

The Idles of March

A Look at March-2011 Ancillary Expenses Associated with the USM Airplane

The 23-Dec-2011 USMNEWS.net report entitled [September Skies](#) announced that USMNEWS.net has recently obtained many new official documents regarding the USM airplane. That particular report indicates that the ancillary expenses associated with the Beechcraft King Air for just the last week of Sept-2011 come to more than \$250. This figure, for such a relatively brief period, is a harbinger of even greater expenses over other periods during 2011. The present report examines similar expenses for the month of Mar-2011.

3/23/2011	KENNETH G PRICE, JR.	EL MESON 2	\$24.53
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The insert above shows just what ancillary expenses that USM's Airplane Operations auxiliary generated during Mar-2011. Table 1 below summarizes these:

Category	Amount
Food	\$24.53
El Meson 2 – (23-Mar-2011)	\$24.53
TOTAL	\$24.53

As Table 1 indicates, Airplane Operations incurred expenses in the food category only during Mar-2011. The information suggests that USM pilot Kenneth Price and perhaps one other USM pilot ate a meal at El Meson, a restaurant located in Houston, TX, a popular destination city for the USM airplane, at least according to a host of reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net. The single meal suggests also that this particular trip to Houston, presumably by someone in the Martha Saunders administration, was a one-day affair.



Before readers of USMNEWS.net, and supporters of USM, rejoice in the appearance that the airplane made only one trip in Mar-2011 costing taxpayers just \$24.53, sources remind us that the *monthly* lease payment on the airplane is the better part of \$20,000, and that [the several pilots](#) in USM's Airplane Operations [auxiliary](#) were still paid their monthly salaries during Mar-2011. The Mar-2011 expense report also belies comments made by USM president Martha Saunders during a 14-Sept-2010 [town hall meeting](#) attended by about 200 USM students (pictured below). During that meeting, USM student Henry Hirdes criticized Saunders' decision to acquire use of the plane during desperate fiscal times. Hirdes also accused the USM executive of

not using the airplane on a regular (sufficient) basis. Saunders took the microphone and addressed Hirdes with the snarky reply: “I don’t know why you’re saying [the plane is] not in the air. It’s in the air two or three times a week, so I think you may have to check your references on that one.” Clearly, Mar-2011 provides strong evidence to support (refute) Hirdes’ (Saunders’) claim (snarky retort).



Stay tuned for the next installment in this series.