

Nebraska Aviation Counts!

Economic Impact Study

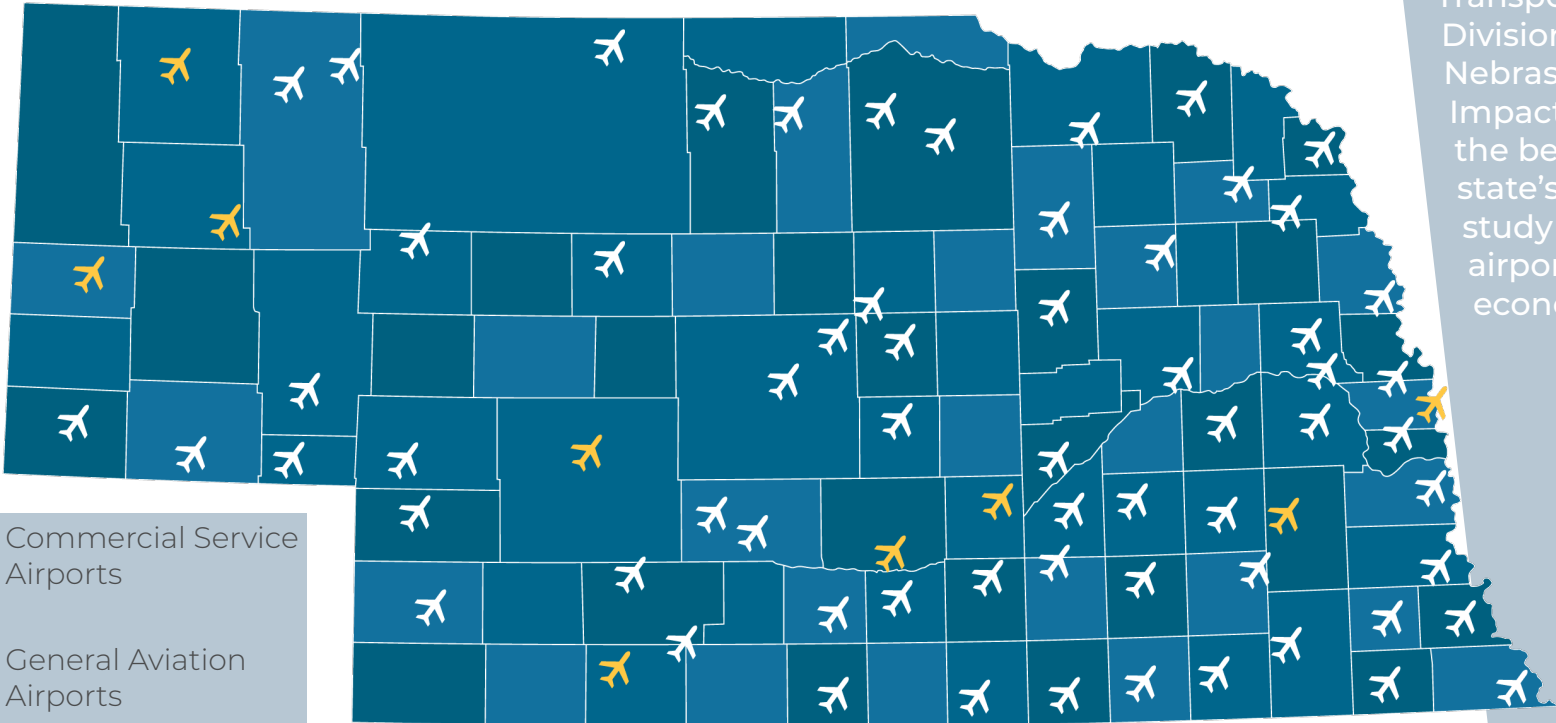
Executive Summary 2019



Nebraska Aviation Counts!

Nebraska's airport system makes valuable contributions to the communities it serves, providing access to the state 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Nebraska's Airports are a dynamic part of the state's economy.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division commissioned this Nebraska Aviation Economic Impact Study to measure the benefits provided by the state's airport system. This study shows how Nebraska airports are important economic engines.



-  Commercial Service Airports
-  General Aviation Airports

90,334
JOBS

\$3.5B
PAYROLL

\$8.6B
OVERALL IMPACT



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Methodology

Aviation jobs and commerce at airports are essential components of the communities they serve. Aviation activity can greatly influence economic growth and development not only locally, but statewide. This Economic Impact Study analyzes aviation's overall role in the state's economy to help inform state decision-making.

The Nebraska Aviation Counts! team conducted the Study using guidelines set by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Primary data was gathered by surveying airport managers, airport tenants, and visitors who traveled to Nebraska by commercial service or by general aviation aircraft. While primary data is the core of the economic impact analysis, missing values and industry-specific information was assembled using secondary data sources.

The primary and secondary data collected for Nebraska airports provided the direct impacts that drove the economic modeling effort for this study. The Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN) modeling system was used to calculate aviation's total contribution to the Nebraska economy.

All numbers shown in this summary are total economic impacts. Direct impacts are aggregated to protect the confidentiality of study participants.

Impact Types

Direct Impacts

Related to the provisions of aviation services, visitors' spending, or the activity of aviation-reliant businesses.

Indirect Impacts

Any portion of direct business revenue from affected businesses used to purchase goods or services within the state.

Induced Impacts

Any portion of direct or indirect revenues paid to on-airport workers and spent on goods and services within the state.

Total Economic Impacts

The total sum of both direct impacts and spin-off effects generated throughout a year.

Spin-Off

Impact Measures



Jobs

Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Part-time positions are considered half of one full-time worker with seasonal workers being calculated proportionally to one full-time worker.



Payroll

Amount of total annual salary, wages, and benefits paid to all FTEs calculated under jobs.



