

PIREPS

From Investment to Impact: How State Aid is Delivering Results

A big part of what we do at the Division of Aeronautics is making sure the investments we're making actually show up on the ground at your airports. Through the State Aid Grant Program, we're seeing that happen across Nebraska.

LB 727 and LB 138 (2023) have strengthened the Aeronautics Capital Improvement Fund and, just as importantly, given us the ability to move more projects forward and respond to needs faster.

The impact is real. In 2024, \$6 million in State Aid funding supported about \$93 million in airport development projects. In 2025, \$3.6 million in State Aid is supporting roughly \$139 million in projects. That kind of leverage is exactly what this program is designed to deliver.

You can see it in the work that's being completed across the state.

At Chappell Municipal Airport, state funds helped move forward a runway reconstruction project that will keep that airport open and operating in a safe manner.

At Central Nebraska Regional Airport in Grand Island, State Aid supported construction of a Snow Removal Equipment building, something that directly improves

winter operations and helps protect the critical equipment used to keep the airport open during inclement weather.

And at North Platte Regional Airport, State Aid is part of a terminal project, that is nearing completion, that will improve the experience for passengers and strengthen the airport's role in the region.

Those are just a few examples, but they reflect what we're seeing across the system. Apron expansions, lighting upgrades, and other improvements are addressing real needs and making airports safer, more efficient, and better positioned for the future.

We're going to keep using a transparent, data-driven approach to prioritize projects and make sure we're putting these dollars where they have the most impact. As funding continues to grow, that puts us in a better position to keep moving projects forward.

At the end of the day, this only works because of the partnership between airport sponsors, the Aeronautics Commission, the Legislature, and our federal partners. We're seeing real progress, and we're going to keep building on it. ■

PIREPS

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Youth Artist Kiersten Hans Wins 1st Place at U.S. Aviation Art Contest

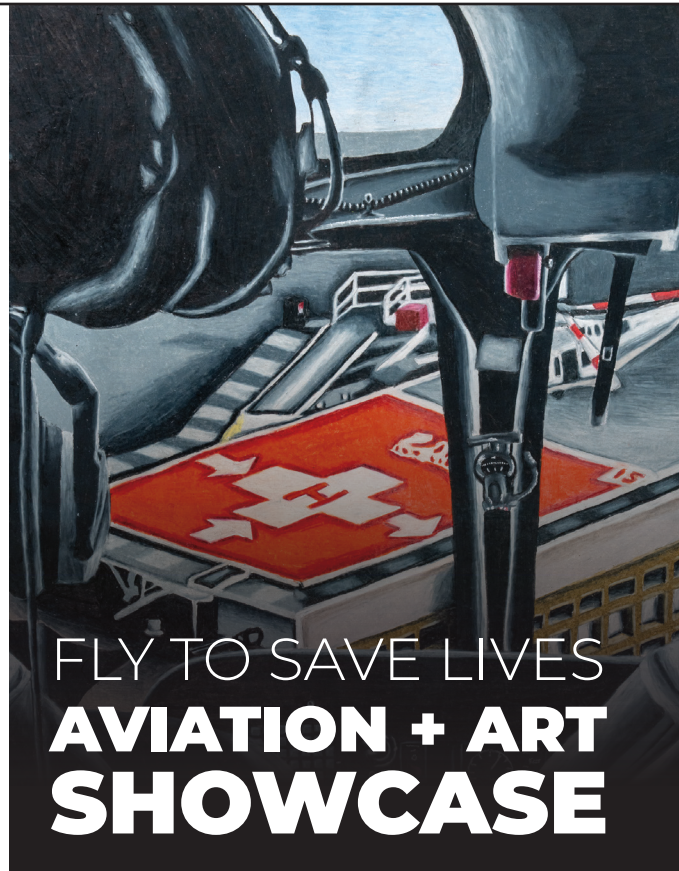
The [National Association of State Aviation Officials \(NASAO\)](#) and [National Aeronautic Association \(NAA\)](#) are proud to announce the national winners of the **2026 FAI Young Artists Contest**. This year's theme, **"Fly to Save Lives,"** inspired hundreds of students across the country to illustrate the heroic role of aviation in emergency response, medical relief, and community safety. Contest judging was conducted by aviation and education professionals with special guest, retired NASA astronaut Frank Lee Culbertson.

Managed by NASAO in partnership with the NAA, the contest challenges youth aged 6 to 17 to explore the intersection of air sports, aeronautics, and social impact. The 2026 theme specifically highlighted how aircraft, from helicopters and drones to fixed-wing planes, serve as lifelines during natural disasters, wildfires, and medical emergencies.

