

# WEST HOUSTON AIRPORT

## 50th Anniversary Special Edition

EDITED BY:  
HALLIE LICKTEIG

Semicentennial Issue | October 13, 2012

A Friendly Place to Fly Since 1962

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### West Houston Airport Celebrates Fifty Years



Inspired by the founder's, Stephen Cumming, love of flight, the West Houston Airport started as little more than a graded out airstrip in 1962. In 1965, Willie Doslauf owned the land and teamed up with Houston businessmen, Landers, Kachel and Bridge to complete what Cummings started and build the airport's first hanger located on the eastside of the airfield.

This year the airport will cele-

brate 50 years of operation, and since those first days of one simple gravel runway West Houston Airport (KIWS) has grown into one of the finest general aviation airports in the country. These days the airport houses more than hangars with a number of on-airport businesses and flight enthusiasts. The airport houses several local aviation groups like the Commemorative Air Force and the Houston Chapter of the 99s, an organi-

zation of female pilots, all of which are a part of this local gem's culture.

"We are the closest general aviation airport to downtown Houston, the Galleria, the Energy Corridor and Memorial City" Director of Aviation and President Woody Lesikar said. "It's Location, Location, Location as the real estate term implies, We're very busy and it's always a different day - no two days are the same."

Lesikar started out as a flight instructor at West Houston in 1966 for a local crop duster, Frank Fennen and eventually became a Gold Seal instructor and an ATP rated pilot.

At 20 years old and without any capital, Woody Lesikar began Skyline Aviation, the flight school and charter operation at the airport. With a \$25,000 loan from Cessna Aircraft, Lesikar

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#### West Houston Airport (KIWS) Adds Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS)

Belfort Instrument Company, one of the country's oldest meteorological sensor and meteorological system manufactures, has installed their AWOS AV with Ceilometer at the West Houston Airport (IWS), Houston, Texas, and an FAA designated reliever airport with some 400 based aircraft, and 130,000 annual operations.

The just installed Automated Weather Observation System provides pilots with Wind Speed, Wind Direction, Wind Gusts, Temperature, Humidity, Dewpoint, Altimeter Setting, Density Altitude, Visibility, Cloud Height and Cloud Cover. The Airport AWOS information is accessible via VHF Radio and over the internet at the DigiWX Advisor website.

"The Belfort AWOS is one of a number of improvements we are making at our airport to increase operational safety and capabilities", this according to Woody Lesikar, Airport Manager, he continues, "After looking at other systems, Belfort supplied us with a demo unit so we could try it before we purchased it. That really sold us on Belfort. The AWOS system proved itself as a reliable performer with a minimum of maintenance. This is our 50th year and we bought the Belfort AWOS as our birthday present and to enhance the overall status of West Houston."

Belfort Instrument Company has been a leading provider of weather instruments to government, professional meteorology and aviation markets for over 130 years.



ABOVE. Recent renovations on West Houston's terminal gutted the existing building built in 1984

#### Major Renovations Ring in West Houston Fifty Years

October 13th will ring in West Houston Airport's 50th birthday and airport management is celebrating its fifty years of flight with a complete renovation to the original terminal facility built in 1984. The airport is getting a complete face-lift with major remodeling of the downstairs lobby and reception area, updated modern bathrooms, pilot's lounge overhaul, and a covered parking facility slated for completion in 2013.

Needless to say, this massive renovation has been full of ups and downs.

Stacy Martin, IWS's Customer Service Manager, notes, "The only thing that's going to be in the same place after the remodel is finished is the staircase".

The project has taken several months and enlisted the help of nearly 20 contractors and businesses to bring this plan to life leaving no feature of the facility unaltered. The new Terminal Facility boasts breathtaking features like the cloudy sky ceiling fixture in the lobby bathrooms and massage chairs in the pilots lounge along with a state-of-the-art weather and observations planning center.

Renovations were the a collective effort of several talented contractors with the updated facility designed by Mr. Frank Goree, the architect be-

hind the original facility from the 80s, and contributions from ICS and Texan Floors with features like custom designed cabinetry and installation of flat-screen TVs.

Going into this project Airport Director, Woody Lesikar, had a set idea of what he wanted and who needed to be a part of this step in IWS's history. "When I knew that we wanted to do this, that it was really going to happen for the airport, I already had the contractors in mind I was going to use. I wanted people who had been a part of the Airport before because I knew they were the best."

Renovations at the Facility will update the current terminal in two phases and last all of three months.

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**ABOVE. The original airport hangar built when the airport was first purchased in the seventies**

**FROM PAGE 1**

bought three planes a small start for his business and within a few years was able to purchase the private airport from then owners.

Lesikar has shared his passion for aviation with a new generation every year since starting at West Houston Airport. Working with local organizations the airport has brought the joy of flight to families. Collaborating with groups like Boy Scouts, Wounded Warrior and Angel Flight to teach children about the sky, West Houston Airport has been giving back to its community opening its doors over fifty years ago.

**West Houston Airport Proposes Park for Addicks Reservoir**

Founded in 1962, West Houston Airport has been teaching people to fly for 50 years. The Airport is a privately owned, public use airport designated as a 'Reliever Airport' by the FAA. Home to over 300 based aircraft, the Airport provides an economic benefit to the tune of over \$20 million per year. The Airport has been actively involved with the community, from offering a place for Scout troops to learn more about flying to hosting several governmental educational seminars and other events.

What started as a grass strip primarily used for agricultural purposes in the western part of Harris County, is now not only a \$20 million economic impact factor to the citizens of the community, but has also become a place of inspiration and joy for numerous boys and girls. The airport has taught thousands of these young men and women how to fly over the past fifty years – many of whom watched planes take-off and land as little kids. Now, the Airport and the West Houston Aviation Association Society would like to help make that a part of many more children's dreams by establish an aviation themed park on the south western side of the runway on property belonging to the U.S. Corp of Engineers.

The 29 acres adjacent to the southwestern boundary of West Houston Airport and north of Groschke Road is currently designated as 'Recreation Land' by the US Army Corp of Engineers. The Recreation Land-use classification consists of areas where the existing environment has been significantly altered for the purpose of recreational development. The purpose of the proposal is to develop the 29 acre segment not currently used for the purpose of Flood Control into a park for the benefit of the community.

Both the US Army Corp of Engineers and Harris County have reported an increased demand for outdoor recreational area with trails, playgrounds, soccer fields, and ball fields as top priorities for the communities. Likewise, Harris County Parks Master Plan notes an existing shortage of park space to meet the needs of the population.

For Woody flight is a family affair, his two daughters have grown up around the airport, and both of them are pilots. They help their father run what has become a family business. All of the employees at West Houston Airport have come to be a part of this family and a passion for aviation surrounds the complex. With four generations of this family leaving their imprint on the airport, the little things that West Houston staff do really emulate a family, friendly feel to their customers.

"We always have discounts on our fuel on the weekends and holidays, always less than the "self-service" airports around the area." Lesikar explained,

The proposed project's first phase will create walking trails and picnic sites for the use of the community as well as boast a large beautification project for the area taking roughly 2 years and costing round \$400,000. A subsequent phase aims at implementing an aviation themed park with a merry-go-round, plane swings, miniature control tower and an observation area in the next 5 years and costing additional \$600,000. Later phases will add a flight museum and static airplane display to the grounds for children to learn about aviation first hand.

The proposed project is a partnership of West Houston Airport with Geodex and could mean significant changes to the surrounding community. Currently the closest recreational use tract in the local community area of Harris County Precinct 3 is the reservoir tract south of I-10.

The proposed project on the land surrounding the airport would bring much need recreational facilities to this side of Katy. Giving local families a place that encourages learning, curiosity and activity. If approved the Park Plan will create miles of trails along with designated nature observation areas, add an extensive playground facility, and multiple outdoor picnic areas for local community use.

