

U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM PRESERVED IN FAA BILL

Congressional approval on Nov. 21 of the \$60 billion, four-year FAA reauthorization bill preserves the agency's 20-year-old contract tower program and validates the important safety benefits contract towers provide to smaller communities.

"FAA contract tower airports, as well as the flying public that benefits from their services, greatly appreciate the support from the Bush Administration, particularly FAA Administrator Marion Blakey, and congressional leaders such as Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and Reps. Don Young (R-Alaska) and John Mica (R-Fla.), in protecting the contract tower program," commented Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of AAE and executive director of its affiliate organization, the U.S. Contract Tower Association.

"Passage of this bill will continue a valuable public/private partnership that has a proven track record for more than 20 years in enhancing aviation safety," Dickerson added. "The legislation also will aid FAA and the Justice Department in the ongoing contract tower federal lawsuit. The bottom line is that the FAA's Contract Tower Program is good government and good for American taxpayers." (see story on page 2 for full text of Dickerson's press statement.)

A letter to Congress from Blakey that pledges to refrain from converting additional FAA-staffed visual flight rules (VFR) towers to the program for the remainder of this fiscal year "simply represents the status quo," Dickerson said. He pointed out that "FAA had no plans to contract out these VFR towers at this time."

The Blakey letter, which resulted in the compromise that permitted final passage of the bill, states, "During this fiscal year, we have no plans to initiate additional competitive sourcing studies, nor will we displace FAA employees by entering into binding contracts to convert

to private entities any existing FAA position directly related to our air traffic control system."

Blakey issued a press statement immediately following passage of the legislation that said, "The bill preserves management flexibility under the status quo to allow outsourcing where appropriate and under well-defined circumstances." She emphasized that FAA will continue to support the agency's existing contract tower program. "This safe and successful 21-year-old program provides cost-effective air traffic services to 219 airports—many of them in smaller communities—which would not enjoy the safety benefits of a tower without this program," she said.

Mica, chairman of the House aviation subcommittee, issued a statement terming passage of the bill "a great win for the Bush Administration and for our hard-hit aviation industry." He pointed out that the measure "maintains Congress' support for the contract tower program, which has provided important safety benefits for 219 smaller communities for over 20 years. This public-private program has been widely supported and was greatly expanded by the Clinton Administration. I am also pleased that the bill will also support the FAA's position as it protects the program against an ongoing lawsuit."

(continued on following page)

CONTRACT TOWER CONSTRUCTION/ EQUIPMENT AIP ELIGIBLE

FAA in August finalized the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Program Guidance Letter regarding funding of contract tower construction and equipment.

If your airport is interested in using AIP funds for (1) equipment for a contract tower; (2) construction of a new or replacement contract tower, or (3) reimbursement of construction and/or equipment of a contract tower built or equipped since Oct. 1, 1996, you should carefully review this document. It is available on the CTA website at <http://www.airportnet.org/cta>.

National Air Traffic Controllers Association President John Carr also issued a media statement following Senate passage of the legislation. It said, in part, "From day one this has been about safety and safety has finally won. Now it's up to all of us concerned about the safety of our skies to make sure that the administration sticks to its promise not to privatize. Actions speak louder than words and rest assured that we will be watching."

USCTA PRAISES FINAL PASSAGE OF FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

(The following is the full text of the USCTA statement)

The U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA) applauds the Senate today (November 21) for passing H.R. 2115, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, which contains \$60 billion in critically needed aviation safety and capacity improvements, maintains the integrity of the FAA Contract Tower Program and validates the important safety benefits contract towers provide smaller communities. The bill, which passed the House on October 30, now goes to President Bush for his signature.

"In the final hours, Congress chose to protect the FAA Contract Tower Program that benefits over 200 smaller communities across the nation," commented Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and executive director of AAAE's affiliate organization, USCTA.

The FAA legislation allows the agency to continue the balance of operating contract towers at smaller airports and FAA-staffed facilities at larger, more complex air traffic facilities. Dickerson noted that a pledge by FAA to refrain for the remainder of fiscal year 2004 from converting additional FAA-staffed visual flight rules (VFR) towers to the program simply represents the status quo "because FAA had no plans to contract out these VFR towers at this time."

"FAA contract tower airports, as well as the flying public that benefits from their services, greatly appreciates the support from the Bush Administration, particularly FAA Administrator Marion Blakey, and congressional leaders, such as Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and Reps. Don Young (R-Alaska) and John Mica (R-Fla.), in protecting the contract tower program," Dickerson said. "Passage of this bill will continue a valuable public/private partnership that has a proven track record for more than 20 years in enhancing aviation safety. The legislation will also aid the FAA and the Department of Justice in the ongoing contract tower federal lawsuit. The bottom line is that the FAA's Con-

tract Tower Program is good government and good for American taxpayers."

24 AIRPORTS PARTICIPATE IN CONTRACT TOWER COST-SHARING

Twenty-four facilities were participating in FAA's contract tower cost-sharing program as of Dec. 1, 2003.

They are: King Salmon (Alaska), Laughlin/Bullhead City (Ariz.), Springdale Municipal (Ark.), South Lake Tahoe (Calif.), Macon (Ga.), Muncie (Ind.), Columbus (Ind.), Bloomington (Ind.), Manhattan (Kan.), Garden City (Kan.), Jefferson City (Mo.), Central Nebraska/Grand Island (Neb.), Elko (Nev.), Lebanon Municipal (N.H.), Oneida County (N.Y.), Hickory Regional (N.C.), Concord (N.C.), Kinston (N.C.), Stillwater (Okla.), Latrobe (Pa.), Williamsport/Lycoming Co. (Pa.), Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach (S.C.), McKellar-Sipes Regional (Tenn.) and Walla Walla Regional (Wash.).

