Midlands Voices: Business Aviation Steps Up for Flood-Stricken Nebraskans

By Mike Gerdes, President of Silverhawk Aviation in Lincoln, Omaha World-Herald  April 11, 2019

The national headlines may be moving away from the historic flooding Nebraskans have recently faced, but one of America’s best industries — “business aviation” — remains on the front line, lending a helping hand to those in need.

Business aviation is a term used to describe the manufacture and use of small airplanes for transportation. It generates jobs, connects communities, helps companies of all sizes succeed — and provides a lifeline when disasters strike, like the one in Nebraska.

Silverhawk Aviation, along with numerous volunteer pilots, was able to provide critical lift to deliver people from crisis areas, while moving medical specialists, supplies and other resources into impact zones. We are just a small part of a loose coalition of nonprofit organizations, companies and other groups committed to providing relief to Cornhusker families and rebuilding the state’s most damaged communities.

Consider the impact of these coordinated efforts: In Fremont, devastating rains cut off a community of 26,000 people from surrounding areas, turning the city into an island. There is no airline service from Fremont, and roads were impressively flooded, so residents began inquiring about charter services to deliver them to medical appointments, jobs and families.

Amidst the deluge of inquiries, our company had a single thought: Nebraskans stick together in times of crisis. We decided to fly as many people as we could from the impact zone. We were a small part in the overall picture of Nebraskans helping Nebraskans. Airports offered free fuel, local residents of Fremont donated food for the pilots and people struggling, and companies contributed thousands of dollars in supplies.

Silverhawk was able to utilize a pair of Beechcraft King Air 90 turboprop aircraft, a Cessna Citation and a Cirrus to operate flights between Fremont Municipal Airport and the cities of Lincoln and Omaha, for relief-transport and related missions.

In the end, we transported more than 140 passengers free-of-charge before the flood-damaged roads gradually reopened. Of course, we couldn’t have done this alone: Silverhawk was joined by dozens of individual pilots, who together flew an estimated 1,000 people out of Fremont and into safety, and dozens more who offered any assistance they could provide.

This moment illustrates the value of business aviation, not just in Nebraska, but nationwide. For example, after hurricanes ravaged Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico in 2017, business aviation was a first responder, providing disaster relief before federal and state authorities could take over.

Of course, business aviation is at work for Nebraska—and America — every day. Nebraska is home to more than 75 public-use airports, many of which are used primarily for business purposes. These airports serve the local communities around them and connect dozens of local companies to the global marketplace. In our state alone, business aviation helps support an economic output of more than $1.2 billion and roughly 7,000 jobs.

In short, business aviation is a vital part of Nebraska’s economy and transportation system — in good times and bad. As Nebraska continues its recovery effort, we look forward to being a central part of that work.

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Richart Joins NDOT as Aeronautics Division Director

Ann B. Richart began her duties as NDOT's Aeronautics Division Director on May 13. She succeeds Ronnie Mitchell, who retired December 2018 after serving in the new role with the merger of NDOT and the Department of Aeronautics on July 1, 2017. Mitchell retired with over 50 years in the aviation industry.

Richart comes to NDOT from Martha's Vineyard Airport, in Massachusetts, where she served as Airport Manager. She has extensive experience in both the public and private sector, including Director of the Oregon Department of Aviation and State Airports Manager at the Oregon Department of Transportation, as well as Director of Aviation at Elmira Corning Regional Airport in Horseheads, New York. Richart has also managed airports in Klamath Falls, Oregon and Hutchinson, Kansas.

“We are excited that Ann has joined NDOT as our Aeronautics Division Director,” said NDOT Director Kyle Schneweis. “She has decades of experience leading airports and supporting aviation through state government positions. Ann's background in planning for and implementing airport development plans will complement our Aeronautics team's experience well.”

Richart said she looks forward to helping aviation continue to grow and flourish in Nebraska.

“Aviation is an important tool in the economic development toolkit. It's an honor for me to have the opportunity to work with Nebraska's aviators, airports and communities to ensure a strong and vibrant aviation industry in our state,” said Richart.

New Surveillance Technology Coming in January

What happens January 2, 2020, if your aircraft is not equipped with Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out and you need to fly into—or out of—a airspace where the new surveillance technology is required?

