
Background and Inventory

HEMET-RYAN AIRPORT

Locations and Environs



Hemet-Ryan Airport is situated in the San Jacinto Valley at the foot of the San Jacinto Mountains in Riverside County, California. The airport is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Riverside, 37 miles southwest of Palm Springs, and 70 miles northeast of San Diego. Hemet-Ryan Airport primarily serves two cities, Hemet and San Jacinto. The airport is located within the City of Hemet, and six miles from the City of San Jacinto (Figure 1A). Additionally, the airport provides access to the City of Idyllwild, a mile-high mountain resort community, and the new Diamond Valley Reservoir.

The airport is at an elevation of 1,512 feet above mean sea level. With an elevation of 10,804 feet, Mount San Jacinto is the highest topographic feature in the area. This peak is located northeast of the airport.

Because of excellent thermal conditions for soaring, Hemet-Ryan Airport is one of the busiest sailplane centers in the United States. Sailplane activity levels vary depending on the season. Hemet-Ryan experiences most of its sailplane activity throughout the spring and fall. However, during the summer many owners take their sailplanes to areas outside of Hemet seeking better soaring conditions.

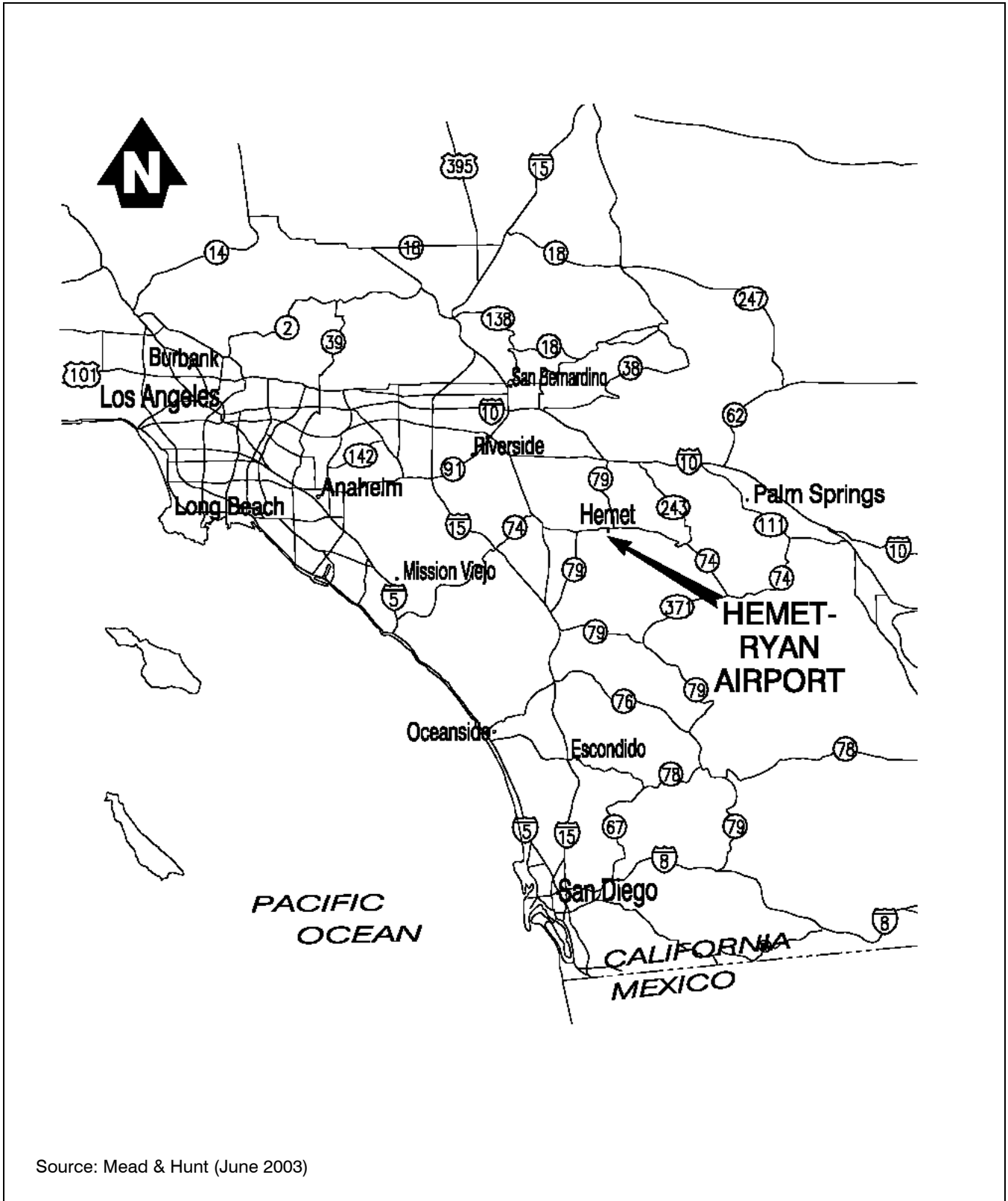


FIGURE 1A

Airport Location
Hemet-Ryan Airport

Land uses in the vicinity encompass a full range of uses. The western boundary is dominated by agriculture and open space. A mobile home park is located to the immediate north of the airport. Land uses east of the airport include industrial, residential, and open space. To the south and southeast are residential developments intermixed with remaining undeveloped parcels. Except to the west, urban uses are rapidly filling the remaining undeveloped areas.

The southern edge of the airfield is defined by a Riverside County Transportation Commission railroad branch line. A flood control channel parallels this railroad line.

Automobile access to Hemet-Ryan Airport is from California State Highway 74 via Stetson Avenue and Waldon Weaver Road. A future extension of State Highway 79 is expected to pass west of the airport and provide another point of access.

HISTORY

Shortly before the beginning of World War II, Riverside County acquired land, which it leased to the federal government for development as a pilot training center. In 1940, the airfield was constructed on 318 acres of land. During the same period, the Ryan School of Aeronautics was selected by the federal government to train cadets entering into the Army's pilot training program. Ryan, an established aircraft designer, owned the aircraft company that produced Charles Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis". Between 1940 and 1944, the Ryan School of Aeronautics trained approximately 6,000 fliers for the Army Air Corps.

