

**St. Mary's County
Airport Advisory Board
2018 Annual Report**

6 June 2019



Eric Pratson, Chairman
Robert Lightstone, Vice Chairman
Ted Klapka, Secretary
Terry Adair
James Alexander
Bryan Barthelme
Brian Schroeder
Andre Swygert
Carrie Kelly, Alternate
Craig Nixon, Alternate

Appointed Ex-Officio Members:

John Deatrick, Director, Department of Public Works & Transportation

Allison Swint, Airport Manager

Assigned Technical Advisor and Staff Support:

Gary B. Whipple, P.E.

Bob Carlton

MESSAGE FROM THE AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD



Since late 2018 through the present, the Airport Advisory Board (AAB, recently renamed in January 2019), has been hard at work addressing public comments and revising the outdated Airport Rules Ordinance, Minimum Standards for Businesses, and Standard Operating Procedures. This effort was driven by a scheduled public hearing on January 8th, 2019 with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County regarding draft documents that still needed significant update, and the resulting public concern over those draft documents. The public hearing was cancelled and replaced with a special meeting of the AAB on January 28th, 2019 in the airport terminal as a forum for public comment. Approximately 70 members of the community attended and provided comment on the draft airport documents. Additional comments were received in writing from the public, airport businesses, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA).

The AAB's focus on revising these important documents (combined with some turnover on the Board this spring including the Chairman), had the unfortunate side effect of pushing the annual report to the back burner. The Board has now rectified that situation, and we hope the Commissioners will forgive the delay.

As you'll read in the following pages, there was much to report on at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport (2W6) in 2018! The most notable highlight was the arrival of Allison Swint to fill the newly-created Airport Manager position in August 2018. In a peninsular county with numerous high-technology businesses but no interstate highways, no railroads, and no scheduled airline service, the lone public airport takes on outsized significance. A full-time Airport Manager is an imperative to maintain and grow such an airport, and Allison has already proven to be up to the task. With the Airport Manager overseeing day-to-day operations at the airport, the AAB envisions its role will transition from tactical/operational to operational/strategic, supporting longer range planning, growth, and development for the airport.

While 2019 airport activities (to include continuing work on the airport documents) will be detailed in next year's annual report, some items underway worth mentioning now are:

- ✦ Construction of new airport West Apron and new airport electrical vault
- ✦ Relocation of Airport Rd in preparation for taxiway relocation
- ✦ Continued construction of airport office buildings
- ✦ Creation of an Innovation District Master Plan for the airport, led by the Department of Economic Development
- ✦ Transformation of the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center (SMHEC) to the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM)
- ✦ Establishment of a free VMC Club open to all to improve pilot safety and proficiency
- ✦ Planning for the airport's 50th Anniversary in 2020

The airport is an economic engine and center of academic excellence in the county, as well as a source of recreation for the general aviation community. This is an exciting period of expansion and exceptional growth -- the challenge is balancing responsible economic development with maintaining the friendly general aviation flavor of the local hometown airport. Many airports in the nation are rich with business activity during the week but are lifeless on weekends because general aviation was not considered an equal priority. Collectively as a community, we must guard against that at St. Mary's County Regional. Economic development and growth at the airport can be a win-win-win for business, general aviation, and the public in St. Mary's County and surrounding region! We encourage local citizens to attend scheduled meetings of the Airport Advisory Board and provide their input on the future direction of our county airport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The St. Mary's County Airport Advisory Board (AAB) submits this 2018 annual report in accordance with Bylaws Article III. The report includes the following highlights:

