

QUARTERLY

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QUARTERLY

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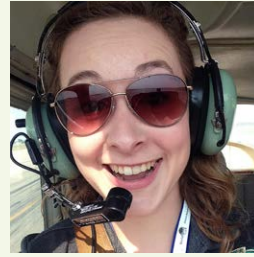
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From the Editor

Autumn has always been my favorite time of the year. While the cool

weather is busy rolling in, a warmth fills the crisp air with excitement as family and friends gather to attend their favorite fall holidays and events. In this issue of the Quarterly, you can enjoy recaps of recent industry events and adventures, get to know our state aeronautics commissioners with a fun Q&A, be inspired by those sharing the gift of flight with the future of aviation, and more! And be sure to mark your calendars for the annual Fly-ND Conference, which will be held March 3-5, 2024, in Grand Forks, ND!

Wishing you clear skies and unlimited visibility,
Nicolette

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Justin Weninger, Chairman
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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

As my family and I rode our bicycles up the hill from the ferry docks on Mackinac Island, MI, my daughter exclaimed her disappointment in our ride up this giant hill. Once we arrived at the Mackinac Island airport, my daughter, out of breath, told me, "Dad, if we've seen one airport, we've seen them all!" We hadn't flown into Mackinac Island but arrived by the ferry from Mackinaw City, and I wanted to see the airport.

After she calmed down and apologized for being upset about the ride up the giant hill and her comment, it really had me thinking. She was absolutely right; if you've seen one airport, you've seen them all, and how great is that?!

I do have a habit of dragging my kids to the airport of nearly every city we are in, just to check it out. I think for me, it's the familiarity that comes with it.

We know that at all of these airports, we're going to find a Fixed Base Operator (FBO) lobby with a pot of coffee on. Inside we'll find the line guys running around working the airplanes coming in, and good for a fun conversation when they're not busy.

In the back, we know we're going to find the hard-working mechanics with their heads and hands inside a cowl, or under a dashboard or wing. We know they're always up for a good conversation of the latest issue that may have them stumped as they work through it.

We know that outside, we'll find a variety of 172s, Cherokees, Bonanzas, Mooneys, Cirrus and numerous other airplanes on the ramp. Maybe we'll find some rarer airplanes as well, and some fun taildraggers or float planes hanging out. We also know with some of these airplanes we'll find their pilots, eager to share stories of the airplane and adventures they've encountered.

As we stepped into the FBO at the Mackinac Island airport, I felt this familiarity wash over me, although I had never been here before. I felt like I was right at home, able to sit down, relax and enjoy a cup of coffee while watching the going-ons outside. Isn't this an incredible aspect of our aviation community? No matter where we go, we know that we can find somewhere to feel right at home, because if you've seen one airport, you've seen them all.

Take Care, Justin





Kyle Wanner, Director
 North Dakota Aeronautics Commission
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DIRECTOR'S
 Chair



The Value of System Planning

Benjamin Franklin's timeless quote, "Those who fail to plan... are planning to fail," rings true in both our daily and professional lives. True success rarely occurs by chance; it demands a concerted effort to identify challenges, explore potential solutions, and ultimately chart a course with confidence towards our desired destination.

Within the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission, one of our key responsibilities lies in shaping the vision and strategy for our state's aviation system. Presently, we are gearing up for a significant undertaking by updating multiple statewide aviation system plans. These strategic initiatives will play a pivotal role in helping our state identify, prioritize, and justify projects and initiatives that are crucial to the enhancement and maintenance of our aviation infrastructure over the next decade.

In 2024, we intend to begin work to provide an update to the Statewide Pavement Condition Index Study, which is a task that our office coordinates routinely every three years. There currently exists approximately 60 million square feet of pavement at our airports which also represents multi-billion dollars of past investments. Our pavement management system reveals the condition of each pavement section at the public-use airports throughout the state, along with deterioration details, photos, and projected future conditions. A recommended funding plan is also provided to each airport, to ensure the pavements are maintained in the most cost beneficial way. The pavement inspections will occur on our airports in 2024 and the results are expected to be available by spring of 2025.

Also beginning in 2024, we are planning to initiate an update of both the Economic Impact of Aviation in North Dakota and the North Dakota State Aviation System Plan.

The State Aviation System Plan will evaluate the foundational principles of the previous 2014 study. It will refresh airport inventory data, redefine performance benchmarks, outline development requisites based upon our airport classifications, update system forecasts, and provide recommendations to guide our aviation system for the future.

The Economic Impact of Aviation Study will offer an updated perspective of the economic value of our airports and aviation industry. It will build upon the economic snapshot last captured in 2015 and will provide a detailed analysis of the substantial economic contributions that our airports make to our state and local communities. The 2015 study revealed that our 89 public-use airports contributed a staggering \$1.6 billion annually to our state's economy, and we anticipate that those figures will prove to have experienced substantial growth over the past decade.

The final results of both of these studies are planned to be

released in the Spring of 2026. Throughout this process, we are also committed to facilitating opportunities for the aviation community and the public to review draft materials and provide comments through an advisory committee and a project website that is planned to be established.

Overall, aviation system planning has the ability to carry profound value for a state. It provides us with data-backed information that can help us to make informed decisions on where to appropriately invest our time and our resources. This in turn, can result in safer facilities, heightened operational efficiency, and an accelerated pace of economic growth. The benefits of good planning also extends far outside of the aviation sector, as a strong and robust aviation system positively impacts many of our other industries which contribute to the overall development and economic diversification of the state.

Through our due diligence and ongoing efforts to map out a plan for success, we can confidently work together to steer North Dakota's aviation community in a positive direction.

Kyle



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NDAA Membership Benefits

All Member Types of the organization will have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the following items:

- *Fly-ND Quarterly* magazine subscription
- Network with other aviation enthusiasts and industry partners
- Help support the future of Aviation in ND
- Opportunity for committee involvement – Conference, Advocacy, Strategic Planning, etc.
- Advocacy and lobbying efforts which benefit the aviation industry
- “Regional Voice” through representation on other boards and other advocacy
- Collaborate with other member groups
- Help student members to fuel aviation for tomorrow
- Protect aviation in North Dakota
- Communicate concerns or issues to the board and organization
- Information focus on website, jobs, blogs, advertising, etc.
- Stay informed on aviation – related issues through regular communication
- Participate in NDAA events and functions



Individual Member (\$40) is for those with personal or employment interest in the aviation profession or industry and who support the purpose of NDAA.

- Member discounts from participating business partners
- Member discounts from participating North Dakota aviation museums
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Organizational Member (\$250) is for agencies and non-profit groups whose mission serves the aviation professions, industries, and supports the purpose of NDAA.

- Special Priority at the Fly-ND Annual Conference (Including hosting training opportunities, discounted booths, meeting rooms, and award recognition)
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- Organization member websites and logos are advertised on NDAA website and at the Fly-ND Conference
- Ability to submit articles for the Fly-ND Quarterly regarding organizational updates

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Fourth Annual Fly-ND Career Expo

I am excited to write about the Fourth Annual Fly-ND Career Expo, which was held in Minot, ND, on October 5, 2023. For me, it is exciting and energizing to see students not only excited about the industry but also about the career opportunities. This year, the North Dakota Aviation Association (NDAA) was able to award \$15,500



in scholarships and expose students to a variety of career fields, through presentations and exhibitors. A huge thank you to all who made this a great day for these students!

We had some exciting presentations from industry representatives from aerial application, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), meteorology, business aviation, airlines, and the military. We also had a student panel discussing post-secondary opportunities and answering questions about their experience transitioning from high school to post secondary, as well as plans for future careers. These speakers provided excellent presentations and students had great questions for them.

It would be impossible to fit a cross-section of the industry on stage to discuss their stories and we had a great group of exhibitors share their experiences with these students. With representation from both flying and non-flying careers, as well as UAS, I heard students telling their teacher, "I found what I want to do!" on multiple occasions.

It is tough to contain the excitement I have for these students in a short article and as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. I hope the included pictures will provide you with a sense of what the day was like.

I do have to make a few special thank yous before I conclude:

- Thank you to the University of North Dakota for being a sponsor for the event and providing a dozen students to help with a variety of logistical tasks throughout the day.
- Thank you to the Minot Aero Center for assistance with planning and coordination and most importantly, for keeping the students well-fed.
- Thank you to the Dakota Territory Air Museum for being a wonderful host and finding a way to work the event, even when the weather didn't cooperate.
- Thank you to all of the speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors who made the event possible. Know that you are appreciated and you really made the day possible for these students.