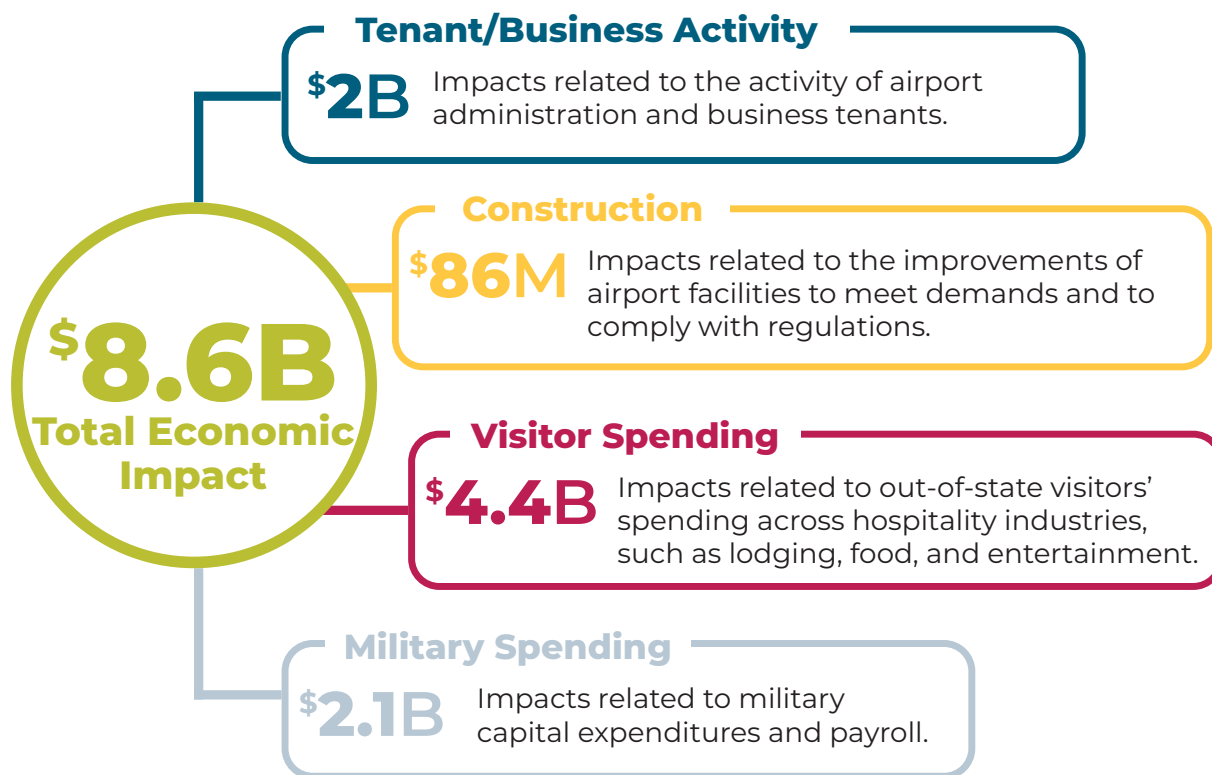
Economic Impact

The combined annual value of goods and services generated from any airport-related activity.



How Economic Impacts are Measured

This study expresses the economic benefits of Nebraska's airports in terms of jobs, payroll, and total economic impact. Direct impacts are expenditures related to the provisions of aviation services, visitors' spending, or the activity of aviation-reliant businesses.

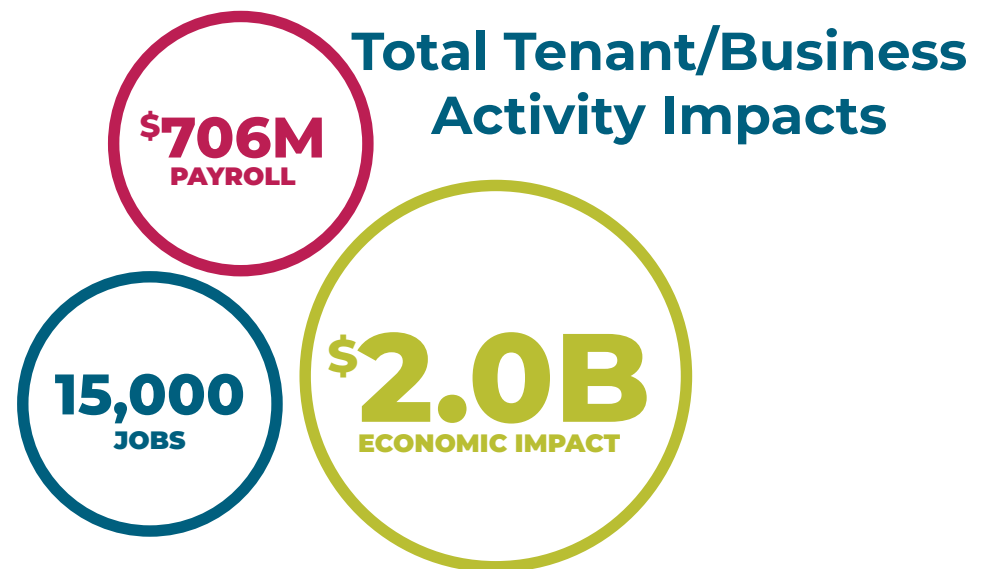




Tenant/Business Activity

On-airport tenants are involved in activities such as Fixed Based Operators (FBOs), fuel sales, aircraft maintenance and repair, flight schools, rental car agencies, food vendors, agricultural sprayers, and other businesses that serve passengers, airlines, and general aviation pilots and aircraft. Airports with commercial services also support a wide variety of aviation-related jobs in transportation, concessions, government, and other services.

In addition, there are non-aviation-related businesses located on-airport that rely upon airport property for their operations. In such cases, airports function as business and industrial parks with available infrastructure and support the economic development of communities and regions.

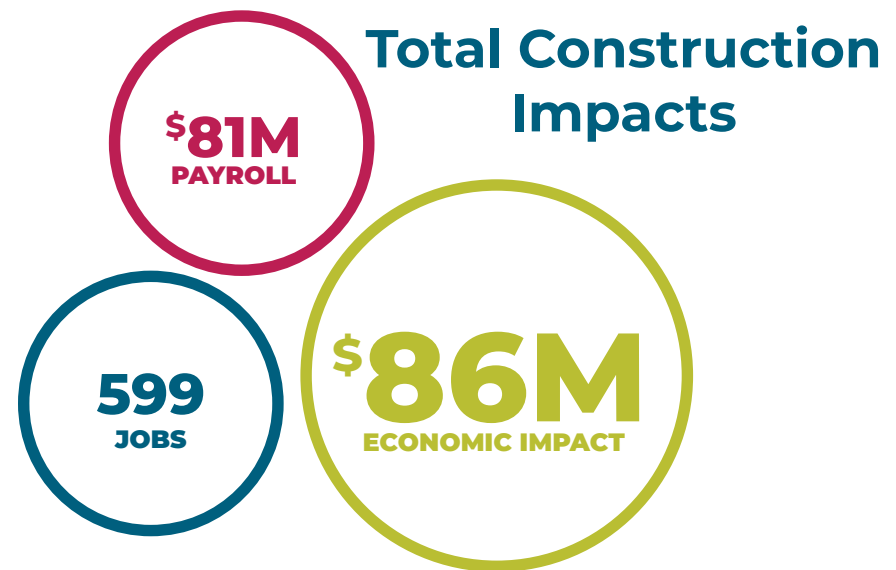




Construction

Capital investments are necessary to support continued operations, provide safe working and operational conditions, and, in some cases, expand operational capacity for increasing demand in aviation services. The airport manager survey requested total capital expenditures for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. Averaging all four years allowed the study to mitigate the impacts of any spikes or declines in construction spending and costs. Combined, Nebraska's airports averaged \$49 million in capital investments per year.

Construction impacts are an excellent example of investment dollars working through the economy. In Nebraska, \$1 invested in construction multiplies through the economy, according to the IMPLAN model, 1.74 times. A \$49 million investment results in an \$86 economic impact.





