Time to end funny business at Detroit's Metro Airport



There's still a whole lot of funny business going on over at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Readers with long memories will recall that the airport for years was an embarrassing mixture of corruption and incompetence. As the opening date of the new terminal approached earlier this year, Gav. John Engler and Wayne County Executive Ed McMamara wisely cut a deal to move administrative control out of Wayne County and place it in the hands of an independent appointed authority. The legislature passed the required law, and McMamara and Engler picked an unusually distinguished group of citizens to serve on the authority. Since then, the authority has had nothing but trouble from the Wayne County commissioners, who hated the change because it took away their cherished political and financial leverage. They manded that "public oversight" somehow had been sacrificed to the workings of the authority had had been sacrificed to the workings of the authority had had been sacrificed to the workings of the authority and arguing that the county will be forced to cover \$115 million in bonds issued to finance the construction and renovate the north terminal. The suit has been hanging fire for weeks at the Court of Appeals.

In the meantime, the commissioners have been stalling on approving the bonds, If the bonds aren't OK'd, Northwest Airlines will face millions in extra charges. Oddly, this doesn't seem to faze the commission. Commissioner Robert Blackwell, who chairs the commissioner Robert Blackwell, who chairs the commissioner flow the Northwest, an unusual way to treat the airport's biggest customer.

Gov. Engler last week requested an expedited hearing on the case from the state Supreme (Court, both to settle the complex issue of the bonds and to clarify once and for all who has the authority to run the airport authority, and approval power over certain large airport contracts.

Let's be clear about what's really going on here.

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Letting the commissioners have any say in appointments to the airport authority would be letting the fox back in the chicken coop. And allowing the tox back in the character coop, and allowing the commission to approve "certain large contracts" does nothing more than take us back to the days when no-bid contracts at the airport were let on the basis of political connections.

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This is hardly theoretical. A highly placed source told me that only last week one of the commissioners called him, ostensibly to ask how a certain asphalt company "could be placed on the approved bidders' list." In reality, what the commissioner was angling for was a route by which his friends in asphalt got awarded a sweetheart deal at the airport. Some things never change, especially when it has to do with the way husiness is conducted in Wayne County. You would have thought it was enough for the commissioners to be paid a base senough for the commissioners to be paid a base senough for a commission that meets once every two weeks. But for the commission to try to get back into its historie role of contributing incompetence and corruption to the business of running the airport is too much!

Gov. Engler was right. The Supreme Court should take jurisdiction over the commission's lawsuit, hold expedited hearings and bring a prompt end to all the whining and funny business.

Then the airport authority can get down to

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Then the airport authority can get down to he serious business of managing the airport

Phil Power is the Chairman of the Board of the compary that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2206 or at ppower@homecomm.net.

LETTERS

Secure absentee ballots

Farmington Hills leaves its returned absen-tee ballots in a "locked" room at City Hall where they sit until counted on election day.

where they sit until counted on election day. How many people have the key to that room, and access to the ballots is unknown. The potential and opportunity to tamper with those ballots is available to certain people run-ning the city, despite the assurances by City Hall that it would never and could never hap-pen here. Human nature being what it is, I dis-ner the state of the country of the country of the country of the perfect of the country of the country

Hall that it would never and could never happen here. Human nature being what it is, I disagree.

Instead the Absentee Ballots should be held secure by a bonded, disinterested third party. The current system, favored by the existing power structure, has too much potential for abuse, especially considering the strange results of past recounts.

The mantar from City Hall is the system has too many safeguards to allow tampering.

Considering the fact that our elections are now called by absentee votes, every effort should be made to ensure that the integrity of the progress is maintained. Those who protest outrage over the suggestion that the system is not foolproof are the same ones who should be watched the closest.

While Farmington Hills has an excellent City Clerk, she is not there 24 hours a day seven days a week. Any system can be beaten if accessible, and the fact of the matter is our ballots are not secure, and should those in City Hall feel threatened by a change in local leadership and decide to ensure an election outcome which would preserve their influence and jobs.

Ron Oliverio

Heed speed

I would like to thank DDA Member Joyce
Cornwell for bringing up the issue of truffic
safety in the Farmington area. I wish her luck
in the quest to feel safe on Farmington streets.
Personally, I have had several conversations
with Frank Lauhoff, Bill Richards of the
Entire of the Street of Stree

Personally, I have had several conversations with Frank Lauboff, Bill Richards of the Farmington City manager's office and Gary Goss, Farmington Public Safety Director. I also presented the Michigan State Police supported "Safety Town program" wew townsafety, com to the Farmington Traffic Safety Board (FTSB). The FTSB never formally responded to my request. They also seem to be unaware of other national speed programs such as "Heed the Speed" or "Not in my Town" I have talked to members of the FTSB and have come to realize that they feel powerless to help. I was told by one FTSB member: "The City Council loves us, we just hear the complaints of people so they don't have to." City of Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss sits on the Board of Directors of the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County (TIAOC), (http://www.tiamit.org) The

TIAOC believes that regardless of posted speed limits traffic enforcement should be based on the 85th percentile speed. This is the speed at, or below which, 85 percent of the

speed at, or below which, 85 percent of the traffic is moving.

The TIAOC also states that many studies show that posting signs at higher or lower limits does not significantly change the 65th percentile speed; it is the driving environment that mainly influences speed. With that being said, the city of Farmington should use the legal means to establish an environment that is conducive to making pedestrian traffic safe and also congruent with what the taxpayers expect.

expect.

The 85th percentile enforcement is inconsistent with posted speed limits and thus makes our signs no different than false advertising. Until the law or posted limits are changed, the City of Farmington should enforce the laws established by the State of Michigan and the Ordinances of the City.

David Judon.

David Judge

A closer look at Brady

A closer look at Brady

Let's take a closer look at Mr. James Brady's credentials to qualify as a full-fledgred judge come November elections:

He has been a part time magistrate for the past 16 years. Magistrate is another name for a justice who presides at a police court. Mr. Brady's entire judicial experience has been spent in the narrow realm of prosecuting traffic tickets given by police, some small claims cases where attorneys are not allowed, and arraigments, which means an accused person would come before him to preliminarily answer to a charge, not be judged.

For four years prior to this, he was a prosecutor for cases brought by police. Virtually 100 percent of his judicial experience has been very minor in nature and mostly hearing police traffic cases, which can be appealed to a real judge and overturned.
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His is other experience, that is, his regular job, is as a patent and trademark attorney, which is far removed from experience which would qualify him to be a sitting 47th District Court judge, who has to be able to hear all types of complicated eases far outside Mr. Brady's large of the complex of the experience as a magistrate or intellectual law

experience as a magistrate or intellectual law attorney.

On the other hand, his opponent, attorney Annette Raczkowski, with 14 years' experience with the type of cases heard by district and higher court judges, is far more qualified.

The Farmington and Farmington Hills Police officers Associations have been pressing hard for Mr. Brady's election. Why do you suppose that is? Could it be they are earning his favor, perhaps to tilt his future decisions their way? What else? That smells a lot like unethical conflict of interest, doesn't it?

Kenneth Kemp



