

**St. Mary's County  
Airport Advisory Board  
2022 Annual Report**

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023



**James Alexander, Chairman  
Robert Lightstone, Vice Chairman  
George Hill, Secretary  
Albert Babcock  
Bryan Barthelme  
Henri Sahut  
Kevin Suggs  
Robert Zaorski  
Gerald Meyerman, Alternate**

Appointed Ex-Officio Members:  
Allison Swint, Deputy Director Transportation and Airport Manager  
LCDR Steve Palmer, NAS Patuxent River  
LCDR Sam Hughes, NAS Patuxent River

Assigned Technical Advisor and Staff Support:  
Gary B. Whipple, P.E.

## St Mary's County Regional Airport (2W6)



**Aviation is in the DNA of St. Mary's County, and it is rooted even deeper in the history of this place where exploration and discovery form the foundation of Maryland itself. It is here that military and civil aviation launch dynamic collaborations. Today, the connection between Naval Aviation PAX River, our centralized and modern airport, and our strategic location in the state and nation position us to take flight in ways never before imagined.**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE BOARD**

The Bylaws of the St. Mary's County Airport Advisory Board, adopted January 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 and revenue;
- ✈ Provide a restaurant, observation area, and pilot store/gift shop for the benefit of the airport community and general public;
- ✈ Complete the extension of the runway 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;
- ✈ Focus on identifying and resolving airport-related issues in a timely manner.

### **Mission Statement**

"To satisfy aviation demand and promote airport development that both integrates with the community and serves the region's general aviation needs."

## **BOARD COMPOSITION**

The Board currently consists of seven volunteer members appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, plus one ad hoc member from Patuxent River NAS. 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 a special meeting is necessary.

## CHART OF ATTENDANCE

Last Name	First Name	JAN 1/24	FEB 2/28	MAR 3/28	APR 4/25	MAY ***	JUN 6/27	JUL ***	AUG 8/22	SEP 26-Sep	OCT 24-Oct	NOV ***	DEC 5-Dec
Officers:													
Alexander	James	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P		P
Lightstone	Robert	P	A	A	P		P		P	P	P		P
Hill	George	P	P	P	P		P		A	P	P		P
Members:													
Babcock	Albert	A	A	P	A		A		P	P	P		A
Barthelme	Bryan	A	P	P	A		A		X	X	X		X
Sahut	C.T.	A	P	P	P		A		A	A	P		A
Snuggs	Kevin	X	X	X	X		X		P	P	P		P
Zaorski	Bob	P	P	P	P		P		A	P	P		P
Palmer	Steve	P	A	P	P		X		X	X	X		X
Hughes	Sam	X	X	X	X		P		A	A	P		A
Alternates													
Meyerman	Gerald	A	P	A	R		X		X	X	X		X
<p>P Present  A Absent  R Resigned  X Place holder, new board position  C Meeting Cancelled  ===== Not on Committee</p>													
<p><b>By-Laws Section 6:</b> 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.</p>													

The Airport Operations Division of the Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) provides administrative staff support and valuable technical input to the Airport Advisory Board. The Airport Manager, Allison Swint, 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 (FBO) (recently transitioned from AIRtec Inc. to RCS Services LLC) providing daily operational support.

Mr. James Gotsch, Director of Public Works and Transportation, is assisted by outstanding staff support which he directs through his deputy, Mr. Gary Whipple. Allison Swint manages day-to-day airport operations with the assistance of Mr. David Gately. The Board wishes to extend its recognition of the County Highways & Building Services Divisions of the DPW&T, Department of Recreation & Parks (snowplowing), Department of Economic Development (DED), Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM), Department of Finance, Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), and fixed-based tenants on the airfield for their continued assistance over the past year.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

Our airport remains a unique regional asset, an important economic engine and center of academic excellence and innovation in the county, and a safe source of recreation for the general aviation community. Balancing responsible economic development with maintaining the friendly general aviation flavor of the local hometown airport is a continuous challenge. We encourage local citizens to attend scheduled meetings of the

Airport Advisory Board and provide their valuable input on the future direction of this county treasure.

