

# MAAC/NJ REPORTER

Mid-Atlantic Aviation Coalition - NJ's Aviation Newsletter Winter - 2009

## May 1 Aviation Conference at EWR

### Who will train the Professionals?

The world just got a lesson in competence from USAir pilot Chesley Sullenberger. As much as we were all amazed by his cool performance in saving the lives of his passengers, Sully patiently explained that he was merely doing what he was trained to do. The 'Miracle in the Hudson' demonstrated the extraordinary skill that airline pilots must attain in order to do their jobs.

Sullenberger was also a general aviation pilot and flew gliders. He got his initial time in the air in light aircraft at small airfields. He learned to fly just like the rest of us.

Right now, aviation education in New Jersey is in a dire state of affairs. New Jersey has lost two valuable A&P training programs in Burlington and Ocean Counties. The foremost academic aviation education program in the State is at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor. This successful aviation vocational program is threatened with imminent closure. By the time you read this, the school's Trustees may have decided the fate of that excellent program.

MAAC is very concerned about where future aviation professionals will come from. Who will train the next generations of pilots and mechanics if the academic programs that train students for these positions fail? To be sure, there are many dimensions to the problem and many unsettling questions. This year's State Aviation Conference will address some of those issues.

The conference will be held starting at 8:30 a.m. at Liberty Newark Airport's historic Building One, the Port Authority Operations building on William

Conrad Road. See the MAAC web page at [www.njaviation.com](http://www.njaviation.com) for directions and updates on the program. Space is limited so we strongly urge advance registration for the event. Fill out and return the accompanying registration form to assure you get a seat.

A number of talented, qualified and knowledgeable aviation education professionals will be presenting their thoughts. These include John and Martha King of the King Schools and Stephen Dilts, recently appointed as NJ Commissioner of Transportation.

Other scheduled speakers are Dr. Tim Brady, Dean of Aviation at Embry Riddle who will present an overview of the national picture on aviation education. Mary Lou Dordan of the FAA Tech Center in Pomona, FAA Aviation and Space Education Program Manager, will present the Administration's view. Joe Blasenstein of Trenton Mercer College will discuss his program's impact and his experience with academic aviation training.

Spirit Airlines pilot Janis Blackburn, will present the perspective of the NJ Aviation Education Council. She will be part of a panel, which will discuss the state's alternative aviation education programs.

If you have attended one of MAAC's annual conferences, you know they present a great opportunity for comradeship. In this year's program we are literally dealing with the future of aviation. We believe the topic is critically important, not just for aviation, but also for the economic health and growth of New Jersey.

## Mercer Flight Program in Jeopardy

The Trustees of Mercer County Community College have the same set of budget issues and problems as every other educational institution in the nation. In recessionary 2009, frugality is the watchword in publicly funded institutions just as it is with families and businesses.

At this writing, the College's Trustees are presently considering whether or not to continue hosting and supporting the excellent flight training program that has trained hundreds of aviation professionals over the past decades. They will render their decision in March and there is reason to fear their budget axe.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees, an overflow crowd of nearly 100 program supporters attended and spoke their mind about the program, its importance to the State of New Jersey, and the meaning it has had in their lives. Current students spoke of what the program meant to their potential for meaningful employment in a vocation they aspired to. Past students testified to their success in a difficult but rewarding career

MAAC was represented by Bob Checchio and Bill Leavens who addressed some of the practical reality of professional aviation and the need to continue a program of Mercer's caliber. Checchio advised that Mercer's was one of only two 2 year programs in the nation that had received full accreditation from Aviation Accreditation Board International. He also noted that the NJ STARS program would pay tuition for qualified low income students and the promise of an aviation career would be lost if the aviation program were discontinued. Closure would force students interested in an aviation career to leave the state in order to pursue their career. When students leave the Garden State, there's a good chance they won't come back.

MAAC also noted that many Fortune 500 companies are headquartered in New Jersey and a large percentage of those firms have corporate flight departments. The College is training flight professionals for good jobs that exist here and now in New Jersey.

Another observation was that the school is not adequately promoted within the target student population or among potential employers for graduates. Every NJ high school guidance counselor might receive a brochure that details the program benefits and availability. Coupled with the NJ STARS program, what better incentive could there be for students to work hard than to qualify for a quality flight training program?

As to budgetary considerations, MAAC noted that the school owns and maintains a large fleet of older training aircraft that have contributed excessively to program costs in recent years. A number of the audience members addressed that question, suggesting that the Trustees consider 'privatizing' the actual flight training and passing those maintenance costs along to a qualified third party flight training school that might be based at nearby Robbinsville or Trenton Mercer Airports.

MAAC noted that the beneficiaries of the program were not just students. Jersey based flight departments have a continuing need for properly trained flight personnel. There is a logical link between that need and Mercer's program. Promoting the program to New Jersey corporations might encourage financial support for the program to defray some expenses. The trustees were encouraged to keep the program and to maintain and strengthen the academic portions, reduce or eliminate the aircraft fleet, and promote the program to potential students and to those corporations that need pilots and other professionals trained in the program.

