

PDK Watch Newsletter, August, 2001

Despite Official Assurances, Regularly Scheduled Service Now At PDK

A new airline based in Cartersville is offering regularly scheduled passenger service out of PDK. Corporate Aircraft Partners uses 12-passenger Jetstream 32 turboprops and advertises, "No security checks required!" What happened to the promises made to residents that there would never be any regularly scheduled passenger service at PDK?

BOC Needs To Change Law To Make PDK Safer

There is a serious problem with safety at PDK. The current law in the county allows for the occasional and special use of blimps, balloons, gliders, and aircraft larger than 75,000 pounds with prior authorization granted by the county. It is simply a one-sentence law under code section 6-93. DeKalb County needs a better law and policy regarding safe use of our runways. The BOC needs to tighten up the language in section 6-93.

While she was CEO, Ms. Liane Levetan abused her powers in establishing guidelines that allow aircraft over 75,000 pounds into PDK under section 6-93. Her actions encouraged the wholesale abuse of the law by allowing larger and heavier aircraft regular use of our airport.

Ms. Levetan indicated she saw no rational basis to deny prior authorization for aircraft over 66,000 pounds. Well, she could not have been more wrong. In 1988 the runway was extended 1000 feet to provide a safety margin. We no longer have that safety margin as PDK, under policy established by Ms. Levetan, is permitting aircraft requiring up to 5,990 feet for take-off to use our County airport!

Despite strong repeated assurances from the FAA, the County and the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals that the 1000-foot extension of the runway was added for safety, not to provide a longer runway for heavier jets, in January 2001 a Gulfstream G-V used PDK. According to manufacturer's specifications, this aircraft needs 5,990 feet to take-off when fully fueled and loaded. PDK's runway is 6,001 feet, which includes the 1000-foot extension added for the purpose of reducing the risk of aircraft accidents at PDK according to the records obtained from the 11th Circuit Court. That only leaves 11 feet for pilot error, wind gust, etc. By the way, the airport does not have the ability to verify the actual weight of aircraft.

Runway safety margins should never have been compromised for the convenience of aircraft owners.

Until the BOC changes the law, citizens will continue to be abused by the policies set by the previous CEO. Until the BOC defines the County's vision for the airport, citizens will continue to be abused by the current policies.

Senate Bill Puts PDK on Priority List for Federal Funds

Georgia's U. S. Senators Max Cleland and Zell Miller recently sought funding for airport improvements at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK) in Senate Appropriations Bill 1178. Their efforts were rewarded when the Appropriations Committee put PDK in the list for

priority consideration for Airport Discretionary Grants for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002. Senate report 107-38 states, "[the] Committee expects the FAA to give priority consideration to applications for the [listed] projects" and the "Committee directs that priority be given to applications involving the further development of the following airports." The list then included:

DeKalb-Peachtree Airport, GA

Airport expansion & noise control

Based on a discussion with staff in Senator Cleland's office, it appears that nothing specific is planned to date. The funds may be for the commercial buyout on the north side of the airport. However, application for these funds must be made by the County and approved by the FAA.

This may portend another expansion for PDK is in the works. If you have an interest in this matter please contact your Commissioners and the CEO to express your opinions. Their address is 1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA, 30030.

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Go to the PDK Watch website at [www.pdkwatch.org](http://www.pdkwatch.org) to get more on PDK Airport. Send your e-mail address to [pdkwatch@yahoo.com](mailto:pdkwatch@yahoo.com) to receive notice of updates.

#### PDK Watch Needs Your Support

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