

## Long Island's Senate Delegation Comes to Republic Airport to Honor Our American Veterans

Virtually the entire Long Island New York State Senate delegation traveled to Republic Airport in recognition of the airport's historic role as part of our nation's "Arsenal of Democracy" during World War II. The delegation announced plans to create a New York Veterans Hall of Fame at a location still to be determined by a committee of veterans and lawmakers.

A US Army veteran and sponsor of the legislation, Senator Caesar Trunzo, was joined by Senator Charles Fuschillo, other members of the State Senate delegation and some one hundred veterans who rallied in support of the airport's American Airpower Museum.

"New York is already home to Halls of Fame that recognize great baseball players, soccer players, wrestlers, even thoroughbred race horses. Our real heroes, the men and women who have served - and continue to serve - our country, deserve no less," said Senator Trunzo.

The Hall would honor legendary leaders and everyday soldiers whose deeds and accomplishments both in combat and in civilian life merit special commendation. Included in that group are the nation-leading 663 New Yorkers that have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor... more than one-fifth of the total.

Deputy Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, of Rockville Centre, said, "New Yorkers from Teddy Roosevelt to Colin Powell, and from the battlefields of Long Island to Baghdad, have shown extraordinary valor and courage in defense of freedom. Their service and accomplishments earn them the special recognition

that only a Hall of Fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration."

Senator Michael Balboni, chairman of the committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, said, "We owe the freedom we cherish today to the extraordinary acts of veterans who served throughout our country's history. With this Hall of Fame we will honor and recognize their service on the battlefield and here at home."

Senator's Trunzo's legislation (S.431-A) provides for the creation of an 18-member council of veterans from across the state which will determine the location and design of the facility and establish the rules for nominating and inducting veterans. For more information on the Veterans Hall of Fame, visit the website:

<http://www.NYVets.org>

## THE DIRECTOR NOW AT THE CONTROLS OF REPUBLIC AIRPORT: MICHAEL GEIGER

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Regional Director Subi Chakraborti recently observed that Michael Geiger is a man equally at home in the cockpit of an airplane or before an executive's desk. No small wonder that Geiger is the individual appointed Director of Republic Airport and one that Chakraborti says has, "the skills, temperament and intellect to ensure Republic remains a critical transportation asset for the entire region at a time when aviation, technology and Long Island's economy are undergoing strategic change."

His comments come as Mr. Geiger runs one of the busiest general aviation airports in the state. A pilot and a

(continued on back)



Airport Director Michael Geiger (left) confers with DOT Regional Director Subi Chakraborti.

## Republic Airport Commission Chairman Sees Potential Compromise with FAA Regarding Proposed Taxiway Safety Relocation



Following a public meeting with officials from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), various civic leaders and State Senator Charles Fuschillo, Frank Nocerino, Chairman of the Republic Airport Commission, believes the airport is now in a position to negotiate with the FAA regarding their insistence that the airport's Taxiway Bravo be relocated to ensure better ground safety.

Chairman Nocerino stated "A public discussion that aired the pros and cons of such a move was in everyone's interest and underscored the airport's commitment to involve the public and keep the community informed. We see this meeting as a new beginning to a cooperative effort with our neighbors."

After questions by Nocerino, Tom Felix, from the FAA's Planning and Engineering Division stated that the taxiway should be relocated to a minimum of 300 ft. from the centerline of the runway, in accordance with FAA design standards. He also explained to State Senator Fuschillo, and others attending the session, that this taxiway relocation is part of the FAA's goal to provide standardized Runway Safety Areas to airports nationwide.

In February the FAA sent the airport a communiqué that stated "...we have determined that due to the non-standard separation between Runway 1-19 and current parallel Taxiway 'B', the State should consider undertaking the relocation of Taxiway 'B' in this Fiscal

Year as a first priority." However, Chairman Nocerino stated "We withheld any decision on that letter until we received additional clarification from the FAA."

Mr. Nocerino continued, "Safety remains the paramount issue for this Commission and we will do everything within our power to ensure that this airport operates well within safety regulations as set down by federal and state authorities. Having said that, it must be done with the knowledge of our neighbors, with clear-cut instructions from the FAA, and with a clear understanding of what is- and isn't- being proposed." He further reiterated that the commission will not vote on the relocation of the taxiway without public input on the matter.