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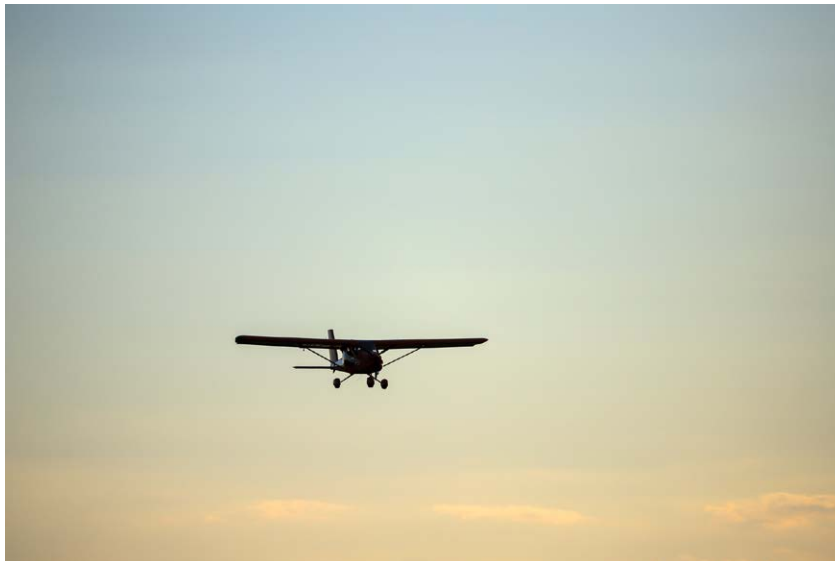
It All Began 60 Years Ago...

By Bob Simmers

Growing up on a farm where both parents were pilots and airplanes were simply a part of life, it was only natural that I would learn to fly. It was September 7, 1963, a clear and crisp autumn day. I had spent the last month or so with an instructor in a PA-18/95 flying off the farm, east of Jamestown, ND. This day was different. After taking off, the instructor instructed, "Let's go to Valley City". After the 15-minute flight and making three circuits in the traffic pattern at the Valley City Airport, I was instructed to pull off to the side of the runway and stop. Then the instructor exited the airplane and told me to make three landings. I will never forget that day! The first landing was good, the second landing was about six inches above the runway, and the third must have been a couple of feet above the runway. That was the day that I learned that any landing you can walk away from is a good landing, and any landing that you can use the aircraft again is a great landing. I guess that mine were great.

Much has changed since that day 60 years ago. But some things are still the same: such as, if you pull back on the yoke the airplane goes up, push forward and the plane goes down, if you move the control to the left, the plane turns left and if you move the control to the right the aircraft turns right. That is about all that is the same. The PA-18 that I was flying was the first airplane that my dad owned which had an electric system. All the ones before that had to be hand propped to start and had no radios. Very High Frequency Omni-Directional Range (VOR) navigation was cutting edge and there was no 90-day endorsement to continue solo privileges.

The next important stage of my pilot journey came in 1984, when I earned my Instrument Rating. The equipment in the airplane consisted of a four-in-black face attitude indicator, a horizontal card directional gyro, and an Automatic Direction Finding (ADF) and VOR indicator. Situational awareness was a real test back then. There was no Distance Measuring Equipment (DME), no GPS, and no moving maps. Flight into known ice had not been an issue with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at that time.



The day of my instrument check ride started off with the weather being 700 and 2 and finally improved to Visual Flight Rules (VFR) by mid-afternoon. Early that morning, I called my instructor and told her there was no way that I could fly to Bismarck in this weather. She instructed me to file an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight plan and she would accompany me to Bismarck, ND. That was one of the best lessons that I ever received. As we were in solid instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) and the airplane was icing up, I became more and more concerned. Her comments were, "Just fly the airplane and we will be alright." Later that day, I passed my instrument check ride.

I've seen a lot of changes in 60 years of aviation. From E-6B's to handheld calculators, plotters, sectional and

World Aeronautical Chart (WAC) charts, chart bags big enough to carry a weeks' worth of clothing, and now electronic flight bags. From black-faced instruments to colored attitude indicators, to Horizontal Situation Indicators (HSI) to Primary Flight Displays (PFD). From charts spread all over the cabin to moving

map displays, from basic engine instruments to engine monitoring systems, from no autopilots to wing levelers, then to two and three axis autopilots to flight management systems, and now to auto-land. From no transponder to transponder, then the addition of mode "C" and now Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B). From Super Homer to ADF, to VOR's to Loran to GPS. We thought that Loran was going to be the answer, but technology surpassed it. From no approaches to ground-based navigation approaches to Microwave Landing Systems (MLS), then Instrument Landing Systems (ILS), and now Localiser Performance with Vertical Guidance (LPV), it has been exciting and challenging to see technology applied and to experience the evolution caused by technology.

Aviation has gone from wood and fabric aircraft to all metal and monocoque construction, and now all composite structures with aircraft parachutes. Engines have gone from two cylinder horizontally opposed to now six cylinders

turbocharged, to turboprop and turbojet engines. We have seen aviation gasoline go from 80, 100, and 130 octane to the now popular 100LL and soon to be lead-free. And now the development of small internal combustion diesel engines is taking shape.

I have witnessed changes in the way the FAA thinks. As an examiner in the 1980's, I was told by an inspector to never let them take the human element out of the check-ride. The government even paid all of our expenses to go to Designated Pilot Examiner Benefits (DPE) school in Oklahoma City, OK. Then in the 90's, things began to change. We now were required to pay for our own current and recurrent training. Check-rides had to last a minimum of three hours. By the early 2000's, the Practical Standards (PTS) were developed and with that a list of tasks that had to be observed and completed for the applicant to pass his check-ride. Now we test from another new document, called the Airman Certification Standards (ACS). The goal is still the same, and that is standardization and safety.

And now we are seeing another evolution, that of the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA). North Dakota has been the leader in the testing of these vehicles, with the mission of integrating them into the National Airspace System (NAS). This industry is evolving at a record pace and is only limited by the imagination.

“I am excited for the next generation of aviators and what the future holds for them”

It has been a fascinating 60 years and for the most part, a great ride. I have doubted some of the changes as a threat to safety but have been convinced that safety has been enhanced by these changes. I thought that the moving map would draw us into the cabin, and we would not be looking out the window. And that it did, but with all the data that is available to us today, it is a much safer environment.

I am excited for the next generation of aviators and what the future holds for them. Like the last 60 years, the next 60 will produce more changes and new challenges. Technology continues to advance and much of the changes in technology are driven by aviation and its “the sky’s the limit” attitude. Will aviation take us beyond the sky in the next 60 years? Perhaps, we are already testing that boundary!

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Get to Know Your State Aeronautics Commissioners!

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) was established in 1947 by the State Legislature, to provide representation of the state in aviation matters and to provide responsibility for the state's aviation programs and regulatory framework. The NDAC actively promotes aviation within the state by providing financial support for airport infrastructure and aviation education grants. Furthermore, the organization maintains robust communication channels with various state and local entities, the Federal Aviation Administration, congressional offices, public-use airports, and national aviation groups. The agency's core mission is:

“To serve the public by offering economic and technical assistance to the aviation community while ensuring the safe and cost-effective advancement of aviation in North Dakota.”

The Governor appoints five members to the Aeronautics Commission, each serving five-year terms. The Commission staff is composed of the Director and a support staff of five. The office location is at the General Aviation pilot terminal on the Bismarck Municipal Airport. Each commissioner brings a wealth of unique skills, backgrounds, and personal experiences to the table within the realm of aviation. We strongly encourage you to reach out to either the NDAC staff or any of the commissioners if you have any concerns or suggestions related to aviation issues in the state of North Dakota.

In this edition of the Aviation Quarterly, we invited our current Aeronautics Commissioners to share their perspectives on the Aeronautics Commission and aviation activities in North Dakota by answering a few questions.



Kyle Humann, Chair
Location: Mandan, ND
Year Appointed: 2019

Kyle is the Chief Pilot for Missouri Valley Aviation Management, responsible for daily operations of two corporate jets, flying both domestic and international flights. He has been flying for over 30 years with experience as a flight instructor, a line pilot, and Director of Operations for a local Fixed Base Operator. Kyle has also served as the Director of Flight Operations for the State of North Dakota. He and his wife, Kimberly, are working to pass a passion for aviation and farming on to their two young boys.

What inspired you to pursue an interest in aviation and ultimately led you to become a part of the NDAC?

I have always been intrigued by aviation. I can't remember a time when I wouldn't stop what I was doing to gaze at an airplane flying overhead. That practice and fascination continues today. At 19 years old I began flying and after many years of flying halfway around the world and back, I realized it was time to try to give back to the community that has treated me so well. The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission provides opportunities to contribute in unique ways.

How have you seen the aviation community directly benefit from the activities and mission of the NDAC?

My initial commercial flying experience in Bismarck was met with some challenges, when attempting to retrieve real-time weather. This limitation restricted which airports we could utilize in the state. In alignment with the mission of the NDAC, the leadership provided technical advancements through Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS). The actions of the NDAC resulted in increased safety across the state, along with increased economic impacts with increased usage at airports across North Dakota.

Could you highlight some of the key challenges and opportunities that you see



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currently facing aviation in North Dakota?