Currently the land remains unused but the city of Houston and the US Army Corp of Engineers has long intended to develop the tract for community use. However, West Houston Airport's plan if accepted would mean extensive development of the land for community use creating a truly rare gem for local neighborhoods to raise up a new generating of flight enthusiasts. The proposal is currently in works with Shelley Lesikar deZevallos involved in it's development.

The aviation park proposal if accepted would be built and complete by 2020 in several stages. It will be the first privately built and funded public park of its kind in Harris County. Over the last ten years, the segment along Barker Cypress Road has added thousands of new homes most of them housing families with children. This park would be a great way to give these children a first person view of flight.

"We're the only full service airport. We try to do little things like that."

The facility's employees are a big factor in the atmosphere too. Visitors are greeted with smiling faces and jovial laughter from the moment they walk on the premise. The airport is alive with the sounds the planes and voices of old friends catching up in the newly renovated terminal. Far from uncommon, one might find employees and pilots spending down time in the spacious facilities like a second home.

Lesikar says it's keeping up with the growth around Houston that has kept the airport going. Making updates and redoing different aspects of the

airport when necessary has produced great responses from fellow aviators and visitors alike. In fact, West Houston revamped the terminal, updated the facility and doubled its ramp space within the last two years. Lesikar and his family anticipate they'll continue to adapt, grow and make more changes over the next decade, some will be substantial.

"We see more growth in the area, and we do our best to keep up with that," he says.

Of course, it's more than the renovations that keep West Houston atop of the aviation community. From pilot supplies to aircraft upholstery shop to maintenance shops, West Houston Airport is home to aviation businesses and organizations as well as nonaviation businesses. With a variety of on-premise businesses and a loyal customer base, West Houston is giving people what they want, when they want it.

"The on-airport businesses are all aspects of the aviation community, so it's a good little niche that we have," described Lesikar. "And our fellow aviators are very important because they keep our passion for aviation alive and going."

While this year marks fifty years of great service to the Katy Community, it's anyone's guess for where the next fifty will take this high flying crowd. Mid-October will bring the completion of the airport's renovation aimed at modernizing the features guests and pilots have come to love, but the future is another question entirely.

In the coming years, Lesikar explained. "I believe West Houston will be a major player in Regional General Aviation Airports in the area. More planes, longer runway, more public interest use. All good things for West Houston."



**ABOVE. Woody Lesikar and Robert Wells shake hands at a lunch from Lupe Tortilla Contractor Luncheon Shows a Lot of Appreciation**

Local contractors gathered this past Friday outside of West Houston Airport where staff served a lunch from Lupe Tortilla to show appreciation for all the hardwork they put in these past few months. Everyone from the airport's receptionist to the customer service manager pitched in to serve contractors and construction workers.

This gesture was a way for West Houston to show their gratitude for their support over the course of the terminal renovation. All of the people who lent a hand with the project the past few months were invited to relax and enjoy a little Texas hospitality.

While some could only drop by for a bite and a quick congratulations on the projects completion, others hung out in front of the nearly finished terminal catching up with staff and friends. Overall, the air of the Luncheon was one of excitement and relief that the massive renovation has turned out wonderfully.

Afterwards, contractors strolled

the facility to admire the finishing touches that they and their companies have been a part of and pausing to catch up with Woody Lesikar, Director of Aviation at the airport.

These last few months have been crazy for the airport and for those apart of the remodel of the Terminal, but the luncheon allowed the contractors to meet and talk with other businesses apart of the project as well as see the fruits of their labor.

Although most are glad to see the completion of this large project, its ending represents a bittersweet close to their unifying goal.

The luncheon was a final note in the hectic three month renovation project at the airport. Staff and contractors alike though delighted to be apart of the project are glad to see this chapter of change closing for the airport. The staff's appreciation luncheon was a great ending to the long hard journey for these involved in the project but everyone involved is excited for what the future holds for the airport. The renovations have been going on for over three months now and have involved 20 contractors and businesses.

## The Wells Group Talks About West Houston's 50th Anniversary

**Hallie Lickteig:** Mr. Wells, can you tell me about your company and what you do?

**Robert Wells:** The Wells Group (TWG) is a 38 year old Houston company started as a manufacturer's representative sales firm and has since grown into a commercial furniture dealership headquartered in Houston with offices also located in Austin, TX and New Orleans, LA. TWG specializes in providing affordable business office furniture solutions for companies, financial institutions, and automobile dealerships.

**HL:** How did your company first start?

**RW:** The Wells Group was started in 1972 by my father. He was a self-made man with a tremendous work ethic. He brought each of his three sons into business with him. That was his true love in life – getting to work and spend time everyday with his three boys. He was the perfect teacher and motivator!

**HL:** When did you first meet Woody Lesikar?

**RW:** Approximately 30 years ago. I started basing a small single engine plane at IWS and thus began our friendship and business together. Since then The Wells Group has provided furnishings for the Airport over the last 18 years. We have worked closely with Woody during this time.

**HL:** What is your most favorite

memory of West Houston or Woody Lesikar?

**RW:** That would have to be celebrating a special birthday for Woody's Dad on sunny Saturday afternoon. Woody created a special "Fly-In" picnic held for his father, Woodrow Lesikar, at his ranch in Hallettsville, TX. Everyone flew their own planes and landed in a special grass airstrip on the ranch to have a BBQ lunch provided by Woody and his family. Going there felt like the flying you might experience in Alaska – untamed and free and out in the country with no red tape, just friends and a good time for all who attended.

**HL:** What was it like to be a part of this extensive team responsible for the remodel of the West Houston Terminal?

**RW:** The Wells Group worked as the furniture and interior solutions vendor for the entire terminal. When you walk in and sit in the special high-sided lounge units designed for private conversations and individual privacy, you get a comfort unmatched in the corporate FBO world. We also provided a unique design and product for pilots to be able to get weather briefings while being able to stay in contact with their plane outside. Each special briefing station also includes power charging work surfaces keeping pilots tethered to their own electronics and their gear fully



ABOVE. Robert Wells, owner of The Wells Group with his plane

charged and ready to go and support of their next flight.

**HL:** How does your love of flying affect the way your company does business?

**RW:** Being able to fly is a very exclusive club of individuals I am proud to being a part of – there is a special bond and respect not found in the rushed society of today. Pilots treat other pilots with respect and awe no matter the plane they fly.



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\*Congratulations West Houston Airport on 50 Years\*

West Houston airport has been banking with Robert Kramer, President of Westbound Bank, for over 40 years now. The business relationship extends back to the sixties when Kramer was President of another local bank. Kramer has provided financing

for numerous West Houston Airport projects. Kramer, along with several other businessmen, formed Westbound Bank in 2007 which is now the only Federally Chartered Community Bank domiciled in Katy, Texas.

Kramer's bank provides unique

services for the Houston aviation community with financing for the purchase and refinancing of aircraft along with construction financing with mini-perm loans for the building of hangars for pilots and aviation buffs that desire their own facilities on the airport. This made Westbound Bank the logical choice for Woody Lesikar, Aviation Director at West Houston Airport, when he decided to move forward with renovation plans and Kramer was more than happy to assist the Airport with this project.

"It is always a good feeling to be in a position to help a valued friend and customer with their financial needs, knowing that your assistance will help them grow their business and become more successful," states Kramer of the experience.

As a pilot, Kramer brings his experience of flying into his business transactions. Kramer first got his pilot's license at Hobby Airport in the 1960s. With aspirations of becoming an airline pilot, he sought out a training program closer to home to continue training for his commercial license.

"I first meet Woody Lesikar back in 1967 while I was working at a bank but had this desire of becoming a commercial pilot. That's when I first heard of West Houston, formerly known as Lakeside Airport, and Woody had just gone into business there. I remember walking up to him and asking if they gave lessons. He gave just about the biggest smile I'd ever seen," describes Kramer.

Since that time, Kramer's relationship with the Airport has grown creating lots of great memories. "There were so many great times flying out of the Airport in the late sixties and early seventies and the camaraderie formed with other pilots and personnel at the airport during this time. It's great to be among a unique group of people that master the feat of piloting."