Long Island members of the NYS Senate delegation gather for ceremonies honoring the American veteran including (right to left) Michael Balboni, John Panagari, Carl Marcellino, Dean Skelos, Owen Johnson and DOT Director Chakraborti.

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# FRG Highlights

FRG

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licensed, professional engineer, he replaces Hugh Jones, who retired after serving more than 20 years as director of the airport. "Michael Geiger's extensive experience as a manager, a pilot and an engineer is invaluable as Republic Airport moves into the 21st Century," Chokrabarti said.

"In commenting on Mike's skills, we need to thank Hugh Jones once again for his tremendous leadership, which helped make Republic Airport the critical transportation and economic development asset it is today."

Geiger has worked for the department's regional office on Long Island for 24 years, having most recently served as the acting planning and development supervisor, overseeing the development of highway construction projects and assisting with the management of the region's capital program. Geiger also has provided an essential regional perspective in his capacity as a member of the NYSDOT Transformation Phase IV team, which was involved in recommending new approaches to better implement DOT initiatives.

"Airport Director Geiger has a long-standing reputation for his ability to strengthen our transportation system for the purpose of growing our economy," observed Desmond Ryan, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island. "His arrival at Republic is welcomed by those who want a strong and vibrant Republic Airport."

As part of the strategy designed to improve management of NYSDOT assets, Geiger reports to the Regional Office, which has assumed daily responsibility for Republic Airport with continued assistance from NYSDOT's Passenger Transportation Division. In a further effort to create an enhanced intermodal approach to transportation solutions, Geiger has also assumed the responsibility for coordinating issues and projects between the Long Island Rail Road and the Region as well as Long Island airports.

## Wal-Mart at Republic Airport Under Construction

Once upon a time, Polytechnic University sited an educational complex along Route 110 to support research and engineering at Republic Aviation. But that was many years ago and Fairchild-Republic has been gone for nearly 20 years. Regrettably, this prime location languished. Until now.

A joint public-private initiative is breathing new life into the property, allowing the Town of Babylon, Republic Airport, the New York State Department of Transportation and Breslin Realty Development Corporation to work to-

gether to pave the way for a new Wal-Mart and other retail stores on the site.

The Breslin project not only demolishes an empty and shuttered complex, but allows the property to generate new tax revenue for the Town of Babylon and the neighboring school districts, provide an opportunity to create local jobs and bring new shoppers into the Town of Babylon from neighboring communities. Airport Director Michael Geiger noted that construction of the new Wal-Mart actually allows this parcel to be on the tax rolls for the first time in years, given that its prior use was by a not-for-profit educational institution.

Republic Airport played a critical role in allowing the Wal-Mart to be built because, while not on its property, the airport is permitting a land swap to take place that will see its road network shift in order to accommodate changes in the traffic patterns required to ensure a gridlock-free Wal-Mart parking plan.

## Talon Air: A Republic Airport Success Story

The opening of the new 40,000 square foot Talon Air hangar at Republic Airport continues to underscore the desire for general aviation to have a share of the art facilities on Long Island.

The hangar is part of the Talon Air charter company that was founded by owner and pilot Adam Katz. His is the typical success story that often surrounds aviation. He bought his first plane in 2001 and began a charter business that has grown quickly, thanks to his commitment to service and professionalism. With eight aircraft and 25 pilots, Talon Air is now a worldwide operation that caters to the needs of business CEOs, Fortune 500 companies and celebrities.

Republic Airport's "Aviation Day" celebrated the role of general aviation with hundreds of families braving wet weather to inspect a variety of aircraft, pose for family photos, participate in a costume contest and enjoy face painting. Now an annual tradition, Acting Airport Director Shelley LaRosa-Arken said two years of inclement weather hasn't dampened anyone's enthusiasm and many are already looking forward to next year's autumn open house.



Winter weather will find Republic Airport prepared with the equipment needed to move snow and keep operations going.



Waiting for a call that no one ever wants to hear, Republic Airport's fire and rescue team remain in a state of constant readiness and training to support operations of the busiest general aviation airport in the State of New York.



Babylon Town Supervisor Steve Ballone (right) listens to Republic Airport Commissioner Frank Nocerno welcome hotel construction at Republic Airport that will add to the economic depth of the Route 110 corridor.