The biggest challenges that I see in aviation in North Dakota is a shrinking job force and inflation. The reduced job force in the area is a challenge that will continue into the future, given the time required to recruit, train and gain experience for potential staff. Inflation has hit the aviation industry in multiple ways with increased operating costs, increased cost to borrow funds, and increased infrastructure costs. Infrastructure requires regular upgrades; with increased inflation competition for funding airport projects is also increased, presenting some difficult challenges. North Dakota aviation has some opportunities in its future as well. The agriculture and oil industries are both thriving in North Dakota; these industries continue to bring opportunities across our state.

Do you have any advice for those who may be considering a career in aviation?

Now is a great time to start a career in aviation or to restart an aviation career; the industry is full of opportunities. Work hard, remain curious, and be patient; in the aviation industry, the sky's the limit.



Dr. Kim Kenville, Vice Chair
Location: Grand Forks, ND
Year Appointed: 2011

Kim began teaching for the University of North Dakota's John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences in the fall of 1999, where she currently teaches airport management. Since 2008, Kim has been the director of the graduate program for the Department of Aviation and holds the rank of full professor. Dr. Kenville received her Ph.D. in 2005 from Capella University, in Organization and Management. Prior to returning to UND, Kim worked in airport operations for Detroit Metropolitan and Milwaukee County airports. She is a Certified Member (C.M.) of the American Association of Airport Executives and holds a private pilot's license.

What inspired you to pursue an interest in aviation and ultimately led you to become a part of the NDAC?

I have been flying with my dad since age four, when he was in his first club plane and he eventually went on to own several different aircraft. I went to every air show I could with him, as part of the Air National Guard in Fargo (Happy Hooligans). I began flying at UND and really just wanted to work with people and solve problems, which lead me to major in Airport Management. After working at MSP, DTW and MKE, I moved back to Grand Forks, began teaching

airport management, and I met Gary Ness- the rest is history!

How have you seen the aviation community directly benefit from the activities and mission of the NDAC?

Drive or fly to any airport in the state and you can see a direct and undeniable benefit in terms of infrastructure, professional networks, and educational activities at every airport, large or small. It is great to see the funds in local control and building for the future.

Could you highlight some of the key challenges and opportunities that you see currently facing aviation in North Dakota?

Accessibility and willingness! Gone are the days of kids riding their bikes to the airport to hangout for the day, so we need to roll up our collective sleeves and figure out a new engagement process for young people to see value, benefit, and careers in aviation, so we do not become extinct!

Do you have any advice for those who may be considering a career in aviation?

Be bold! Make as many connections as you can, stay in touch, ask questions, find a mentor, and keep moving forward. There will be obstacles, so remain agile but keep striving to meet your goals. Our industry is always changing, so staying engaged with groups, associations, and clubs is essential to industry and personal growth.



Warren Pietsch
Location: Minot, ND
Year Appointed: 2012

Warren is president of Pietsch Aircraft Restoration & Repair at the Minot International Airport. Warren soloed at the age of 16 and has continued in aviation. He began chartering for the family business, ventured into airshows in 1981, and worked for ATA Airlines 1989-2008 serving as a captain for L-1011, B-727, B-737. Warren is a current and founding



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board member of the Dakota Territory Air Museum and the Chief pilot for the Texas Flying Legends Museum, Houston TX. Holding a single & multi-engine ATP, Seaplane rating, Commercial glider CFI & CFIs and is an Aerobatic Evaluator for ICAS.

What inspired you to pursue an interest in aviation and ultimately led you to become a part of the NDAC?

I grew up in an aviation family and I liked it so much that I decided to pursue it as a career and a hobby. After many decades of receiving from aviation, I felt that it was time that I would give something back. Hence, I applied to be a North Dakota Aeronautics Commissioner.

How have you seen the aviation community directly benefit from the activities and mission of the NDAC?

The aviation community in North Dakota and nationwide has benefited immensely because of the NDAC. The Commission has improved and maintained airports, supplied windsocks, financed weather stations, initiated the passport program, and associated awards which encourage pilots to fly to different places, which in turn improves their skills. The NDAC also monitors and comments on legislation, both state and federal, that impact aviation.

Could you highlight some of the key challenges and opportunities that you see currently facing aviation in North Dakota?

Ensuring adequate levels of infrastructure funding and working to grow aviation activity levels are key challenges we are currently facing.

Do you have any advice for those who may be considering a career in aviation?

If you want an aviation lifestyle - make aviation your life! Work to spend as much time as possible at the airport.



Steve Blazek
Location: Fargo, ND
Year Appointed: 2022

Steve grew up in Fargo and earned both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Business Administration from North Dakota State University. He is a past or current member of a number of community organizations including the Municipal Airport Authority for the City of Fargo, Fargo Planning Commission, Fargo Air Museum, Fargo AirSho, Fargo Post 2 Baseball Club, FM Kicks Band, El Zagal Shrine, North

Dakota American Legion State Band, Lake Agassiz Concert Band, FMWF Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs, and the North Dakota Governor's Task Force MIND. Outside of work, Steve is interested in "all things" aviation. He is a private pilot and enjoys music, sports, community engagement and development.

What inspired you to pursue an interest in aviation and ultimately led you to become a part of the NDAC?

I can't really pinpoint when or what sparked my love for aviation, but I am certain my father, having been an aircraft mechanic in the U.S. Air Force and later for Pan American Airlines, had something to do with it. While my young friends were putting together plastic models of Camaros and Corvettes, I was gluing together F4-U's, P-51's and P-38's. Growing up, my favorite television show was "Baa Baa Black Sheep" with Robert Conrad playing the role of the legendary Greg "Pappy" Boyington. Being a private pilot and having served on a municipal airport authority for many years motivated me to learn more about the NDAC; I quickly learned that I wanted to give back to North Dakota aviation by serving on the Commission.

How have you seen the aviation community directly benefit from the activities and mission of the NDAC?

The Aeronautics Commission, with its wonderful and talented staff, continues to have positive and lasting impacts on aviation in North Dakota. The technical assistance and grant process/coordinating multiple sources of funding is the most readily identifiable, but it goes much deeper. The willingness and ability to help rural airports in the time of need to help rectify unforeseen circumstances, the education of young people by introducing them to various aspects of the aviation industry through various education and flight training assistance grants and programs, the "can-do" attitude to help advance new aviation technologies such as the Northern Plains Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site, and the ownership of the airports at the Garrison Dam Recreational Airpark and the International Peace Garden Airfield are just a few of many that come to mind.

Could you highlight some of the key challenges and opportunities that you see currently facing aviation in North Dakota?

The cost of maintaining the infrastructure of runways, taxiways, etc. has skyrocketed. Funding needs are greater than funding availability. New requirements from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) placed on commercial service airports are

increasing and there is no direct funding available to offset the costs of these requirements. The proposed phase out of 100LL gasoline will have a material impact on General Aviation in North Dakota. North Dakota is the leader in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) with Grand Sky and Vantis providing flight beyond visual line of sight. Our military is using cutting edge technology with the MQ9 flying by the Happy Hooligans in Fargo, the bomber wings and missile rehabilitation in Minot, and the new hypersonic mission in Grand Forks. North Dakota is a leader and an incubator for new aviation technologies.

Do you have any advice for those who may be considering a career in aviation?

Don't wait!! Everything you need to get started is right here in North Dakota. I encourage you to check out the North Dakota Army and Air National Guard, as they provide excellent career training, financial assistance for college education, and are the best at what they do. The demand for all areas of aviation is very strong and the future looks very bright in North Dakota. Kick the tires and light the fires! Do it now!



Rodney Schaaf
Location: Bowman, ND
Year Appointed: 2023

Rodney has been an active member of the North Dakota aviation community throughout his life. He became a pilot in the U.S. Air Force in the early 1970s, where his first assignment sent him to the Grand Forks Air Base as a KC-135 flight crew member. Following his honorable discharge in 1978, Rodney was hired as a pilot for Delta Airlines and had a successful career through his retirement in 2004. In 2007, Rodney was appointed to serve on the Bowman County Airport Authority, and he has acted as the chairman of the board for over a decade. In this role, he was instrumental in the planning, design, and construction of the new Bowman Regional Airport, which was opened to the public in 2015. Rodney was also inducted into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame in 2023.

What inspired you to pursue an interest in aviation and ultimately led you to become a part of the NDAC?

As a kid growing up on the farm, watching two neighbor farmers crop dusting and starting Weather Modification operations, created my interest in aviation. I thought to myself, "someday, I want to fly!" The stars aligned at North Dakota State University! The U.S. Air Force's Pilot introduction program started my journey. They helped pay

for my education, in exchange for six years of active duty service (having a low draft lottery number also helped me make up my mind.) After active duty, the Airline Deregulation Act was passed. So, like today's environment, everyone was hiring pilots for the great expansion. Right time, right place! I was always involved with small plane ownership, maintenance, and local airport activities.

How have you seen the aviation community directly benefit from the activities and mission of the NDAC?