The initial facility had 97 duplex-style redwood bungalows, each of which housed up to eight cadets. Because of the bungalow design, which was unlike other military barracks, the housing units were often referred to as the "country club of the air". Other facilities included a mess hall that seated 300 cadets, hospital, cadet lounge, library, dry cleaner, tailor, barbershop, post exchange, and commissary.

Five hangars were constructed on the east side of the airport to support the training program. These hangars were numbered one through five, starting from the east. Today, three of the original hangars (1, 4, and 5) remain and are used by several of the FBOs. Fire destroyed hangar No. 2 in 1974 and hangar No. 3 in 1997.

After WWII, management of the airport was returned to the County of Riverside with an additional 72 acres. Since then, the County has purchased additional land in anticipation of future expansion of the airport. Today, Hemet-Ryan Airport has a total of 440 acres.

In 1957, the California Division of Forestry (CDF) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) began their fire fighting operations at the airport. Hemet-Ryan Airport was one of several strategically placed air attack bases located throughout California. For over 40 years, CDF and USFS have been major economic contributors to Hemet-Ryan Airport. However, in 1998, USFS relocated its operations to San Bernardino International Airport. Similarly, CDF has plans to relocate their operations to March Air Force Base by 2002.

A variety of improvements have been completed at Hemet-Ryan Airport over the last six years that were funded by the State of California, the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program (AIP), the fixed base operator, airport funds, and community development block grants. Most of the projects involved pavement rehabilitation or drainage improvements. The high level of activity by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and United States Forestry Service (USFS) operations caused load-induced distress to the runway and taxiway pavements. Poor drainage also contributed to the poor condition of these pavements. Specific projects included:



- ▶ Reconstruction of 33,000 feet of apron including installation of valley gutters (1994)
- ▶ Reconstruction of Runway 5-23 and its parallel taxiway (Taxiway A) and construction of a midfield taxiway (Taxiway C) to the fire attack base (1996-1997)
- ▶ Development of a drainage master plan for the airport (1996-1997)
- ▶ Construction of a Portland cement concrete lined channel along the south side of Taxiway A with drainage facilities (1996-1997)

