



A plane taxis out the runway preparing to take off from the Mustang Beach Airport in Port Aransas.



New facilities at I.B. Magee Park.

I.B. Magee Park has everything for the beach camper

With camping areas, showers, a laundry facility and more, I.B. Magee Beach Park offers just about everything a beachgoer could request.

That includes a park headquarters that offers a breathtaking view of the beach and the Gulf of Mexico from a third-floor observation deck. Opened in 2007, the \$1.8 million building combines the offices that were in the former headquarters building and the showers in the old central building, which was demolished.

Owned and operated by the Nueces County Parks Department, I.B. Magee Beach Park offers beachfront bathrooms and showers as well as camping spaces - both tent and trailer. Plans are in the works to greatly expand the trailer spaces, including some with Internet access as well as the more common camping facilities.

The county parks department is working on improving drainage in the campground, and after the issue is addressed, the plan is to pave the roadways into the park.

RV camping in the campsite area of the park is available for \$18 per night, and includes a water and electric campsite with dump, water and shower for up to six people, with a two-vehicle parking limit. A \$5 deposit is

required for a key card to access the showers.

RV campers can stay in the park for up to two weeks, and can pay a weekly rate of \$110.

A tent campsite with water and electricity, including shower access for up to six people, also costs \$18 per night.

Day parking on the beach from the south jetty to Horace Caldwell Pier is under county jurisdiction and is free (no beach access permit required). South from that point, a beach access window sticker is required for a cost of \$12 per year.

Camping overnight in an RV or in tents, with a two-vehicle parking limit, is available for \$10 per night, with access to the beach shower house and bathrooms on the beach.

The park office is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week; shower facilities are available to registered campers 24 hours a day.

The park was named in memory of I.B. Magee Jr., a Port Aransas resident who was widely known for his community support.

Magee lived in a house near the park, where he could watch and enjoy the sight of visitors relaxing in a campground near the beach.

For more information on I.B. Magee Beach Park, call the park office at (361) 749-6117.

Airport upgraded, more to come

Facilities at Mustang Beach Airport could expand significantly if negotiations between the City of Port Aransas and the Texas General Land Office work out.

The city is negotiating a new land lease with the GLO to increase the size of the airport and to add amenities that a survey has shown pilots desire.

If a new lease is signed, the airport property would expand to include 23.2 more acres.

The added acreage could be where new airport hangars and other development would occur under a partnership between the city and Texas Aviation partners of Austin.

Several recent improvements already accomplished at Mustang Beach Airport brought the once-quiet little island airport into direct competition with larger

fields such as T.C. McCampbell Airport in Ingleside and Aransas County Airport in Rockport.

The improvements include AWOS, an automatic weather service for pilots that will give local weather with a phone call, and 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 off the ground in inclement weather.

That's important to people who might contemplate flying to Port Aransas for a vacation or for a weekend, because they can now leave Dallas or San Antonio and come directly to Port Aransas.

The Port Aransas City Council has made airport improvements a priority and has given the facil-

ity its own section in the city's comprehensive plan.

City staff is working with Texas Aviation Partners to develop a far-reaching airport layout plan that will move Mustang Beach Airport beyond the Texas Department of Transportation aviation system and onto the Federal Aviation Administration funding list. The FAA oversees domestic flying activities.

As aviators have become more familiar with Mustang Beach Airport, support for the improvements has grown.

Additions that are in the planning stage are new bathrooms, a locker room with showers, rental cars, lodging information, a courtesy telephone and other amenities.

The airport currently is ready to welcome visitors who fly in for a month, a weekend, or just for lunch.



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