You will be able to request an airspace authorization from the FAA. Some information about the process was published April 1 in the Federal Register. While the title, “Statement of Policy for Authorizations to Operators of Aircraft that are Not Equipped With Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out Equipment,” is a mouthful, and despite the publication date, it is no April Fool’s joke. This document establishes the FAA’s policy for issuing air traffic control (ATC) authorizations to pilots flying aircraft not equipped with ADS-B Out equipment who want to access rule airspace after January 1, 2020.

ADS-B uses satellites instead of ground-based radar to determine aircraft location, and it is a key technology behind the FAA’s Next Generation Air Transportation System. The FAA has mandated ADS-B Out for flights after January 1, 2020, generally in airspace where a transponder is required today.

The FAA policy primarily affects scheduled operators but also addresses general aviation operations. The agency said it is placing the burden for approving non-equipped aircraft operations in ADS-B rule airspace, defined by FAR 91.225, primarily on the aircraft operator—and not on the FAA. “To the maximum extent possible, operators of equipped aircraft should not be penalized or have their ATC services affected by operators who choose not to equip their aircraft with ADS-B Out equipment,” the agency wrote in the policy statement. “Therefore, an ATC authorization allowing an operator to deviate from the equipage requirements of [FAR] 91.225 must be requested and obtained prior to the operation.”

ADS-B rules require that the operator of an unequipped aircraft request an authorization at least one hour prior to the flight. The FAA will not issue in-flight authorizations to operators of non-equipped aircraft, nor will air traffic control facilities accept telephone requests.

Only if ADS-B Out equipment fails in flight will controllers be able to issue an airspace authorization to an airborne aircraft. Otherwise, an authorization must be requested at least one hour in advance, through a website that is being developed. We can expect the website for non-equipped authorizations to be available before 2020.

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Attention instructors — designated pilot examiners need your help! The FAA has initiated a new Designee Management System (DMS). This new system requires examiners to submit a request to the FAA for approval to perform a practical test. This request must be submitted a minimum of 24 hours before the practical test.

Much of the required information can be obtained off the practical test Airman Certification and/or Rating Application, (FAA Form 8710-1); however, examiners need to have access to the applicant's FAA Form 8710-1. The only way an examiner can digitally look at an applicant's form is for it to be submitted in the Integrated Airman Certification and Rating Application (IACRA) system.

If it is a Part 61 application, after submission by the applicant, the recommending instructor must sign into IACRA, then review, electronically recommend and sign the FAA Form 8710-1. If it is a Part 141 application, after submission by the applicant, the flight school chief instructor must perform some administrative work, then the recommending instructor must sign into IACRA, review, electronically recommend and sign the FAA Form 8710-1. Until these actions are completed, the examiner cannot electronically see the applicant's FAA Form 8710-1.

From my viewpoint, the best way to make DMS easy and effective is for applicants and instructors to make sure IACRA is completed a minimum of 48 hours before the scheduled time of the practical test. The day of finishing IACRA just as the examiner is walking in the door is over.

And, this is the short list.

Instructors, we examiners and your applicants need to have you do the entire job when preparing the applicant for his/her practical test. We have a big job preparing for and satisfying the escalating need for pilots. Many of you will be sitting in the front window of a jet before too long. That's great, but before that happens, let's make sure the next generation of pilots coming behind you are fully trained and qualified. That student pilot today may be your first officer some day.  

Fly Safe!

Second Annual Greater Omaha Aviation STEM Day  

By Jim Beyer

Weather permitting, Saturday, June 8, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. to noon, promises to be a great day for aviation in Omaha! The second annual Greater Omaha Aviation STEM Day will be happening at the Millard Airport. Activities include static displays of various types, including the P-51 Gunfighter and a T-6 Texan, drone demonstrations, desktop flight simulator flights, a hands-on riveting name tag project, and the opportunity to help build a real RV-12 aircraft, which is being constructed by high school students as part of the AviationNation group. There will also be information booths from local aviation educators: Burke High School Air & Space Academy, Iowa Western Aircraft Technician, and the UNO Aviation programs. Club-type organizations such as the Omahawks radio-controlled model aviation club, Civil Air Patrol, and the UNO Women in Aviation chapter will also be there. And, we can't forget a pancake breakfast provided by the Pancake Man for a nominal donation. Finally, EAA Chapter 80 will be giving Young Eagle introductory flights as part of International Young Eagles day. Please put June 8, 2019 on your calendar and bring a youth who wants to learn about aviation. More information available at aviationSTEMday.org.  

