Statement of

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Norman, Oklahoma

Before the Subcommittee on Aviation

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

U.S. House of Representatives

"A Review of the FAA Contract Tower Program"

July 18, 2012

Chairman Petri, Ranking Member Costello and members of the House Aviation Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to discuss FAA's Contract Tower Program.

I am Walt Strong, Administrator of the University of Oklahoma's Max Westheimer Airport in Norman, Oklahoma, and chair of the Policy Board of the U.S. Contract Tower Association (USCTA), an affiliated organization of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). AAAE represents the men and women who manage nearly 900 air carrier, reliever and general aviation airports nationwide. AAAE created the USCTA in 1996 to represent the FAA Contract Tower Program from the perspective of public airport officials. Also, I currently serve on the AAAE Board of Directors and was an air traffic controller in the U.S. military early in my aviation career.

Our partnership with FAA on the contract tower program is exemplified by AAAE's/USTCA's mission statement -- ***"The Government/Industry Partnership Dedicated to Air Traffic Safety."*** And, in today's challenging economic environment, we might also add ***"The Government/Industry Partnership Dedicated to Jobs and Economic Growth."***

We would like to begin by thanking this subcommittee for including provisions in the recently enacted FAA reauthorization bill that enhance the contract tower program. Your support is critical to the continuation of a program that is vitally important to aviation safety, job creation, and economic development in our country, and all of our airport members are very grateful for your assistance.

Contract Tower Benefit/Cost Calculations Under Review

Before we offer our thoughts on the many benefits of the contract tower program, we want to raise a flag of caution about one current issue. Potential changes to FAA's benefit/cost (B/C) analysis that determines participation in the program have caused concern in the airport and user community. We are encouraged by FAA's stated desire to work with the industry in a collaboratively, balanced, fair and transparent manner to resolve this issue. And we hope FAA stays on that path to avoid changes to the program that would jeopardize air traffic safety, economic growth and jobs across the country.

We need to make sure that updated B/C information for the contract towers takes fully into account the broad array of significant benefits the program provides to individual communities and to the nation as a whole in terms of enhanced safety, cost savings, economic development and other factors. This program is not about black and white numbers – it is about what's in the best interest of advancing aviation safety throughout the nation.

AAAE and USCTA are working closely with FAA as the agency prepares to update the B/C analyses for all 250 contract towers. However, absent a collaborative, balanced and transparent approach by FAA, we are concerned these potential changes could potentially lead to closure many of the 250 contract towers across the country – a fact that alarms airport executives, general aviation operators, regional airlines and other stakeholders. Additionally, these changes could result in FAA shifting significant costs to local communities that have little, if any, ability to absorb additional shows in these challenging economic times.

Also, it is important to note that, just like our tower in Norman, airports with FAA contract towers already pay some of the total costs to operate and maintain the tower, including maintenance, utilities, janitorial and other expenses. Additionally, many of the recent non-federal towers added to the program over the past 10 to 15 years have provided substantial local and state funds to construct state-of-the-art towers. We believe we communities will continue to participate in the cost share program **if** the process is fair and transparent and has a balanced approach that gains buy-in from the stakeholders.

Max Westheimer Airport's FAA Contract Tower Experience

Next, I would like to start by describing how important this program is to Max Westheimer Airport. I also want to point out that we have another FAA contract tower just thirty minutes up the road at Wiley Post Airport in Oklahoma City.

Our contract tower operation is not unlike any of the other 249 participating airports across our country. Max Westheimer Airport, home to the University of Oklahoma, logs approximately 54,000 annual air traffic operations.

Our airport joined FAA's Contract Tower Program in 1991. The tower has never been staffed with FAA controllers. In 1941, the U.S. Navy acquired the University airport and invested $4.5 million to develop the facility into a training center for U.S. Navy fliers. When the U.S. Navy returned the airfield and its improvements to the University in 1946, the control tower was closed. From that time until the University reopened the tower in 1982, U.S. Air Force controllers from Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City occasionally would occasionally operate a mobile tower at Westheimer.

The presence of a control tower is vital to our community for economic growth, jobs and aviation safety. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant flight-training program that generates as many as 200 flights a week during the summer and 240 flights per week in the spring and fall semesters. These students are in training for Private Pilot (entry level) to Airline Transport Pilot (very experienced with multi-engine and complex aircraft). The department of aviation has the capacity to add 100-plus flights per week.

