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Mason City looking for new airport manager

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Mason City Airport
CHRIS ZOELLER, The Globe Gazette

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Tom Jolas: 'Man with Vision,' 'Moses of Mason City' dies at 87

Tom Jolas, who played a part in North Iowa politics and development for more than a half century, died Monday night at the age of 87.

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Before the year is up, Mason City airport officials hope to have a new manager in place.

The airport's current manager, Pam Osgood, who has occupied that position for 17 years, is retiring soon which kickstarted the Mason City Human Resources Department's recruitment for her replacement.

According to Director of Human Resource Perry Buffington, specialized openings such as this don't usually have large applicant pools.

"We are conducting a regional recruitment throughout the Midwest and are optimistic we should attract a sufficient number of viable candidates for consideration," Buffington said.

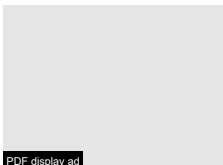
The vacancy, which was just posted Monday, calls for graduation from an accredited four-year college with a bachelor's degree in aviation management, business management, public administration or a closely related field and has a starting salary of \$78,000.

As of now, there haven't been any formal applications for the position and the Airport Commission, a five-member panel

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that meets the second Monday of every month, has final say on who gets hired.



In August, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved \$7.6 million for the fiscal year 2020 State Aviation Program and the Mason City Airport received almost \$300,000 for improvements to lighting and hangars.

Some of the companies that use the Mason City Municipal Airport include: Target, Eaton, John Deere, Cargill, Iowa State Patrol, the Iowa DNR, Poet, Walmart, Menards, Kraft, HyVee and MercyOne, to name a few.

There are 12 private hangars at the airport, with another currently under construction. There also is a waiting list for the city-owned hangars.

Prior to 2014, the number of people flying into and out of the Mason City Municipal Airport was declining quickly. Osgood said only about 3,300 people annually used the airport for flights between 2010-2013.

Because of that, the airport lost \$1 million in federal funding it counted on annually to help with renovations and expansion.

That trend began to be reversed in 2014 when Air Choice One took over passenger service at the Mason City Municipal Airport.

In 2017, there were 7,572 enplanements (passengers boarding) and 7,613 deplanements (passengers arriving) recorded at the Mason City airport. In 2018, those numbers increased to 8,250 enplanements (9 percent increase) and 8,207 deplanements (8 percent increase).

At the time, Osgood said that "The airport is a vital part for the area to be successful from an economic development standpoint," she said. "We are the front door of North Iowa and Southern Minnesota."



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