Visitor Spending

Because commercial service and general aviation airports serve as a gateway to Nebraska for thousands of visitors each year, airports also offer significant economic benefits across hospitality and service industries. Airports are essential to visitors' ability to conduct business or vacation in Nebraska, leading to spending in sectors such as lodging, restaurants, retail, and entertainment.

Commercial Service



49,162
JOBS



\$1.4B
PAYROLL



\$4B
IMPACT

General Aviation



5,591
JOBS



\$163M
PAYROLL



\$463M
IMPACT

Total Visitor Spending

\$1.6B
PAYROLL

54,735
JOBS

\$4.4B
ECONOMIC IMPACT

Military Spending

Military aviation in Nebraska is a major contributor to the state and local economies, employing more than 25,000 workers and contributing over \$2.1 billion in economic activity in the forms of expenditures and payroll.

Overall Economic Impact

Offutt Air Force Base

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Employment | 17,817 |
| Payroll | \$1,104,500,000 |
| Economic Impact | \$1,978,700,000 |

Nebraska National Guard

Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Employment | 5,269 |
| Payroll | \$163,400,000 |
| Economic Impact | \$292,600,000 |

Reserve Forces

Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy

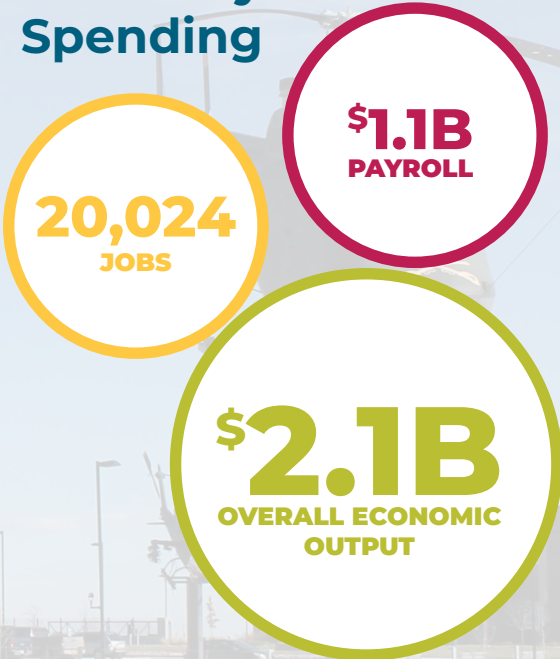
| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Employment | 2,217 |
| Payroll | \$42,400,000 |
| Economic Impact | \$67,200,000 |

Total Military Aviation Impact*

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Employment | 20,024 |
| Payroll | \$1,170,000,000 |
| Economic Impact | \$2,090,000,000 |

* Non-aviation or non-airport military positions are backed out of total military economic impact calculation.

Total Military Spending



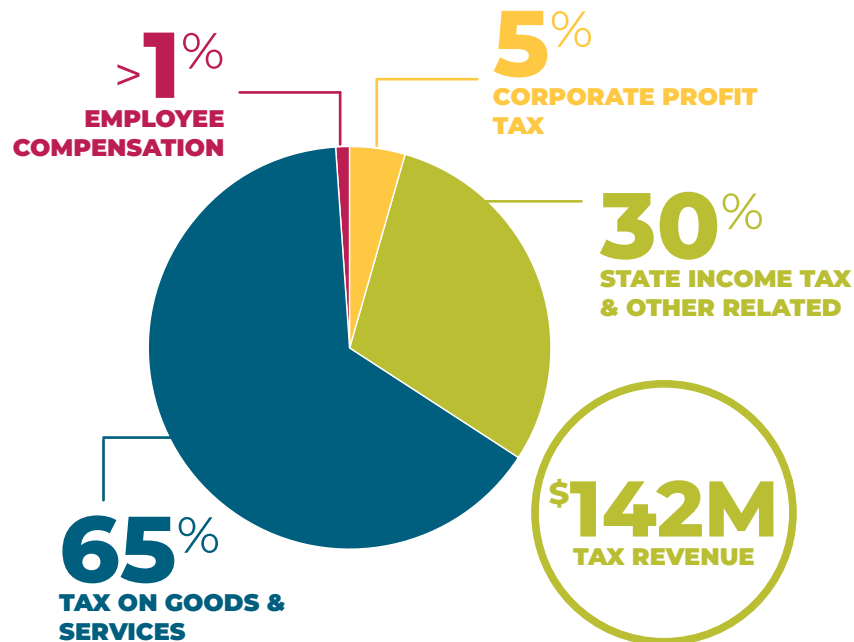
NEBRASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Additional Benefits

Airport-Related Taxes

In addition to the economic impact from jobs created and direct and indirect spending, the state receives a significant amount of tax revenue from aviation activity. These taxes take many forms from taxes on goods and services to income tax, corporate profits, and employee compensation. The tax analysis conducted during the study examined revenue generated from the taxes paid by on-airport businesses, general aviation and commercial service visitors, and workers in airport-related activities. When combined, airport-related activity generates an estimated \$142M in tax revenue on direct spending only for the state of Nebraska.



Total Aircraft Value in Nebraska

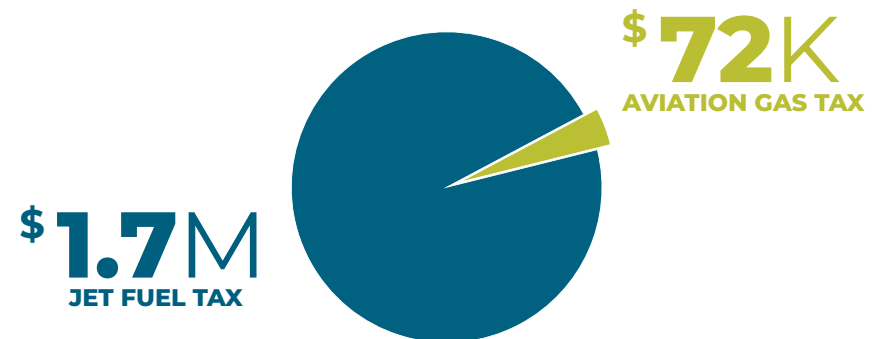
\$920,241,000

The total aircraft value is established by combining the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) aircraft certification database, the FAA-based aircraft database, and commercially available valuation tables to establish the value of all aircraft certified in Nebraska. An interactive map with the number, age, and approximate value of aircraft is available at www.nebraskaaviationcounts.org.