Kramer's hopes are for West Houston Airport to continue to develop and improve the aviation community in and around Katy and the West Houston area. He hopes that Westbound Bank continues to be part of that experience and provide financing to those flying out of the Airport.

### Westbound Bank Finances Airport Renovations



ABOVE. The Katy branch of Westbound Bank off of Grand Parkway

13225 FM 529  
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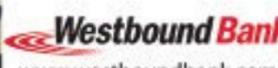
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**ABOVE.** The 'Very Important Pilot' lounge at West Houston

### Zero Gravity Recliners New Addion to IWS

The Relax the Back store is all about providing products that relieve pressure on the body. Cindy Cauthen, Product Consultant at the Town & Country location for over 21 years, says, "when you recline in one of our Zero Gravity chairs your body will experience a position which can help relieve pressure in the spine."

When Woody came to the Town & Country store last July he was looking for a way for his pilots to relax during flight down time in their new VIP Lounge. The interior designer who was helping to design West Houston Airports new terminal recommended he come to the store to view the Serenity Upholstered Zero Gravity Recliners. She suggested this product because she liked the concept of neutral posture, and not sitting in flexion. The designer felt it would help the pilots to relax more efficiently.

Woody decided to try the recliners and fell instantly in love. He knew that the designer was correct and the recliners would definitely aid the pilots in relaxing. Mr. Lesikar ordered six of the chairs to have on hand. These chairs are a highlight of the terminal. Most pilots fight over who gets to sit in them first.

Cauthen has worked with Relax the Back since the earlier 90s and has seen many of their customers who've had more than one back surgery or who are looking to prevent back and neck injury find a solution with the stores products. Working as a product consultant, She has assisted individual customers with the stores range of products. The store has partnered with local Doctors, Chiropractors, and Physical Therapist in the area that refer Relax the Back products. Cindy works together with specialists to provide patients a relief to their pain.

"We have hundreds of prod-

ucts that can help customers be more comfortable sitting or resting," notes Cauthen. "Whether they are riding in their vehicle, working, sleeping, or flying." This is why Woody contacted the store with an interest in their products last July. He was looking for a chair that would allow his pilots a break from the stress of flying. Once Woody sat in the chairs he knew he had to have them.

Cauthen says, "We want to thank Mr. Lesikar for immediately recognizing how zero gravity or what neutral posture can benefit anyone that sits in one of our Zero Gravity Recliners. We are happy that he chose our Zero Gravity Recliners for his pilot's relaxation room at the West Houston Airport terminal.

Back pain is an epidemic in our society. Eighty percent of adults will suffer from back pain at some time in their lives. The solution is all about self care. Nearly 100 percent of back problems can be prevented. Relax The Back provides product solutions that eliminate the cause of back pain by ensuring proper posture. We offer relief 24/7.

Our mission statement is to 'improve our clients' quality of life by educating them about the importance of proper ergonomics and offering premier products that provide practical solutions for the relief and prevention of back and neck pain.'

You can visit one of our 4 Relax The Back stores in the Houston area. Or you can go online to relaxtheback.com."

The recently finished Pilot's lounge features the six Zero Gravity recliner purchased by Lesikar in July. Along with the new chairs, renovations were aimed at completely updating the lounge replacing the floors and getting a change of paint. Guests can now recline in the arm chairs which also feature massage capabilities and watch the brand new flat-screen TV with every possible channel available in the updated VIP lounge.

## A Long Standing Friendship: Nottingham Plumbing and West Houston Airport

By Freddie Bailey  
Owner - Nottingham Plumbing

*Freddie Bailey is a long time friend of Woody Lesikar and owner of Nottingham Plumbing, a contractor for the recent terminal renovation. Bailey's company assisted with renovations to the terminal.*

My history with West Houston Airport is a long one. In early 1992 my dad and I bought a 1976 Cessna 310R twin engine airplane and needed a place to hangar it. West Houston Airport was the only logical choice. That is when I first met Woody Lesikar. Woody has a charismatic and likable personality. The West Houston Airport has always been a beautiful place to bring friends for an airplane ride with the well maintained and clean facilities. Through the years I eventually bought 2 lots in the hangar subdivision, sold them, bought a hangar, sold the hangar, and sold the airplane. The relationship with Woody grew to where he called upon my company for service work that was beyond his maintenance personnel's ability or time allowance. Woody has always tried to support businesses and individuals that do business with the airport. I am fortunate that the relationship continues even though I no longer fly.

Woody mentioned to me that he was getting ready to start a major renovation to update the original terminal building about 9 months ago. He knew that I had a small business and did mostly residential work and some light commercial work. He wanted to know if I would be up for the challenge of such a major project. I told him I would certainly entertain it - that I always liked a good challenge. One thing led to another and I was given a drawing of what was wanted for the public Men's and Ladies' restrooms. I procrastinated on finalizing a bid worrying if I could really handle such a large job. It required completely breaking out all the concrete for the re-configuration of both bathrooms and re-working all of the piping including the concealed flushing mech-

anisms. All measurements and piping had to be dead on. The day finally came that I gave the bid and met with Woody. We agreed to the contract. Excitement for getting such a large contract and fear gripped me at the same time thinking "what have I gotten myself into?"

The first thing to happen was a pre-construction meeting to ensure that everybody was on the same page to complete the project in a timely manner. Throughout the meeting all I could think of was "I am not going to be the one that holds things up". The real work began and we immediately faced challenges like all remodels - hidden stuff in the walls and ceiling that were not anticipated. At the very end of Phase I it was discovered that I had made a mistake on the height of the drinking fountain. While standing in front of it and thinking through how to correct the problem, Woody, Courtney and a couple of others walked up. I thought, "Crap, this is going to be embarrassing". When Woody asked me about it, all I could say was "Woody, I take full responsibility for it and I'll get it taken care of." At that time Woody did something that made me feel great and took away any embarrassment. He put his arms around me and smiled really big and said "Freddie Bailey, I am so proud of you. I love you man. That is why you are on this job. I have the best subcontractors because they don't pass the buck and blame it on someone else. I know you'll get it taken care of."

That stuck in my mind. It made me realize that the many years that I have worked hard to live and work with integrity and honesty were all worth it. Toward the end of Phase I, Woody asked me if I wanted to do Phase II, the other side of the terminal building. The confidence was there and I said absolutely yes. I am very proud to have been a part in the project. It was truly a pleasure to work with the other trades and Drymalla Construction. All parties were class acts. Woody truly does have the best subcontractors in the Houston area. It was an honor to be a part of the project at West Houston Airport.

**ABOVE.** A young Freddie Bailey has been flying with the West Houston for over 20 years now



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## Drymalla Construction Pairs up with West Houston for Renovation Project

Drymalla Construction oversaw the renovation plans at the West Houston Terminal. Drymalla Construction Company, Inc., was founded in 1946 by J.L. Drymalla and quickly established a reputation for quality. J.L. Drymalla retired in 1979, and an employee, Earl Pitchford, acquired the company. Earl has remained the owner since that time.

Our portfolio includes a diverse range of commercial construction projects that includes medical & healthcare, K-12 educational, higher educational, manufacturing, industrial, detention facilities, retail facilities, banks, churches, and airports. We have delivered eight private hangars and are currently remodeling the terminal at the West Houston Airport.

We deliver projects by means of competitive sealed proposal, negotiated agreements, design/build, and we have extensive experience with the CM@Risk method. We have delivered projects up to \$100 million in value, yet retain the personal touch necessary to properly administer projects of much lesser value.

In addition to our central office in Columbus Texas, Drymalla also maintains offices in Houston and San Antonio. Stability is a mainstay at Drymalla; our President and two Vice Presidents have been with Drymalla for a combined 121 years. Our project managers, estimators and superintendents have an average tenure with Drymalla of 13 years.

Our financial strength is a tangible asset in these difficult economic times. We are a Texas owned, debt free corporation with over \$400 million in bonding capacity.