For information on the contract tower cost-sharing program, contact your FAA regional representative (listed on page 5).

FAA ISSUES BENEFIT/COST PROCESS GUIDELINES

FAA has issued the recently finalized Contract Tower Program Benefit/Cost (b/c) Guidelines in an effort to establish consistent guidelines to help to standardize and

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U. S. C O N T R A C T T O W E R A S S O C I A T I O N

N E W S L E T T E R

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THE U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

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Visit our website at <http://www.airportnet.org/cta/>

FAA CONTRACT TOWERS

(219 towers as of December 1, 2003. Towers marked with an asterisk are part of the cost-sharing program.)

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Bethel	AAL	AK	Burke Lakefront (Cleveland)	AGL	OH
Kenai Municipal	AAL	AK	Ohio State University	AGL	OH
*King Salmon	AAL	AK	Lunken Mun. (Cincinnati)	AGL	OH
Kodiak	AAL	AK	Cuyahoga County (Cleveland)	AGL	OH
Dubuque	ACE	IA	Rapid City Regional	AGL	SD
Forbes Field (Topeka)	ACE	KS	Appleton	AGL	WI
*Garden City	ACE	KS	Central Wisconsin	AGL	WI
Hutchinson Mun.	ACE	KS	Kenosha Municipal	AGL	WI
Johnson Co. Exec.	ACE	KS	Lacrosse	AGL	WI
Philip Billard Mun. (Topeka)	ACE	KS	Rock County (Janesville)	AGL	WI
*Manhattan	ACE	KS	Timmerman (Milwaukee)	AGL	WI
New Century Air Center (Olathe)	ACE	KS	Waukesha County Airport	AGL	WI
Salina Municipal	ACE	KS	Wittman Regional (Oshkosh)	AGL	WI
Columbia	ACE	MO	Bridgeport	ANE	CT
*Jefferson City	ACE	MO	Danbury	ANE	CT
Joplin Regional	ACE	MO	New London (Groton)	ANE	CT
Rosecrans Mem'l (St. Joseph)	ACE	MO	Brainard (Hartford)	ANE	CT
*Central Neb. (Grand Island)	ACE	NE	Tweed-New Haven	ANE	CT
Martin State (Baltimore)	AEA	MD	Waterbury/Oxford	ANE	CT
Washington Co. (Hagerstown)	AEA	MD	Barnes Municipal	ANE	MA
Salisbury-Wicomico	AEA	MD	Beverly	ANE	MA
Trenton	AEA	NJ	Hyannis	ANE	MA
Tompkins County	AEA	NY	Lawrence	ANE	MA
Niagara Falls	AEA	NY	Martha's Vineyard	ANE	MA
*Oneida County	AEA	NY	New Bedford	ANE	MA
Stewart	AEA	NY	Norwood	ANE	MA
Capital City (Harrisburg)	AEA	PA	Worcester	ANE	MA
Lancaster	AEA	PA	Boire Field (Nashua)	ANE	NH
*Latrobe	AEA	PA	*Lebanon Municipal	ANE	NH
*Williamsport/Lycoming Co.	AEA	PA	Eagle County	ANM	CO
Charlottesville-Albemarle	AEA	VA	Grand Junction	ANM	CO
Lynchburg	AEA	VA	Friedman Memorial (Hailey)	ANM	ID
Greenbrier Valley	AEA	WV	Idaho Falls	ANM	ID
Morgantown	AEA	WV	Lewiston-Nez Perce Co.	ANM	ID
Parkersburg	AEA	WV	Pocatello Municipal	ANM	ID
Wheeling Ohio Co.	AEA	WV	Gallatin Field (Bozeman)	ANM	MT
Bloomington/Normal	AGL	IL	Kalispell	ANM	MT
Decatur	AGL	IL	Missoula	ANM	MT
St. Louis Regional	AGL	IL	Klamath Falls	ANM	OR
So. Illinois/Carbondale	AGL	IL	McNary Field (Salem)	ANM	OR
Waukegan Regional	AGL	IL	Medford	ANM	OR
Williamson County (Marion)	AGL	IL	Pendleton	ANM	OR
*Bloomington	AGL	IN	Redmond	ANM	OR
*Columbus Municipal	AGL	IN	Troutdale (Portland)	ANM	OR
Gary Regional	AGL	IN	Ogden-Hinckley	ANM	UT
*Muncie/Delaware County	AGL	IN	Bellingham Int'l	ANM	WA
Battle Creek	AGL	MI	Felts Field (Spokane)	ANM	WA
Detroit City	AGL	MI	Olympia	ANM	WA
Sawyer	AGL	MI	Renton	ANM	WA
Jackson	AGL	MI	Tacoma Narrows	ANM	WA
Anoka (Minneapolis)	AGL	MN	*Walla Walla Regional	ANM	WA
Minot	AGL	ND	Yakima	ANM	WA
Bolton Field (Columbus)	AGL	OH	Cheyenne	ANM	WY
			Jackson Hole	ANM	WY

AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE	AIRPORT NAME	FAA REGION	STATE
Dothan	ASO	AL	Santa Fe Co. Mun.	ASW	NM
Brookley (Mobile)	ASO	AL	Ardmore Municipal	ASW	OK
Tuscaloosa Municipal	ASO	AL	Enid Woodring Mun.	ASW	OK
Albert Whitted (St. Petersburg)	ASO	FL	Lawton Municipal	ASW	OK
Boca Raton	ASO	FL	Univ. of Oklahoma/Westheimer	ASW	OK
Cecil Field	ASO	FL	*Stillwater	ASW	OK
Gainesville	ASO	FL	Wiley Post	ASW	OK
Hollywood	ASO	FL	Brownsville Int'l	ASW	TX
Craig (Jacksonville)	ASO	FL	Easterwood	ASW	TX
Key West	ASO	FL	Grand Prairie	ASW	TX
Kissimmee	ASO	FL	Laredo International	ASW	TX
Lakeland Municipal	ASO	FL	McAllen	ASW	TX
Melbourne	ASO	FL	McKinney Municipal	ASW	TX
Naples	ASO	FL	Redbird	ASW	TX
Opa Locka	ASO	FL	Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen)	ASW	TX
Page Field	ASO	FL	San Angelo	ASW	TX
Panama City/Bay Co.	ASO	FL	Stinson Municipal (San Antonio)	ASW	TX
Pompano Beach	ASO	FL	Sugar Land	ASW	TX
St. Augustine	ASO	FL	Tyler	ASW	TX
Stuart/Witham	ASO	FL	Waco	ASW	TX
Titusville/Cocoa	ASO	FL	Chandler	AWP	AZ
Athens Municipal	ASO	GA	Flagstaff Pulliam	AWP	AZ
Fulton County	ASO	GA	Glendale	AWP	AZ
Gwinnett County	ASO	GA	Goodyear (Phoenix)	AWP	AZ
*Macon	ASO	GA	*Laughlin/Bullhead City	AWP	AZ
McCullum	ASO	GA	Mesa/Williams Gateway	AWP	AZ
SW Georgia/Albany-Dougherty	ASO	GA	Ryan (Tucson)	AWP	AZ
Valdosta Regional	ASO	GA	Chico	AWP	CA
Barkley Regional (Paducah)	ASO	KY	Fullerton	AWP	CA
Owensboro/Daviess Co.	ASO	KY	Hawthorne	AWP	CA
Greenville Municipal	ASO	MS	Mather (Sacramento)	AWP	CA
Hawkins Field (Jackson)	ASO	MS	Modesto	AWP	CA
Meridian/Key Field	ASO	MS	Oxnard	AWP	CA
Tupelo Regional	ASO	MS	Palmdale	AWP	CA
*Concord	ASO	NC	Redding Municipal	AWP	CA
*Kinston	ASO	NC	Riverside	AWP	CA
New Bern	ASO	NC	Sacramento Executive	AWP	CA
Smith Reynolds (Winston-Salem)	ASO	NC	Salinas Municipal	AWP	CA
*Hickory Regional	ASO	NC	San Carlos	AWP	CA
Isla Grande	ASO	Puerto Rico	Brown Field (San Diego)	AWP	CA
*Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach	ASO	SC	San Luis Obispo	AWP	CA
Greenville Downtown	ASO	SC	Santa Maria	AWP	CA
Millington	ASO	TN	*South Lake Tahoe	AWP	CA
Smyrna	ASO	TN	Vandenberg Air Force Base	AWP	CA
*McKeller-Sipes (Jackson)	ASO	TN	Victorville	AWP	CA
Henry E. Rohlsen (St. Croix)	ASO	Virgin Islands	Whiteman (Los Angeles)	AWP	CA
Fayetteville	ASW	AR	William J. Fox (Lancaster)	AWP	CA
Northwest Arkansas Regional	ASW	AR	Agana	AWP	Guam
*Springdale	ASW	AR	Kalaeloa	AWP	HI
Texarkana Mun./Webb Field	ASW	AR	Kona/Keahole	AWP	HI
Acadiana Regional	ASW	LA	Lihue	AWP	HI
Chennault	ASW	LA	Molokai	AWP	HI
Houma	ASW	LA	*Elko	AWP	NV
Alexandria	ASW	LA	Henderson (Las Vegas)	AWP	NV
Shreveport Downtown	ASW	LA	Saipan International	AWP	MP
Farmington Municipal	ASW	NM			
Lea County/Hobbs	ASW	NM			

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simplify the agency's b/c process.

The procedures and timelines contained in the document were coordinated with AAAE and the U.S. Contract Tower Association.

The document provides:

Fully Funded Towers

FAA's policy office (APO-200) will provide the FCT Program Office by Nov. 15 of every other year the updated benefit/cost (b/c) ratios for all fully funded contract towers.

For regular contract tower airports with revised b/c ratios that continue to be over 1.0, the FAA contract tower program office will advise the airport sponsor of its revised b/c ratio and that the airport's contract tower will continue in the regular program for full funding.

For regular contract tower airports with revised b/c ratios that are below 1.0, the FAA Contract Tower Program Office will send each of these airport sponsors a letter with the updated b/c ratio and the backup data information used for the b/c calculation.

Included in the letter will be a request for the airport sponsor, if it so desires, to provide, no later than 60 days after receipt of the letter, to the FAA contract tower program office updated and verifiable data that will be used to calculate the final b/c.

The FAA will provide these airport sponsors the final b/c no later than 60 days after the deadline for the receipt of the new data. The airport sponsor's cost-share portion to operate the tower, based on the final b/c, will become effective on Oct. 1.

Cost Share Towers

FAA's policy office (APO-200) will provide the FAA Contract Tower (FCT) Program Office (ATP-140) by May 1 of every other year the updated benefit/cost (b/c) ratios for all cost-share contract towers.

