

At the same time, the county provided free parking, waived landing fees on all small aircraft and all federal aviation, and offered reduced landing fees for commercial aviation, revenue streams that could have added another \$20,000,000.

While providing those free services, airport management accepted \$15,900,000 in grants. Had none of these grants been accepted, the 20-year commitment to the FAA would have elapsed, along with the obligation to operate the airport. The county's argument that it will cost \$300,000,000 to turn the airport over to the Air Force would have expired along with it.

Hotel and sales taxes are designed to get out-of-towners to help fund local government-provided needs. But for the tens of thousands of passengers who didn't live in the county, MidAmerica flipped that into reverse, tax us to support them.

Finally there's this: In addition to their ticket individual price, each passenger received another \$926 credit from the taxpayers of St. Clair County so they could fly at that price. Some went to the airlines; the rest went to keep MidAmerica open for the airlines. No wonder, in Tim Cantwell's words, "(Allegiant) is killing it" and continues to add destinations and profits at county taxpayer expense.

- Richard L. Skillings, Troy

OUTRAGEOUS EXPENSES

It is hard to convey the abject failure of MidAmerica Airport to provide any value to the citizens of St. Clair County. From every perspective the facts are outrageous.

In its first 17 years (latest available figures), the airport's aviation operations generated merely \$13,683,000 of revenue while the county spent \$185,395,000.