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Questions and
comments about airport
issues can be sent to
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**Thousands Experience
Sizzling Summer Event**



August 7th was the perfect day for an Open House. The weather service predicted sunny skies, light winds and temperatures in the mid 70s, the perfect day for relaxing with the family. And that's just how thousands of residents surrounding the airport decided to spend their Saturday, relaxing in a completely new venue that we called the Summer Sizzle. Estimates put the crowds at 10,000 people, a sizable increase over last year's 4000 visitors for the Open House alone.

This year, the traditional Palwaukee Airport

Open House was combined with the Wheeling/Prospect Heights Chamber of Commerce's Business Expo in North American Jet's hangar on the airport's northwest corner, as well as a mini Taste of Wheeling in a new tent located on the east side. Rounding out the Summer Sizzle was a Classic Car show hosted by Stasek Chevrolet with over 420 cars of all varieties on hand. The cross over of car enthusiasts reviewing the airplane static display was almost as large as the numbers of pilots gawking at the cars.

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One on One: An Interview with Robert Strauss

Robert Strauss is the present chairman of the Palwaukee Municipal Airport Commission and owner of a long-established insurance business.



Born on the North Shore, Bob Strauss and his parents also lived in Colorado and Michigan. After graduating from Michigan State University, Bob spent five years in the US Air Force, ending

up as an instructor/navigator on a C-124 (Globemaster), with the rank of captain.

He vividly recalls three weeks of gruel-

ing Air Force survival training near Reno, Nevada. "We lived on dandelions during escape and evasion drills in the hills. We discovered what fish and animals were good to eat. How to stay hidden, and still find our way home. We learned how to survive psychological abuse, through capture training."

By 1966, Bob's navigation missions around the world were getting longer and longer. At this point, with two young children to

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This past August, those of you who attended the Summer Sizzle probably realized rather quickly that the crowds were larger than in the past. Visitors numbered 10,000 from the early reports.

We've never had that many people on the airport at one time, ever. The preparations for that event consumed many, many hours of staff planning time long before August. The success of the event says a great deal about the effectiveness of those planning efforts.

What you may not be aware of though, is that this year's Airport Open House/Summer Sizzle was not one huge event, but rather a series of smaller events and the work of many organizations and dozens of people.

Most of the people involved were folks who do not normally work at Palwaukee and so, may have found some of our operations a bit foreign at times. In fact, I can tell you that we did not all agree all the time on how the event should work. The venue changed a few times, the number of participants and vendors rose and fell and even which tent should be placed where also changed.

But considering this was the first time we combined a dozen different restaurants, with a classic car show and a business expo with the traditional airport venues, everyone involved made it all come together for five glorious hours on August 7th. And that's something to write home about.

Despite all the work, I hope this was just the beginning, because what we proved this past summer is that many of us working together can accomplish much more than any of us can alone.

If we want our airport to become the premier facility in Chicagoland, we need to develop more opportunities to work jointly. That means learning how to leverage our talents as effectively as possible.

There are many possibilities, from co-op marketing of airport businesses to sponsoring events that will bring in customers that benefit everyone, like the Chicago Area Business Aviation Association seminars. I'm sure there are many more I have not even thought of yet. But placing our airport first on a new customer's agenda is not all about what I'd like to do, so feel free to give me a call because I'm open to your suggestions as well.

Dennis G. Rouleau, C.M.
Airport Manager

Presidential SUV



During election time, almost everyone has seen pictures of the president climbing aboard Air Force One, the airplane that serves as executive transport for George W. Bush and much of his staff.

What you may not know, however, is that the term Air Force One does not actually apply to the President's Boeing 747, but rather to the fact that the president is on board. But that big 747 cannot land at all airports. When the president visits Chicago, for instance, he lands at O'Hare and climbs aboard a helicopter for the trip to a local event. When the president rides one of these copters, flown by Marine pilots, their radio call sign is Marine One.

Recently, Palwaukee was host to a new helicopter – the VH-92 – that Sikorsky Aircraft, the aircraft's manufacturer, hopes will

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Meet Bob and Mattie



If you haven't met these two characters yet, we'd like to introduce you to Bob & Mattie. This husband-wife team is much more than simply the spokes-people for the airport's small-aircraft marketing efforts.

We hope these people are a lot like you, people who really care about the future of general aviation. They are not professional pilots, but Mattie has been a 99 for 20 years and Bob has flown many a mission for the CAP and Young Eagles.

As time passes, you'll see them as the voice of people who still believe there's a reason to have a strong general aviation airport, one that can mix small aircraft with the business aircraft that have become so much a part of the local landscape.

We hear they're about to join PAPA next.

Summer Event, continued from page one

We were also pleased to have timed the Sizzle with a visit from historic WWII aircraft from the Collings Foundation. The East Coast foundation brought a Boeing B-17, Consolidated B-24 and North American B-25 for viewing as well, as well as rides for a lucky few.