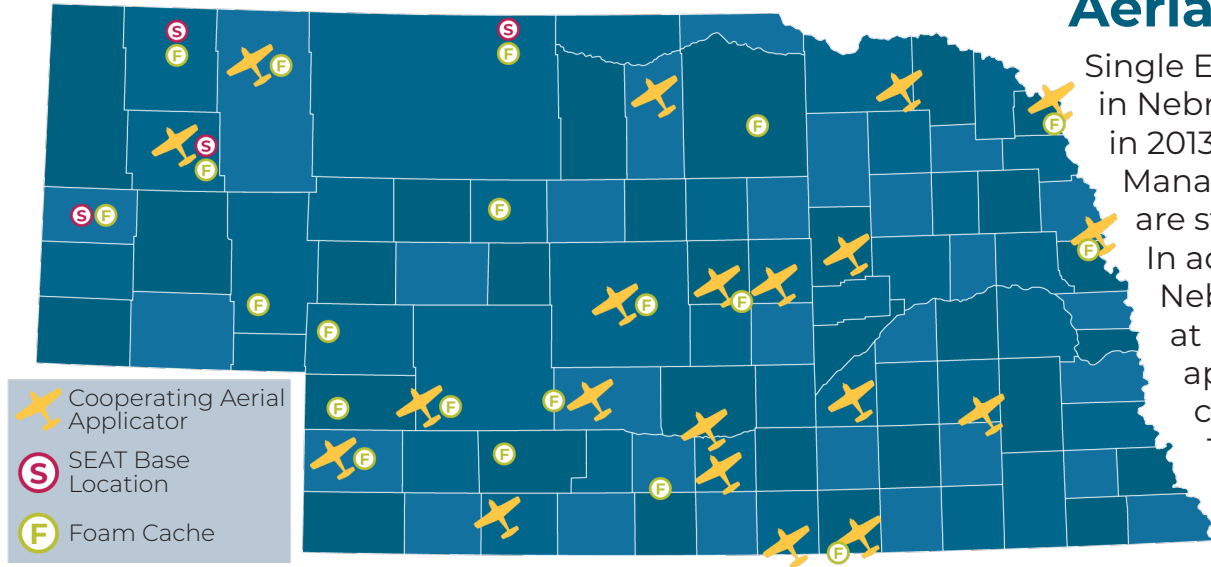


Aviation Fuel Taxes

The State of Nebraska levies a 5¢ per gallon tax for aviation gas and 3¢ per gallon tax for jet fuel. Tax collected on aviation fuel is spent on aviation program costs, including maintenance of state airports, navigational aids, obstruction tracking, and staffing.



Additional Benefits (cont'd)



Aerial Firefighting

Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Bases were established in Nebraska after the passing of the Wildfire Control Act in 2013. During fire season, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency contracts SEAT bases which are staffed by the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS). In addition to the four permanent SEAT bases in Nebraska, a mobile SEAT base provides support at airports as needed. Across the state, 22 aerial applicator companies with 45 airplanes work in cooperation with the NFS for aerial fire suppression. To provide rapid-response services, 20 locations across the state are equipped with firefighting foam specifically for aerial wildfire suppression.



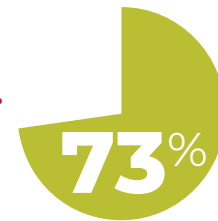
Medical Reliance/Utilization

The availability of medical clinics in rural areas permits Nebraskans to stay in their family homes longer.



Nebraska airports surveyed indicated that Air Ambulances use their facilities.

*Many of the respondents who answered 'no' lacked sufficient infrastructure to support air ambulances



Nebraska airports said visiting doctors and medical clinics use their airport.

*Response rate is not adjusted for metropolitan area or areas with no hospital

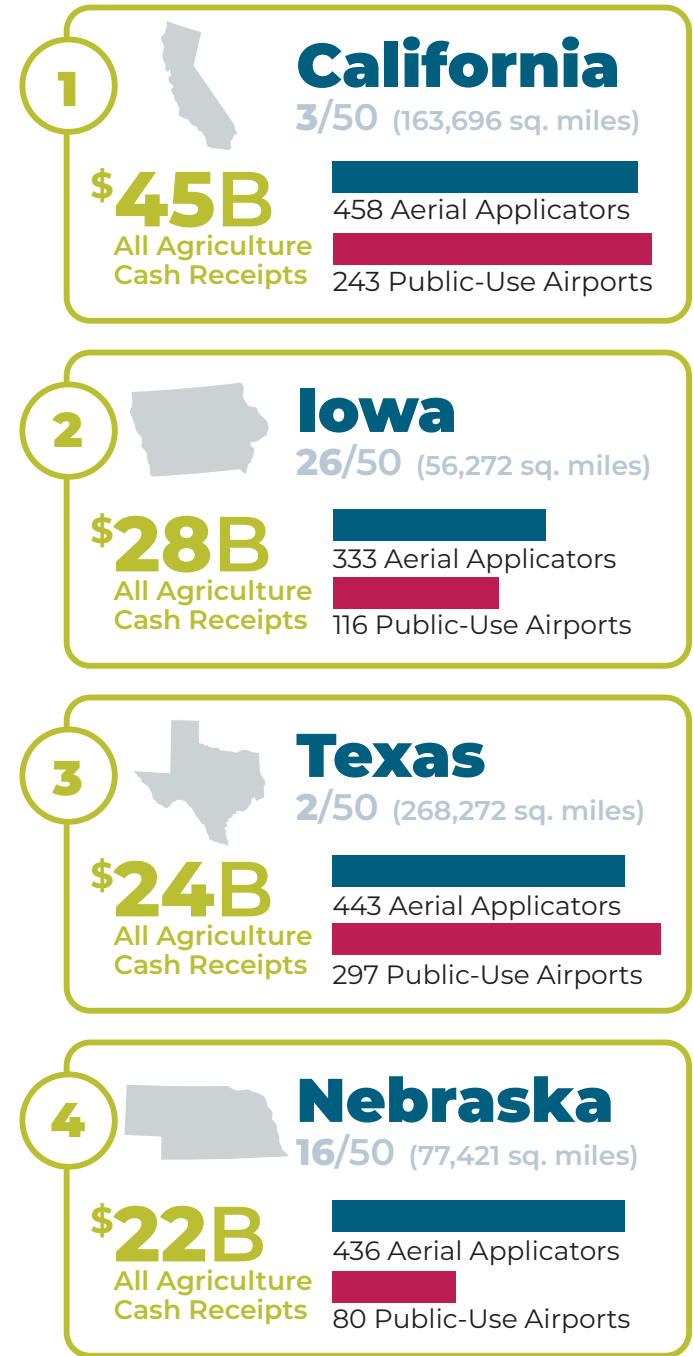
Aviation's Role in Nebraska Agriculture



There are over 46,000 farms in the state of Nebraska. The estimated value of agricultural facilities is \$120 billion, with an additional \$12 billion in machinery and equipment. Nebraska ranks fourth in total agricultural output in the United States, following California, Iowa, and Texas. Crops account for 42% of all agricultural sales in the state. The three primary crops are corn, soybean and wheat. Approximately 28% of all crops in Nebraska receive treatment from aerial application.

Using a conservative crop-loss equation comparing the use of traditional ground application machinery versus aerial application, aerial application preserves \$130 million in crops. Various studies indicate a 7% or greater increase in yield compared to untreated crops. An estimated \$651 million in crop preservation can be attributed to the use of aerial application on the estimated 6.2 million acres that receive treatment per year. The total impact of aerial application on the state's economy when a multiplier effect is included is \$1.05 billion.