Drymalla is committed to the green building process. We are a member of the USGBC and have delivered projects that are LEED Certified, Silver and Gold, plus projects that are CHPS compliant. Earl Pitchford, the owner of Drymalla, remains actively involved in estimating and construction performance. He is always available to the owner and architect.

Drymalla is a builder, not a broker, as evidenced by our staff of 50+ field craftsmen and our extensive equipment ownership. Our team is complemented by construction specialists: a full time safety director and a full time environmental manager who are dedicated to ensuring that our activities are performed safely and in accordance with all environmental requirements. Our full time warranty/closeout manager strives to deliver the same level of service and commitment to our clients after the project is completed as they were afforded during the actual construction process.

Our growth and success is a result of performance, professionalism, quality and personal participation of our management. Drymalla believes that strong team relationships lead to successful projects that meet the owner's aesthetic, functional, budgetary and scheduling goals.



ABOVE. Drymalla has worked on various project throughout Houston

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# DRYMALLA

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## Construction Company




ABOVE. Fred Goree cracks a smile at his offices in Bellaire

### Fred Goree of Goree Architects, Inc.

Fred Goree Architects, Inc. have had a long-standing relationship with West Houston Airport. Although Goree was involved with the recent renovations at the Terminal, he actually designed and oversaw the construction of the original terminal building in 1984. Over the years he has been involved in multiple projects for the airport, including plans for a new control tower and worked on a private and residential hangar at the airport.

The recent renovation project was designed by Fred Goree Architects in conjunction with Courtney Saldivar, the project's interior designer, and McDonough Engineering. The remodel covered over 30,000 sq ft of the existing terminal building expanding parts of Goree's original design.

Since he designed the original terminal building in the eighties, Goree was the logical choice to develop the plans for the renovation. While the firm

has done several types of projects in the US, Fred Goree architecture is renowned for the work he's done on car dealerships like Don McGill Toyota and Central Jaguar in Houston, TX.

The architectural firm has specialized in commercial, industrial and business architecture since 1963, based out of Bellaire. The Principal Architect of the firm is Fred Goree, Mr. Goree is a licensed architect and certified with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and has received numerous awards for design and sustainable architecture.

Fred Goree is the principal architect for Goree Architects, Inc. located in Bellaire (Houston). Mr. Goree is a 1958 architectural graduate of Rice University in Houston, Texas and is a member of the American Institute of Architects. Opening his own architectural firm office in 1962, Goree is currently architecturally licensed in Texas,

California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, Tennessee and Virginia. Mr. Goree travels extensively throughout the United States providing designs for projects in the private, corporate and public sectors. A specialty of Goree Architects is the design of automobile dealership projects (having designed over 600 dealerships in the past 30 years).

Having been involved in hundreds of construction programs, the firm is keenly aware of the importance of budget and schedule and is nationally recognized among major automobile dealers and automobile franchises for superb and noteworthy designs. Goree Architects maintains a complete state-of-the-art computerized design and drafting capability for the entire office, along with computer animation and visualization processes, having received national awards for Computer Animation and Visualization of dealership designs.

Fred Goree began his auto experience with Sam White in 1968 when Sam White wanted to move his Oldsmobile dealership from downtown Houston out to the Southwest Freeway. This became part of an exodus from the central city out to the freeways, which included Frank Gillman, Sam

Montgomery, Al Parker, David Taylor and many other giants of the industry. References from Dealers expanded the business around the State to San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, and outlying areas.

Fred Goree participated in The National Automobile Dealers Association convention in 1987 and presented a seminar on dealership design at NADA in Las Vegas, from which he began helping dealers, auto groups and factory executives coast to coast.

This national exposure led to association with other industry leaders such as Woody Lesikar in the airport industry. We worked with Woody for the last 25 years in developing buildings at the West Houston Airport including the terminal building.

Goree Architects, in addition to dealership design, offers consulting services assisting the dealership in reviewing his operation and his needs for facilities or remodeling.

"In cases where the dealer has someone from his organization or a local architect prepare a layout, we can come in as a consultant, review the design, and recommend suggestions or an alternate solution. The prime concern is the project program and satisfying that program with a unique design within the established budget."



## GOREE ARCHITECTS, INC.

A.I.A.

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Here's Wishing You a  
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**ABOVE.** John Conley of ICS installs flatscreen TV at West Houston

### Integrated Cabling Solutions Installs New Electronics System at West Houston Airport

Integrated Cabling Solutions joined an elite group of contractors behind the recent renovations at West Houston Airport. Workers oversaw the installation of the terminal's new flatscreen TVs and the computer inte-

grated display system at the terminal Reception desk. ICS is primarily an Audio / Video Company specializing in the sales and installation of home and commercial electronics including TVs, theater rooms, speakers, home automation and more.

"Our experiences at West Houston Airport have been outstanding, not only are Woody and his family great to know and work with, but Woody spares no expense when it comes to the Airport and having the job done right. In our first meeting, he let me know he



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didn't mind paying to have a job completed with pride! He's very loyal to any contractor who respects his Pride in mind vision for a job," John Conley, the contractor overseeing the installation, said about the project.

Conley first met Lesikar a month ago when the Aviation Director contacted him about the project and although ICS is new to the aviation community, they enjoyed staring out the windows at the planes during the installation work. Conley has never flown but working on this project showed him the unique lifestyle of West Houston's staff and pilots.

"I made Woody promise if he liked the work he'd take me for a flight," jokes Conley.

Being a part of such a large project has been learning experience for Conley and the ICS employees. His first impression of the airport was awe at the

success of West Houston and the size of its facilities. Unsure of what to expect, Conley was amazed at the level of quality the Airport maintains and the professionalism of staff.

When he first met Woody Lesikar, Conley knew he was going to love the guy and Woody would love working with ICS because both men respected good work. He considers it an honor to have been involved in this integral project at West Houston Airport because of the quality Lesikar demands in all of the Airport's business interactions.

Conley says, "As you get to know Woody on a more personal level, he's got a great personality, he's able to make you laugh, smile have fun all while showing you his passion for not only flying but also W.H.A. You can't help but to do your best work and his passion helps you feel as though, you're part of his team."

# Here's to Enough Fifty Years!

- Texan Floor Service, ICS, McDonough Engineering, & Bundren Painting

### Texan Floors Responsible for Terminal Flooring

Texan Floor Service started in business 25 years ago. As many small businesses, Texan was started with very little capital, but what they lacked in capital they made up for in energy and rock solid knowledge of the floor covering industry. With this reservoir of knowledge and a desire to be the best, Texan built its business one client at a time. Service was more than something that was in the company name, Texan Floor Service was built on that foundation. A foundation the company feels is the reason Mr. Lesikar has worked with Texan on numerous projects for the last 15 years.

"Mr. Lesikar is demanding but fair and we at Texan were proud to once again be chosen to be the flooring contractor for this project. Our experience was nothing but great" Jeff Hill explains.

Texan Floor and West Houston Airport have a business relationship that stretches back over the last 16 years. The Director of the Airport, Woody Lesikar, has used Texans over the years because of their commitment to quality. Texans has paired up with West Houston handling minor flooring projects including

carpeting and tiling in smaller portions of the terminal. However, the recent terminal renovation marks the largest project Texan Floors as done for the airport to date.

The new terminal will feature new carpet in the Pilot's lounge and up stairs offices along with modern marble floors in the updated lobby area. Mike Baker states this was the most challenging job Texans has done in a while, since the Terminal was occupied and open at the same time.

As a company known for quality, Texans has had the honor to work on other projects of this scale for Houston Landmarks like The Wortham Center, IAH, and George R. Brown Convention Center. Texan Floor Service is unique because it is an employee owned company, for this reason each person here takes pride in the work that they do.

This marks the second time Texan Floors has redone the flooring for West Houston Airport and employees are impressed with terminal's updated design. The new terminal features over 30,000 sq ft of flooring from Texan Floors using high quality material including marble and plush carpeting.

