

Numerous improvements occur at airport

Multiple projects are underway or complete at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield this fall, most notably the Airport Advisory Committee's top project: development of a grass runway. This improvement addresses an interesting development at Hood River's airport: increasing use by taildragger airplanes since last year's opening of the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum.

A grass runway is preferred by taildraggers because the aircrafts require more pilot skill for take off and landing than tricycle or conventional three-point landing gear. "A grass runway is more forgiving and makes you look like a better pilot," explains Jeremy Young, chairperson of the Port's Airport Advisory Committee. "But it's also safer. It makes

for an easier landing in wind because you can put a wing down to smooth the landing." The turf runway will be located adjacent to the existing asphalt runway, and considered a single runway giving pilots the option to land on grass or asphalt. "The new grass runway will benefit the airport tremendously as an added incentive for pilots to come to Hood River. It will be a draw to aircraft clubs," Young adds. "It's beneficial to almost every pilot out there. Cessnas may even opt to use the turf runway on windy days. Some pilots might avoid Hood River because of its wind, but grass runways eliminate a lot of fear, especially for pilots flying solo." Young says a grass runway is also advantageous when learning to fly, and it may draw students from other airports. Scla Consulting Engineers is designing the runway, with geotechnical work performed by GRI. Once designed, the final step will be securing a contractor.

The grass runway is not included in the airport master plan, so is not eligible for Federal Aviation Administration funds. The Port received FAA approval for the project, however. The grass runway

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Economic Focus

by Michael McElwee,
Port Executive Director



Michael McElwee

The economy is in a downturn and we are entering a period of economic challenge. It is human nature to focus on immediate

priorities to weather the storm. A downturn heightens our concerns about jobs, insurance, savings and the myriad issues that affect our families, neighbors and local community. For the Port, it also means a renewed focus on our core mission – economic development.

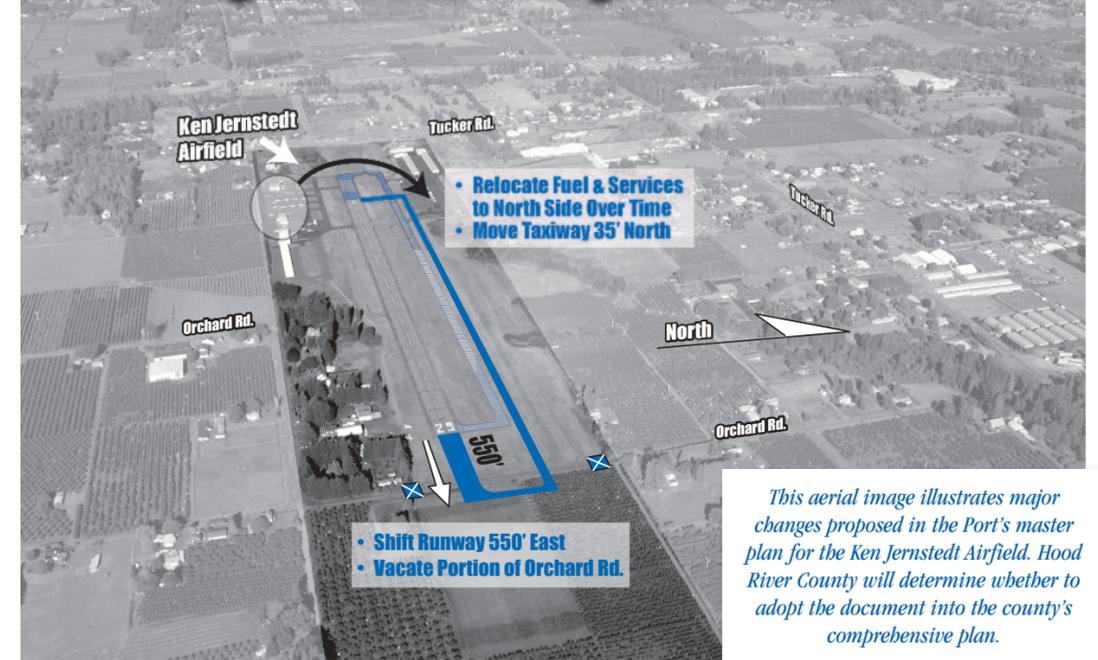
Among other things, economic development at the Port means long-term efforts such as the acquisition and preparation of property for development. This is needed to retain businesses and recruit new ones for the future. In a poor economy it also means renewed efforts to accommodate the needs of businesses within existing Port buildings. This may include floor plan changes or lease modifications that can support both growing firms and those experiencing a downturn. In both time frames, our role is to assist private businesses so they can invest capital and create jobs.