The aviation community directly benefits from the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission's mission, especially through education and cost sharing programs.

Could you highlight some of the key challenges and opportunities that you see currently facing aviation in North Dakota?

I think the main challenges for our state aviation are inspiring the younger generations in aviation and ensuring the survival of the little guys, the small General Aviation airports. The sky's the limit for those seeking aviation opportunities. There are many other fields other than pilot, maintenance, drones, etc. to look to be involved within the industry.

Do you have any advice for those who may be considering a career in aviation?

My advice for someone looking for an aviation career, is to stay informed and when involved in an aviation program-keep the throttle forward! Keep a "can-do attitude" and get advice from those who have gone before you. Hard work does pay off!



The Gift of Flight

By Kris Magstadt



On May 10, 2022, my husband, Kevin, and I had the privilege of adopting two of our beautiful grandchildren, Kaiden and Michaela. It was a magical day.

As our one-year anniversary of the adoption approached, we tried to decide how we would celebrate. Michaela requested a photo at the courthouse and dinner at Olive Garden, just as we had done on adoption day. Neither had ever been in an airplane. Growing up with aviation and my father as a Cessna dealer and Fixed Base Operator (FBO) owner, there was no way I was going to have their first flight in anything but a small plane, and, hopefully, a Cessna.

I quickly contacted Jon Simmers, a good friend at Bismarck Aero Center (BAC) and proposed the idea. We sat down and planned, and oh what a plan! Red carpet, flight wing pins, cupcakes, and the whole nine yards. He immediately knew which pilot, and was as excited as me. We decided to keep it a surprise for the children.

Well, May 10 finally arrived. First we took pictures at the courthouse, and then were off to a school track meet. We quickly went home to prepare for dinner, or so the children thought! As we were driving, I asked Kevin to quickly stop at the airport to drop something off for Jon. There was no suspicion, since they were aware of my years as the Quarterly editor and my frequent conversations with them about aviation, my dad, and my aviation friends; I told them I wanted them to meet my friend, Jon. They pleaded that I not talk for long, as they so often state that adults talk too much.

SURPRISE! We got inside the FBO and there stood Clint, the lead Certified Flight Instructor at BAC! What a smile he had on his face. We walked around the corner and there were balloons, cupcakes (with TONS of frosting) and sweet tea, all arranged by Linda. What was going on? They were asked if they'd ever flown. "No," they said. Then Clint asked them if they'd like to fly. Yes

could not come out of their mouths, as they were wide-eyed and jumping for joy!

Before we went up into the beautiful blue sky, the entire staff of BAC came for refreshments and spent time telling them what role they played in the organization and about their first flight. The children learned so much. What a special treat to hear what goes on behind the scenes to insure safe flight.



Then it was time for pre-flight! I have never, in all my years around aviation, seen anyone explain, include, and excite someone about the intricacies of what makes a plane fly as Clint. He was so easy to understand and included them in every aspect. To this day they talk about flaps, rudders, lift, and drag. Next, it was time for take off! Each took a turn in the pilot seat. Their faces beamed with delight and awe. They were actually flying! Clint let them take the controls (safely), explaining everything in words that made sense to a 10- and 11-year old. He did it all with his brilliant smile and positive, happy attitude. He was just as much a kid as they were! It was obvious that flying is his passion.

They flew over our home and their school, and both kids were shocked at how small everything looked. Michaela had nice easy turns, while Kaiden was a little more daring and his turns were a bit steeper. But, best of all, they were flying.





So many of us take that gift of flight for granted. I know I did, growing up at an airport. I always thought the train or car would be more fun. I now know much better! We forget that rush of adrenaline when you first take-off and float through the sky and clouds, slowly drifting back to the ground.

Unfortunately, the flight had to end. We were met by Jon, rolling out the blue carpet and helping us out of the plane. The kids made a jump for joy photo with Clint. He took them into the FBO and straight to his office. They were confused, as they thought they were done. No, Clint promptly pinned on flight wings and sat them down. Suddenly, he was writing in a little black book. He presented each

of them with their own logbook with their first lesson time already logged! What a wonderful end to a day our entire family will remember and cherish.

Without Jon, Clint, Linda, and the staff at BAC, this special day wouldn't have happened. I believe they all shared our excitement, and we will be eternally grateful for their kindness and commitment to sharing the gift of flight with the youth in our community.

I can't tell you if Kaiden and Michaela will be lifelong pilots, although my hope is that they will. I can tell you, however, it was another magical day in our lives.

“I can tell you, however, it was another magical day in our lives.”



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Keeping Your Airport's AWOS in Prime Condition

Pilots depend on accurate and reliable sources of weather information to ensure their flights are safe and efficient. The most common source of this information in North Dakota are 26 Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) stations, scattered at airports across the state. These automated weather stations supply a wealth of data, including visibility, wind speed and direction, temperature, altimeter settings, density altitude, ceilings, and some can also report precipitation types and lightning. It is the responsibility of each airport sponsor to ensure that their AWOS station is well maintained and fully operational. This article will discuss some common AWOS maintenance issues.

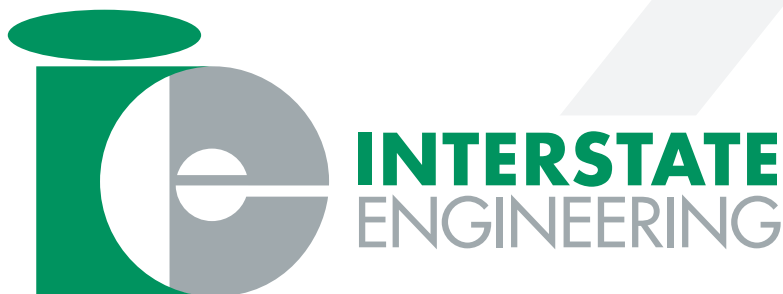
Vegetation: Plants that are allowed to grow near AWOS stations are a chronic safety and mechanical concern. Trees interfere with wind measurements. Weeds can grow to block sensors and jam components. Pollen can obscure sensor windows. The moisture released by nearby plants during photosynthesis can skew humidity data. The result is that your AWOS suffers reduced reliability and some components may fail outright. Worse, dry vegetation can create a fire hazard capable of badly damaging or even destroying your station. Dense weeds can also be a risk to technicians and airport personnel as

it can conceal snakes, ticks, wasp nests, open burrows, and other dangers. To prevent

interference with sensors, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards require all vegetation within a 100 foot radius of the AWOS to be cut shorter than 10 inches, and any trees or other obstructions within 500 feet of the station must be kept at least 15 feet shorter than the height of the wind sensor. Many airports protect their AWOS from encroaching plants by laying gravel or crushed stone around the installation and regularly applying herbicide. And with winter weather right around the corner, please remember that snow accumulations and drifts can have similarly detrimental impacts on AWOS stations and should be cleared as much as able.

Fencing: AWOS units are very expensive and easily damaged. To help protect yours from vandalism, accidental damage from mowing or farming activities, or even the odd cow searching for a convenient scratching post, it is recommended that a fence be installed around the station.

Information Availability: AWOS data is typically provided to pilots and the public by automated radio broadcasts, a dial-in phone line, and numerous websites online. Airports should frequently check these systems to ensure pilots can easily and



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readily access them: tune in to the AWOS frequency at different ranges to check for strength and quality of the radio signal, call the phone line, and check recent data on websites like the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Aviation Weather Center. If any of these data sources have errors or have failed, they should be troubleshooted and restored as soon as possible.

AWOS Computer: The computer is the brains of the AWOS and is usually installed in an airport building to protect it from the elements. Make sure that the computer is not exposed to severe heat or cold or excessive dust to prevent failure of its hardware. Pests are also a problem frequently identified by inspectors, with mice found nesting in computers and bird droppings fouling components.

Ground Access: Stations are often installed in remote parts of the airfield or sometimes in nearby farm fields making it difficult for technicians or airport staff to reach them. The installation of even a simple raised-bed dirt roadway can be highly beneficial, especially during snowy winter months.

North Reference Marker: Each AWOS should have an official marker installed nearby that technicians use to align wind and thunderstorm sensors. Common marker types are brass plates installed on concrete plugs sunk in the ground and are usually



An AWOS unit overrun by weeds (FAA photo)



A well maintained AWOS enclosure (NDAC photo)

placed 100-150 feet true north of the station, though some have been found north of the unit, along the edge of runways. It is not unusual for markers to have been plowed up or buried over the years. If an airport cannot locate its AWOS marker, a new one should be officially surveyed and installed.

Inspections & Maintenance Costs: Each AWOS is required to be inspected annually, to ensure it is properly calibrated and complies with hardware tolerances, and routine preventative maintenance is conducted three times per year. The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) provides AWOS support to our airports, through a program in which we cover 100% of the costs of annual inspections, triannual maintenance, and National Airspace Data Interchange Network (NADIN) connections, or reimbursement for those services should an airport prefer to contract out the work themselves. Airports

are responsible for any unscheduled maintenance or hardware replacement costs, but those expenses are frequently eligible for partial reimbursement through the NDAC's airport grant program.

