



Moontown Airport News

By George Myers October 2007

ALDOT Approves Moontown

It has been a struggle but, with a lot of effort from local pilots and a lot of funds expended, ALDOT has finally reapproved Moontown as a Privately Owned, Public Use Airport. Rickey Weldon and I removed the last of the offending trees and ALDOT's Keith Heartsell reinspected and found that we meet all requirements for a sod public use airport. We are now in a position to provide some extra leeway by moving runway 27's threshold lights 50 feet closer to Moontown Road, thus moving the approach fan further from the trees on each side of the approach. That project will be completed after the busy flying season.

Just because ALDOT is happy now does not mean that they will be in the future. The Feds keep changing the rules and ALDOT jumps right on top of the changes. Our latest problem came from an interpretation of a rule defining where the approach fan started relative to the runway threshold. Did it start at the end of the runway or at the displaced threshold? It was finally decided that it started at the displaced threshold and that required us to cut trees and move a utility pole.

Annual Old Fashioned Grass Field Fly-In

The EAA 190 Newsletter has more photos and words about the fly-in. EAA Chapter 190 and Moontown Airport, Inc. jointly sponsor the fly-in. We have had really bad luck with rain and heat over the past 10 years so we decided to try September, knowing we had to compete with football, NASCAR, The Trail of Tears and the start of the school season. The decision was correct and the third weekend in September was a real winner for us this year. We had a dust settling rain early Friday and the weather for the weekend was great. David Mars



brought his 1929 Travel Air from Mississippi, Rex Davis had his helicopter and both sold rides all weekend. David was very impressed with the airport and the crowd and looks

forward to next year. There were 80 transit airplanes visiting during the weekend and the new Southeast parking field came in very handy. The EAA pilots took about 240 Young Eagles for airplane rides and food was provided both days by local high and middle school booster clubs. The Maze brought their cow train to provide rides for the kids (of all ages I might add) and the Central Volunteer Fire Department provided medical aid and stood by for any disaster. We had radio-controlled airplanes and antique cars on display and our former FAA control tower operators provided air traffic advisories.

Our visitors enjoyed the PA system and service provided by Doug McDaniel even though some had doubts and even a few people complained about the radio advertisements and noise. The overall effect was really great. Visitors found out where the Young Eagles were, that airplane and helicopter rides were available for hire, and even heard descriptions of various planes. Not all people flew in. Both parking lots were full of cars. We had more drive-ins than we have ever had.

There were formation demonstrations by six members of the RedStars and a glider demonstration by Rand Baldwin. An unexpected fly-by was a highly polished P-51D Mustang from parts unknown (someone told me it came from Birmingham).



Ed Fielding's presentation on the SR-71 and his record-breaking speed run across the United States was well presented and well received by the banquet crowd. We sold around 90 tickets for the banquet.

Airplanes came from Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Airplanes were judged and the following winners selected:

- Best Classic, Piper J-3 Cub, N98880, Ed Williams, Apison, TN
- Best Homebuilt, RV-6A, N413BB, Bob Butler, Decatur, AL
- Best Antique, Fleet 7, N798V, Aubie Pearman, Tupelo, MS
- Best Warbird, CJ-6A, N600YK, Richard Hess, Cartersville, GA

Trophies will be prepared and sent to the winners. I was not a judge but I noticed a lot of really nice airplanes in attendance. There were no losers. Thanks for your attendance.

The list of people, both EAA members and Moontown pilots, who helped with the planning and operation of our fly-in is long. We had volunteers directing and parking airplanes, preparing food, parking cars, helping with crowd control, registering and flying Young Eagles, servicing airplanes, and standing by for emergencies. It was a huge effort and greatly appreciated by the staff and management of Moontown Airport, Rinet Air Service, and EAA Chapter 190.

Moontown Host to Elementary and Middle School Students

Around 45 home schooled students and some of their parents attended a Moontown Airport field trip in early October. Rickey Weldon of Rinet Air Services and myself hosted them. The students were interested in how Moontown Airport fit into the overall aviation environment, what type of flying was conducted at airports like Moontown, and how to get a start in aviation. Rickey and I divided the students into two groups for the briefings who spent time both in Rickey's shop and my hangar.



Rickey discussed airplane maintenance and airport operations. I talked about aviation history, how airplanes fly and went over an airplane preflight inspection. We both answered questions beyond the basic briefings. We ended the field trip with a brief flight demonstration with the YAK-52. The students are interested in returning to Moontown for Young Eagle flights and perhaps a tour of Bosch Aerospace.

Catch-A-Cardinal Comes To Moontown

AOPA's Julie Boatman and AvNet's Dan Gryder stopped by Moontown during their cross-country tour with the AOPA Save-A-Cardinal. Julie called ahead to see if we could round up a few local pilots and perhaps some news coverage. Getting people was easy. I sent out email messages to the world and offered a Moontown hosted free lunch. About 45 interested and hungry pilots were there to meet the Cardinal when it landed.



AOPA will give this airplane away to an EAA member early next year. The plane has been fully restored with a new engine, accessories and paint. There are pictures of the progress of the restoration in most of the past year's AOPA Pilot magazine.

Rickey Weldon removed the engine cowlings after the plane arrived so we could inspect the firewall forward. We all inspected the engine installation, the great paint job, the modern instrumentation, and new leather interior. Julie said she thought the value of the restored airplane would be around \$110,000.



We ate lunch and then Julie talked about the airplane and its progress through restoration. Channel 19 came out to do some photography for the evening news. Thanks Julie for coming to Moontown with that great bird. I think it would feel right at home at Moontown. Also, we are looking forward to your next great adventure with AOPA.