Nebraska's investment in public-use airports efficiently provides for \$1 billion in agriculture economic activity compared to the other top states. There are fewer public use airports in Nebraska than any of the top three agricultural production states. There are similar numbers of aerial applicators in California, Texas, and Nebraska; however, Nebraska's public-use airport system contains 200% fewer airports. As a part of this study, all public-use airports answered questions regarding aerial applicator activity on their airport. Over 80% answered that aerial applicators use their facility for base of operations, fuel and/or maintenance. Public-use airports contribute significantly to the state's agricultural production.



Economic Impact of Commercial Service Airports

The nine commercial service airports in Nebraska are responsible for more than approximately \$6.1 billion in output and 54,356 jobs earning more than \$2.2 billion per year. These facilities directly connect Nebraska to the region, nation, and the world. Commercial service airports range from Omaha's Eppley Airfield, which served approximately 5 million passengers in 2018, to airports that serve single airlines operating multiple times per day. This data reflects an individual airport's total economic impact. For more information about an airport's impact, please see the technical report.

| City | Airport | Jobs | Payroll | Output | Enplanements |
|--------------|---|--------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Alliance | Alliance Municipal | 221 | \$9,975,000 | \$20,739,000 | 5,791 |
| Chadron | Chadron Municipal | 243 | \$9,322,000 | \$21,636,000 | 5,228 |
| Grand Island | Central Nebraska Regional | 2,188 | \$66,723,000 | \$171,769,000 | 63,298 |
| Kearney | Kearney Regional | 533 | \$18,291,000 | \$44,551,000 | 4,568* |
| Lincoln | Lincoln Airport | 8,884 | \$508,316,000 | \$1,272,504,000 | 150,726 |
| McCook | McCook Ben Nelson Regional | 264 | \$7,775,000 | \$21,570,000 | 1,174 |
| North Platte | North Platte Regional Lee Bird Field | 1,397 | \$44,433,000 | \$154,960,000 | 13,798* |
| Omaha | Eppley Airfield | 51,610 | \$1,551,861,000 | \$4,292,110,000 | 2,457,087 |
| Scottsbluff | Western Nebraska Regional William B. Hellig Field | 1,040 | \$31,430,000 | \$86,367,000 | 13,628* |

Enplanements count the number of passengers boarding an aircraft at a commercial service airport. The total number of passengers include the number enplaned or departing an airport and the number of passengers who arrive by aircraft at the airport. The number of enplanements is approximately equal to the number of visitors who arrive and depart.

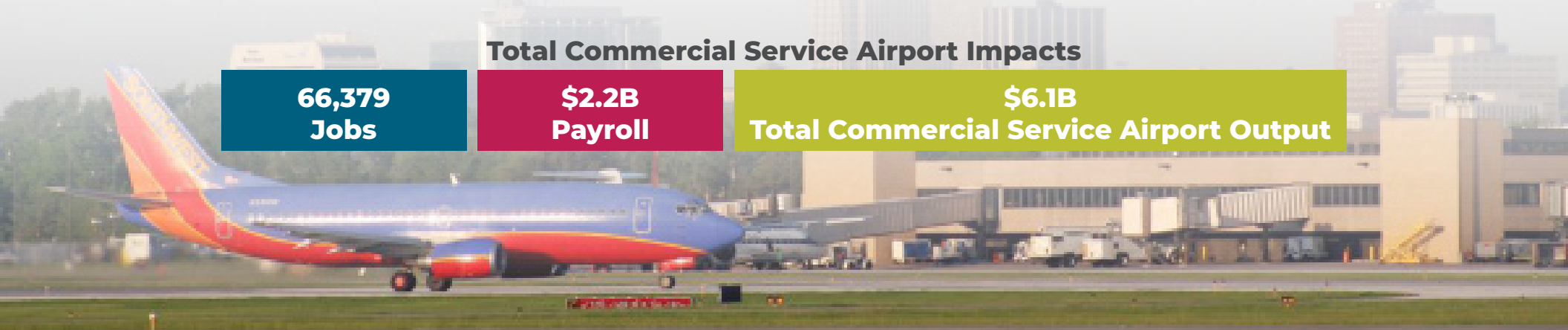
* Commercial enplanements trended higher in 2019. Final numbers for 2019 were not available at the time of this report

Total Commercial Service Airport Impacts

66,379
Jobs

\$2.2B
Payroll

\$6.1B
Total Commercial Service Airport Output

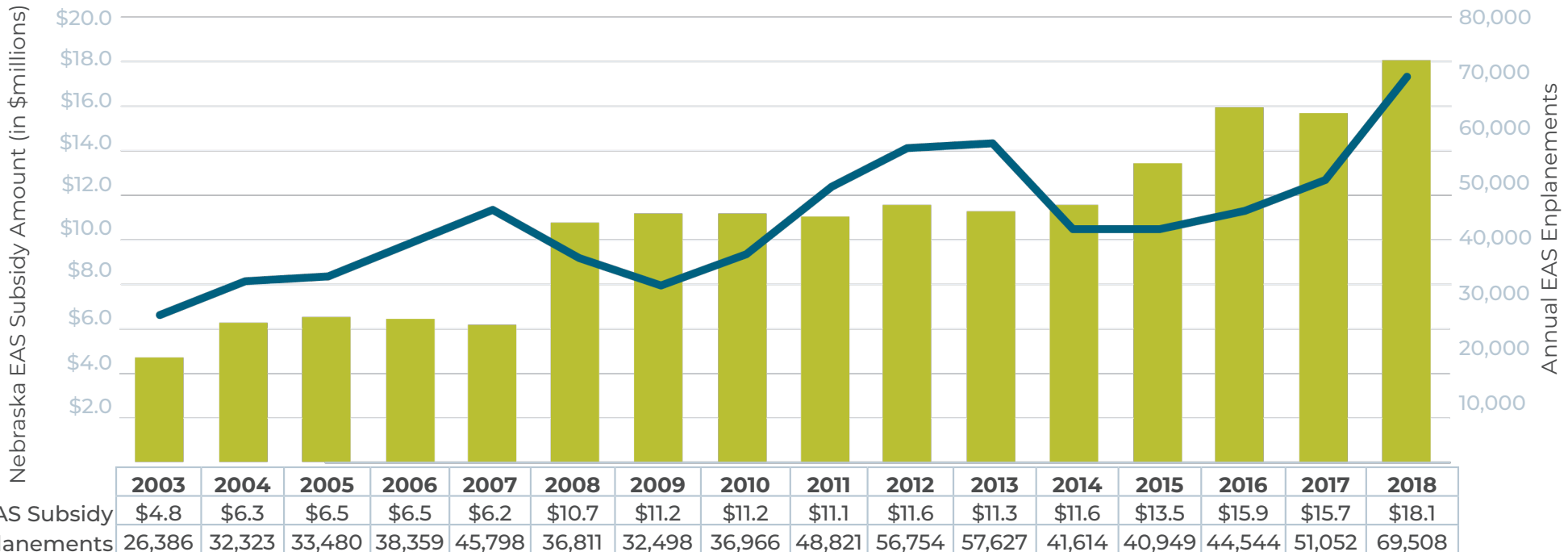
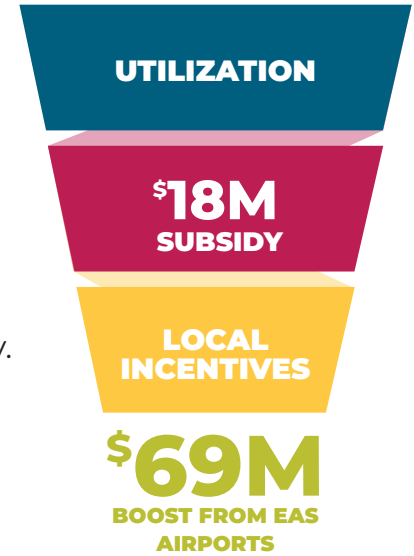