Environmental impacts of the discovered garbage dump have caused both time and money delays to the completion of the runway extension. The extension is now anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023 and will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI).

Continued technology development indicates areas of future development that can/could be included in future planning for the airport. Unmanned aircraft growth is already underway and expansion will surely follow.



Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft development is showing promise for growth as air taxis to connect remote hubs to urban centers or large airports. Vertiports will be needed for takeoff and landing locations, and small regional airports such as 2W6 are in a perfect position to capitalize on this expected demand. The Airport Advisory Board Chairman briefed the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at their March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, meeting on the potential economic and public benefits of establishing a vertiport at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport.

The Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) Building at the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM) is expanding the scope of technology in the AeroPark area.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The St. Mary's County Airport Advisory Board (AAB) submits this 2022 annual report in accordance with Bylaws Article III. The report includes the following highlights:

- ✈️ AECOM will be working to update the 2002 Airport Master Plan and associated Airport Layout Plan. This will be their first priority after completion of the pavement study.
- ✈️ The environmental impacts of the discovered garbage dump have caused both time and money delays to the completion of the runway extension. Now anticipate the extension will be completed by the end of 2023 which will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI).
- ✈️ Completed placing military traffic de-confliction information in the FAA Chart Supplement and on AWOS to enhance safety.
- ✈️ RCS Services is the new FBO at the airport. They replace the former FBO, AIRtec Inc., with new personnel and additional services. AIRtec remains a key business at the airport.
- ✈️ Renovations to the terminal have been completed to add new office space and a commercial kitchen, enabling a new food facility (Bird Dog Bistro) to open in November. An Open House to celebrate the renovations was held in the terminal building on May 24<sup>th</sup> and featured several speakers including the AAB Chairman.
- ✈️ AUVSI Student UAS Competition held at 2W6 in June included US and International competitors. This is planned to be an annual event at 2W6.
- ✈️ Mr. James Gotsch is the new Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation as of February.
- ✈️ LCDR Sam Hughes replaced LCDR Steven Palmer as the Air Traffic Control Facility Officer, and ex-officio Board member from NAS Patuxent River. This critical position has streamlined communications and improved safety and traffic deconfliction between the two airports. A good example is the annual pilot forum held with Pax River Air Ops as an FAA Safety Team event.
- ✈️ Construction of Hangar Z has proceeded apace but will not be fully completed until early in 2023.
- ✈️ Notable airport activities advanced technology; stimulated research, development, and innovation; and promoted general aviation and STEM education. Local youth and the general public are encouraged 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 have likely grown over the past few years. The State’s next report is expected in 2023
- ✈ Annual Budgeting – Capital Budget Improvements remain on track with the 2002 Master Plan. In FY2022, the airport operated at a net gain of \$68,040 when comparing direct operational expenses and direct revenues. This is the fourth consecutive year of operating at a net gain.
- ✈ Airport Activity and Capacity – 2019 MAA data show more than 40,000 operations annually, an increase of 13.1% from previous data. The next report is due in FY24. A total of 230 aircraft reside at the airport. The airport is currently at aircraft storage hangar capacity with 90 aircraft owners on the waiting list for occupancy with 30 of them having an immediate need. Outdoor tie-downs remain available.
- ✈ The AeroPark Business Alliance continues to meet quarterly. An effort began in November to establish comprehensive signage and a way finding system for the AeroPark Innovation District.

## **HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2022**

### **STUDENT UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS COMPETITION**

For the first time, the SUAS Competition, sponsored by the Association of Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), was held June 15-18, 2022, at 2W6.

The Competition fosters interest in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), stimulates interest in UAS technologies and careers, and engages students in a challenging UAS mission.

Students are required to design, integrate, report on, and demonstrate a UAS capable of autonomous flight and navigation, remote sensing via onboard payload sensors, and execute specific tasks.

This year’s competition had 1000+ contestants, volunteers and coaches registered to attend, with flight missions scheduled throughout the event.



Formerly held at NAS Pax River Webster Field, it was moved in 2022 to 2W6 and the 2023 event will also be held here.





