

Airport boasts improvements

If you're familiar with Mustang Beach Airport, you might be surprised at the changes coming to it.

Within the past few months, the city has corrected a fuel contamination issue at the airport, hired a part-time airport manager and started negotiations with a company to become a private partner in airport operations.

Mustang Beach now has an attendant, good fuel and credit card operations and daily checks of the runway. During SandFest, in April, more than 30 visitors flew in for the sand sculpture festival.

Still to come are expanded hangar space and paved tie-downs for visiting pilots as well as full-time attendants for those who want information or transportation.

Port Aransas means to make Mustang Beach Airport competitive with any other small airport in the area.

The airport's fuel became contaminated earlier this year when the tanks weren't checked regularly. That's being done now, and new fuel has been substituted for the old fuel. Credit card devices,



A private plane takes off recently at Mustang Beach Airport. Plans call for many improvements at the airport.

which several pilots said wouldn't work for them, have been replaced and put under protective hoods which shield them from sand and salt air.

By the end of the year, the city intends to have a contract with a private firm that will provide professional airport operations as well as several improvements.

Mustang Beach Airport already has automated weather reports available by phone, radio and the Internet. A GPS approach information is available to pilots flying in to the airport, as well as a navigation system

that's almost as good as the high-dollar Instrument Landing System used by commercial airports. The new system will let fliers navigate to within 265 feet of the ground in cloudy or rainy weather; previously they could only legally descend to within 1,500 feet of the ground in inclement weather.

As people become more familiar with Mustang Beach Airport, support may grow, backers hope. It's ready now to welcome visitors who fly in for a month, a weekend, or just for lunch. But wait till you see what's happening in the future.

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