Regional Airlines in Nebraska

Visitors traveling to Nebraska on regional airlines generate a total economic impact of \$530 million, exclusive of the estimated \$210 million in ticket expenses generated by airlines. The \$530 million effect on the economy supports 7,702 jobs in Nebraska travel, retail, and entertainment industries.

Western Nebraska travelers use of North Platte Regional Airport and Western Nebraska Regional Airport in 2019 resulted in the FAA taking the unusual step of renewing the airports' Essential Air Service (EAS) contract early. EAS is a Federal subsidy program that was designed to assist rural communities to retain commercial air service relatively close to the areas that it served prior to deregulation. In recent years, the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) decreased the regulatory requirements of the program providing flexibility in EAS provision by the local community. The chart below tracks the correlation of the growth in passenger enplanement and subsidies provided by the DOT EAS program. As the chart shows, \$18 million in subsidies assist almost 70,000 enplanements. The economic impact of travel spending, as determined by IMPLAN, is \$16.42 in additional impact for every dollar spent by a traveler.

As a result, the Nebraska economy received a \$69 million boost from EAS airports through 2018. The boost is not necessarily limited to the individual EAS community. The preliminary number for 2019 indicate that the trend line continues upward movement at Nebraska's rural commercial service airports.



Economic Impact of General Aviation Airports

The Nebraska airport system consists of 79 airports, all of which are available for use by the public. Scheduled commercial airline service can be found at nine of these airports, with the other 70 airports dedicated to serving the needs of general aviation. These general aviation airports feature a vast array of facilities and activities.

The economic impacts of these airports take into account a wide variety of aviation services. The general aviation airports offer unmatched accessibility across Nebraska while providing a host of services such as avionics installation, flight training, environmental surveys, aerial application, charter flights, and aircraft maintenance. All of these activities support jobs in the community and bolster each region's economy.

Nebraska's general aviation airports are also critical to the state's tourism industry. Visitors to the state make frequent use of general aviation airports to enjoy the varied recreational activities—ranging from national and state parks, to major sporting events and hunting and fishing opportunities. During these trips, visitors spend money locally on goods and services such as food, lodging, events, and world-class golf. This data reflects an individual airport's total economic impact. All numbers presented in this table are total economic impacts to protect the confidentiality of survey respondents, visitors, and businesses. For more information about an airport's impact, please see the technical report.

| City | Airport Name | Jobs | Payroll | Impact |
|--------------|--|------|-------------|--------------|
| Ainsworth | Ainsworth Regional | 31 | \$1,402,000 | \$2,786,000 |
| Albion | Albion Municipal | 8 | \$450,000 | \$1,099,000 |
| Alma | Alma Municipal | 30 | \$893,000 | \$2,530,000 |
| Arapahoe | Arapahoe Municipal | 7 | \$146,000 | \$656,000 |
| Atkinson | Stuart-Atkinson Municipal | 13 | \$581,000 | \$1,462,000 |
| Auburn | Farington Field | 18 | \$1,450,000 | \$2,012,000 |
| Aurora | Aurora Municipal - Al Potter Field | 61 | \$2,760,000 | \$7,095,000 |
| Bassett | Rock County | 6 | \$222,000 | \$835,000 |
| Beatrice | Beatrice Municipal | 157 | \$4,788,000 | \$10,417,000 |
| Blair | Blair Municipal | 69 | \$2,812,000 | \$5,693,000 |
| Bloomfield | Bloomfield Municipal | 13 | \$343,000 | \$1,183,000 |
| Broken Bow | Broken Bow Municipal/Keith Glaze Field | 28 | \$1,991,000 | \$3,305,000 |
| Burwell | Cram Field | 22 | \$1,094,000 | \$2,348,000 |
| Cambridge | Cambridge Municipal | 36 | \$1,161,000 | \$3,316,000 |
| Central City | Central City Municipal Larry Reineke Field | 29 | \$1,028,000 | \$3,052,000 |
| Chappell | Billy G. Ray Field | 4 | \$175,000 | \$492,000 |
| Columbus | Columbus Municipal | 133 | \$4,101,000 | \$14,693,000 |
| Cozad | Cozad Municipal | 95 | \$2,802,000 | \$8,226,000 |
| Creighton | Creighton Municipal | 10 | \$556,000 | \$1,066,000 |
| Crete | Crete Municipal | 213 | \$6,079,000 | \$16,637,000 |
| Curtis | Curtis Municipal | 6 | \$145,000 | \$708,000 |
| David City | David City Municipal | 70 | \$3,470,000 | \$15,093,000 |
| Fairbury | Fairbury Municipal | 34 | \$1,198,000 | \$5,405,000 |
| Fairmont | Fairmont State Airfield | 31 | \$763,000 | \$2,388,000 |
| Falls City | Brenner Field | 20 | \$770,000 | \$1,881,000 |
| Fremont | Fremont Municipal | 91 | \$2,663,000 | \$10,541,000 |
| Genoa | Genoa Municipal | 2 | \$102,000 | \$247,000 |
| Gordon | Gordon Municipal | 23 | \$1,309,000 | \$2,435,000 |
| Gothenburg | Gothenburg Municipal | 11 | \$348,000 | \$919,000 |
| Grant | Grant Municipal | 79 | \$2,535,000 | \$6,298,000 |
| Hartington | Hartington Municipal/Bud Becker Field | 27 | \$871,000 | \$3,147,000 |
| Harvard | Harvard State Airfield | 13 | \$279,000 | \$1,134,000 |
| Hastings | Hastings Municipal | 137 | \$3,963,000 | \$10,509,000 |
| Hay Springs | Hay Springs Municipal | 3 | \$142,000 | \$395,000 |
| Hebron | Hebron Municipal | 22 | \$1,306,000 | \$2,780,000 |
| Holdrege | Brewster Field | 95 | \$3,075,000 | \$8,244,000 |
| Hyannis | Grant County | 11 | \$369,000 | \$1,327,000 |
| Imperial | Imperial Municipal | 87 | \$3,219,000 | \$8,713,000 |