## **BIRD DOG BISTRO**

The AAB has long been advocating for a food service provider at the airport, and that goal was finally achieved in 2022! The Bird Dog Bistro has opened for business with current hours Wednesday through Saturday for lunch from 10:00 AM to 2 PM. They have also been opening for other events such as Sunday Farmer's Market days at the airport and have catered other events. Changes are to be anticipated but the opening times and menu can be accessed at the following website:

<https://www.birddogbistro.com>

## **AEROPARK AIRPORT INNOVATION DISTRICT**

AeroPark combines business, industry, education, and research centered on the St. Mary's County Regional Airport. Per the Department of Economic Development, "This effort provides a unique opportunity to strengthen and expand the local economy, deliver education and employment opportunities, and create a world-class research and innovation hub."

The AeroPark Business Alliance meets quarterly. The AeroPark Innovation District Working Group met November 7<sup>th</sup> to provide input for the way forward to establish comprehensive signage and a way finding system for AeroPark.

The Airport Advisory Board looks forward to future developments with the AeroPark Innovation District, including creation of a gateway sign marking the entrance to the airport on Three Notch Rd.



## **AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION**

Environmental impacts of the discovered garbage dump have caused both time and money delays to the completion of the runway extension. The extension is now estimated to be completed by the end of 2023 and will include the runway, taxiway, and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI). Renovations to the terminal have been completed to add new office space and a commercial kitchen, which opened in November. Bird Dog Bistro is a great addition to the airport! An Open House to celebrate the renovations was held in the terminal on May 24<sup>th</sup> and included several speakers including the AAB Chairman.

One of the key events of the year is the hanging in November of a static display of a former University of Maryland uncrewed aircraft inside the terminal building, a photo of which can be seen below. A pilot lounge is making progress in the terminal.



## **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. 2022 airport activity included the following.

### **On Airport:**

- Construction of Hangar Z has proceeded apace but will not be fully completed until early in 2023. This is the last hangar currently planned for the airport.

### **Adjacent Airport:**

- Land for additional airport construction by the County or other developers is available at the west end but is subject to engineering and approval by the County.



## **AIRPORT DATA**

### **SAFETY & SECURITY**

The Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) conducted their annual licensing inspection on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, without any significant issues noted.

The AAB made substantive additions to the airport info in the FAA Chart Supplement to improve safety, situational awareness, and traffic de-confliction with NAS Patuxent River. General aviation pilots using 2W6 were alerted that military traffic may overfly the airport just above traffic pattern altitude without being on Common Traffic Advisory Frequency or ADS-B. A similar caution was added to the AWOS weather recording to improve safety of operations.

The FAA Safety Team (FAASTeam) mission is to “lower the Nation’s aviation accident rate by conveying safety principles and practices through training, outreach, and education; while establishing partnerships and encouraging the continual growth of a positive safety culture within the aviation community.” The FAASTeam Program Manager at the Washington Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) provides national policy and guidance for the southern Maryland region. Local FAASTeam Representatives are James Alexander, Jacque La Valle, and Bill Posnett. Of note, the FAASTeam hosted its annual pilot forum with NAS Patuxent River Air Traffic Control on May 25<sup>th</sup> to improve communication, increase traffic awareness/deconfliction, and enhance safety between 2W6 and Pax River air traffic. The event was well received with 31 people attending.

The voluntary Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Airport Watch Program continues to enhance safety, security, and a sense of ownership among airport tenants. The program features a centralized nationwide toll-free hotline (1-866-GA-SECURE) for reporting and responding to information provided by the airport community. In 2022, the Office of the Sheriff responded to five reported security-related matters at the airport: one Premise Check, two Animal Control Calls, and two miscellaneous calls. None of the calls required action.

## **ANNUAL BUDGETING**

Since 1978, the Federal and State Aviation Administrations have funded 30 grants at the St. Mary’s County Regional Airport in excess of \$34 million. FAA funding is 90% with the State and County providing 5% each. However, beginning in FY2021, the State of Maryland will only provide the 5% match for construction costs due to significant State budget constraints. Planning, design and construction management will not be funded by the State.