- ✦ Hiring of a full-time Airport Manager.
- ✦ Continued development of airport-related facilities by S. Hunt Aero, LLC.
- ✦ Notable airport activities that advance technology, stimulate research and development, promote general aviation and STEM education with local youth, and encourage the general public to visit the airport.
- ✦ Economic Impact – Based upon the State's 2018 report, business revenues exceeded \$35M with 499 direct and indirect jobs producing in excess of \$32M local income and \$6M in tax revenue. These figures are expected to grow in the future.
- ✦ Atkinson Aeronautics and Technology committed to providing an FAA-certified Part 145 Repair Station at the airport, which will greatly improve availability of local maintenance services for based aircraft.
- ✦ Annual Budgeting – Capital Budget Improvements remain on track with the 2002 Master Plan with major construction planned for completion within the next six years. In FY2018, the airport operated at a net loss of \$92,659.79 when comparing direct operational expenses and direct revenues. This figure is larger than the net loss of \$61,255.03 in FY2017.
- ✦ Airport Activity and Capacity – The airport supports more than 35,000 operations annually. A total of 178 aircraft reside at the airport as of January 2018. The airport is currently at hangar capacity with near term growth planned that will accommodate the existing 29 aircraft waiting for occupancy. Outdoor tie-downs remain available.
- ✦ Airport Rules, Minimum Standards, and Standard Operating Procedures – Dating to 1994, these critical but outdated airport documents have been in the update process for over five years. A public release of the current drafts in late 2018, in advance of a scheduled public hearing with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, caused concern both with the AAB and the airport community. Since that time, the AAB's priority has been updating these documents and addressing public comments. The Board expects new recommended documents will be presented to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in summer 2019, to be followed by a public hearing.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Goals of the Board

The Bylaws of the St. Mary’s County Airport Advisory Board, adopted January 15th, 2019, govern the purpose, composition, and procedures of the Board. The purpose of the Board is to “advise the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County concerning the development and management of the St. Mary’s County Regional Airport.” This broad purpose encompasses airport operations, planning, economic development, responsible growth, and identification of the needs and best interests of the citizens of St. Mary’s County. Specific goals of the Board are:

- ✦ Ensure safe and secure facilities for general aviation;
- ✦ Promote safe ground and flight operations;
- ✦ Maintain a friendly environment for the aviation community and the general public;
- ✦ Improve economic development potential;
- ✦ Provide a restaurant, observation area, and pilot store/gift shop for the benefit of the airport community and the general public;
- ✦ Complete the extension of the runway and relocation of the taxiway to meet or exceed Federal Aviation Administration standards for the Airport Reference Code (B-II large, aircraft less than 12,500 lbs.);
- ✦ Protect and enhance airspace and approaches;
- ✦ Ensure that commercial, private and public development in and around the airport meets standards with respect to safety and noise;
- ✦ Promote the sustainment and growth of general aviation through local activities that showcase the airport to the general public, introduce youth to potential aviation careers, and support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education

The Board consists of ten volunteer members appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County. Board officers are elected by the Board each January or as required. The Board meets on the fourth Monday of each month in the conference room of the Captain Walter F. Duke Terminal Building in California, Maryland unless otherwise indicated on the county website or if a special meeting is necessary. The table below details the attendance record of the Board members in 2018.

Last Name	First Name	JAN 1/22	FEB 2/26	MAR 3/26	APR 4/23	MAY no mtg	JUN 6/25	JUL no mtg	AUG 8/27	SEP 9/24	OCT 10/22	NOV no mtg	DEC 12/3	
<u>Officers:</u>														
Pratson	Eric	P	P	E	P		P		P	P	P		P	
Lightstone	Robert	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P		P	
Klapka	Ted	P	P	P	P		P		E	P	P		P	
<u>Members:</u>														
Adair	Terry	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P		P	
Alexander	James	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P		P	
Barthelme	Bryan	P	E	P	E		A		A	P	A		A	
Swygert	Andre	P	P	E	P		P		E	P	P		A	
Schroeder	Brian	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	P	P	A		P	
<u>Alternates:</u>														
Nixon	Craig	=====	P	P	P		P		P	P	A		P	
Kelly	Carrie	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P		P	
	P Present						By-Laws Section 6: If any appointed member fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings, with or without reasonable cause, or is absent from 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings during any calendar year, the Chairperson shall notify the County Administrator of the absences.							
	E Excused													
	A Absent													
	R Resigned													
	===== Not on Board													

The Airport Operations Division of the Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T), which had no permanently assigned staff, provides administrative staff support and valuable technical input to the Airport Advisory Board. This year saw the hiring of a long-sought airport manager, Allison Swint, who serves as an ex-officio member of the Board. The St. Mary's County Building Services Division assists the Airport Manager by providing facilities maintenance services. A Private-Public relationship for airfield operations was established via the 2005 Operating Agreement with the primary Fixed Base Operator (referenced below as AIRtec, Inc.), who provides daily operational support.