Further, we are a reliever airport for Oklahoma City's Will Rogers Airport. Since we are located on the edge of a major metropolitan area, we receive a significant amount of corporate and general aviation aircraft. Business aviation traffic mix varies from single-engine and light twin-engine aircraft to business jets of all sizes up to a Gulfstream V's. The corporations that use these aircraft vary widely from retail to oil and gas businesses.

We also accommodate a mix of state and local law enforcement activity. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol bases four fixed-wing aircraft at our airport that are used for patrol and search and rescue operations. The highway patrol also has several helicopters. The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety bases a Beech King Air 350 at the airport that is used for executive transport of state officials, including the Governor.

The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (OBNDD) uses Max Westheimer as its home base of operations for its aviation unit. Westheimer turns into a beehive of activity each summer when the OBNDD focuses its attention on central Oklahoma to shut down facilities that grow marijuana and house meth labs.

We also support medical emergency aircraft that transport persons with life-threatening conditions. Often we accommodate Angel Flights and aircraft carrying human organs to be used in transplants. Angel Flights transport patients needing to be taken to or from the heartland region for surgery, chemotherapy, dialysis and other treatments. Angel Flights also transport blood products for the Oklahoma Blood Institute and Red Cross in emergency situations.

Due to the University's involvement in major NCAA sporting events, we experience a diverse mix of traffic year-round for these events. Aircraft that move these athletes vary from lighter twins to heavier turbine-powered aircraft. In addition, media helicopters, pipeline patrol, military units flying fixed wing and helicopters, and active U.S. Air Force operations come and go daily.

The airport frequently receives letters of praise from our users. For example, Ken Carson, director of the Oklahoma University Department of Aviation, wrote that:

> *"I wanted to just take this time to acknowledge our partnerships and relationships here at Max Westheimer and what I believe to be your key roles in the successful execution of our education mission of our over 300 flight students each year -- additionally, to thank you for your steadfast participation and partnership in our department's "Operational Risk Management (ORM) = Safety" Safety Management System (SMS). I firmly believe it is through our participation along with the participation of our partners of airport management, OU Real Estate and OU Security Police, that our planned and responsive processes of participative and open communications within our SMS program proactively addresses risk mitigation before incidents and accidents happen. We may never know how many incidents were prevented with our working group and hazard ID processes, but one thing is certain, through our collective working group efforts of assessment, evaluation and taking management actions goes a great way towards improving our*

training and operations. I am certain our collective efforts benefit our flying educational and your air traffic control missions. The results are tangible and real."

While it is difficult to project exactly what would happen to our airport if we didn't have an air traffic control (ATC) tower, I would speculate that without the presence of controllers providing for the "safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic," the University's department of aviation would soon close and the diverse aviation programs I outlined earlier would be in jeopardy. Everything we do at the airport is focused on safety. I simply can't imagine the university continuing to support a flight training program in an unstable/unsafe air traffic environment. FAA and DOT constantly preach safety, safety, safety...and we're absolutely on board with that. Our objective, pure and simple, is to provide the safest ATC environment possible.

As do most of the airports in the contract tower program, our airport also supports the tower operations with local funds. Beyond paying monthly utility costs for the tower, repairs and maintenance, we have installed a new console in the tower, as well as new radio transmitters/receivers and antennas. We bought new carpeting, painted the tower cab inside and out, put in new shades, replaced two heat pumps and security cameras, and renovated the manager's office and training room. So even though FAA pays for controllers' costs to operate the tower, we provide significant local funding in partnership with FAA to provide first class air traffic control services to our aviation community.

FAA's Contract Tower Program Promotes Safety and is Cost-Effective for Taxpayers

FAA's Contract Tower Program, which began 30 years ago, has a proven successful track record by all measures. It provides for FAA to contract ATC services to the private sector at visual flight rule airports. The primary advantages of this program are enhanced safety, improved ATC services, significant cost savings to FAA and taxpayers, and economic growth and job creation in local communities. Today the program includes 250 airports in 46 states (234 in the fully funded program and 16 in the cost-share program; see attached list of all 250 FAA contract towers nationwide). FAA's Contract Tower Program is accurately described as one of FAA's most effective government/industry partnerships dedicated to aviation safety. It is a shining example of an industry-government alliance that really works for the taxpayers and traveling public. Airports in the program also have a superb working relationship with the contract tower program office in FAA's Air Traffic Organization, resulting in a highly effective partnership among FAA, airports, and the ATC contractors.

