

# CHICAGO EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

WHERE CHICAGOLAND BUSINESS TAKES OFF

SPRING 2011



The Chicago Executive Airport Maintenance Crew keeps the airport running - (from left to right) Norm Mackey, Don Berg, Harry Wollscheid, Joe Wargo, maintenance lead, Rick Hervas and David Barry

## THE UNSUNG HEROES OF CHICAGO EXECUTIVE

They're the unheralded heroes of Chicago Executive Airport. When planes approach the airfield for a night landing, pilots know they'll find parallel rows of lights outlining the runway. In the midst of a winter storm, they're the difference between an icy, perilous landing, or a snow-packed reason to divert to another field, and a safe arrival on a cleared runway. They're the maintenance crew for Chicago Executive Airport and they almost invisibly keep the airport running.

"Our main job description is we maintain the airfield," said Joe Wargo, the airport maintenance lead. "We do airfield inspections, repairs, plowing, cutting the grass, making sure tie-down areas are in good shape. We do security around the field."

Where it includes the more mundane day to day responsibilities, it's easy to miss the critical nature of their jobs. But, as crew member Norm Mackey put it, they are always conscious of the overriding importance of what they do.

"When you're out on the broom trucks (removing snow), peoples' lives depend on it," he said. "The guys here know that."

The mundane includes caring for hangars, checking the condition of fences and maintaining equipment. Of course, equipment maintenance only appears inconsequential. When a storm blows in is no time to discover one of the sweepers isn't running.

Maintenance of the grass also has an additional hidden value. As Airport Manager Dennis Rouleau explained, they maintain the grass at different heights in different areas based on discouraging wildlife. He said the geese don't like the taller grass because they can't see predators approaching. They use everything from pyrotechnics to hired border collies to keep the wildlife away.

Other wildlife seen around the field includes coyotes, fox, deer and various birds, including Canadian geese, seagulls, hawks and turkey vultures. Then again, the crew is also on constant lookout for two-legged and four-

wheeled creatures that wander onto the field from time to time.

"We have people try to walk through the airfield," Wargo said. In some cases, the police are called and those attempts end in arrests. Thankfully, none has worked out worse than that in Joe's recollection. He did, however, recall two boys trying to takeoff a radio-controlled airplane from the northwest end of Runway No. 16/34.

"They had a model airplane on the runway," Wargo said. "Just after I had them off to the side, a plane landed."

While stories like that, in hindsight, bring a smile to Wargo's face, he's quite serious about the importance of what his crew does from day-to-day.

While, during nicer weather, their job includes maintaining the lights and vigilant surveillance of the airport, airport maintenance is never more critical than during adverse weather, particularly in the winter. Wargo said they provide pilots with regular updates on runway and taxiway conditions.

## A MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

Dennis Rouleau



2011 is a monumental year in the history of Chicago Executive Airport, marking the 25th anniversary of when Prospect Heights and Wheeling joined forces to purchase the facility. A lot has changed since that winter day Dec. 26, 1986.

Foremost among those changes is improved safety here at the airfield.

In 1992, we added an additional runway safety area at the north end of 16/34. That was made possible by pushing Hintz and Wolf roads to the north and west, respectively. In the process, the new lighted intersection of the two roads is no longer a magnet for traffic accidents, as it once was.

From the days when the north end of the airfield was bordered by an abandoned drive-in theater and a junk yard, the purchase of additional properties facilitated rerouting the drainage ditch that once presented a flooding threat in years, such as this, when the rains came hard and frequent.

The drainage ditch was in the safety area of two runways. But, moving it did more than solve one problem; it also contributed to improved drainage of the entire airfield.

We've seen the construction of a new \$3-million control tower, widened Runway 16/34 and upgraded the lighting system and signage on the field. When I came here in '89, the runway lights were mounted on U-channel sign posts – they were not the required breakaway posts that we have now.

The acreage of the Chicago Executive Airport has increased by more than 50 percent to its current 420 acres. We also have a customs department now to meet the needs of a burgeoning level of international flights.

Going forward, our goal is to maintain Chicago Executive Airport as a financially self-sufficient operation while continuing to improve safety. On the horizon, we have plans for an EMAS (Emergency Material Arresting System), which we'll install off the ends of the runways.

Of course, our goal is to continue to serve as an economic engine for the region. We've come a long way but we're still moving onward and upward.

## CEA PALWAUKEE CAP SQUADRON HONORED FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE



Members of the Palwaukee Composite Civil Air Patrol Squadron stand at attention as they are honored for "Exceptionally meritorious service."



