

County airport manager disputes deficit figures

by Gwen Bixby

Charles Ely, manager of the Oswego County Airport located on State Rte. 176 in the Town of Volney, recently discussed a proposal to privatize the operation of the facility. A policy paper explaining the proposal was submitted to the Oswego County Legislature by Minority Leader James McMahon (D-Hastings) at the recent January session.

"Actually, privatization is the way of the future, where it will work," Ely said. "Whether it will work here at this airport will take a lot of research to determine."

Ely noted that the legislature has the responsibility of keeping government services and costs within the confines of the taxpayers' ability to pay for them. Innovative methods to do that are in everyone's best interest, he said.

"I would be the happiest man in the world if this proposal would work and save the taxpayers' money," Ely continued. "Anything they can come up with that will make life easier on the taxpayer, I'm just thrilled to death with it."

Ely said it was his understanding that a legislative committee would be appointed to research the proposal and determine its feasibility. If the legislature decides to privatize the operation of the county airport, Ely would likely be out of a job.

"If they say, 'We're closing the airport tomorrow, Charlie,' then Charlie's going fishing," Ely said. "I'm not the airport; I just work here. . . I see the proposal as another effort to help county government help the county taxpayers."

Ely said he had read the policy paper and had only one problem with it. "Their figures are wrong, but that's not their fault," he commented. "They got their figures from the county budget." Ely said it is often difficult to track all the revenues related to the airport because they go into different accounts within the county budget. "I don't think they've completely disassembled the county budget and found all the revenues that impact the airport."

According to the privatization proposal, the airport has operated at a loss since 1989, with the anticipated seven-year total through 1995 reaching about \$1.2 million. Ely agreed that there has been a deficit, but he disputed the amount. The proposal predicted a deficit of \$232,421 in 1994 and \$182,447 in 1995.

"There's going to be a deficit but I wouldn't say it's going to be that much," Ely said. "My guess is that the 1994 deficit is probably closer to \$70,000."

One of the revenues that Ely doubted the proposal had considered was the return to the county from federal fuel excise taxes. "It comes back to the county, but it doesn't get shown coming in as a revenue for the airport," he noted. Ely said the county buys fuel for the airport in bulk for both aircraft and landbound motor vehicles. Most of the aircraft fuel is sold to private users but some goes into the Oswego County Sheriff's Department helicopter. Regular fuel also goes into sheriff's department snowmobiles, patrol cars, and highway department vehicles, such as snow plows. The returns from sales to private users more than covers the cost of all the fuel delivered at the airport, Ely said.

"It costs money to track money," he explained. "If the county has in-kind services from one department to another, you don't do a paper track on it." Ely maintained that his budget is just another part of the whole county budget, and that it would be costly and nearly impossible to pull out all the airport figures.

Ely said his goal has always been to move the airport to the place where it its operation is completely self-supporting. In recent years, several improvements and services have been added at the airport to generate revenues. The county has built three T-hangers and leases most of the bays to private users. Using grant funding, the county will construct another one in the spring. The county has also negotiated land lease contracts for private users to build their own hangars.

Legislators serving on the public works committee recently approved a rate hike for the fuel, hangar leases, tie-downs, and landing fees. Monthly tie-downs are \$30 and hangar rentals are \$100 per month for the older "pole barn" hangar, and \$135 per month for the newer T-hangers. Daily tie-downs are \$3 per day, and the landing fee is \$10. However, pilots using the county airport can waive the landing fee if they make a minimum fuel purchase.

Ely said that the county has investigated the cost of a credit card system for fuel delivery. Once installed, fuel could be purchased by credit card users 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Ely said the new system will eliminate the need for employ-

ees to staff the pumps.

A federal weather station, completely operated by computer, was installed this past year and is currently in test operation. Ely said he is seeking federal funding to install an instrument landing service (ILS), so that the airport can be used at night and in any kind of weather conditions. "I wouldn't think of asking the county to install an ILS," Ely said. "If it's a federal installation, they also have the liability." He said the application is in, but "bureaucracy is slow." He anticipates that it will be five years before an ILS is operating at the airport.

At that point, when all the systems were

in place and operating, Ely predicts the airport could be self-supporting because corporations' use of the facility would increase. When he first became manager several years ago, the airport averaged three to four corporation landings per year. Now the average is 160 to 170 per year. Ely said many planes carrying management people from central New York businesses and industries come into the county airport "because they don't have to wait in line" to land or take-off. "I see this airfield as a tremendous asset to the county," Ely concluded. "This airport can become a major tool in economic development--a major tool in attracting industry."

Antos to retire; reception planned

A community reception will be held in honor of Thaddeus L. Antos, who is retiring from active management of Fulton Savings Bank after more than 20 years of service Friday, Jan. 20, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Polish Home, 153 W. First St., Fulton. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

"For over a decade, Ted has led the management team at Fulton Savings Bank, ensuring financial strength and superior customer service," said Fulton Savings Bank President Michael J. Pollock. "This reception will give all of our customers, friends, and employees an opportunity to thank Ted for his faithful, outstanding service."

In his retirement, Antos will continue to serve as chairman of the bank's board of trustees.

He joined Fulton Savings in 1972 as assistant vice-president, after serving as an examiner with the New York State Banking Department. He was promoted to vice-president soon after and was named president in 1982. During his tenure as chief executive, Fulton Savings' assets more than doubled and the third branch office was added.

