff priority appropriately





# Security Issues



# Security Issues

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- Airport incursions
  - Motorcyclists and nighttime revelers
  - Fires, shots fired, garbage dumping
  - Airport vandals affect neighbors too
- Lack of law enforcement
  - Inadequate signage
  - Sheriff understaffed, policy unclear



# Security Issues: Airport Incursions



# Security Issues: LRAAC Advisory

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- Enable DOT to work out airport policy jointly with Sheriff and DA
  - Arrest and prosecute for property damage or hazards to aircraft
  - Make use of mutual aid agreements if enough officers aren't available
- Add security features to airport:
  - Add “No Trespassing” signs
  - Block access where necessary
  - Install electric gate to control ramp access
  - Proceed with security fencing
- Let's take care of security issues locally and not involve Transportation Safety Administration (TSA)



# Sample Signs

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# Possible Consequences of Inaction

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- Failing to address the issue of security could well lead to a loss of the hard-won community goodwill that LRAAC has built up over the last few years
- There could be a serious accident
- There could be expensive damage from foreign object debris (FOD)
- TSA might impose expensive requirements



# Summing Up

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- Stalled Projects
  - Adjust the priority of airport projects to allow for adequate DOT staff time
- Airport Security
  - Develop a security policy
  - Develop security features at the airport



# Little River Airport