Hail, Farewell, and Thank You

The Board would like to recognize Mr. John Deatruck, Director of Public Works and Transportation, for his continued support of the airport both during and after his tenure as acting Airport Manager prior to the hiring of Ms. Swint. Mr. Deatruck is assisted by outstanding staff support which he directs through Mr. Gary Whipple. The Board wishes best of luck and many thanks to Bob Carlton who retired in December 2018 after more than 25 years of service to St. Mary's County. The Board wishes to extend its recognition of the County Highways & Building Services Divisions of the DPW&T, Department of Recreation & Parks, Department of Economic Development (DED), Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM), Department of Finance, Chamber of Commerce, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), Civil Air Patrol (CAP), and fixed-based tenants on the airfield for their continued assistance over the past year. Finally, we wish to recognize the outstanding leadership Mr. Eric Pratson provided as Board chairman in 2018.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To satisfy aviation demand and promote airport development that both integrates with the community and serves the region's general aviation and corporate pilots.”

HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2018

S. Hunt Aero, LLC

S. Hunt Aero, LLC is a private entrepreneur development company with a vested market-driven approach to excellence in developing aviation-related facilities at St. Mary's County airport. The company broke ground in April 2018 for the following office/flex buildings:

- Building 5 - 13,860 SF
- Building 6 - 20,000 SF
- Building 7 - 5,000 SF
- Buildings 5 and 6 were leased to a total of five companies that are aviation related
- The sewer pump station that serves the entire airport was upgraded to meet current standards which will provide capacity for future airport growth
- The first 700 feet of the future Airport Loop Road was graded and paved
- Site plans were developed and submitted for 2019 projects:
 - Building 8 - 12,000 SF office
 - Hangar X - 6,000 SF (Future aircraft maintenance facility)
 - Hangar Y - 11,000 SF (Corporate Hangar)



University of Maryland Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Test Site



UAS TEST SITE

2018 was another busy year for the University of Maryland (UMD) UAS Test Site, with several projects receiving national media exposure. Most notably, the first-ever test flight of a human organ transported by UAS was successfully completed at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport in March 2018, in conjunction with the University of Maryland Medical Center, University of Maryland Baltimore, Maryland Development Corporation, and the Living Legacy Foundation. The event, which was the initial step in transporting organs via UAS for human transplantation, was later reported by the Associated Press, Newsweek, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), among others. In addition, AOPA shot several drone safety videos at the airport featuring UMD UAS Test Site staff. These were released online in the summer with exposure to AOPA's approximately 330,000 members. UMD also provided subject matter expertise for a University of Maryland University College online UAS course planned for release in 2019.

Summer was particularly busy with a solar wing UAS demonstration in Thailand to US Indo-Pacific Command, hyperspectral crop imaging in Maryland and Minnesota for NASA, a technical demonstration/evaluation of several small tactical UAS on behalf of NAVAIR, a bridge inspection for the Maryland Department of Transportation led by a summer intern, and a demonstration of coordinated operations between a UAS and an Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) for NAVAIR. The UAS-USV project was a follow-up to last year's demo of coordinated operations between a UAS and an Unmanned Ground Vehicle (UGV).

Other significant projects included post-hurricane damage assessment of Dominica in partnership with the GlobalMedic humanitarian aid organization, rainforest mapping in Belize, cubesat radio testing for the US Air Force, and testing for the Army Research Lab (ARL) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

A milestone was achieved on December 5th, 2018 with the first flight of UMD's 500-lb Tigershark UAS in Crisfield, MD. This was the result of 16 months of upgrades, preparation, and training, and paves the way for several major projects with the US Navy and others. Other major projects that got underway in late 2018 and will continue into the next year include support to the NASA Search and Rescue Mission Office, development/test of a solar wing for the Puma UAS, and test of a long-endurance UAS.

