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Tuesday, December 21, 2004

# Rieke leaving Board of Aviation Commissioners; Calls county airport marketing crucial to growth

*By Bill Gisel*

AUBURN — With an infrastructure that is soon to include an instrument landing system, the task facing the Board of Aviation Commissioners in the near future is marketing the DeKalb County Airport.

That is the advice from Layden Rieke, who has stepped down as an aviation board member and president effective Dec. 31.

Rieke noted the airport is 41 years old, "and when it was first built it had a 3,650-foot landing strip."

Today, the airport has a 5,000-foot runway, taxiways, numerous corporate and airport-owned hangars, an automated weather observation system (AWOS) and the ILS, Rieke noted.

Airport board appoints Turner

AUBURN — The DeKalb County Commissioners Monday appointed Jeffrey L. Turner to the board of aviation commissioners.

Turner succeeds Laydon Rieke, who is stepping down to spend more time at his home in South Carolina.

The commissioners also reappointed



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“We have an infrastructure that is second to none, that is for sure, and the future work is going to be marketing our airport to corporate businesses. That is the next step,” he said.

Rieke started flying at the age of 21, out of the old Auburn Airport owned by his father, Glenn. The old airport site is now the city’s new Rieke Park, under development off North Indiana Avenue.

The airport terminal at the DeKalb County Airport is named the Glenn T. Rieke Terminal, in honor of the late Mr. Rieke.

“There have been 17 board members, including the present members, and you can thank every one of them” for making the airport what it is today, Rieke said. “I just happened to be on the watch.”

According to Rieke, “Outside of Fort Wayne, ours is the best airport in northeast Indiana. It can be compared only to Warsaw” in its systems and facilities, he said.

Rieke said the aviation board has “wisely spent its money, purchasing new land and putting the infrastructure in place.” He said federal funding has played a big part in making the airport great, “thanks in no small part to Butler Fairman & Seufert, our consultants.”

He said he believes the addition of an airport manager has “really crowned things off” and taken much of the day-to-day responsibilities off the shoulders of the aviation board.

Airport manager Russ

George Wappes to a four-year term.

Aviation board member Brad Stump presented the nominations, and he said he and fellow board members and also board attorney Derald Kruse determined there should be no conflict of interest in appointing Turner to the board.

Turner is a principal in Metal Technologies Inc. of Auburn. That company maintains a hangar at the DeKalb County airport.

Stump said a lease agreement is in place with Metal Technologies, and the board “sees no issues relating to that agreement” upcoming in the foreseeable future.

“In the off-chance that there were to be something, Jeff would excuse himself” from voting on any related matter, Stump said.

Jim Mason is the fourth



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Couchman said Rieke's aviation experience and expertise will be missed, but he believes the appointment of Jeffrey Turner to replace Rieke is a good pick.

While not an aviator, Turnery "has a really good business mind," Couchman pointed out. "I think we have a board that is well-balanced, and Jeff will be a great addition."

Rieke said he will be available at any time "if the board wants my advice, or if they want me to work on a special project. I would have loved to stay on the board, but with my plans to be gone six months of the year, it just didn't make any sense."

member of the aviation board.

Stump said state Sen. Dennis Kruse will be presenting new legislation that would allow for the expansion of the aviation board from four to five members. The legislation would make it easier for four-member boards to field a quorum of voting members, Stump explained. "It is easier to have three of five members present than three of four," he said.

Also on Monday, the commissioners reappointed Robert Menzie to a two-year term on the DeKalb County Community Foundation board of directors.

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