**BELOW.** Texan Floors Worker puts finishing touches on West Houston Terminal floors for 50th anniversary





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ABOVE. McDonough Engineering has worked on various projects around Houston, TX

### McDonough Engineering Oversees West Houston Renovations

McDonough Engineering Corporation has provided professional civil engineering services for public and private sector clients throughout the Gulf Coast area since 1977. The company was first founded by Ranney McDonough and since then has successfully completed over 1,800 projects involving design for commercial, institutional, industrial, infrastructure, transportation and public works related projects.

The engineering firms working relationship with West Houston Airport and IWS's Aviation Director, Woody Lesikar, began about 10 years ago. Since that time the company has worked on various projects for the airport providing paving, drainage, and utility infrastructure design as well as project management and facility planning. The existing relationship between West Houston Airport and McDonough Engineering is the reason Lesikar choose them to oversee the renovation project in 2012.

In the past, McDonough Engineering has served West Houston Airport for various improvement projects ranging in size and scope. Their involvement includes the preparation of land use studies, roadway realignment concepts, general terminal area parking improvement, and design of improvements and replacement of a portion of the airport sanitary sewer system.

After choosing to undertake a project of this, Lesikar wanted to find companies he knew held a personal interest in the success of the project. Having flown for several decades and worked with the airport several times before, Ranney McDonough, having being a part of the aviation community, understood what was at stake for West Houston with this project.

McDonough's flying back-

ground began earlier in life as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. A large part of his training was with military aviation at the U.S. Army Aviation School, McDonough's flight experience has primarily been combat missions as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam from 1967 - 1968, but he still flies today.

As a pilot flying out of the West Houston Airport, Mr. McDonough has developed a close working relationship with the staff and community leading to his inclusion in the renovation project. However, this was not the first airport work the company has participated in. McDonough Engineering airport work began with the construction of the Dallas / Ft. Worth airport and later, various projects at Bush Intercontinental, Ellington and Hobby Airports. Being licensed as both a rotary and fixed wing pilot, Mr. McDonough understands that proper infrastructure at airports is critical to safety and operations. His knowledge of working airports and design criteria for airport facilities has been passed down to the company's engineers.

The renovation project at West Houston Airport marks an important stage for the airport. Along with celebrating their 50th Anniversary on October 13th, the Airport has experienced five years of substantial growth calling for the need to expand. McDonough Engineering was instrumental in this process overseeing the project aimed at updating the existing terminal facility.

"We feel fortunate to be part of such a significant project for West Houston Airport. Over our ten year working relationship with the Airport, we have learned that Woody demands quality and wants only the best for his clients. This starts with him hand-picking the best team of professionals for his projects," explains Katie Yount, Director of Marketing at McDonough Engineering. "Quality design is also imperative to us, and we enjoy working for the best. We're honored to be part of both the history and the future of West Houston Airport."

### Bundren Painting: A Passion for Flight and Business

Bundren Painting was formed by Larry Bundren in 1984 to provide quality finishes to the commercial painting industry. From the small beginnings of a two man office Bundren Painting has grown to a company capable of competing in any market.

Based out of Houston, Texas Bundren has helped to define the business culture of this diverse city. With projects such as Reliant Stadium, home to the Houston Texans, N.A.S.A., high rise condominiums, churches and cancer treatment facilities such as M.D. Anderson, the company continues to do their part to shape the Houston community.

With most of their project work is in Texas, Bundren Painting has developed the skills and local traditions that keeps them confident and competitive in the Houston market. They have also completed projects in Louisiana and Arkansas.

The Houston Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) is the premier network of more than 600 commercial real estate professionals representing more than one hundred million square feet of commercial real estate in the Houston area.

"We were very excited to be able to play a part in the renovation at West Houston airport. West Houston Airport has a community of people that make it feel like home. To be able to associate our company with such an organization is a great honor," says Craig Bundren, Vice President of Bundren Painting.

BELOW. Craig Bundren relaxes against an aircraft before take off



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### David Wight Construction a part of Terminal Renovations

Founded in 1974 by David Wight, he built the company with his vision of quality service at a fair price. 35 years later David Wight Construction still clings to these values and will turn away a job if they believe they are not the best match for the work.

“We want you the client to be thoroughly satisfied with the finished product. We stand behind our work and resolve any issues that may arise quickly and with minimal disruption to the workflow. With our extensive work history, we have the knowledge to see problems ahead of time and address them before the work begins. Change orders are something we avoid if at all

possible. Repeat business from a satisfied client is our goal.” Say David Wight, Owner of David Wight Construction.

David Wight Construction first began work on the underground utilities at West Houston Airport in 1982. The company was chosen by West Houston Airport because of the recommendation of L. S. “Pat” Brown, then with the firm of Brown and Gay Engineers. Pat became a pilot at IWS and David was flying his Cessna out of Clover Field Airport in Friendswood at the time. David Wight Construction is known for their quality of work and on time performance. Giving owners what they want and when they want it is what DWCC does. From underground utility construction, to roads and curbing, to lift stations and forced mains, DWCC does it all.

Back in 1984 DWCC constructed the underground utilities for West



**David Wight Construction Company**  
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Houston Airport and became a lot owner in the subdivision that he helped construct. In addition, David who is an instrument rated pilot with CE500 Citation Jet rating also recently undertook the task of connecting into the City of Houston’s sanitary sewer system for West Houston. With numerous entities looking over DWCC’s shoulders, including the City of Houston, Harris County, Parks Department, Public Works, Corp of Engineers and the Airport, DWCC was in the performance lane. Everyone was pleased and the project went smooth. We connected up to the COH and started up the pumps and away went that old airport package plant! Airport Manager Woody Lesikar said “what a relief to have that behind us!” With over five years invested in getting permits and approvals including planning by McDonough Engineers and others and hiring the well-known environmental firm of Blackburn and

Carter to get through the process, it was a lengthy process but finally came to fruition and christening the end of 2011. DWCC has been there for almost three decades.

“I feel connected” said Wight, of his working for West Houston Airport. “We talk planes and old flying friends and there is really a lot of camaraderie in that and doing the work is the icing on that cake”.

David Wight and DWCC are ready and able and equipped contractors that can provide the services needed to satisfy job requirements. From small jobs to multi-million dollars infrastructure, David Wight Construction Company is there for the next project. “It’s jobs like West Houston Airport that keeps us going including the reference which we get from outperforming others”. We are appreciative of the business and want to continue to have satisfied customers.

### Courtney Saldivar of Allen-Guerra Designs Terminal’s New Look

Allen-Guerra Design-Build is based in Breckenridge, Colorado. The firm was started by Suzanne Allen in 1997 focused initially on residential projects in Colorado. Courtney Saldivar joined the firm in 2001. Initially based out of Breckenridge with her small family, Saldivar returned to Houston to be closer to her extended family in 2008 and continuing to work for the firm in here in Texas.

Although Allen-Guerra focuses on the building of mountain homes, Over the years clients have asked the company to work with them on projects

in many different locations. The company quickly found they really enjoyed working on all sorts of projects each helping to broaden the teams design abilities.

Allen-Guerra Design Build, is a full-service design and construction firm, with a passion for details and quality craftsmanship. They aim to bring together the client’s vision of their project and guide them in creating unique and beautiful architecture that will withstand the changing times. The company’s founders believe that the homes they design are more than just buildings, but representations of the self and a refuge for friends and families. Their process allows Allen-Guerra Design Build’s team to know clients, their needs and their desires and guide them in creating their dream.

Saldivar was originally asked to design the new kitchen and coffee bar area for West Houston Airport’s renovation project. The project since expanding to include most of the terminal and there is more coming after the 50th anniversary including a new covered parking area.

Aviation Director, Woody Lesikar, had a longstanding relationships with most of the contractors. According to Salivar the skills and easygoing attitudes of all the trades made the building process very enjoyable. New sub-contractors also joined the effort and helped bring the project to a finish on time.

“Architectural concierge is the best description I have for my role in the redesign and revitalization of the Airport terminal. I helped Woody take

the ideas and hopes he had for the Airport and made them reality suggesting designs, colors, furniture, and finishes. I also had the pleasure of forging new relationships when a contractor did not exist.” says Courtney Saldivar, of Allen-Guerra.

