

## Press Release

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM MONTEREY REGIONAL AIRPORT POST

MONTEREY, CA, September 24, 2024 - Michael La Pier has informed the Monterey Peninsula Airport District Board of Directors of his intention to retire as the Executive Director of Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) effective June 6, 2025. He has held the post since June 2016.

Mr. La Pier made the following statement in a formal letter of resignation to the Monterey Peninsula Airport District Board of Directors and Monterey Regional Airport staff:

"It is with great pride that I announce my retirement as the Executive Director of Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) effective June 6, 2025. While the original plan was to stay through the completion of the new terminal building, slated for 2026, I believe the time has come for my departure.

On one of my first days on the job as the new Executive Director of Monterey Regional Airport, members of the Board of Directors of the Monterey Peninsula Airport District outlined three key issues for me to address during my tenure; first, financial stewardship that would lead to generating much needed revenues to operate and grow the airport. Second, address air service development with an eye toward making it easier and less expensive for travelers to and from our region to use our airport instead of finding it necessary to drive to Bay area airports to begin their travel and, finally, complete the Master Plan for the airport and move the airport toward the construction of a new terminal complex. Over the past nine (9) years, most, if not all, of those challenges have been accomplished.

- In June of 2016, the operating budget for the airport was \$5.6 million. The airport had cash reserves of just \$2.8 million. With the Fiscal year 2025 budget recently crafted by my staff and I, the airport will operate on a budget of \$13.7 million with a net positive income from operations of \$2.4 million. That net income will be added as additional reserves to our current reserve total of \$14,000,000.00.
- My staff and I have worked closely with FAA to secure over \$200 million in grant funding for projects at the airport including the new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Station, support infrastructure for a new replacement terminal including \$44 million for a new ramp area and \$16 million for a new auto parking lot currently under construction.
- Recruited new air service to Seattle, Denver, Dallas-Fort Worth and Minneapolis and increased the number of passenger enplanements from 183,000 to a projected 316,000 in FY 25
- Competed for and won a Small Community Air Service Development \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to attract new non-stop service to Chicago O'Hare (ORD) Groundwork laid with at least two airlines for future ORD service

- Along the way, I am proud of the relationship we have fostered with Visit Carmel and See Monterey. The effort to continue to develop air service opportunities is now one that involves these two key community voices. Their contributions to air service development have been consequential in the successes we have seen.
- Completed Airport Master Plan. My staff and I, working with our design professionals, have nearly completed the design of the new replacement terminal which will be ready to go to bid in November.

During my over 40-year career in airport management, I have served as the CEO of several airports throughout the country. I have strived to bring passion and determination to each airport, hopefully leaving each one a bit better than I found it. I believe I have accomplished this goal during my tenure at Monterey Regional.

I want to thank the Board of Directors of the Monterey Peninsula Airport District for providing the policies and support that were vitally needed to achieve these successes. Their focus on the airport and the community should not be overlooked. Thank you for allowing me to share my passion for this airport.

To my staff, I want to express my deep gratitude for your efforts during our ride together. It hasn't always been the easiest but, I hope you will agree, it has been exciting. The pride I have in the staff that I assembled is unbounded. It is because of us that this airport is well positioned for the future.

In the words of one of my favorite musicians, Warren Zevon, "My Ride is Here." A bit sooner than planned but it's here, nonetheless."

Mary Ann Leffel, current Chair of the Monterey Peninsula Airport District Board of Directors commented, "The entire Board of the Monterey Regional Airport commends Mike on a job well done. He and the staff have navigated through numerous large construction projects, always delivering on time and on budget. Mike and the staff's relationship with FAA and the major airlines serving our region is the envy of many. The addition of new routes is in answer to the needs of our community, and coming through Covid without losing tenants was remarkable; always adding to the reserves in each fiscal year as the airport prepared for the current safety/modernization finale... a new terminal. We look forward to working with Mike and the team on finalizing the design and turning the dirt on the new gateway to the Monterey Region."

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#### About Monterey Regional Airport

Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) is Monterey County's only commercial airport and accommodates over 500,000 passengers each year. The airport services eight nonstop markets with an average of 15 daily departures. We are committed to providing our customers with superior services in a safe, secure, professional environment. Be sure to visit [www.montereyairport.com](http://www.montereyairport.com) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @montereyairport.