For contract tower cost-share airports with revised b/c ratios that are over 1.0, the FCT program office will advise the airport sponsor of its revised b/c ratio and that, effective no later than Oct. 1, the airport's contract tower will be in the regular program for full funding.

For contract tower cost-share airports that have revised b/c ratios that have increased but are still below 1.0, the FCT program office will advise the airport sponsor of its revised b/c ratio and that the revised cost-share portion for the airport will be effective no later than Oct. 1.

For contract tower cost-share airports with revised b/c ratios that have decreased, the FAA contract tower program office will send each of these airport sponsors a letter with the updated b/c ratio and the backup data information used for the b/c ratio calculation. Included in the letter will be a request for the airport sponsor, if it so de-



sires, to provide, no later than 60 days after receipt of the letter, to the FCT program office updated and verifiable data that will be used to calculate the final b/c ratio. The FAA will provide these airport sponsors the final b/c ratio no later than 30 days after the deadline for the receipt of new data. The airport sponsor's revised cost-share portion to operate the tower, based on the final b/c ratio, will become effective no later than six months after receipt of the initial b/c ratio.

DOT INSPECTOR GENERAL PRAISES VALUE OF FAA CONTRACT TOWERS

DOT Inspector General Ken Mead said in an interview with AAAE's ANTN Digicast on Dec. 8 that he is pleased that Congress in the recently passed FAA reauthorization bill "not only said that (FAA's Contract Tower Program) should continue, but also didn't ban consideration of its expansion."

Mead was interviewed by Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of AAAE and executive director of USCTA.

Mead said that the contract tower program has "a proven track record" and he noted that the difference in cost between operating a contract tower and an FAA-staffed tower is almost \$900,000 annually per tower. "That's a big difference," he stated, "particularly when you aren't getting as much money in the way of revenues as you once were."

Most important, Mead said, is the excellent safety record held by FAA contract towers. "The safety record (of contract towers) is very impressive," he said. He added, "It's also impressive for the FAA-staffed towers." However, Mead stressed that, "It's totally unfair to allege that the contract towers have a safety problem, because they don't. They can hold their safety record up against anybody. It's excellent."

Mead noted that many communities in the nation are able to have the safety benefits of a tower only because of the contract tower program. "And every time you have a tower in there, obviously there's a safety improvement," he said.

While FAA's Contract Tower Program has received much positive publicity in 2003, Mead cautioned that in 2004, the contract tower program "will be in even more of a fishbowl than it has been, so they should take heed there."

NEW MEMBER JOINS THE U.S. CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

Greeley-Weld County Airport in Colorado is the newest member of the U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA).

Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of AAAE, is executive director of USCTA.

Consultants to USCTA are Linda Hall Daschle and Bert Randall of Baker Donelson Bearman & Caldwell;

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Analysis: Privatization Dispute Stalls FAA Reauthorization Bill (from the AAAE/ACI-NA Legislative Affairs 2003 Annual Report)

It took lawmakers in the House and Senate just a few weeks to introduce and pass multi-year FAA reauthorization bills in their respective chambers. The quick pace slowed significantly, however, when Republican lawmakers included a provision in the conference report that would have preserved the option for the FAA to contract out 69 FAA-staffed Visual Flight Rules (VFR) towers at smaller airports around the country.

Both the House- and Senate-passed versions of the FAA reauthorization bill included language prohibiting the privatization of the air traffic control (ATC) system but exempting the current contract tower program. When the Senate considered the FAA reauthorization bill, it adopted an amendment offered by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) that would have prohibited any outsourcing or privatization of the ATC system, flight service stations and ATC specialists. The vote was 56 to 41.

The administration raised strong objections to the privatization protection language included in the House and Senate versions of the FAA reauthorization bill. In July, DOT Secretary Norman Mineta sent a letter to lawmakers indicating that the President would veto the final bill if it would "limit the operation and expansion of the FAA contract tower program."

Facing a potential veto, Republican conferees decided to preserve the option for FAA to contract out 69 of the 71 FAA-staffed VFR towers. Two towers in Alaska were exempt. The conference report also called for the prohibition on any outsourcing or privatization of the core ATC functions to end on Oct. 1, 2007.

Proponents of the provision argued that the conference report to the FAA reauthorization bill protected at least 94 percent of air traffic controllers for four years. Moreover, administration officials said repeatedly that they have no plans to contract out or privatize any ATC facilities. Despite receiving nearly all the protections it was seeking and repeated assurances from the administration,

labor strongly opposed the ATC provision and reportedly spent \$7 million urging lawmakers to vote against the bill.

In an effort to garner more support, Republican conferees decided to eliminate the privatization protection language from the bill. On Oct. 30—more than three months after lawmakers approved the initial conference report—the House narrowly approved the revised conference report by a vote of 211 to 207. The irony, of course, is that by removing the ATC provision, the bill went from protecting at least 94 percent of air traffic controllers to protecting zero percent.

House passage of the bill moved the debate back to the Senate where labor continued to work hard to convince lawmakers to vote against the measure. Although the revised conference report no longer included the ATC provision, labor opposed the legislation bill because it did not include stronger language prohibiting the FAA from privatizing air traffic controllers.

In an effort to appease lawmakers who were concerned about potential contracting out of ATC facilities, FAA Administrator Marion Blakey sent a letter to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, on Nov. 17 reiterating that the administration would not contract out any towers during fiscal year 2004.

The letter did not satisfy opponents of the ATC provision, and the Senate failed to invoke cloture and cut off debate on the FAA reauthorization bill.

