

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Economic Development Agency, Aviation Division

SUBMITTAL DATE:
April 8, 2004

SUBJECT: Renaming of Desert Resorts Regional Airport as Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, 4th District

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve renaming of Desert Resorts Regional Airport as Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport;
2. Authorize the Economic Development Agency's Aviation Division to proceed with all steps necessary to effect the change of name; and
3. Authorize the Assistant County Executive Officer/EDA or his designee to execute all related documents, contracts, and forms as may be required to effect the name change.

BACKGROUND: As its primary purpose, the Desert Resorts Regional Airport Authority is charged with the promotion of economic development of Desert Resorts Regional Airport (formerly Thermal Airport) and the surrounding area. In that capacity, the Authority's Board of Directors received a proposal from the Coachella Valley Historical Society to rename the Airport in honor of Jacqueline Cochran (see attached letter dated February 3, 2004). During its March 24, 2004 meeting, the Authority's Board of Directors voted to request that the Board of Supervisors approve changing the airport's name to Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport.

Jacqueline Cochran was one of the most prominent aviators of the 20th Century, and is likely the most important aviator in the County's history. She is also very well known and remembered in the aviation community. Ms. Cochran was a long-time resident of the Coachella Valley, and is buried in Coachella Valley Cemetery. She regularly utilized Desert Resorts Regional Airport over the course of her long aviation career.

(Continued to page 2.)



Supervisor Roy Wilson
Fourth District

BACKGROUND (Continued):

Cochran earned her pilots license in 1932, and by 1934 was already participating in international air races. A contemporary and friend of Amelia Earhart, she tried to dissuade Earhart from attempting the 1937 round-the-world flight that led to her demise. During World War II, Cochran was the director of Women's Flying Training, and was the founder and director of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) Program. Following the war, she became a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. In 1953, she became the first woman pilot to break the sound barrier. Cochran was enshrined in the Aviation Hall of Fame in 1971. When Cochran died at her Indio home in 1980, she held more speed, altitude, and distance records than any other pilot, male or female.

For further details, please refer to the 2004 issue of the Coachella Valley Historical Society's publication, Periscope, which is devoted to Jacqueline Cochran.

Requirements and Costs:

Once the Board of Supervisor approves the proposed renaming of the airport, the following steps will need to be taken to effect the name change:

- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) would have to be provided with a copy of the Board's action, along with a request that they approve the change of name.
- Once approved, the FAA and Caltrans would have to provide notice for publishing the name change in flight guides and other aviation-related publications. It should be noted that the airport's identifier would continue to be TRM, as this was not changed when the airport was renamed the first time.
- Caltrans would have to replace the airport's freeway signs, which were originally installed at Caltrans' cost.
- The airport directional signs that are currently placed in the City of La Quinta and City of Coachella as well as various unincorporated areas near the airport were prepared by the County sign shop and placed by the cities and others at no cost.
- The onsite signs and monument sign would have to be replaced by the County's Aviation Division.

Costs would consist primarily of staff time and expenses associated with replacing signs and printed materials. Most of these would be relatively insignificant; however, replacing the monument sign at the intersection of Vic Higgins Drive and Airport Boulevard would entail a somewhat protracted bidding and construction process, as the existing sign cost approximately \$20,000 and weighs about 16,000 pounds.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

The overall cost for renaming the airport should not exceed \$45,000, including staff time, contracts, and materials. All costs will be paid from the Aviation Division's Operating Fund, and there will be no impact upon the County's General Fund.

**COACHELLA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**P.O. BOX 595
INDIO, CALIF. 92202Supervisor Roy Wilson
Larson Justice Center
46-200 Oasis Street, Ste. 318
Indio, CA 92201

February 3, 2004

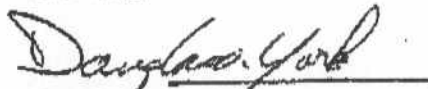
Dear Supervisor Wilson:

The Coachella Valley Historical Society would like to suggest the name of the airport in Thermal, California be changed to JACQUELINE COCHRAN AIRPORT or JACQUELINE COCHRAN REGIONAL AIRPORT, if it so qualifies.

Jacqueline Cochran's record in aviation is unparalleled. The holder of more records than any pilot, she was a woman of international stature. She developed her ranch and home in Coachella Valley in the 1930's. Now known as Indian Palms Country Club, she entertained the world's dignitaries there including U.S. presidents. Her lifetime was one of breaking barriers in aviation and setting records, some of which began from the airport in Thermal and were set over the Coachella Valley. Her most well known achievements were organizing the WASPs (Women Air Force Service Pilots) in World War II and being the first woman to break the sound barrier in a jet plane. She died in Indio in 1980 and is buried in the Coachella Valley cemetery.

We respectfully ask that you forward this request to your fellow supervisors, county officials and appropriate persons for their consideration. We will be most happy to help provide any necessary documentation.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. York
President