



## **My Turn**

# **Taos Airport crosswind runway ruse**

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For decades there has been a push in Taos for a crosswind runway at the Taos airport. The reason being given for the crosswind runway is safety.

As a pilot, an engineer, and a life-long resident of Taos, I agree that there are a few occasions when a crosswind runway would be beneficial. However, a crosswind runway can be shorter than the primary runway because when there is wind, i.e. a crosswind, airplanes do not need to travel as far on the ground to take off and to land.

Airplanes require airspeed not groundspeed to fly. When there is wind, a shorter ground-roll and less ground speed are required for an airplane to takeoff or to land; the stronger the wind, the shorter the required groundroll.

The existing runway at the Taos airport is suitable for operations 94 percent of the time. The other 6 percent of the time is when the wind blows hard and at an angle to the existing runway. One solution to the danger of using the Taos airport in these conditions is to simply not fly in adverse conditions.

Another solution to the danger of using the Taos airport in these crosswind conditions is to build a true crosswind runway for the small airplanes that have the most difficulty operating in crosswinds. Because this runway would be for the occasional use of lightweight airplanes in strong winds, it can be shorter, and it can be narrower than the existing runway.

Some crosswind runways are not even paved. A runway like this would be far less expensive to build than the proposed runway.

Regarding the design of the proposed crosswind runway: The proposal calls for a very expensive runway, much longer and wider than the existing runway, with a full length parallel taxiway, so it is clearly not simply a crosswind runway meant for safety. The design of the proposed new runway actually shortens the length of the existing main runway – this is clearly not a good safety feature. This design will make for a situation where larger aircraft will prefer the new longer runway, and smaller aircraft will prefer the old runway oriented more favorably to the prevailing winds.

This situation of one size aircraft using one runway, and another size aircraft using the other runway, at an airport without a control tower, would potentially make Taos Airport more dangerous than it is now.

In the entire life of the Taos Airport there have only been four accidents related to crosswind, none resulting in major injuries.

As a tax payer, I don't want my taxes being spent on a bigger toy for the wealthy.

*Ian Wilson is a resident of Taos.*