Reconstruction of the central parking apron was completed in 2001. As a part of this project the portable hangars were relocated from this area to a newly constructed hangar area in the southeast corner of the airport. Portables were positioned adjacent to existing building hangars. A new airport parking lot was also constructed, with a vehicle access gate. Waldon Weaver Road, which fronts the airport, was reconstructed during this period.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Hemet-Ryan Airport is owned by the County of Riverside. The airport is administered by the Economic Development Agency (EDA). Leasehold properties are administered by the EDA. Hemet Ryan Aviation provides routine maintenance activities under contract to the County of Riverside. Management of the airfield is overseen by aviation staff and the EDA.

A *fixed base operation* (FBO) is a business based at the airport, which provides aircraft and aviation services to the general public.



Although Runway 4-22 parallels Runway 5-23, the standard runway naming convention has not been followed. That is, the sailplane runway is not named Runway 5L-23R. The intent was to clearly differentiate the sailplane runway from the main runway.

Between the several fixed based operations (FBOs) at Hemet-Ryan Airport, a full range of general aviation services are offered. Services include: fueling, powered aircraft and sailplane flight instruction, aircraft maintenance, aircraft storage, and aircraft interiors. Greater detail of services provided by FBOs are listed in Table 1A.

Supporting services include a café (open seven days a week) and an aviation museum, which operates only on the weekends.

The primary runway, Runway 5-23, is 4,315 feet in length and 100 feet wide. Runway 5-23 is constructed of asphaltic concrete. It can accommodate an 80,000-pound, single-wheel aircraft.

Landing aids for Runway 5-23 include a standard Medium-Intensity Runway Lighting System (MIRLS). The lights are operated from dusk until dawn via pilot control on the Unicom frequency, 123.0 MHz. To facilitate landing operations, a Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI-V2L) is located on the Runway 23 approach end. The VASI has the standard 3.0° approach slope.

A second runway, Runway 4-22, is restricted to glider-related operations. The runway is 2,045 feet in length and 25 feet wide. The runway is made of asphaltic concrete. The surface accommodates a 5,000-pound, single-wheel aircraft. The surface is in excellent condition, having been resurfaced in 1998.

There are two building areas at Hemet-Ryan Airport. One facility is located north of Runway 4-22. It consists of three FBOs that primarily serve sailplanes or ultralights.

The other building area is situated south of Runway 5-23. Within this area, there are seven banks of hangars containing 79 aircraft units.

Fixed Base Operations (Aviation-Related Services)																		
Name	Fuel Sales		Flight Instr'n		Aircraft Rental		Aircraft Parts & Maintenance				Aircraft Storage			Miscellaneous				
	100 / Jet A 80		Fixed	Sailplane	Fixed	Sailplane	Engine	Airframe	Avionics	Sailplane	Other	Based	Hangars	Transient	Pilots'	Charter	Aircraft	Other
Hemet-Ryan Aviation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
Inland Avionics									X									
Advanced Avionics									X									
Aero Propeller											X ¹							
Inland Aircraft Interiors											X ²							
Sailplane Enterprises				X		X												
Steve's Soaring Services										X								
Ultralight Safaris																		X ³

Other Aviation-Related Tenants	
Name	Type of Business
CDF Tanker Base	Fire containment/protection
California Fish & Game	Game management
Riverside County Sheriff's Dept.	Aviation unit-patrol, search and rescue, photo missions, and surveillance
Nonaviation Tenants	
Hangar One Café	Restaurant
Hemet-Ryan Museum	Aircraft museum

¹ aircraft propeller-sales and service
² aircraft interior service
³ ultralight instruction and repair

Source: Data compiled by Mead & Hunt (June 2003)

TABLE 1A

Airport Tenants
Hemet-Ryan Airport

Three large box FBO hangars, a café, and a museum front Waldon Weaver Road. Portable hangars and individual hangars are located to the north of this area. Table 1B provides more detailed information on airport facilities and services.

