

The Manager's Approach



Vol. 4 Issue 9

Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

September 2005

PML Access Gate

The procurement of a new gate access card reader at the Pine Mountain Lake Airport that is compatible with the PMLA gate cards has been initiated and we hope to have the system installed around mid September. We sent out new Access Card Application forms to all those that are current gate card holders. These application forms must be completed and returned to the Airport Administration office so that we can preprogram your card number into the reader. This will provide you with uninterrupted access through the gate.

Garbage Disposal Problem

We see a growing problem at both Columbia and Pine Mountain Lake Airports with more and more household garbage being dumped in the airport trash cans. Garbage disposal is a community wide problem and the cost of disposal continues to rise. The Airports Department pays for garbage service just like everyone else. It is not a free service and when we have an excessive amount of garbage we have to pay for an additional pick up.

At Columbia Airport we often find used furniture, large cardboard boxes, broken electronic equipment, car batteries and other items put in or left next to our garbage cans. It is obvious that this stuff is not generated by owning and operating an aircraft.

At Pine Mountain Lake Airport the problem trash is usually bags of household garbage left by someone that owns a second house at PML but who doesn't have trash collection. Their method of trash disposal is to stuff it in the trash can at the airport on their way out of town. The Pine Mountain

Lake Airport trash problem is complicated by the fact that the airport is only maintained two or three days a week and the trash is either trucked or flown to Columbia for disposal. Any rotten garbage begins to smell quickly, making it a very unpleasant job to haul and dispose of the trash.

Please help us out by only placing airport generated trash in the airport garbage cans.

New Reserved Space Permit Applications Mailed Out

The Airports Department has begun the implementation of our new Reserved Space Permit. A copy of the new Permit was included with the September statements sent out to every tenant. The new Permit must be filled out and sent back to the Airport Administration in order to maintain your tiedown or hangar. The new Reserved Space Permit requires the aircraft in the tiedown or hangar be registered to the permittee. Permittees that are the registered owner of the aircraft in the tiedown or hangar need not provide us additional copies of their registration and insurance policy.

Obviously, the main intent of the new Reserved Space Permit is to stop the subleasing activity and make the waiting list start to move again. Those Permittees that have traded hangars or are subleasing have one of two options; either become a registered owner of the aircraft in their tiedown or hangar or vacate the spot. If they choose to become a registered owner, then a copy of the registration and insurance certificate must be provided with the new Reserved Space Permit.

FAA Grant Received

Columbia Airport Layout Plan Update

We have received a grant from the FAA to update our Columbia Airport Layout Plan and Property Map. This is a requirement that must be satisfied before we can apply for a grant to construct a waterline extension along South Airport Road which will provide fire protection to the west side of the airport, a requirement for the construction of new hangars.

Airports Department Webpage

The Tuolumne County Airports webpage has gone live. We won't be winning any awards with it, but it is a start at providing airport users with online information. As the webpage develops we will post various types of information including:

- General airport information
- Airports Committee agendas and minutes
- A calendar of events
- Application forms for tiedowns, parking permits and gate cards
- Links to other County Department information that pertains to the airports.
- Links to appropriate aviation websites

The webpage is intended to be a tool that can be used to more efficiently communicate with our tenants and the flying public.

Stupid Pilot Tricks

Which Runway is the "Active Runway"

One of the most commonly heard phrases on the CTAF at Columbia Airport is that a pilot is "taking the active". Although Runway 17 is the most commonly used runway for departures because it is downhill and generally into the wind, it is not the only "active runway" at Columbia.

The Aeronautical Information Manual defines the "Active Runway" as "Any runway or runways currently being used for take off or landing. When multiple runways are used they are all considered active runways." At Columbia it is not uncommon

for aircraft to be landing and departing Runway 17 while others are using the grass Runway 29 and the air tankers are landing on Runway 35. This makes 3 "active runways"!

At Pine Mountain Lake I often see planes landing and taking off on both Runway 9 and 27. Personally, in the mornings I prefer to do a downwind takeoff putting the sun at my back instead of in my eyes, preferring good visibility over a shortened takeoff roll. Others prefer the more commonly practiced into-the-wind takeoff. In this case both Runways 9 & 27 are "active runways".

So let's get back to that commonly heard phrase "taking the active". At Columbia Airport where there could be three active runways or PML Airport where there could be two active runways, this phrase doesn't give enough information. Other pilots will still not know what runway the aircraft is departing. A better way to communicate would be to announce your departure on a specific runway in the following way: "Columbia traffic, Super Cruiser 16-Mike taking off on Runway 17 with an eastbound departure, Columbia". This way everyone listening knows exactly where you are and the direction of your departure.

So next time you go flying, don't sound stupid over the CTAF. State the specific runway you are using and your direction of flight. We will have safer skies around our airports if you do.

Stupid Pilot Tricks is a monthly article that attempts to raise awareness of safety and courtesy issues around our airports.

The Manager's Approach is a monthly publication from the Tuolumne County Airports Director for the purpose of keeping our community informed of local aviation and airport issues. You can contact me at:

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