

Bend Airport Day Takes Off June 17

by K_Guice

Festivities Take Place Amid Exciting Airfield Changes

At this year's Bend Airport Day there are more reasons to celebrate. There has been a whirlwind of changes making the airfield experience better than ever.

Saturday, June 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. the airport will be celebrating 64 years of service to Bend and a lot of big changes.

"We are at a pretty significant level of expansion at the airport," said Greg Phillips, the airport manager at Bend Municipal Airport. Those changes started with the re-evaluation of the airport's master plan in 2002. "Since that time, we have been working towards implementing that plan."

The airport has come a long way from an airfield out in the middle of nowhere. "The airport was originally deeded to the city by two land owners in 1942," Phillips said. "That was a common theme across the west; to develop airports and airfields for training." Bend was one of those airports. It was used for pilot training during wartime.

For the longest time it was just a little strip east outside of the city. "It wasn't until two years ago that it was at a place where it needed a full-time manager," said Phillips. "Then they hired me half time, and a year ago full time."

What a difference a couple years can make. "The first things at hand were to resolve the safety issues around the airport," according to Phillips. "In 2004 we moved a road that was close to the south end of the runway. We had operated safely, but we did that by keeping the runway shorter." By moving the road, they were then able to extend the runway to allow pilots a larger safety zone.

Now Phillips says they are working on their biggest capital project ever; moving the runway. "The runway is too close to the taxi way," he said. "When the airport was originally built it, was built for small airplanes." While the current distance is considered safe, the master plan called for an increase in distance for an extra margin of safety and to accommodate any potential aviation needs at Bend Airport. "For general and corporate aviation it makes sense. The traffic is building," he said, "you're not going to stop it."

The grand total for the new runway is expected to be around six million dollars. "The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) is paying 95 percent of that." The other five percent is expected to come from a state grant. "It has been recommended by the state aviation board and forwarded to the committee,"

Phillips said. "We hope to hear by this July." His plan is to do the runway project at no cost to the city. In fact, every project the airport has done so far has been at no cost to the city and there are quite a few.

There is the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS). "We commissioned it on April 17 and it has been great to have," Phillips said. "It is a system that helps pilots all over the area." So, what was the cost? Phillips says it cost about \$100,000 and is thanks to a grant from Oregon State and the FAA.

"It's not predictive weather, but it is real time," he said. Pilots can call into 382-1477 or listen on VHF frequency 134.425 as they are flying into the airport. Phillips adds, "We hope by next month to have it on the Internet."

The other big news is the Eastside Development. In January, a master developer was selected to develop up to 42 acres on the east side of the airport. Professional Air Partners was chosen to design and develop this phase of the airfield. The first parcel in this project will include up to 18 acres of hangars to meet an immediate and growing need. Phillips says Bend Airport has pilots on a waiting list who want a hangar spot.

However, he seems more excited about the possibility of a restaurant coming to Bend Airport in the future. "We are negotiating a lease with a current fixed-base operator," he said. "When we sign a lease with them, they have an agreement to sublease a section to a restaurant."

It's an addition that is needed now that there are over 1100 employees at the airport. "Columbia Aircraft (formerly Lance Air Certified) has 730 employees alone." He says if you don't bring food or don't care for the vending machines you have to drive all the way to town. "That is only five miles, so it's not that far, but if you don't have a car that's too far to walk."

Though, you might be able to call for a pizza now that T-Mobile and Unicom have towers up and working at the airfield, which has greatly improved service. Phillips said, "Especially for people coming out here after hours, it is nice to have reliable service; at least with these two carriers."

It will also be nice for visitors at this year's annual Bend Airport Day. Barb Malcom of Impressive Events says, "It is a great opportunity to see many different types of aircraft in one place. All the military and forest service aircraft will have pilots, smoke jumpers and rescue swimmers to talk to as well."

It is a great way to spend Father's Day weekend and enjoy time with the family, Malcom says. It is also great for educating the public about how the airport helps the economic growth of the region and how it is growing.

Phillips agrees it is a great time for everyone. "There are going to be airplanes, helicopters and a pancake breakfast." He says the best part is, "Bend airport is going to be there."

Bend Weekly Newslink: www.bendairport.org/AviationDay2006.pdf

Schedule of Events and Festivities: 7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m. -- Pancake Breakfast hosted - \$5 for all you can eat
* Scenic Flights \$25 @ The Flight Shop - Call 388-0019 * U.S. Army @ UH 60 Blackhawk helicopter *
U.S. Coast Guard @ HH-65A Dolphin helicopter * Sign-up for future Young Eagles aviation events *
Static Aircraft Displays from Vintage to the latest Cessna, Columbia * Powered Parachutes, Gliders,
Gyrocopters * Motorcycle and Vintage car displays * Air Life Open House * Glider Rides (\$50) * Glider
Water Drop demonstrations * Model Airplane Demonstrations 3:00 p.m. -- Airport Festival Ends
Location: Bend Municipal Airport Directions: Head east from Bend on Highway 20. Turn left onto Powell
Butte Highway. The Bend Municipal Airport is three miles ahead on the right.

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