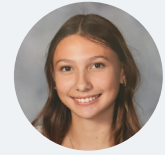
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"It's exciting for those of us in the aviation industry to see the talent and effort these young people put into their entries," said Greg Pecoraro, NASAO president and CEO. "This year's theme 'Fly to Save Lives' captured the imagination of young people, spotlighting an often underappreciated sector of aviation. From fighting fires to transporting organs for donation, their artwork creatively demonstrates the ways aviation is utilized by first-responders, medical professionals, and more to deliver life-saving aid. Congratulations to our winners and everyone who entered the contest! We hope their passion for art and aeronautics inspires these artists to always be aware of the role aviation plays in our lives."

"The creativity and technical skill displayed by this year's participants were truly remarkable," said Amy Spowart, NAA president and CEO. "These young artists didn't just draw aircraft; they captured the spirit of hope and service that defines the aviation community. By imagining how flight saves lives, they are already contributing to the future of our industry." ■



Special Guests:



Kiersten Hans

Featured youth artist from Wynot, NE. Senior Division First Place state winner, U.S. national winner now competing at the international level.



Rescue Aviation Pilots

From fighting wildfires to life saving flights—hear from **Nebraska pilots** behind the missions.

Monday, May 4, 2026
5 p.m.
Wayne Municipal Airport



Scan the QR code for more details

Open to the Public
Youth are welcome!



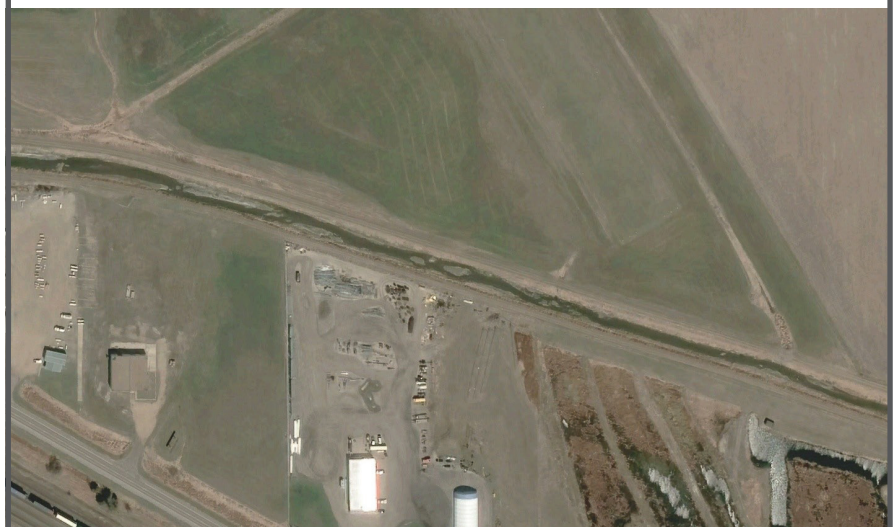
NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Journey.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2026

U.S. National Winners

The winning entries were selected from a highly competitive pool of finalists submitted by participating states. The first, second, and third-place winners in each category will now advance to the international judging round at the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, to compete against artists from around the world. [Click here](#) to view U.S. winning entries.

Can you identify the following Nebraska public airport based on the following aerial snippet? North is up. (Answer is on the last page)



History of the Gordon AWOS in Support of Medical Flights



A community in northwest Nebraska, 15 miles from the South Dakota border, with a population of just under 1,700 residents and an airport with a runway 5,196 feet long is Gordon, NE. This community has the only hospital in Sheridan County. Other nearby medical facilities are nearly 50 miles away.

Community leaders heard the concerns of residents and medical personnel, the importance of an airport with certified weather information for medical transport flights was needed. In 2013, they began the process of finding the options available. An FAA approved automated weather system [AWOS] that would meet the requirements of medical air transport providers. These providers include private air ambulances for critical care, non-emergency medical transport and emergency helicopter response services. Previously, the only medical transport was ground-based. They now average 3-4 air med flights per week. This AWOS allows non-medical aircraft increased access to the airport.

At the time, Gordon Municipal Airport did not meet the criteria for federal or state funding grants of an AWOS. Those standards have

changed in recent years. The community began reaching out to private resources. By mid-2015, resources had been secured. The FAA approved the installation of a non-federal maintained AWOS at Gordon Municipal Airport. The installation and FAA commissioning were completed by late 2016. The community now had approved, certified, current weather information available 24/7 to pilots, Life Flights and local emergency services. The information is available via phone, through the National Airspace Data Interchange Network and the designated radio frequency assigned to that airport.

Prior to installation of this approved weather system, critically ill or injured patients were limited by the lack of air transport services available. There are countless stories of young children and infants needing critical care services that were not provided in time. These services are needed 24/7 by patients of all ages, in all types of weather. The foresight of the community leaders to obtain funding resources providing this service will continue to reduce the number of fatalities in the years to come and limit the long-term severity of those in critical care situations. ■



CHAPTER 569

MONTHLY FLY-IN BREAKFAST

2nd Saturday of the Month (April – October)

8am – 10am

Come for Good Food, Good Fun, and Good Conversation!

