



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 4, 2026

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION, AIRPORT DIVISION

FROM: LISA MURPHY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

BY: MATT NELSON, AIRPORT DIRECTOR

TITLE: 2026 CALIFORNIA INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW PERMIT AT
THE SALINAS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion recommending City Council approve a resolution

- (1) Authorizing the City Manager to execute an Airport Use Permit for the 2026 California International Airshow, to be conducted by the Monterey County Airshow Association, Inc. at the Salinas Municipal Airport, in accordance with the terms of said permit;
- (2) Waiving the Airport Use Permit fees for the 2026 California International Airshow; and
- (3) Waiving the cost of City Airport staff time associated with the 2026 California International Airshow.

BACKGROUND:

The 45th California International Airshow is scheduled to take place at the Salinas Municipal Airport on September 26 and 27, 2026. This year's airshow will feature the United States Air Force Thunderbirds Team and several other aircraft acts and displays. The California International Airshow has been showcasing aviation excellence for over 44 years while at the same time raising over \$9 million for local nonprofits.

Utilizing all volunteers and service groups from the community, the organization each year plans and executes the event that entertains 25,000 to 30,000 spectators annually. The top military and civilian performers in the United States thrill and inspire the crowds. Over 90 static aircraft, exhibits, and displays are available for Airshow fans to enjoy during their experience. Each year, the goal is to produce an event that will be family-oriented, educational, and entertaining for the whole family. In addition to its main goal of raising money for charity, the airshow's charter also emphasizes volunteerism and community involvement, family-oriented entertainment, aviation and its contributions to the American way of life, and pride in our nation and its military.

To most of Monterey County and the Central Coast, the California International Airshow represents a homegrown community event based in Salinas that is a spectacle of fun and

entertainment. To the City of Salinas, it is an annual economic infusion of millions of dollars to the local economy. The airshow event planning process never ends; at the completion of each annual event, the event planners begin preparing for the next year's event. The hosting of the Airshow is in the best interests of general aviation and the Airport, with the purpose of enhancing the Salinas community image, promoting public use of the Airport, and promoting revenue for local charitable organizations.

ANALYSIS:

Permit:

The attached Permit is essentially the same as those approved in previous years but with minor modifications. The Permit requires a \$10,000,000.00 Airmeet Liability Insurance Policy and includes authorization for various street closures and specific operational provisions. Typically, only one other City Permit, a Special Events Permit, is required for the event. Once completed, the Special Events Permit becomes the "Exhibit A" document referenced in the Airshow Permit. The Airport Use Permit is being presented to the Airport Commission for review without the Special Events Permit because 1) All Airport use issues are covered in the Airshow Permit and the Special Events Permit covers City Streets and facilities and therefore does not come under Airport Commission review; and, 2) Timing is such that the Airport Use Permit needs to advance through the Airport Commission in order to gain overall Permit approval prior to the Airshow.

In-Kind Contribution:

Airport Staff recommends waiving the \$38,600.00 Permit Fee. Additionally, staff recommend not billing any staff time associated with the Airshow. Typically, staff time billed to the Airshow is less than \$1,400.00 per year.

Salinas Pilot Association (SPA) Donation:

The Airshow Organization is continuing to honor the fundraising clause in the agreement for the Salinas Pilot Association (SPA). The Monterey County Airshow Association, Inc. will donate \$2,500.00 (cash donation) to SPA for volunteer services rendered during the airshow period. In consideration of the \$2,500.00 donation, SPA will provide various services during the Airshow.

City of Salinas Booth Space:

In consideration for waiving the Airport's \$38,600.00 Permit Fee, the Airshow Association has agreed to provide the City of Salinas, at no charge, three (3) Booth Spaces for promoting and enhancing the Airport and City of Salinas' community outreach.

Airport Commission Consideration:

At their meeting on July 23, 2026, the Airport Commission unanimously recommended the City Council approve the Airport Use Permit for the 2026 Airshow and waive the fees associated with the Permit and with Airport Staff time.

GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 84308 APPLIES:

Yes.

CEQA/NEPA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project and therefore exempt as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Approval of the 2026 California International Airshow permit complements Salinas City Council's economic development and public safety 2025-2026 Strategic Goals and Strategies.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Staff recommend waving the \$38,600 Use Permit Fee. Staff recommend the Airport Enterprise Fund absorb staff time associated with the 2026 California International Airshow.

The economic-financial impact of the Airshow is hard to quantify without procuring economic impact analysis services. Money spent by the Monterey County Airshow Association, Inc. hosting the Airshow and patrons of the event contribute to the local economy and the local tax base. Past performance indicates the annual Airshow drives hundreds of thousands of dollars in economic impact to the local economy. Additionally, the Monterey County Airshow Association, Inc. has contributed in excess of \$9 million dollars to charities over the last 44 years.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

The Use Permit has been reviewed as to form by the City Attorney's office. The Police and Fire Departments participate in the planning and execution of the Airshow.

ATTACHMENTS:

2026 Airport Use Permit to Conduct Air Shows at the Salinas Municipal Airport
Resolution - 2026 Airport Use Permit to Conduct Air Shows at the Salinas Municipal Airport