After being stalled for months over a dispute on privatization of the ATC system, the Senate approved the conference report to the FAA reauthorization bill by voice vote just four days later. The successful vote was made possible after Blakey sent another letter to Senate leaders on the privatization issue. This time, the administrator assured lawmakers that FAA would not contract out any flight service stations during the current fiscal year.

Patrick McCann of McCann Capitol Advocates, and Larry Barnett of AB Management Associates.

Members of the 2003 USCTA Policy Board are: Jack Schelter, A.A.E., deputy director of aviation, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, chair; Bryan Elliott, A.A.E., executive director, Charlottesville Albemarle Airport Authority (Va.); James Hansford, A.A.E., manager, Central Wisconsin Airport; Tim Rogers, A.A.E., executive director, Salina Airport Authority (Kan.); Ted Soliday, executive director, Naples Airport Authority (Fla.); Steve Stockam, manager, Joplin Regional Airport (Mo.); Michael Covalt, manager, Flagstaff Pulliam Airport (Ariz.); Lynn Kusy, executive director, Williams Gateway Airport (Ariz.); Walt Strong, C.M., administrator, Max Westheimer Airport (Okla.); Bill Gatchell, C.M., airports supervisor, Lea County Airports (N.M.); Jerry O'Sullivan, manager, Greenbrier Valley Airport (W. Va.); Richard Baird, manager, Friedman Memorial Airport (Idaho); Robert Bryant, A.A.E., manager, Salisbury-Ocean City-Wicomico Regional (Md.); Steve Harvey, director of operations, Chennault International (La.); Scott Carr, C.M., deputy executive director, Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority, (Fla.); Russ Chandler, manager, Craig Airport (Fla.); Michael Feeley, C.M., manager, Spinks Airport (Texas); Russ Johnson, director, Manhattan Regional Airport (Kan.); Shane Cordes, president and CEO, Midwest ATC; Pete Dumont, contract manager, Serco Management Services; Will Mowdy, director-ATC services, RVA, and Brian Lally, vice president/manager engineering services, AJT & Assoc.

The following are members of the association: Hawaii Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Aviation, Mobile Downtown Airport (Ala.), City of Phoenix Aviation Department (Ariz.), Chandler Municipal Airport (Ariz.), Mesa/Williams Gateway (Ariz.), Flagstaff (Ariz.) Pulliam Airport, Laughlin/Bullhead City, (Ariz.) International, Tucson (Ariz.) Airport Authority, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, Sacramento (Calif.) County Department of Airports, San Luis Obispo County Airport (Calif.), Modesto City-County Airport (Calif.), Los Angeles County Aviation Division (Calif.), Ramona Airport-County of San Diego (Calif.), San Diego (Calif.) Brown Field, Redding (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Salinas (Calif.) Municipal Airport, Santa Maria Public Airport District (Calif.), Eagle County (Colo.) Regional, Greeley-Weld County Airport (Colo.), Boca Raton Airport (Fla.), Jacksonville/Craig (Fla.) Airport, Kissimmee (Fla.), Martin County Stuart/Whitham Airport (Fla.), Naples Municipal Airport (Fla.), New Smyrna Beach Municipal Airport (Fla.), Titusville-Cocoa Airport (Fla.), Page Field (Fla.), Lakeland (Fla.) Linder Regional Airport, St. Augustine Airport (Fla.), Vanden-

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burg Regional Airport (Va.), Spokane (Wash.), Walla Walla Municipal Airport (Wash.), Olympia Airport (Wash.), Greenbrier Valley Airport (W.Va.), Chippewa Valley (Wis.) Regional Airport, Kenosha Regional Airport (Wis.). Milwaukee Timmerman (Wis.) Airport, La-Crosse Municipal (Wis.), Central Wisconsin Airport (Wis.), Outagamie County Regional Airport (Wis.), Waukesha County Airport (Wis.), Cheyenne Airport (Wyo.), Jackson Hole Airport (Wyo.), AJT & Associates, CI2 Aviation, Engineering & Installation Services (EIS), Northrup Grumman ES Denro Systems, Lockheed Martin ATM, Marsh USA, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services Inc., PBS&J, Quadrex Associates, Raytheon Company-Air Traffic Management Systems, Robinson Aviation (RVA), Serco Management Services, SolaCom Technologies, Stonefield LLC, Washington Consulting Group, Weather Services International and William E. Payne & Assoc.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT FAA'S CONTRACT TOWER PROGRAM

Reauthorization Passes Without Anti-Privatization Provisions

Reason Public Policy Institute
Dec. 5, 2003

In a victory for common sense and good government, the Senate last month passed (by a voice vote) the FAA reauthorization bill, after much gnashing of teeth over the issue of further outsourcing of ATC activities. In the end, the Senate agreed to the House-passed bill, which was shorn of the anti-privatization amendments that had been added to earlier House and Senate versions over the summer. The face-saving compromise was a letter from FAA Administrator Marion Blakey promising that the agency would not add any more contract towers during FY 2004, and that no decision on possible outsourcing of flight service stations would be made next year, either — though the ongoing A-76 study of that possibility will continue.

That letter is the sum total of what controllers' union NATCA managed to achieve after a \$7 million, 11-month campaign that began with leafleting at airports last Christmas, released an anti-privatization white paper in February, ran ads on television, and included news conferences, editorial briefings, op-ed articles, and heavy-handed legislative tactics. The campaign alienated virtually every other aviation interest group, all of which banded together to urge passage of the reauthorization bill without the troubling anti-privatization amendments.

