

McKeon takes tour of Plant 42 Heritage Airpark in Palmdale

By LISA WAHLA HOWARD
Valley Press Staff Writer

PALMDALE — Congressman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon on Friday toured the Palmdale Plant 42 Heritage Airpark, a collection of aircraft that were designed, produced, tested, flown or modified at the U.S. Air Force’s Plant 42.

The nine aircraft and a model of a B-2 Spirit were donated by various military branches and aerospace companies, and pieced together and refurbished by volunteers.

“I’m impressed with their wealth of talent and dedication,” Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford told McKeon, speaking about the volunteers. “Everything here has been done by their own hands. They have such extensive knowledge of aerospace, there is nothing they cannot do.”

In August, officials celebrated the grand opening of the park on See MCKEON on A8



RON SIDDLE/Valley Press

AIRPARK TOUR — Rep. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, received a tour Friday of the Palmdale Plant 42 Heritage Airpark. Volunteer Lou Provencia provided the golf cart tour by the C-140 Lockheed Jetstar and other static aircraft.

MCKEON: Palmdale airpark plans expansion

From A1

Avenue P, just west of 25th Street East, after a “soft opening” the previous November.

After viewing the displayed airplanes, McKeon said he was also impressed with the volunteers’ work.

“I think it’s fantastic — these guys, what a job they’re doing,” said McKeon, R-Santa Clarita. “Can you imagine, young people who don’t know about these planes— having the opportunity to visit and learn about the aerospace history here.”

Palmdale officials responded that school groups do indeed come in for tours, as do scouting groups.

Planes at the park are: an F-86 Sabre, a C-140 Jetstar, an A-4 Skyhawk, a T-38 Talon, an A-7 Corsair II, an F-4 Phantom II, an F-100 Super Sabre, an F-104 Starfighter and an F-105 Thunderchief.

The park is next-door to the Blackbird Airpark, where the SR-71 spyplane is displayed.

“We look at this as a complement to the Air Force museum and Blackbird Airpark,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Ron Ortiz, commander of Air Force Plant 42.

“There are many other aircraft that have a link to Plant 42. The city has taken this on as an investment for future generations to be able to appreciate the aerospace



RON SIDDLE/Valley Press

TAKING IT ALL IN — Congressman Howard “Buck” McKeon, second from left, on his tour of the Heritage Air Park in Palmdale. Volunteers, Lou Provencia, left, and Dick Madison, along with Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford, provided information about the Palmdale landmark.

achievements of the Antelope Valley.”

The airpark has been the beneficiary of “millions and millions” of dollars worth of aircraft, volunteer hours and materials — including the main building and machinery used to refurbish the planes, said

Tim Hughes, deputy director of Public Works.

The park plans to expand soon. The Palmdale City Council has authorized the purchase of an F-101 Voodoo from a private company in San Diego, said Sayne Redifer, a senior administrative

analyst for Palmdale.

Recently, the city received an award from the Southern California chapter of the American Public Works Association for the airpark.