

City celebrates 75 years of airport operations

Aircraft have changed over the years, and so has the airport's mission

The first Lake Placid Olympics had wrapped up, the Lindbergh baby was still missing and Herbert Hoover was in the last months of his presidency.

And, back on April 3, 1932, the City of Merced started running an airport. A tri-motor Stinson passenger craft was christened "Miss Merced" as part of the ceremonies, and the first passenger air service for the region began soon after.

Since then aircraft have gotten faster, the Airport moved to a new location and the U.S. has had a dozen more presidents.

The first airport site was located about 3 miles northeast of town. In 1941, the City acquired the present airport site near Grogan and West avenues from the delinquent tax rolls and started developing the airport.

During World War II, the Army Air Corps took over the Airport as a training base. By 1946, the City resumed control of the airport and signed a lease with United Airlines.

The Airport grew in size and added hangars and buildings through the years. Currently it has 125 planes based at the airport, which includes a mix of planes ranging from Cessnas to business jets.

Since 2005, the Airport has been the base



US Airways Express has up to five flights a day from the Merced Airport.

for the air ambulance service provided by MediFlight. The helicopter crew sleeps at the airport and is ready 24/7 to answer emergency calls throughout Merced County.

FedEx also is based at the Airport, with offices that offer connections to cities around the world. UPS flies its overnight parcels and letters out of the Merced Airport.

Merced is currently served by US Airways, which has daily flights to Las Vegas International/McCarran Airport. Connecting flights are available to destinations around the world.

The Airport is served by the Transportation Security Administration, known as the TSA, which screens passengers and their baggage before they board US Airways flights.

Once passengers are screened in Merced, they don't usually have to be re-screened when boarding connecting flights.

The Airport has a fire station that offers specialized firefighting capabilities. Crews are ARFF (Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting) certified and can deal with fires on planes as large as a 737. A dedicated crash fire rescue engine is stationed at the Airport.

The Airport is experiencing a mini building boom. The Fixed Base Operator (FBO), the technical term for the airport's main concessionaire, is in the process of building two

In aeronautical circles, the Merced Municipal Airport is known as MCE.

hangars that would house an additional 20 aircraft.

The FBO, Gateway Air Center, sells aviation fuel for corporate and light aircraft and other pilot supplies. The company also provides a range of aircraft maintenance services. It is a factory service center for Cirrus Aircraft, a leading manufacturer of top-end private aircraft. The firm also is constructing a 12,000-foot corporate jet center, with a crew lounge and rest facilities.

Another Airport property owner is building a hangar for aircraft he will be transferring from a nearby airport. There also are plans for two additional private aircraft hangars in the works.

Business continues to grow at the Airport, so the parking lot is expanding to handle more long-term passengers. And, unlike many airports, parking is free.

In the near future other improvements are planned. The terminal building is small, and was designed in the days when there was no TSA or airport security, so there are plans being developed to build a new terminal.

Airport by the numbers

Airport elevation.....	156 ft
Runway length.....	6,302 ft
Airport radio frequency.....	122.7 Mhz
Aircraft based @ MCE.....	125
Operations (avg).....	266/day
Airport acreage.....	538
Years running airport.....	75
Miles from freeway.....	1.5
Hours of operation.....	24/7
Airport budget.....	\$2,562,870

The City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
 Mayor Pro Tem Joe Cortez
 Councilmember Michele Gabriault-Acosta
 Councilmember Rick Osorio
 Councilmember Carl Pollard
 Councilmember Jim Sanders
 Councilmember Bill Spriggs

City Council meetings are usually the first and third Monday of the month. The Council meets at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers on the second floor of the Civic Center.

Contacting us

The City of Merced wants the site www.CityofMerced.org to be a one-stop source for information on the City. It contains City Council agendas and minutes, the Municipal Code, the General Plan, news releases, department listings, street closures, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, information on officials and an online survey.

To contact the Newsletter, e-mail newsletter@cityofmerced.org, call the Public Information Office at 385-6232 or write to Newsletter at the address below.

Merced Civic Center
 678 W. 18th St.
 Merced CA 95340
 Open Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.,
 except holidays

City Council.....	385-6834
City Manager.....	385-6834
City Attorney.....	385-6868
Code Enforcement.....	385-6855
Finance.....	385-4718
Inspection Services.....	385-6861
Personnel.....	385-6839
Planning Department.....	385-6858
Public Works (7:30-4:30)...	385-6800
Recreation/Parks.....	385-6855

E-waste are household electronics and other items that can no longer be disposed of in City garbage cans. Call 723-4735 to learn how to properly dispose of those items.

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department..... 385-6891
 Police Department..... 385-6912

Assistant City Manager Cahill receives statewide award

Assistant City Manager Bill Cahill received the John H. Nail Memorial Award, which is given to one "outstanding municipal assistant" by the City Managers Department of the League of California Cities.

The statewide award recognizes one official a year for his or her contributions to the city's government and the community.

Merced's assistant city manager serves as the department head of the City's Rede-

velopment Agency, Office of Economic Development and Merced Municipal Airport. Cahill also is the lead staff liaison with the University of California for the new Merced campus.

He is the lead negotiator in collective bargaining with the City's five labor unions, oversees and coordinates the City's capital improvement projects and substitutes for the City Manager.

Visitor from Down Under observes City government

Australians like their burgers with a slice of beet, and they drive on the opposite side of the road, but otherwise there are plenty of similarities with the U.S.

Les McMahon visited Merced last month as part of an exchange program of the City Managers Department of the League of California Cities. He is the general manager of the Wollondilly Shire Council in New South Wales, Australia. Wollondilly is about 60 miles southwest of Sydney and has 16 towns and villages. The Shire Council is a regional government combining services similar to those provided by the City and the County.

McMahon conferred with City department heads, sat in on agenda meetings and joined a Leadership class to share his experiences. McMahon said the visit has given him several new ideas he plans to try out when he returns to Australia.



Wollondilly's Les McMahon

He enjoyed his visit, with stops in Monterey, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Yosemite. "Americans are the most friendly people I've ever met," he said.

City has plenty of recreation opportunities available

The City's Parks and Community Services Department offers a variety of classes for all age groups.

The department offers classes in aquatics during the summer months, and throughout the year there is a variety of leisure classes and youth and adult sports available.

Rental of the City's pools, parks and Senior Center is handled through the department.

To find out more about the classes, the services available and our parks, visit Parks and Community Services Web site at www.CityofMerced.org or call the department at 385-6855.

It's time to prepare in case the spring rains are heavy

The first part of our winter has been dry, but that doesn't mean it will stay that way. Last year heavy spring rains caused some localized flooding, along with soaked streets and creeks.

City crews regularly check drains, but make sure a sudden storm doesn't block your gutters and drains with debris.

And slow down when driving on wet streets and allow extra distance for braking.

The City provides materials for sand-

bags, if needed. The bags can be picked up at the Central Fire Station, 99 E. 16th St.

Sand is available 24/7 at these locations (bring a shovel): Loughborough Drive and R Street, Parsons Avenue and Oregon Drive, the 200 block of W. 15th Street, East Santa Fe and Green Street, West-North Bear Creek Drive at the end of the street near the City water well site.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 385-6800.