For further information on the NDAC's AWOS maintenance or grant programs, please visit our website at www.aero.nd.gov/airports/. Details on FAA AWOS standards and programs can be found at https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/non_federal.



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RECORD NUMBER ATTEND 17TH ANNUAL UAS SUMMIT AND EXPO

Summit’s speakers call partnerships between military, academia, private sector vital to creating robust UAS ecosystem

Industry professionals, military leaders and academics gathered for the 17th annual UAS Summit and Expo in October 2023, for an in-depth look at the wide range of applications supported by the sector. With 760 registered guests attending from 36 states and five countries, the event was the largest in its history, according to organizers.

In his remarks last Wednesday, UND President Andrew Armacost praised the innovative spirit of the industry’s leaders, expressing amazement at the technological advances on display with each passing summit. “People outside the industry might believe that making autonomous or AI-based systems just happens,” he said. “Yet here we are now, years into the development of operating beyond visual line of sight systems, and every year we make additional progress. It doesn’t happen with the snap of a finger.”

Armacost also impressed upon attendees the importance of addressing the myriad ethical questions surrounding artificial intelligence, referencing ChatGPT co-creator Greg Brockman’s recent visit to campus. “We do need to position ourselves to responsibly and ethically adapt to AI, autonomous systems and technologies that are being developed and offered,” he said. “And what better way to do this than to bring to campus a mainstay in this field. He (Brockman) mentioned to me that when it comes to creating something new, that education can yield a spark of creativity. As educators, we need to foster that creativity – what I’ve often called that sense of wonder that just reaches out and grabs you.”

Armacost said creating partnerships is vital for continued innovation in the field. He cited the Mountains and Plains Innovation Alliance – a memorandum of understanding between UND, North Dakota State University and other institutions in South Dakota, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming – as a potential to become “the engine that catalyzes autonomous systems development, and the fielding of such systems across a wide range of uses.”

Armacost also announced that UND recently received a \$1 million engines grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) from its participation in the alliance – one of the first such grants offered by the NSF. Additionally, the university has partnered with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to assist in further commercializing the state’s UAS sector. “UND is leading as a team across the five-state alliance, proposals related to AI and astronomical science,” he said. “Work with the NSF and EDA will push us to even greater heights with innovation and commercialization that impacts the state, region and entire nation.” Deans of three of UND’s academic colleges, along with Mark Askelson, associate vice president for research – national security, appeared onstage Wednesday for a panel discussion about UAS’ connection to national security.

In its most recent biennial budget, the North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$9 million to UND for continued development of the University’s Science, Engineering and National Security Corridor. Brian Tande, dean of the College of Engineering & Mines, said the college plans to hire at least three new faculty members in the coming year – two focused on satellite design and another on hypersonics. “We have a lot of capabilities and we’re continuing to grow



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them, because there's a lot of need and opportunity for those," he said.

Robert Kraus, dean of the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, said UND has been at the forefront of UAS' growth across the state and region, typified by the university being the first in the nation to offer a Bachelor of Science in Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations. Kraus added that a strength of the degree is a requirement that all graduates receive a single engine commercial pilot's rating.

Askelson – who was appointed to his role in July 2022 – said UND is committed to educating the next generation of UAS professionals, many of whom remain in Grand Forks upon graduating to work in the field. "I feel like we live in an almost unprecedented time from a demand

standpoint for this type of talent," he said. "We're working as hard as we can to help provide that talent." Askelson also said it is critical for the U.S. and its allies to maintain a competitive advantage in the domain of space and autonomous systems. "From a fundamental standpoint, there are some folks out there who aren't always our friends," he said. "A key piece to ensure that really bad things don't happen is technological advantage. We know that space and hypersonics are a race. At the end of the day, we have to be smart enough to recognize where our adversaries are trying to go, what are they trying

to exploit and how to ensure we don't fall behind in key technological areas."

Kraus said that artificial intelligence and autonomous systems are being deployed on battlefields across the



UND President Andrew Armacost addresses attendees at the 17th annual UAS Summit and Expo on Wednesday, Oct. 11. Joe Banish/UND Today.



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U.S. Sen. John Hoeven (left) and Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, chief of space operations for the U.S. Space Force, discuss North Dakota's UAS ecosystem. Joe Banish/UND Today.

globe, which shifts human effort to areas where it is most efficient. “One of the fears that everybody has is the Terminator situation, where you have AI running a weapons system,” he said. “I think people today don’t understand how automated many of our weapons systems already are. As we think about the Iron Dome in Israel, there is a human consent that says, ‘you are able to fire defensive missiles at rockets coming at you, because humans cannot react fast enough.’ We have systems on our naval ships that shoot faster than a human possibly could. Where AI is useful is doing the things that are routine, or the things that humans are not the greatest at.”

U.S. Sen. John Hoeven received the summit’s inaugural Sky Pioneer Award, given to an individual who has made “groundbreaking contributions to the UAS industry.” His legislation was instrumental in directing the Federal Aviation Administration to establish six UAS test sites, the first being the Northern Plains UAS Test Site. “This is a partnership like none other,” Hoeven said. “When our partners benefit, we grow and do great things. That’s our mantra, and that’s what we’ll continue to do.”

Col. Timothy Monroe, commander of the 319th Reconnaissance Wing at Grand Forks Air Force Base, said the base’s mission – which aids allies in both Europe and the Pacific — is bolstered by unwavering support from local leaders. “We think, we lead, and we act beyond the confines of our installation, because our mission is global,” he said. “Not a week goes by that our community leaders don’t directly ask me ‘what can we do to help? How can we partner more effectively with one another?’”

U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer echoed Monroe’s sentiments. “North Dakota has strung together what I believe is one of the most diverse and important critical defense ecosystems in the nation,” he said. “We have a patriotic population,

innovative educational institutions like right here at the University of North Dakota and forward thinking local, state and national leaders.” Two members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff appeared onstage as guests of Hoeven and Cramer. Gens. David Allvin and B. Chance Saltzman, acting chief of staff of the Air Force and chief of space operations for the U.S. Space Force, respectively, stressed the need for continued innovation and cooperation between their branches in the face of emerging threats.

“Our space capabilities are so critical to what we are doing for the joint team, that now our strategic competitors are investing heavily to operationalize weapons that will deny, degrade and even destroy

our space capabilities,” Saltzman said. “This is the same fight we’re having, we’re just shifting between domains and platforms. It’s vital that we work together to share best practices, share lessons learned and get this right.”

Allvin, who expressed fond memories of his past service at Grand Forks Air Force Base, said autonomous systems augment the human-centric decision making required by airmen.

“I would submit that one of the things that has made us airmen as much as the airplane, is the spirit of innovation,” he said. “If it helps the human make decisions better, be more effective and keep the adversary on their back foot, I think that is a fundamental core principle we should consider as we’re designing into rather than bolting on UAS technology. This is not the time to shy away — now is the time to lean into it heavily. I think if all we do that together as society — we’ll have a force the nation can be proud of.”

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Gen. David Allvin, acting chief of staff of the Air Force (left), and U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer discuss emerging threats to national security. Joe Banish/UND Today.

Props & Hops Recap



On October 5, 2023, over 250 local folks gathered at the Mandan Aero Center to enjoy an evening of planes, beer, and music at the seventh annual Props & Hops event. Guests enjoyed a smoked rib dinner by Chef Roby Boehm and music by Shawn Oban, as well as shiny airplanes on display and a fantastic silent auction.

This year, the \$15,000 in proceeds will go to support two upcoming scholarships in our local aviation community. These will be an Advanced Pilot Scholarship and Advanced Aviation Maintenance Technician Scholarship, in honor of North Dakota aviators Mark Sundby and Darrell Pittman, who both recently passed away. These funds will be dedicated to helping aspiring pilots and maintenance

technicians to earn their licenses and start their careers in our local industry. The Props & Hops team is extremely grateful to our sponsors, volunteers, and everyone who came out to support this important cause! We're already looking forward to next year. For those looking to apply, please go to bismarckaero.com/community.aspx and select download in the Props & Hops section.



Props & Hops is a state and federally registered 501c3 nonprofit organization that was founded in 2017. The organization's mission is to bring positive attention to the aviation community by showcasing the benefits that the airport brings to local communities and raise funds for aviation related causes that are tied to Bismarck/Mandan and surrounding area. The organization designates a selection committee made up of five local aviators to determine an annual beneficiary within the surrounding aviation community. Props & Hops has been able to donate over \$100,000 to selected causes over the years.

Jimmy Stewart's Mustang Is The Best Of Old And New

By Frederick Johnsen



The rich blue finish on Warren Pietsch's racing Mustang Number 90 harkens back to the Bendix Trophy race of 1949. The newly rebuilt P-51 flew during EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2023. (Photo by Frederick A. Johnsen)

Take a beloved actor from the Golden Age of Hollywood, add a favorite fighter covered in accolades from World War II and converted to an air racer, and the result is a story that sounds like it should become a Technicolor blockbuster coming to a theater near you. Only this story is flying to an air show near you — if you're lucky.

