

Airport Expansion Greeted at Laurel

LAUREL—The newly expanded Laurel airport, to be dedicated Sunday, fills a definite need for the Yellowstone Valley community, says David Powers of the airport commission and chairman of the committee on arrangements.

Increased tax base for the school district Powers listed as a benefit of major importance, and a boon for private plane operators. He terms the Laurel facility a satellite field for Billings—relieving congestion there.

Airport commission members view the future of the Laurel airport as comparable in impor-

tance to those now surrounding major cities—Denver for example. Rulings of the Federal Aviation Agency place limits on small aircraft operations at major ports, with eight large city airports now closed to any aircraft that is not being flown on instrument flying plans, Powers pointed out. "This cuts out 90 per cent of single engine aircraft," he noted.

Increased use of the Laurel airport since the new runway was completed last year is already apparent, says Powers. Aircraft traffic has doubled, with a notable increase in cross-country flights. Facilities are available for gasoline service and a number of motels provide free transportation to the downtown area for pilots and personnel on landing. "Many times pilots radio ahead and the fuel service is there by the time the plane lands," Powers commented.

Future development plans include the possibility of aircraft repair and maintenance, charter service, crop spraying, and flight instruction, Powers stated in expressing the view "We very definitely see a commercial future."

The Sunday dedication program will begin 10 a.m. with a fly-in, and the formal program will start at 1 p.m. Other events include a spot landing contest, 11 a.m., radio controlled model aircraft display, "fly-by" by the Experimental Aircraft Association, and aerobatics by John Burns of Sidney, Al Newby of Bozeman. Sky divers and a flour bombing contest (with local pilots participating) will be a part of the afternoon program.

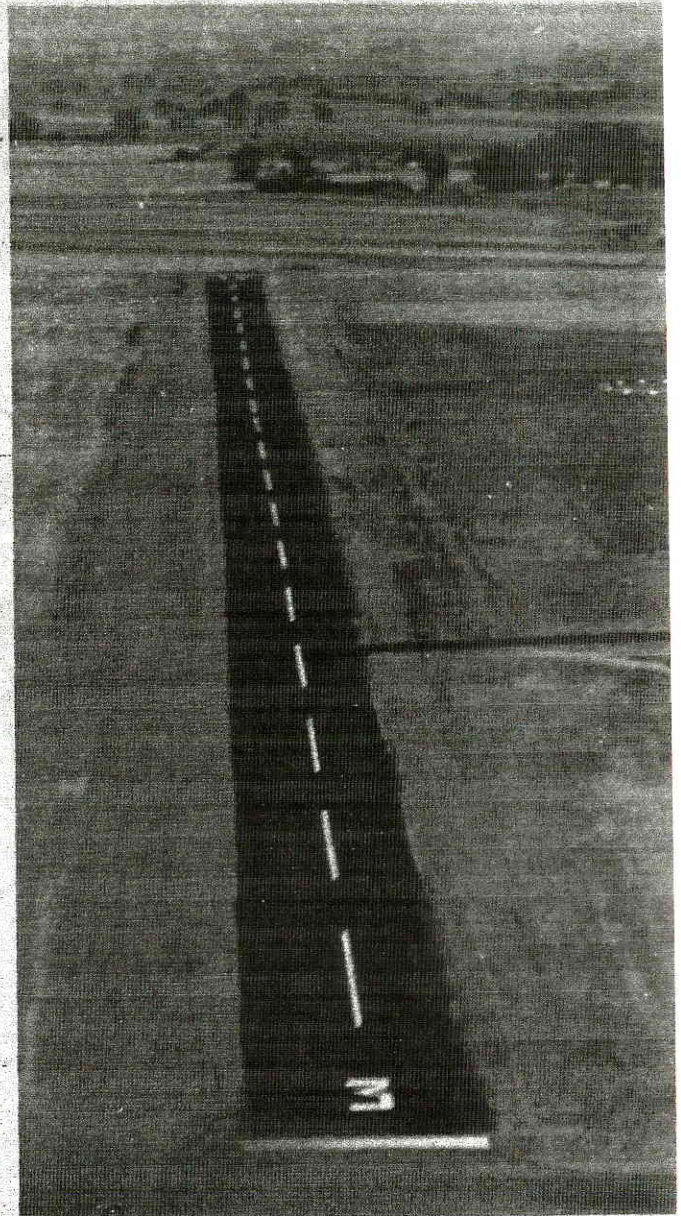
Lunch and concession stands will be on the site throughout the day.

Airport events slated Sunday

The dedication of the runway and lights at the Laurel Airport is rescheduled for Sunday, Sept. 20, David Powers, airport commission chairman, said Monday. The day-long activities, originally planned for Sunday, Sept. 13, had to be postponed to the rain-snow date of Sunday, Sept. 20 because of rain and snow.

Bill Hunt, director of the Montana Aeronautics Commission, will be the featured speaker. Weather permitting, the remainder of the schedule will be the same as planned for the previous week.

A fly-in is planned at 10 a.m.; a spot landing contest at 11 a.m.; and lunch served from 12 to 1 by the Laurel Jaycees. Dedication ceremonies for the runway and lights will be conducted at 1 p.m.; and aerobatics will be staged from 2 to 4 p.m.; a flour bombing contest is scheduled from 4:15 to 5 p.m.



New Runway Ready

Aerial view shows Laurel airport's new runway, which will be dedicated at ceremonies Sunday. The "3" at the end of the runway indicates a heading of 30 degrees.—Photo by George Heck.