Existing Light Industrial Space

The Port owns four light industrial buildings totaling about 115,000 square feet. These are on the waterfront (Maritime Services Building and UTS Portsite), and

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County reviews Airport Master Plan



This aerial image illustrates major changes proposed in the Port's master plan for the Ken Jernstedt Airfield. Hood River County will determine whether to adopt the document into the county's comprehensive plan.

Efforts to align future projects at the Port's Ken Jernstedt Airfield with Hood River County's comprehensive plan moved forward this fall, with a late-October county planning commission work session following a September open house to consider the airport's master plan.

If adopted by the Hood River County Board of Commissioners, the master plan – which describes how the airport may look by 2024 – would become part of the county's Transportation System Plan.

Ken Jernstedt Airfield's master plan chief goals are enhancing safety,

planning for facilities and ensuring the airport's longevity.

No major growth is anticipated at Ken Jernstedt Airfield, but the airport may look different in the next few years. A

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continued from above addition will cost approximately \$80,000 and will preserve the Port's water rights.

Other recent developments at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield include the installation of a new airplane tie-down system, pavement repairs, and the search for a new Fixed Base Operator (FBO).

The Port of Hood River seeks a new Fixed Base Operator of the Ken Jernstedt Airfield, after Anne Yannotti reported to the Airport Advisory Committee last August that Flightline Services would not seek renewal of its contract that ends December 31. Flightline Services, owned by Yannotti and Denny Kindig, has been operating the Hood River Airport since 1995. The couple decided not to reapply for the FBO position in order to focus on new opportunities.

"An FBO is critical to an airport's success. It makes or breaks an airport," Young shares. His reasoning is rooted in the FBO as the social center of an airport. "It needs to be a welcoming place, but also calm and quiet. It's a place where pilots come in, file flight plans, and refuel. Flying is serious stuff," he adds. "We had good people already, and we need good people again."

Last month, the State of Oregon completed crack sealing and new striping at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield through its Pavement Maintenance Program. Oregon Department of Aviation contributed about \$90,000 for the project, and the Port used an additional \$23,000 in FAA funds for additional crack sealing and striping on airport aprons.

A new tie-down system at the airport uses anchor and chain tie-downs, replacing the cable tie-down with sliders. "The old cable system would get caught on snowplows, and could ultimately damage aircraft. Now the planes and tie-downs will be easier to plow around," says Port Marketing Manager Mike Doke. Tie-down installation was completed by Port maintenance staff. ●



Taildragger pilots will likely prefer landing on the new turf runway being developed at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield.

PORT MEETINGS

Regular Port Commission meetings are held on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday** of each month in its **Boardroom at Marina Center Building** (1000 E. Port Marina Drive). The Port welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.

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Building concept considers future waterfront development

A concept design for the waterfront's first new building in 25 years is in the works. The Port of Hood River contracted with Group Mackenzie to create a commercial building concept that could help determine future development standards on the waterfront.

The project presents a design challenge because conception of the first building will set precedence for future development of the industrial park. How can this building be visually aesthetic while built at a suitably affordable price for potential tenants? How shall the Port design a new building for the waterfront compatible with its scenic Columbia River location and nearby recreational uses? These are just some questions the Port expects answered with this project.

The new building would likely be developed on Lot 1 of the recently approved subdivision, located at 8th Street and Portway Avenue. Its size between 16,000 to 20,000 square feet would be configured as flexible space for office and light manufacturing.

The area in the center of this photo, across from the new waterfront park, is the likely location of proposed new industrial development.

Building elements and materials will be recommended that may include Cascadian-style architectural or other appropriate design.

The front of the edifice would accommodate pedestrian traffic on Portway while recognizing the community's use of the new waterfront park. The rear of the building would address light industrial needs, including shipping and receiving. A flexible configuration inside would satisfy office functions at the front of the building, and manufacturing needs in the rear.

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New Harvest Fest venue feeds the senses



Harvest Fest was blessed with sunny, dry weather for its 2008 debut at the Event Site, staged with tents and a new layout.

Each year, about 25,000 visitors attend the Hood River County Chamber of Commerce Harvest Fest. This year's event, held October 17 to 19, had an entirely new look and feel in its Event Site location.

Staged with tents and a modified layout, the new venue followed the Port's strategic decision to change the Hood River Expo Center from event to commercial use in 2007.

One of the Port's biggest concerns when considering Expo Center change of use was its impact on Harvest Fest, whose importance cannot be undermined. Harvest Fest is not only the largest event in the Gorge, it's the Chamber of Commerce's largest fundraiser. Last January, the Port contracted with Surround Architecture to evaluate the feasibility of locating Harvest Fest at the Event Site. The Port of Hood River and Chamber Board approved using the Event Site for Harvest Fest 2008 after viewing conceptual layouts for the new waterfront location.

