

# The Aviator

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## From the Desk of Arlene Feldman, President, NJAA

Dear Governor Corzine:

Please allow me to add my voice to those of the others who are concerned with the public safety issues surrounding the denial of the basing of NorthSTAR at Somerset Airport in Bedminster.

As the former Regional Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration and Director of New Jersey's Division of Aeronautics, I am well aware of the life saving capabilities of the State Police Medivac helicopter and am appalled that the local community has denied its services. It would seem that the construction of suitable facilities to accommodate the crews would be a small price to pay to have this valuable resource readily available to save lives.

Although the New Jersey Supreme Court has acknowledged the right of the State Police to operate from Somerset Airport, the airport owners have been prevented from constructing the needed facilities and have had to endure countless lawsuits in their efforts.

The airport manager, Steve Parker at 908-722-2444, welcomes you or your staff to tour the facility to provide you with an up close view of the facilities in question.

In the meantime, your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated by the many New Jersey citizens who will benefit from these services. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Arlene Feldman, President, NJAA

## NJAA Meets with Governor and State's Top Transportation Leaders to Discuss State Monetization Plan

### NJAA Praises Governor for Recognizing Aviation as a Major Component in His Plan

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2008, the New Jersey Aviation Association was invited to participate with other leaders of New Jersey's transportation community to discuss Governor Corzine's financial restructuring plan.

"We appreciate that Governor Corzine has recognized that aviation is an essential part of the transportation infrastructure in New Jersey," said Justin Edwards, NJAA Chairman who attended the meeting. "The Governor has outlined in detail his plan to improve New Jersey's transportation system and the NJAA looks forward to working with the Administration over the next few months to solve many of transportation needs."

The NJAA supports the effort that the Governor is making and applauds the Governor for making aviation needs and concerns a top priority.

NJAA Board Member Bob Checchio, who also attended the meeting with the Governor added, "Aviation is a strong part of New Jersey's transportation infrastructure and faces many challenges every day. The Governor has promised us his commitment to aviation and we will work with him and his administration to make sure all of the aviation community's needs are met."

NJAA hopes to continue to be involved in further dialogue regarding the state's plan for financial restructuring. NJAA commends the governor for seeing the need to invest in the future of aviation as it continues to be a major part of New Jersey transportation. ←

## Member Commentary: Sport Piloting in NJ's Skies — A Maturing Market with Needs

by Bill Leavens

A look around the recent Sport Pilot convention revealed one thing. The market is maturing. New and very capable designs are being introduced and some of the older designs have been refined to a startling capability. As of this writing a total of 63 new aircraft designs have been certified by the FAA. That number will surely shrink over time as economic realities sink in, but it indicates the faith that manufacturers have in the marketplace.

Cessna and Cirrus displayed their slick and capable designs — both to be manufactured outside the USA in China and Eastern Eu-



Mercer County Airport, Dedication Ceremony — October 26, 1929.

continued on page 2

## Member Profile:



### Ralph F. Tragale

*Manager, Government & Community Relations, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey*

Ralph Tragale was appointed Manager of Government & Community Relations for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 1997.

As the primary external affairs representative for the New York/New Jersey region's major air transportation facilities, Mr. Tragale oversees all external and government relationships for John F. Kennedy International, Newark Liberty International and LaGuardia airports, which together comprise one of the world's largest aviation system. In addition, he handles the same duties for Teterboro Airport, a general aviation airport, and the Downtown Manhattan Heliport in Manhattan, which are premier facilities in their class. In this capacity, Mr. Tragale is responsible for fostering and maintaining relationships with government entities at the federal, state and local level as well as business, community and civic organizations.

