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Weekend Weather Forecast

Friday

Mostly Sunny

74°



Saturday

Mostly Sunny

76°



Sunday

Sunny

76°



True All-Stars



Photos by Kristi Zeman

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LAX Fight Heads North

By Brian Simon

You wouldn't exactly call them the good ol' days, but there was a time not that long ago that this reporter barely went two weeks without covering some new development regarding El Segundo's continuous and often contentious battle with Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA). While the storyline hasn't totally changed, the participants have mellowed and with that, the articles became less frequent. Whatever drama and rancor was left between the two sides seemed to fizzle out on the heels of the January 2006 landmark legal settlement that paved the way for LAWA's South Airfield Improvement Project (SAIP). Completed last year, the SAIP was the first implemented component of the LAX Master Plan and the first major facilities upgrade of any kind at the airport since 1984. It included construction of a parallel taxiway between the airport's two south runways and relocation of the southernmost runway 55 feet closer to El Segundo—a distance studies determined made no discernible difference in noise impacts on the community. El Segundo bought into the runway move after an independent study by the NASA Ames Research Center supported safety claims that the project would go a long way in reducing dangerous runway incursions.

In exchange for its signature on the dotted line, El Segundo received a hefty chunk of money for residential sound insulation as well as a key concession: a contractual guarantee to limit airport growth through the year 2015. LAWA agreed to reduce the total number of passenger gates from 163 to 153 (starting in 2010 by eliminating two gates per year) unless annual passenger traffic was below 75 million. By putting the clamps on gates, El Segundo made certain the airport could not grow beyond its current physical maximum capacity of 78.9 million.

LAX passenger growth, always a major concern for El Segundo, swelled to unprec-

edented proportions in the '90s and peaked in 2000 with a record 68 million people passing through airport gates. Talk of 80 or even 90 million annual passengers suddenly seemed realistic as LAWA considered its expansion options, with El Segundo usually playing the role of foil. Then came September 11 and everything changed. Airport modernization became more about safety than growth, although air travel figured to pick up again. Yet while all the major U.S. airports eventually returned to their previous traffic levels, LAX never recovered. According to recently released stats, LAX passenger traffic was down to 59.5 million passengers last year, the numbers dropping with each passing month as the ongoing recession continues to adversely impact both business and leisure

travel. International travel, down more than 16 percent so far this year, is one major culprit, as is a significant reduction in airline seats. The fact that LAX is not a "hub" airport (due to its West Coast location) also doesn't help matters.

At first glance, it may seem as though El Segundo has emerged as the clear winner. After all, isn't dwindling air passenger traffic a good thing for a community that has fought airport expansion from day one? Be careful what you wish for, as the pundits say.

If anything, a continued decline in air travel will mean negative impacts on the regional and local economies, according to various experts across the Southland and also El Segundo Mayor Kelly McDowell.

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Aloha Evening Benefits Childrens Hospital

By Jesse Blake McCann

No one would guess that on a quiet El Segundo street last weekend, a residence was holding a very special event. If a person were to follow the helpful arrows into a passage along the side of this home, it would open up to a colorful backyard luau with all the important components: pineapples, hula dancers, ukuleles... and a good cause.

The El Segundo Auxiliary of Childrens Hospital Los Angeles held its first Aloha Evening last Saturday to raise money for the hospital. For a \$25 entrance fee, guests were treated to food, drinks and entertainment in a backyard turned Hawaiian beach.

The El Segundo Auxiliary's 90th anniversary will be next year, Secretary

Patty Reed said, "It started with a couple people from Chevron, and it's been going ever since."

The purpose of the Auxiliary is to raise money for Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. To do so, it holds various fundraising events throughout the year, such as garden tours and a wine tasting in November. There are about 40 different auxiliary and associate groups with CHLA, Reed explained, and each group does something different for its fundraisers. "Everybody has their own ways of making money for the hospital," she said.

The El Segundo Auxiliary held the Aloha Evening thinking would be a nice

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