

Addendum to Chapter 2 Forecasts.

Merrill Municipal Airport (KRRL)

It is clear that airport forecasts are quite complicated and use very sophisticated, required tools, and methodologies to arrive at decisions on appropriate forecasting for a given airport's future structural attributes.

Merrill was established in the early 1930s when two local gentlemen bought some land and called it an airport. The airport grew slowly and although FAA indicated that there were only 13 registered aircraft on the field in 2002, there were actually 25 aircraft on the field. Merrill Municipal has grown now to forty-eight registered aircraft based at Merrill, and currently with twenty-one aircraft owners on a waiting list for hangar space to base their aircraft at Merrill. Merrill has maintained a "hangar waiting list" for over twenty years and that list has never had fewer than sixteen aircraft owners wanting, looking for hangar space.

Forecasting operations are required to rely on electronic means such as Flight Plans filed, ADSB out data, and Flight Aware. ADSB out using Mode C is remarkably unreliable at Merrill. We are able to prove thru Flight Aware data that aircraft landing at Merrill are often shown by ADSB to have landed at other airports as far away as fifty air miles and more. Published readily available information indicates that only fifty to sixty percent of GA aircraft are currently equipped with ADSB out. It is not known how many of this sixty percent group of GA Aircraft are using the remarkably unreliable Mode C for their position broadcast during the approach/landing phase of a flight. This problem with Mode C negatively impacts Merrill's operations count, and therefore forecasting.

Two things that the Merrill Forecast data does not take into consideration is that Merrill is only twenty minutes from Wausau by car, and maybe ten by airplane. There are sixty plus aircraft at Wausau. A quite busy flight training company at Wausau often uses Merrill for pilot training activities

One crucial point to keep in mind when Forecasting is that Merrill has had continuous full-time maintenance by appropriately credentialed individuals based at the airport since the later part of the 1940s. We still, have full time

maintenance available five days a week or more, by four FBO employees. Merrill's FBO is also involved in a high school training program for future maintenance staff. There are currently two individuals in our program.

It is widely accepted that aircraft maintenance is getting harder and harder to acquire for GA aircraft. Merrill is the only airport in the wider central Wisconsin area that has full time maintenance offered to the GA fleet. Merrill is currently building a new FBO maintenance hangar which will triple the working space from our current hangar to accommodate the demand in an area approximately eighty miles in any direction from Merrill. This includes all 243 regional aircraft as pointed out in the Forecast within 30 nautical miles of Merrill. As a further demonstration of the scarcity of aircraft maintenance in the region Merrill's FBO is contracted with the airlines operating in and out of Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA), a towered commercial transportation airport to provide emergency type service to them.

Gary Schwartz, Chair

Merrill Municipal Airport Commission