Fly Safe!
Have you ever looked out the window, and wondered what it would be like to fly? Inside many of us, a dream to fly is just waiting for the chance to come to life. Each achievement in flight started with a dream. Along the way, aviation enthusiasts built their dreams on the works of those who came before.

Those dreams were embodied in the theme for this year’s Division of Aeronautics Aviation Art Contest, “My Dream to Fly.” The Lincoln Airport Authority Operations and Maintenance, located at the Lincoln Airport, was host to the 2019 contest awards ceremony on April 6.

At the top of the program was Nebraska State Patrol Trooper Brandon Wilkie #464 and his K-9 Police Service Dog (PSD) Bane #464K. PSD Bane, a 4-year-old Belgian Malinois, is a dual-purpose canine trained in narcotic detection, tracking, evidence recovery and patrol. Bane totally “stole” the show! We learned of numerous drug seizures and apprehension of multiple criminals credited to K-9 Bane.

Next was presentation of awards. The first-, second-, and third-place winners from each art category were: Category I Junior (Age 6-9): First- Nithin Paul Mehta of Lincoln; Second- Madeleine Charlsen of Omaha; Third- Luigi Forgione, Lincoln. Category II Intermediate (Age 10-13): First- Jingyi Wang of Omaha; Second- Sicily Manganaro of Omaha; Third- Ben Spencer of Gibbon. Completing the awards ceremony were the Category III Senior (Age 14-17) winners: First- Macey Wahl of Omaha; Second- Sofia Pantano of Bennington; Third- Stevin Hasler of Osmond.

In addition to receiving trophies, the first-, second-, and third-place winners from each category – ages 6-9, 10-13, and 14-17 – won cash prizes of $150, $100, and $75, respectively.


Congratulations to all the contestants. Your work was outstanding and this made tough decisions for the judging committee. Thank you to the parents, teachers and mentors for all the time, hard work and support you have put into this program. A special “thank you” to our friends at the Lincoln Airport Authority Operations and Maintenance, along with all our sponsors. Without your continued generous support, this program simply would not exist.

The International Aviation Art Contest encourages engagement with aeronautics through art. The annual contest has been hosted by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale since 1989.
Flying with Animals

By Dan Petersen

Every now and then, it makes the news that a pet died while traveling on an airliner. We have procedures that are followed to ensure this does not happen. It is important to make sure the animal is traveling in the correct heated cargo compartment, and pilots are informed that live animals are traveling on the flight. On some aircraft, certain switches must be configured to heat those compartments.

We also have procedures and rules for animals traveling in the passenger cabin. This is for our passengers’ safety and comfort. Animals must not be in an emergency exit row where they could impede an evacuation. Animals must also be in the immediate area of their handler, under their legs or under the seat, so as not to invade other passengers’ space.

In General Aviation (GA) we should think about the same things for the comfort of our passengers and the comfort of the animal. The biggest concern is safety. Back in the mid-80s, I was flying a DC-3 and was in San Antonio where the First Officer lived. We were going to fly from there to Port Isabel, Texas, where the aircraft was based. He asked if he could bring his dog along and I said, “Sure, that can’t hurt anything.”

The dog was one of those small yippy-yappy dogs and he had a whole DC-3 to himself. As we taxied out for takeoff, he was in the empty cabin just relaxing. During takeoff roll as I applied full power, the cacophony of the engines and the rattling empty airframe scared the living daylights out of that dog. Just as the tail was starting to come up, that dog ran so fast into the cockpit and dove right between my legs and behind the rudder pedals. He jammed the pedals, and I was afraid I was going to crush him as I was screaming at the First Officer to get that #@%$ out from there. Fortunately, he was able to pull Fido out and we were able to lift off uneventfully. We put the dog back in the cabin and closed the cockpit door.

