

NEWS

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Chino Airport celebrates 70 years of soaring success Leaders, business and community stakeholders gather for event

CHINO – Marking seven decades of aviation history, the County of San Bernardino Department of Airports hosted the Chino Airport 70th Birthday Celebration on Monday, September 13, 2010 at the Planes of Fame Museum.

An estimated 70 people attended the invitation-only gala and shined a spotlight on one of Southern California's premier general aviation airports, Chino Airport, and its rich history and bright future.

"Chino Airport not only trained pilots during World War II, it has been instrumental in keeping Southern California's aviation history alive," said Fourth District Supervisor and Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt.

Chino Airport was founded as the Cal-Aero Academy, a private pilot school that focused on training pilots for the United States military. Between 1940 and 1944, approximately 10,000 pilots earned their wings flying in Stearman and BT-13 Valiant aircraft in the skies over Chino. After the war, the airport held its own in Southern California's thriving aerospace industry. As interest in recreational aviation climbed, Chino Airport became a hub for World War II era aircraft restoration. As a result, the airport is home to Planes of Fame and Yanks Air Museum, two of the world's preeminent aircraft museums and home to 300 restored warbirds, many of which are maintained in flyable condition.

With three runways, Chino Airport is one of San Bernardino County's most important economic development assets, attracting aviation-related businesses and companies that need access to corporate aviation services and easy access to all of Southern California. And the airport is still evolving. In the next few years, the airport uses will likely be rearranged to better separate air and ground operations for safety and security. To further enhance the Chino Airport, the County has initiated an update to the Airport Master Plan, which is expected to be complete in 2011. The plan is available for public review and comment via the Internet at www.chinomasterplan.airportstudy.com.

There are more than 450 people working at the Chino Airport, which boasts an astonishing 98 percent occupancy rate. All told, the Chino Airport has a regional economic impact of about \$100 million in revenues and earnings, based on a 2003 study.

And that number is expected to soar in the next few decades as aviation demand recovers from the economic downturn and other Southern California airports undergo increasing scrutiny. The number of aircraft based at the airport is expected to rise to 1,375, up from the current 600 by 2025. Also, the types of businesses at the airport will broaden as aviation-related guidelines expand for business development at the airport.

"There is enormous economic opportunity in and around Chino Airport. This Airport has the potential to generate well paying jobs and provide a better quality of life to Chino and to San Bernardino County," Chairman Ovitt said.

"The history and growth for Chino Airport would not have been possible without the participation of numerous interested parties, especially the City of Chino. The Department of Airports looks proud to be a member of this local community and looks forward to a bright and successful future", said Mike N Williams, A.A.E., Director of Airports for the County of San Bernardino.

"This news continues to confirm the investment in Chino Airport," said Chairman Ovitt. "The potential for Chino Airport is significant and impressive. Our efforts to market and improve this economic engine of the county will lead to jobs, economic benefit and a better Chino Airport for the region."

About Chino Airport:

Located minutes from Los Angeles County and Orange County, the County of San Bernardino's Chino Airport is a preferred destination for general aviation and corporate aviation in Southern California. The historic airport, which once trained World War II pilots as Cal Aero Field, is home to unique aviation museums, an acclaimed air show and excellent facilities for private and business aviation. To learn more, visit www.ChinoAirport.org or www.SBCountyWings.com