NATCA's real target was to undo President Bush's executive order from June 2002 that undid the "inherent-ly governmental" language that NATCA persuaded Bill

Clinton to slip into his December 2000 executive order implementing a performance-based organization for air traffic control. With its years of litigation against the contract tower program failing to bear fruit, NATCA tried an end-run around the courts by undercutting the legal basis for towers to be operated by anyone other than the federal government. But the Bush administration noticed, and fixed the problem, catching NATCA by surprise. It also played hardball right back, by threatening to veto any bill constraining the FAA's ability to make use of competitive sourcing, one of the pillars of the President's Management Agenda.

Ironically, not a single control tower has been outsourced during the three years of President Bush's administration. That compares with 116 FAA towers that were added to the program during the eight Clinton years. Where were Sen. Lautenberg and Rep. Oberstar during all those years? Apparently safety was not at risk when their president was contracting out control towers.

Senate Democrats Vow Continued Privatization Fight

Aviation Daily
Dec. 1, 2003

Although the immediate fight to stop air traffic control privatization is over, Democrats say they will keep pressing in hopes of either a change in Administration — or Administration attitude — to keep privatization out of the picture entirely.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) told The DAILY he wants to "make sure we resurrect interest in retaining a government-managed FAA" and hasn't ruled out legislation to do so. "But I don't know exactly what the period for extension ought to be, except to get it out far enough so there is an opportunity to protect it," he said, referring to introducing a bill that would halt privatization longer than the one-year moratorium agreed to last month by Congress, the FAA and the White House.

Senate Minority Leader Sen. Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.) told The DAILY "we will have to continue to insist that people understand the implications of privatization," and said he would work the issue in the Senate on both

Keep in touch with USCTA news and upcoming events by visiting www.airportnet.org/cta. The website features a discussion forum, as well as our newsletter, press releases and information on FAA's contract tower program.

Membership information is available by calling Spencer Dickerson at (703) 824-0500, Ext. 130, or e-mailing sdickerson@airportnet.org.

sides of the aisle.

The FAA reauthorization passed in the late evening on Nov. 21 after the Administration and FAA agreed to a bipartisan deal to protect three air traffic control functions from privatization for one year.

The \$60 billion, four-year reauthorization includes \$14.2 billion for security, safety and capacity projects for the Airport Improvement Program. Commerce Committee chair Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said in a floor statement last week it will create about 162,000 jobs. It contains \$13.3 billion to modernize ATC and \$31 billion to operate the FAA's ATC system and support FAA safety programs. It contains \$1.6 billion for aviation research and development; \$2 billion for airport security and \$500 million for the Essential Air Service program.

Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), ranking member on Commerce, said the committee plans to hold hearings on ATC privatization and will ask for a detailed analysis from the General Accounting Office and DOT to help determine how to enhance ATC safety and how to keep up with future growth.

One-Year Privatization Ban Secures FAA Reauthorization

Airports

Nov. 25, 2003

The Senate passed the four-year FAA authorization late last week, breaking a stalemate after the Bush administration agreed not to pursue air traffic control (ATC) privatization for one year.

The agreement was reached after senators received a letter from FAA Administrator Marion Blakey late last week pledging not to privatize additional FAA-staffed visual flight rules (VFR) towers during fiscal 2004. The agreement also prohibits the contracting out of maintenance and certification of ATC system and equipment.

"The Senate has agreed on a conference report that does not tie our hands," Blakey said. "The enacted legislation... did not impose inappropriate restrictions."

"It's about time that we were able to move beyond the misconceptions that held this bill hostage," remarked House Transportation Aviation subcommittee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.). He called the final bill a victory for airports. "This four-year measure includes \$14 billion in airport improvements that will create much needed jobs and will also help improve air service to small communities," he said.

In addition, the bill calls for streamlining of capacity projects, increasing the number of communities that receive nonstop flights from Washington Reagan National and ATC modernization.

It also provides \$2 billion for airport screening, \$140

million to attract and retain service to small communities and \$308 million to ensure service to isolated communities.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), a privatization foe, said the one-year moratorium on ATC privatization meant the administration had caved in on the issue. "The White House plan to privatize the air traffic control system has been stopped dead in its tracks... I will feel better knowing that the government professionals that work to ensure our safety and guide the nation's air traffic will be in those towers, and not someone from ACME Air Service," he said.

Blakey denies that the administration intended to privatize ATC. "Nothing could be further from the truth," she said in a statement. "The enacted FAA reauthorization bill is consistent with the administration's longstanding position.... The bill preserves management flexibility under the status quo to allow outsourcing where appropriate and under well-defined circumstances," she added. Senate Aviation subcommittee ranking member Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) said that debate over the issue was far from over. The Senate Commerce Committee would hold future hearings, he said, "and we will be closely monitoring the administration's actions in this area."

While debate will likely follow, airports are focusing on the retention of the contract tower program. "In the final hours, Congress chose to protect the FAA Contract Tower Program that benefits over 200 smaller communities across the nation," said Spencer Dickerson, senior executive vice president of the American Association of Airport Executives and executive director of its affiliate, the U.S. Contract Tower Association. Dickerson lauded the fact that the bill would allow FAA to continue contract towers at smaller airports while keeping agency staff at larger facilities.

John Carr, president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, credited public outcry with spurring the agreement. "As a matter of fact, a Republican-controlled Congress told the White House that privatization is unacceptable and something needed to be worked out," Carr said. "Congress knew that the flying public was not going to tolerate privatization."

