

# MAMA news

The Montana Airport Management Association

## PUTTING THE CUSTOMER BACK IN "CUSTOMER SERVICE"

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The slow march by many airlines, TSA and FBO's over recent years away from true customer service has come home to roost. The flying public is fed up with all manner of being ill treated. Unfortunately the airport industry in large part is being characterized similarly by mere close association.

The good thing is that such circumstance opens opportunities for change by airports and their tenants to reclaim the perception that flying for business or pleasure truly can be a positive experience.

More airports are considering taking over ground-

handling services in order to control the passenger experience. Money can be made in fueling and turning an aircraft with minimal ramp time. Quad Cities Airport in Moline, IL is doing it, so is Daytona and Savannah. Liability insurance is available and a limited liability corporation can be established.

XJet corporation in Englewood, CO shows that top notch service attracts and keeps customers while they are happy paying the cost. XJet is an FBO that focuses on extreme, way above the bar service to corporate aircraft owners. They provide fuel at cost, no margin. Their two

revenue streams are facilities and service. They offer five star facilities and service so special that patrons are willing to pay a fee just to be a part of it. An example: An owner called and wanted an international trip set up to include FBO arrangements, transportation, accommodations, entertainment reservations, and dining reservations. He left the next day with nine different arrangements confirmed, with just one call to the FBO. Outstanding service, a smiling customer, value compensated.

The flying public is clamoring, deservedly so, for a pleasant travel experience. Airlines have to provide that or die. Airports should push it hard and find ways to provide it.

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- Special points of interest:
- GA fatalities in 2007 were down 30%, lowest in 40 years
- US Court rejects law in NY requiring airlines to provide relief to pax trapped in plane delayed on ground
- American Airlines institutes a \$15 chg for 1st bag

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS BECOMING STANDARD

There is a good article in the May issue of AAAE's "Airport" magazine on GIS. This tool for mapping software has evolved into much more and airport management is using it for a variety of pur-

poses. Satellite imagery allows GIS to perform such things as identifying homes that are in a noise profile, obstacles in a clear zone, utility line locations, pavement inspection results, stormwater runoff patterns,

incident log locations, and leasehold descriptions to name just a few.

This tool will soon be standard for airports of all sizes. Contact your engineer for further information.

## ADVOCATE FOR YOUR AIRPORT -- WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

It's never been more important than now to cultivate that local public support for your airport. Whether it is new or expanded airline flights, justification for funding new facilities, or a needed fee increase, you want the support of the general public. One critical element needed to accomplish this is working with the media. Some tips:

- DO: Get to know local news people.
- DO: Invite media to an airport tour.
- DO: Feed the press newsworthy info.
- DO: Answer questions honestly, fully.

DON'T: Guess at answers or stretch facts, you lose all credibility.

DON'T: Go "off the record", there really is no such thing.

DON'T: Say you have no comment, rather give a constructive answer, get back to them later with more info.

DON'T: Refer inquiries to others, rather take the question directly and if necessary get further facts to them later.

DON'T: Promise to get back to someone and not do it or do it late.

DON'T: Speculate about any accident.

At the SWAAAE summer meeting in Mesa, AZ in July they will have a seminar on how to respond to the media when TV cameras or a newspaper reporter pops into your office. The Southwest Chapter has hired one of corporate America's leading media trainers who will lead the seminar and discuss everything from the tone of your voice to the speed at which you talk to actual words and phrases to incorporate.

The meeting takes place July 12-16, for more information contact them at [www.swaaae.org/event](http://www.swaaae.org/event).

## IS THERE A BIG PICTURE REGARDING FUEL COSTS?

Unprecedented costs for fuels of all types, what will it mean for economies? This question and similar ones for virtually all persons and businesses is in sharp focus. At a meeting in Dallas in February Ben Brockwell, an analyst in the petroleum pricing business said crude could likely go to \$150/barrel soon. However, he went on to say that it should get better in the near future. Speculators, government policies, and world demand are all in the mix of why prices are rising so rapidly.

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**JET FUEL IS NOT LUCRATIVE FOR PRODUCERS, THE MARKET IS TOO SMALL. SYNTHETICS AND OTHER PRODUCTS WILL BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE IN OTHER APPLICATIONS BEFORE AVIATION SEES ALTERNATIVES.**

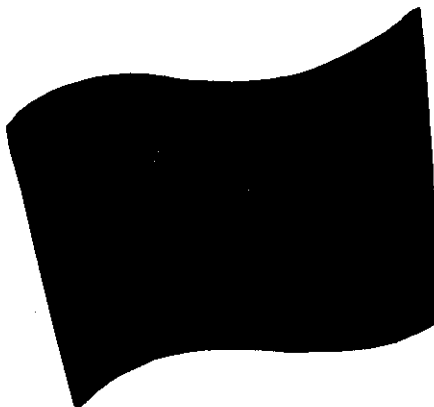
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Brockwell says that oil capacity has started to grow at a faster rate than demand. After a lag period, perhaps yet a year, the totality of alternative fuel sources, production increases, greater fuel efficiency, and a softening of demand will kick in and we should see prices correct and come down. Down to what? A consensus of analysts at this meeting was that crude per barrel would likely then be somewhere between \$78 and \$112. High by past standards but tolerable, probably.

## WILL FUEL DRIVE AIRLINE CONSOLIDATIONS?

It is never an easy task to merge two airlines, it is complex at best. But in today's economic conditions we hear talk and now see actions to accomplish just that. Airline executives say that skyrocketing fuel costs are a large factor in merger or buyout considerations.