The move one block northeast had both positive and negative results. Although festival attendance was consistent with recent years at over 24,000, the Chamber's net revenue was lower due to increased costs. However Mary Closson, Executive Director of the Hood River County Chamber of Commerce, said many visitors appreciated the scenic riverfront setting and open air feeling of this year's event. "It gave more of a true festival atmosphere," Closson summed up. "In my mind, a successful event should engage all your attendees' senses. We had great food aromas wafting through the air, music coming from the entertainment tent, people enjoyed hands-on experiences in the produce area, and wonderful free samples of fruit. We offered about a dozen food vendors, wine from four local wineries, and a variety of local beers. Many things had visual appeal including the arts and crafts, the colorful flags and banners. Saturday the sun was out, the wind was blowing, and the kiteboarders and windsurfers added that extra visual element that is a bonus to any outdoor event."

Closson adds, "The Port was a great partner in this transition, and I especially want to thank Michael McElwee, Mike Doke, Joe Pounders and his maintenance crew for all of their outstanding help with Harvest Fest." ●

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Brian Prigel of Prigel Machine and Metal Fabrication purchased property west of the Port's Incubator Building at John Weber Business Park. The company will continue to lease space in the Incubator until phased development gets underway next spring.

- Mid Columbia Distributors, Inc. is leasing 7,000 square feet of space at the Hood River Expo Center, leaving the atrium the only unleased space in the building.

- Group Mackenzie is preparing engineering documents for the new industrial road on the waterfront, tentatively named Anchor Way. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration has earmarked \$500,000 of funding contingent on the agency's approval of specific requirements associated with the project. A \$250,000 grant from the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department's Immediate Opportunity Fund (IOF), and \$84,000 each from the Port of Hood River, Hood River Distillers and the Hood River Juice Company make up the balance of the \$1.1 million project.

TRANSPORTATION

- Routine maintenance of a natural gas pipeline attached to the Hood River Interstate Bridge was performed by Acuren Inspection, Inc., and Extreme Access.

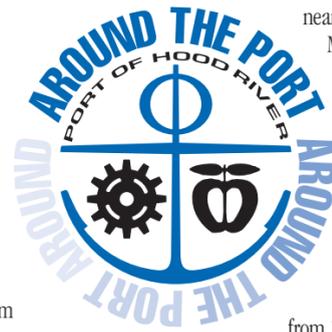
- The 2008 WAAAM/Hood River Fly-In held September 5, 6, and 7 received optimal weather conditions and about 218 visiting aircraft.

- The September 12 re-opening of the Mt. Hood Railroad's line to Parkdale was great news for the local economy. Port Commissioner Fred Duckwall and Port Executive Director Michael McElwee were on the train's first Parkdale trip since a portion of the track was washed out



Left: Port Executive Director Michael McElwee and Port Commissioner Fred Duckwall celebrate aboard Mt. Hood Railroad's September 12 Back to Parkdale train.

Below: The vast Hood River Delta is being assessed by the Army Corp of Engineers.



near Dee during the November, 2006 floods. McElwee was honored at a celebration in Parkdale for his role in securing grant funds from Oregon Department of Transportation's ConnectOregon.

RECREATION

- Marina news includes the recent installation of a new security gate at the marina moorage ramp.

- The Marina waiting list was reduced from 135 names to about 40 names after the

Port of Hood River requested a \$100 fee to hold places. The Port will add 20 slips to C-Dock to address demand. Permitting is in progress.

- Event Site passes were down 13% in 2008 after a record season in 2007, and Spit passes were down as well. Attrition may be due in part to use of Luhr Jensen property and the new waterfront park for sailboard launching.

- An assessment of the Hood River Delta was prepared by the Army Corps of Engineers and presented in a public meeting in September. A PowerPoint presentation covered an overview of the hydrodynamic and particle tracking models based on the 2006 storm event, and potential future case flood events with high sediment discharge. Future events will be difficult to prevent, the presentation concluded.

- Jim Grady of Columbia Gorge Kiteboarding Association and Tim Mayer of the Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association were appointed to the Port's Waterfront Recreation Committee.

- Progress is being made on new segments of the Riverfront Trail connecting the Hook and Event Site to waterfront park. Thiel Landscape Architecture of Hood River presented a master plan to the Port Commission last month.



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The new building's price point is critical, because its success is relative to serving potential tenants at competitive market rates. Likely tenants are existing local businesses that need to expand, or businesses new to the area. The Port has already heard from a few local companies.

"The design of this new building begs answers to many questions that could lead to CC&Rs for future development on the waterfront," explains Port Executive Director Michael McElwee. Among the issues pondered will be window specifications, allowable materials, and height restrictions.