The draft FY2023 Capital Budget Master Plan Improvements include:

- ✈️ \$3M in prior approval for the Hangar Access Road extension (Local funding).
- ✈️ \$5.4M in prior approval for Phase 3 airfield construction (FAA Airport Improvement Program, 100% federally funded under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act).
- ✈️ \$1.075M in prior approval for perimeter fence replacement and airfield and ramp pavement repairs (Local funding).
- ✈️ \$120,000 in prior approval for a pavement management study in advance of existing runway rehabilitation.
- ✈️ FY2024 funding \$380,000 for terminal exterior improvements and \$750,000 for additional solid waste removal costs.
- ✈️ \$500,000 for Airport Master Plan update in FY2025.
- ✈️ \$7,000,000 for runway rehabilitation in FY2026
- ✈️ \$680,000 for Access and Security Improvements in FY2027.

The airport also received an additional:

- ✈️ \$59,000 in discretionary funding through the American Rescue Grant Program (ARPG), which will be applied to operational expenses.
- ✈️ \$23,000 in discretionary funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), which will be applied to staffing for additional janitorial and disinfection requirements.

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.

<b>Facility Expenses</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Facility Maint/Utility	\$ 36,186.17	\$ 25,359.22	\$ 12,076.30	\$35,511.48	\$20,395.39
Electric (incl. Nav Aids & Lighting)	\$ 31,139.32	\$ 20,724.16	\$ 18,336.77	\$21,917.01	\$23,778.43
Airport Lighting	\$ 180.88	\$ 833.56	\$ 1,615.44	\$1,200.01	Combined in above
Liability Insurance	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 7,700.00	\$7,700.00
Property Insurance (structure)	\$ 3,116.00	\$ 3,479.00	\$ 3,847.00	\$ 3,980.00	\$3,980.00
Grounds	\$ 11,366.00	\$ 11,762.00	\$ 10,495.00	\$ 7,626.00	\$3,183.00
Runway/Taxiway Maint.	\$ 93,324.22	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$181,472.59</b>	<b>\$ 66,317.94</b>	<b>\$ 52,530.51</b>	<b>\$77,934.50</b>	<b>\$59,036.82</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Direct Revenue	\$ 88,812.80	\$ 84,358.79	\$122,009.68	\$ 119,724.19	\$ 127,077.12
<b>Gain/Loss</b>					
Asset / (Liability)	\$ (92,659.79)	\$ 18,040.85	\$ 69,479.17	\$41,789.69	\$68,040.30

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The MAA issues an economic impact report every three years. Below is a graphical depiction of the economic impact at St. Mary's County Regional Airport as of December 2018. Next impact report is expected in 2024.



## **AIRPORT CAPACITY**

The FAA's National Based Aircraft Inventory assists the FAA in 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. The FAA required each airport to review and update their based aircraft inventory by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. As of that date, 230 total aircraft are recorded in the inventory; 224 fixed wing (including 191 single-engine, 20 multi-engine, eight gliders, four jets, and one ultralight) and six rotary wing. Total airport capacity is 74 tie-down spaces, 123 general aviation hangar spaces, and 14 commercial hangars (including the county hangar). The waiting list, as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, contains 90 requests for space with thirty of those for immediate occupancy. While outdoor tie-downs are available, there continues to be a shortage of hangar facilities for indoor aircraft storage that is unlikely to change due to land availability.

## **AIRPORT OPERATIONS**

Each take-off and landing is considered a separate aviation-related operation. The Maryland Aviation Administration conducts a study every three years for aircraft operations at all Maryland airports. A new study was conducted in 2019 and St. Mary's County Regional Airport had 40,263 operations in 2019, an increase of 13.1% over the previous report. The next study will be conducted in FY2024.

## Annual Aircraft Operations

Local GA	23,380
Transient GA	15,589
Air Taxi	1,126
Military	216
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>40, 308</b>

## AIRPORT MAINTENANCE

With an increasing number of based and transient aircraft, access to general aviation maintenance providers at the airport remains extremely important. There is a current and forecast shortage of certified Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) mechanics throughout the aviation industry; with community support and commitment a maintenance-training program in St. Mary's County may be possible. This would build on the efforts of Atkinson Aeronautics and Technology, which has been working with the Forrest Tech Center and College of Southern Maryland to assist in the development of an Aviation Maintenance Apprenticeship program.

