

VILLAGE of HAMILTON

We are writing to respond to some assertions made in a recent letter to the editor concerning the Hamilton Municipal Airport, and the perimeter fencing project now nearing completion.

The airport perimeter fencing project is a part of ongoing airport improvements, and is an important and essential step to further economic development of the airport. Hamilton Municipal Airport stood nearly alone among general aviation airports in New York State with no significant security infrastructure. The fence is necessary to enhance the safety for both pilots and the public by preventing incursions into areas of the airport property that would be dangerous during aircraft operations. There have been many such incursions, such as hikers walking across the runway, and unauthorized motor vehicles driving on the runway, especially in the last few years.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety standards for the installed fencing require re-routing parts of the Chenango Canal Trail to provide a safe distance between the fence and the runway. The alteration of the trail route is part of the funded project, and is currently in progress. We ask that residents be patient until the necessary changes can be completed as required by the project contract. The Village is committed to maintaining the Chenango Canal Trail as a benefit for all Hamilton residents.

The Hamilton Municipal Airport is a public-use airport, and the only one in Madison County. We do not subsidize aircraft operations for any entity. For the last decade, the airport has been self-sufficient: that is, day-to-day operations have been sustained solely by the revenues generated by airport operations and fuel sales. The airport conducts several thousand takeoffs and landings per year. A recent study conducted for the New York State Department of Transportation estimated the regional economic impact of the airport at approximately \$6 million per year.

Virtually all of the aircraft based at Hamilton Municipal Airport are owned and operated by individuals who live in Central New York. These pilots fly for recreation, business, aviation training, and charity (including Angel Flights). Hamilton Municipal Airport provides an affordable means for local and regional residents to be involved in general aviation. Because of our proximity to Colgate, Chobani, Briggs & Stratten-owned Ferris Industries, and the Baseball Hall of Fame, we also draw a significant number of visitors who use Hamilton Municipal Airport when visiting or conducting business at these destinations. At a time when many general aviation airports are struggling, Hamilton Municipal stands out as a facility that not only serves the community, but conducts its day-to-day operations at no cost to the taxpayer. By successfully obtaining federal airport improvement grants (more than \$3 million in the last 5 years), Hamilton Municipal Airport has dramatically improved its infrastructure, operational capacity and safety, and has all-weather landing capabilities that rival those of major airports.

The public is welcome to contact the Village or any Commissioner if they have questions about the Airport. Our monthly meetings are open to the public.

Mayor Margaret Miller