

MAC's Anoka County-Blaine (AC/B) MINOR Airport History and Facts:

- ❖ Metropolitan Airports Commission's (MAC) airport system is comprised of but not limited to the following:
 - Major Airport MSP, 3,100 acres. Runways 10,000 feet long, 11,003 feet and 8,000 feet long.
 - St. Paul/Holman Field, 540 acres; Runways 6,491 feet; 4,115 feet and 3,657 feet long
 - Anoka County-Blaine, 1,900 acres; Runways 5,000 feet and 4,855 feet
 - Flying Cloud, 780 acres; Runways 3,909 (soon to be 5,000 ft.) and 2,691 feet
 - Crystal, 436 acres; Runways 3,267 feet and 2,500 feet long
 - Airlake (Lakeville), 425 acres; Runway 4,098
 - Lake Elmo, 640 acres; 2,850 runway and 2,497 foot runway.

- ❖ Some comparisons in airport acreage/runway lengths:
 - LaGuardia Airport in New York, 680 acres; Runways 7,001 and 7,003 feet long.
 - Logan Field in Boston, 2,384 acres; Runway lengths of 10,083, 10,005, 7,861, 2,557, 7,000 and 5,000 feet.
 - Midway Airport in Chicago, 320 acres; Runway lengths of 5,507, 6,446, 6,522, 5,141 and 3,859 feet.

- ❖ AC/B airport was built in the late 1940's/early 1950's and has always been designated as (and used as) a *minor* airport. In 1980 a minor airport definition was tied to the Metropolitan Council's Aviation Development Guide: *In 1978 (and 1980) the referred to development guide stated that Minor Airport runway lengths were limited to 2,500 to 4,000 feet; Intermediate Airports were defined as having runway lengths of 4,000 to 8,000 feet.*

- ❖ In May 2000 a bill was signed into law stating that Minor Airports are defined as having runways not to exceed 5,000 feet in length.

- ❖ **May, 2000: HF849, Chief Authors: Rep. Barbara Haake and Sen. Steve Novak amended 473.641 and passed into law the following:**
 - **473.641 Subd. 4. Expansion or upgrade of metro airport.**
Notwithstanding any other law, the metropolitan airports commission shall not use revenue from any source, as described by section 473.608, for *construction of air facilities to expand or upgrade the use of an existing metropolitan airport from minor use to intermediate use status without approval in a law. For the purposes of this section, a minor use airport is defined as an airport with a runway or runways of length no longer than 5,000 feet.*

- ❖ Anoka County-Blaine Airport prior to June 2007 had a North/South runway length of 4,855 feet and an East/West runway length of 4,000 feet.

- ❖ In June 2007 the East/West runway at the AC/B airport was extended from 4,000 feet in length to 5,000 feet. An Instrument Landing System (ILS) was installed on the E/W runway.

- ❖ In 2008 Key Air/Key Aviation entered into a public/private partnership with Anoka County for the purpose of building a charter facility at the AC/B airport. On September 1, 2008 Key Air's opened a 14,000 square-foot executive terminal and an 80,000 square-foot hanger at the airport..
- ❖ Key Air has three facilities in the United States. Oxford Connecticut has a 5,800 foot runway; Fort Pierce Florida's runway is 6,500 feet long and Anoka County-Blaine Minnesota's runway is 5,000 feet long. Key Air came to the AC/B airport *knowing* that AC/B was a minor airport and it is established in law that a minor airport runway cannot exceed 5,000 feet in length.
- ❖ On November 18, 2008 the Airport Subcommittee of the Anoka County Board of Commissioners was going to consider a Resolution endorsing 6,000 foot runways at the Anoka County-Blaine Airport (AC/B) as follows:
 - NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anoka County Board of Commissioners supports efforts to extend the runway at the Anoka County Blaine Airport so that the length of the runway is 6000 feet.
 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Anoka County Board of Commissioners supports new legislation that may be needed to allow for said extension.
- ❖ Upon seeing/hearing objections from the public to the above Resolution on November 18, 2008, a subsequent December 2nd meeting at Kingswood Church in Blaine was canceled.
- ❖ In January 2009 Key Aviation hired a top-notch lobbyist to the Minnesota State Legislature, Ross Kramer. In order to build a 6,000-foot runway at the AC/B airport, the law defining a minor airport (5,000-foot runway maximum) would have to be changed.
- ❖ The Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC) is in the process of upgrading the Comprehensive Plan for AC/B airport. Presently MAC is in the information gathering stage. Runway lengths are not determined by the Met Council at the system plan level; they are determined during the preparation of a long-term comprehensive plan (LTCP) for each individual airport. A runway extension at the AC/B airport would require approval not only from MAC but the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Legislature.
- ❖ The *threat* of 6,000 minor airport runways appears to be real: The Met Council is working on gathering information/statistics for its Transportation Aviation Plan for minor airports throughout MAC's system and may be considering Minor I and Minor II designations; Key Air/Aviation has hired a top lobbyist to "work" the Legislature; and MAC is gathering information for its three remaining minor airports' long-term comprehensive plans (Lake Elmo, Flying Cloud and Anoka County-Blaine).
- ❖ The FAA, if everything is in order, would listen to the Met Council, MAC and the State Legislature.
- ❖ Information has come to light that the Metropolitan Council has hired an airport consultant who is expected to propose two "minor airport" designations: Minor I limiting runway lengths to either

4,000 feet or 4,500 feet and Minor II, limiting runway lengths to 6,000 feet. Current law states that minor airports are limited to 5,000-foot maximum runways. Intermediate airports have runways of 5,001 to 8,000 feet in length. This would require a change in the minor airport law. Going into the 6,000-foot runway range would put AC/B airport into Intermediate status and in that category, in the future, AC/B airport could have runways up to 8,000 feet long.