The Palwaukee Composite Civil Air Patrol Squadron

They support the United States Air Force. They provide assistance for disaster relief in Illinois and serve as a responder for aviation-based search and rescue missions. They're on the job whenever there is a distress call in Northern Illinois and have even supported missions in Indiana, Wisconsin and Kentucky, as well as out over Lake Michigan. They're members of the Palwaukee Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol and they were recently honored for their efforts.

The Unit Citation Award, from the Illinois Wing of CAP, was presented by Maj. Brian Pokuta, Group 22 Commander, on Tuesday, May 3. It recognizes the squadron for "Exceptionally meritorious service, outstanding achievement, and a high degree of performance" during the period beginning Sept. 1, 2008 through Oct. 1, 2010. A streamer was fastened to the unit's flag in recognition of the award.

"While we are especially proud of this prestigious recognition, we cannot say that we did this without assistance," said Squadron Commander Capt. James Griggs. "We are blessed with very professional members serving their communities. But, the support of the General Aviation community is amazing at Chicago Executive. We are truly committed to being a partner with Chicago Executive and

hope to continue as an evolving asset to both them and the surrounding communities."

The squadron, a component of CAP Group 22, has been based at the airfield since 1941. Staff members with the group receive the same incident training as their public safety, EMS and federal agency counterparts. They often work with members of those groups in the classroom and in the field.

Civil Air Patrol, the United States Air Force auxiliary, is a nonprofit organization with almost 62,000 members nationwide. It performs 95 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the almost 27,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has performed missions for America for 70 years.

The unit meets weekly from 7:30 to 9:30 PM, Tuesdays at the CEA Administration Office.

### For more information contact:

Captain Griggs at 773.230.9099

[www.pwk.group22.net/Palwaukee\\_Composite\\_Squadron.html](http://www.pwk.group22.net/Palwaukee_Composite_Squadron.html)

Web Blog: [www.il049.blogspot.com](http://www.il049.blogspot.com)

# CEA HOSTS HIGH SCHOOL CAREER DAY



A&P Joe Fritzen at Windy City Aviation presents careers in aviation mechanics to District 211 students.

In terms of versatility, Chicago Executive Airport is virtually unsurpassed considering the number and types of planes it handles, as well as the varied origins of many flights in and out of the airport. CEA further proved its versatility March 31 and April 7 when it welcomed groups of students from School Districts 220 and 211 for tours of the facility. The educational opportunity to learn about aviation and related careers was arranged by the Public Awareness for Chicago Executive (PACE) in conjunction with career counselors from the two high school districts.

“Our students had a fantastic experience at Chicago Executive Airport,” said Jacquelyn Menich, career advisor at Conant High School. “The information... presented was both comprehensive and practical.”

She referred to the presentation as creative and having the ability to hold the interest of the students.

“All the visual experiences ... provided, as well as the first-hand contact with enthusiastic professionals, were extremely effective,” she said.



District 211 students examine a Diamond DA-20 used for training by Windy City Flyers

PACE Chairman Michael Haupt welcomed the students and provided a short initiation of the tours at the Control Tower. Air Traffic Manager Tyree McAfee brought the students inside the Tower Cab where they observed controllers working with live traffic. Controllers, who were not occupied with aviation traffic, explained various aspects of a career in air traffic control and answered questions.

The tours then visited Windy City Flyers. Liz Ganz briefed the students on different careers in aviation, including what is required to obtain a pilot's license for a career in the field. Students were shown a full-motion simulator and aircraft used for pilot training.

Windy City Aviation's Joe Fritzen then gave the students tours of Windy City Aviation's repair and maintenance facility. Students observed different aircraft undergoing a variety of repairs and maintenance procedures. Fritzen explained about airframe and powerplant licenses issued by the FAA and the extensive training involved qualifying for the licenses.

The tours were capped off with a presentation from Sable Omes-Sombke, newly appointed as operations manager for CEA, who discussed airport management and safety.

Students in the tour were driven from one location to another using airport taxiways. The process allowed students an up-close view of airport operations, as well as the perspective of someone taxiing on the airfield in a small plane.

Instructional tours of Chicago Executive Airport are available for small groups of high school students interested in aviation.

#### For more information contact:

Michael Haupt of PACE  
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or Jamie Abbott of CEA  
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## 25 YEARS WORTH CELEBRATING

Chicago Executive Airport has come a long way since Prospect Heights and Wheeling purchased the facility 25 years ago. The airport stands as a shining example of cooperation between two communities for the benefit of all.

To celebrate that momentous event, plans are underway for celebration. Prospect Heights, Wheeling and CEA look forward to providing more information about that event as it becomes available.