FAA Reauthorization Comes To Pass Privatization Looms, All Sides Claim Victory...

AvWeb

Nov. 24, 2003

In the rest of the world, there are winners and losers, but in the magical spin machine that is Washington, D.C., somehow there are only winners ... if you believe the talking heads.

A blizzard of self-congratulatory words are flowing from combatants on all sides of the privatization controversy that had held up passage of the FAA Reauthorization Bill — the money (for GA), jobs and programs it represents — until late Friday. The Senate, by unanimous consent, suddenly passed the bill after months of political trench warfare, when FAA Administrator Marion Blakey extended a slim and short-lived olive branch.

Blakey agreed, in writing, to a one-year moratorium on expansion of the contract tower program or any other privatization move. Apparently that was enough for the bitter foes engaged in dispute to all claim victory. The saga began last June when both the House and Senate passed versions of the bill that prevented further privatization of ATC for the full four-year term of the reauthorization bill.

But the White House successfully pressured a conference committee preparing the final version of the bill to scrap the privatization ban and allow up to 69 control towers to be privatized, while the rest of the system remained untouchably government-run. Enough Republican representatives and senators opposed the privatization option that the Democrat-led opposition to the bill was able to stall it for almost two months.

With hundreds of airport improvement projects stalled and other aviation-friendly measures on hold, pressure mounted on Congress to pass the legislation and the letter from Blakey offered the face-saving compromise needed to break the logjam.

...NATCA Breathes "Sigh Of Relief"?...

FAA spokesman Greg Martin told AVweb the one-year privatization ban was an easy compromise for the agency to make since it had no immediate plans to expand the contract tower program or any other aspect of ATC.

Throughout the debate, Martin insisted that the privatization provision merely provided long-term flexibility needed to address looming staffing issues (as large numbers of Reagan-era controllers near retirement age). The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), which has long said it would settle for nothing less than a permanent moratorium against further privatization, found reason to cheer Friday's events.

"The American public can breathe a sigh of relief for now," said NATCA President John Carr in a release. "Congress has declared that selling out air traffic control to the lowest bidder will not be tolerated." Not for another year, anyway. NATCA spokesman Doug Church told AVweb that despite the moratorium's short duration, he considered it a victory and that the "House and Senate pushed it as far as they could." He acknowledged the fight is far from over. "There is another battle for another

day," he said.

Where and how that battle will be fought isn't clear since the FAA bill, once signed by the president, is set in stone for four years. Church said NATCA hasn't yet formulated a plan to resurrect the issue when the moratorium period runs out.

In his statement, Carr said the final deal shows that "Congress knew that the flying public was not going to tolerate privatization." He said NATCA will be watching the government closely to ensure the terms of the compromise are met.

...Compromise Still Finds Fighting Words

"NATCA President John Carr has snatched defeat from the jaws of victory," said longtime NATCA adversary Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.). "He traded job-protection guarantees for 94 percent of our controllers in exchange for a letter from the administration restating the same thing that's been said for two years now."

Mica, the aviation subcommittee chairman, called the bill's passage "a great win for the Bush administration and for our hard-hit aviation industry." He also chided Carr, suggesting NATCA's membership, on the whole, was better off with the original conference committee language and calling the campaign against the privatization language "a significant and costly failure" by Carr and the union leadership.

Privatization wasn't the only contentious issue in the bill. Air cargo pilots are worried about losing jobs to cheaper foreign carriers as a result of the bill. In a letter to cargo pilots, Mike Armacuzi of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) Master Executive Council alleged that Alaska Sen.

Ted Stevens slipped a "cabotage" clause in the reauthorization bill. Armacuzi said the clause will allow foreign airlines to pick up and deliver freight within the U.S. and could affect the domestic industry. "What do you think the affect [sic] would be on your quality of life and income if you were to compete with pilots from Air China or Air Somalia?" he asks in his letter.

Besides the potential loss of jobs, Armacuzi said there are concerns about the security of foreign carriers and the potential deterioration of the U.S. cargo fleet, making it less able to respond to military needs through the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program. "Are we to rely on Air Indonesia and other foreign carriers to deliver war materials to our forces in Iraq?" he wondered.

Walla Walla's Control Tower Faces Uncertain Outlook

Walla Walla (Wash.) Union-Bulletin

Oct. 21, 2003

If the Federal Aviation Administration has its way,

come March the Port of Walla Walla may have to shoulder a \$90,000-per-year burden to keep the airport's control tower open. That price is twice what the Port currently pays, and may be too large of an expense to meet, prompting worry among many that the tower may cease operating.

A few options still exist to reduce the cost and keep the tower open. The prospect of having the tower shut down has many in the local aviation community concerned, and is part of the reason why the Port is working to keep it open.

"For the good of the community and to attract corporate aircraft, we need it," said Stan Holm, the manager of Blue Ridge Aviation, which is the airport's primary maintenance shop.

Walla Walla's air traffic control tower is contracted to a private company, Serco, which provides the controllers and is paid by the FAA and the Port. Serco has run the



tower since the mid-1990s, when the federal controllers were removed to save on operating costs at the comparatively low volume airport. It costs the FAA and the Port about \$281,000 per year to keep the tower open and staffed by Serco, but that is about half of what it would cost if the tower were federally run. Since contract employees receive the same salaries as their federal counterparts, the difference in cost results largely from having fewer controllers working in contract towers.

When it was a federal tower, Walla Walla had eight controllers; now there are only four Serco controllers. This lower number doesn't concern Marshall Rüb, the Director of Flight Operations at Walla Walla College's flight school, though.