As a result of this 30-year government/industry partnership, the FAA Contract Tower Program: (1) enhances aviation safety at smaller airports that otherwise would not have a tower; (2) provides significant cost savings to FAA and taxpayers; (3) helps small airports with retaining and developing commercial air service and general aviation; (4) promotes economic development and sustains and creates jobs locally; and (5) consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users (pilots, airlines, FBOs, flight schools and corporate flight departments). The bottom line is that, absent this highly successful federal/industry partnership program, many local communities would not receive the significant safety benefits of ATC services. And, importantly, local economic growth and jobs would be severely impacted in cities across the country without the contact tower program.

The program has consistently enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress in recognition of the enhanced safety, improved air traffic control services, and FAA cost savings these towers provide – results that have been validated repeatedly by the Department of Transportation (DOT) Inspector General (IG) since the late 1990s.

Furthermore, the greater aviation community is very supportive of the program. In a letter earlier this year to leaders of the House and Senate appropriations committees, signed by AAAE/USCTA and a broad group of aviation associations, the groups urged Congress to provide full funding for the FAA Contract Tower Program in the Fiscal Year 2013 DOT/FAA appropriations bill.

Signers of these letters were AAAE/U.S. Contract Tower Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Regional Airline Association, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, National Business Aviation Association, Air Carrier Association of America, Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association, Airports Council International-North America, National Association of State Aviation Officials, Air Traffic Control Association, National Air Transportation Association and Cargo Airline Association (see attached letter). The aviation community is also very concerned about potential devastating cuts to the program if the automatic budget sequester goes into effect on January 1. We urge Congress to make sure these cuts to a valuable ATC safety program do not occur.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in 2011 added "General Aviation Safety" to its Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements. This is important since contract towers serve a large portion of general aviation traffic nationwide.

NTSB Chairman Deborah Hersman on June 19-20 this year convened a general aviation safety forum in Washington. "Each year, hundreds of people are killed in general aviation crashes, and thousands more are injured," said Hersman. "Tragically, the circumstances leading to these accidents are often repeated over and over, year after year. If we are going to prevent future fatalities and injuries, these common causes must be addressed."

NTSB has stressed that general aviation accident rates are stagnant. In a national air transportation system that needs to stay vigilant to reduce the accident rate, AAAE/USCTA believe that safety benefits provided by the FAA's Contract Tower Program are not optional, but mandatory.

To illustrate the cost-effectiveness of the program to taxpayers, the 246 towers in the FAA Contract Tower Program in Fiscal Year 2011 handled approximately 28 percent of all U.S. tower operations (14.8 million operations), but accounted for just 14 percent (approximately $133 million) of FAA's overall budget allotted to air traffic control tower operations. In contrast, the 264 FAA-staffed towers that handled the remaining 72 percent of total tower operations (38.9 million operations), consumed 86 percent (approximately $851 million) of the FAA's budget dedicated to that purpose.

Also, of the 250 towers currently in the program, 136 were previously FAA-staffed VFR towers that were converted to the FAA Contract Tower Program in the 1990s, in large measure as part of Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review. Based on anticipated cost information from the DOT IG, if FAA were still staffing those 136 towers, the additional annual costs to taxpayers, based on fiscal year 2010 figures, would be approximately $200 million, which is **$50 million more** than the current budget to operate **all 250 current contract towers** across the entire country.

In addition to the unquestioned safety benefits the program provides, these numbers clearly highlight that the contract tower program is a great value to the American taxpayers and aviation users from a cost perspective.

Contract Tower Controllers Meet All FAA Safety, Training Standards

All FAA contract controllers are FAA-certified air traffic controllers who meet the identical training and operating standards as FAA controllers. The vast majority of federal contract controllers have FAA or military air traffic control experience.

FAA controls and oversees all aspects of the contract tower program, including operating procedures, staffing plans, certification and medical tests of contract controllers, security and facility evaluations. Equally important, federal contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system.

It should also be noted that many FAA contract towers are represented by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA). USCTA continues to have an open and positive dialogue with NATCA and cooperates with NATCA on ways contract towers and FAA-staffed towers can work together effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the traveling public. There is a clear role for both FAA-staffed towers and contract towers in the nation's air transportation system.