## OMES-SOMBKE BRINGS WELL-ROUNDED EXPERIENCE TO AIRPORT OPERATIONS COORDINATOR POSITION



Newly appointed operations coordinator Sable Omes-Sombke

An airport coordinator needs to know the ins and outs of running an airfield. That's why former intern Sable Omes-Sombke was the best choice when Chicago Executive Airport Manager Dennis Rouleau was looking for someone to fill the spot.

"Sable is uniquely qualified to handle this position," Rouleau said of Omes-Sombke. "She's very dedicated and well prepared to serve this airport."

The position comes with a substantial level of responsibility. Omes-Sombke will communicate with pilots about airfield conditions, coordinate construction projects at Chicago Executive Airport and follow through to ensure that the airport is running in accordance with all rules and regulations.

She'll also play an integral role in helping to maintain and improve on airport safety. From wildlife control around the airfield to responding to critical and emergency situations: a lot of weight will rest on her shoulders.

The good news is that Omes-Sombke is well suited to handle the pressure. She graduated from the University of North Dakota in December of 2009 with a degree in Business Administration in Airport Management. She has also served as an intern with Chicago Executive Airport, first as a maintenance intern in 2006 and, more recently, as a management intern.

The combination of well-rounded practical experience and education positions Omes-Sombke to excel in her new post.

"You learn a lot from the maintenance side of the airport," she said, adding that knowing what's involved from the ground up provides her with a fuller perspective on how the airport operates.

Actually, Omes-Sombke's experience with aviation extends back further than her internships. She was with the Young Eagles out of old Schaumburg Airport when she was in fifth grade. She then joined the Civil Air Patrol while attending high school.

"I always knew I wanted to be in aviation," she said, indicating that her passion for aviation extends to sitting in the pilot's seat when she's not working.

When asked about the biggest challenges of her new position, Omes-Sombke didn't hesitate to point to the winter months. She said the day of the big blizzard last winter was an all-hands-on-deck event for the entire staff at Chicago Executive Airport.

"We called everyone out," Omes-Sombke said. However, she added that, "even in the summer months, I have to make sure that everything is to FAA standards - lights, pavement wildlife - everything."

## ELECTION RESULTS MEAN CHANGES IN CEA BOARD

With the landslide victory of Nick Helmer as the mayor of Prospect Heights, the city's gain was Chicago Executive Airport's loss, as was the city council victory of Luis Mendez. The two served as members of the CEA Board for 2 and 3 years, respectively.

The loss of two experienced members, however, is compensated by the arrival of two new board members - Bill Kearns and Betty Cloud. While thanking Helmer and Mendez for their past service, as well as wishing them the best in their new positions, CEA looks forward to introducing readers to our new board members in upcoming issues.

## AIRPORT HOLIDAYS

May 30 - Memorial Day

July 4 - Independence Day

September 5 - Labor Day

October 10 - Columbus Day - Observed



Young Eagles Hotline  
847.883.8388

[www.ceaa.us/youngeagles.html](http://www.ceaa.us/youngeagles.html)

For information about our communities, visit:

[www.prospect-heights.il.us](http://www.prospect-heights.il.us)  
[www.vi.wheeling.il.us](http://www.vi.wheeling.il.us)

Additional copies of the Chicago Executive Airport Newsletter are available at wheeling and prospect Heights Village Halls, their municipal libraries, or by visiting [www.chiexec.com](http://www.chiexec.com)

### Chicago Executive Airport Noise Hotline

Help reduce airport noise 24 hours a day seven days a week. Call:

847.537.2580 X 7

## CHICAGO EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

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847.537.2580 Phone

Wheeling, Illinois 60090  
847.537.8183 Facsimile

[www.chiexec.com](http://www.chiexec.com)

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### Board of Directors Meetings

June 15, 2011, Wednesday  
July 20, 2011, Wednesday  
August 17, 2011, Wednesday  
September 21, 2011, Wednesday  
October 19, 2011, Wednesday

#### Public Awareness for Chicago

##### Executive Airport (PACE) (In managers office)

May 31, 2011, Tuesday  
June 28, 2011, Tuesday  
July 19, 2011, Tuesday  
August 30, 2011, Tuesday  
September 27, 2011, Tuesday  
For More Information: [www.chiexec.com](http://www.chiexec.com)

#### Aviation Explorer Post 9 Meetings

1st and 3rd Monday of each month  
7:30 p.m. at Windy City Flyers  
1098 South Milwaukee Avenue, Suite 301

#### PAPA At Chicago Executive Meetings

Check website for current meeting date  
[www.pwkpilots.org](http://www.pwkpilots.org)

#### Flight World Hangar Talk

1st Thursday of each month  
Call 847.459.0360

#### Civil Air Patrol

Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m.  
Airport Admin office, 1020 Plant Road  
Call 773.230.9099

### BOARD MEMBERS

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