"As far as I'm concerned, the people they have in here (working in the control tower) are phenomenal. And these people want to be here, and that's the nice thing about it," said Rüb.

An important part of the FAA's Contract Tower Pro-

gram, under which Walla Walla's tower is run, is that local communities and the federal government split the cost of operating the tower. The FAA uses a complex formula to determine who pays how much. Among other variables, it takes into account the peak traffic volume at the airport—how many times airplanes take off and land—and what proportion of those flights are commercial and commuter flights. Since Horizon Airlines recently cut one of their four daily flights to and from Seattle, that 25 percent decrease factors significantly into the formula. In general, the busier the airport, the less the community has to contribute, although other factors play a role as well.

The future of the control tower is uncertain, as annual traffic volume has been sliding over the past six years, from over 50,000 takeoffs and landings in 1997 to only 40,000 in 2002.

"It's not as bad as what the FAA originally said," regarding adjusting how much the Port would owe, said Larry Adams, the Walla Walla Airport Manager. The bottom line for him is that "we can keep it open if we want to pay for it." But getting the Port commissioners to approve spending that much would most likely mean taking additional money out of the airport's General Fund, and possibly raising landing fees and lease rates in the airport industrial park.

The Port has hired an independent consultant to check the FAA's math in the formula, and the findings are good for the Port, if the FAA accepts them. The consultant found that, using the most recent statistics available for the field, The Port should be able to actually reduce its cost share to just under \$34,000 per year, or about 12 percent of the total cost of the control tower. The Port currently contributes about \$45,000 each year towards funding the tower.

The Port has until November 3 to submit a letter to the FAA detailing their revised calculations and requesting that the FAA reevaluate the cost share proportion with the city.

While there is a vocal minority of pilots who would rather there was no control tower, Adams sees a number of very significant benefits in keeping the tower open, views that are largely shared by Holm and Rüb.

"We absolutely understand the value of the tower when it comes to safety," said Adams. The airport can get congested with air traffic at times, and without someone to coordinate things, operations might not be so smooth, Rüb also suggested.

"If [Walla Walla] were a non-towered airport you're going to have traffic doing all kinds of different things. I see the potential, if somebody's not out there trying to sort things out, that there could be some problems in the

future,” said Rüb.

Adams and Rüb agree that the tower is very important to both flight schools located on the field, Walla Walla College and Skyrunners. The tower provides invaluable assistance to student pilots, and also allows several planes to make simultaneous practice approaches. Practice approaches simulate cloudy and low visibility conditions when it would not be possible to make a strictly visual approach and landing into the airport. Without a tower, that would not be possible, and operations at the airport when the weather really does deteriorate would be dramatically slowed.

“We could see some delays ... in terms of arrivals and departures of Horizon if the tower weren’t here,” said Adams. He added that all other air traffic would experience similar slowdowns.

From an airport security standpoint, Adams said that the air traffic controllers “know what’s normal out here. ... They have a position of visual advantage up there” in the cab of the control tower. Controllers can more easily pick out things that are out of the ordinary, and that might be more difficult to catch without a control tower.

Holm, who also provides services for many corporate aircraft flying through Walla Walla, and who was once a corporate pilot himself, sees substantial advantages in keeping the tower open.

“All these corporate pilots like it ... it’s awfully handy to have,” said Holm. Without a tower, Holm suggested that corporate jets would be less likely to come to Walla Walla, which would hurt both businesses on the field and the larger community in the Walla Walla Valley. He spoke of one corporate pilot who had recently flown into Walla Walla from the Southeast, and thought that the airport was a “jewel” for what it offered and for its location.

The minority of pilots who see no need for a tower have moved to Martin Field in College Place, said Adams. That airport has no control tower. “It’s your normal two percent that don’t like any type of control,” said Adams. While he does not feel as strongly, Holm can understand that perspective. As a private pilot in his free time, “personally I don’t need a tower,” he said.

Walla Walla is one of 219 airports in the nation with towers that are not staffed by federal employees, but that are instead contracted to private corporations while remaining under government oversight. Nearby Pendleton and Lewiston airports also have contract towers staffed by Serco employees, while Pasco’s control tower remains federally staffed.

On the national level, controversy has been brewing in recent months as Congress has been considering a bill that, among other things, would allow the FAA to release more airports to contract controllers if it chose to. That

power has been opposed by many labor groups and others in the industry who claim that contract towers aren’t as safe because they aren’t staffed as heavily.

Peter Dumont, Serco’s Contract Tower Program Manager, disagrees strongly with those claims. “We staff our towers more efficiently and provide oversight and Quality Assurance programs over and above what is required by the FAA. We are required to follow all the same rules and regulations as FAA staffed ... towers,” he said in an e-mail. He also pointed out that Serco’s towers undergo the same inspection process that all FAA towers are required to pass.

Rüb feels similarly, saying “the people in the control tower have an experience level that’s remarkable.” According to him, two of the controllers have extensive experience working military air traffic control, including aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln and at Fallon Naval Air Station in Nevada. Another has years of prior experience working in larger FAA towers.

If Walla Walla’s control tower is forced to close, Dumont says that the controllers “would be offered their choice of positions at other towers” run by Serco.

For the time being, it is up to the Port to present their recalculated figures to the FAA. If the FAA does not accept them, and instead keeps its existing calculations, then the Port will have to decide if the tremendous cost increase is worth it for the airport and the community.

Adams made clear “that’s going to be a tough judgment call for the commissioners.”



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