The P-51C Mustang called "Thunderbird" emerged at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2023 in paint so fresh some said they could still smell it drying. Thunderbird, Race Number 90, was entered in the Bendix trophy race after World War II by owner Jimmy Stewart, with Joe De Bona flying to victory in 1949 at a record-setting 470 miles per hour.

The Bendix race was a cross-country event envisioned in the 1930s to stimulate the design of better, faster, safer aircraft. For the 1949 race, aircraft launched from



The gloss cobalt blue sheen of Thunderbird was carefully reproduced in North Dakota. A slight exhaust ghost spreads back over the names on the side of the fuselage. The names identify the owner as Jimmy Stewart, and not the more formal James Stewart of some movie credits. (Photo by Frederick A. Johnsen)

The slicked-up Mustang had one more moment in the sun in June 1953, following the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. American television networks needed film coverage quickly, so the reels were flown across the Atlantic to Newfoundland where De Bona, flying N5528N, raced the footage into the U.S. as did one of Paul Mantz's Mustangs.

From being a racer with Hollywood cachet, Thunderbird was sold by De Bona to Texas flier James Cook in March 1955. Cook was engaged in hail suppression flights over Nebraska, using the by-now repainted Mustang to chemically seed clouds with silver iodide.

On June 22 of that year, Cook was aboard the Mustang with a dilemma — one main gear had retracted, the other remained extended. With a heavy load of fuel, including the fuselage tank behind him, Cook elected to bail out of the Mustang when all efforts failed to get the stuck gear to extend. The P-51 came to earth northeast of Morrill, in western Nebraska, and was described as "smashed beyond recognition" in a contemporary news account.



A cardboard cutout of Jimmy Stewart recreates an historic photo with the newly restored P-51-C "Thunderbird," the 1949 Bendix Trophy winner. (Photo by William E. Dubois)

Rosamond Lake, a dry lakebed near Muroc Air Force Base in California's Mojave Desert, and ended in Cleveland, Ohio.

Jimmy Stewart's association with aviation included a tour of dangerous B-24 Liberator bombing missions as a pilot in World War II, followed by the post-war bloom of his movie career in everything from westerns, to Hitchcock suspense, to flying films like Strategic Air Command, The Spirit of St. Louis, and Flight of the Phoenix.

Carrying civil registration number N5528N, Thunderbird ownership passed back and forth between Jimmy Stewart, Jacqueline Cochran, and Joe De Bona over a period of several years. Cochran set some records with Thunderbird in 1949.



It's an antique; it's a warbird. Which is it? Thunderbird spent some time on the grass in the Vintage area at AirVenture 2023, and some time in the Warbird part of the campus. (Photo by Frederick A. Johnsen)

That might have been it for Jimmy Stewart's P-51. But famed North Dakota warbird pilot Warren Pietsch followed a lead on some Mustang parts that turned out to be salvage from that aircraft. With sufficient identification to claim it as Stewart's airplane for FAA purposes, Pietsch enlisted the warbird restoration team at Aircorps Aviation in Bemidji, Minnesota, to make Thunderbird come back to life in all its Bendix air racing glory.



Warbird and air show pilot Warren Pietsch is the driving force behind the rebirth of Mustang Race Number 90, shown at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2023. (Photo by Frederick A. Johnsen)

There is a vital and magic alchemy in modern aircraft restorations that replaces missing and worn-out old materials with new. The former curator of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Jack Hilliard, was fond of characterizing restorations by saying "We have the original ax George Washington used to chop down the cherry tree, only the handle's been replaced and the head is a replica." With custom shops manufacturing nearly all P-51 Mustang assemblies from scratch, the reborn Thunderbird uses a new-built fuselage from the North Dakota business of the late Gerry Beck, mated to a wing also built in North Dakota by Bob Odegaard's company.

Warren Pietsch allows that a fair amount of original P-51 parts are in this rebuild, but not much from the actual Thunderbird wreckage. And true to N5528N's original setup as an air racer, the reborn Thunderbird shuns a lot of military equipment. This airplane's very light, says Pietsch, who also flies the Dakota Territory Air Museum's combat-authentic P-51C in full-up wartime gear. "Thunderbird is 10% lighter, and it shows in its handling characteristics," he says. Pietsch credits Roy Kieffer's Custom Aircraft Refinishing in Casselton, North Dakota, with the glass-smooth finish on Thunderbird.

The evolution of the warbird reconstruction and restoration movement includes acknowledgment of warbirds whose chief claim to fame is in the civil aviation arena, like the gloriously beautiful post-war Thunderbird. If judging the masterful reincarnation of Thunderbird at AirVenture was difficult to categorize, the airplane was acknowledged with a "Keep 'em Flying Award" in the Warbird category.

It's a wonderful life for this Mustang, now ensconced in the Dakota Territory Air Museum in Minot, North Dakota.

About Frederick Johnsen

Fred Johnsen is a product of the historical aviation scene in the Pacific Northwest. The author of numerous historical aviation books and articles, Fred was an Air Force historian and curator. Now he devotes his energies to coverage for GAN as well as the Airailimages YouTube Channel. You can reach him at Fred@GeneralAviationNews.com.

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After its debut at AirVenture, Thunderbird will be seen at the Dakota Territory Air Museum.



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FAA Grants Approval Allowing BVLOS Drone Flights in North Dakota

uAvionix Utilizes North Dakota Vantis System to Satisfy FAA Safety Requirements for Advanced UAS Operations

GRAND FORKS, North Dakota – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued an approval to uAvionix, an avionics company specializing in drones, that enables them to conduct beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone flights using Vantis, North Dakota’s first-of-its-kind UAS system.

uAvionix, with support from the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, demonstrated to the FAA that it established adequate risk mitigations to satisfy required safety standards for the specified BVLOS operation within the national airspace system (NAS). This is a precedent-setting approval as the FAA determined that the Vantis system meets the applicable requirements of industry consensus standards, or an alternative set of requirements that ensure safe integration of routine BVLOS unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) operations in the NAS.

“Today’s precedent-setting exemption approval marks a monumental milestone for Vantis, solidifying North Dakota’s unwavering leadership in aviation and UAS innovation,” said Trevor Woods, Executive Director of the Northern Plains UAS Test Site. “It’s not just a step forward; it’s a significant advance in the evolution of UAS policy, redefining what’s possible in the skies of tomorrow.”

This approval provides for repeatability – an exemption, which is technically rulemaking, that can be referenced for future approvals in a much faster manner. More importantly it goes beyond the original applicant, working for the whole industry. With this exemption approval, the process is smoother for demonstrably safe BVLOS operations, especially in North Dakota, where the infrastructure can be leveraged for repeatable operations. The same, or similar infrastructure can be used in other geographies.

North Dakota leads the way in bringing UAS to commercial sectors safely and economically with Vantis. This success adds to the foundation that Vantis has set for the next phase of operation as the state continues to lead the way for autonomy and automation.

The Northern Plains UAS Test Site, administering Vantis for the state of North Dakota, partnered with Thales USA to develop and implement the UAS system. It allows pilots to command and control BVLOS UAS and remain well clear of other aircraft. Vantis consists of ground-based aviation infrastructure, like that used in traditional aviation, which significantly lowers the barrier of entry to BVLOS flights for multiple users.

“We thank the Federal Aviation Administration for acknowledging that our approach to BVLOS in North Dakota maintains the same safety standards that the agency expects for all users within the national airspace,” said Frank Matus, Director of ATC and Digital Aviation Solutions for the Americas at Thales USA, the state’s infrastructure partner for Vantis. “We continue to collaborate with FAA as regulations evolve to ensure that Vantis meets the needs of all stakeholders.”

About uAvionix

uAvionix was founded with the mission of bringing safety solutions to the unmanned aviation industry in order to aid in the integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into National Airspace Systems (NAS). uAvionix offers low SWaP TSO certified and uncertified avionics for General Aviation (GA), Airport Surface Vehicles and the UAS markets. The team consists of an unparalleled engineering and management team with a unique combination of experience within avionics, surveillance, airport services, UAS aircraft development, radio frequency (RF), and semiconductor industries.

About Northern Plains UAS Test Site

The Northern Plains UAS Test Site is one of seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) unmanned aircraft system (UAS) test sites in the nation. The mission of the NPUASTS is to collaborate with FAA and industry partners to develop systems, rules, and procedures to safely integrate unmanned aircraft into the National Airspace System without negatively impacting existing general or commercial aviation. NPUASTS is administering Vantis. Visit NPUASTS.com for more information.

About Vantis

Vantis is North Dakota's statewide unmanned aircraft system (UAS) beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) network, the first of its kind in the nation. Created by North Dakota with an initial investment in 2019, Vantis provides turnkey support to commercial and public UAS operators through infrastructure and regulatory approvals allowing

applications and usability over a variety of industries. Visit VantisUAS.com for more information.

