

Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

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New Airports Director – Jim Thomas

Unless you have been completely out of touch with the world, you most likely know that there is a new Tuolumne County Airports Director. I started work in mid September and have been spending much of my time meeting the airport crowd here at Columbia. Since I live in Pine Mountain Lake and own a house on the private taxiway, I pretty much know the PML crowd already.

Yes the rumors are true; I am a pilot and have been for over 28 years. I have owned 6 airplanes and I am building my seventh. I commute daily between Q68 & O22 in my 1947 Piper Super Cruiser, except when the weather is not conducive to safe flight.

My qualifications for the job of Airports Director, include a degree in aeronautical engineering, experience at maintenance and operation of several airports in Alaska, and over 20 years of project management experience.

I believe both Columbia and Pine Mountain Lake airports are true treasures in the aviation world. Columbia Airport with it's grass runway, campground, and close proximity to Columbia State Park make it a great destination for the recreational pilot. Pine Mountain Lake, on the other hand, is one of the best residential airparks around. That is why I chose to move there in 2000.

It is my goal to operate both airports safely using reasonable solutions to many of the unresolved issues. Additionally, the airports need to be managed in a fiscally

responsible manner so that they are as self-supporting as possible.

I have an open door policy and encourage pilots, aircraft owners, visitors, and concerned citizens, to come by my office to discuss any airport issues you feel are important to the safe operation of our airports. If you can't make a personal visit, please feel free to call me at any time during the day at 533-5685 or send me an email at jthomas@co.tuolumne.ca.us

The First 6 Weeks

As with any new job, getting up to speed is always the first priority. To be effective, one must have a working knowledge of how the system operates. My first 6 weeks on the job have been filled with meetings, tenant visits, reading volumes of project files and talking with both Liz and Dennis about the operation of the airports.

Although I don't feel I am anywhere near "up to speed", I do feel I am in a position where I can effectively begin to address many of the airport issues. The following are some of the things that I have accomplished so far.

- Walked around Columbia Airport and met all the current commercial tenants
- Set up an office paper recycling program
- Obtained 2 Resolutions authorizing me to apply for CalTrans matching grants
- Obtained contract with Cingular Wireless for the installation of a cell transmitter on the Mt. Brow beacon
- Attended the Assoc. of Calif. Airports conference
- Formed a user's group at PML to address pedestrian access issues

- Reconditioned both windsocks at PML with the help of local pilots
- Monitored the final stages of construction of the Columbia airport ramp renovation and grass runway construction
- Spoke at the November TCAA meeting
- Set up regular office hours at PML
- Prepared a list of future projects at for both Columbia and PML for FAA grant application
- Modified the Columbia AWOS so that a continuous message is broadcast regarding the closure of the grass runway

I hope you can see that I am taking the Airports Director's job seriously and will work hard to improve our airports.

Email Addresses

Email is a fantastic communications tool, when used properly. It provides a quicker and less expensive method for disseminating information to our airport users and the local community. The current mailing list for the Manager's Approach is over 350 people making the task of printing, folding and stamping the bulletin a significant effort. The postage alone could be over \$1,500 for the year, assuming it is distributed every month.

I would like to get as many people and businesses as possible on an email distribution list so this bulletin and important airport announcements can be emailed instead of USPS mailed. The benefit to you is you get the information right away. The benefit to the airport is we save money and time. Your email address will be protected and not shown on the distribution, nor will it be given to anyone else. I hate spam too!

To show your support for this, please send us your email address, either by phoning it in, stopping by our office, or by emailing Liz at elogan@co.tuolumne.ca.us. Thanks.



Rich McGlashan & Ken Helling Helped Recondition Both PML Windsocks

Thanks to the help of a few residents at Pine Mountain Lake, both windsocks were completely reconditioned. Several pilots had complained that the west windsock was nearly invisible due to sun fading of the windsock fabric. Also, it squeaked when it rotated in the wind indicating the bearings needed servicing. The lighted windsock located adjacent to the wind tee often times contradicted the wind tee. It was noted that the windsock mount was slightly bent and that the light support was broken.

Many thanks to Rich McGlashan, Ken Helling, Dick Collier, Bob Applebee and Paul Price for their assistance in the making the needed repairs.