Yes, I have learned from my errors. Always make sure animals cannot foul the controls or interfere with the pilot in any way. Make sure they are not traveling in an area where they can chew though something important, like electrical wiring or other critical plumbing or controls.

It is also wise to make sure that animals are comfortable, hydrated, fed, and that it is not too hot for them. I would suggest before taking an animal on a long cross-country flight, take it up on a local flight to see how it reacts. The pet might take a few of these flights to acclimate to flying. Who knows, maybe you have just found another flying companion!
Did you know that America has over 20,000 public- and private-use airports? According to the Central Intelligence Agency, America has about one-third of all the world’s airports and the most of any single country. Nebraska has 80 public-use airports.

One of our important airports in western Nebraska is McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport (KMCK). The airport is named for McCook’s native son born in May 1941, honoring Nebraska’s former Governor and former United States Senator.

KBFF is another important airport. Airmail service helped establish our national airport system. By 1934, Scottsbluff was established on that circuit which grew into today’s Western Nebraska Regional Airport (William B. Heilig Field). KBFF played an important role in World War II as Scottsbluff Army Airfield, where B-17-Flying Fortress and B-24-Liberator crews were trained. By 1947, the City of Scottsbluff guided the airport to its civilian growth. William B. Heilig, served as a WWII U.S. Army Air Force flight instructor and continued to promote the airport’s role in post war growth as airport manager. Named “Mr. Aviation,” Heilig was inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame in 1993.

Even earlier, North Platte played a significant role in aviation history by hosting the first night airmail flight on February 22, 1921. Originally called North Platte Field, it was built and funded with private money. That night sky was ablaze from light created by fires in fuel barrels for the 7:48 p.m. landing. After refueling and a few repairs, the airmail pilot flew off at 10:44 p.m. to Omaha.

Wanting to demonstrate the speed of airmail, a daring San Francisco to New York flight began where pilots would fly day and night, despite winter storms. Heroic pilot, Jack Knight, had landed in North Platte before in daylight, but night flying has its challenges, even today. A former Army flight instructor and experienced airmail pioneer, Jack had also flown to Omaha many times... but never at night. Nebraska towns played their part by lighting bonfires to help mark the route. As the weather worsened, Knight set down in Omaha, wind chilled from the open cockpit, famished and exhausted.

Continuing Nebraska airport history, according to Wikipedia, Omaha Eppley Airfield began as an extension of eastern Omaha Levi Carter Park in 1925. That same year, the City of Omaha acquired 200 acres of cleared land on Carter Lake’s east side. Almost immediately, planes started landing and taking off there. A lawsuit was launched against the City in 1927 when a group wanted to build a private hangar there. The lawsuit failed and residents called it both the Omaha Municipal Airport and the American Legion Airport. By 1957, United Airlines and Braniff International Airways scheduled service. The airport is named for Eugene C. Eppley, founder of the Eppley Hotel chain, whose estate funded $1,000,000 to prepare Omaha Municipal Airport for jet traffic in 1959-60. In 1960, Eppley Airfield was named and United Airlines landed the first B720 jet.

Without visionary airport leaders, our national transportation network would not be as comprehensive and connected.
My Bad

By Scott Stuart

Well, not that bad... I do manage to get the wheels down when they should be. But, I missed a real clue, a cry for help, and I failed to recognize it.

Weather, weather, weather. It is the Number 1 killer of the "you's and me's" of general aviation. That is fact, not fiction. And, sometimes we need help when it comes to weather before we ever leave the ground. Flight Service Station (FSS) is a source, and I also use ForeFlight App. But, maybe the best one is a good briefing from a pilot who is familiar with the departure airport and/or, one who has just arrived and knows the truth about what is lurking.

Last June, when in Portland, Maine, the day I was leaving for home was dreary, rainy, lower IFR, but not bad. It was early, with only one other pilot around, and he asked me about the departure procedures at Portland Int'l. Jetport (PWM): was there anything he should know? Thinking on it now, I brushed him off with a "no," and then headed to the plane for departure. The man was probably in his early 40's; but was likely a newly-minted instrument pilot seeking information from an old guy, me. I don't think of myself as old, but am 72 and have been blessed with good instruction my whole life and thousands of hours of flight. I should have taken time to answer questions, offer "wisdom," and help him along his general aviation journey. My Bad.