The Hemet-Ryan Airport also serves as a base for several governmental agencies. All of these uses are grouped at the west end of the south-side building area. The County of Riverside Sheriff's Department-Aviation Unit is housed in a large, box hangar. The aviation unit's primary function is routine patrol. It also performs search and rescue operations, photo missions, and surveillance operations. Adjacent to the Sheriff's Aviation Unit is an office used by the Riverside County Fire Department's inspectors. The CDF fire attack base is also located in this area. The California Department of Fish and Game has two aircraft based at Hemet-Ryan Airport. These aircraft are used for anti-poaching patrol, game counts, and similar tasks.

AERONAUTICAL SETTING

Area Airports

Seven public-use airports are located within 25 nautical miles of Hemet-Ryan Airport. Two of these, Flabob and Perris Valley airports, are privately owned facilities that permit public use. Table 1C summarizes the facilities and services available at these airports. Restricted use (those closed to the public) airports are not included in Table 1C.

Class C - Generally that airspace from the surface to 4,000 feet above the airport elevation (charted in MSQ surrounding those airports that have an operational control tower, are serviced by a radar approach control, and that have a certain number of IFR operations or passenger enplanements).

Class E - Generally, if the airspace is not Class A, Class B, Class C, or Class D, and it is controlled airspace, it is Class E airspace. Class E airspace extends upward from either the surface or a designated altitude to the overlying or adjacent controlled airspace. Also in this class are Federal airways, airspace beginning at either 700 or 1,200 feet AGL used to transition to/from the terminal or enroute environment, enroute domestic, and off-shore airspace areas designated below 18,000 feet MSL. Class E airspace does not include the airspace 18,000 MSL or above.

Area Airspace

Federal aviation regulations define seven categories of airspace each with distinct operating requirements. The airspace in the vicinity of Hemet-Ryan Airport is relatively uncomplicated (Figure 1B). The airspace from the surface of Hemet-Ryan Airport to 700 feet is Class G uncontrolled airspace. Class E controlled airspace overlies the Hemet-Ryan Airport beginning at a height of 700 feet above ground level. Class E airspace has higher flight visibility and cloud clearance standards than uncontrolled Class G airspace. The Class E airspace overlying the Hemet-Ryan Airport area is controlled by Southern California approach control. March Air Force Base and its surrounding Class C airspace lie about 15 nautical miles northwest of Hemet-Ryan Airport.

MAJOR FEATURES

Property

- Approximately 440 acres owned in fee by the County of Riverside
- County controls avigation easement on 45 acres encompassing portions of runway protection zones.

Airfield

- Elevation: 1,512 feet MSL
- Runway 5-23: 4,315 feet long, 100 feet wide; asphalt.
 - ▶ Pilot-controlled MIRLS.
 - ▶ Glide Slope Indicator (VASI-V2L - 3.00°) on Runway 23
 - ▶ Full length parallel taxiway on south side; 220 feet from runway centerline
- Runway 4-22: 2,045 feet long, 25 feet wide; dirt; unlighted; unmarked. Glider restricted.
- Rotating beacon; wind cone.

Building Area

- Two building areas; located southeast of Runway 5-23 and north of Runway 4-22.
- Aircraft hangars (136):
 - ▶ 1 helicopter
 - ▶ 6 FBO
 - ▶ 6 individual
 - ▶ 44 portable units
 - ▶ 79 units grouped in 7 banks
- Aircraft parking (136):
 - ▶ Tiedowns: 55
- Other facilities:
 - ▶ Airport museum and café.

AIR TRAFFIC PROCEDURES

Traffic Patterns

- Right turning traffic to Runway 5 and Runway 22.
- Pattern altitude: 1,000 feet AGL

Instrument Approaches/Nav aids

- Homeland VORTAC.
- San Jacinto NDB and GPS-A.
- GPS to Runway 5.

Communications

- UNICOM: 123.0 MHz; operated by pilot.

Source: Data compiled by Mead & Hunt (June 2003)

MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

Management

- Management and maintenance provided by County of Riverside.

Fixed Base Operations

- Fuel service: 100LL, Jet, Jet-A — by truck from FBO during daytime hours; summer 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., winter 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; 24-hour call out.
- FBO's offer wide range of small-aircraft and general aviation services (see Table 1A).

Emergency and Security

- Fire and police protection by the City of Hemet.
- If necessary, CDF will assist in fire control.