To be successful an airline needs pricing power and fewer airlines means that goal is easier to achieve. Some industry experts say that the carriers



operate in a fragmented, overserved industry and profitability would return only if 20% of domestic flights were eliminated. Consolidation could do that. We possibly could see Delta-Northwest, United-US Air, American-Continental and as a result: pricing power. In such a scenario ticket prices would undoubtedly rise, enplanements would likely drop and just perhaps service levels of yesteryear might begin to return???

# THE MAMA WEBSITE IS UP... [www.flymontana.org](http://www.flymontana.org)

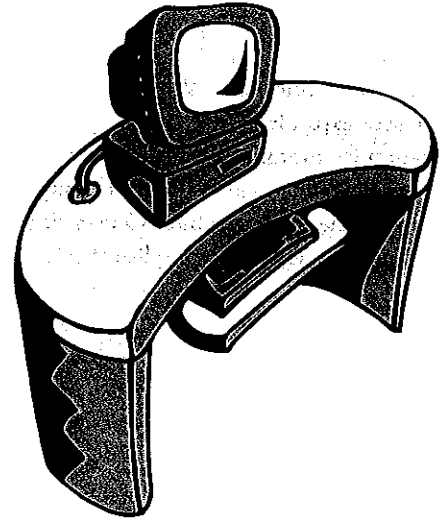
At the last MAMA meeting it was voted on to proceed to develop a website for the organization. The goal was improved communications among members and other aviation entities. President Teri Norcross and her committee have done a great deal of work and now have a site base from which to move forward.

The website is active with some initial postings already available. Next time you are online pull up [www.flymontana.org](http://www.flymontana.org). It is still a work in progress so if you have any com-

ments please let Teri know.

There are several bullet categories listed on the left side of the site so a user can click on area of interest and speedily get to information needed. Those categories now include: Membership List, Upcoming Events, Newsletters, Aviation Links (i.e. Montana Aeronautics Division and MonTAP), a Message Board, and How to Join.

This effort is for you, the MAMA membership and it will only be successful if it gets used by everyone. Are we on target?



## A Smile Is A Contagious Thing

George Carlin has a way of using stand-up comedy that cuts to the chase.

On how we describe age milestones: A kid will tell you I'm four and a half; when you are in your teens you are gonna be 16; then the greatest day of your life you become 21; but then you turn 30, sounds like bad milk; next you are pushing 40; whoa! put on the brakes, before you know it you reach 50; then you make it to 60 and are going so fast that you hit 70; you get into your 80's and everyday is a complete cycle,



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**At the close of one of his TV shows Groucho Marx said "I've had a perfectly wonderful evening.... But this wasn't it."**

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you hit lunch; it turns 4:30, you reach bedtime, you make it through the night. In your 90's it starts to go backwards, you were just 92; and if you make it over 100 you are a little kid again, you say I'm 100 and a half.

Carlin's advice on staying young; Enjoy the simple things in life, and laugh often, loud, and long.

## ADO NEEDS YOUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The Helena FAA ADO is requesting that all air carrier airports submit their fiscal year 2009 to 2014 Capital Improvement Plans to the ADO office not later than August 22, 2008. This date is critical because of the programming of funds in the AIP entitlement pot.

The CIP should include a detailed list of work in the order of priority to be done during each year. Obviously this

six year plan can be very accurate in the near years, a little more flexible in the out years. For general purposes airports are asked to use FY 2007 federal funding levels as expected funds for each year in the plan. The CIP should show both entitlement and reasonable levels of discretionary funding if the work is high priority. Also the CIP should show any work to be funded by Passenger Facility Charges.

The ADO will use the most current CIP to submit candidate airports to FAA Headquarters for FY 2009 Discretionary finds. This process goes up the chain to Northwest Mountain Region and their date of submittal to Headquarters is August 1, 2008. Careful attention to these dates helps the Montana ADO help you.

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**MEMBER PROFILE: RICK GRIFFITH, BUTTE, AMERICA**

When you think about someone who has "service" as their primary focus you would be hard pressed to find someone that beats Rick Griffith, the manager of Bert Mooney Airport in Butte. Most who know Rick know that he is an astute observer of politics but fewer know just how much of his time he has devoted to public service as a very active player.

He has been the airport manager in Butte since 1991. He's a Butte boy and of course fiercely loyal to all things connected to that city. And as most folks know about Butte, Rick like others there, is ready to give the shirt off his back to help anyone. It's just part of the unique fabric of that old ethnic melting pot

mining community. He and his wife Kathy are a joy to be around.

Here's a summary of Rick's public service to Montana. Currently he is one of five members serving on the Montana Transportation Commission, he is a past president twice of MAMA, he is past president and on the board of directors of Project Green and he is on the Montana Aerospace Authority.

His past service includes: board of directors and president twice of the Butte Local Development Corporation, board of directors and chairman four times of the Port of Montana public port authority, past chairman of the Urban Revitalization Board, member of the

Montana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education, a past City Council member and a former County Commissioner. Throw in that he is a gourmet chef who enjoys cooking for groups large and small and you can readily see that Rick has and continues to prove that service to his fellowman is what makes his day.

Local, state and national politics are always on this mind and it is not by happen stance that he heads up the successful MAMA legislative efforts each session. Few folks have the savvy and connections to understand how to move things politically, Rick is one of those people. MAMA is fortunate to have him and his service for the greater public good. Thanks Rick.