The future continues to look bright for UMD at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport. The test site staff has grown to ten, and a new custom Mobile Operations Center was delivered in January 2019 thanks to a grant from the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance. Routine unmanned flight operations continue safely alongside manned aircraft. UMD is well connected to the UAS industry and was a sponsor of the FAA UAS Symposium in Baltimore in March 2018. At the UAS industry's largest annual trade show, held in Denver in May 2018, UMD and the Maryland Department of Commerce co-sponsored the largest state booth with participation from ten Maryland companies. In addition, groundbreaking for the third building at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center (SMHEC) is slated for October 2019. The third building will focus on unmanned and autonomous technology, and the SMHEC merged with the University System of Maryland effective March 1st, 2019. The renamed University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM) will become the third regional education center for USM, and the only one with a dedicated research component.



TechPort



TechPort is Southern Maryland's new business incubator located at St. Mary's County Airport. Initiated and supported by Navy, County, University of Maryland (UMD), and Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) stakeholders, TechPort's charter is to grow the area's economic base by assisting innovation and entrepreneurs to create and build new tech-based companies. UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) and other autonomous systems are a prime focus of the incubator, given TechPort's unique 'UAS Central' ecosystem and assets: Naval Air Station Patuxent River, NAWCAD/Navy Tech Transfer, St. Mary's County airport location with UMD's UAS Test Site next door, UAS companies, and aligned higher education resources (SMCM, CSM, SMHEC and its upcoming facility for autonomous systems).

TechPort began operations in April 2018, firstly with development of its strategic plan and then setting forth marketing efforts to communicate its mission, resources, working arrangements and unique advantages. To best capture the ecosystem's opportunity and act in a complementary manner with the region's innovation community, TechPort services include: venture assessment, planning and ongoing business consulting, and investor relationship development. Specific advisor team skills include extensive commercial experience, IP (Intellectual Property) strategy and protection, deal making, marketing and high tech project management. Limited to tech-only, TechPort to date has assisted clients with their innovation and business in UAS, autonomous systems and solar technology. In addition to membership, TechPort opportunities include the "InventorMuscle" group (supports and celebrates inventing) and monthly LunchBox Talks on topics of interest to new entrepreneurs.

St. Mary's Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol

The St. Mary's Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) meets weekly at the Walter Duke terminal building at St. Mary's Regional Airport. CAP has three mission areas: Search and Rescue, Aerospace Education, and Cadet Programs. CAP is a federally chartered corporation that is also the official Auxiliary of the United States Air Force. It is mainly made up of volunteers who dedicate their time to helping others and improving the community. Nationally, there are more than 26,000 cadet members and more than 36,000 adult members. Cadet members range in age from 10 to 21 but mainly consist of middle and high school students between the ages of 12 and 18. Senior Members (adults) conduct the supervisory and execution roles of the organization.



Cadets are beneficiaries of many unique and valuable opportunities presented through CAP. The Cadet Program is an outstanding leadership opportunity, with many of the cadet leaders moving on to graduate from college and continue to be a positive influence in their community. There is no military commitment incurred by participating in CAP, however, it does allow youth to see how a military-like organization is structured and offers education and leadership activities to benefit the whole community, both here locally and elsewhere in the state and country.

St. Mary's Composite Squadron has an association with the Esperanza Middle School Flight and the two organizations operate together as one large unit. Total membership is 174, made up of 110 Cadets and 64 Senior Members. The squadron held more than 500 events in 2018, with over 200 of them at the airport terminal building. The squadron meets each Wednesday night where they conduct training in aerospace education, leadership, core values, character development, and physical fitness. Other activities in 2018 included Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) training and events, first aid classes, flight operations, pilot training, Color Guard practice, UAS competition training, parent orientation meetings, Emergency Services training, and tutoring events. Most notably, the squadron completed training to qualify ten members for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).



Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 478 – Young Eagles

EAA Chapter 478 holds a Young Eagles rally each summer at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport, giving a free airplane ride to youth aged 8 to 17 and perhaps inspiring them to a future career in aviation. This year's event was held June 16th, 2018 and 80 Young Eagles were flown by nine volunteer pilots. Other opportunities throughout the year raised the chapter's annual total to 209 Young Eagles flown by 17 volunteer pilots. Since 1992, the chapter has flown a total of 3,076 Young Eagles, and nationwide EAA has flown more than two million total Young Eagles! Each of those flights may have created a special memory and been the start of a lifelong passion for aviation. Next year's rally is scheduled for June 15th, 2019.



Fly-In Farmers Markets

A new event debuted at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport terminal building on December 22nd, 2018, the inaugural Fly-In Farmers Market. Designed to be an indoor winter alternative to the summer farmer's markets held at Historic Sotterley and elsewhere in the county, the event featured a dozen vendors and was attended by approximately 300 people. A crowd of children was on hand to see Santa Claus arrive in his red (helicopter) sleigh! Additional Fly-In Farmers Markets were held at the airport terminal in February and March 2019. The events attracted members of the community who might not typically visit the airport.



AIRPORT DATA

Safety & Security

The Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) conducted their annual licensing inspection on April 5th, 2018, and the Airport Advisory Board conducted their safety inspection on May 12th, 2018. Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPIs) on Runway 29 were returned to service in December 2018 following an accident occurring in 2017. Crack sealing and painting was also completed in 2018.

The voluntary Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Airport Watch Program continues to enhance safety, security, and a sense of ownership among airport tenants as evidenced by no reported Office of the Sheriff responses to the airport for security-related matters this year. The program features a centralized nationwide toll free hotline (1-866-GA-SECURE) for reporting and responding to information provided by the airport community.

Economic Impact

The MAA issued its updated economic impact report in December 2018. Below is a graphical depiction of the economic impact at St. Mary's County Regional Airport.

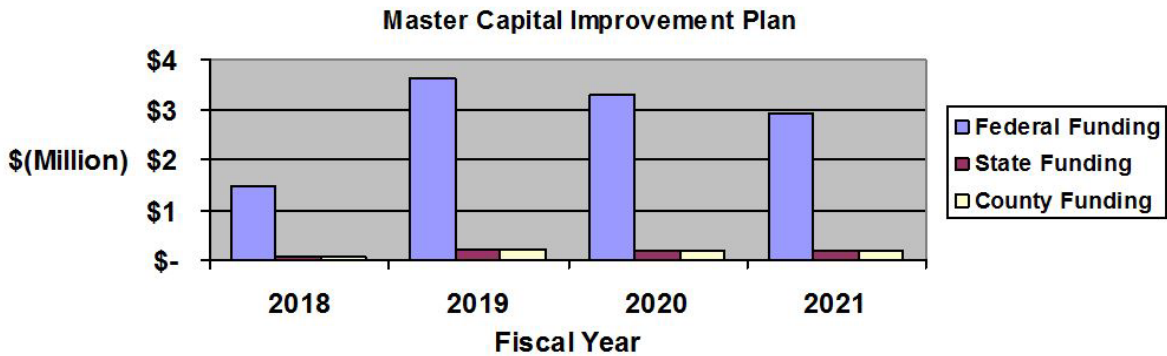


The following commercial services are provided at the airport:

- ✦ AIRtec Inc. (FBO Services & Hangar Leasing): Since 1987, AIRtec provides aircraft maintenance, line service, hangar rental, transient aircraft support, and aircraft fueling. AIRtec is also an aviation and technology integration company that specializes in maritime radar surveillance, range safety, airborne telemetry flight operations, priority air transport; Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR); maintenance, training, equipment integration and sensor operation. AIRtec has experienced significant growth in the past year.
- ✦ Aviation Systems Engineering Company (ASEC): Systems engineering, test and evaluation, logistics, flight operations, and training. ASEC has a North American Navion, Beech Super King Air 300, and a Basler BT-67 (Douglas DC-3 converted to turboprops) based at 2W6.
- ✦ Navy Annapolis Flight Center (NAFC): Part 141 and Part 61 flight training programs.
- ✦ Pax Aero Solutions: Aircraft engineering, fabrication, modification, integration, and repair.
- ✦ Piedmont Flight Center: Aircraft rental, Part 61 flight training, and a Part 107 UAS (drone) license course.
- ✦ S. Hunt Aero, LLC: The company continues in developing/leasing general aviation hangars, commercial hangars, office/R&D buildings and production facilities. The rapid growth of St. Mary's County Airport would not be possible without this substantial corporate involvement.
- ✦ St. Mary's Hangar Association, Inc.: Hangar Leasing.