- ❖ Since the year 2000 with 156,546 flight operations at the AC/B airport, the take-offs and landings have decreased to 69,403. Much of this decrease is due to the overall slow economic situation and the high price of fuel.
- ❖ Safety is the argument put forth by the proponents of 6,000 foot runways at minor airports. According to Gary Schmidt of the Metropolitan Airports Commission larger aircraft would be able to use the AC/B airport if the runway is extended to 6,000 feet. Schmidt stated that the CX class and the smaller XLS class planes hold eight passengers, but the CX has a range of approximately 3,000 miles compared with the XLS plane's range of approximately 1,000 miles. The XLS planes can already land at the AC/B airport. The CX class planes can already land here but if the pavement is wet, 5,000 feet is not long enough, Schmidt has said.
- ❖ Safety has always been the main argument supporting longer runways. In 1999 and 2000 before the law establishing 5,000 feet as the maximum length for minor airport runways, the compromise to 5,000 feet was made specifically to address the safety issue; it was argued that 4,000-foot minor airport runway lengths were not safe for minor airport operations: 5,000 feet would effectively eliminate the "safety" argument for minor airports. The safety issue was and is addressed for all airports defined as MINOR airports. Aircraft requiring runways longer than 5,000 feet can fly 15 miles south to MSP or St. Paul's Downtown Airport (Holman Field).
- ❖ Increasing runway lengths at AC/B airport would require additional money to be spent to add 1,000 feet to AC/B's E/W runway. Plus going to 6,000 feet may require an entire runway replacement so the longer runway can support heavier/larger aircraft. Schmidt has said "we (AC/B airport) don't have the weight-bearing capacity...or turning radius" (i.e. for larger aircraft, planes, cargo, etc.).
- ❖ It is acknowledged that AC/B airport does not have the corporate air traffic that Flying Cloud in Eden Prairie has. Flying Cloud has six fixed-base operators (FOB's); three of them cater to corporate users. Flying Cloud is "where your CEO's and executives live." What type of air traffic will AC/B attract?
- ❖ AC/B airport is in the midst of residential (all directions) and recreational land uses (north). Dense housing developments have been built within a three/four mile radius of the AC/B airport. It has always been understood, by cities who are responsible for zoning in their city planning and by the people who live in the area that AC/B airport is a *minor* airport and the surrounding property was zoned with the Met Council's approval. Before homes were purchased, the buyers were told the AC/B airport would remain a minor airport. The argument that "they can just move" if the residents don't want an Intermediate airport in their midst is grossly unfair. Any change in the AC/B airport's current status is a breach of trust in oversight and promised by metropolitan agencies (i.e. Met Council and MAC).

- ❖ Expensive new housing was built using codes established by the cities surrounding the airport: Any noise abatement measures required and costs that are incurred due to an increase in the usage/Intermediate status of the AC/B airport has to be borne by the cities, the Met Council and MAC in order to remedy any unsafe/noise situation for residents.
- ❖ Due to the recreational use to the north of AC/B airport and the “on site” golf course wildlife is rampant in the area. This is unsafe for the users of the airport and any status change of the AC/B airport will make the airport even more unsafe.
- ❖ MAC and AC/B airport allowed Key Air/Aviation to build fuel tanks at ground level on AC/B property. Placement of these fuel tanks is dangerous and if an air crash occurs at or near the tanks, it could be an explosive situation. .
- ❖ Arguments are put forth that in the middle-1990’s promises were made by MAC that reliever airports in MAC’s system would be used to redirect traffic away from MSP. No airport in MAC’s system can require aircraft to use any other airport within MAC’s system due to FAA’s rules and regulations. Consequently, there has been no perceptible decrease in traffic to/from MSP. The promises made were unfair to residents throughout the metro area who have airports near their communities – promises that no one at-large knew were being made (made without citizen approval), thereby jeopardizing everyone’s right to health, safety and welfare of their and their families’ well-being.

CONCLUSION:

The THREAT of increasing AC/B airport runways to 6,000 feet in length is real. Anoka County wanted to pass a Resolution to increase AC/B’s airport runways from 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet; Met Council is studying minor airport definitions and will update its Transportation/Aviation plan; the MAC is updating its LTCP (Plan) and Key Air/Aviation has hired a lobbyist to work for them at the State Legislature. What do YOU think is going to happen? Read our Website for more information.

From Concerned Citizens of the North Metro - www.ccnm.com