

Airplane service group shifts to Collin County

Air-O had worked from Addison Airport

BY MARGARET ALLEN | STAFF WRITER

With its business slowing in recent months at Addison Airport, Air-O Specialists of Texas Inc. relocated in September to Collin County Regional Airport in McKinney.

Business is booming, said Charles Schandelmeier, owner of the small aircraft maintenance shop.

Schandelmeier left Addison Airport in search of cheaper rent and cheaper aviation fuel for his customers. He says he found it at the Collin County airport, and already is planning to expand beyond the small, temporary box hangar that Air-O is leasing.

Schandelmeier said he was paying \$6.02 a square foot annually at the bustling Addison Airport, which along with Dallas Love Field is the acknowledged North Texas hub for corporate aircraft.

Trained as a crew chief on Chinook helicopters in the Army Air National Guard, Schandelmeier bought the 20-year-old Air-O in 2001 after working for the owner for three years. Air-O pays \$4.80 a square foot annually at Collin County Regional, he said. And rather than being one of a half-dozen aircraft maintenance shops on the field, Schandelmeier has the market to himself in McKinney.

Businessman Brandon Pogue, owner of commercial real estate brokerage Pogue Group in McKinney and a long-time user of the airport, said Air-O is a welcome addition to the airfield. He's already taken his own Bonanza aircraft in for servicing.

"That's a great facility," Pogue said. "We really needed that."

Air-O was wooed to the field by its fixed-base operator, Cutter Aviation, which services and refuels aircraft there, Schandelmeier said.

"We really pride ourselves on the customer-service aspect," he said. "If you



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CHEAPER BY THE SQUARE FOOT: Charles Schandelmeier, owner of Air-O Specialists of Texas Inc., has opened up shop at Collin County Regional Airport.

need it done, you need it done now. Right now we're the exclusive maintenance shop, and we have been swamped."

A two-man shop, Schandelmeier and Jorge Ashford, who also has his airframe and powerplant licenses, handle all the work. But that's likely to change soon, Schandelmeier said. If business continues brisk, he said, he'll hire another mechanic, as well as an office manager.

The shop can take in all small- and medium-sized piston aircraft, he said, from Pipers and Mooneys to Beechs and even

home-built aircraft. By the end of the year, he said, the shop may be doing the larger King Air planes as well.

Customer relationships are important, Schandelmeier said.

"It's a very trusting relationship. We try to become friends with all our customers and get to know them on a first-name basis," he said, "because we are dealing with somebody's life and the lives of their loved ones."

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