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Hoosier Air Museum rep gives positive report to aviation board

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AUBURN — Things are looking “pretty rosy” for the Hoosier Air Museum, museum first vice-president Glen Litke told the DeKalb County Board of Aviation Commissioners Friday.

“For a while it was looking just a little bleak,” he said, “but now things are looking rosy.”

The museum recently held its first Texas Hold ‘Em fundraiser, which netted \$2,200 with 108 people attending. Litke said the fundraiser was expensive to stage because of one-time costs such as poker chips and table coverings, but he hopes that the next Texas Hold ‘Em event can make significantly more money.

“It should come up in maybe the \$4,000 range,” he said.

Museum staffers are also in contact with people regarding a possible bluegrass music festival in January or February.

Litke reported that museum president Niles Walton will not seek re-election, so the museum is searching for a new president. Walton plans to live in Florida for six months out of the year due to health concerns, he said.

Litke’s appearance at Friday’s meeting was part of an attempt to have more reports at meetings, said DeKalb County Airport manager Russ Couchman.

“It would be fun to come in once in a while,” Couchman said to Litke. “It’s so easy, because you’re so well-run, to forget you’re there.”

Board treasurer Brad Stump reported that the DeKalb County Council approved the board’s budget, except for the entire amount of Couchman’s salary. Stump said that in previous years, the board’s budget had been cut, while the budgets of many other county agencies had risen. Stump said airport officials provided “evidence” that their budget had been cut consistently, and the council responded accordingly.

“We’re not going to be hurting nearly as much as we’re hurting this year,” Stump said.

Also at Friday’s meeting, Lara Zook Gaerte, president of fixed-base operator (FBO) Century Aviation,



reported that total fuel sales had risen. She said she is tracking fuel "shrinkage," or how much bad fuel the FBO must dispose of each day.

Gaerte said shrinkage is a cost of doing business "because you have to know that what you're putting in is clean."

Gaerte also reported that Century Aviation has numerous annual inspections and other maintenance jobs scheduled. The FBO has begun recycling plastic, aluminum, cardboard and paper.

Century has also purchased an aviation fuel truck, which will be painted in the future.

Gaerte said she and her husband, Tony, are pleased with the way things are going. She said they are taking it slowly at first to ensure that they do things right.

"If it grows like a weed, it might possibly be a weed," she said.

Aviation board president Jim Mason said he was pleased with Century Aviation "as opposed to what was going on before." Century Aviation took over as FBO after former FBO operator Victory Aviation left in August.

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