



# Rotary Club of Greater Grants Pass

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## Southern Oregon Air Academy – Proposal for Lease of 210 Tacoma Street

### Background

The Grants Pass Air Academy (GPAA) recently completed it's second annual Summer Camp for local middle school students ([vimeo.com/233911269](https://vimeo.com/233911269)), a program sponsored by the Southern Oregon Education Service District. The program has operated as an unofficial program of the GP Airport.

GPAA now has a unique – and time-sensitive - opportunity to engage in a lease to operate out of the facilities at 210 Tacoma Street on the airport, with ample classrooms, housing and office space.

Advocates are now in the process of forming a non-profit organization that will be named Southern Oregon Air Academy, to be finalized by December 2017, and will be the official lease holder.

### Program Vision

SOAA's goals are to offer year-round STEM training and education for Southern Oregon-based Elementary, Middle and High School students, and to foster opportunities in aviation-related careers.

The Tacoma Street facility is large enough to host the following activities, as well, some of which can generate significant income for SOAA's education programs through sub-lease arrangements.

Flight Training – Domestic	Helicopter Training Program	Civil Air Patrol
Flight Training – International	Collegiate Flying Team	RC Aircraft Club
Balloon Pilot Training	Corporate Balloon Management	Other Summer STEM Camps
Balloon Crew Training	Corporate Balloon Maintenance	

There is also room for expansion – more parking, classrooms, housing, or office space – if needed.

Sincerely,

Caleb LaPlante

Board Chairman  
Southern Oregon Air Academy

Founder and Chairman  
[www.gpballoonfest.com](http://www.gpballoonfest.com)

Public Relations Chairperson  
Greater Grants Pass Rotary

America Region - Northwest Section Chair  
International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians

**Note: SOAA is NOT an official Rotary program, but rather an extension of my IFFR leadership position.**



[SOESD](#) / [Administration & Business](#) / [College and Career for All Hub](#) / [News](#)

## \$1,197,286 for CTE / College and Career / STEAM Pathways

The Oregon Department of Education has awarded a \$382,286 Career Technical Education Revitalization (CTE-R) grant to Southern Oregon Education Service District as part of a regional collaborative project with Southern Oregon Air Academy, K-12 school districts, higher education, and other business, industry, and community partners.

The CTE-R grant will supplement other funding SOESD has obtained this school year totaling about \$1.2 million to be used in the College and Career for All (CC4A) / STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) and CTE programs for activities to support teacher training on project-based learning, student internships and teacher externships in local businesses, as well as a variety of out of school camps and in school courses.

Graduation rates for students in Oregon CTE programs are 15.5% higher than the statewide average. Projects will specifically be targeting traditionally underserved students with a goal of increasing attendance and graduation rates while preparing students in career pathways that result in high wage, high skill, and high demand occupations aligned with the needs of local industry as well as employers across the state and nation. These include courses in aviation, advanced manufacturing, computer science, electronics, engineering, and medical fields.

The CTE-R **Southern Oregon Air Academy Partnership Project** is designed to ignite a diversity of middle and high school students' interest in pursuing aviation sciences, aerospace engineering, and related CTE/STEM subjects. Collaborating with industry stakeholders and area non-profits, SOESD and its education partners will create after school, 10-week long camp experiences led by teachers to be trained in Project Based Learning (PBL) methods. Simultaneously, PBL trained educators collaborating in their Professional Learning Communities with college faculty, will work to align project lessons with STEM/CTE content standards and classroom work to ultimately lay the foundation for building pathway(s) leading to the formation of a new programs of study in aviation engineering and sciences. With access to PBL trained instructors, high-tech equipment, and industry experts, students will engage in rigorous, real-world lessons, career exploration activities and regional robotics / drone competitions fueling their excitement for continued participation in the district's various CTE/STEM camp offerings and in the pursuit of high wage, high demand jobs throughout the region and beyond.

The various grants SOESD has obtained so far this school year to support our CTE, CC4A, and STEAM efforts include:

- **CTE-R Grant (Southern Oregon Air Academy Partnership Project): \$382,286**
- Math in Real Life Grant (Project Based Learning training for teachers): \$215,000
- Southern Promise Grant (Dual high school - college credit in various career pathways): \$300,000
- STEAM Hub Grant (Hub management, teacher externships, and student activities): \$300,000
- Total to date: \$ 1,197,286

The CTE-R grant award is a result of the College and Career for All (CC4A) / STEAM initiative at SOESD representing a partnership of Southern Oregon ESD with school districts, colleges and universities, business, industry, and community partners. This collaborative effort provides project-based, hands-on, industry-aligned learning experiences for students in courses leading to certificates and degrees in high-wage, high-demand, high-skill career paths.

