

# WINGTIPS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION  
OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION  
AVIATION DIVISION.



WINTER 2017

## THE AIRPORT WITH A PLAN

*La Porte Municipal Airport  
Takes Flight*

- Loné Survivor Marcus Luttrell headlines Aviation Conference
- Megan Caffall featured in employee spotlight
- Jasper County-Bell Field profiled



## DAVE'S HANGAR

The 35th Annual Texas Aviation Conference is on the horizon

It's time to start thinking about the 2017 Texas Aviation Conference which will be held at the Embassy Suites San Marcos Hotel Conference Center on April 19th through the 22nd.

I am pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Marcus Luttrell, the *Lone Survivor*, a national hero, and native Texan.

Marcus Luttrell is the author of the #1 New York Times best-selling book, *Lone Survivor*, which tells the harrowing story of four Navy SEALs who journeyed into the mountainous border of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Operation Redwing. An unparalleled motivational story of survival, the book is also a moving tribute to the friends and teammates who did not make it off the mountain.

After recuperating from the near-fatal injuries of Operation Redwing, he redeployed to Iraq for a second tour and retired in 2007, earning the Navy Cross for combat heroism by President George W. Bush.

Following his physical recovery, and one more tour of duty, Marcus retired from the Navy and wrote the book, *Lone Survivor*, to share the amazing story of his brothers who paid the ultimate sacrifice. In 2014, a major motion picture was released depicting the story of *Lone Survivor*.

Please plan to join us to listen to and honor a true American hero!

For more information including registration, please visit the conference website at: <https://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac17/>.

### The National Association of State Aviation Officials has a new President

With the departure of Greg Principato to become head of the National Aeronautic Association, Mark Kimberling becomes the next President and CEO of NASAO. Mark is not new to NASAO as he previously managed the association's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. Prior to joining NASAO, Mark was the National Director of State and Government Affairs for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. Mark is also a commercial rated pilot and certified Flight Instructor with international flight experience as a former First Officer for American Eagle based in Puerto Rico. Mark will be joining us at our aviation conference in San Marcos in April. ▀

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# 2017 TEXAS AVIATION CONFERENCE RETURNS TO SAN MARCOS

Marcus Luttrell Featured as Keynote Speaker

## 2018-2020 Conferences Will Take Place in Galveston

The 2017 Texas Aviation Conference will return this spring to San Marcos and the Embassy Suites San Marcos Hotel and Conference Center on April 19-20, 2017. The conference program is currently under development and will be completed in January 2017. The conference website, including online registration, will go live in December. The web address for the conference website is <http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tac17/>.

Beginning in 2018, the Texas Aviation Conference will begin a three-year run in Galveston at the Moody Gardens Hotel. Last held on the Island in 2012, the multi-year deal will provide significant cost savings to TxDOT Aviation and conference attendees. As the conference has grown over the years both in terms of participants and exhibitors, it has become increasingly challenging for conference planners to find suitable locations that provide the needed space at a manageable cost. The three-year deal allows for TxDOT to lock in a location with ample space for both attendees and exhibitors as well as attractive rates for hotel rooms for both governmental and non-governmental employees. Given the past hospitality of the hotel and community in 2012, it is sure to be a great venue and a successful conference. ▀



Marcus Luttrell, keynote speaker, 2017 Texas Aviation Conference.

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### AVIATION DIVISION LEADERS

- David S. Fulton, Aviation Division Director  
[david.fulton@txdot.gov](mailto:david.fulton@txdot.gov)
- Jay Joseph, Deputy Director & Flight Services Director  
[jay.joseph@txdot.gov](mailto:jay.joseph@txdot.gov)
- Kari Campbell, Director, Grants  
[kari.campbell@txdot.gov](mailto:kari.campbell@txdot.gov)
- Harry Lorton, Director, Engineering  
[harry.lorton@txdot.gov](mailto:harry.lorton@txdot.gov)
- Greg Miller, Director, Planning  
[greg.miller@txdot.gov](mailto:greg.miller@txdot.gov)

### MANAGING EDITOR

- Chris Sasser  
Texas A&M Transportation Institute  
[c-sasser@tamu.edu](mailto:c-sasser@tamu.edu)

### DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- Jason E. Hranicky  
TxDOT Publishing and Design Services  
Communications Division

### PRINTED BY

- TxDOT Print Services, Austin, TX  
Support Services Division

### AVIATION DIVISION, TxDOT

- 125 E. 11th St.  
Austin, Texas 78701-2483  
512-416-4500 or 1-800-68-PILOT  
FAX: 512-416-4510  
<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/aviation.html>

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The terminal building at Jasper County-Bell Field airport.

