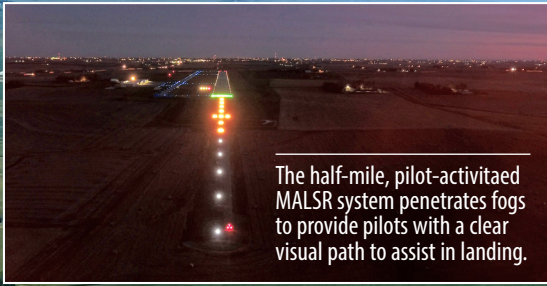


Airport of the Month - Sioux County Regional Airport KSXX

By Tom Foster



The half-mile, pilot-activated MALSR system penetrates fogs to provide pilots with a clear visual path to assist in landing.



The waiting area of the terminal offers great views of the 5,500-foot runway.

The Sioux County Regional Airport seen from the southeast, including new construction for additional hangars. There are currently 7 box hangars with 3 additional commitments and 24 T-hangar stalls, all full with a waiting list.

Jet takes off at the Sioux County Regional Airport during the airport's grand opening in 2018.

The thickness of the file must exceed that of the pavement before a new airport can be opened, an airport development axiom from back when files were paper instead of electrons.

Two cities in Sioux County, Iowa, operated airports. Orange City Municipal Airport was opened in 1968 with a single paved runway. Some buildings were constructed and the airport stayed pretty much the same well into the twenty first century except the runway became slightly longer. About 10 miles away at Sioux Center they also had an airport of similar size and character that opened in 1972. The cities were dependent on general aviation for economic and social development. Both were blessed with aggressive and growing industries that were frequent users of business aviation.

Near the end of the twentieth century, users of both airports wanted better facilities, but neither could be expanded. Sioux Center and Orange City were friendly rivals on several levels, but the obvious solution was to get together and build a new airport. After some discussions the county and two cities agreed to study the idea. The file had started.

An elegant analysis using geometry and statistics established a "centroid" for aviation demand and three potential sites

were identified within five miles of that spot. All three were subjected to environmental screening and airspace analysis, and the file got thicker.

In 2004 the Sioux County Regional Airport Agency was formed. The SCRAA board had representatives of the two cities and the county. Since a new airport would probably need federal funding, the FAA requested a Cost/Benefit Analysis which determined the economic benefits of a new airport far exceeded the cost. One of the sites was selected and more documents were generated.

A Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan (ALP) were completed, accompanied by an Environmental Assessment (aka, EA). In 2009 the FAA (being in love with acronyms) issued a FONSI/ROD meaning a Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision. The SCRAA was ready to buy land and build an airport.

For government entities, buying property is no walk in the park. It takes surveys, appraisals, negotiations and sometimes legal activity. For the Sioux County Regional Airport Authority, it took four years and added considerably to the files which were now thicker than the proposed pavement (and base and subbase, etc.). It was time to start construction.

Big projects like the Sioux County Regional Airport usually involve phased construction to accommodate state and federal funding cycles. The new facility opened for business in November 2018 with a 5500-foot-long runway that will accommodate most of General Aviation. A full-length parallel taxiway assures safe operations, and an approach lighting system allows landings with visibility as low as one half mile. Total cost of the new facility was \$32 Million shared by federal, local and state agencies. SCRAA was a new entity with no credit history. In an innovative move, a consortium of area banks was formed to finance the local share.

Thirty-five airplanes called the place home on opening day, and that's grown to fifty-five including three jets. Hangar space is available for just about anything in the General Aviation fleet as is fuel and maintenance. There are agricultural operators, a flight school and aircraft charters. Rental cars and taxi service provide ground transportation. An aerial photograph company does business from Sioux County on a nation-wide basis. Sioux County Regional Airport is a success!

Sioux Center and the county are named for a Native American group who prefer to be called Dakota or Lakota. The Ojibwa called the Dakota *nadowessi* meaning snakes

or enemies leading to the French exonym, *nadouessioux* which anglicized to Sioux.

Orange City is the county seat and named by immigrants from Holland. William was founder of the Dutch royal family who led the sixteenth century revolt against Spanish rule. William was also the Prince of Oranje, now part of France and ruled Holland as "William of Orange" making orange the Dutch national color and providing the name for a city in Iowa.

Sioux County Regional Airport's address is Maurice, Iowa named for one of the sons of William. Maurice is also home to the famous "fire escape" water slide. Although the airport is business oriented, there's plenty of fun things to do around Sioux County besides the water slide, including arts and music. There's an indoor water attraction in Sioux Center, and Windmill Park in Orange City. Weekend flyers are welcome and there's lots of good food for the hundred-dollar hamburger fans.



The Sioux County Regional Airport is located near the intersection of Highway 75 and Highway 10 on a paved access road and is approximately equidistant between Sioux Center and Orange City.



Landside buildings including hangars, apron, parallel taxiway and runway.



A jet parked near the airport's terminal building, which includes a waiting area, offices, pilot lounge, and conference center.



The airport offers a full-service fueling system.