Contract Towers Serve a Variety of Aviation Operations

Contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system and serve a wide variety of aviation users. For instance, many contract towers also handle significant air carrier operations. These include Kona and Lihue in Hawaii; Bethel, Kenai, and Kodiak in Alaska; Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport; Appleton, Wisconsin; Phoenix-Mesa Gateway, Flagstaff and Bullhead City in Arizona; San Luis Obispo, Redding and Santa Maria in California; Redmond and Medford in Oregon; Stewart, New York; Branson and Columbia in Missouri; Latrobe, Pennsylvania; Lewisburg, West Virginia; Bloomington and Marion in Illinois; Hyannis, Massachusetts; Charlottesville, Virginia; Key West, Panama City, Gainesville, and Melbourne in Florida; Bozeman, Missoula, and Kalispell in Montana; Hailey, Lewiston, and Idaho Falls in Idaho; Harlingen, Laredo, and Brownsville in Texas; Eagle and Grand Junction in Colorado; Jackson Hole and Cheyenne in Wyoming, Rapid City, South Dakota; St. Croix; and even Guam.

Additionally, many contract towers across the country provide the only link a rural community has to the national transportation system. Other towers serve as busy reliever airports and are vital to the movement of general aviation traffic in major metropolitan areas such as Chandler, Goodyear and Glendale in Phoenix; North Perry in Ft. Lauderdale; Opa Locka in Miami; Ryan Field in Tucson; Brown Field in San Diego; Whitman in Los Angeles; Arlington, McKinney, Grand Prairie and Spinks in Dallas; Martin State Airport in Baltimore; Timmerman in Milwaukee; Fulton County in Atlanta; Burke Lakefront in Cleveland; Waukegan in Chicago; Troutdale in Portland, Oregon; Lunken Field in Cincinnati, and Anoka in Minneapolis.

Without FAA's Contract Tower Program, many American communities would not enjoy the safety and economic development benefits provided by air traffic control towers. Further, since many insurance policies require that businesses with flight departments only operate into towered airports, the loss of the contract tower program would be highly detrimental to economic development in many communities.

Contract Towers are Critical to National Security/Defense

The U.S. military is a long-time advocate and user of FAA contract control towers. Since the 1980s, the U.S. Army, U.S Air Force, U.S. Navy and Air National Guard have recognized contract ATC as a cost-effective and reliable solution.

Among the airports with extensive military operations are:

- Cecil Field, Florida, works primarily with the Navy out of Jacksonville and the north Florida;
- Mobile Downtown, Alabama, works with transient military operations from North Florida and Southern Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi;
- Millington, Tennessee, works primarily with Navy operations;
- Dothan, Alabama, works with Army aircraft from Cairns AAF;
- Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, works with U.S. Coast Guard aircraft stationed at Aguadilla;
- Golden Triangle, Mississippi, works with Columbus Air Force Base aircraft;
- Enid, Oklahoma, works with Vance Air Force Base aircraft and is located on the base;
- Stillwater, Oklahoma, works with Vance Air Force Base;
- Lawton, Oklahoma, works with Ft. Sill AAF aircraft and is located adjacent to the base;
- Victoria, Texas, works with Navy Corpus Christi aircraft;
- San Angelo, Texas, works with aircraft from Navy Corpus and from Randolph Air Force Base;
- Topeka Forbes Airport works with Air Force Reserve KC-135 Tanker Squadron;
- New Century Air Center works with Kansas National Guard CH-47 Squadron;
- Battle Creek, Michigan, works with Air National Guard C-21s;
- Martin State Airport, Maryland, works with Air National Guard A-10s;
- Stewart Airport, New York, works with Air National Guard C -17s, and
- Barnes-Westfield, Connecticut, works with Air National Guard F-15s.

Looking Ahead —Together

Airports that participate in FAA's Contract Tower Program are important contributors to the economic growth of their respective communities. They provide the vital elements of safety, economic stimulus and dependability to vast segments of the American population that otherwise would not have the opportunity to expand their business and travel needs. In an increasingly global marketplace, we cannot afford to take a step backward. Our communities desire and deserve the benefits that FAA contract towers provide. We are encouraged by the successful and highly effective partnership that airports, contract controllers, the ATC contractors, and FAA have developed over the past three decades, and we urge Congress to continue its critical support of this program.

