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## NASAO Activities

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# STATE AND LOCAL

Department Editor: Madeline C. Dinu\*

## NASAO ACTIVITIES

**T**ERMINAL type larger airports have constantly received a major share of interest in the past, from all levels of government, from industry and from the public. The proposal of such terminals is to provide facilities for air transportation from major points of potential,—the larger communities,—linking them with similar points elsewhere. For the healthy growth of any system, however, the need is for mass transportation of more people from smaller communities to their natural points of market and business areas and then into transcontinental and international traffic.<sup>1</sup> Consequently there was developed the national program of an airport system to include the smaller facilities.

In the past two years noticeable growth of industrial and agricultural use of smaller aircraft has brought about the awareness that minimum cost, small landing field or single-runway air strips should be an integral part of the over-all airport system. Efforts to include such a landing strip system under the Federal Airport Act program were nullified because of the excessive administrative and construction costs entailed for compliance with provisions of the Act and Regulations. It was hoped that a state agency could sponsor in one application and as one project the construction of from ten to twenty air strips, under standardized engineering plans and processing. Title to land requirements for each site, entering into lengthy project sponsorship assurances on each strip, maintaining a system of account for each location, and other requirements imposed, were so burdensome that they defeated the principle behind the idea.

The flying farmer is spearheading a movement for such strips, and he is usually ingenious and resourceful. In the majority of the states west and south of the Eastern seaboard, records show surprising increase of agricultural-use plane registrations.<sup>2</sup> To achieve highest percentage of use for such aircraft, landing and servicing facilities are needed. If they cannot be had under an over-all federal airport program, then they must be estab-

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<sup>1</sup> See *American Aviation Daily* 12/15/50—"AIR TAXI AGREEMENTS SIGNED BY AIRLINES," "The interline agreement between scheduled airlines and the National Air Taxi Conference of local operators to provide air taxi connections between airline stops and off-airline communities will become effective January 10, 1951. . . . The Agreement requires NATC operators, who now total 82 applicant members, to carry not less than \$40,000 per passenger liability insurance and to meet certain standards of operation. Air Taxi operators, may use single or multi-engine aircraft, will at their own expense arrange airline reservations for passengers who request them; in turn, the airlines will pay expenses of arranging requested air taxi service and will collect a \$10 deposit on the air taxi fare for the operator . . ."

<sup>2</sup> See *Annual Report of Montana Aeronautics Commission for 1950*, page 10; "There were 181 aircraft and 178 pilots registered with the Montana Aeronautics Commission for crop spraying operations in 1950. This shows an increase of 42% in the number of aircraft used, and an increase of 21% in the number of pilots. Figures for the previous year, now available, show that approximately 50% of the wheat lands in the state were sprayed, and it is estimated that the average yield per acre of wheat on crop land sprayed was 17.9 bushels and 14.9 bushels on crop land not sprayed, resulting in a 20% increase of yield due to weed control by the use of 2 4-D chemicals."

See: *Report of the Department of Aeronautics of Nebraska for 1950*, page 32; "There were 90 aerial applicators approved by the Department of Aeronautics

lished by local effort. This was commenced in the Western states, principally in the Idaho region,<sup>3</sup> and much impetus was gained recently by a program initiated by the Flying Farmers of Minnesota in the following recommendations:<sup>4</sup>

"It is recommended that the present state airport program be *strengthened* by providing a basic airstrip system of low cost, close in, landing strips in the small communities; this airstrip system to be *state owned*.

*Reasons:*

1. The low cost, close in, landing strip at the small community is an essential and necessary part of the total airport system to serve air transportation.
  - (a) All airports, regardless of size, are dependent upon each other for the development of traffic.
  - (b) The airports in the primary and secondary system will be strengthened economically by traffic flowing to and from them to the community airstrips.
2. Agricultural and industrial users of the aircraft require the prompt development of the low cost landing strips.
  - (a) Aerial application of dusts and sprays is becoming a necessity in farming operations.
  - (b) The airplane is becoming a farm management tool as well as a vehicle of transportation.
3. The system of low cost landing strips should be *owned and developed* by the *state*.
  - (a) The small city or village does not have the tax sources or resources to either acquire or improve the needed landing strips.
  - (b) The direct benefits to the local taxpayer from such a landing strip do not justify requiring such taxpayers to share the cost.
  - (c) The user type revenues collected from 'little aviation' are and will be adequate to pay the costs involved.
  - (d) The problem is state-wide rather than local in nature, requiring planning and execution at the state level in order to best serve the agricultural and industrial requirements.
  - (e) The strips are required for emergencies of a state-wide nature—war, floods, catastrophies, search and rescue, internal security, etc.

"The following specific recommendations are made for the low cost landing strips of the basic airstrip system:

1. The landing strips should be within walking distances of the community and be located adjacent to an improved state or county highway.
  - (a) Coordination between the Highway Department and the Department of Aeronautics in land condemnation would be required.
2. The strips would be about 2500 ft. long and about 400 ft. wide comprising a total land area of about 30 acres.

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during 1950 to engage in aerial crop dusting, spraying, seeding, fertilizing, etc., as compared to 68 approved during the 1949 season. This type of operation utilizes 166 aircraft and 210 commercial pilots as compared with 102 aircraft and 131 pilots last year. . . . There were 175 Federal waivers registered with the Department of Aeronautics, 14 for aerial photography, 25 for aerial power line patrol, 17 for newspaper delivery, 19 for hunting of predatory animals, 10 for banner towing, and 90 for aerial application of chemicals . . ."