| City | Airport Name | Jobs | Payroll | Impact |
|------------------|---|------|--------------|--------------|
| Kimball | Robert E. Arraj Field | 20 | \$730,000 | \$1,813,000 |
| Lexington | Jim Kelly Field | 72 | \$2,179,000 | \$6,055,000 |
| Loup City | Loup City Municipal | 19 | \$647,000 | \$1,629,000 |
| Minden | Pioneer Village Field | 22 | \$566,000 | \$1,715,000 |
| Nebraska City | Nebraska City Municipal | 48 | \$1,748,000 | \$4,294,000 |
| Neligh | Antelope County | 54 | \$1,389,000 | \$6,465,000 |
| Norfolk | Norfolk Regional Karl Stefan Memorial Field | 109 | \$4,433,000 | \$13,570,000 |
| Ogallala | Searle Field | 42 | \$1,515,000 | \$3,930,000 |
| Omaha | Millard | 903 | \$28,196,000 | \$77,476,000 |
| Omaha | North Omaha | 83 | \$1,508,000 | \$5,551,000 |
| O'Neill | O'Neill Municipal John L. Baker Field | 47 | \$1,723,000 | \$4,224,000 |
| Ord | Evelyn Sharp Field | 20 | \$930,000 | \$2,003,000 |
| Oshkosh | Garden County | 8 | \$568,000 | \$869,000 |
| Pawnee City | Pawnee City Municipal | 6 | \$427,000 | \$775,000 |
| Pender | Pender Municipal | 14 | \$708,000 | \$1,964,000 |
| Plattsmouth | Plattsmouth Municipal | 91 | \$3,560,000 | \$8,470,000 |
| Red Cloud | Red Cloud Municipal | 18 | \$307,000 | \$1,187,000 |
| Rushville | Modisett Field | 11 | \$403,000 | \$1,419,000 |
| Sargent | Sargent Municipal | 12 | \$384,000 | \$2,537,000 |
| Scribner | Scribner State Airfield | 20 | \$1,496,000 | \$2,336,000 |
| Seward | Seward Municipal | 97 | \$2,395,000 | \$7,823,000 |
| Sidney | Sidney Municipal Lloyd W. Carr Field | 73 | \$1,814,000 | \$4,537,000 |
| South Sioux City | Martin Field | 30 | \$499,000 | \$1,913,000 |
| Superior | Superior Municipal | 23 | \$820,000 | \$3,723,000 |
| Tecumseh | Tecumseh Municipal | 11 | \$665,000 | \$1,134,000 |
| Tekamah | Tekamah Municipal | 71 | \$2,526,000 | \$7,608,000 |
| Theftord | Thomas County | 11 | \$728,000 | \$1,341,000 |
| Valentine | Miller Field | 68 | \$1,974,000 | \$5,044,000 |
| Wahoo | Wahoo Municipal | 103 | \$2,858,000 | \$9,074,000 |
| Wallace | Wallace Municipal | 13 | \$306,000 | \$1,204,000 |
| Wayne | Wayne Municipal Stan Morris Field | 28 | \$1,727,000 | \$3,910,000 |
| York | York Municipal | 40 | \$1,522,000 | \$3,788,000 |

Total General Aviation Airport Impacts

3,951 Jobs

\$133M Payroll

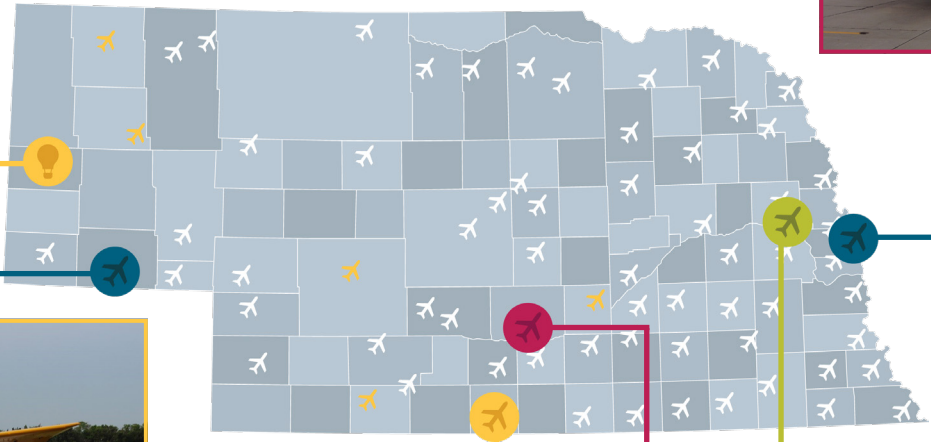
\$371M Total General Aviation Airport Impact

Case Study Highlights

The Nebraska Aviation Counts! team developed case studies that highlighted real-life examples of the economic impact that Nebraska's airports have on their communities. These showcase unique aspects of Nebraska's aviation industry and provide a qualitative description on how the aviation industry impacts Nebraska's businesses and communities.



Old Mitchell Airfield
National Competition Fills Sky With Hot Air Balloons



Bryan Heart Medical Care
Physicians utilize airports to provide services throughout the state



Alma Municipal Airport
Facility Upgrades Bring New Business to Alma



Omaha Eppley Airfield
Airline Service Makes Major Events Possible



Kearney Regional Airport
Aviation Program Filling Sky-High Demand for Pilots



Fremont Municipal Airport
Airport Offers Connection For Stranded Victims



Sidney Municipal - Lloyd W. Carr Airport
Aviation Program in Sidney Offers FAA Training



General Aviation Provides Lifeline for Flood Victims

“ I think the coolest story isn’t about an individual, it’s about the pilot community as a whole. Talk about a group of people that are selfless, that’s pretty cool. They drop everything, take off work, and say hey here’s my plane. ”

Collin Caneva
Volunteer Pilot

In times of natural disasters, communities can become helpless when ground infrastructure is compromised. During these moments, general aviation can provide essential support in the immediate aftermath to those affected. In the spring of 2019, Nebraska and other states along the Missouri Valley experienced record flooding, causing damages in the billions and leaving some rural areas stranded.

Forty miles northwest of Omaha, the 26,000 residents of Fremont, Nebraska found themselves surrounded by flood waters after two levees were breached. With no available roads or bridges, the Fremont Municipal Airport became a central hub for rescuers.

As the historic and catastrophic flooding continued, volunteer pilots and aviation companies provided disaster relief to and from the only operating airport for the devastated community. Following this meteorological phenomenon known as a “bomb cyclone,” Greg Kjeldgaard, the FBO’s Vice President, estimated at least 1,000 people were transported to nearby airports in Omaha, Columbus, Lincoln, and Wahoo. As aircraft provided makeshift shuttle services in and out of the area, pilots would continue to return to deliver any amount of relief supplies they could carry to the remaining victims. These efforts proved to be a lifeline for the remaining victims in the four days it took emergency crews to clear the roadways.