All of these events were combined with the regular airport booths and static airplanes everyone has become used to seeing from some of the airport businesses and local aviation associations like the Palwaukee Airport Pilots Association and the Civil Air Patrol. Copies of the airport's new four-color newsletter were also available for the first time at the Sizzle. Many thanks to Rick Klein of Klein Tools for his sponsorship of the show's newsletter, as well as for bringing his Harvard and Extra aircraft to the static display.

Our thanks to a few of the gourmet restaurants who provided scrumptious food such as the 94th Aero Squadron, The Adam's Mark (now the Radisson), Bob Chinn's Crab House, Buca di Beppo, Pete Miller's, Wa-Pa-Ghetti's Pizza and The Ram.

Next year's Palwaukee Airport extravaganza is already scheduled for July 23. It's never too early to mark your calendars because the 2005 version is sure to be even better.

One on One Interview, continued from page one

consider, Bob and his wife agreed that a career change made sense. They moved to Wheeling, and Bob started his insurance career with the Travelers Insurance Co.

Through his involvement with the Jaycees, Bob met Tony Altieri. In 1985, when Palwaukee Airport came up for sale, Village President Sheila Schultz asked Tony to suggest some good commissioner candidates and the rest is history. Now, Bob is one of the "grand old men" of the airport, having held the chairmanship more than once in the 20-odd years of his involvement.

"Some people think of expansion only in terms of 'bigger', but for us, expansion means so many other things; increased safety, new buildings, lighting, improving the roadways and intersections around the airport. Correcting the drainage ditch problem was a huge, yet necessary, undertaking.

"We've improved our relationship with the community measurably, with CommAvia's Palwaukee Airport Community Engagement (PACE) project. Local school classes and scout troops always look forward to touring the airport. Airport Manager Dennis Rouleau has done an excellent job of maintaining a healthy dialogue between the community and the airport. As we await the official response to our major airport noise study, we have proactively followed through on many of the initial recommendations.

"Airport funding is always a concern. Our state matching funds have dropped from 5% to 2.5%. The airport is financially strong, with leasing bringing in over 70% of our work-

One on One Interview, continued from page one

ing capital. We're making improvements, and will continue to make improvements, as fast as we can."

For Palwaukee, and this old navigator, the future holds many new adventures.

Palwaukee Pilot Reunion Another Success



Reunion organizer
Bob Mayer

When Bob Mayer first conceived of organizing a Palwaukee pilot's reunion, the point was to try and connect with a few old friends when he came to town from Phoenix where he now resides. Mayer learned to fly at Palwaukee in the late 1940's.

As he began working his way through the phone list, Mayer began connecting with old friends he hadn't spoken to in decades. But he also noticed that more old Palwaukee pilots than he expected were interested in getting together to rekindle old ties.

And so began the first Palwaukee Airport Pilot Reunion at the 94th Aero Squadron in August of 2003. Slightly more than 100 pilots attended, many of who had been flying here for over 30 years.

This year's September 26th event however, drew 129 pilots and aviation aficionados, representing some 8 different states, a 25 percent increase over last year. At the recent reunion, 97-year old George J. Priestler, pilot, former airport owner and founder of Priestler Aviation was presented a plaque for his service to the aviation community. Esther Noffke, a former 35-year Priestler Aviation employee also received a similar award. Noffke, was a member of an elite group of World War II women pilots who ferried bombers and fighters from US factories to Europe when not enough male pilots were around to help.

As Mayer made plans to return to his Arizona home last week, he said the next reunion is already being organized to which pilots and non-pilots alike will be invited in September 2005.



Three generations of the Priestler family.
L-R, James, Charles and George.

become the new Marine One as it replaces the president's 30-year old Sikorsky VH-3D. Attending the ceremony to review the new helicopter on the west side of the airport was US. Congressman Mark Kirk.

Along with Airport Manager Dennis Rouleau, Congressman Kirk and James Cameron, vice president and general manager, Northrop Grumman Defensive Systems Division, took the copter for a short demo flight around Chicagoland.

If the new copter gets the nod from the White House later this year, the first VH-92 will begin carrying the president sometime next summer. The White House plans to order approximately 23 of the VH-92s at a cost of \$20 million each.

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Also available online at www.palwaukee.org and at the Village of Wheeling and City of Prospect Heights Village Halls, and both municipal libraries.



**Palwaukee Municipal Airport
Noise Hotline**
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Help reduce airport noise
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Palwaukee Municipal Airport Commission

Meeting Dates for 2004, 8:00 pm

October 20, 2004 December 15, 2004
November 17, 2004

Palwaukee Municipal Airport Community Engagement Council (PACE) Meeting Dates for 2004

October 7, 2004 December 2, 2004
November 4, 2004

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