## OPERATIONS EQUIPMENT AND NAVIGATION AIDS

- ✈ The Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) is inspected three times per year, one of which is completed by the FAA. The last FAA inspection was in October 2021. The AWOS continued to struggle in 2022 with limited range. The MAA continues to fund the AWOS connectivity to the national FAA weather database.
- ✈ 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).
- ✈ Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out is required as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 on all civil aircraft that operate in airspace requiring a Mode C transponder. Aircraft equipped with ADS-B In can see ADS-B traffic on a cockpit display to enhance situational awareness and safety.

## ADDITIONAL FACILITIES ON THE AIRPORT



# UAS RESEARCH AND OPERATIONS CENTER

### UMD Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Research and Operations Center (UROC)

The UMD UAS Test Site rebranded in October to better reflect its mission, as over the past eight years it has always done much more than test uncrewed aircraft. The UROC “serves as a resource for university researchers whose work involves aerial autonomy; offers education and outreach activities, including our summer internship program; provides operational and technical expertise to a wide range of public and private partners; and works actively to facilitate the safe and efficient integration of UAS into the national airspace”, according to Dr. Samuel Graham, Jr., Dean of UMD’s A. James Clark School of Engineering. To lead the organization forward, Mr. John Slaughter came aboard as the new Director in August.

Highlights this year included local flights in January to test sensor performance in cold weather, followed by a February data collection mission in the Straits of Mackinac, Michigan, as part of a continuing NOAA sea ice study. Next year’s ice survey is planned for Nome, Alaska.



Flight operations then shifted to Hawaii in March in support of NASA and NOAA to validate data for ground station commissioning of a new generation international Search and Rescue (SAR) satellite system.





In a related project, the operations team traveled to Australia and New Zealand from late September to early November to conduct flights and validate data to commission ground stations from those international SRSAT partner nations.

In addition to the intern program, the summer months were busy with research and test flights in support of a large, multi-year project on applied aerial autonomy for long distance collaborative operations involving UMD and the Army Research Lab. In June, the international Student UAS competition was held at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport for the first time, and UROC technical expertise helped make it successful. With US Coast Guard support, NASA SAR beacon tests were conducted with an uncrewed surface vessel (USV) in the St. Mary's River in August. The summer period ended with UROC conducting a Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) Technology Demonstration on behalf of NAVAIR PMA-263 over two weeks in September. Twelve UAS from nine different companies were put through their paces to inform the fleet on the latest small UAS capabilities available.

A dedicated project manager was hired in January to bring the Chesapeake UAS Route Network (CURN) to reality, and things are progressing. CURN is envisioned to allow routine transit of civil, public (i.e. government), and military UAS between various locations in the Chesapeake Bay region in non-segregated airspace, fully integrated with crewed aircraft in the National Airspace System.

UMD UROC will continue to be at the forefront of technical advancement and operational best practices during the rapid evolution of the uncrewed aircraft systems industry.



## **The USMSM SMART Building and the UMD MATRIX LAB**

The USMSM SMART Building and the UMD MATRIX Lab continue to serve as the education and research hub of the AeroPark Innovation District. We are working to grow and retain talent that could eventually work at the St. Mary's County Airport and other regional staples. We encourage students from St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert counties to try the "2 plus 2" program. Students spend 2 years at the College of Southern Maryland, then 2 years at USMSM's campus as a USMSM or UMD student, which allows them to stay in the region throughout their education.

USMSM continues to grow its upper-level undergraduate and graduate level program options through its University System of Maryland partners, including new undergraduate programs and certificates in computer science, cyber security, and cloud computing, as well as a master's in nursing to start Fall 2023.

Other programs that support the regional workforce needs are still offered: criminal justice (forensics), elementary education, human resources, and social work. USMSM is also a location for the collaborative endeavors that mark the region, bringing together the DoD, local industry, and academia.