Thank you very much for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

FAA Contract Tower List

as of May 11, 2012

Airport Name	State
KODIAK	AK
KING SALMON	AK
BETHEL	AK
KENAI	AK
BROOKLEY	AL
DOTHAN	AL
TUSCALOOSA MUNICIPAL	AL
SPRINGDALE MUNICIPAL *	AR
FAYETTEVILLE	AR
ROGERS MUNICIPAL-CARTER FLD *	AR
TEXARKANA MUNI/WEBB FLD	AR
NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL	AR
CHANDLER	AZ
FLAGSTAFF PULLIAM	AZ
GLENDALE	AZ
GOODYEAR	AZ
LAUGHLIN INTERNATIONAL	AZ
WILLIAMS GATEWAY	AZ
RYAN FIELD	AZ
CHICO MUNICIPAL	CA
FULLERTON	CA
HAWTHORNE	CA
CASTLE	CA
MATHER	CA
MODESTO	CA
OXNARD	CA
PALMDALE	CA
RIVERSIDE	CA
REDDING	CA
RAMONA	CA
SACRAMENTO EXECUTIVE	CA
SAN LUIS OBISPO	CA
SAN DIEGO BROWN FIELD	CA
SANTA MARIA	CA
SALINAS MUNICIPAL	CA
SAN CARLOS	CA
VICTORVILLE	CA
WHITEMAN	CA
WILLIAM J.FOX/LANCASTER	CA
EAGLE COUNTY	CO
GRAND JUNCTION	CO
FRONT RANGE	CO
BRIDGEPORT	CT
DANBURY MUNICIPAL	CT
HARTFORD-BRAINARD	CT
GROTON-NEW LONDON	CT
TWEED-NEW HAVEN	CT
WATERBURY	CT

Airport Name	State
NAPLES	FL
BOCA RATON	FL
JACKSONVILLE/CRAIG	FL
PANAMA CITY/BAY COUNTY	FL
NEW SMYRNA BEACH MUNI. ARPT	FL
KEY WEST	FL
PAGE FIELD	FL
GAINESVILLE	FL
HOLLYWOOD/NORTH PERRY	FL
KISSIMMEE MUNICIPAL	FL
LAKELAND MUNICIPAL	FL
LEESBURG REGIONAL	FL
MELBOURNE	FL
OCALA AIRPORT	FL
ORMOND BEACH MUNICIPAL	FL
OPA LOCKA	FL
CHARLOTTE COUNTY AIRPORT	FL
POMPANO BEACH	FL
ST. AUGUSTINE	FL
ALBERT WHITTED	FL
STUART/WHITHAM	FL
TITUSVILLE/COCOA	FL
CECIL FIELD	FL
FLAGLER COUNTY AIRPORT	FL
SW GEORGIA/ALBANY-DOUGHERTY	GA
ATHENS MUNICIPAL	GA
FULTON COUNTY	GA
GWINNETT COUNTY	GA
MACON	GA
MC COLLUM	GA
AGANA, GUAM	GU
KALAELOA (JOHN ROGERS FIELD)	HI
KEAHOLE-KONA	HI
LIHUE	HI
MOLOKAI	HI
DUBUQUE	IA
IDAHO FALLS	ID
LEWISTON-NEZ PERCE COUNTY	ID
POCATELLO MUNICIPAL	ID
FRIEDMAN MEMORIAL / HAILEY	ID
ST LOUIS REGIONAL	IL
BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL	IL
DECATUR	IL
SO. ILLINOIS/CARBONDALE	IL
WILLIAMSON COUNTY *	IL
WAUKEGAN REGIONAL	IL
COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL	IN
MONROE COUNTY/BLOOMINGTON *	IN