About Thales USA

A global technology leader, Thales platforms provide air traffic control (ATC) services across 40% of the globe's airspace, making Thales the #1 air traffic management (ATM) provider in the world. The company provides solutions, services and products that help its customers – businesses, organizations and states – integrate the right mix of existing and new technologies to anticipate and address the demands of our evolving airspace system. In Vantis and North Dakota, Thales delivers an aviation-grade UAS integration capability designed specifically to complement manned aviation infrastructure while enhancing safety, integrity, interoperability within the airspace system.



The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued an approval to uAvionix, an avionics company specializing in drones, that enables them to conduct beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone flights using Vantis, North Dakota's first-of-its-kind UAS system.

My Oshkosh Experience Over the Years

My name is Gary Johnson. I have been a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) since 1966. That's 57 years! The EAA Airventure event is held every year in Oshkosh, WI. I went many times to Oshkosh in the early years; however, work and family slowed down my trips the past 10 years. Whether you drive or fly there, are aviation or non-aviation, it is well worth the trip. A tip: be sure to make reservations of where to stay well in advance. The surrounding area has a ton of fun opportunities too!

There are many things to see and do: seminars (most of which are free) on welding, fabric, electrical, etc. Hundreds of aircraft to explore: vintage, classic, modern day, homebuilts of all kinds. The best warbird aircraft displays and shows you will ever find. Every afternoon, the airshow runs for approximately three to four hours, featuring some of the best performers anywhere. There are hundreds of exhibitors and many other educational events. The attendance for 2023 was 677,000. There were 10,000+ aircraft, 5,500 volunteers, 1,400 forums and workshops, and 848 exhibitors. It truly is an epic event!

677,000
ATTENDED

10,000+
AIRCRAFT

5,500
VOLUNTEERS

848
EXHIBITORS

1,400
WORKSHOPS

There is also a seaplane base nearby that offers seminars during the week. That's another great opportunity to see, learn, and experience new things.

When I talk to people and they tell me they have never attended AirVenture, I insist they need to go. Whether you are into aviation or not, it is a very family friendly event that everyone should attend at least once. It is such a great experience!

The most memorable thing for me, from my many times at Oshkosh: looking at antique and vintage aircraft, and visiting with their owners, who in turn have become friends over the years.



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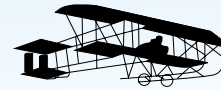
“I chose UND because of the world-class programming that blends my passion of flying with leadership, service to others, and excellence.”

ZOE BUNDY

Commercial Aviation | Fargo, ND

Leland Brand Aviation Hall of Fame Video Released

North Dakota Aviation

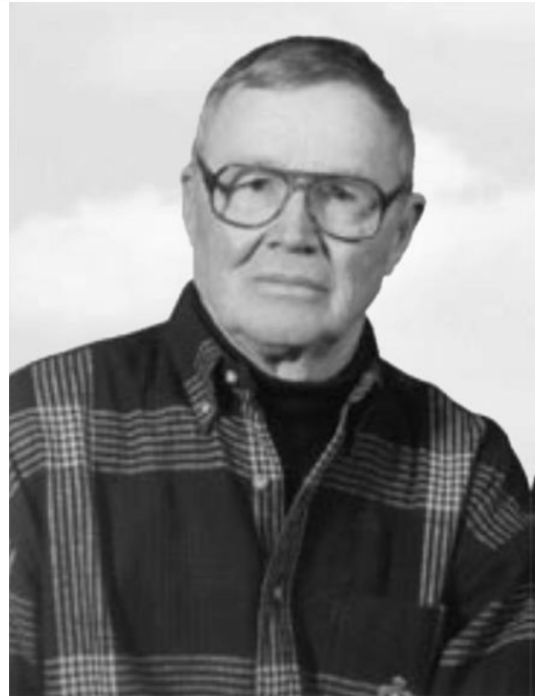


HALL OF FAME

A new North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame video is now available, featuring Hall of Fame recipient Leland Brand. Born in 1921 and inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1997, Leland is still sharing his stories and passion for aviation at the age of 102. We are excited to provide a historical video to preserve the story of this incredible “Flying Farmer.” The North Dakota Aviation Association Board and HOF Committee is thankful for our partnership with the University of North Dakota Aerospace Network and their work on this video.



Watch it online by going to the Hall of Fame section of the NDAA website at fly-nd.com or by scanning the QR code.



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North Dakota Aeronautics Director Appointed as Chair of NASAO



The ushering in of the new board was commemorated by the passing of the gavel from NASAO Immediate Past Chair, David Ulane – CO (right), to Chair Kyle Wanner –ND (left).

On September 12, 2023, the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) announced the members of the 2023–2024 Board of Directors at NASAO’s 92nd Annual Convention & Trade Show in Rogers, Arkansas. The NASAO Board of Directors – comprised of NASAO’s Executive Committee and Regional Directors – will be led by Kyle Wanner of North Dakota as Chair. Kyle is the third individual from North Dakota to serve as the Chair of NASAO since the organization was established in 1931. Harold Vavra held the position in 1975 and Gary Ness held the position in 1995.

“I am deeply honored to serve as the NASAO Chair for the upcoming year and am eager to lead and advocate for the interests of the members within the state aviation community,” stated Wanner. “With a strong foundation of exceptional leadership over the years, NASAO is well-positioned to continue its efforts to foster meaningful and positive impacts within the ever-evolving field of aviation. I look forward to working closely with our outstanding staff, our state aviation leaders, and our valued business partners to address industry challenges, explore

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innovative solutions, and seize opportunities that will enhance our nation's air transportation system.”

NASAO is the nationally recognized voice for the public interest in aviation on behalf of the states and territories. The organization represents state aviation agencies in all 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Its mission is to encourage and foster cooperation throughout the public sector in the development and promotion of a national aviation system that safely and effectively serves the needs of citizens, commerce, and communities throughout the United States.

Members of the 2023–2024 NASAO Executive Committee include:

- Kyle Wanner, ND – NASAO Chair
- Martin Blake, IN – NASAO Vice Chair
- Clayton Stambaugh, IL – NASAO Treasurer
- Frank Farmer, AL – NASAO Secretary
- David Ulane, CO – NASAO Immediate Past Chair

Members of the 2023–2024 NASAO Regional Directors include:

- Tim McClung, IA – Central Region
- Greg Campbell, VA – Eastern Region
- Michael Trout, MI – Great Lakes Region
- Denise Garcia, MA – New England Region
- Kenji Sugahara, OR – Northwest Mountain Region
- John Paul Saalwaechter, TN – Southern Region
- Grayson Ardies, OK – Southwest Region
- Kurt Haukohl, NV – Western-Pacific Region



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CONFERENCE

March 3-5, 2024 • Grand Forks

The conference is an opportunity to learn more about aviation in North Dakota and network with our aviation community. Throughout the conference, sessions will be held for pilots, mechanics, airport managers, and general aviation enthusiasts.

- Learn from Aviation Industry Leaders
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- Exhibitors Night
- Hall of Fame Banquet
- Educational Sessions

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Watch for details to come at www.fly-nd.com/events/Conference

Hosted by North Dakota Aviation Association



TOWERS & TENTS: EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2023

By Tanner Overland

The mornings are getting cooler and the days shorter, how can it be fall already? This action-packed summer certainly flew by, with happenings and events nearly every weekend, like Fly-ND Summerfest, fly-ins, air shows, and of course Oshkosh AirVenture!

AirVenture 2023 was my third EAA AirVenture I've attended at the splendid Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, WI. Having never attended "Oshkosh" until 2021, I'm making up for lost time by going every year since then and I plan on making it my annual summer pilgrimage.

This year's AirVenture was terrific, made even better with the unique opportunity to take in one of the daytime airshows from the air traffic control tower at Oshkosh; the busiest airport in the world (well, at least for one week in July.) What an awesome experience! While people joke "it must just be chaos up there with all those aircraft", I was somewhat surprised and relieved to learn just the opposite after speaking with the air traffic controllers. As one of the air traffic controllers explained to me, "It's a well-choreographed dance each year, with only the best-of-the-best air traffic controllers being invited to make up the team of about 80 Oshkosh air traffic controllers during the show." The controllers tasked with keeping the operations at AirVenture safe and efficient come from near and far throughout the country. They each work a couple of hours before taking a break to keep them fresh, and they rotate from the control tower out to the arrival reporting points of Fisk and Ripon. It was certainly all smiles up in the tower.

This year was also my first-year tent camping on the airport grounds in Camp Scholler, named after early EAA supporters Ray and Bernice Scholler. While tent camping makes one

year for a comfy bed and ice-cold air conditioning to offer a brief reprieve from the

sizzling Wisconsin summer sun, it provides a greater, more-authentic experience and a sincere appreciation of AirVenture and the camaraderie it provides.

