

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Joseph M. Deakin, Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Air Show Report
DATE: December 2, 2003

NEEDS: For the City Council to receive and file the attached report outlining the concepts and provisions necessary to sponsor an Airshow.

FACTS:

1. During the past 12 years, the Estrella Warbird Museum sponsored Air Shows at the Paso Robles Airport as a means to compensate for the land leased from the City. In July, 2002, the City Council amended the Estrella Warbird's lease, replacing the requirement for an annual Air Show with a cash payment.
2. The Air Show purpose was to showcase aviation, the airport, and the community. The City, as outlined in the adopted Airport Vision Statement, desires to promote the *"...economic development and growth in tourism through ... aviation service to the community..."*
3. City Staff recently attended the International Council of Airshows (ICAS) Airshow Academy, held at the California International Airshow Salinas (CIAS) to gain insight into Airshow composition and management. The report on the Academy is attached.

**ANALYSIS
AND**

CONCLUSION: An Airshow can be a beneficial event for the community. It requires significant community involvement through financial sponsorship and volunteer labor. As the attached report elaborates, an Air Show must benefit the community broadly, in order to attract the necessary support and become a sustained program.

A grass-roots committee of community volunteers could form an Executive Committee for an Air Show. The many organizing tasks are then implemented by those ultimately accountable to the Executive Committee. An Air Show is a major undertaking with a need for both sponsorship and leadership, and the community must provide the impetus for a successful venture.

POLICY

REFERENCE: City Council Goals - #4 Focus on Airport Development; Airport Vision Statement

FISCAL

IMPACT: None

OPTIONS:

- A. Receive and file the attached report.
- B. Amend, modify or reject the above option.

Attachments: (1)

1) Air Show Report

TO: Joe Deakin, Public Works Director

FROM: Roger Oxborrow, Airport Services Coordinator
Mindy Shaffner, Public Works Secretary

RE: Airshows

DATE: October 24, 2003

The International Council of Airshow (ICAS) is the Airshow authority – the organizational representative for Airshows, Airshow performers, Airshow producers and Airshow support services providers throughout the United States and Canada. From their annual Convention and professional publications to the safety and industry promotional programs, ICAS is the recognized leader in the Airshow business, a central clearinghouse for Airshow information, and a comprehensive network of Airshow professionals.

The ICAS Academy is intended to provide a ‘hands-on’, behind-the-scenes look at an Airshow operation, giving participants an opportunity to learn how to put on, or to improve their existing, Airshow. Success is based on some very key elements, beginning with taking the right steps in establishing the show. Presented herein is information provided at the ICAS Academy California International Airshow held October 16th-18th in Salinas, CA.

There are five key elements to creating an Airshow;

- Establish a Purpose
- Develop a Leadership Nucleus
- Solicit Sponsorships/Community Support
- Determine Airshow Potential based on venue Constraints
- Recruit Volunteer Support

Establishing a Purpose:

Any successful event must have a clear purpose. The first step in establishing an Airshow is to determine the point, or purpose of the event. The unique and extremely successful goal of the Salinas Airshow is to raise money for charity while entertaining the public with a spectacular community sponsored event. They repeatedly stated that their show is a “*fundraiser* that happens to be an Airshow”. The ‘purpose’ must be an objective that is attractive to a wide section of the community, so that all will accept and lend support – either money, or labor – to the effort of the event.

Develop a Leadership Nucleus

The Airshow Organization must be driven by a highly motivated group of individuals who are high profile leaders in the community and are committed to the success of the event and its stated purpose. By having these qualities, each member is well qualified and accepted to encourage his peers to participate in the event objectives.

Ideally, established and proven businessmen/individuals form the Board of Directors and organize a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation to operate the Airshow as a business. The makeup of the Salinas Board of Directors includes bank officers, business owners, an accountant, a local construction ‘king’ and other similarly successful people. Interestingly, not one is a pilot.

