

Customs facility, new tower to lift airport

International travel will soon be within reach of McCollum Field with improvements now underway at the Cobb County airport.

Officials held a joint groundbreaking Sept. 17, for a new air traffic control tower and a U.S. Customs inspection facility planned to be open for business next year.

This will be the first on-site U.S. Customs inspections facility at a metro Atlanta general aviation airport.

The announcement of these follow the August completion of a \$1.2 million extension of two parallel taxiways at the western end of the airfield. Ninety percent of the cost was paid for through federal grants.

“All these improvements provide a safe, efficient and convenient option for our users,” Airport Manager Karl Von Hagel said, adding the changes give potential customers good reasons to consider coming to McCollum Field. “We may now become their airport of choice.”

The \$2.9 million air traffic control tower, scheduled to be completed in January, will improve visibility, provide proper layout of equipment and offer an improved work environment for controllers.

The \$800,000 customs inspection facility will allow international arriving aircraft to clear customs at Cobb County Airport rather than clearing at another port-of-entry airport and then continuing their flight to Cobb. It is expected to start providing services in July.

Officials said the new customs facility will eliminate the requirement for an extra stop, saving money, time and increasing productivity – thereby making Cobb County businesses more competitive in the world market.

“This new U.S customs facility and service will make it more convenient for international travel to and from our airport.” Von Hagel said.



Special



Special

Renderings of the new \$2.9 million air traffic control tower and \$800,000 U.S. Customs facility at McCollum Field.

Funding for the customs inspection facility is being provided by Hawthorne Global Aviation Services, the airport’s major service provider.

Once the new air traffic control tower becomes operational, the current control tower will be demolished but the airport administration base building will remain.

Funding for the tower project includes \$1.25 million grant from the Federal Airport Improvement Program and a \$125,000 grant from the State Division of Aviation.

The new control tower is being constructed just 35 feet north of the existing control tower. Access to the existing control tower and administration building is still available from the Entrance A parking lot.

Other improvements at the airport are under consideration, Von Hagel said, including an approach light system.

Cobb County airport is the second busiest general aviation airport in Georgia and is home to 250 aircraft, while generating an annual economic impact of \$112.4 million to the local community and supporting 842 local jobs, officials said.

For more information, go to CobbCountyAirport.org.



Gary A. Witte

Assistant Port Director Priscilla Frink was one of several U.S. Customs agents attending the Sept. 17 groundbreaking ceremony at McCollum Field.



Carry A. Witte

Breaking ground at the new ballfield

The Atlanta Braves announced SunTrust Park will be the name of the new stadium under construction in Cobb County Sept. 16.

Dignitaries from throughout the region, including Braves legend Hank Aaron, the Cobb County Board of Commissioners, Major League Baseball officials and the governor, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony at the future stadium site in the Cumberland area.

SunTrust Bank entered into a 25-year deal to secure the naming rights of the stadium, which is scheduled to open to fans at the start of the 2017 baseball season.

The Board of Commissioners approved a 30-year agreement last year that will help build the \$672 million stadium.

At least \$322 million of the stadium project will be paid for by the Atlanta Braves, which will also invest an additional \$400 million for an entertainment district on the 60-acre site.

This will include retail, restaurants and other development projects on the location at the intersection of Interstates 285 and 75.

Local costs will draw from various sources including payments by private businesses within a special district around the project, the motel/hotel tax and existing county revenues.

Books for sale this month

The Cobb County Public Library System's next semi-annual book sale will be held Friday and Saturday, **Oct. 10-11** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 12 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Jim R. Miller Park at 2245 Callaway Road, Marietta.

Donated items for the book sale include books, textbooks, DVD and VHS movies and children's books. Prices range from 10 cents to \$4. All profits from the sale go directly to buying more items for the 16 Cobb libraries.

For more information, please call Patty Latch at (770) 528-2345.



Community panel discussions planned

The Neighborhood Safety Commission is again hosting community awareness monthly panel discussions. Upcoming panels and topics include:

- Wednesday, **Oct. 15** - Active Shooter
- Wednesday, **Nov. 19** - Teen Pressures
- Wednesday, **Jan. 21** - Be an Educated Driver
- Wednesday, **Feb. 18** - Cultural Diversity
- Wednesday, **March 18** - Emergency Preparedness
- Wednesday, **April 15** - Protecting Our Children
- Wednesday, **May 20** - Mental Health

All of the panels will be held in the BOC Room on the second floor of 100 Cherokee St., Marietta. The discussions will also be televised on Government Access Channel TV23.



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