



TO: Karen Rahfeld, Director
Alaska Office of Management & Budget
P.O. Box 110020
Juneau, AK 99811-0020

OFFICE OF
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET
DEC 01 2008

DATE: 26 Nov 08

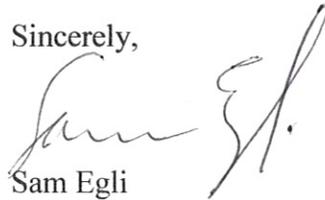
SUBJECT: KING SALMON AIRPORT SOUTH-EAST RAMP UTILITY HOOKUP

Dear Ms. Rahfeld:

I have sent the following letter to Gov. Sarah Palin, supporting the Bristol Bay Borough request for additional airport improvement to the King Salmon Airport.

I have sent you a copy for your reference. Thank you for any help you can rally on our behalf.

Sincerely,


Sam Egli
EAH, inc.



TO: Governor Sarah Palin
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

DATE: 26 Nov 08

SUBJECT: KING SALMON AIRPORT SOUTH-EAST RAMP UTILITY HOOKUP

Dear Sarah:

The King Salmon Airport has long been a location of strategic importance to the State of Alaska. The Bristol Bay economy depends in large part on the operational status of this hub airport for the world class commercial and sport fishery, and lodge/outfitter mecca that it is. The villages of Southwest Alaska and the Alaska Peninsula depend on this airport for their life-line. The US Mail is a mainline hub into this airport. All imaginable air-freight comes through here on its way to somewhere in Bristol Bay. Emergency medical service, major airlines (passenger and all-cargo alike), regionals, and bush carriers, the US Air Force, US Coast Guard, and Egli Air Haul (the prime helicopter operator for the Bristol Bay Region); all these users are either coming and going here on a regular basis, or actually maintain an operations base at this airport.

From a military standpoint, the airport can, with a phone call and a launch order, become an active fighter-jet base providing top cover for the North American Continent.

Sanitation is a necessary component of this airport facility, and yet not all the airport area is connected to such. I have been operating at this airport since 1982, and can share with you the following brief history on the subject.

HISTORY:

FAA had a Flight Service Station (FSS) on the field (until around 1995), co-located with the National Weather Service (NWS) near the West Ramp. The community restrooms for the GA pilots, crews, and our passengers were the public restrooms at the FSS. I and all the other pilots who parked our planes on the airport had to hot-foot it in our cars down the road to the FSS for a mother-nature call, or more discreetly referred to as a "weather-check".

Alaska DOT built the new Southeast Ramp sometime around 1987.

In September of 1991, I rented hangar space on Lot 4 of the Southeast Ramp. With the advent of hangar space to operate from, Egli Air Haul expanded from 1 employee to 3, tripling the pressure for a restroom over here. We were the only life on the Southeast Ramp at that time, besides the state trooper. As an employer, I was required to provide a

restroom for my employees. The only way we could deal with that issue was to see to it that there was a car for them to blitz to FSS when they needed. This meant they were blitzing in my car, since they usually didn't have their own.

The Southeast Ramp became a centrally-positioned General Aviation location for a fixed-base-operation to provide fuel and services to the flying public at our airport. Egli Air Haul's business plan included that in the hangar design and construction plans for our own hangar.

In the summer of 1992 I commenced building our own new hangar on Lot 2. I sought a permit to drill a water well on Lot 2. This was denied on the basis that I first had to have approved septic or sewer. So I sought a permit to install a septic system on Lot 2. This was denied on the basis that Lot 2 wasn't big enough for a septic system.

I leased the adjacent vacant Lot 3. I again sought a septic permit, this time for Lots 2 and 3 combined. This was denied again. The area of both lots together still did not meet the code requirement for size.

Looking for a solution, I sought a permit to run a septic pipe across the road from our hangar into the bushes to the east of us and build a mound septic system there. After all, that's where everybody was peeing anyway. Denied again!!! I was told that the area across the road is designated "wetlands." I suppose if you pee somewhere long enough it just might become wetlands!

One day, I believe it was in 1995, FAA shut down the King Salmon FSS. The NWS office has lived on to this day, and continues to host pilot weather briefings, but the public got shut down from access to the FAA restrooms. The result of the Flight Service shut-down was now complete. The mission statement "Flight Service" actually became "Flight Dis-Service" by this government act.

After FSS closed down, and FAA shut down their "public" toilets, I visited with the State DOT shop at King Salmon, to ask them if our employees could please use their facilities during the work day. I was told not only "No", but "Heck No".

SITUATION:

So here Egli Air Haul lives, in a stand-off situation. There is no sewer connection available beyond downtown King Salmon to the rest of the airport area where we are located. The general aviation area of the airport has a respectable amount of traffic and activity. That means people are coming to this part of the airport. Where people go, people have to "go". There is no lavatory facility available or currently even allowed at this end of the airport.