## COMMUNITY PRIDE

### The Story of Jasper County-Bell Field Airport

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Jasper County-Bell Field Airport (KJAS), located just southeast of Jasper off Highway 190, holds not only a prominent place in the area’s physical landscape, but also in the hearts and minds of the community.

“We look at our airport a couple of different ways,” explained Jasper County Judge Mark Allen. “First with a modern airport, we have a good chance of promoting economic development. We also learned during the hurricanes that for disaster relief efforts, this airport was a key resource. We were able to evacuate people on military aircraft and stage relief efforts for our community. When the Space Shuttle Columbia crashed, one of our hangars was used to store pieces of the shuttle while

investigators studied the crash site.”

In the late 1990s, the airport underwent an ambitious project that lengthened the runway to 5,500 feet, an improvement that allowed for larger jet traffic to land and open the door for economic development. The project was spearheaded by Blair Bisbey, who at the time was the chairman of the airport’s advisory committee.

“When we lengthened the runway to 5,500 in the late 1990s and made other improvements, we had two people that had jobs at the airport,” said Kevin Boyett, manager of Bravo Aviation, the airport’s FBO. “Now there’s around 11 with full-time jobs. If you’re interested in creating jobs and looking at economic impact, the ‘build it and they will come’

mentality does apply to this situation. This airport is really kind of a hidden treasure.”

Bravo Aviation, which has a hangar adjacent to the terminal building, provides aircraft management and pilot services.

Recently, the airport completed a \$2.5 million project that enclosed the airport with game-proof fencing, slurry sealed the runway, taxiways and ramp area, extended the ramp parking area, and improved drainage. The terminal building has also undergone improvements including new flooring and paint.

The airport enjoys support from not only local officials, but also the community.

The airport hosts a large amount of agricultural flying to support the timber industry.

“The annual air show has been a great way for the public to come out,” said Boyett. “For a small populated county, we’ve had great support for that. We also have a lot of people drive out just because they’re curious. I can’t tell you how many airplane rides I’ve given to people who have come out with their kids and just want to see what’s going on out here. That’s the best way to educate people about the airport.”

Future project goals for the airport include widening the runway,

additional drainage improvements and hangar development.

“We’ve worked with TxDOT Aviation’s RAMP Program on our projects to help save money on airside improvements and make sure we are doing everything in compliance,” noted Allen. “They’ve always been responsive and we have a great relationship.”

Though local officials and airport supporters concede it’s always an ongoing battle to educate the public on the value of having a modern general aviation airport, the success of Jasper County-Bell Field Airport makes it an easy sell.

“My favorite way to justify this airport is when I see the kangaroo jet (children’s hospital jet) sitting on the apron preparing to fly a child out,” said Jasper County Commissioner Roy Parker. “It helps to justify in my mind the need for this facility.”

For more information, visit <http://www.airnav.com/airport/KJAS>.

## AVIATION DIVISION STAFF VISITS KERRVILLE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

TxDOT Aviation Division (AVN) staff members were treated to a field trip recently when they visited Kerrville Municipal Airport for an Aviation 101 workshop.

“This was a great opportunity for many of our staff members to visit an airport and get a hands-on look at day-to-day operations,” said AVN Grants Director Kari Campbell. “Our grants staff generally stay in the office, yet work with contracts regarding physical aspects of an airport that are challenging to understand without field experience.”

The staff arrived at the airport at 10AM, and after being welcomed by Airport Manager Bruce McKenzie, split off into groups to tour the airport. RAMP coordinator Megan Caffall and Kerrville Aviation Owner Joe Kennedy helped lead the tours. AVN’s planning and engineering staff were also available to provide valuable input.

The staff toured the airside of the facility, which included the AWOS system, fuel island, PAPI’s and runway lights. As part of the tour, AVN employee Scott Bryan explained the components of an airport 5010 inspection.

After lunch, the group toured the Mooney International Aircraft Corporation.

“We were very appreciative of Bruce McKenzie hosting this event,” said Campbell. “As well as being an educational day for our staff, it was also a productive teambuilding day and will help them to provide even better service to our sponsors.”



TxDOT Aviation Division staff, Kerrville Municipal Airport personnel and others at the Aviation 101 field trip.

# THE AIRPORT WITH A PLAN

## *La Porte Municipal Airport*

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Located in the heart of La Porte approximately 11 miles west of Hobby Airport, La Porte Municipal Airport (T41) traces its roots back to the early 1940s when it was used as an Army Air Force training field. The city acquired the airport shortly after World War II.