FAA Contract Tower List

as of May 11, 2012

Airport Name	State
GARY REGIONAL	IN
MUNCIE/DELAWARE COUNTY *	IN
FORBES FIELD	KS
GARDEN CITY REGIONAL AIRPORT *	KS
HUTCHINSON MUNICIPAL	KS
NEW CENTURY	KS
MANHATTAN REGIONAL	KS
JOHNSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE	KS
SALINA MUNICIPAL	KS
PHILIP BILLARD MUNICIPAL	KS
OWENSBORO/DAVIESS COUNTY	KY
BARKLEY REGIONAL	KY
ALEXANDRIA INTERNATIONAL	LA
ACADIANA REGIONAL	LA
CHENNAULT	LA
SHREVEPORT-DT	LA
HOUMA TERREBORNE	LA
BARNES MUNICIPAL	MA
BEVERLY	MA
NEW BEDFORD	MA
HYANNIS	MA
LAWRENCE	MA
MARTHA'S VINEYARD	MA
WORCESTER	MA
NORWOOD	MA
EASTON	MD
FREDERICK MUNICIPAL	MD
WASHINGTON CO. REG'L/HAGERSTN	MD
MARTIN STATE	MD
SALISBURY-WICOMICO COUNTY	MD
BATTLE CREEK	MI
DETROIT CITY	MI
JACKSON *	MI
SAWYER GWINN	MI
ANOKA	MN
ST. CLOUD REGIONAL	MN
BRANSON AIRPORT	MO
COLUMBIA	MO
JEFFERSON CITY MEMORIAL *	MO
JOPLIN REGIONAL *	MO
ROSECRANS MEM'L/ST. JOSEPH	MO
SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL	MP
GREENVILLE MUNICIPAL	MS
GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGIONAL AIRPORT	MS
HAWKINS FIELD	MS
STENNIS	MS
MERIDIAN / KEY FIELD	MS

Airport Name	State
OLIVE BRANCH	MS
TUPELO REGIONAL	MS
GALLATIN FIELD/BOZEMAN	MT
KALISPELL/GLACIER PARK	MT
MISSOULA	MT
NEW BERN	NC
HICKORY	NC
SMITH REYNOLDS (WINSTON SALEM)	NC
KINSTON	NC
CONCORD	NC
MINOT	ND
CENTRAL NEBRASKA/GRD ISLAND *	NE
BOIRE FIELD/NASHUA	NH
LEBANON MUNICIPAL	NH
TRENTON	NJ
DOUBLE EAGLE II	NM
FARMINGTON MUNICIPAL	NM
LEA COUNTY/HOBBS *	NM
SANTA FE COUNTY MUNICIPAL	NM
HENDERSON	NV
NIAGARA FALLS	NY
TOMPKINS COUNTY	NY
ROME-GRIFFISS	NY
STEWART	NY
FRANCIS F. GABRESKI	NY
BURKE LAKEFRONT	OH
CUYAHOGA COUNTY	OH
CINCINNATI MUNI/LUNKEN	OH
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	OH
COLUMBUS AIRPORT (Bolton Field)	OH
ARDMORE MUNICIPAL *	OK
LAWTON MUNICIPAL	OK
UNIV OF OKLAHOMA/WESTHEIMER	OK
WILEY POST	OK
STILLWATER	OK
ENID WOODRING MUNI	OK
KLAMATH FALLS	OR
MEDFORD	OR
SOUTHWEST OREGON REGIONAL	OR
PENDLETON MUNICIPAL	OR
REDMOND	OR
MCNARY FIELD	OR
TROUTDALE	OR
CAPITOL CITY	PA
WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING CO. *	PA
ARNOLD PALMER REGIONAL	PA
LANCASTER	PA
UNIVERSITY PARK	PA

FAA Contract Tower List

as of May 11, 2012

Airport Name	State
RAFAEL HERNANDEZ (AQUADILLA)	PR
ISLA GRANDE	PR
GRAND STRAND/MYRTLE BEACH	SC
GREENVILLE DOWNTOWN	SC
DONALDSON CENTER	SC
HILTON HEAD AIRPORT	SC
RAPID CITY REGIONAL	SD
MCKELLER-SIPES	TN
SMYRNA	TN
MILLINGTON	TN
NEW BRAUNFELS MUNICIPAL	TX
BROWNSVILLE INTL	TX
EASTERWOOD	TX
WACO	TX
LONESTAR EXECUTIVE AIRPORT	TX
DENTON MUNICIPAL	TX
FORT WORTH-SPINKS *	TX
(GALVESTON) SCHOLES INT'L	TX
GRAND PRAIRIE *	TX
ARLINGTON MUNICIPAL	TX
GEORGETOWN	TX
RIO GRAND VALLEY (HARLINGEN)	TX
SAN MARCOS	TX
LAREDO INT'L	TX
MCALLEN	TX
REDBIRD	TX
SAN ANGELO/MATHIS FIELD	TX
SUGARLAND	TX
STINSON MUNICIPAL	TX
MCKINNEY MUNICIPAL	TX
TYLER	TX
VICTORIA	TX
OGDEN-HINCKLEY MUNICIPAL	UT
PROVO MUNICIPAL	UT
CHARLOTTESVILLE-ALBEMARLE	VA
LYNCHBURG	VA
HENRY E. ROHLSEN AIRPORT	VI
WALLA WALLA REGIONAL *	WA
BELLINGHAM INTL	WA
OLYMPIA	WA
RENTON	WA
FELTS FIELD	WA
TACOMA NARROWS	WA
YAKIMA	WA
APPLETON	WI
CENTRAL WISCONSIN	WI
CHIPPEWA VALLEY (EAU CLAIRE)	WI
KENOSHA MUNI	WI
ROCK COUNTY	WI
LA CROSSE	WI
TIMMERMAN	WI
WITTMAN REGIONAL	WI
WAUKESHA COUNTY	WI
WHEELING OHIO COUNTY	WV
MORGANTOWN	WV
PARKERSBURG/ WOOD COUNTY	WV
GREENBRIAR VALLEY	WV
CHEYENNE	WY
JACKSON HOLE	WY