We cannot drill a well and bring in water unless we have septic or sewer to dispose of the water we bring in. The lease lots are not big enough to permit septic installation.

While there is plenty of space to install a septic system on the other side of the road from the Southeast Ramp, we are disallowed from doing that because it is designated “wetlands”. With Obama as our country’s chief executive, I don’t expect to see that change any time soon.

Everybody involved says they want the King Salmon Airport to “grow”, but the growth area of this airport, the under-developed Southeast and East Ramps, is stymied from growing by the very bureaucracy that says it promotes growth. To grow this airport, the only area available is locked in a standoff—the notion that “if we build it, they will come” is the very problem we face. We have built it (the existing businesses on the Southeast and East Ramps) and the people are coming. The trouble is, when they get here, sooner or later, they need the bathroom. The nearest toilet is ½ mile away, owned by the Alaska Department of Transportation (the airport crew), and they have told us it is off limits to us. The next toilet is ¾ mile away at what used to be the FAA Flight Service Station, but they shut that down and posted a hate-sign on their toilet years ago. The nearest available toilet is 1 mile away in downtown King Salmon.

STATISTICS:

Egli Air Haul has employed 62 employees over the past 16 years; a turnover rate of 3.9 new employees per year. With 6 employees for EAH to be at current full strength, this is a pitiful turnover average. By this statistic, we have to hire 4 new employees almost every year, which we will lose that year, leaving me and only one other employee to keep the boat afloat at EAH. It is typical to have these employees quit mid-season when we need them the most.

One of the big reasons our new-hires throw in the towel as they do, is no water and no bathroom at work. People want to feel like they work for a “for-real outfit”. When a newly-hired employee starts out with our business, I think they are favorably impressed with our standards of operation, our safety record, and overall image. I think they find us more-or-less pleasant to work for. I hope they find that I, as their boss, care about them personally, and I want to provide everything for them that I can, to make their employment with our company rewarding to them.

After our employee makes enough trips to the “bushes” while at work, I think maybe something clicks in his head. I believe he starts to think that a “for-real” outfit would not function so primitively. I’m sure the thought that “If a business can’t even provide a flush toilet, what kind of an outfit have I hired on with?” crosses his mind. Despite all the positive things about working for Egli Air Haul, the basic need for water and sanitation wins, driving him to leave.

EAH inc. has enplaned an estimated 20,000 people over the years we have operated here. We have also serviced an estimated 10,000 pilots and passengers of transient aircraft with fuel. The first thing each of these people asks us when they arrive at our facility, and the last thing they are all looking for before they fly away, is the restroom. We have to tell them “#1 is across the road (pointing to the bushes), and #2 is across the airport

(hoping they will go somewhere downtown, and not in the bushes).”

When the business jet traffic arrives, the first thing they ask for is “lav service”, which is pilot talk for “where can I dump my holding tank for my jet’s toilet?” When we tell them there is no where they can dump it, they usually sneak a holding tank dump into a garbage bag, and then throw it over the airport fence into the bushes surrounding the East Ramp where they park.

Arriving here, people who have traveled from other more urban locations may feel like they have arrived in the Alaska “bush”. The fact is, Bristol Bay Borough actually has a lot of infrastructure already in place. We have many things available to our communities in this borough, which the “real bush villages” don’t have access to.

Our Southeast Ramp community is supposed to be a part of King Salmon, but as soon as you drive past the State DOT shop headed for the Southeast Ramp, you really do enter the “bush” in the most literal sense. Just spend a few hours around our side of the airport, and you will be “primed” for the “bush”. The bushes will be your closest pit-stop. If your timing is too far off, it may be too late to “dash for downtown”, and the bushes will be your only acceptable alternative.

BUSH FACILITIES:

A year or so ago, you visited our community, traveling in one of the state’s King Air turbo-prop airplanes. Trooper Shane Stevenson, who used to be based here at our hangar in King Salmon, was your pilot. His knowledge that the Southeast Ramp (where he parked your plane) had no bathroom, undoubtedly saved you from having to experience our “bush facilities” first-hand.

Let’s look at the Southeast Ramp “bush facilities”. It consists of a sloping unimproved footpath that starts at the road, sloping downward through the bushes on its way toward the tundra to the east.

Winter. A trip to the “bushes” in the winter with slick ice on the sloping pee trail as hurricane-force winds drive the wind-chill to the bone (or with 3-foot snow drifts to surmount), tempts one to grab a shop bucket just to get things taken care of inside where there’s no frostbite, and you don’t fall and break your body, no matter who might walk in on you through the hangar door.

Spring. In the spring, fording the calf-deep mud on the unimproved walkway through the brush leaves one all “choked up”, running interference with the pit-stop on one’s mind.

Summer. In the summer with the swarms of King Salmon bugs biting your public as well as private parts, you may get cut short on your “bush” visit altogether. Since this is a “public airport” and not a “private airport”, maybe the bugs should only be allowed to bite airport users’ “public parts”!