<sup>3</sup> *Idaho Aeronautics Commission* prepared an excellent color, sound, film, entitled—"The Air Age"—depicting uses of aircraft for every day pursuits by Idaho ranchers and businessmen, and the construction of flight strips by community efforts on an "air-strip bee" basis, at costs ranging as low as \$1,000 for completed strip.

See: *Oregon Air News*, January, 1951, published by the Oregon State Board of Aeronautics: "The Farm-to-Market airstrip plan shown on the map on the reverse side of this sheet (indicating 15 locations) is the proposed Farm-to-Market strip constructed program for the biennium of 1951-1953. . . ."

<sup>4</sup> See: *Recommendation to Efficiency in Government—Committee—Aviation Sub-Committee*, dated November 5, 1950, presented by the *Minnesota Flying Farmers*. Some of the recommendations have been put into legislative proposals for the 1951 General Sessions of the Minnesota State Legislature.

- (a) Estimated average cost of land per site would be \$6,000.
- 3. The strips should be leveled and crowned and have simple surface drainage, access to the highway, and a usable building area for low cost hangars.
  - (a) Estimated average cost of improvements \$6,500 per strip.
- 4. The strips should be state owned, but be maintained by the village, county or township.
  - (a) Department of Aeronautics to prepare standard lease forms for use of landing strips.
  - (b) Revenues from land rental or crops to go to village, to offset maintenance costs.
- 5. The program for the development of these strips by the Department of Aeronautics should be at the rate of about 10 each year—estimated total cost per year \$125,000 to the state aeronautics fund.
- 6. The purchase of land by the state for airport purposes should be limited to landing areas of the single strip type which are to be a part of the state basic airstrip system."

These landing strips programs at the local level may well be the forerunner of a system of facilities for dual motor-vehicle/aircraft use by larger segments of the American public, in the light of recent strides forward in the field of convertible vehicles and small personal helicopter variations. While large jets and turbo-jets may be the future medium for long-haul air transportation, from investment standpoint for individual users of aircraft, his medium is directed at fulfilling his every-day needs at minimum costs and at his own "front-door."

Airports and their construction, involving not only engineering but legal aspects in many respects, were the subject of the full agenda prepared for the Joint Cooperative Committee, NASAO-Associated General Contractors of America, meeting in Boston, February 27, 1951. Items on the agenda were:

- " I. Impact of defense program on Federal-aid airport construction.
- II. Cut-back of Federal funds by Bureau of Budget from \$36,700,000 to \$21,200,000 and status of projects that were ready to be processed for construction but cannot qualify as defense jobs.
- III. Progress on clarification of CAA policy regarding disputed final estimates.
- IV. Responsibilities of CAA personnel on construction projects as related to suggestions and instructions to contractors.
- V. Recent announcement by CAA on directives to be channeled through them to National Production Authority. Clarification on whether a sponsor may apply and receive directive prior to award of contract or wait until contract is awarded and then apply. Effect on bids when contractor has no assurance of supply of critical materials.
- VI. Work of last Congress of importance to airport program.
- VII. Clarification of S.1281 permitting CAA to provide up to 50% of the cost of land for airports. Can sponsors apply for the additional 25% reimbursement on land that has been purchased since May 13, 1946, or is the sponsor limited for reimbursement to projects that are under grant agreement and have not been finalled?
- VIII. Bills now before Congress that require Joint Committee action.
- IX. Possible relaxation of CAA requirements that sponsors clear zones of obstructions prior to receipt of any partial construction payments.
- X. Consultant engineers' pay based on straight percentage fee. Should sponsor be reimbursed on costs for zoning plans and etc., as required by CAA?
- XI. Progress on study of long-range financing for airport construction.
- XII. National Defense plan to take over some civilian airports."

At the National Association of State Aviation Officials Executive Board meeting held in Washington, D.C. in February the Board voted that possession of CAA Airman Identification Cards should be mandatory; that these

cards be printed and issued at the earliest possible date; and that they include an anti-subversive statement or declaration, provided its inclusion would not delay printing and distribution of the cards. With respect to legislation introduced in the 82nd Federal Congress, the Board took the following action in general terms:

- 1) That the Association take no official position at the present time on any bills pertaining to separation of subsidy from airmail pay.
- 2) That the Association support legislation to repeal and/or reduce the tax on the transportation of persons and property.
- 3) That the Association actively support in principle the construction of heliports on or near new government buildings.
- 4) That the Association actively support legislation to eliminate overtime pay of customs, immigration and health department employees, providing it included all types of aircraft and aviation.
- 5) That the Association actively support legislation pertaining to the training of civilian pilots, technicians and mechanics (H.R. 1521, H.R. 1168, S.507, S. 325) but not to actively support H.R. 1301 to extend benefits of Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944.

A subject under research and study for several months at the University of Minnesota Law School of interest to state and municipal aviation authorities is that of the problem of removing damaged, derelict or abandoned aircraft from public airport premises. Involved are the federal and state laws on title to aircraft, police powers to remove aircraft and dispose of them at public sale, preservation of damaged aircraft held for investigations by both federal and state authorities, and related legal questions. Chief concern over these aircraft is the temptation to their use in flight by unauthorized persons, who, whether heedless of their own safety, have shown no responsibility to life and property on the ground. There is the correlated factor of safety at airports in removing such aircraft from areas needed for flight and servicing purposes. Motor Vehicle laws in the various states are more or less uniform in providing for removal from highways of such abandoned vehicles by the state police or other enforcement agencies, notifying the last known owner at his last known address, or by publication, and then disposing of the vehicles at public sale, with title firmed after lapse of a designated period. It is thought that some similar legislation may need to be enacted for aircraft of this category, and the study is to make recommendation on all aspects of the subject.

M. D.