

February 2010



Ben-Epps Airport Tour and Luncheon

About 50 AANC members and guests enjoyed a beautiful morning at the Ben Epps Airport, spending time in the Flight Center and the Fire Station. The Airport Manager, Tim Beggerly, his associate, Angela Dalton, Coordinator, and Alan Reddish, "Fire Chief" kept us fascinated, entertained, and informed.

We had an exceptional Power-Point presentation on the history, both current and projected and the economic impact of this remarkable facility. Our visit also included a tour of the Fire Station and the state of the art Airport-Use-Only fire truck, capable of unbelievable speed on the tarmac and foam-spreading capability. The presentations captured everyone's undivided attention. The technology of the entire facility was a marked contrast to the replica (hanging from the ceiling of the Flight Center) of the original plane design flown by Ben Epps in the early 1900's, two years after the achievements of the Wright Brothers.

Everyone had a great time, arriving at 10:30 AM and not leaving until about 1:00 PM, since our program and tour, included a luncheon provided as part of our annual club membership dues.

Of special interest is the passenger service which the airport is now providing. There are 4 shuttle connections each day TO & FROM the Atlanta Airport. This low fare commuter option is one of the greatest bargains in air-fare history, and so convenient! Also, there is now a reconstruction upgrade of the passenger terminal which will be started this Spring. Another interesting thing about our local airport is that because of its FAA Tower, and exceptional runways, it has military contracts, and many flights across the USA stop here for refueling rather than having to get delayed in the

congestion of the Atlanta Airport flight patterns. Of course, Bull Dog team players, visiting teams and fans enjoy the Delta Contracted flights that carry the athletes to and from events on the large planes.

Because of Federal Funding and landing/usage fees, our airport shows a considerable profit, and is a major attraction in the economic development of the north Georgia region. There are flight school certification programs offered at the airport, as well as maintenance and excellent hanger facilities for the many private and corporate aircraft based here.

We have heard from all the members who attended that they had a great time, and especially enjoyed the "Hot Air Balloon cookies from the Black Forest Bakery!