

My name is Paul Sekula and I'm chairman of the Clearfield-Jefferson Counties Regional Airport Authority which manages the DuBois Jefferson County Airport. With me today is Bob Shaffer, our very capable manager at DuBois.

We are here to make comment regarding our involvement and relationship with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Bureau of Aviation. We're happy and honored to do so.

I'd like to read to you an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting held almost 47 years ago in DuBois. It's a meeting of the DuBois Board of Trade (predecessor of the DuBois Area Chamber of Commerce) and it's an item we periodically read at our Airport Authority meetings.

READ EXCERPT (on last page)

The rest, as they say, is history. In 1960 the DuBois Jefferson County Airport opened and we've never looked back. The airport has grown and become a key factor in the economic development of our rural Tri-County area here in North West Pennsylvania. The airports' wide, long runway, top notch snow removal and safety equipment, state of the art lighting and navigation facilities, terminal building, restaurant and, of course, commuter airline all serve to make DuBois Jefferson County Airport one of the finest airports in the nation.

The DuBois Jefferson County Airport is an excellent example of cooperative efforts between Federal, State, County and Local governments

resulting in an airport that works and whose value to the citizens of our area is irreplaceable.

Now my job today would be simple if I only listed the projects and dollars that the State Bureau of Aviation has invested in our airport. Just since 1991 we have been the recipients of over \$1 million of state grants and general fund acts which have allowed us to complete improvements that were not eligible for Federal Funding such as Runway Painting, Fuel Farm Removal/Reconstruction and Taxiway Lighting improvements. Additionally, State Bureau of Aviation funding has allowed us to leverage over \$3½ million worth of Federal grants to complete projects like our Deicing Pad, our Emergency Generator, our Water and Sewage Treatment plant and our Taxiway Extension as well as numerous smaller projects.

But our good relationship with the State Bureau of Aviation goes beyond dollars.

It's hard to quantify the trust that allows us to frankly seek advice on project eligibility and funding options. It's difficult to add up the value of cooperation when exploring the answers to the many problems we face in operating a commuter service airport. How do you put a price on the enthusiasm for aviation and the professional attitude that ensures limited funding is used prudently and wisely without undue hindrance or bureaucratic delay?

Perhaps a recap of a situation The Airport Authority faced a few years ago would best illustrate the Bureau of Aviation's role with the DuBois Jefferson County Airport.

Go back with me to February 11, 1994 when the Authority learned that Crown Airways - headquartered at DuBois Jefferson County Airport and operating as US Air Express in the Tri-State area - had sold their assets to Mesa Airlines. Mesa is the largest independently operated commuter airline in the United States and looked forward to increasing their presence in the Northeast.

That was the good news.

The bad news was that Mesa also planned move the administrative and maintenance operations from DuBois to Jamestown, NY. There was - and is - a fine new hangar at Jamestown, just right for Mesa's needs. Mesa indicated that they were 90% decided on the move and initiated preliminary action to effect the move. Action that would result in 90+ jobs leaving our area (and leaving Pennsylvania!).

The Airport Authority decided to visit Mesa at their Farmington, NM headquarters to try to convince them they should stay where they were. We set about assembling a team appropriate for the visit. Congressman Bill Clinger sent his executive assistant; then State Senator John Peterson immediately agreed to be part of the team; and when we asked the Bureau of Aviation for their support, the Deputy Secretary for Transportation asked: "When do we leave?!".

Needless to say the team got Mesa's attention and the follow up action by all parties kept their attention. The State Bureau of Aviation performed well above the call of duty! The Bureau coordinated training arrangements with the Department of Education and the Department of Commerce; a Phase I Environmental Assessment Study of the former Crown hangar to insure no

environmental surprises existed was also arranged by the Bureau of Aviation.

The key effort, however, was the State Bureau of Aviation Grant towards the cost of hangar renovations to bring it and the administrative office area up to ADA standards and to meet Mesa's needs.

Needless to say, Mesa Airlines stayed at DuBois Jefferson County Airport (much, I might add, to Jamestown, NY's chagrin!).

You can't get much more "can do" than that. The State Bureau of Aviation answered when we called and Mesa's presence at our airport is greatly appreciated by everyone concerned. We hit a home run and the Bureau of Aviation - along with Congressman Clinger and Senator Peterson - was a major league reason why we did.

Do we want anything more from the Bureau of Aviation? Sure we do. The biggest item on our list is improved access to the airport. Present access is difficult over roads that are narrow and anything but straight. Direct access to DuBois Jefferson County Airport from I-80 (only 1½ miles to our south) would not only make use of our facility much easier and safer for all concerned but would open up the airport property for new economic development in ways that we only dream about. We need Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's support on that project and, if the past is any indication, I'm sure we will have it.

We appreciate the good relationships we have with the State Bureau of Aviation and we've certainly benefited from that in the past as we've tried to point out.

But gee - it would sure be nice to have a crack at another home run!

The DuBois Board of Trade at its meeting held September 4, 1951 discussed at considerable length the various obstacles hampering its efforts in the area of Industrial Development. The directors decided that a modern airport capable of handling airline type aircraft was a must if their efforts were to be productive.

The directors appointed A.C. Nelson, W.F. Schneider, Ken Barraclough, and William Korb to an airport committee with the established goal of developing an air-carrier airport.