For more information, please see:

### State of Oregon Press Release

<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/learning-options/CTE/statefund/Documents/Press%20Release%20Announcing%20Grant%20Awards%202012-4-2017.pdf>

### Medford Mail Tribune Article

<http://www.mailtribune.com/news/20171210/soesd-receives-grant>



**Demonstration Area**

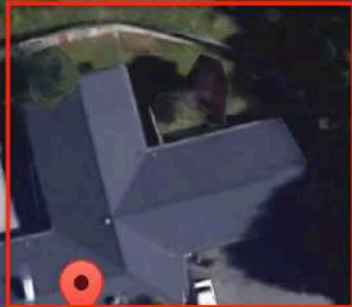
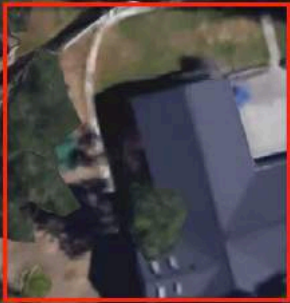
**Classrooms**

**Housing**



**Possible Expansion**

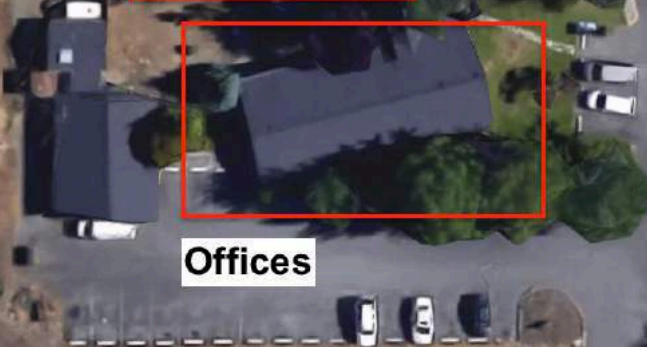
**Future Parking**



**210 Tacoma Street**

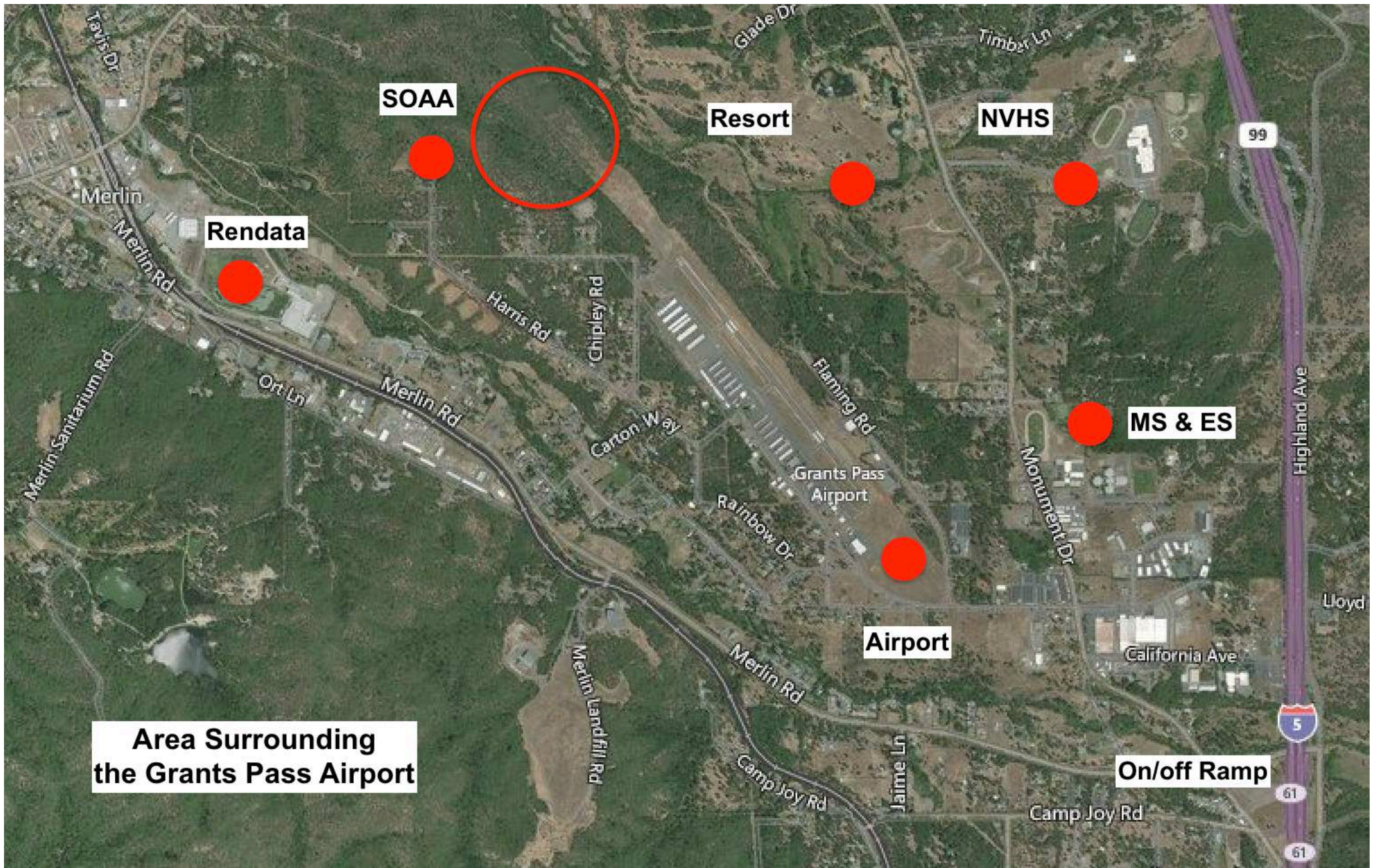


**Offices**

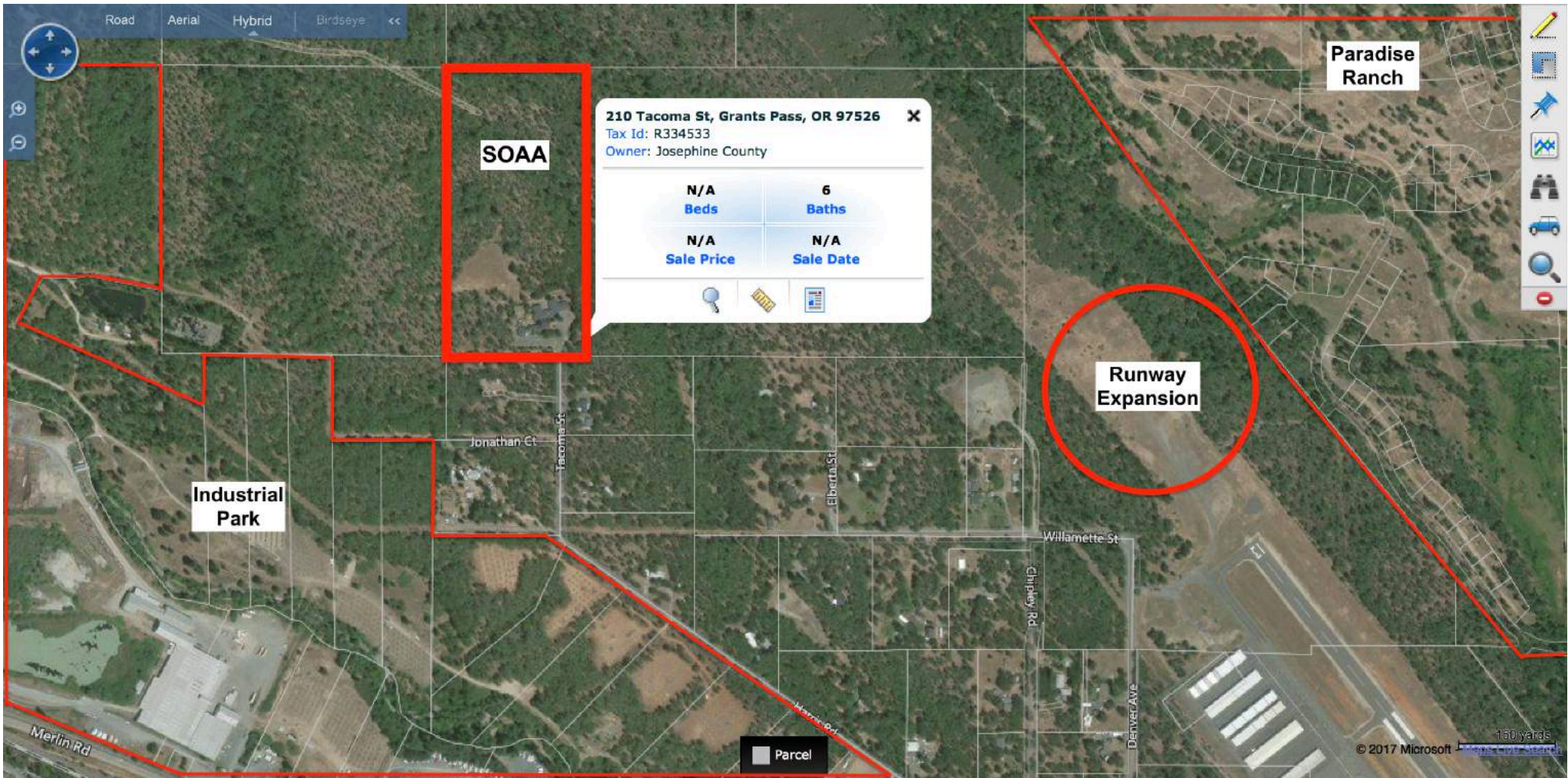


**Entrance**

Google



**Area Surrounding  
the Grants Pass Airport**



# Southern Oregon Air Academy to expand programs

Thanks to a lease from county property manager's office, three aviation camps will now be offered for children instead of one

By Madeline Shannon  
of the Daily Courier

MERLIN — Southern Oregon Air Academy, which operates out of the Grants Pass Airport, will see an expansion of the children's aviation program in coming years.

The program will now have three camps for local children instead of one, but a lease between the Air Academy and the Josephine County Property Manager's office will provide more long-term opportunities to expand the program and reach even more children.