Autum. In the fall-time, there is a real concern for getting bushwacked in the bushes by a hungry bear scrounging around for food and attracted to the “bush pit-stop”. Heaven knows there’s plenty of bear attraction there.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

I have grouped the Southeast and East rampers into 4 user groups as follows:

Year-round business operations on the Southeast and East Ramps: Egli Air Haul, US Fish & Wildlife, Tibbett’s Aero Service, and King Salmon Ground Service. The employees and customers of these businesses need visits to the bathroom throughout the course of every day at the workplace.

Year-round air carriers that use the Southeast and East Ramps: Alaska Central Express, Evert’s Air Cargo, Arctic Circle Air Service, Lynden Air Cargo, Frontier Flying Service, and Egli Air Haul. These flights, some all-cargo, and some passenger and cargo, bring pressure to the sanitation situation on this side of the airport multiple times each day.

Year-round small general aviation aircraft actively use the Southeast Ramp throughout the year. The pilots and passengers of these aircraft all need a “pit-stop” when they arrive here and prior to departure when they leave.

Seasonal business jets fly from all over the United States to the King Salmon Airport Southeast and East Ramps. These crews and passengers all need a “pit-stop” when they arrive here and prior to departure when they leave. Also, these aircraft almost always have a lavatory tank that has to be emptied when they arrive.

The people of these user groups have only three ways of dealing with “mother nature” when on the Southeast or East Ramp area of the King Salmon Airport.

- a. use the bushes, or other areas of choice (be careful where you step!)
- b. using a vehicle (if they have one), blitz for downtown King Salmon to a public toilet there (if there is time before mother nature takes over).
-- or--
- c. give up and go in your pants. (mother nature has just taken over.)

LEFT OUT:

We Southeast and East Ramp people pay our taxes. We pay our airport fees. We pay and we pay. The airport improvements just keep on leaving out the one thing our airport really needs and has never had—a public flush toilet on the Southeast or East Ramp.

With a sewer connection, everything would be raised to a better level on this side of the airport. New business opportunities would become reachable, enhancing further new

growth to the airport community.

The latest idea proposed by Alaska DOT of bringing a sewer line as far as the floatplane cabins on the river, falls short of the Southeast and East Ramp area by about 500 yards. This proposal, while commendable, and while bringing relief to some riverfront users on the riverfront part of the airport, DOES NOTHING FOR THE SOUTHEAST AND EAST RAMP USERS. All the users within the range of the proposed sewer line extension are SEASONAL ONLY. The area that needs sanitation the most is the YEAR-ROUND Southeast and East Ramp. To bring the sewer line anything short of all the way is a wasted effort as far as I am concerned. Let's not stop searching for funding to complete this sewer line extension, just because we have found funding enough to come to within 500 yards or so of the primary target. This is the time to tie the whole community into the infrastructure.

CALL TO ACTION:

The King Salmon Airport sewer line extension needs to be carried the short additional distance around the corner to tie in the Southeast and East Ramp businesses to the existing sewer system.

The reconstruction of Main Street should also include asphalt paving all the way to the Southeast and East Ramp access gates.

In the over-all scope of these projects, another 500 yards of distance is so very little, and being accomplished at a time when the digging, pipe-laying, and paving equipment and crew are here and in motion, makes it never better timing.

IN CLOSING:

In closing, let me share a personal memory of my childhood growing up in the farmland of the lower 48. I and my friends, would be away from my house way far away out in the hay field, or way over in the orchard, playing as little children do. When mother nature would call one of us, it was a long run from the field or the orchard to get to the house in time. Sometimes, one of us wouldn't make it in time. My mother told me there were two obvious solutions to that problem. 1, head for the head more promptly, or 2, don't play so far away from home.

Well, here we are now, all grown-ups, in this wild exciting "hay field" we call Alaska. We are still facing one of the basic issues we all have to deal with in life. Are the solutions really still the same? I believe that "Alaskans" are hand-picked. We are where we are because we take life from a different angle than the average lower-48'er. We Alaskans have already decided for ourselves that we are going to "play" further away from "home" in our life, than someone else somewhere else may be willing to. Instead of the childhood solution to head for the head more promptly, the real solution here is to put in a head where it is needed.

Over the past year, oil royalties have brought Alaska windfall revenues. With all the things your office will be looking at to accomplish with the state budget, please don't leave us out. I challenge you to help us solve this problem which stifles growth of our local economy. Bringing a sewer line on around to the Southeast and East ramps will serve to tie the entire King Salmon Airport Community to a civilized lifestyle, promoting growth so desperately needed now in the Bristol Bay Borough. Be a saver of airport business, instead of a hindrance. Let's get the public funding needed to bring a sewer connection line around the corner to our side of the airport, and help us put the honey bucket in the museum.

I appreciate the improvements you are making to our airport, and our community, and intend my comments to help you in the process of prioritizing how funding for all this is to be allocated.

Thank you,



Sam Egli
Egli Air Haul inc.

cc.

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