The MATRIX Lab is a leading research component of the AeroPark Innovation District. The main focus is multi-domain autonomy research. The MATRIX Lab is committed to both basic and applied research to bring to fruition the capabilities of unmanned, automated and autonomous technologies across the air, sea, and land domains. We work with industry and government partners, and continue to bring in organizations including Shield AI, the ONR, NAWCAD, and ARL. We also focus on outreach, especially to underrepresented and underexposed students and communities.

The SMART Building and MATRIX Lab continue to bring attention to the airport as the center of the AeroPark Innovation District in its university research park identity.





### **TechPort Technology Collaboration**

The key organizations at TechPort include:

- NavalX Southern Maryland's Tech Bridge focuses on unmanned aviation, autonomous systems, modeling and simulation, and live/virtual/constructive environments for training and test.
- Naval Aviation Systems Consortium (NASC)
- IMPAX - A partnership between NAWCAD and the Georgia Tech Research Institute - Bridging the gap between technology and capability
- NAWCAD Technology Transfer Office (TTO)
- NAWCAD AirWorks

These organizations will support the innovation pipeline enabling stakeholders to source, curate, scan, incubate, prototype, validate, field and sustain critical technologies to address Naval Aviation capability gaps more timely and cost effectively.



## **St. Mary's Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol**

The Walter F. Duke Terminal Building at St. Mary's County Regional Airport is home to one of the largest Civil Air Patrol (CAP) squadrons in the State of Maryland. CAP has been active in St. Mary's County for 70 years. Since 2002, the members of the St. Mary's Squadron have used the terminal building to host aerospace classes, learn outdoor survival skills, teach military-style drill, and become young leaders in their community. In the last year, CAP has hosted 50 of their weekly meetings there, providing instruction for a large audience of cadets, ages 12-21. The CAP blended Vision-Mission Statement is "Volunteers serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures." 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 26,000 cadet members and more than 35,000 adult members. Aircraft, communications equipment, and vehicles are provided to CAP units for their use in training and providing services in emergency conditions and are funded by donations and the United States Air Force.



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. Former CAP cadets populate the base with civilians and military members as well as the Sheriff's Department, State Police, County Commissioners as well as many businesses including at least one CEO. There is no military commitment incurred by participating in the Civil Air Patrol, 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 a CAP unit at Esperanza Middle School and the two organizations operate together as one large squadron. Membership consists of 110 members, made up of 61 cadets and 49 adult officers. St. Mary's Composite Squadron conducted more than 300 events during 2022, consisting of training, community service, as well as actual Search and Rescue or Disaster Relief missions. The squadron meets weekly on Wednesday nights where they conduct training in aerospace, leadership, character development, cyber security, and physical fitness training. The squadron operates a Civil Air Patrol-owned Cessna 182 from the St. Mary's Airport to perform search missions and training. The aircraft is flown over 250 hours a year.

Other activities in 2022 included COVID response missions to Montgomery County, Flight Operations, advanced pilot training, STEM events, and Air National Guard cook team support. St. Mary's Squadron hosts a state-ranked CyberPatriot competition team as well as a UAS4STEM drone competition team. In 2022, the CAP National Headquarters awarded the Quality Cadet Unit Award to St. Mary's Composite Squadron. This award is based on several criteria including cadet orientation flights in CAP aircraft, cadet advancement through a 16-step leadership program, and excellence in aerospace education. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year in a row that St. Mary's has attained this high honor and that is due, in no small part, to the continued availability of the Walter F. Duke terminal building that St. Mary's County provides.



## Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 478

EAA Chapter 478 conducted two major Young Eagles events and several mini Young Eagle events at the airport this year. A total number of 257 were flown by the chapter this year. A Young Eagles flight allows youth aged 8 to 17 to experience a free airplane ride, perhaps inspiring them towards a career in aviation. The Chapter was recognized for achieving Bronze Status. This status is only achieved by a small number of Chapters who participate in the various Chapter and HQ programs. The Chapter also hosted a successful open hangar night at the airport on June 21<sup>st</sup>.