According to ICAS, “One of the principal causes of failure [of Airshows] is due to the “organizational structure” of the sponsoring agency. Many sponsors are a single service club or a group of flying enthusiasts who do not have enough members with the needed expertise, or the necessary budget, to finance a successful event.” Any single discipline or focus (organizers) is not adequate. The entire community must buy in and support the effort.

Sponsorships & Community Support

Once the Board is formed and the necessary structure developed, one of their primary and most important tasks is to generate community enthusiasm and support. The financial success of an Airshow is determined by community sponsorships and other similar support, and not by revenues collected at the gate. Revenues at the gate for Salinas account for only 31% of revenue. Sponsorships account for 36% with the remainder coming from ‘in-kind’ donations and services to the event.

Salinas’ goal of raising money for charity is one of the most effective incentives to their sponsors. Many of the largest contributors are already making donations to charities. The Airshow functions as a pass-through organization allowing these companies to make their tax-deductible contributions and be part of putting on an incredible event that the entire community can see and be part of. The Airshow Organization then obtains the positive image in the community of contributing to charity, as well as staging an impressive event. The second benefit for sponsors is the increased advertising exposure the sponsor receives through all the Airshow publicity efforts and special events (host and sponsor dinners, receptions and special accommodations at the Airshow itself).

It should be noted that the City of Salinas’ (the airport owner) contribution is in-kind only. Besides allowing use of their airport via a Conditional Use Permit, they provide a budgeted amount (\$3,700) in staff time including Emergency Services, Police and Public Works. The Airshow pays the airport a nominal (\$2,000) use fee. Even the Airport Manager is actually not involved in the event other than as a resource to the Airshow Directors.

Venue Constraints

The size of the Airshow that can be staged is determined by the constraints of the Airport site. This includes street capacity (for traffic), parking, staging areas, concession and display space, aircraft parking, spectator access and viewing area. Also to be considered are required safety distances for show performances, and impacts of overflight on development surrounding the airport, available runway length and weight restrictions.

The development of the actual spectator display area needs to provide for static aircraft, concessions and other spectator accommodations (restrooms, first aid, and information, lost & found, etc.). Spectator viewing of the show must be provided. Sponsor and other V.I.P. accommodations (chalets, tents, and box seating) can not dominate the entire crowd line area.

Street access to the show site is essential. Traffic flow and capacities must be adequate to support the show, available on site parking must be sufficient for anticipated crowd size, parking layout must prevent traffic backup onto major arterial roadways. Currently, the Paso Robles Airport can accommodate no more than 20,000 – 25,000 spectators viewing 30-40 static aircraft displays and parking for 2,500 vehicles. To increase the scope of a show above these levels would require additional modification to the current available facilities

FAA regulations describe sizable facility requirements for the staging of the show itself. Specific distances between the crowd and performers are required and overrun areas adjacent to the show must remain clear of all persons or significant obstructions. The City of Paso Robles must consider Airshow operations requirements and their impacts on existing and future industrial development adjacent to the show site, primarily in the area of Dry Creek Road and other perimeter areas. The residential development immediately east of the airport is also a major consideration.

Besides the physical location of the show, the surrounding available amenities must also be taken into consideration. Performers require adequate hotel accommodations and they expect entertainment and other activities. Attractions such as golf, shopping, tours, wine tasting (for our area) must be provided as incentive to attract/entice and keep performers. The more popular the performer, the more essential and complex is the effort to attract, and to accommodate them, during their stay.

Volunteers

Volunteers are absolutely essential to the Airshow operation. Every function of an Airshow is staffed by volunteer labor. The only paid staff may be an Executive Director with Administrative support (as is Salinas' method). All other labor is volunteer; including the Board Directors. The Salinas Show has a staff of 1,500 volunteers in order to make it all work.

The event must be something that people WANT to volunteer for. Community support is crucial, not only monetarily but also in personnel. Having an Airshow as a fundraiser for charity is one of the reasons it is so successful. It is a community effort and a goal that all can buy into and benefit from.