The Lackawanna native and longtime Fulton resident served with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War and then obtained his B.S. degree in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University. Antos also attended the Federal Reserve Board's Bank Education Fundamentals School and studied data processing at SUNY Albany.

He has long been active in Fulton civic affairs. He is a member of the board and past board chairman of A.L. Lee Memorial



Thaddeus L. Antos

Hospital, a trustee of the United Way of Greater Fulton, and was a longtime director and served as chairman of the board of the Greater Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

He is also active in several professional organizations including the Community Bankers Association of New York State, National (a New York State-chartered commercial bank), the Institutional Investors Mutual Funds of New York, the Community Lending Corporation of Albany, Robert Morris Associates, the Home Builders Association of Central New York, and the Oswego County Board of Realtors.

Antos and his wife, Joan, reside on North Pollard Drive in Fulton.

Dog adoption officer reappointed in Volney

by Gwen Bixby

Gloria Raymond was reappointed as "adoptions" dog control officer at the Jan. 12 meeting of the Volney Town Board. Last year was her first year in the position and her job performance netted savings for the town.

Board members commended Ms. Raymond for the fine job she has done in finding homes for dogs picked up by the dog warden or his assistant. Town Clerk Barbara MacEwen reported that only seven dogs were "put to sleep" in 1994 and 84 dogs were adopted. "She saved the town lots of money in euthanasia fees," Mrs. MacEwen said. Ms. Raymond's services are mostly volunteer; she is only reimbursed for mileage, the town clerk noted.

The board also officially approved two new appointees to serve in various capacities. Jodi Marvin will serve as secretary to the town planning and zoning boards, and Ed Geers as voting machine custodian. All three terms, including Ms. Raymond's, expire Dec. 31, 1995.

The majority of town appointments had been approved at the board's reorganizational meeting held New Year's Day. Appointments approved at the Jan. 1 meeting included Ron Carr as town attorney; Cynthia Tolbert as building inspector/code enforcement officer; Dana Smith as her assistant; Charles Marks as town constable; Leonard Duciaume as building custodian and assistant dog control officer; Jerry Hourihan as dog control officer; and James Schwiter as meter reader, billing clerk, and payment receiver for the Seneca Hill Water District. All of their terms expire at year's end.

Kevin Connelly was reappointed to the

town planning board for a five-year term, expiring Dec. 31, 1999. His appointment as chairman of the planning board was extended to Dec. 31, 1995.

The board approved a five-year term for James Hinman to serve on the zoning board, and Marie Austin was reappointed as chair of the zoning board until Dec. 31, 1995. Michael Parsnow was approved for a five-year term to the assessment board of appeals, and also a one-year term as chair of the board.

Susan Roik will be the 1995 recreation director and Mrs. MacEwen will serve as registrar of vital statistics.

Town Supervisor Howard Rose announced the 1995 appointments he had made at the Jan. 1 meeting. Councilor Jesse Warner will be deputy supervisor, Fern Parsons will be town historian, and Pamela Hladik will serve as bookkeeper. The supervisor also designated liaison assignments for the board members: Councilor Warner, building and grounds and water districts; Councilor James Ridgeway, senior citizens' program and assessment review board; Councilor William Pierce, planning and zoning boards and dog control; and Councilor Claudia Smart, fire corporation. Supervisor Rose will oversee playground and recreation concerns, and the board as a whole will oversee highway and assessors' matters.

The 1995 monthly meetings of the town board are set for the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Bills due for payment will be reviewed by the town board the Tuesday before each town board meeting. Marine Midland Bank/NA and Fleet Bank were designated as the town's official depositories in 1995, and *The Valley News* was named the official newspaper with *The Palladium Times* as an alternate.

United Way appeals for additional support

United Way of Greater Fulton Fund Drive Co-Chairs Dick Kemmis and Frank Hale have announced that 80 percent of the \$221,000 fund-drive goal has been reached.

"A lot of folks have worked really hard and given generously of their time and money to have gotten us this far along toward our goal," said Kemmis. "We are very grateful for their support and generosity. Eighty percent is encouraging. . . but, there are urgent needs that must be met and we really need to reach our \$221,000 goal."

"We have felt since the beginning," added Co-Chair Hale, "that the \$221,000 goal established for this year's fund drive is realistic and attainable. . . and, we know from talking with the member agencies and people throughout the community that all

of it, and more, is needed to continue funding programs for the people of Fulton, Phoenix, and Southern Oswego County. We still feel that with everyone's help, we can raise the additional 20 percent to make our goal."

"What we are asking," continued Kemmis, "is that anyone who has not yet made a contribution to the fund drive, please, do so as soon as possible. And, because it is so important that we do attain our goal, we are even asking those who have already given, if you can possibly give a little more, we, and all who are helped by the programs and services funded by our United Way, will be most grateful."

"When you contribute to your United Way," assured Kemmis, "the dollars go to work immediately, right here in our own area, effectively and efficiently. . . improving the quality of life for all of us. A big job requires a big commitment, from everyone."

Contributions to the United Way can be given directly or through payroll deduction. These contributions support the programs and services of fourteen member agencies serving Fulton, Phoenix, and Southern Oswego County. The agencies are: American Red Cross, Association For Retarded Children, Aurora of Central New York, Hiawatha Council Boy Scouts, Camp Fire, Catholic Charities/CYO, Farnham Inc., Central N.Y. Council, Girl Scouts, Oswego County Opportunities, Salvation Army, United Cerebral Palsy of NYS, USO, and YMCA. Information may be obtained by calling United Way at 593-1900.

