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# Council Bluffs Municipal Airport award highlights growth

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File photo

A Light Sport plane is pictured at the Council Bluffs Municipal Airport.

Posted: Saturday, April 27, 2013 12:00 am | Updated: 1:12 pm, Sat Apr 27, 2013.

By Tim Rohwer  
trohwer@nonpareilonline.com | 0 comments

Council Bluffs Municipal Airport has undergone considerable growth, not just in size, but also the number of planes that now use it.

This hasn't gone unnoticed by the Iowa Public Airport Association, which this week awarded its "Presidential Award" to Dan Smith, the airport authority's executive director.

"This is a big deal," said his daughter, Lisa LaMantia, president of the airport's Advanced Air operation. "It's a very nice honor to get that."

It's an award given to someone who has made a big

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lot going on," he said.

Today, there are 103 planes based there with 45,450 annual operations, with a take-off and a landing being one operation, LaMantia said.

That makes the Council Bluffs airport the fourth busiest in the state behind just Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Ankeny, she said. The 103 planes based there makes the airport the fourth-busiest in that category behind only Cedar Rapids, Des Moines and Davenport, LaMantia said.

This activity didn't come overnight but after years of

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lobbying for federal funds and lots of physical work, according to LaMantia said.

"Because of his vision he changed the face of the earth at the airport. There were 3,330,000 yards of dirt moved at the airport (for expansion). He has also been a good lobbyist for the airport to get improvements."

Today, the airport has a new runway, new hangers, new airplane parking ramps, and a modern terminal, she said.

For added pilot safety, an Instrument Landing System, or ILS, has been installed, she added.

"That is huge for Council Bluffs," LaMantia said.

Pilots, especially those crossing the country, want an airport with an ILS system in case bad weather makes

visual approach difficult, she said.

"A lot of pilots like to come here," LaMantia said. "That includes the fact that our jet fuel is \$1 cheaper per gallon than in Nebraska, and our airport is ramp free. There are no ramps or landing fees."

"We provide friendly service, and it's an easy airport to get in and out of," Smith said. "We try to make it as pleasant an experience as possible to attract more business."

Smith said he's seeking federal funds to build even more hangers to meet the growing demand.

"We've got five planes on our waiting list."



Smith said he was unaware of the award recognition until it was given to him at the state airport association conference this week in Des Moines.

"I consider it an honor. And, all my contemporaries were present when it was awarded, and that meant a lot to me."

This is not the first time Smith won the award. He was recognized in 2003 for working with Iowa Western Community College to help upgrade the college's aviation program.

"We are moving in the right direction," Smith said about the airport.

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
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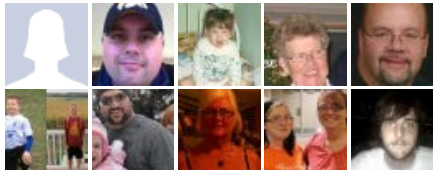



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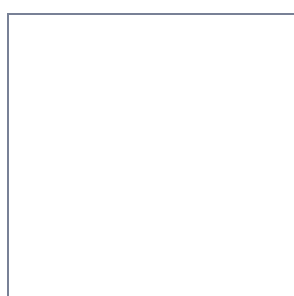
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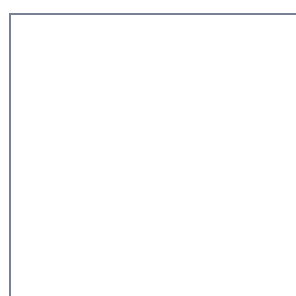
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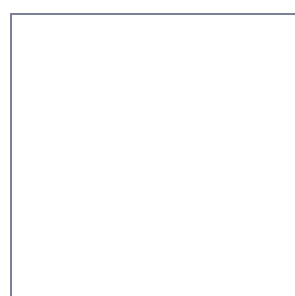
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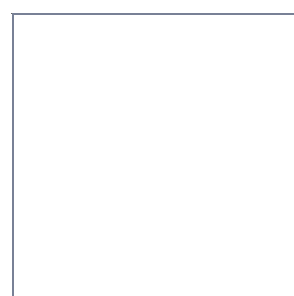
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