

Duane K. Haugstad
516 27th St. NW
Minot, ND 58703
September 9, 2008
1-701-839-4616

Minot International Airport
Patrick Dame, Director

Regarding: Minimum Standards for Commercial Airport Operations

Serving the Public

Providing the best quality and mix of aviation services to the public at the Minot International Airport should be the main priority as Minimum Standards for Commercial Airport Operations are worked through. There are some concerns that I have relative to the current Minimum Standards draft that may impact many aspects of aviation at the Minot airport and Minot as a community.

The primary concern is the minimum building size requirement as currently stated in the draft. The draft requires a minimum of 16,000 sq ft of total building space. This may or may not be valid in order for an FBO to provide the range of services desired at the airport. However, requiring one hangar to be at least 14,000 square feet, capable of accommodating one or more large business jet, is certainly an issue. I request that you amend the requirement in a manner so that the current Transient Hangar operated by Pietsch Aircraft will meet the Minimum Standards. Hopefully the following commentary will provide good foundation to the request.

Pietsch Aircraft and Restoration invested in Minot and the Minot Airport by putting up a hangar as large as the airport was willing to accommodate at that time. The FBOs purpose was to expand its business and hopefully its profits by providing hangar space for transient aircraft. This service also benefited greatly the City of Minot and the airport allowing Minot to compete with other communities for this transient service which had previously been unavailable in our city. More fuel sales, restaurant, hotel, rental car business and much more resulted.

To the best of my knowledge there has never been an airplane of any size that requested overnight hangar space that was not accommodated. Depending on the definition of medium or large business jets, these kinds of jets certainly have been accommodated with this facility along with many other aircraft sizes and types. Pietsch Aircraft and Restoration has served the community and public good in this regard for a number of years and did so before it became a priority for the airport.

Now this very nice hangar, only a few years old, is not sufficient to meet the current Minimum Standards draft. Because of this arbitrarily set square footage requirement for one building, this current long standing, well known, service providing "FBO" will not meet the minimum standard to become a seller of fuel on the airport even though the building was more than sufficient to meet the RFP. How does this enhance the airport? How does this better serve the public and the City of Minot? It does not. It jeopardizes the public good by artificially and arbitrarily limiting competition for services on the airport. A hangar that meets the vast majority of transient aircraft needs and has done so for years should not be excluded now. It is aviation customer's needs

that we are trying to meet, not some arbitrary square footage number. This proven facility has been meeting those consumer needs for years.

If another FBO comes in and builds a larger hangar, it will then have a competitive advantage over its competitor by being able to provide hangar space for larger and or more aircraft. That's business.

Perhaps one provider will offer more amenities to attract business than its competitor. Maybe one will provide better service, or friendlier service, or better mechanics, or better chocolate chip cookies. Each competitor may provide service in such a way to attract a different type of clientele. Some aircraft may want red carpet treatment while others demand no frills best value service. One FBO may be better at one than the other but not necessarily. It is nearly impossible for most businesses to be all things to all people and this is probably true of FBOs as well. Competition at the airport, FBOs providing a wider range of services, catering in different ways to their customers, as their customers demand, is good for Minot and allows these different businesses to grow and prosper, while using their creativity in serving various aviation niches. That is business. Why would we not want this competition on the airport?

What if an FBO does a good job of servicing big corporate jets but is ho hum about smaller private jets, twin engine, or single engine aircraft. This is a reality at certain airports in the region. The consequence are that the smaller aircraft will soon go elsewhere. The single engine aircraft owner/business man of today may be the corporate jet owner of tomorrow and Minot may lose him as a customer for ever. This does not serve the public good. Perhaps due to GA being less of a priority at the airport, less GA traffic may utilize the Minot airport. Fewer landings/takeoffs at the airport could jeopardize our control tower. Will jeopardizing our control tower jeopardize airline service? I don't know. I do understand that there is certain amount of work that is needed to justify a control towers existence and has previously been a concern in Minot.

What if an FBO on the airport goes out of business because of trying to expand too much or too fast, or the economy turns, or maybe due to politics or price the Bakken Boom goes bust. Some are predicting oil under \$80 a barrel in the near future. What could the consequences be for Minot? A business going under is common and perhaps even more common in aviation. Are we better off in Minot having a couple of service providers or only one?

Is Minot and its Public better served when there are fewer or more businesses advertising and marketing themselves and their services to national, regional and local consumers. The answer is easy and self evident. More marketing for Minot and its services is better for everyone and can help the airport and Minot continue to grow.

In conclusion, good competing FBOs providing a wide range of services at the airport will attract more business to the airport and to Minot. Let's work to allow our current long standing FBO, Pietsch Aircraft and Restoration, compete for business and provide fuel service by amending the single building size requirement to allow his current transient hangar to meet minimum standard. I understand there may be additional requirements to qualify for selling fuel, but I believe this is the major hurdle. The airport will benefit, the public will benefit and Minot generally will be better served. It is the right and smart thing to do.