

Executive hangar at LT Airport ready for big aircraft

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Airport's new hangar in relation to the old one is like comparing a penthouse to an ordinary hotel room.

That's how Michael Golden of Mountain West Aviation described the executive hangar that is on the north end of the property. While he wouldn't disclose the exact cost of the building, it was several hundred thousand dollars.

Having such a facility in South Lake Tahoe means airplane owners who have bigger planes and want them stored out of the elements will be able to do so in Tahoe. In the past, passengers were dropped off and the flight crew would go to Reno to store the plane until called upon to pick up the people.



The executive hangar at Lake Tahoe Airport allows larger planes to be covered.

Photo/Provided

“There are customers during celebrity golf who want their plane in a hangar, but this is more for the itinerant traveler who doesn’t want their plane out in the elements. Ice and snow do not mix well with plane travel,” Golden told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Summer sun and planes is not a good combo either. That’s why it’s expected the hangar is likely to be used year-round.

Size of planes would dictate how many the space could hold. It could fit one big executive jet, or a mix of turbo props – it all depends.

“We would prefer someone to rent it out year-round, but we also know there is a market for people who want their plane in a hangar while visiting,” Golden said. “And if it’s successful, we’ll build another one.”

The airport has other hangars that are owned by the city. If looking to the right of the runway from the deck of the terminal, those are the smaller, city hangars. Golden’s executive hangar is to the left, past his office.

When Golden took over the fixed base operations in December 2007, part of the lease agreement was to eventually build the hangar. What was there before was so poorly designed that the door opened in the back so a plane could never access it. Instead, it was rented out for storage. An adjacent building had been used for weapons training for South Lake Tahoe police officers.

Both those buildings are gone. The footprint is not identical, but the coverage is the same. Most of the scrap from the old building was recycled.

The new facility has high-intensity, low-voltage throughout. Each wall panel has solid foam as insulation between the metal and outside. The five heaters hanging from the ceiling act as thermal deicing units. Any water coming off the plane goes

into a floor drain where there is a water-oil separator.

The whole point is the planes will be more than protected from Mother Nature. The warmth will keep all the parts in working order.

While Mountain West has a deicer, it's expensive to use. But it is a tool Golden envisions will be useful if commercial service resumes.