## Feds Plan NY Class B Expansion

Members of MAAC have been meeting with a group that is providing qualified public input to the New York Region FAA on a proposal to greatly enlarge class B airspace in the New York metropolitan area. Presently the outer ring of the zone extends out 20 miles from EWR, LGA and JFK airports. The proposal would lower the floor from 3000 feet to 2500 feet and extend that ring out to 25 or possibly 30 miles. The airports newly affected by the 25 mile ring expansion in New Jersey include Somerset, Morristown, Old Bridge, and Central Jersey Regional. 30 miles is worse.

A corridor is being designed for Runway 11 traffic at EWR which will be located between Somerset and Morristown and have a 2,000 foot floor. This will impose severe operating limitations on these airports or on any aircraft transitioning through the area.

MAAC Director Steve Parker, operator of Somerset Airport, was selected to join the 11 member team that is reviewing the proposal. That team is composed of members of the Eastern Region Helicopter Council, fbos, and private pilot groups. Because the air carrier airports in the region and Teterboro would not be materially affected by the expansion, they are not represented.

The FAA's supposed need for the expansion has come about because of a change in the regulations that govern how air traffic is managed in controlled airspace. During 'rush hour' pilots of airliners landing at EWR are routinely routed in a loop to the north of the class B to maintain separation for inbound traffic. The new regs change one word - 'should' notify to 'shall' notify - when advising pilots they are leaving and then re-entering the class B. That requirement to positively communicate between controllers and pilots will require a lot of broadcast radio bandwidth on already crowded frequencies.

This requirement ignores the fact that virtually all of these aircraft are on instrument flight paths, squawking assigned codes and following the same general route. The FAA's answer to a question nobody is asking is to make more airspace available so that they don't have to make more radio space available.

MAAC's position and that of the other groups involved is that the system works fine no matter what the regs say. The havoc that will be caused in outlying GA airports will create a far greater safety hazard as aircraft are squashed down into diminishing uncontrolled airspace. Or have you tried getting a clearance into the class B lately?

We'll keep you advised.

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## GA Awareness Week

As in previous years, MAAC will participate in General Aviation Awareness Week at the Statehouse in Trenton by displaying information to members of the New Jersey Legislature and their staff and discussing issues of importance to the aviation community. This has proven to be a valuable way to present aviation's story to those leaders who have the most to say about how our airports will be governed.

From last Fall's discussion with the Assembly Transportation Committee, it appears we have work to do concerning the removal of trees and obstructions from airport approach areas. That remains a major MAAC initiative.

## Dues are Due

If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter, we strongly encourage you to send in your check for dues. Individual donations remain at \$15.00. Groups remain at \$50.00 and have done so since 1992. In the time honored words of Bartles and Jaymes, "Thanks for Your Support!"

## From the Flight Deck      Mike Stoddard, President

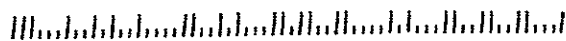
“The end of February also signaled an end to the comment period for the Transportation Security Administration’s Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP), but not to the industry-wide effort opposing the TSA plan. More than 4,200 comments were submitted to the docket, which according to USA Today, were the most comments TSA has received regarding any single initiative since the agency was created in the wake of 9/11.” (*AOPA ePilot*)

MAAC is not the only group worried about the insane paranoia left over from the last 8 years. The intrusion of the Transportation Security Administration into the lives of every American carries too many earmarks of the worst totalitarian regimes from World War II.

In the face of no credible threat to our national security, the LASP rules will make GA airports into virtual prisons with gated entries and exits scanned by remote cameras. What we love most about flying is the freedom to go where we want, when we want, without constant surveillance. We have had to endure the foolish stupidity of airline boarding where it is acceptable for TSA personnel to hassle old ladies and children with inspections and shoe removal. If we do not fight the TSA LASP rules we will lose even more freedom and deny the joy of flight to generations that will follow.

I urge you to contact all your elected representatives and voice your objections to this idiocy. Please come to our May 1 Conference and sign the petition objecting to the LASP. To paraphrase everyone’s favorite patriot, Ben Franklin, “They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” He saw this coming.

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# MID-ATLANTIC AVIATION COALITION

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MAAC represents the interests of New Jersey's 15,000 licensed power and glider pilots, balloonists, airport owners, FBOs, and others with a strong concern about aviation. Our mission is to advocate for aviation in New Jersey, to preserve the State's public use airports, and to improve their safety and capacity.

MAAC educates key people in our State Legislature about the benefits of general aviation and on the potential impact of legislation that targets general aviation. MAAC monitors political actions and decisions that affect general aviation, and alerts NJ aviators, airport operators, and others interested in preserving our general aviation airport infrastructure. New Jersey State Senate and Assembly Members know that there is a citizens' group that cares about decisions affecting aviation. The Legislature listens because of our numbers and the strength of our positions. Please add your voice to ours.

All dues and contributions are used solely for promotion, education and communication.

For more information contact MAAC at    maacmembers@gmail.com    or check out our website at www.njaviation.com

Send dues with the following information to MAAC, P. O. Box 155, Pluckemin, NJ 07978.

Suggested Membership Donation:    Individual \$15                      Sustaining Organization \$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your primary airport \_\_\_\_\_

If we may contact you about legislation, what is your State Legislative District? \_\_\_\_\_

Pilot Status:    Student    Private    Commercial    ATP    Instrument    Glider

Multi-Engine    Balloon    Helicopter    CFI    CFII    Ground Instructor