



Media Release

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Venango Regional Airport Chosen as Business of the Year *Airport comes out on top as among the best area businesses*

The Venango Area Chamber of Commerce has selected the Venango Regional Airport as the 2009 Business of the Year. This annual honor is awarded to a local business that meets several criteria in recent years, including the ability to overcome adversity, marketing achievements, expansion or quality improvements and commitment to the community.

Established in 1946, and operated by the County of Venango since 1959, the airport provides Essential Air Service as part of a Federal program offering daily air service through Continental Connection from Venango Regional Airport to the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport -- connecting to over 60 destinations world-wide.

The airport was named *Commercial Service Airport of the Year for 2006* in the FAA's Eastern Region.

Chamber director Susan Williams notes "Air travel continues to be an important attraction to businesses. The Venango Regional Airport and its staff have remained committed to delivering the best possible service even through challenging circumstances."

Overcoming Adversity

The airport lost air service through US Airways in early 2008 and awarded Gulfstream International a bid to replace the air service later that same year. Air service was available again beginning September of last year.

Airport manager Otho Bell says, "It was a long and difficult process to restore the air service. A lot of community leaders helped with the process and supported our efforts. I think it's still surprising to people that we have people --and businesses too--who rely on our airport to provide that service to them."

The launch of the new air service was difficult due to many obstacles. "September is typically one of the worst months for air travel. We also had one of the worst winters in recent years. And--we have to change the habits of air travelers all over again. Many have just begun to get comfortable with alternative air services while we were without one."

Marketing and Outreach

Currently the airport is engaged in a marketing and outreach campaign that specifically identifies and targets both the business and leisure traveler.

"Just as we want to educate businesses and people regarding the new air service, we're learning from them...what they need, what they expect, how we can compete with other airports."

Expansion and Renovation

The airport is embarking on a \$1.3 million project this spring to rehabilitate the General Aviation runway 12-30 and improve the safety areas conforming to current FAA criteria. “The project will include complete repaving of taxiways and the terminal aircraft parking apron as well as complete re-painting of the pavement markings.”

Commitment to Community

The airport has 39 private aircraft hangars as well as nine hangars occupied by the PA State Police, Channelock Corp., Conair (IPEG), The Civil Air Patrol, EAA chapter 988, PennAire Aviation, Tom’s Aircraft Service, KB Aviation Flight School, and Franklin Aircraft Sales.

The airport is also home to Primo Barones restaurant, Continental Airlines, and The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Franklin section). Seventy people are employed for the various entities doing business at the airport.

The airport does what ever it can to spend dollars locally. “On several occasions we’ve had the opportunity to request that other local businesses be included in certain projects when outside service providers were needed. If the service provider needs certain equipment we make sure they use a local business to supply it when possible.”

Citing the hard work and efforts of many airport staff Bell concludes, “The Airport owes its success to its customers and employees past and present, and this would not have been possible without the vision and years of effort by the previous manager, Mr. Alan Penksa. We work hard each day to build upon the foundations established over the years while trying to keep current with today’s aviation environment.”

The Airport will be honored at the Chamber’s annual Business Tribute Luncheon, Wednesday July 22nd at the Arlington Hotel.

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