Wahoo Municipal Airport **KAHQ**

Disclosure of Certain Information During FAA Medical Application

By David Morris

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has taken significant action against thousands of individuals who were receiving Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits while failing to disclose these conditions on FAA medical application.

The FAA investigated nearly 5,000 pilots for allegedly falsifying health records to hide conditions like PTSD, depression, or cardiac issues that could disqualify them from flying. Roughly half of these cases were closed, with many resulting in action.

The FAA ordered approximately 60 pilots to stop flying on an emergency basis while their records were reviewed.

The FAA has established an "Amended Prompt Settlement Policy" that allows, and often results in, an emergency revocation of certificates for pilots who were less than truthful about their health, offering a potential path to reapply after nine months.

While some pilots were targeted with legal enforcement, the FAA has also used "Compliance Actions" (remedial training, counseling) for those deemed willing and able to comply.

The investigation was triggered when the VA Inspector General cross-referenced data, revealing that thousands of pilots were receiving benefits for disabilities from the VA, while simultaneously telling the FAA they did not have these conditions. The FAA argues that masking these conditions for the VA (to maximize benefits) while minimizing them for the FAA (to continue flying) creates a significant safety risk. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

4/11 | EAA 569 Fly-In Breakfast | Wahoo Municipal Airport (AHQ) | 8-10am | suggested donation: \$10/ adults; \$5/kids

4/18 | Cornhusker Plan Pull 2026 hosted by Cornhusker Chapter WAI | 10am-12pm | Lincoln Airport, 3410 W. Mathis St., Lincoln, NE | Team Registration: \$100/team (3 people per team) - Register by: 3/27 | Information & Registration: [Cornhusker Plan Pull 2026](#)

4/25 | Nebraska Chapter of the Antique Airplane Association Hamburger Fly-In | Hastings Municipal Airport (KHSI) | 11:30am-1pm (free-will donation)

4/25 | FAA's Drone Safety Day | www.faa.gov/uas/events/drone_safety_day

4/26 | Annual Arbor Day Fly-In Breakfast | Nebraska City Municipal Airport (KAFK) | 8am-12pm | Hosted by the Nebraska City Jaycees | \$7/Adults, \$5/Children (5-12), Free/Children 4 & under, Pilots & Passengers

May

5/1 | LNK Outdoor Movie Night: Zootopia | 3801 NW 34th St., Lincoln, NE 68524 | 7 PM, movie starts at dark | Free Event | www.eventbrite.com/e/lnk-outdoor-movie-night-zootopia-2-tickets-1986838811369

5/1 - 5/2 | MAC80 Aerobatic Championship | Seward Municipal Airport (SWT) | www.iac.org/contest/2026-05-01-mac-80-aerobatic-championship

5/7 | Nebraska Business Aviation Association Spring Luncheon | 11:30am-1:30pm | Location TBD | nebaa.org/event-6404149

5/9 | EAA 569 Fly-In Breakfast | Wahoo Municipal Airport (AHQ) | 8-10am | suggested donation: \$10/ adults; \$5/kids

5/30 | Nebraska Chapter of the Antique Airplane Association Hamburger Fly-In | Hastings Municipal Airport (KHSI) | 11:30am-1pm (free-will donation)

June

6/16 | EAA 569 Fly-In Breakfast | Wahoo Municipal Airport (AHQ) | 8-10am | suggested donation: \$10/ adults; \$5/kids

6/20 | State Fly-In at Fremont Municipal Airport

6/21 | EAA 804 Fly-In/Walk-In Breakfast during Berry Pepper Days | 7-11 am | Creighton Municipal Airport | Free Will Donation & PIC's eat free | Questions: Contact Barry Steans at 308-379-5331 or Jason Schindler at 402-961-9499

6/27 | Nebraska Chapter of the Antique Airplane Association Hamburger Fly-In | Hastings Municipal Airport (KHSI) | 11:30am-1pm (free-will donation)

6/28 | Fly-In Breakfast | Pender Airport (0C4) | 8-11am (PIC eat free)



Nebraska State Fly-In

Fremont Municipal Airport
📅 Saturday, June 20, 2026 ⌚ 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM
📍 Location: 1777 W 23rd St, Fremont, NE 68025

Celebrate aviation in Nebraska at this family-friendly event!

- Vendor Fair
- Aviation Hall of Fame Display
- Local Entertainment
- Children's Activities

FREE BREAKFAST!

Sponsored by:



For More Information:
Cari Hoffart, Airport Manager
☎ (402) 727-2691



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