

From the President's Desk

On July 10th, 2010, the Michigan Private Airstrip Owners Association held its first Annual Meeting at Clare Municipal Airport (48D) in Clare, MI. Airport Manager Dick Acker was our host and what a host he was! Dick and his wife Nikki provided all of the food at lunch time plus he provided a birthdaycake and ice cream with which we celebrated the first birthday of the MPAOA. And yes, we did sing Happy Birthday! We will forever be grateful for Dick's assistance and it is entirely possible we will have future MPAOA meetings at 48D because of Dick's graciousness and also because of 48D's central location in the State. The meeting cost the MPAOA nothing, nada, zip. Dick refused to take any payment for his hospitality, not even for the birthday cake. According to Mr. Acker, all of the food was donated by local merchants. For all you members out there reading this column, make sure you come to the next MPAOA meeting. It will be worth your time and your effort. All of you private airstrip owners reading this column and who have not yet joined the MPAOA, go to our website: www.mpaoa.org, print an application and send it in with your check for \$25 made out to MPAOA. We can't accomplish our goals without strength and strength is in numbers. We need your presence.

Our First Annual Meeting was a success. There were 26 people present including 19 MPAOA members, three of whom brought their wife and two who brought a guest. Those 19 members represented 34% of our membership and 13 of those present at the meeting flew in. I spoke with each member as they arrived and all were very enthusiastic about the meeting and about the MPAOA. They had an opportunity to talk with fellow members about mutual problems and by the time the meeting was called to order everyone was ready to participate. I opened the meeting by bringing everyone up to date on where we are with our two major projects - the identifier issue and FAA Form 7480-1 and the liability issue. When I was finished, Randy Collier, Chief Airport Inspector for the MDOT Airports Division in Lansing took over and gave a very well received presentation on issues related to owning a private airstrip. There was a lot of audience participation and Randy was kept busy answering questions and discussing various topics with the interested and involved members and guests.

Regarding our two major projects, we are working with the ADO office in Romulus, MI in their efforts to streamline the identifier request process using form 7480-1. I have already attended one meeting with the ADO and MDOT Airports Division and will be attending another follow-up meeting sometime in August. Our three members who precipitated our involvement with the ADO have all seen progress with their requests for an identifier after nearly 5 years of waiting fruitlessly for a reply from the FAA. The other major project involves the liability issue as related to owning a private airstrip. An ad hoc

committee has been formed within the Board of Directors to begin developing a plan of action designed to accomplish our objectives.

I must bring up a subject I mentioned above once again – membership. In order to accomplish our objectives we will need members, a lot of members – the more the merrier. If you are a member and know others who own their own airstrip or just someone who would be interested in supporting private airstrips and general aviation in Michigan please make an effort to get them to join the MPAOA. Anyone can be a member, you don't have to be an airstrip owner. As mentioned above an application is available on our website.

As an FYI I spoke for the second time at a meeting of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission to bring them up to date on the progress of the MPAOA. Once again we were very well received and although I was allotted 15 minutes at the podium I was kept there for a half hour because of questions and comments from the Commission members. When I finally concluded and thanked them for the opportunity to address them MAC Chairman Terry Everman thanked me for appearing and invited us back to a future MAC meeting to keep them updated on our progress.

As I have said numerous times to people who ask about the MPAOA we are not a social club, we are a group of private airstrip owners who are dedicated to promoting, protecting and advancing the interests of the private airstrip owners in Michigan. Join us to help make people realize that private airstrips are important assets to our beautiful State.

That's it for now, and don't forget to put the wheels down.

Steve Zelle, President
Michigan Private Airstrip Owners Association