Saldivar’s current projects are a renovation of a historic Heights Blvd home into an office space for a new Houston City Magazine, ranches in Wyoming, New Mexico and British Columbia. She is also working with residential clients here in Houston.



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## Behind West Houston Airport's Accounting Department

Renee started working at West Houston Airport after getting laid off from her previous job when the I-10 corridor expansion closed down a large portion of the muffler shop. She knew what was coming for the business there having worked as an accountant for them. During the time, her brother-in-law was working at West Houston

Airport and knowing Renee's specialty recommended her to the Director of Aviation when a position opened up.

She is now about to complete her fifth year at West Houston working as the accounting manager. Initially from Missouri, Renee went to business school to get her associates degree in a field completely unrelated to her role at West Houston Airport. Most of her training was on the job doing the same things as her current position requires, but to her this aviation stuff is a whole new world.

## Twelve Years of Service and Security

*Rich Whitney has worked at West Houston airport for over twelve years as the facility's Compliance and Security Officer. Before coming on at the Airport in 2000, Whitney worked in law enforcement in Harris County for eight and a half years.*

**Hallie Lickteig: How long have you worked at the airport?**

Rich Whitney: Going on twelve and a half years now.

**HL: How did you first come on here?**

I was looking out for a new job I worked law enforcement prior to this and having three kids decided I wanted to grow up with them. Working at West Houston gave me a better opportunity to do that then my previous job where I was working seven days a week always on call.

**HL: Is there a big difference between what you do here and what you did as an officer? Do you enjoy it more?**

RW: It's not really a big difference, the difference is in some of the jobs I have to do but in essence it's maintaining the safety and security of the airport. In law enforcement the job is anything and everything with my job status I did everything working as a detective and accident investigator. Here its pretty much the same thing, it's just a smaller area that I have to deal with.

**HL: Are you a one man team?**

RW: The role is kind of like law enforcement, it's all in how you present yourself. If you treat people bad when you're in need of help their probably not going to help you. So it's all in communication and how you treat others. I would think if I was in a situation here I'm sure there would be others who would assist me. So communications a big part of that and it's probably got me through a lot of it.

**HL: Have you enjoyed your experience at West Houston Airport?**

RW: Yes, it's different. If I didn't like it I wouldn't be here, and I think that

the airport manager runs a good show taking care of his people. As long as you do your job and handle your business, there's nothing he won't do for you.

**HL: So how did you first meet Woody Lesikar?**

RW: I didn't live far from here and I just came in one day when I realized that this airport was here when I was looking to get of law enforcement. I came in and talked to Brandon who was the line manager at that time and he interviewed me. It's funny I think they had a pool going in the line crew to saying I would only last two weeks. I've been here twelve and a half years and their long gone. You know I guess that says something. It's all in how you take the job at hand.

**HL: What made you decide to stay here so long?**

RW: I enjoyed it. The airport's run the way it should be, it's clean and Woody takes care of the people who work for him and that's hard to find. You get some property owners and business owners who really don't look at the ones work for them or their never around, but Woody is always here encouraging his staff.. He does a real good job with that, keeps you on your toes so he knows exactly what everyone's doing.

**HL: So what exactly do you do? What would a typical day look like?**

RW: My job is like law enforcement in a sense, everyday is different. From the morning when I pull in it's never the same. It changes every day, I do a lot of stuff here besides being the compliance and safety officer. I assist maintenance and I can run the trucks, I know how to tow, I can do just about anything and everything here. I might not know it all but there's always room for training, If there's something I'm asked to do I don't know, I ask'll and do the best job I can.

**HL: Do you find it challenging to do a job like this?**

RW: I wouldn't say it's difficult because I know my job description and as long as I do what's expect of me it shouldn't be a difficult. A challenge is giving me something else that I haven't done before to handle. In all essence, if I get those challenges I always find out



## Billie Ledbetter Orchestra Plays at West Houstons 50th anniversary

Billie Ledbetter along with his "Billie Ledbetter Orchestra" is playing at West Houston's 50th Anniversary Party on October 13th. Billie has been a Private pilot since 1968. He was born in Tuskegee, Alabama and learned music at an early age. Billie played trumpet and had a band in High School and later went in the Navy and played in numerous bands including the Navy School of Music and Navy Band. He is married and has three children and three grand-

children. In 1996 Billie formed his Orchestra and has been playing professional gigs ever since. Billie has owned two planes. He went from a Cessna 152 to a Bonanza and currently interested in continuing his flying interests with a twin engine. He particularly enjoys playing at the airport where he can combine his love for aviation and music into one venue. You can learn more about Billie and his Orchestra at [www.bigbandhouston.com](http://www.bigbandhouston.com).

Over the years, she's learned that aviation is its own world and didn't realize the everyday people who are pilot's in the community. It's family, not just of West Houston staff, but a big network of some many different stories. You never really realize the size of the community. You get everyone from young teenagers to business owners who are a part of this vibrant community. She loves being at West Houston Airport, particularly the people and the atmosphere. For her, it's rare where you find a job that feels like it's the direction your life is meant to take, but for her West Houston embod-

ies this ideal.

The people at the airport are friendly which means she enjoys every day she comes to work. Though she never saw herself getting in to the position, she tries to exhibit the dedication of the community at the Airport. As a parent, Renee feels it's important for her kids to be apart of what has become her second family. Her children, 2 and 6, are big factors in her life changing the way she sees the world. She holds high hopes for the future of the Airport and her family.

what is specifically needed and what I'm suppose to do. I'm always trying to check up front to see what exactly he's expecting. If you fail the first time then you'll know the second time how to do it properly.

**HL: What's the craziest thing that's ever happened to you at West Houston?**

RW: That's a tough one. It's crazy every day, I'm always smiling and I'm always cracking jokes. So that's tough to answer maybe I'm crazy in a good sense because I know how work is and I joke around a lot. I prod and poke at people to get them to smile because it takes the stress off. Who wants to come to work and hate being there. A little humor doesn't hurt anyone, the tension will hopefully loosen up. I'm never serious, I do joke and most people here know up front that I joke around a lot. I guess I did that in law enforcement cause it helped me out. I never believed them when told me that while I wrote tickets there was always a time in my stop

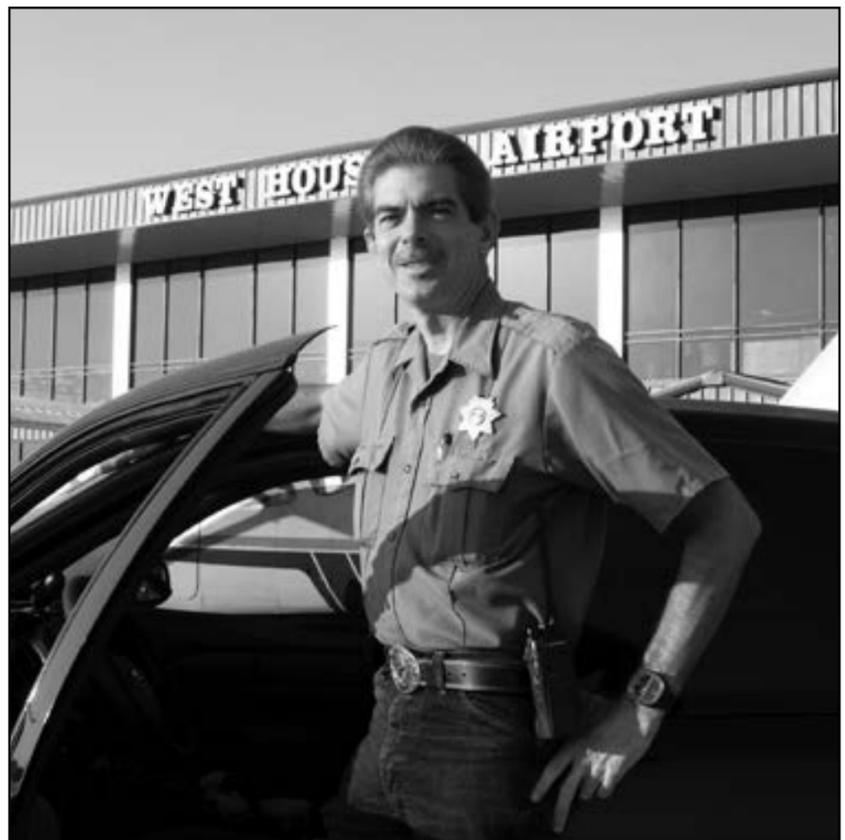
where I'd either smiled or laughed.