"This isn't just getting kids interested in aviation," said Caleb LaPlante, a member of the airport board. "This is to actually provide them with tangible, real opportunity on the other side of their K-12 educational experience."

LaPlante, along with county airports manager Larry Graves and others, started the Southern Oregon Air Academy two years ago to generate children's interest in aviation and get them excited about career opportunities in the field. The summer program grew from 12 students in the first year to 24 last year.

Plans for the program aim to draw even more local children into the Air Academy fold. Starting this summer, the academy will expand to three camps.

"We're going to do one camp for IV kids, one for Grants Pass-based kids and one for Phoenix-



TIMOTHY BULLARD/Daily Courier

**Caleb LaPlante, a Grants Pass Airport board member, addresses a group interested in expanding the reach of the Southern Oregon Air Academy. A new lease on county property would allow the SOAA to take over an existing facility near the airport for training and classes.**

Talent-based kids," LaPlante said. "We've only had one camp in the past, and this is going to be a scale-up for us."

In the Air Academy program,

children learn about scientific principles of aviation using crafts and activities such as fly-alongs and flight demonstrations. The program excites chil-

dren, but also piques their interest in a professional field that is currently experiencing a shortage of pilots, a massive problem for the industry.

"The industry in general is seeing a decrease in both recreational and commercial pilots," LaPlante said. "The numbers are low."

Toward that end, organizers hope to roll out long-term programs that provide more educational opportunities to children in the area, including a program that will teach high school students how to build planes and an after-school program targeted towards middle school youths.

It might be some time, however, before those programs get off the ground, since those will be housed at an airport facility that still needs renovations and a certificate of occupancy.

"We're not planning to run any programs out of that facility until we start our middle school after-school program next October," LaPlante said. "So we've got some time, and that's also for staffing. It gives us some time to find the funds we need to operate for a couple of years."

The Grants Pass Airport board isn't the only group pushing for an expansion of the Air Academy. Other groups in the area are interested in what opportunities these new aviation programs presents for local children and the local economy.

"Getting them involved at an early age like this is really forward-thinking," said Susan Seeretter, business advocate for the city. "This really focuses on STEM programming and how to integrate that kind of learning in these students."

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