Annual Budgeting

The draft FY2019 Master Capital Improvement Plan includes \$4,000,000 to construct the first phase of the taxiway relocation and runway extension. FAA funding is 90% with the State and County providing 5% each. Since 1978, the Federal and State Aviation Administrations have funded 29 projects at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport in excess of \$17.8 million.



The Capital Budget also includes \$3,400,000 to construct Airport Loop Road in FY2020 and \$2,800,000 for apron/ramp construction in FY2021.

The table below presents the costs and revenue associated with maintaining and operating the airport. Expenses are grouped by type. Revenues include tie-down and hangar rentals, office space rent and fuel sales.

Facility Expenses	2015	2016	2017	2018
Facility Maint/Utility	\$ 51,726.00	\$ 92,861.00	\$ 43,363.34	\$ 36,186.17
Electric (incl. Nav Aids & Lighting)	\$ 19,706.00	\$ 18,388.00	\$ 24,479.82	\$ 31,139.32
Airport Lighting	*-0-*	*-0-*	\$ 320.69	\$ 180.88
Liability Insurance	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 6,160.00
Property Insurance (structure)	**_0-**	**_0-**	\$ 3,116.00	\$ 3,116.00
Grounds	\$ 22,965.00	\$ 18,700.00	\$12,949.00	\$ 11,366.00
Runway/Taxiway Maint.	**_0-**	**_0-**	\$ 82,862.40	\$ 93,324.22
Total expenses	\$100,557.00	\$136,109.00	\$173,251.25	\$181,472.59
Income				
Direct Revenue	\$ 74,192.00	\$ 96,205.00	\$111,996.22	\$ 88,812.80
Gain/Loss				
Asset / (Liability)	\$ (26,365.00)	\$ (39,904.00)	\$ (61,255.03)	\$ (92,659.79)

Notes / Comments

-0- Runway lighting was included in terminal utility cost

_0- Was not provided in the previous years

Airspace Protection and Encroachment

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Chapter 43 provisions with respect to Airport Environment and Tower installations implemented by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County has served the airport well by preventing penetrations to 14 CFR Part 77 surfaces and preserving airport approach minimums.

Airport Capacity

The FAA's National Based Aircraft Inventory was updated in January 2018 to assist the FAA is administering its various national airspace planning programs. The data update ensures that all planes are accounted for by location and tail number and is a requirement for receiving continued Federal and State funding. As of January 2018, **178** total aircraft are recorded in the inventory; 173 fixed wing (including seven gliders and three jets) and five rotary wing.

Total airport capacity is 63 tie-down spaces, 122 general aviation hangar spaces, and six commercial hangars (including the county hangar). The waiting list, as of December 27th, 2018, contains 29 requests for T-hangar space, two corporate hangar requests, and zero requests for tie-down space. While outdoor tie-downs are available, there continues to be a shortage of hangar facilities for indoor aircraft storage.

There is also a shortage of maintenance providers to support the general aviation aircraft based at the airport, as well as transient aircraft. Atkinson Aeronautics and Technology, based at Tappahannock-Essex County Airport, Virginia, is an FAA-certified Part 145 repair station that has recently committed to expanding their operations to St. Mary's County Regional. The addition of another maintenance provider will be a great benefit to the airport, and operations are slated to begin here in late 2019 following construction of a hangar.



Airport Operations

Each take-off and landing is considered a separate aviation-related operation. Annual aircraft operations for 2018 shown below were provided by the Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Aviation Administration in their report “The Economic Impact of Public Use Airports in Maryland”, December 2018.

