

The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

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Young Eagles Rally Columbia Airport April 17th PML Airport October 2nd

The 2010 flying season is rapidly approaching and two of the important aviation events in Tuolumne County are the EAA's Young Eagles Rallies. These Rallies are a part of the EAA national program to provide kids between the age of 8 and 17 with an opportunity to learn about aviation and to take a ride in an airplane. The first Rally will be held on Saturday, April 17th between 9 AM and 12 PM at Columbia Airport. The second Rally will be held on Saturday, October 2nd at Pine Mountain Lake Airport. Any pilots wishing to participate in either of the Rallies should contact the airport office for the specific requirements for flying the kids. Those wishing to just help as ground crew are welcome to participate also. Again contact the airport office (209) 533-5685 for details.

Volunteer for the Father's Day Fly-In

Columbia Airport is celebrating its 75th Birthday on June 19th and 20th. Preparations for this year's Father's Day Fly-In are in full swing. Each year we encourage our tenants to participate as volunteers since it takes a lot of people to put on a good safe event. This year the Volunteer form is available online in addition to hardcopy. The online form can be accessed by clicking the link to the Volunteer form on the left side of the Airports Department home page. Use the following link to access our home page:

http://portal.co.tuolumne.ca.us/ps/ps/TUP_AIRPORTS/ENTP/h/?tab=DEFAULT

When the form is filled out, it is automatically added to our list of volunteers. We will then contact you with specific information on volunteering.

We are looking forward to an excellent event this year and hope you will contribute some of your time to help make this Father's Day Fly-In a great success.

Used Oil Disposal

There are used oil storage tanks at both Columbia and Pine Mountain Lake Airports. These are for collecting any used crankcase oil from aircraft, cars, motorcycles, yard tractors or mowers, etc. Our recycling facilities are also set up to take used oil filters, too. However, lately we have been receiving several buckets with the filters submerged in the oil as shown in the photo. This makes it difficult to dump the oil and very messy to drain the filters.



Example of What NOT to Do

All users of the oil recycling facility should drain their filters prior to disposal and place the drained filters in a separate empty bucket or wrap them in a shop towel and put them back in the filter box.

Also please don't over fill the buckets. Leave at least 4" of freeboard so the buckets won't have a tendency to spill when handled.

These simple efforts will make our job of collecting and disposing of used oil and filters much easier.

PML Airport Hangars

The new hangars at Pine Mountain Lake Airport should be ready to be occupied within the next few weeks. Everything but some electrical work, paving and fire hydrant installation is complete. I'm impressed with the quality of the Gold Country Hangars and I'm sure the new tenants will be very pleased having their aircraft out of the weather.

After all the equipment and leftover materials are moved out of the project area we will be able to let the tiedown tenants return to their original tiedown or a new open tiedown if they prefer.

Smart Pilot Tricks

Ground Operations

We've had several pilots land on the grass runway because the winds favored Runway 29. This is the choice I would make too because when the wind is blowing hard it is best to use the runway most aligned with the wind. Even though the grass runway is pretty firm due to the well developed grass, the infield around the grass runway can be soft or muddy for a couple of days after a good rain. In cases such as this, back taxiing on the grass runway is preferable to taxiing off the runway after your landing. After a rainy period a taxiing aircraft can leave ruts in the infield which must be leveled using maintenance equipment. Often we don't even know there are ruts until a pilot comes in the office and brings the roughness of the infield to our attention.

On the flip side of the situation, when the infield ground is dry it is best to turn off the grass runway after your landing rollout.

Doing this frees up the runway for another landing or departing aircraft and it also puts less wear and tear on the grass. When taxiing, the entire weight of the aircraft is on the wheels and none is on the wing. Also, sharp turns on the grass will result in dragging a wheel which can tear the grass. So, exiting the runway onto the infield is preferred when dry conditions prevail.

One operation that generally goes along with operating off the grass runway is the need to taxi across Runway 17-35. When doing this it is desirable to announce your intention to cross Runway 17-35 and the location you are doing it over the Unicom frequency. A typical broadcast might go something like this. "Columbia traffic, Piper 16M taxiing across Runway 17-35 at the windsock" or "Columbia traffic, Piper 16M taxiing across Runway 17-35 to the threshold of Runway 29 for departure." Making such a broadcast provides any pilot monitoring the Unicom frequency with the situational awareness that there is an aircraft crossing Runway 17-35. With three possible runways to take off on (Runways 17, 29 & 35) and four runways to land on (Runways 11, 17, 29 & 35), it is important that all pilots communicate their intentions clearly, especially when crossing a runway. Remember at a non-towered airport all runways are "active runways".

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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Noise Sensitive Areas

As a reminder to our local pilots, we have several noise sensitive areas near our airports. Maps showing these areas are posted at both airports. Please be neighborly and avoid these areas.