The monthly VMC Club meetings were held at the terminal building conference room. Rich Byrnes does a fantastic job as organizer and facilitator. The VMC Club is a free pilot safety and proficiency forum open to all pilots; you do not need to be an EAA member to participate. It meets the third Saturday of each month at 9:00 am.



## **Commercial Services Provided at the Airport**

- ✈ ABSI Aerospace and Defense: Expertise in Unmanned Systems Training and Curriculum Development, Acquisition and Program Management Support, Manned/Unmanned Test and Evaluation, and SecondSky Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) Training Environment.
- ✈ AIRtec Inc.: AIRtec is 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. Several aircraft are based at 2W6.
- ✈ Huntington Ingalls Industries (formerly Alion Science and Technology): An engineering, science, and technology firm with expertise in Artificial Intelligence; Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); LVC Training; Modernization & Sustainment, Networks & Software, Systems Engineering & Integration, and Weapons Platforms.
- ✈ Atkinson Aeronautics and Technology, Inc.: A dedicated full-service general aviation maintenance facility offering maintenance, repair, overhaul, interior refresh, and modification for all reciprocating engine and light turbine powered aircraft. Also offering 14 CFR Part 91.411 and 91.413 IFR aircraft certification services under a 14 CFR Part 145 Repair Station certificate.
- ✈ Aviation Systems Engineering Company (ASEC): Systems engineering, test and evaluation, logistics, flight operations, and training. ASEC currently operates a North American Navion based at 2W6.
- ✈ Chesapeake Aviation Services provides inspections, maintenance, and repair of aircraft.
- ✈ Chesapeake Technology International: Offering advanced technology engineering including systems work on Electronic Warfare, Tactical/Unmanned, and Training/Simulation.
- ✈ MTech: Aerospace structural design, analysis, and certification.
- ✈ PAE: Training, Logistics, Operations, and Maintenance services.
- ✈ Pax Aero Solutions: Aircraft engineering, fabrication, modification, integration, and repair.
- ✈ Piedmont Flight Center: Aircraft rental, Part 61 flight training, and provides airport courtesy car.
- ✈ RCS Services LLC (FBO Services): Aircraft fueling, transient aircraft support
- ✈ 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.
- ✈ Ready 9 & Southern Maryland Seaplanes: Steeped in traditions of naval aviation and flight test, we offer specialized flight instruction in seaplanes, tail wheel, or your aircraft. We also offer introductory flights, seaplane sightseeing flights, and other Part 61 flight instruction.
- ✈ St. Mary's Hangar Association, Inc.: Hangar Leasing.
- ✈ WGS Services: Provides engineering services to the RDT&E community in areas of communications, sensor development, and integration.

**Maryland State Police Trooper 7:** The Maryland State Police Aviation Command continues to provide critical community services through Trooper 7 located at the airport. 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 785 patient transport flights out of 2W6 in 2022.





**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, a BD-5 microjet, and a 1939 Piper J-3 Cub.



## 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 continue to search for ways to increase a revenue stream and enhance the economic value of the airport. The ultimate goal is for the airport to remain self-sustaining financially.
- ✈ As the airport and surrounding area continues to grow and expand, it must be a top priority to ensure the airport remains an airport. While there is no reason to believe that may be in jeopardy here, there are examples of general aviation airports in other communities that were closed or restricted to accommodate other priorities. A notable recent example is Washington Executive Airport/Hyde Field in Clinton, MD.
- ✈ The AAB recognizes the unique operational demographics of the airport when attempting to maintain appropriate Rules, Minimum Standards, Standard Operating Procedures, and other documents. The Board will continue to engage the airport and surrounding community in order to provide sound recommendations to the County regarding these important documents.
- ✈ The AAB recognizes the significant nationwide shortage of pilots and mechanics to sustain and grow the aviation industry, 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 691,691 in 2020. While the numbers have trended positive since 2017 after years of decline, the Boeing Pilot and Technician Outlook 2022-2041 estimates there will be a demand for 602,000 new pilots and 610,000 new maintenance technicians to support commercial aviation globally over the next 20 years. The demand remains strong, but the numbers slightly decreased from the 2021 estimates. It's evident that a shortage of pilots and maintainers is detrimental to the future of general aviation and general aviation airports such as St. Mary's County Regional, along with the broader aviation industry. We should do all we can at the grass roots level to generate interest in aviation and inspire people to fly or fix airplanes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- ✈ The County should plan now to utilize the airport as a vertiport for future Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) operations. AAM is envisioned to use electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft as air taxis connecting remote hubs to urban centers or large airports. Smaller regional airports such as 2W6 are well-positioned to support AAM development and success because the flight operations infrastructure and expertise is already in place. The airport is within a short drive of thousands of local passengers who could benefit from quick, quiet, economical, efficient travel to Washington DC, Baltimore, Reagan National Airport, BWI, Richmond, or the eastern shore. With no interstates, commercial rail, or commercial air travel in St. Mary's County, AAM would offer a tremendous convenience for local businesses and residents, and a new source of revenue.