Total FAA Contract Towers (250)

* Cost Share Facility

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
2406 RHOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Fax 202/225-0940

Similar letter sent to Congressmen Latham, Dicks and Olver, and Senators Inouye, Murray, Cochran and Collins

Dear Chairman Rogers:

As Congress begins work on the Department of Transportation/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) fiscal year 2013 appropriations bill, the organizations listed below urge you to support funding of $136.1 million for the regular FAA Contract Tower Program, as well as an additional $10.35 million authorized for the continuation of the contract tower cost-sharing program. Full funding of the contract tower program will permit continuation of this important FAA safety program and allow additional non-towered airports to receive the vital safety benefits of a control tower.

The FAA Contract Tower Program has provided cost-effective and essential air traffic safety services since 1982. Currently, 249 smaller airports in 46 states participate in the program, including two in Kentucky. Together these 249 towers handle approximately 28 percent of all air traffic control tower (ATCT) aircraft operations in the U.S. but account for just 14 percent of FAA's overall budget allotted to total ATCT tower operations. Most importantly, the safety and efficiency record of the FAA Contract Tower Program has been validated numerous times by the DOT Inspector General (IG) and FAA safety audits, as well as by the National Transportation Safety Board.

All federal contract controllers are FAA-certified air traffic controllers who meet the identical training and operating standards as FAA-employed controllers. The vast majority of federal contract controllers have FAA or military air traffic control experience. FAA controls and oversees all aspects of the federal contract tower program, including operating procedures, staffing plans, certification and medical tests of contract controllers, security and facility evaluations. Moreover, federal contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system.

As a result of this 30-year government/industry partnership, the FAA Contract Tower Program: (1) enhances aviation safety at smaller airports that otherwise would not have a tower; (2) provides significant cost savings to FAA and taxpayers; (3) helps small airports with retaining and developing commercial air service and general aviation; (4) promotes economic development and creates jobs locally; and (5) consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users and pilots. The bottom line is that, absent this highly successful federal program, many local communities and smaller airports would not receive the significant safety benefits of ATC services.

We thank you for your continued support of this important ATC safety program and look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its future success.

Sincerely yours,

J. Spencer Dickerson
Senior Executive Vice President
American Association of Airport Executives

Craig L. Fuller
President and CEO
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

(continued on next page)

Roger Cohen
President
Regional Airline Association

Ed Bolen
President & CEO
National Business Aviation Association

Henry M. Ogrodzinski
President
National Association of State Aviation Officials

Greg Principato
President
Airports Council International - NA

Peter J. Bunce
President and CEO
General Aviation Manufacturers Association

Pete Dumont
President
Air Traffic Control Association

James K. Coyne
President
National Air Transportation Association

Stephen A. Alterman
President
Cargo Airline Association

Edward P. Faberman
Executive Director
Air Carrier Association of America

Stanley Bernstein
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Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association

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405.325.7233

Professional Experience

Administrator, Max Westheimer Airport (University of Oklahoma - 1998 – Present)

- Plans and directs activities of the University's 727 acre Max Westheimer airport to include airport operations, maintenance, development, and air traffic control operations.
- Has overall fiscal responsibility for operational and capital budgets and is responsible to both the University and the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal management.
- Develops and/or approves policies and procedures, Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards.
- Responsible for solicitation and acquisition of state and federal grants to support multi-million dollar improvement efforts.
- Approves and retains final authority for all capital improvements to all airport property.