Last December, I was at Chicago Midway Int'l. Airport (MDW) planning my flight to Lincoln Airport (LNK). It was cold, windy and overcast. Meeting the Captain as he departed his Citation, I asked him for a Pirep regarding icing and tops. He took the time to school and have been blessed with good instruction my whole life and thousands of hours of flight. I should have taken time to answer questions, offer "wisdom," and help him along his general aviation journey. My Bad. By the way, I did check the flight path of the man who departed PWM later that day after I arrived home. All was fine, he made it safely back to Philadelphia Int'l. Airport (PHL). I only wish I had truly listened to what I heard and been the Pirep he was seeking. All's well that ends well, but maybe, we can have more weather flights end well if we take the time to communicate with one another. Gear Down and Locked

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No Coffin Corner

By David Moll

Quite a few years ago, one of the pilots in an FBO lobby loudly told everybody he got his Learjet 35 into “Coffin Corner.” In pilot lingo, this meant the airplane was just knots away from stalling, while at the same time he was just a few knots away from a high speed Mach buffet. And if he got over redline, he would get Mach tuck, where the nose pitches down with 150 to 200 pounds of force on the yoke. Plus, he had aileron buzz that would develop into flutter so bad the yoke would slam from stop to stop, breaking his wrists.

I finally heard enough and told him his Coffin Corner scenario wasn’t even close to being correct. To prove my point, I told him to go back to his airplane, get out his Flight Manual, and look at the speed difference between high-speed cruise and long-range cruise. I knew exactly what he would find: the speed difference is far greater than his "just knots away" claim. He impressed the FBO audience with his total lack of knowledge for the airplane he was paid big bucks to fully understand and safely fly. Almost immediately, he knew his doomsday scenario had been proven wrong.

How did I know he was wrong? In 1984 Pete Reynolds, the Learjet Engineering Test Pilot, responded to several poorly written aviation articles by writing an excellent paper detailing in clear language the High Mach characteristics of the Learjet. He noted the speed margin between low-speed buffet and MMO is 100 knots at 41,000 feet and 45 knots at 51,000 feet. He then explained that on models that incorporate a Mach trim system (such as the model 35), as their Mach number increases, the Mach trim system trims the elevator to counteract the effects of Mach tuck. Even at speeds well in excess of Mach redline (such as .88 Mach) it only takes about 10 pounds of pressure to keep the nose from lowering, which is barely perceptible to the pilot. “Aileron buzz,” as Pete described it, is simply from non-hydraulic powered flight controls at higher Mach numbers, but will never slam the yoke from stop to stop, breaking wrists.

I’m not sure where this pilot got his Learjet doomsday characteristics, but my guess is they probably started as a made-up story that only grew more wild over the years. I’ve done some CFI work in the Learjet and always loved it when the student said, “I’ve heard those tip tanks will give me a Dutch roll on the approach.” I would let him show me the rolling, but would raise my knees up and lock the yoke for a second or two. Immediately the rolling would quit, proving to him this was caused by his over-controlling, not the tip tanks.
National Day of Prayer

By David Morris

These photos were taken during flight on May 2 in observance of National Day of Prayer. The photo of the Nebraska State Capitol was taken by Tom Trumble, Lincoln, while piloting over the city of Lincoln. The night photo was taken by David Morris, Beatrice, while piloting during night time hours west of Omaha. National Day of Prayer was observed on May 2, 2019. This event was created by the U.S. Congress in 1952 during the President Harry Truman administration. The law was amended in 1988 and signed by President Ronald Reagan, permanently setting National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday in May. The event is observed annually, to invite all faiths to pray for the nation.

Fly-in Information
Events Calendar

Gordon Municipal Airport (KGRN)
Nebraska State Fly-In
Saturday, June 1st
8:00 am – 4:00 pm
spaughg@gordon-ne.us

Hastings Airport (KHSI)
EAA Chapter 544 Annual Open House and Fly-In Breakfast
Saturday, June 15th
www.flyhastings.com

Aurora Airport (AUH)
Fly-in Breakfast
Saturday, June 22nd
7:00 to 10:00 (Pilot-in-command eats free)
402-694-3633