Annual Aircraft Operations

Local GA	19,482
Transient GA	12,988
Air Taxi	936
Military	180
Total Operations	35,588

Maryland State Police Trooper 7: The Maryland State Police Aviation Command continues to provide critical community services through Trooper 7 located at the airport. According to the Aviation Command, Trooper 7 flew 450 medevac, 44 search and rescue, and 13 law enforcement missions out of the airport in calendar year 2018 for a total of 507 missions. Trooper 7 continues to enhance airport security by providing a continuous law enforcement presence.



MedSTAR Transport: MedSTAR Transport, a non-profit service based out of MedStar Washington Hospital Center, provides enhanced response times to better assist critical care patients in the Southern Maryland region. MedSTAR's aircraft and crews are single-pilot IFR and night vision goggle qualified to ensure immediate response 24/7 in a wide variety of conditions. MedSTAR flew 667 missions out of the airport in 2018.



Nalls Aviation: Nalls Aviation is an especially noteworthy aerobatic team based at St. Mary's County Regional Airport. Art Nalls, a retired Marine, holds the distinct honor of owning and operating the world's only civilian AV-8A Sea Harrier (SHAR) jet and has been recognized by the Washington Post, Classic Aircraft magazine, Aeroplane Monthly, and Jets Monthly publications. The Harrier team includes local county residents who maintain the aircraft during the busy national airshow season. Nalls Aviation obtained a second Harrier in 2015, and also has an L-39 Albatross jet trainer and a BD-5 microjet.



Operations Equipment and Navigation Aids:

- ✦ The Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) passed a thorough FAA field inspection on October 4, 2017. The MAA continues to fund the AWOS connectivity to the national FAA weather database. An AWOS repair was completed in early 2019.
- ✦ Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPIs) on Runway 29 were returned to service in December 2018 following an accident occurring in April 2017.
- ✦ A new larger and lighted windsock was installed at the airport in 2018.
- ✦ For Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations, the airport is serviced by non-precision RNAV GPS approaches for both runways 11 and 29.
- ✦ While a GPS WAAS signal is available via Channel 70502 W11A, the GPS approaches have not been developed for CAT II approach minimums and are currently restricted to a decision height of 298 feet Above Ground Level (AGL).
- ✦ On October 17, 2016, the County signed a support letter to MAA for an Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) demonstration project to test a ground station at 2W6 for coverage from approach altitude to the airport surface. The results of this project were briefed by the University Research Foundation on June 25th, 2018. Future plans are undetermined.

Airport Rules, Minimum Standards for Businesses, and Standard Operating Procedures

The current Rules and Minimum Standards were adopted in 1994 as a county ordinance and have been in desperate need of update. The County, Airport Advisory Committee/Board and community have been struggling since October 2013 to update the documents and make them acceptable to all stakeholders. The process has included some lively debate, discussion, and contention.

The Airport Advisory Committee, with public input, developed a final draft of the proposed Airport Rules and Minimum Standards in 2017. These were reviewed by the FAA and MAA without comment, then forwarded to the County Attorney for review as a county ordinance. Following that review, the newly revised documents were posted for the public in late 2018 in advance of a scheduled public hearing with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on January 8th, 2019. The documents had undergone some significant changes, which caused concern with both the Airport Advisory Board and the airport community. The public hearing was cancelled and replaced with a public forum hosted by the AAB to get public comment on the latest draft documents. Revising the airport documents and addressing public comments has been the top priority and focus of the Board from late 2018 through the present. The Board expects new recommended documents will be presented to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in summer 2019, to be followed by a public hearing. The county will issue a new Airport Rules ordinance after the public hearing and comment process is complete.



CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED OR EXPECTED

- ✦ The AAB recognizes the challenges faced by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and the DPW&T Director, especially with only limited financial resources and staffing available. The Board will search for ways to increase both a revenue stream and a means to recognize and enhance the economic value of the airport. The ultimate goal is for the airport to be self-sustaining financially.
- ✦ As the airport and surrounding area continues to grow and expand, it must be top priority to ensure the airport remains an airport. While there's no reason to believe that may be in jeopardy here, there are examples of general aviation airports in other communities that were closed to accommodate other priorities. Notable examples include Santa Monica Airport, CA and Chicago's Meigs Field.
- ✦ The AAB recognizes the unique operational demographics of the airport when attempting to write appropriate Rules, Minimum Standards, and Standard Operating Procedures. The Board will continue to engage the airport public and provide sound recommendations to the County regarding these important documents.
- ✦ The AAB recognizes the dramatic nationwide decrease in pilots and mechanics over the past few decades and the implications for national defense, commercial air transportation, business aviation, and our local airport. FAA data indicates there were 827,071 active pilots in 1980 and only 584,362 in 2016. It's evident that a shortage of pilots is detrimental to the future of general aviation and general aviation airports such as St. Mary's County Regional. While there is some good news (active pilots increased to 609,306 in 2017 and 633,317 in 2018), it's estimated the shortage of professional pilots will grow to 5,000 by 2021. We should do all we can to generate interest in aviation and inspire people to fly or fix airplanes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- ✦ First and foremost is the need to complete and implement the update to the Airport Rules, Minimum Standards, and Standard Operating Procedures. This is the Board's primary focus, with expected completion in summer 2019.
- ✦ The Board continues to fully support the goals and objectives of the 2002 Airport Master Plan and is pleased to see some projects completed, with additional projects now or soon to be underway. The Board is eager to see continued strong effort and evidence of progress to bring the major projects, the taxiway relocation and runway extension, to completion within the next six years. It has been 17 years since the Airport Master Plan has been updated. The Board recommends that the Master Plan be reviewed and revised to account for growth in the southern Maryland region and at NAS Patuxent River.
- ✦ Continued monitoring of development within the Airport Environs and in the vicinity of the airport property to provide sound technical recommendations to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in order to protect the County's and the FAA's substantial investment in this important public asset.
- ✦ Work with the Department of Economic Development and airport stakeholders to further develop and market the airport and surrounding area as a regional asset for all of Southern Maryland. A primary goal is establishment of a restaurant, observation area, and pilot store/gift shop to attract pilots and the general public to the airport and increase revenue. Pilots need an excuse to fly somewhere, and the public enjoys a good meal with a view of airport activity.
- ✦ Continue to provide and support activities that promote interest in general aviation, flight/maintenance training, and STEM education.
- ✦ Plan for a variety of events to celebrate the airport's 50th Anniversary throughout 2020.

- ✦ Update airport website to be more current and better organized.
- ✦ The Board concurs with the Airport Operations action items that have been integrated with the DPW&T's 2006 Transportation Plan. The Board will continue to monitor and address these issues as presented for recommendation and/or action. Specific Action Items of particular interest to the Board are as follows:
 - Develop an Airport Business/Finance Plan that is integrated with the Airport Master Plan and in conjunction with the DED. As the County deals with growth, budget challenges, and FAA requirements, it is essential the County has a vision on how to manage this essential resource.
 - Once the runway is extended, “open up” the southwestern portion of the airport for development by extending water and sewer with County funding resources as shown in the capital improvement plan, and providing a second entrance to the airport via Lawrence Hayden Road connection to the planned Airport Loop Road.
 - Work with the Emergency Services Director to provide annual updates of the disaster preparedness plan.
- ✦ Ensure increased safety for pilots, aircraft, persons and properties through the review and update of existing safety processes.
- ✦ Pursue and obtain all required navigation and obstruction removal easements.
- ✦ Track, monitor, and assist new activities on the airfield to ensure they are conducted with all notifications, permits, and notice. Streamline and facilitate the process of allowing new businesses to operate on the airfield in a timely manner.
- ✦ The Board will continue to work with the County and the FBO to evaluate and provide recommendations on the Airport Layout Plan, identify additional areas for tie-down spaces, and consolidate parking areas where available in order to meet current and future demand.
- ✦ Replace and upgrade the existing AWOS radio system.
- ✦ Seek FAA funding for the installation of an Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) antenna so as to facility 978 MHz ADS-B broadcast to aircraft during ground operations. This will serve to increase safety in flight operations by providing pilots with weather, traffic, airspace, and other critical information prior to takeoff and during air traffic pattern operations.