Adjunct Professor (University of Oklahoma, Dept. of Aviation – 2002 – Present)
Adjunct Professor (Oklahoma State University, 1997 – 2000)

- Airport Planning & Management (AVIA 3513) - Provides students with an in-depth analysis of airport management, operations and planning functions necessary to operate, develop, and maintain safe and efficient airport facilities as is the practice in the United States. Also introduces air traffic control (ATC) concepts.
- Faculty Advisor, Sooner Chapter American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) – Serve as counselor and mentor for students interested in having a deeper knowledge of the airports business.

Deputy Director, (Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) 1995-1998)

- Coordinated, supervised and organized programs of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission. Provided oversight to special projects, policy and legislative development impacting aviation statewide. Provided oversight and direction of business administration, purchasing and leasing. Developed and coordinated implementation of policy. Coordinated Commission budget and training programs for supervisors and journeyman. Was legislative liaison at state and national levels coordinating matters impacting state and federal aviation plans, policy and procedures. Acted as Director in his absence.

Airports Administrator, (Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, 1993 – 1995)

- Administered various functions of the Airports Branch, to include planning, engineering, environmental assessment, state and federal Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), and Airport Inspection Program. Planned, coordinated and implemented

state and federal grant programs. Monitored airports to ensure compliance with state and federal laws & regulations.

Air Traffic Control Supervisor, (US Air Force, 1972 – 1988)

- **Superintendent Air Traffic Control (ATC) Plans and Programs.** Planned, directed, coordinated and managed activities of assigned ATC and maintenance personnel in support of worldwide exercises. Assessed system needs, and formulated plans that met emergency support functions, and local exercises.
- **Chief, Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS).** Planned, developed, designed, coordinated and arranged for publication of aircraft instrument arrival/departure procedures required for support of worldwide requirements. Was Chief Controller for deployed radar and tower facilities managing 50+ personnel and operations and maintenance of these multi-million dollar facilities.
- **Chief, ATC Training.** Developed and administered the ATC training program. Was Air Force ATC liaison to Singapore, Philippine, Thai and Korean Air Forces pilots for the Clark Air Base Philippines control area. Supervised, directed and controlled all aspects of training for more than 100 controllers. Managed radar simulator, non-radar and indoctrination training programs.

Education

- Achieved professional accreditation status (Accredited Airport Executive (AAE)) in February 2006.
- Enrolled with Oklahoma State University in 1993, seeking a graduate degree in Natural & Applied Science in Aviation. Graduated in 1996 with a 4.0 GPA.
- Enrolled with Southern Nazarene University in 1992, seeking an undergraduate degree in Human Resources Management. Graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1993 with a 4.0 GPA.
- Trained in creation/design of Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, MS in 1985. Was later certified to approve instrument procedures developed for use in tactical environments for Air Force Headquarters, Langley AFB, VA.
- Earned an Associates of Arts Degree from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) in 1981.

Professional Affiliations

- Board of Directors, American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)
- Chairman, US Contract Tower Association (USCTA)
- Past President and Member, South Central Chapter AAAE
- Past President and Member, Oklahoma Airport Operators Association (OAOA)
- Member, National Business Aviation Association (NBAA)
- Member, Norman Chamber of Commerce
- Mentor, American Corporate Partners

Technical Expertise

- Accredited Airport Executive (American Association of Airport Executives)
- Private Pilot - July 1975
- Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) Specialist 1985
- Control Tower Operator certificate issued 1978

Honors

- Southern Nazarene University Summa Cum Laude
- Oklahoma State University 4.0 GPA
- Phi Kappa Phi, National Honor Society
- Oklahoma Airport Operators Association, Airport Manager of the Year, 2011
- Oklahoma Airport Operators Association, Airport of the Year, 2011
- US Air Force Meritorious Service Medal
- US Air Force Commendation Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster
- US Air Force selectee for 1985 Jaycees 10 Outstanding Young Men of America
- US Air Force NCO Academy and NCO Leadership School Speech Award Winner

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Truth in Testimony Disclosure

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of House Rule XI, in the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include: (1) a curriculum vitae; and (2) a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Such statements, with appropriate redaction to protect the privacy of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

(1) Name: Walter Blair Strong Jr., A.A.E.

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing:
American Association of Airport Executives
University of Oklahoma, Max Westheimer Airport

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES **If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.**

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

September 12, 2011 - Grant #3-40-0064-023-2011 - Max Westheimer Airport South Apron Reconstruct - $2,040,606.

Signature

6/20/12
Date