



Wednesday, November 12, 2003

Mather air testing ends

By Ryan Rose

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The Mather Air saga has concluded another chapter: tomorrow is the last day of the 120-Day air-path test.

Residents of El Dorado Hills, Folsom and Cameron Park have complained about noise caused by cargo flights traveling to Mather Airport.

The testing, which started July 17 and includes night time air fly-over, was developed by the Federal Aviation Administration and County officials to find alternative means by which cargo traffic could travel to Mather Air Field.

At the conclusion of the tests, the approach will be returned to the original "ILF" method over other area residential neighborhoods.

While that may be positive for some residents, other residents will now have to live with the noise.

Regardless, El Dorado County Supervisor Rusty Dupray is happy the testing period has concluded.

"We are definitely looking forward to the end," said Dupray. "It has proved to be not a very popular test."

Bothered by the noise and frustrated with tests, residents from affected areas were invited to meet to discuss issues in their respective areas.

During the meetings, which were held the first week of October, the testing process was explained to community members, and they were all allowed to express their opinions.

Dupray opposed the testing, asking instead that the planes use a "step-down approach," in which, a plane comes in with less power, gliding into a landing. Less power means less engine noise.

For Dupray, the 120-days of testing was nothing more than a problem.

"It was a failure," said Dupray of the test. "As soon as it started we got complaints."

Dupray said the test did what the Federal Aviation Administration promised not to do: move the noise from one place to another.

However, many who were affected by the original air flight path were happy to hear the noise would be moved to another location.

Now that the original ILF approach will be restored, Dupray assures residents El Dorado County will help.

"I want to stress to the people in the ILF approach that we are not giving up on them," said Dupray, adding the Board of Supervisors has passed resolutions stating the Sacramento Airport must include information concerning affected residents in their environmental impact report.

The Mather Air saga will continue, but Dupray is looking forward to tomorrow.

"I am disappointed the test ran as long as it did," said Dupray.