ENVIRONS

Topography

- Nearest rising terrain approximately 6 miles southeast of the airport.
- Mount San Jacinto located northeast with mountain ranges peaking at 10,804 feet.

Access

- Primary access is Stetson Avenue via Walden Weaver Road and California State Highway 74.

Jurisdictions

- City limits of Hemet.

Nearby Land Uses

- Mobile home park to the immediate north of the Airport.
- Agriculture and open space to the west.
- Residential, industrial, and commercial to east and northwest.
- Residential and industrial to the south and southeast.

TABLE 1B

Airport Profile
Hemet-Ryan Airport

This airspace begins at an elevation of 3,900 feet MSL to 5,500 feet MSL. Aircraft may pass through this Class C airspace, but are required to be in radio communication with the controlling agency. Aircraft pilots operating in the vicinity of Perris Valley Airport, east of Hemet-Ryan Airport, must be especially vigilant for the intensive parachute activities that take place at or below 18,000 feet MSL.

GPS: global positioning system; a satellite-based navigational system.

NDB: nondirectional beacon; a radio beacon transmitting a nondirectional signal that can be used for navigation by aircraft equipped with direction finding equipment.

Two low altitude (Victor) airways, V64 and V372, pass near the Hemet-Ryan Airport. These airways provide pilots with routes with defined clearances from mountains and tall structures. They are used for both instrument and visual flight. The Homeland VORTAC, located about 8 nautical miles to the northwest, is the nearest en route navigational aid.

There are three nonprecision instrument approach procedures serving Hemet-Ryan Airport:

- A straight-in approach to Runway 5 using GPS
- A circling approach using GPS
- A circling approach using the San Jacinto NDB

These approaches have height minimums as low as 1,215 feet above ground level and visibility minimums as low as 1¼ statute miles.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Hemet is located at the western end of the San Jacinto Valley at an elevation of 1,599 feet. Hemet was incorporated on January 20, 1910. As of January 1999, according to the California Department of Finance, the City of Hemet had a population of 61,139.

Historically, the Hemet area has been known for its prime agriculture. Today, Hemet is a major trade area for western Riverside County and is well established as a retirement community. The local economy is based on service, trade, agriculture, and manufacturing. A major component of the manufacturing section is devoted to the construction of mobile homes and recreational vehicles. The Deutsch Company, located in the airport's industrial park, is the largest manufacturer in Hemet and employs 450 people. Next largest is Skyline Corporation, a manufacturer of mobile homes and travel trailers, which employs 420 people. The largest nonmanufacturing establishment is the Hemet Valley Hospital District. The District accounts for 2,000 jobs in the Hemet area.

While the County of Riverside experienced a 27% increase in population from 1990 to 1999, Hemet's population increased by 70% during the same period. This large increase was partially due to annexation. This rapid growth continues; from June 1998 to June 1999, the City added almost 300 dwelling units. Increased construction and affordable new homes have attracted younger families to the area. This has resulted in a shift in the median age of residents from 64.2 years in 1980 to 41 years today. Additional information is presented in Table 1D.

PREVIOUS AIRPORT PLANS AND STUDIES

Only one comprehensive Master Plan has been previously prepared. In 1985, a Master Plan was prepared for Hemet-Ryan Airport by CH2M Hill. Key recommendations included:

- ▶ Extension of Runway 5-23 to 5,250 feet
- ▶ Extension of Runway 4-22 to 2,500 feet
- ▶ Acquisition of 2.5 acres of land needed for an extension of Runway 5-23
- ▶ Realignment of Stetson Avenue and Warren Road consistent with Riverside County's General Plan
- ▶ Implementation of a Drainage Plan to reduce poor drainage

Of these recommendations, only the drainage improvements have been implemented to date.

In 1982, the *Hemet-Ryan Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (CLUP) was adopted. The plan's purpose was to minimize land use conflicts over height and noise within the airport's influence area. Both the City of Hemet and Riverside County have integrated their land use policy procedures with Hemet-Ryan's Airport Land Use Plan.

In 1997, discussions between the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) service led to an *Air Attack Base Relocation Study*. The report identified March Air Force Base as best suited to accommodate CDF aircraft operations and related functions. Consequently, CDF is currently scheduled to move from Hemet-Ryan Airport in the near future.