**HL: What does it feel like to be a part of this big family here at West Houston Airport?**

RW: You know it's great, it's tough I've got a family at home and this is like my second family. You know it seems like I'm here just as long as I'm at home. The only difference is I can drink beer at home.

**HL: What has the experience been like watching the airport grow over the last twelve years?**

RW: It's been interesting. I started in 2000 and I think in the last five years it's grown tremendously. Since the recession I would have thought, the airport might go downhill. People are building and still buying planes and there are some selling that aren't as fortunate as others. When it comes to that, the more they build the better. I call it job security so as long as people are bringing their planes here, it keeps this place full.



# WEST HOUSTON AIRPORT

## A LEGACY OF EXCELLANCE

### 1962-2012



### With 70 Years of Flight, Hank Henry Shows Us Your Never to Old to Soar

Meeting West Houston Airport's Chief Pilot, Hank Henry, who will be 88 in January, is like talking to history itself. What seems a quiet and unimposing gentleman, is in fact an individual who despite his many years of flight retains his boyish optimism of the world.

Having grown up in what he dubs as 'Hillbilly Tennessee' where his parent's 86 acre farm was roughly 10 miles from the nearest city midway between Knoxville and Nashville, Henry watched the hand propped bi-planes of local barnstormers and knew he was meant to be in the air. Henry longed to leave the farm anxious to get out and do something else. He enlisted in the Army at 18 after just finishing high school where he learned how to fly in 1943. The country was in the height of the depression and the Army gave Henry a way to realize his dreams.

With a quick learning curve, Henry was taught by an Army instructor how to fly bombers and would stay roughly two and half years on active duty as a pilot during WWII where he flew B-32 bombers out over Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

Hank Henry recalls his first experience in the air, "We had just barely gotten out of the airport traffic pattern and the instructor said 'you take off and you turn 45 degrees to the right out of the traffic pattern.' I responded 'you must be crazy I don't know anything about flying this thing.' I thought he was trying to scare me but in the Army you don't argue so I did the best I could and it went from there."

Henry has flown over 31,630 something logged hours the last time he's counted, and though he can't afford to fly for his own enjoyment these days he stays in the air by working as a pilot. He first came to Dallas to take refresher courses and ended up never leaving staying for an opportunity to develop his mechanic skills.

Setting up a shop in August of 1973, Henry came to the Airport as a mechanic when current owner Woody Lesikar first bought the airport. After the chief pilot at the time left to take another job, Lesikar asked him to take over in the chief instructor role.

Back then the Airport had only one large hangar with three rows of T-hangars when Lesikar bought the property, everything else seen on the property now he put here. The west side of airport was bought in 1980 by Lesikar and he started selling lots for people to build additional hangars some of which have now been bought back by the airport to use like public garages. There are now 38 hangars to the north of the Terminal building. What use to be a rice



irrigation reservoir surrounded by rice fields when Henry started here is now polluted with people.

Henry began teaching in 1947, being a pilot was his way of making a living and staying in aviation. What he enjoys most is the people he's met throughout the years. "Flight is probably one of the most basically honest and friendly industries we have in this country" says Henry. "Doesn't take too terribly long to say to meet the challenges and skills you have to have to be successful in flying and there has to be something that keeps you going and it's the people."

There has never been a threat that would cause him to change his mind about his love of flight, but there was a time when he considered another life. Back when Henry was out at Pearland, he was working on a job and was really just worn out. He was starting to look for something else, something different and when Mobile Oil tried to get him to take a service station they'd just built in Pearland.

"I was strongly tempted to take their offer and make a run it. I would have made more money than what I was making as an instructor and charter pilot, but the more I got to thinking about it I knew that in six months to a year I'd pretty much have mastered the operations and everything." Hank Henry explains, "What was I gonna do with myself after that. There was not enough challenge there to keep me going. So I back off of it and I'm glad I did."

Henry collects model airplanes he's flown and hangs from his ceiling in his office as a reminder of the challenges he's faced in his life. He has flown just about anything on the book and has a Glider and Cplane rating. He views it as a challenge to his abilities and judgment flying an average of three to four flights a day most days.

Teaching lessons through the years has enabled Hank Henry to meet a lot of people some of them he wishes he hadn't he notes with a boyish glint in his eye. The one he most appreciates was meeting with and talking to Gene Cernan, the last man on the moon. Whether their seasoned veterans like Cernan or rookies taking their first steps, Henry is proud to be a part of so many stories and still believes the experience that first time in the air is the same for all his students.

"When someone starts flying, their first exposure is to flight training regardless of whether their 16 or 60. They react pretty much the same. It's easier to teach the younger ones cause they don't have fear built in. Their minds are more flexible where older people are a little bit more timid about doing things You have to push them into it. They all go through the same stages of learning."

For Henry, flight is something you master and you never quit learning. He instills this in the students that come to him for lessons. Despite his almost 70 years of flying, he still maintains that he hasn't mastered it completely.

### Living the Dream at West Houston Airport

Nestled amongst the airplanes, T-hangars, and taxiways of West Houston Airport, hides a rich and vibrant community of locals who call the Airports hangar's home. The collection of roughly 40 privately owned and rented Community Hangars located on the west side of the airport property. Originally plots of land were sold and the hangars were built by private owners to store airplanes, cars, and for some owners even live in.

These days the Community hangars house 5 businesses and over 20 residents. This is a tight knit group of locals who share a passion and commitment for the unique lifestyle living in one of West Houston Airport's hangars brings. The most notable being Bobby Jackson who has lived in one of the hangars since December 1994, and now serves as the Property Ownership Association's President. Serving as President since 2000, Jackson has been aptly dubbed, Mayor Emeritus, and is the face for the community that lives on the airport premise and recently turned 80.

While the roll doesn't call for much policing aside from the occasional letter, Jackson works with the airport's Young Eagles Program as the Associations representative. The YE program aims to garner interest in flight by taking children age 8-18 into the air for a 30-minute flight. Over the years, Jackson has taken numerous children on flights through the program and finds this truly rewarding work.

Over the years, Jackson had always wanted to live with his airplane, but it wasn't until the passing of his wife that he started actively searching for a community. In 1990, after purchasing his airplane he began searching for a hangar to buy. He has found living on the airport property truly wonderful and loves that most pilot's he meets are in awe of the life he lives.

Bobby Jackson found his love of airplanes young. A self-proclaimed airplane nut from the time he could crawl, Jackson was enthralled with all kinds of military aircraft during World War II and knew every type of aircraft they were flying at the time. Growing up in Cameron, TX, Jackson first learned to fly in 1945 while still in high school.

At that time the GI bill came out offering pilot training to veterans, the city setup a grass runway on the north side of town. Jackson remembers asking the instructors what it would take to become a pilot and informed him he could rent the plane for \$8 dollars an hour. At that time, Jackson work Saturdays to earn his \$4 and then arrived diligently every Sunday at the airstrip to rent the plane for 30-minutes.

After only five and a half hours of flight, Jackson flew his first solo flight the instructor telling him he didn't need to ride with Jackson anymore, which now meant Jackson could rent the plane for cheaper. From that point, Jackson was hooked.

In 1947, he and six other men raised funds to purchase a Navy surplus plane, a Stearman, and he would follow the achievement by earning his pilot's license in 1948 before enrolling at Texas A&M to study Design Engineering.

While in school, Jackson's father and other owners sold the Stearman for \$300 dollars. Not long after, Jackson would receive his commission for two years serving as an air traffic controller in Greenland.