Mr. Tragale is a strong advocate for airport issues on Capitol Hill, and in the State Capitols of New York and New Jersey. He is a recognized expert on managing relationships with airport neighbors and is routinely speaks before legislative bodies, business and community groups and airport professionals. Under his stewardship, the NY/NJ region's airports have developed a community-centric vision to improve the airports while being sensitive to airport neighbors. Mr. Tragale also serves on the Board of

the New Jersey Aviation Association, in addition to participating in many other aviation organizations, both nationally and locally, including the famed New York Wings Club. Mr. Tragale is committed to enhance the quality of life of those people living near the airports. His strong commitment to the community is demonstrated by his active involvement in numerous community and civic organizations. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce and the South Queens Boys and Girls Club. He is also responsible for managing the Aviation Development Council, whose mission is to ensure that local residents and businesses most impacted by the airports receive the job, contract and procurement opportunities that the airports provide.

Mr. Tragale joined the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as an auditor in the Inspector General's Office in 1988. His educational background includes a Bachelor's Degree in Management and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from St. John's University in Jamaica, NY. He also attended both the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service and the MIT/Harvard University Public Disputes Program.

Prior to joining the Port Authority, Mr. Tragale worked for the New York State Crime Victims Board as a program manager, where he was responsible for the staffing and budgets of 75 local assistance programs throughout the State. While pursuing his undergraduate degree, Mr. Tragale worked as a Bridge and Tunnel Officer for the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, working at the Marine Parkway and Cross Bay Bridges. He has also worked on several city and statewide political campaigns in resource allocation and management.

Mr. Tragale was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. He has been married since 1991 to his wife, Amy, and has two daughters Julianna and Jessica. He resides in Aberdeen, NJ, where he coaches little league baseball and is active in his community's parent/teacher organization. ←

## Sport Piloting *continued from page 1*

rope respectively. Older designs like the Kitfox have re-emerged as sophisticated clones. The Venerable Thorpe Sky Scooter certified as a production aircraft in 1947 was the ancestor of the Piper Cherokee series. It has become a formidable challenger for market leadership with a few aerodynamic tweaks from the Lo Presti team and equipped with modern Jabiru powerplants carved out of aluminum billet in Australia.

A most modern engine was on display from England that may help solve the world's leaded avgas dilemma. The two stroke, super-charged diesel Gemini engine was designed by the Westlake Engineering group founded by engine wizard Harry Westlake. The engine offers significant fuel economy in a tiny, robust package. Significantly lighter and smaller than the legacy Continental O-200, the Gemini features an opposed piston design used on the Junkers Jumo engines that powered Heinkel bombers.

But as LSA aircraft mature, the graying temples of the target population betray that aircraft buyers are maturing, too. Aging

boomer pilots were seen everywhere, ogling aircraft they could fly without clearance from an Aviation Medical Examiner.

The LSA market would best be suited for primary training if it were not for the high cost of the new aircraft. A clapped out Cessna 152 can be had for less than half the cost of a new LSA. However LSAs will have to fill the training fleets since clapped out 152s are currently out of production.

All of this brings us to New Jersey's major small airport problem. Lovely Twin Pine Airport near Pennington is closing soon due to real estate tax issues. The recently released State Aviation System Plan affords little protection for other smaller fields like Hackettstown, Aeroflex and Trinca that would be the training ground for tomorrow's pilots. LSAs and small airfields belong together. There is currently no flight training operation at Teterboro. As larger airports like Morristown, Caldwell and Trenton Mercer provide service to an ever expanding business aviation market, flight training will be crowded out to smaller airports. The smallest of our airports - the ones best suited for primary training and recreational flight - need protection, too. ←

## NJ Aviation Association Appeals to the President Over Seizure of Airport under Eminent Domain

Arlene Feldman, President of the New Jersey Aviation Association, appealed to President Bush to examine the issue of the seizure of airports by local communities under eminent domain. Her action was precipitated by a decision handed down January 16 by New Jersey Superior Court Judge Yolanda Ciccone, approving the seizure of 612.5 acres of land belonging to Solberg-Hunterdon Airport by Readington Township.

In a letter sent to the President Ms. Feldman stated that this decision would set a precedent that could encourage local communities all over the country to seize airport property within their borders. Feldman pointed out that local airports are part of the National Airport System plan and local communities are intruding on the province of the national government.