Through the generosity and services of general aviation, the state of Nebraska was able to find immediate relief in its time of need.



Airline Services Makes Major Events Possible

“Every time a College World Series game goes on TV, it just gives us another chance to promote ourselves to somebody who might be thinking about moving a business here, or moving themselves here for a career or just even coming here to visit.”

David Brown

Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Every June, college baseball fans from around the country gather in Omaha, Nebraska to cheer on their favorite team at the College World Series (CWS). The event, held at TD Ameritrade Park, has created a stable impact on the local economy and continues to grow year after year. In 2019, a record 357,646 attendees over the course of 16 games brought an estimated \$70 million in economic impact.

With almost 60% of attendees coming from out of state, aviation serves as a vital link for the event. Located less than four miles from the stadium, Eppley Airfield hosts thousands of out-of-state visitors who not only attend the CWS but visit other attractions in the area as well. This direct spending has led to growth that provides year-long support to the local economy.

In addition to visitor spending, media coverage during the CWS showcases Omaha on a platform that increases national exposure and provides long-term value for the entire state. This recognition has helped Omaha attract other sports events, including NCAA volleyball and basketball tournaments, Olympic swim trials, and the international equestrian World Cup in 2017.

As the College World Series continues to bring nationwide coverage of the state of Nebraska, aviation provides essential support for the economic impact of major events.



University of Nebraska at Kearney Aviation Program Filling Sky-High Demand for Pilots

Over the last five years, airlines across the country have been on the hunt for qualified pilots. To entice potential candidates, salaries for entry-level pilots have almost doubled and hiring incentives have increased. The aviation program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney is doing its part to fill this demand.

The school is one of only two in the state with an aviation program and currently has 60 enrolled students. Although it is on the smaller side, the program's director, Terry Gibbs, sees this as a strength as it creates a better learning environment. Gibbs, who has led the program since 2001, says it's one of the university's hidden gems. In addition to small class sizes, the school's rural location makes it an efficient place to train. With only one flight instructor on staff, they often partner with licensed instructors from Big Air, who are often alumni of the program.

On campus, a Redbird Flight Simulator helps prepare students for a variety of different environments. Purchased in 2015, the simulator can create a range of flying conditions and can match controls for a variety of aircraft. The simulator has become an important tool for teaching students how to properly handle emergency situations like engine failure. With its realistic views and dual controls, students and instructors can record and replay flights for review.

Job placement for students is above 90 percent for pilots and is higher for students with certain certifications. Students graduate with around 250 flight hours and typically begin as flight instructors. Although the pilot demand is high, the aviation program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney is helping one flight hour at a time.

“ There’s a thrill with aviation. It’s hard to describe. It’s a fun feeling. It’s an enjoyment. It’s one of those things you can see yourself doing for a long time. ”

Jacob Barth

UNK Aviation Program Student



National Competition Fills Sky With Hot Air Balloons

Hot air balloons took to the sky in early August 2019 as the Old West Balloon Fest hosted the US Nationals Hot Air Balloon Championships of the Balloon Federation of America. 2019 was the fifth year for the festival and the first time the Balloon Federation of America brought its national competition to western Nebraska. The competition will also be held in the area for 2020 and 2021.

Hot air balloons are a unique part of aviation that create excitement and attract attention. Balloons have been around since 1783 and were the first successful flight technology with the ability to carry humans. More than six million spectators across the globe attend balloon events, making it more popular than any other outdoor summer activity.

“My friend told me the area was great for flying so I should consider it. We competed against four other cities and were chosen because of the open flying area and the hospitality of the community.”

Colleen Johnson

Old West Balloon Fest Executive Director

Johnson said that in past years, the Balloon Federation of America has done market surveys on the impact their event had in host communities. With pilots staying for an entire week, the event brings in an average of \$1.2 million. “That’s a lot for our community,” Johnson said.

In the United States, balloon pilots must have a commercial pilot certificate to carry paying passengers and attend most balloon festivals. Those who are FAA certified can also act as hot air balloon flight instructors and can fly passenger sightseeing tours or corporate advertising balloons.





Physicians Utilize Airports to Provide Services Throughout the State

Through innovative treatments and technology, the staff at Bryan Heart are highly skilled with the drive to improve. Through their dedication to patients and families, their collaboration with healthcare providers throughout the region expands services, bringing value and pride in working together to change lives.

The Bryan Heart Health System is a Nebraska-governed, nonprofit health system that cares for patients that educates tomorrow's healthcare providers, motivates our community with fitness and health programs, and collaborates to continually improve how we serve others. The award-winning network of doctors, hospitals and medical providers ensure the highest quality of care and the most advanced, effective treatments for those they serve throughout the region. Through the statewide networks, Bryan Heart brings care and treatment directly to rural communities through sophisticated mobile diagnostic and treatment services, telemedicine services, specialized heart care clinics, telehealth mental health counseling and more.

With more than 5,000 highly trained staff members, Bryan Heart takes its commitment to provide the best care, the best education, the best wellness and recovery services, and the best work environment seriously.

- Bryan Heart physicians provide services in 42 communities across Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri
- Utilized airports in 22 communities in 2018 and 19 communities in 2019 to provide these services
- Approximately 30% of total patient visits provided in the year take place in Outreach locations, for a total of over 21,000 outreach patient visits
- Over half of provider clinic days occur in outreach locations



Aviation Program in Sidney Offers FAA Training

For 50 years, Western Nebraska Community College's Sidney Campus (WNCC) has helped train a new generation of workforce in the aviation industry. Sidney Municipal Airport became home for WNCC Sidney Campus' Aviation Maintenance Program in 1997 and is the only FAA-approved program in the state of Nebraska. Through partnerships between the Airport Authority, Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, the community and WNCC, the airport has expanded its facilities including a terminal expansion and hangar construction over the last 20 years. WNCC's facility at the airport to accommodate the growing program that continues to train students to perform diagnostics on and repair single-engine, multi-engine, and corporate jet aircraft. More than half of their graduating students accept jobs at companies based in Nebraska while others take their skills to airports across the US and globally.

Facility Upgrades Bring New Business to Alma

Over the last several years, Alma Municipal Airport has experienced significant growth in terms of facilities and economics. In 2011, the airport installed a self-service fuel facility. A few years later in 2014, its 3,200-foot long turf runway was paved, and runway edge lights were installed. Shortly after that, several hangars were constructed. Since the 2014 facility improvements, fuel sales continue to grow and are triple what they were prior to Runway 17/35 being paved. With 40 years of aerial application experience, R Muckel Cropdusting decided to base its crop dusting operation at Alma Municipal after facility improvements were made in 2014. The company constructed a hangar and attached office area to allow it to provide aerial application services within a 50-mile radius of Alma serving southern Nebraska and northern Kansas.





NEBRASKA
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Prepared for the Nebraska Department of Transportation,
Aeronautics Division. Prepared by GBA, with assistance
from Kimley-Horn, Olsson, Marr Arnold Planning, and Dr.
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