Jackson has lived in Houston most of his life working as a design engineer for various oil related companies. During that time, he would purchase an airplane hanging onto it for a few years before selling them again. He purchased his Lake Amphibian the year after his wife passed holding on to it for seven years, but it's his North American T-28 he's most proud of truly passionate about the old warplane.

Jackson cherishes the experience of living in an airport hangar, every morning he walks out to find his right there, but believe us, Jackson understands how truly lucky he is to do something a lot of Pilot's have always dreamed of doing.

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## Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP) Framework for Growth

It's estimated that the Houston Region will add nearly four million people and two million jobs by 2040. The Houston Regional Airport System will play a huge part in that growth. The airports in the Houston area are already generating roughly 1.9 million take-offs and landings a year. That rate is expected to almost double by 2030. Millions of people a year will use and benefit from local airports. The Houston-Galveston area council has created a plan that is the blueprint for the future of the Houston-Galveston airport system. It's called the Regional Aviation System Plan. The Plan examines local airports, evaluates how well they perform, and identifies future improvements and ensures that the system continues to be a major economic engine for the area.

"Every ten years, we add over a million new residents and along with that comes many jobs." Alan Clark, Director of Transportation Planning, H-GAC. "These people, these jobs, these businesses, they depend upon convenient and easy access to the airports for much of their activity."

Houston has had a partnership with aviation since the pioneering of flight. The first aircraft flight took off from a grassy field south of Houston in 1910. Over the decades air travel became increasingly important, airfields and then airports grew up to serve the needs of the Houston-Galveston region. By the 1950s there were regular flights from Hobby Airport to Mexico City and Houston's airports became an airport system as the area expanded.

Because the Houston region can expect more people and because the airports are huge revenue and job providers, now is the time to think about the future and where the system will go from here. The plan identifies 600 projects to meet growing aviation needs and over \$2.3 billion in needed airport improvements over the next 20 years. Those include improvements for runways, terminals, and hangars.

Regional airports are classified by the Federal Aviation Administration into three categories: commercial, reliever, and general aviation. Commercial airports provide scheduled airline service like Bush Intercontinental and Hobby. Reliever airports are designed to do just that, relieve congestion at Bush and Hobby. Houston supports over ten reliever airports around the area and they generate a lot of activity. Houston reliever airports are home to more than 2,000 aircraft and they generate nearly 1 million take offs and landings a year. More than Bush and Hobby combined.

Community airports sometimes called general aviation airports, provide a range of important services support local community giving them access to services they might not have otherwise. With fourteen general aviation airports in the area, they typically are not as busy but they create jobs, generate local revenue, and attract business to their surrounding areas.

"Every airport is important to the system no matter how small it is or how advanced it is. Every airport plays a role in the system" explains Shelley Lesikar deZevallos. Smaller airports like West Houston handle local medical flights that come in and out, cargo, and mail creating a lot of activity close to smaller businesses.

"We are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We provide services to the little guys, to the folks who come in here to make business transactions who do little deals. This airport here, West Houston Airport, contributes over \$20 million a year for the economic impact of this community" says deZevallos.

H-GAC's plan establishes a balanced airport system, but if an airport closes its unlikely that it will reopen or be replaced. That's the job of the Regional Aviation System Plan, to look at the system in place now and anticipate the future needs. With the rate Houston is growing those demands will only increase.

## West Houston Airport : A Family Tradition



**ABOVE.** Woody Lesikar with his two daughters, Shelly and Stacy, have been a part of the airport for almost fifty years now.

Growing up, Stacy remembers her first primary job at the airport as cleaning trashcans. That was one way their father taught the girls how to make sure everything stayed clean and teach them a work ethic. Then they became responsible for sweeping the original white hanger at six and seven years old even though they were too small for push brooms. It's one of her earliest defining memories of the airport, their father teaching them the importance of cleanliness. It was the girls' first job working at West Houston when they were young. Woody had always wanted his daughters to be a part of the airport. His love of aviation always effecting the way Stacy saw the world.

Spending her childhood at the airport, Stacy has loved it as her home away from home, a comfort zone of sorts only getting her pilot's license in 2004. She first flew when she was six months old, and the love of being free in the air captivated her at a young age. When the girls were young Lesikar loved to travel, and they always took an RV to see land He rarely experienced in the air.

Born into a community, Stacy understands she's known and meet more people than she could possibly remember. She grew up outside of Pearland and went to the high school at the same school as her parents. However, she was at West Houston every chance she could be after deciding she wanted to fly at 16. She spent the week of spring break driving back and forth which didn't get her very far, but it was exhilarating to be in the air.

Getting married in 1993, she was living in Willis was never really involved in the airport other than then love as a child. Through high school, Stacy always missed being here. She ini-

tially learned to fly in Portland, OR in a Cessna 150 while living there a total of eight years. Flying there was a different experience from flying in Texas with the backdrop of Mt. Hood. Her father was a part of this experience, talking with the instructors at the school. Anywhere you go in aviation Woody Lesikar's name is known, and being a part of this legacy is astounding to her. She is still in awe of what her father accomplished at 23 years of age with two young children.

From the beginning the airport was a family affair, the girls and their mother helping out at the airport. She has to wonder what part of her father's initial dream has come to life and what part of the airport's success might exceed his expectations as a young man. So much has changed since then.

Stacy has flown with her father a few times, when she was a new pilot seriously learning to fly. When she came to visit, Lesikar would take her up and teach her as an instructor. Woody has always been patient with their learnign experience and Stacy is proud that she's accomplished earning her father's signature on her logbook. She is a self professed, 'newbie' pilot, and being in the air is always a rush leaving her worries behind her enjoying her life and enjoying the world in that moment of freedom. She revels in the enjoyment of the flight.

After returning from Oregon, Stacy became a part of the airport family when her father offered her the position of Customer Service Manager two and a half years ago. She sees herself as a strong personality and is never afraid to ask the questions she doesn't know. She's never known her father as anything except his passion knowing retirement is not for him. As long as he's always flying she knows he'll be happy.

There were only ever two things Woody tried to instill in his girls, to help them learn how to fly and to help them with their college degrees. Even though this was one of the roughest times in her life, Shelley remembers her father doing just that. She took her first ten hours with him when she was sixteen years old finally getting her pilot's license at 18. For Shelly to be sixteen and soloing is a phenomenal feeling like she could do anything in the world.

Woody has always been a very positive person, and instilled that in the girls young. He always told them to follow through in their dreams, which told Shelly to not give up no matter what. Shelly like her father has always believed in education currently working towards her doctorate.

She worked at Cessna in aircraft sales before coming on at AOPA as the world's largest aviation organization and has always officed out of the airport working on special projects with her father. She got to see many of the challenges her father faced running a family business. Growing up with her father, Woody always encouraged her in her dreams. Working together, she got to see rare moments of her father on their trips to pick up aircraft garnering a respect for his aviation and business career.

One of her biggest memories with her father was flying her first Bonanza with him at fifteen taking the plane out to land in Alexandria, LA. He was a gold seal instructor, which is the highest honor a pilot can get from the FAA. He has flown a lot and taught many students throughout the years.

Flying is one of the few times Shelly gets her father to herself spending the time to talk about everything going on at the airport. She learned from her father at a young age to stand up for what you believe in and do what's right. She sees this with the way Woody has grown the airport over the last fifty years running a top notch facility. As a small business there were a lot of things that Woody had to learn, and how to deal with everything and willing to do tasked he asked of his staff.

Like her father, Shelly and her husband have been taking their daughters into the air since three months old. Her and her family have lived on the airport and teaches her daughters the difference between aircraft types. It's what they've been raised with just as Shelly before them. As a family they've travelled back and forth across the country with the girls.

While their lives have been a whirlwind of aviation since birth, Lesikar always wanted his daughters to be a part of his passion for flight. He raised them with the idea that the harder you push your children to do something the more they might go in the opposite direction trying to instill the basic values of right and wrong.

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