

Brownsville for Lunch July 13, 2010



Ever hear of Brownsville? Brownsville TX, yes. Brownsville CA, no, not until I was invited to join a group of pilots for lunch at Bonnie Lou's Café.

Brownsville (F25 on the chart) is located fifteen nautical miles east of Oroville at 2120 feet msl. The 2300 ft long runway is tucked into a valley

surrounded by hills. We arrived from Sacramento via Auburn to avoid an active TFR over Beale AFB, descended to the downwind for right traffic, runway six (RP6) because everyone was using that runway. It was a downwind landing. I should have checked the windsock. I was high and fast on final and had to go-around once. A Bonanza behind me did the same,



then smoked his tires braking at midfield. It's an 800 foot traffic pattern, but the downwind leg is less than 800 feet above the terrain because you are flying along the slope of a hillside. The tendency is to shy away from the hillside and fly a tight pattern. This makes for a short base leg, which may be the reason I was high on final. Of course I also have a tendency to make excuses. I figured things out on the go-around.



It's a Funk

The runway is paved; the taxiway gravel. To avoid nicking your valued prop, you should pull off into the dirt next to the runway, shut down and push your plane across the gravel to a safe distance off the runway. A short walk past the wind sock at the east end, a left forty five, and you are aimed straight toward Bonnie Lou's Café located in a woodsy area slightly north and east of the end of Runway 6. We are not looking for gourmet lunches at airport cafes. Satisfaction is all we ask for. We would definitely return for the friendly service and good food.



The author, center, enjoying lunch at Bonnie Lou's

A nearly straight out departure on Runway 24 (just a tad to the left) easily clears the trees and terrain and allows you to stay north of the perpetual TFR over Beale. In short time we are headed down the Sacramento Valley to our home field at Executive Airport. It may be a bit of a challenge for some, but Brownsville, CA is a drop-in destination for general aviation flyers looking for a meal and wanting to avoid the heavy use airports.