The Advanced Aviation Infrastructure Modernization (AAIM) Act, included in the omnibus spending bill passed by the Senate on December 21<sup>st</sup> and now with the House of Representatives, would establish a two-year, \$25M pilot program to provide grants to state and local governments for AAM infrastructure. With or without federal funding, this is an opportunity to be seized. St. Mary's County Regional could be a key location in the Chesapeake UAS Route Network (CURN) project being led by the University of Maryland. SMECO inspected the terminal ramp area on May 13<sup>th</sup> and indicated it would be highly feasible to install aircraft electrical charging capability to support vertiport operations.

- ✈ The Board continues to fully support the goals and objectives of the 2002 Airport Master Plan and is pleased to see great progress made in recent years with more to come. It has been 21 years since the Airport Master Plan was last updated, and technology and society have changed. Now that AECOM is the new airport consultant, the Board plans to support review and revision of the Master Plan to account for growth in the southern Maryland region and at NAS Patuxent River, and industry advances on the horizon such as AAM.
- ✈ Work with the Department of Economic Development and airport stakeholders to further develop and market the airport and surrounding area (AeroPark Innovation District) as a regional asset for all of Southern Maryland. Build on the establishment of a restaurant in the terminal by supporting establishment of an observation area and pilot store/gift shop to increase utilization of the airport terminal building, attract transient pilots and the general public to the airport, and increase revenue. By providing a convenient airport with attractive amenities, St. Mary's can lure pilots looking for an excuse to go flying and the local community looking for an excuse to enjoy a good meal while watching an operating airfield.
- ✈ Continue to provide and support activities that promote interest in general aviation, flight/maintenance training, and STEM education. One great example is Atkinson Aeronautics' initiative to help create an Aviation Maintenance Apprenticeship program in conjunction with the Forrest Tech Center and College of Southern Maryland. The ultimate goal is to locally grow a qualified workforce to meet the demands of the airport, the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum. The addition of an aircraft maintenance training program to local education offerings would be extremely beneficial. The AAB encourages one or more local education institutions to seriously consider this opportunity.
- ✈ 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.
- ✈ Provide a public facing perspective on airport activities and opportunities.
- ✈ Update airport website <https://www.stmarysmd.com/dpw/airport-operations/> to be more current and better organized.
- ✈ Maintain the new airport Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StMarys2W6/> as another source of information for the airport community.

- ✈ The Board concurs with the Airport Operations action items that have been integrated with the DPW&T's 2006 Transportation Plan. Brudis & Associates, Inc. was contracted in November 2021 to update the Transportation Plan, which should be complete in 2023. 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 Department of Economic Development. As the County deals with growth, budget challenges, and FAA requirements, it is essential the County has a unified 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, and encouraging participation in FAA Safety Team events (WINGS pilot proficiency program), VMC Club, and other pilot forums.
- ✈ 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. Facilitate the process of allowing new businesses to operate on the airfield in a timely manner.
- ✈ 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.
- ✈ Install working internet access in the terminal for transient visitors and working meetings.

## **THANK YOU**

The Board recognizes the service of those members who departed in the past year: Bryan Barthelme, Gerald Meyerman, and LCDR Steve Palmer. Finally, we wish to recognize the outstanding leadership provided by Mr. James Alexander as Board Chairman.