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Allegiant increases activity at airport

By NEIL YOUNG/The Daily News

BULLHEAD CITY - Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport is experiencing a 20 percent increase in activity from Allegiant Air operations, according to Airport Director David Gaines.

The airline is "redirecting activity toward gaming industry," and is also using the Bullhead City facility for overnight parking of aircraft, Gaines told the Mohave County Airport Authority board during its quarterly meeting Tuesday.

Gaines also reported:

- The recession is continuing to affect the airport's ability to attract regularly scheduled passenger service. They've talked with some potential candidates, but "none of them quite fit the specific need of the community and satisfies the requirements of USDOT (Department of Transportation)," Gaines said.

- The recession has also slowed development of airport land for retail use. At least 25 potential businesses are being pursued to sign long-term rental agreements, Gaines said.

As to the types of businesses being wooed, "They would be fairly typical of what exists down there now," he said.

- The airport has \$8 million in improvements programmed for 2011, Gaines said, including a new fire station, design and site preparation for a 1,000-foot runway extension, and the first noise study in 15 years.

"We're posturing ourselves to compete with a lot of other airports for some of the (federal) stimulus money," he said.

- The airport's firefighters are being trained beyond requirements for an facility the size of Laughlin/Bullhead International, according to Darryl Thompson, the assistant airport director.

- There will be discussions with the State Land Department over the next six to eight months regarding land the airport needs for continued expansion, Gaines said.

- A new baggage claim facility, started in mid-December, is expected to be completed in early May.

The next airport board quarterly meeting will be held at 9 a.m. April 13 at Laughlin Ranch, 1360 William Hardy Drive.