Since 1951, the airport has been home to the 272nd Engineering and Installation Squadron of the National Guard. The National Guard building at the airport was originally constructed in 1949–50 as part of a nationwide post-World War II project that was the largest airways and facilities upgrade in the history of U.S. air travel by the Civil Aeronautics Authority (the FAA's predecessor).

Moving forward, the airport is currently working with the TxDOT Aviation Division and R A Wiedemann & Associates on a business plan.

"We are almost on the last leg on the business plan," explains La Porte Assistant City Manager Traci Leach.

"We've had a lot of public meetings and we're going over the options to make the airport a community asset and economically viable. Because of the airport's location in the center of residential areas, there's always been a concern that the runway would expand and create noise issues. Those are issues that we attempt to educate the public about."

Some of the needs identified include a terminal building, AWOS system (which is being installed), infrastructure needs such as drainage and runway/taxiway improvement, events to bring the community closer to the airport, and ways to make the airport more attractive for businesses.

The airport is also home to several FBOs, including Tri-Star Aviation and Harvey & Rihn Aviation (see related story on page 8). Dan Marrouf is the owner of Tri-Star Aviation, which is located on the southwest side of the airport. Tri-Star Aviation is a full service FBO that provides fuel, maintenance, flight training, avionics and aircraft support.

"We've been here since 1989 and obviously started with a small group of customers that has grown steadily over the years," said Marrouf. "We are a full-service FBO that provides everything from advanced flight training, to aircraft painting and inspection and catering."

Marrouf, who is also a corporate pilot, recently completed work on a new terminal building, which he was happy to complete in time for the upcoming Super Bowl in Houston in February.

"The airport has been a major part of the community for a very long time, and we're hopeful that this business plan will give us a workable path forward so that we continue to have a real asset in our community," noted Leach. "I'm excited about where we can be 5–10 years down the road." ▀



# AN AVIATION LIFE

## Legendary Flyer Debby Rihn-Harvey Calls La Porte Municipal Airport Home

By Chris Sasser

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

When describing Debby Rihn-Harvey's long list of aviation accomplishments, it's hard to know where to start. Do you begin by mentioning that she's one of the most successful aerobatic competitors of all time? Or that she recently completed a 27-year career as a captain at Southwest Airlines? How about that she's owned and operated Harvey & Rihn Aviation at La Porte Municipal Airport since 1979? Don't forget about the 34,000 hours of flight time and induction into multiple aviation hall of fames.

Rihn-Harvey has been flying for 52 years and explained that growing up she was expected to continue the family's aviation legacy.

"I'm a 3rd generation aviator," said Rihn-Harvey. "My grandfather started flying in the 1920s and had a barnstorming business in Nebraska. My dad flew in the war and taught ground schools. We flew everywhere as kids; my dad loved to fly. I wanted to go into medicine but eventually flying became my living."

Rihn-Harvey worked various jobs in her early aviation career before meeting her colleague whom she eventually started a flight school (Harvey & Rihn Aviation) with in La Porte in 1979. Rihn-Harvey Aviation offers everything from basic flight training to tail wheel, instrument and multiengine instruction and is also world renowned for being a leader in aerobatic instruction.



Debby Rihn-Harvey alongside her Cap 232 airplane; one of only five in the United States.

In 1978, Rihn-Harvey began her commercial pilot career by being hired by United. She was furloughed and eventually found an opportunity with Southwest Airlines, becoming the 11th female pilot to fly with the airline.

"I had the support from family to try a career with Southwest Airlines," said Rihn-Harvey. "It was a great experience. The company was small when I started and you knew everyone and they all did what it took to make the job work."

Rihn-Harvey recently retired from Southwest Airlines flying her last leg from Harlingen to Hobby Airport in Houston. Her co-pilot was her step-daughter Chris Dale.

"We had only had the opportunity to fly one time together since we had both worked with Southwest," said Rihn-Harvey. "It was a very emotional day to fly my final flight with her."

When Rihn-Harvey opened the flight school, she began flying acrobatics. She qualified for the USA Unlimited Acrobatic Team in 1983, has flown on the team for 31 years, and participated in 15 world championships. She became the United States highest-ranked overall aerobatic competitor, U.S. National Champion in September 2006, again repeating the title in 2008 and 2009. She has won the Betty Skelton trophy for being the U.S. Women's National Champion fifteen times. In addition, Debby has twice been a World Champion Gold Medalist.