"The waterfront south of Portway Avenue looks like a lot of land, but it really isn't," McElwee adds. "We can't realistically accommodate 'giant' users there. The land is more appropriate for research and development businesses, or smaller scale manufacturers. This new building will reflect these generalities." ●

An early rendering (above) by Group Mackenzie and an image of a similar commercial building (below) are groundwork for a waterfront industrial building concept.



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near downtown (Wasco Business Building and Big 7). These buildings currently contain 20 different businesses that employ about 200 people with an aggregate annual payroll of over \$5.5 million. We are currently working with existing businesses that want to expand in these buildings, and with other businesses seeking to move to Hood River. Except for Wasco, the Port's industrial buildings are not new or fancy. They do, however, provide affordable homes for both stable, long-term businesses and start-up or growth-phase companies with limited capital. Our goal is to maintain full occupancy for these facilities.

Waterfront Development

The Port is engaged in both long-term and short-term economic development efforts here. Almost 80 percent (20,600 square feet) of the old Expo Center is now leased to three local businesses: Full Sail, Mid-Columbia Distributing and DaKine. These distribution uses do not represent the future of this site, but the structure serves the immediate needs of these companies very well. The Port is preparing an industrial

subdivision south of Portway Avenue to provide shovel-ready industrial sites by mid-2009. The Port Commission will consider sale of these sites to companies that present a specific development plan and schedule. Engineering is also underway for a new industrial street – tentatively called "Anchor Way" – that will provide better access to Hood River Distillers and facilitate new industrial development near I-84. Construction is expected to begin next spring. Finally, the Port has begun planning a new industrial building on Portway Avenue. Contingent upon adequate market conditions, and acceptable financing, construction of the first new waterfront building in over 25 years could be underway by late 2009. The waterfront is a prime opportunity to enhance the long-term economic growth of our community. The Port seeks to do it in a way that acknowledges other important waterfront uses, such as recreation, that also enhance our economy.

New Light Industrial Opportunities

Adequate land for job-creating businesses in Hood River County is a big challenge. In recent years, the Port has sought new properties to support industrial

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significant master plan goal is shifting the existing 3,040-foot runway 550 feet to the east. This would move the runway farther away from Tucker Road/State Highway 281, one of the area's busiest ground traffic arterials that is located west of the airport, but would require abandoning the section of Orchard Road east of the landing strip. Plans call for Orchard Road to dead-end to the north and south of the airport's runway, preventing ground traffic from using the county road as a thoroughfare.

All future Ken Jernstedt Airfield projects would be designed to meet the Federal Aviation Administration's B-II design code, limiting the size of typical aircraft to those with wingspans 79 feet wide or shorter with airspeeds that do not exceed 121 knots – these include smaller twin-engine piston and turboprop airplanes.

As a B-II airport, the runway's taxiway will be moved 35 feet to the north to meet FAA standards for 240 feet of separation between landing strip and taxiway.

Airport services, including fueling and flight training, would move from the airport's south side to the north side, alleviating the current pattern of aircraft taxiing across the runway for these services.

Early in the review process, county planning staff identified a critical consequence of the airport's design. The master plan includes an instrument approach as a future landing aid. However, the lower Hood River Valley's hilly landscape makes such an approach difficult to implement, and the instrument approach protects airspace 10,000 feet away from the runway. In other words, building heights nearly 2 miles away from the airport could be affected by this instrument approach standard – a result not intended when the Port adopted the master plan in 2004.

As a result, the Port is working with the FAA to replace the future instrument approach standard with the existing visual approach, which reduces protected airspace to 5,000 feet and greatly reduces the amount of impacted land. The Port's goal is to have the instrument approach goal deleted from the master plan before the county considers adoption, and the work to amend the plan should be completed in early 2009.

Scott Keillor of Columbia Planning and Design, LLC, is leading this planning effort. He anticipates that the county planning commission will hold another public workshop in the next few months, and if the review process moves forward there will be public hearings at the planning commission and county commission levels.

If Hood River County adopts the plan into the county's comprehensive plan, the Port could begin the formal process of seeking approval to shift the runway. ●

development with limited success. However, the Commission recently authorized an agreement that allows us to take a detailed look at the Waucoma Building and consider its purchase. This existing 209,000 square foot structure could become a much more significant economic development platform for our region. It is a stout, large floor plate structure, sits on eight acres of industrially-zoned property, has ample parking and lies in close proximity to the downtown core. Currently about 60 percent of the building is unoccupied. The balance could provide a significant location for business growth and potentially as a business incubator. The Commission will decide whether to acquire this property next spring.

In a national economic downturn our area has significant strengths. These include our critical foundation in agriculture, a strong tourism/hospitality segment, and growing medical services and technology sectors. However, we are not immune to negative impacts when the national economy deteriorates. In these times the Port increases its attention and focus on economic development tasks. Our role as a public agency is limited but can be meaningful in both the immediate and long-term time frames. ●