

Airport Advisor

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Edited by Richard Acker

WWW.CLARE48D.COM



Free lunch? In this day and age? Well, it appears there is such a thing. A few months back a representative from the *CONTROLLER*, a magazine that advertises and sells airplanes, offered a free web site for the Clare airport. It is now up-and-running on the internet, and it is free.

Check it out at www.clare48d.com. As of right now it is pretty standard stuff, but there will always be room for improvement.

That is where you enter into the equation. Please take a look at the Clare airport web page and offer suggestions for improvements. As with any project, the more ideas we can implement, the better product we will have.

There are plans for some pictures of local airplanes and some links to other aviation web pages. What do you think? Please offer some ideas and suggestions.

Fly-Out to White Cloud

Sunday, March 13, 2005 the Clare Area Pilots Association will fly-out to White Cloud 42C for breakfast. The plan is to meet at the Clare airport for a short briefing. Departure for White Cloud will be at 8:00 a.m.

Your host is Dave Schmelzer. If you are interested and have any questions about the trip, please contact Dave by e-mail at KSA1@aol.com or by telephone at 989-274-1683.

If you plan to fly and have room for a passenger, please let Dave know. If you want to be a passenger and need a ride contact Dave as soon as possible. He will try to make the necessary arrangements.

This will be the first fly-out of the year. Come on out and join in the fun.

Aviation longevity is a mixture of common sense, mechanical knowledge, weather avoidance, and fellow pilots telling you that you are stupid when you're stupid.

Thanks D.P.W.

Supposedly it is the end of winter, but looking outside it sure doesn't seem that way. However, it is the time of year to extend a huge THANK YOU to the folks and equipment from the Clare Department of Public Works. Their efforts in keeping the snow removed from the surfaces used at the airport have again been exceptional.

There are two specific instances of late which illustrate the fine job they are doing. Last month a corporate-owned twin-engine airplane flew in from Wisconsin. It had snowed most of the night, but when the airplane arrived at 8:30 a.m., DPW had the runways done and were just finishing up the parking ramp. The pilot commented that he was pleased and surprised that a small airport like Clare was "on the ball" with the snow removal.

Another situation arose when a medical evacuation helicopter needed to pick up a patient to be transported to Saginaw Mercy Hospital. The helicopter dispatcher called and asked if the ramp could be cleaned. The DPW plows arrived almost immediately and removed the snow facilitating a safe landing and departure for the helicopter and the critical patient.

THANKS from the airport and the citizens of Clare who benefit from having a safe and usable landing facility.

Canada in April

One of the goals of the Clare Area Pilots Association is to have at least one event or activity each month. At the annual meeting in January, a sign-up sheet was passed around and members signed up for each month as "their month" to act as host.

Stan Jensen has offered an educational fly-out to London, Ontario, Canada. Many pilots think they shouldn't fly into Canada because that is an international flight. Guess what? You can — and it is pretty easy. Why not join Stan on April 16, 2005 and find out how it is done?

The plan is for a one-day trip there and back. It will involve clearing customs in both Canada and the U.S. There are some special flight following requirements, and a little paper work, but it is all very doable.

If you plan to join in, you MUST let Stan know ASAP so he can make the appropriate arrangements for the trip. The weather will be a major factor. It will need to be near "severe clear".

Don't wait. The trip will be limited to ten airplanes, so contact Stan now at stan@lightningranch.net or call him 989-837-2619. Don't miss out on this great trip.

Fuel Price Up

As a result of higher cost of fuel, the price of aviation gas is up ten cents per gallon. Current price is \$2.65 per gallon and will stay there until more fuel is delivered (probably in May).

Those who have paid attention have noted Clare's fuel pricing is often fairly low. Why is that?

The City of Clare owns and operates the fuel system. They purchase the fuel, sell it, and reap the profit. Why is that good? Many airport fuel operations have a middle-man involved. Most often it is the fixed base operator (FBO). The fuel system is owned by the airport while the FBO uses the equipment to sell the fuel. For this privilege there is often a fee paid to the owner of the equipment, thus adding to the cost and therefore the price of the fuel.