Even though she has retired from commercial aviation, Rihn-Harvey continues to be active in the aviation community by performing in air shows and running her flight school.

"Aviation has been so good to me," said Rihn-Harvey. "I've gained so much and I want to give back, and hopefully others can experience just a portion of what I've experience." ■

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## RAMP Program Manager Megan Caffal



### Tell us about your background.

I graduated from college with a degree in Landscape Architecture, a minor in English, and a Reader's Digest Civil Engineering degree.

I worked for the City of Midland Engineering Department and then almost 15 years at the City of Kerrville. At Kerrville, my focus shifted from engineering to solid waste and recycling where I managed the solid waste collection and disposal contracts, landfill operations and the startup and staffing of the Community Recycling Center. In 1995 the Kerrville airport manager retired and his duties were passed on to me, gradually becoming a full time position. In 2002 I became an AAAE Certified Member. Kerrville participated in the RAMP program from the earliest opportunity, and when Kathy Griffin retired (from TxDOT's Aviation Division) in 2002, I applied for the RAMP manager position.

### What are the best parts of your job?

One of the most gratifying aspects of my time in aviation has been the association with so many professional and accomplished women.

In Kerrville I was honored to meet and spend some time with Rosa Lea Fullwood Dickerson. Her father, Walter "Pop" Fullwood taught her and her brother to fly, and Lea was a commercial rated pilot by age 20. She flew military aircraft, including the famous P-51 fighter plane for two years during World War II as a Women's Airforce Service Pilot ferry pilot - the stories that woman could tell! After the war she and her

husband established Kerrville Flying Service. We honored her at the last Kerrville Air Festival and hangar dance in 2001 – the Sentimental Journey Orchestra played Glen Miller classics and Lea had a blast. Nearly 70 years after their World War II service, the WASPs were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2010. I was sorry to hear that she passed away this October at 94.

And to come to work at the Aviation Division for Karon Wiedemann – what a force of nature! Anything was always possible with Karon with her total support and dedication to her grants staff. The Aviation Division has always been at least 50 percent or more women, and we have so many capable and outstanding women at our airports.

### What is a typical work day for you?

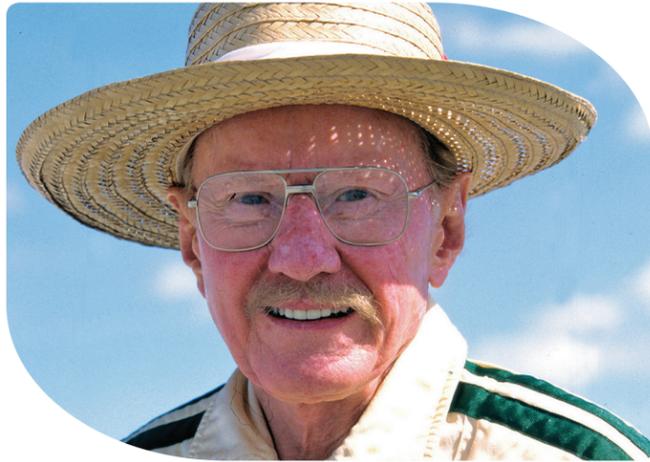
I don't think I've had a typical day in my time at TxDOT! The RAMP program has always been a work in progress – we try to do more grants each year - when I came in 2002 we had 89 grants, and this year I have sent out over 230 with the ultimate goal of every eligible airport in the system.

The opportunity to work with airport sponsors all over the state is wonderful – sometimes I think I know someone in just about every county in Texas. Since our funding challenges, I've seen many airports using RAMP to do their pavement rehab and other major maintenance with RAMP funds plus whatever it takes locally to do the work. The program really gives airports an opportunity to shine.

### Tell us about your personal life.

I'm married to Thomas, and without his support and willingness to relocate his business would not have been able to take the RAMP position. Our 26 year old son Thomas IV "Quattro" represents the ninth generation of Caffal family in Texas and lives in Houston with his wife Nicole and our granddog Rose. The family generally refers to my point of origin as "North of Dallas." We enjoy travel to New Mexico, visiting family and friends in Colorado and California, desert off- road racing, and improving our rural property. ■

# AVIATION LEGEND BOB HOOVER DIES AT 94



Bob Hoover, often called “the pilot’s pilot” and an aviator whose career spanned 70-plus years and nearly every facet of aviation, died October 19 at age 94.

