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City Lights

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Published on June 14, 2007

Breaking Stories: Hearing No Evil

By Matt Potter

Fighting a two-front war with the Federal Aviation Administration over the too-tall high-rise he is building near Kearny Mesa's Montgomery Field and two towers he's proposing for Harbor Island near Lindbergh Field, Sunroad Enterprises' **Aaron Feldman** has gone to Washington for some heavy-duty help. According to a February filing with the clerk of the U.S. Senate, Sunroad has retained the services of lobbyist **David Schaffer**, whose duties are listed as "ensuring that a building does not create an unsafe condition for aircraft." Formerly senior counsel and GOP staff director for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's aviation panel, Schaffer has represented such well-heeled clients as Virgin Nigeria, a joint venture between the Nigerian government and Britain's Virgin Atlantic that wanted takeoff and landing rights in New York and Houston, and Sound Initiative, a group lobbying for legislation against noisy jets. Five years ago, Schaffer told a writer for *Washington Monthly*, "People on the Hill don't really see lobbyists as evil. But the public doesn't see it that way."

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Posted by **Rick Beach** on 06/14/07 @ 10:57 am

Sunroad has numerous lobbyists at City Hall, so it is totally expected that they would hire lobbyists in Washington. They have the financial incentive to push the system to their advantage. (My speculation is that lowering all 3 Sunroad buildings in Kearny Mesa to 160 feet would cost Sunroad \$100 million in if-sold value.) Some of the most egregious aviation losses have come at the hands of Congressional actions. Rialto Airport in Riverside County was closed because FAA objections were made irrelevant by a stealth amendment to a highway bill introduced by a local Congressman. A Republican. The same party that just endorsed Jerry Sanders for Mayor.

Sound Off

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