“Small local airports provide remote communities with avia-

tion access to any place in the world. These airports also provide employment for hundreds of thousands of people,” said Feldman.

Solberg-Hunterdon Airport has been owned and operated by the same family for 70 years. It was founded by aviation pioneer Thor Solberg Sr., who, in 1935, became the first man to fly from the United States to Norway. The airport is owned today by his son, Thor, Jr., and his daughters, Suzy Solberg Nagle, and Lorraine Solberg.

Feldman concluded, “Under the Constitution transportation is the domain of the federal government not every little community in the country. Townships cannot control railroad rights of way nor should they be able to control the existence of established airports.”

Feldman appealed to the President to have his staff look into the matter and determine the affect it would have on the welfare of the nation. ←

### NJ Aviation Notes:

#### NJAA Urges NJ Senators to Take Action on Sturgell Nomination — *Anything Other Than an Up or Down Vote Hurts NJ Aviation*

At a time when the nation’s aviation industry faces more critical issues than anytime in its history, Senators Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez have put a hold on the nomination of acting FAA Administrator Bobby Sturgell. This means that issues like aviation safety, funding, air traffic control, airport improvements, all of which will determine whether the nation’s air transportation system will be strengthened or weakened, are on hold.

Most of the major aviation organizations in Washington have endorsed Sturgell. “We would like to see him confirmed, quickly,” said Jim Coyne, president of the National Air Transportation.

Ed Bolen, president of the National Business Aviation Association, said, “We support the Sturgell nomination.” When Sturgell was first nominated in October, Phil Boyer, president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, declared, “While we haven’t always seen eye-to-eye with Bobby on such issues as user fees, labor relations, or flight safety oversight, we’ve always been able to talk honestly and know that he at least understands our position.”

“Putting this nomination on hold puts the issue of aviation safety on the back burner,” said Justin Edwards, Chairman of NJAA. “To delay action on such a vital issue for months is unacceptable and the New Jersey Aviation Association stands ready to join with other aviation organizations to get a vote on this nomination back on track.”

#### Senator Menendez to Acting FAA Administrator: *Answers to Air Traffic Concerns are Inadequate*

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), dissatisfied with the Federal Aviation Administration’s response to concerns he had lodged, today demanded from the acting-chief of the FAA clearer, more precise answers on a number of issues confronting the New Jersey airspace. Among the topics on which Senator Menendez is seeking information are:

- ◆ The sharp increase in planes landing at Newark Liberty International Airport with only minimum fuel remaining in the tank

- ◆ The airspace redesign affecting flight paths at the New York City and Philadelphia region airports, which has led to collision danger and increased noise for residents
- ◆ The inadequate staffing of air traffic controllers, both in numbers and in experience.

Senator Menendez met with FAA Acting Administrator Robert Sturgell in December to raise these issues and was promised follow-up answers to many of them. Late last month, the FAA sent a letter to the Senator, which he believed did not contain sufficient or specific answers.

Many of the same questions I had about air safety in our region last year going into my face-to-face meeting with the acting Administrator, I still have today, even after their follow up response, said Senator Menendez. I still haven’t received specific or satisfactory answers on my concerns about the new flight paths, the amount of flights landing with minimum fuel left in their tanks or the shortage of air traffic controllers who have the experience to manage our crowded airspace. I’m not going to drop these concerns until the FAA either provides a better explanation or changes their approach to these issues. ←

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## April 16... NJ Aviation Policy Forum:

### Issues, Challenges and Solutions for the 21st Century

The **Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center** of **Rutgers University** will host New Jersey's first statewide forum on aviation policy on April 16, 2008 at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy in New Brunswick. The event is free and open to the public. A complete agenda and forum announcement are available at [policy.rutgers.edu/vtc](http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc). To attend, please RSVP to: [vtc@policy.rutgers.edu](mailto:vtc@policy.rutgers.edu).

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