The aviation career of Bob Hoover had a nearly storybook quality to it – a story that was often a mix of thriller and adventure. After working at a Nashville grocery store to pay for flight lessons as a teenager and teaching himself aerobatics, Hoover entered the Tennessee National Guard and eventually was sent to Army Pilot Training School. In World War II, Hoover talked his way out of test pilot duty into combat missions, where he eventually was shot down, captured, and escaped from a German prisoner of war camp.

As a test pilot following the war, he flew a variety of aircraft and was Chuck Yeager’s backup and chase pilot during the eventually successful attempts to fly faster than the speed of sound. He set numerous aviation records and his long association with North American Aviation and Rockwell International allowed him to test many aircraft, ranging from the T-28 trainer to the F-100 jet.

Many air show fans knew Hoover from his impeccable air show performances in the P-51 as well as in the Shrike Commander, where he would showcase his energy management sequence without engine power. His flying skills allowed him to pour himself a cup of tea while flying a complete roll in that aircraft.

A 1988 inductee to the National Aviation Hall of Fame, Hoover also received numerous awards throughout this life. ▀

# REMEMBERING EUGENE CERNAN

Eugene Cernan, the last man to walk on the moon, died Monday, Jan. 16, surrounded by his family.

Cernan, a Captain in the U.S. Navy, left his mark on the history of exploration by flying three times in space, twice to the moon. He also holds the distinction of being the second American to walk in space and the last human to leave his footprints on the lunar surface.

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said in a statement after Cernan’s death, “Truly, America has lost a patriot and pioneer who helped shape our country’s bold ambitions to do things that humankind had never before achieved.”

Cernan was one of 14 astronauts selected by NASA in October 1963. He piloted the Gemini 9 mission on a three-day flight in June 1966. Cernan logged more than two hours outside the orbiting capsule. In May 1969, he was the lunar module pilot of Apollo 10, the first comprehensive lunar-orbital qualification and verification test of the lunar lander. Cernan concluded his historic space exploration career as commander of the last human mission to the moon in December 1972.

Cernan was the keynote speaker at the 2016 Texas Aviation Conference where he memorably said “when you’re on the moon and you look back at the earth, it’s like being on God’s front porch. That’s what it’s like being on the moon.” ▀



*Apollo 17 mission commander Eugene Cernan inside the lunar module on the moon after his second moonwalk of the mission. His spacesuit is covered with lunar dust.*

# GRANTS RECEIVED

## Marfa Municipal Airport

\$866,390

Replace medium intensity runway light and signs Runway 13-31; install precision approach path indicator-2’s Runway 13-31.

## Taylor Municipal Airport

\$2,732,923

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35; reconstruct north portion of parallel taxiway; construct south apron access taxiway; construct hangar apron; reconstruct T-hangar access taxiway; rehabilitate south hangar access taxiway/apron; rehabilitate parallel south taxiway; construct run-up area Runway 17 ; construct 12-unit T-hangars; and install chain link fencing and wildlife fencing.

## Mid-Way Regional Airport

\$1,366,656

Construct 12-unit T-hangar and new hangar access taxiway.

## Paris/Cox Field

\$1,106,666

Construct 10-unit T-hangar; construct hangar access taxiway.

## Presidio Lely International Airport

\$330,400

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35 and turnarounds; and rehabilitate taxiway and apron.

## Gonzales/Roger M. Dreyer Airport

\$1,039,660

Construct T-hangars (10 unit) and T-hangar access apron/taxiway.

## Fayette Regional Air Center

\$2,801,650

Construct T-hangar 8-unit, 2- box hangar; rehabilitate and mark Runway 16-34; rehabilitate and mark parallel taxiway, apron, and hangar access taxiway; construct new concrete hangar access taxiway; replace medium intensity runway lights and electrical vault; replace windcone/segmented circle; replace guidance signs; replace rotating beacon; install wildlife fencing for deer/hogs and chain-link fence.

## Levelland Municipal Airport

\$778,200

Rehabilitate and mark Runway 17-35 and rehabilitate apron.

## Angelina County Airport/Lufkin

\$2,401,670

Reconstruct taxiway D; rehabilitate hangar access taxiway; and rehabilitate transient apron.



Texas Department of Transportation

125 E. 11TH ST • AUSTIN, TX 78701-2483

AVIATION DIVISION

# WINGTIPS



*WINGTIPS* is an official publication of the Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Division. The intent of *WINGTIPS* is to keep the aviation community and others informed of local developments in aviation.

Printed circulation: 4,000.

Comments and suggestions are welcome. Submission of articles is subject to space and editorial review and should be directed to the editor at:

[wingtips@tamu.edu](mailto:wingtips@tamu.edu)



WINTER 2017