Analysis

The City of Salinas has an Airport with a 6,000 foot runway, no commercial traffic, a primary market of 130,000 and county population of 350,000. The City basically turns over their Airport to the California International Airshow Salinas organization for a week. By doing this, Salinas has a highly successful community event and fundraiser with phenomenal community support. The airport itself does not readily show direct benefits from the event (i.e. increased activity, development or employment base). An airport is not necessarily a prerequisite for a good Airshow, or a beneficiary of its success.

History has proven that Paso Robles can have a successful Airshow. Having this type of event is one of the Goals and Objectives of the City of Paso Robles' Economic Strategy. To revive this potentially excellent event, the correct steps need to be taken by the appropriate people. The community must be involved and support the event, headed by community leaders excited about putting on the event and for the stated purpose.

Success of a show is not necessarily measured by the size of the show, or the performers. A recent event at Paso Robles was attended by almost 2,000 people. The total expense for the show was less than \$3,000. The Airport and aviation in general received excellent publicity in the community. Everyone involved considered the day a success. Certainly, much larger events have seen less success.

The following chart compares the finances of two successful events. The last Paso Robles show (2001) is compared to the 2002 Salinas show. Note that both were a success, although the numbers for Salinas are significantly greater than those of Paso.

	Salinas	Paso Robles
Market Area	300,000	60,000
Show Attendance	75,000	7,500
Gross Operating Budget	\$ 1.2 mil	\$ 110,000
Total gate receipts	\$ 400,000	\$ 23,000
Total sponsorship revenues	\$ 400,000	\$ 40,000
Performers (Air Ops) Expenses	\$ 175,800	\$ 20,000 (est.)

Attendance figures for Salinas show a full 50% of attendees come from 0-30 miles to see the show. The remaining 50% come from 30-100 miles. No attendees travel more than 100 miles for the show. The target market is 25-40 years old with families.

Conclusion

A jet team or any other prominent Airshow act has the basic desire to be associated with a successful event. Accordingly, the appropriate steps that must be taken to attract them are as follows:

1. Establish a working Airshow operations structure according to the above outline.
2. Any outside paid contractors can provide the actual administrative support for show execution. Their contracts still spell out the need for volunteer support and community involvement for ongoing show organization, support and sponsorship, and actual show execution.
3. For military acts, a pre-requisite is to submit the required Dept. of Defense Form 2535 to receive show site approval (Pentagon). Specific requirements and show provisions are identified in that application.
4. With approval of the show (for military performers), the focus then turns to personal contact with the desired teams and performers. Attracting both military teams and civilian performers is done through personal invitations and enticements by the individual show. Show organizers travel to other airshows to observe the performance, meet the prospective performers, and negotiate the terms of performance at their show. The show accommodations and available outside attractions in the local area are a key point in attracting the performers. A history of good accommodations and treatment at previous shows convinces performers to return, and to recommend the show to fellow performers. The Airshow industry is very small and word travels very fast.
5. The City must assume only a peripheral support role in the event and not that of direct sponsorship. Direct governmental involvement in the show has proven to be counter-productive in sustaining the kind of community support necessary for long-term viability of the event.
6. Jet teams do not perform at shows intended to make a business profit. They may be an incidental part of a show that charges admission; but a show cannot advertise them as the star act and then charge the public to see them. This arrangement is verified in the DD 2535 application for to the military.

7. Jet team approval for performance will be considered only for events which are: (1) aviation oriented, (2) planning civilian aviation participation; (3) open to all Military Services for participation, and (4) held during the Airshow season (*mid-March to mid-November*).

An Airshow is a valuable and viable community activity. It must extend much farther in to the community than just aviation interests and airport promotion. It requires involvement by as many interests and disciplines in the community as possible. Working together, in a non-commercial environment (all volunteer), for the good of the established purpose, the community can benefit greatly from such an event.