

Akhiok, Kodiak Airports Officially Renamed

Thursday, 11 July 2013

Senator

Gary Stevens joins Governor Parnell and family members of Jim Andie and Robin Starrett for signing of SB31.

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Wednesday, Governor Sean Parnell signed Senate Bill 31, which renames Akhiok's runway the "Jim Andie and Robin Starrett Memorial Runway," and renames Kodiak's airport the "Kodiak Benny Benson State Airport."

Senator Gary Stevens sponsored the legislation at the request of the residents of Akhiok, who wanted to honor the memory of two pilots who were well known in the community. Representative Alan Austerman later introduced an amendment for the "Kodiak Benny Benson State Airport."

According to Akhiok's mayor, a gold-lettered sign will be built next to the runway and friends and family will be invited for a ceremony this summer to mark the dedication of the airstrip.

Robin Starrett followed a distinguished career in the U.S. Army with service in the Coast Guard before retiring in 2004 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. His later years were spent as a bush pilot in the Kodiak area. In 2008, Starrett was killed in one of Kodiak's worst air disasters in recent memory. He died along with five others when the baggage door of his plane popped open shortly after take-off.

Jim Andie grew up in California and working many jobs in the Western United States until finally realizing his dream by becoming an Alaskan bush pilot. Andie died after his aircraft struck a tree near Heitman Lake. Two passengers survived the crash.

Benny Benson is the designer of Alaska's flag, and spent most of his adult life in Kodiak and worked for Kodiak Airways. This year will mark the centenary of his birth in Chignik in 1913.