



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

January 14, 2019

Program

Steve Singleton introduced our speaker, Mr. Ben Harrison, Manager for the Cullman Regional Airport since 2014. This airport is a joint venture between the City and County of Cullman, Alabama. It was established in the mid 1950's as a 2800-foot-long dirt strip. Beginning in the 1970's the Federal Aviation Administration made funds available for improvements to the runway and capital investments. Since that time there have been many grants with matching funds from the city and county. Under the leadership of Mr. Harrison, funding in accordance with detailed 5-year plan have led to enough Federal and other funding which continues to fulfill those plans and associated upgrades. Ben also said that the airport would never be self-sufficient without this government support.



President Lion Mike Ponder presents Mr. Ben Harrison with a token of appreciation for his speaking presentation this night.

Today, the airport boasts a 9-inch thick asphalt, north/south runway which is 5500

feet long, 100 feet wide and lighted. It is accompanied by full-length lighted taxiways, fifty-six T-hangars, ten corporate hangars, helicopter hangars, a terminal building with full service restaurant (which Ben claims to dish-out the best hamburgers in Cullman. The airport has precision approach path indicators, an automatic weather observation station, and a ground communications outlet. As Ben explained the airport is an asset that has been very critical in bring new industry to Cullman; our airport can accommodate aircraft such as the CRJ200 or anything up to 100,000 lbs. Industry appreciates the travel time it saves corporate executives and fast delivery of industry production parts and equipment. On-site partners include Alabama Dept of Public Safety, the Civil Air Patrol, Cullman Police Dept, Sky Dive Alabama, Wallace State, Air Evac-Cullman, and Life Team. Industry Partners include Rehau, Cash ACME, and Shark Bite. The Alabama Highway Patrol uses our Airport as its center of flight operations for northern Alabama. Eighty-seven aircraft are based out of this airport. In the event of a power-failure, the airport has a generator on standby that can totally provide it power needs. The airport averages around 800 flight operations per month. Cullman's airport does not charge any landing-fees; otherwise many planes would likely go to the larger airports in Birmingham or Huntsville, that offer more services. However, Cullman's airport partially makes up for no-landing fees with services for aircraft fuel and maintenance. It also can guarantee having a rental car ready to meet a passenger who calls



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ahead, and other conveniences of less crowded locations.

A couple of the biggest projects upcoming for the airport is an extension of the existing airport by another 700 ft. The largest aircraft are now limited in how much fuel fly at take-off with the runway's current length. In order for the runway to be FAA certified for its current and extended length, about 22 acres of 40-year timber growth around the airport will have to be cleared and continue to be maintained as grass-only pasture in the future.

Wallace State Community College is a significant partner providing pilot training. Today there is a great demand for pilots, as well as maintenance technicians across the country. This need is highlighted by the fact that at any one-time, over 1-million planes are flying over our country. One of the countries larger airports, Atlanta, averages 3,500 take-offs daily.

The Cullman Municipal Airport plays an increasing part in maintaining and growing our community and is a first-class operation.

Other Business

Lion Jim Walker suffered another fall and will continue in rehab. Lion Mariman Pope received a better diagnosis and new medicine which is improving his health, outlook, and abilities.

Lions were provided with a set of tickets to sell for our Fish and Ham Dinner, which will be held on March 9th. Lion Austin

Monk is in-charge of taking your ticket sale money in place of Lion Jim Walker. Lion Carey Thompson will be making team assignments for this event. In general, he will use last year's assignments as the starting point for 2019 assignments. If you were not happy with your position last year, see him for possible change.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Jan 21: Ms. Helen Cary from Two Shoes.



Ms. Helen Cary

Feb 18: No meeting. Eat across the street in support of the empty bowls dinner.

Mar 9: Fish and Ham Dinner at the Cullman Middle School cafeteria.

Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-739-0580 (H) or 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C).