When the City of Clare decided to get into the aviation fuel business several years ago, the decision was wisely made to spend a few extra dollars and purchase a 12,000 gallon tank. Why is that good? Many airports have smaller tanks (8,000 gallons or less). Fuel is delivered by trucks that carry 8,500 gallons. Due to rules, regulations, taxes, licensing, and fees, the cost of shipping fuel is significant. The shipping cost is the same whether you receive 8,500 gallons or 4,000 gallons. Therefore the cost of shipping is not spread over as many gallons thus the cost per gallon goes up.

There are two methods of purchasing fuel. The airport can be "branded" and contracted with a particular vendor such as Texaco or Phillips. The other choice is to be non-branded. If you contract with a distributor, you pay what ever that vendor's price is at the time you order the fuel. By being non-branded, the City of Clare can obtain a price from each of the fuel vendors and purchase from the one having the less expensive fuel. Why is that good? The last time fuel was ordered the cost difference between the highest vendor price and the lowest vendor price was eleven cents per gallon.

If you start with the cost of fuel, add a use fee, small load freight, and happen to be branded with a higher priced vendor, it is hard to have a competitive price and still make a viable profit.

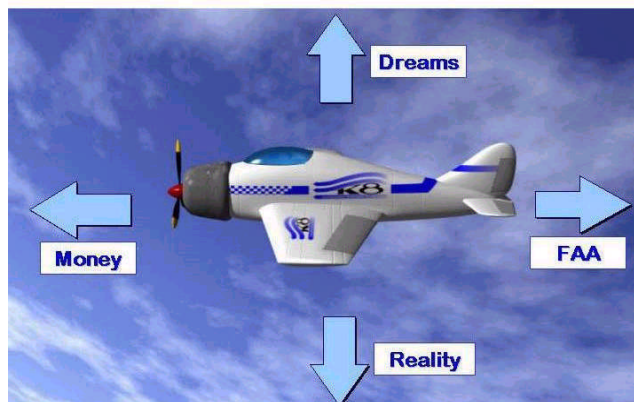
By taking advantage of all cost saving options, Clare is able to maintain a low fuel price, while continuing to provide great service.

Editorial

The opinions expressed in this publication are the opinion and sole responsibility of the editor.

Comments should be addressed to: Richard Acker, 202 West 5th Street, Clare, MI 48617, Phone 989-386-0445.

How Planes REALLY Fly



"New" Plastic License

In the next two years, the Federal Aviation Agency wants all pilots to trade in their paper certificates for the (allegedly) more terrorist-proof plastic model unveiled in 2003. Initially, the agency was going to let the paper editions be replaced by the natural attrition of wear and tear and when pilots got new ratings or certificates. But the agency is now working on a rule requiring replacement of the paper pilot certificates within two years (five years for other types of airman certificates). However, even that may be an interim measure. The agency is still working on getting photos on the certificates but it's hung up on the mechanism for actually getting the pictures taken. (A camera should work well for that ...) Among the procedural suggestions is that medical examiners be issued digital cameras to snap the photo as part of the examination routine. In the meantime, pilots have to carry their driver's license with them. Getting a plastic certificate is as easy as ordering one from the FAA at Oklahoma City. The processing fee is \$2. You can save yourself the two bucks if you tell the FAA you want your social security number removed from your certificate for privacy or security reasons.

You Missed A Great Movie Night

Only nine people showed up for movie night at the airport. The rest of you missed a great classic: Jimmy Stewart starring in *Flight of the Phoenix*.

A projector borrowed from the Clare Garfield Library made it possible to play the VCR tape and project it onto a four foot screen. The sound was not "big screen" quality, but that will be improved for the next time.

Good movie, great company, and lots of popcorn and snacks made for an enjoyable evening. Don't miss the next movie night coming soon to an airport near you!