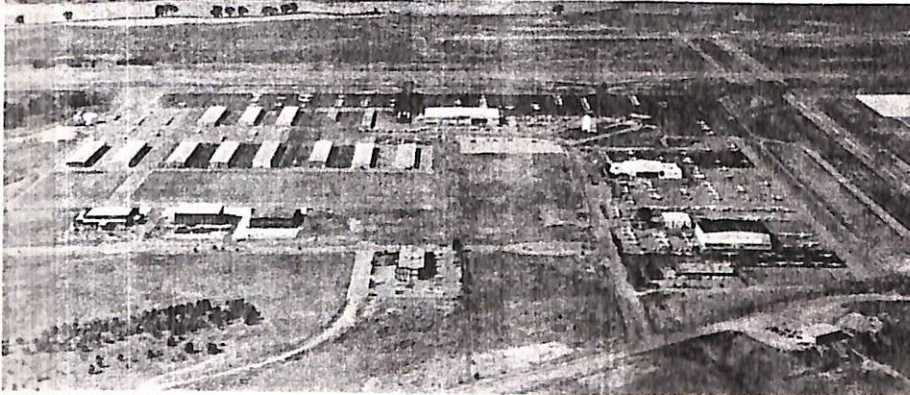




# Broomfield ENTERPRISE

SECTION A

## 1959 foresight begins <sup>Aug. 5, 1982</sup> successful Jeffco Airport



### Bird's eye view

This is the way Jeffco Airport appears to pilots flying over the area. The east/west runway runs across the top of the picture and the north/south runway is at the far right. In the foreground, left to right, are corporate hangars, the airport executive building, Roach Aircraft, and Aero Propeller. In the background, left to right, are several T-hangars, Aircraftco Beech, the Jeffco Air Traffic Control Tower, and Aero Associates. (Photo by Phil Sterritt)

by Becky Nothnagel

In 1959, the Jefferson County Commissioners purchased a 1,700 acre site south of Broomfield on Wadsworth Blvd. and in 1960 the Jeffco Airport officially began operation there.

Airport manager Dave Gordon, who has held that position since 1974, said the site choice "really showed a lot of foresight." It had been criticized because it is located at the north end of Jefferson County, but it was a good choice because it is in a slower developing area of the county, he said. In addition, an airport is a good use for that location because it is compatible with surrounding land use of Westminster, Broomfield and Boulder County, he said.

"We're seeing a lot of airports close down because incompatible zoning has been allowed," he added.

In the early days of the airport, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provided initial funds to build a runway, a tie-down ramp area and a terminal building. Since then the airport has grown and today is the base for 500 planes. An executive office building is located on the site along with state headquarters for the general aviation district office.

The airport is also home to four fixed base operators: Beechcraft, Roach Aircraft Inc., Aero Associates and Turbo West. These companies sell aviation fuel, provide maintenance, conduct flight instruction and provide tie-downs to secure airplanes.

Several other businesses that serve special aviation needs are also located at Jeffco Airport. They include Rocky Mountain Piper, Heffman Pilot Center, Rainbow Aviation, Executive Transport and Aero Flight. Two radio repair firms, Avionics and Aeronics, are based on the site as well.

The airport is run by a five-member Airport Authority, which was formed in 1965. The members are appointed to four-year terms by the Jefferson County Commissioners. Two of the current members are original members from 1965. The Authority meets monthly and also conducts six study sessions per year.

"A big reason for the airport's success has been due to the Airport Authority," Gordon said. "They run it like a business." Since 1965, the airport has operated "in the black," totally from revenues generated by the airport, he added. No tax money has been used since the Authority was formed.

Among the airport facilities is a control tower which is owned, operated and staffed by the FAA. It operates from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Twelve controllers direct traffic in a five-mile radius zone sur-

rounding the airport. During the air traffic controllers' strike last year, five controllers walked off the job but two later returned, Gordon said.

The airport also has three paved runways: a main runway, a parallel runway and a crosswind runway. The main runway, which is 7,500 feet long, includes a parallel taxi-way which is used only for ground movement. The crosswind runway, which runs in an opposite direction from the main runway, is used about 3 percent of the time, Gordon said, when a storm or strange front is in the area. During a storm the wind blows north or south, rather than the usual east or west and pilots always land or take off into the wind, he explained.

The crosswind runway would be used more often, Gordon said, but according to an airport runway use agreement, pilots at Jeffco Airport do not use the crosswind runway until the wind speed is 10 mph. That wind-speed occurs a small percent of the time, he said, so the agreement has lowered use of the crosswind runway from an approximated 6 percent of the time to about 3 percent. The agreement was made in an effort to limit air traffic over Broomfield, primarily the Lac Amora area, he added.

The airport also has a noise compatibility program to lower noise from aircraft flying over area cities. According to Gordon, the air traffic controllers tell pilots whenever possible to avoid flight over Broomfield. A flight booklet disseminated across the United States also advises pilots that Broomfield is a noise sensitive city and flight over the area should be avoided. As a final measure, signs in run-up areas of the runways read "Noise annoys—please avoid flight over Broomfield and other populated areas." The warning is a last minute reminder, Gordon said. "Five years ago I think we had a greater noise problem than we do now."

Of the 500 planes based at Jeffco Airport, about 75 percent are used for business trips and deliveries, Gordon estimated. Technically, the airport is considered to be a general aviation reliever for Stapleton Airport traffic, he said, and is open to all air traffic except military aircrafts or air carriers. "This airport has never been proposed to be used by commercial airlines and air carriers," he added. "It will be all we can do to expand the airport to cover general aviation traffic."

One reason for the use limitations is that the runways and taxiways are not strong enough to hold air carriers, such as a 707 jet. The wheels would go right through the pavement as if it were butter, Gordon com-

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