While certainly a bit overwhelming in the daytime by the record-breaking crowd of 677,000 fellow aviation enthusiasts, things calm down at night and it's easy to stroll amongst the aircraft and connect with those around you. One night, after a drenching line of thunderstorms rolled through, we met Stephan, one of our tent neighbors in Camp Scholler. Over a headlamp-lit-dinner consisting of a box of Cheez-Its and an M.R.E. pouch of dehydrated pad thai, Stephan enthusiastically described his travels from his home in Frankfurt, Germany to Oshkosh, WI. He wanted to make the trip for years, but just couldn't make it work - until this year! This was his first time at AirVenture, and the experience was so much more than anything he ever imagined. And it was; the nighttime air show, the rows and rows of every aircraft imaginable packed into every square foot of available grass, the Yellow Ribbon Honor Flight's salute to veterans, and the way the Pratt & Whitney radial engines reverberate deep inside your lungs when Team Aeroshell's five AT-6 Texans fly over you in a tight formation at dusk.

EAA AirVenture is more than just an airshow, it's an experience. An experience that provides a sincere appreciation of all-things aviation and a connection amongst everyone in our industry, whether it be a general aviation pilot from Williston, ND, or an aviation enthusiast from Frankfurt, Germany.

If you've put EAA AirVenture on your to-do list but just haven't gotten around to doing it yet, put it on the top of your to-do list for next year; hopefully I'll see you in Oshkosh at AirVenture 2024!



Eternal FLIGHT



Tylor Lee Johnson

Tylor Lee Johnson, 33, of Grand Forks, ND, passed away on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, when his agricultural aircraft went down. Tylor was the son of Lynn Johnson and Tracey Ebertowski.

He was born October 8, 1989 and grew up in Argyle, MN. He graduated from Stephen-Argyle High School in 2008, where he played football and golf and made lifelong friends. After graduation, he tried

out a few colleges, but the one he liked the best was South Dakota State University, where his wife was. During this time, he also became a commercial pilot. Ultimately, he knew he was going to be a pilot; as his passion was flying and he loved what he did. He married his wife, McKenzie (Bruer), of Fisher, MN, on January 7, 2017. They started their married life in Grafton, ND and eventually made their home in Grand Forks, ND.

He started his career as a third generation aerial applicator at Johnson Airspray in Argyle, MN, where he also built planes with his Grandpa Lindley in the winter. Later, he started his own busi-

ness, Flyiton Ag., out of Oslo, MN. Airplanes were a huge part of his life, and he spent many hours researching them. He was an extremely hard worker and has always been a hustler, with many projects in the works, including his newest business, Flooriton, where he sold commercial flooring.

No matter where Tylor went, he made friends. He had an infectious personality that drew people to him. Perhaps, his favorite hobby was talking to his friends on the phone numerous times a day. He loved life and was a kid at heart. He enjoyed spending time with his nieces and nephew. He looked forward to his annual hunting trip. He loved to spend time at the lake and enjoyed snowmobiling and ice fishing in the winter. As a couple, Tylor and McKenzie spent a lot of time traveling, especially to his favorite place, Maui, HI. He was an avid Vikings fan and never missed watching or attending a game. He liked the atmosphere of UND hockey games and has been attending them for most of his life. Any extra time he had was spent on the golf course. Most of all, Tylor loved his family.

He is survived by his wife, McKenzie (Bruer), his father, Lynn (Cathy) Johnson, his mother, Tracey Ebertowski, his sister, Brianne (Troy) Osowski, his brother, Cole Johnson, his brother, Andrew Ebertowski, his stepbrothers, Ross Domier and Christian (Chelsey) Ebertowski and their children, Everett and Harper, his nieces, Margot and Edie Osowski, Harlow and Luella Bruer, his nephew, Tate Bruer, his grandparents, Lindley and Betty Johnson and Curt and LaVonne Lundeen and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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Lawrence "Larry" Polries

Lawrence Joseph Polries, 63, Jamestown, ND, died in an accident on September 19, 2023.

Larry was born to Donald and Sheila (Barry) Polries on January 6, 1960, in Carrington, ND. He grew up on a large family farm near Sykeston, ND. Larry played the trumpet and participated in school plays, basketball, track, and other school sports until graduation from Sykeston High School in 1978.

Larry was involved in farming nearly all his life, except for brief ventures in custom combining and coal mining. He returned to North Dakota and married Michelle Richter in 1982. They had four daughters, Ginger, Jessica, Vanessa, and Joselyn, and farmed near Sykeston, later moving to Jamestown, ND.

In 2012, Larry married the love of his life Cessna Waliser on a beach in the Gulf of Mexico. They continued to visit that area every winter and were planning to have a winter home there one day. Larry, Cessna, daughter Rio, and stepdaughter Brooke resided near Jamestown.

In the 1980s, Larry purchased an ultra-light aircraft to repel blackbirds from eating sunflower crops, and his love for flying was born. In 2000 he started an airplane crop-spraying business, which he grew into an operation that served hundreds of farmers annually from the Carrington airport.

Larry enjoyed planting his fields in the spring and watching them

grow. He also enjoyed visiting with all his customers when they stopped at the airport. Larry lived life to the fullest, he was an avid skier of the mountains, as well as snowmobiling. He liked going fast, especially in his red Mach 1 Mustang and his Harleys. Riding a motorcycle was a big part of his life and brought the biggest smile to his face. Fear was not in his vocabulary. He also loved to walk the beaches and collect seashells every year with his family and take in the beautiful sunsets on the Gulf Coast. Sunday boating always made for a good day especially if the fish were biting. Larry will always be remembered for his beautiful smile and his iconic giggle which will forever be missed.

Larry was a member of the ND Agricultural Aviation Association, he served as chief operating pilot overseeing the training and mentoring of future ag pilots. He was a squadron member of the Civil Air Patrol for several years. Larry and Cessna were awarded the Wells County Soil Conservation Achievement Award recently. Larry also devoted many hours to the James River Figure Skating Club.

Larry is survived by his wife, Cessna, Jamestown; children, Ginger (Tyler) Doeling, Carrington; Jessica (Brad) Warren, Moorhead, MN, Vanessa (Dakotah) Walker, Fargo, Joselyn Polries, Scottsdale, AZ, Rio Polries, Brooke Graalum, both of Jamestown, Matt Mitzel, Munich; nine grandchildren; his sisters, Linda (Charlie) Donlin, Bismarck; Julie Larson, Olathe, KS; Peggy (Mark) Anderson, Bismarck; Patti (Bruce) Penas, Wisconsin Rapids, WI; brother, Jon (Stephanie) Polries, Sykeston; sister-in-law Kim Polries, Thompson; many nieces, nephews, cousins and their families; along with many lifelong friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, infant Donald Michael and David Polries, grandson William Polries, and brother-in-law Lyndon Larson.



Doug Larsen

Douglas Allen Larsen, 47, loving father and beloved son, brother, husband, and friend, was taken from us tragically on Sunday, October 1, 2023.

Douglas was born on March 8, 1976, to John and Carleen (Kelly) Larsen in Minot. He grew up in Granville, where he played on the TGU football team, participated in FFA, and served as leader of the Luther League on both the local and western LYO Synod. Doug spent

countless hours at the family farm, picking weeds and growing potatoes and onions with Grandpa Alf. Douglas graduated from Granville High School with the Class of '94. Following graduation, he attended Minot State University, where he served a term as student body president and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Arts and Political Science (with honors).

Doug began his military career by enlisting in the North Dakota Army National Guard during his senior year of high school. He proudly served to protect our nation and after 9/11 was subsequently deployed to Iraq, where he bravely served as Company Commander for Charlie Company, 2-285th Aviation Battalion. Thereafter, he was deployed with Operation Noble Eagle as a part of the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery Battalion in Washington, D.C. Even in recent years, Doug continued to serve part-time in the North Dakota Army National Guard, exemplifying his patriotism and unwavering devotion to his fellow servicemen and women. With over 29 years of service, he attained the rank of Colonel. He touched the lives of many through his selfless dedication to the service of his country and his unwavering commitment to making the world a safer place.

After attending college, Doug met Amy and they started dating.

On March 17, 2003, Doug married Amy Haugan in Bismarck, ND. Through this marriage, Doug gained his stepson Dylan Stevens. Doug enjoyed being involved with Dylan's sports, including coaching his baseball team. In 2011, Doug and Amy welcomed their son Christian into their family, and in 2015, they completed their family when little Everett came into this world. Doug found tremendous joy in taking Everett to a Minnesota Vikings football game or a Minnesota Twins baseball game. He nourished Christian's love of learning, especially dinosaurs, by bringing Christian to all dinosaur events and dig sites that were available along their life's journey. At night, you could find Doug reading books to the boys, which would famously include all the silly voices and sound effects that are required when reading a child's book.

Outside of his military service, Douglas was a driven individual, who had an entrepreneurial spirit. This spirit started early, as a young newspaper boy in elementary school and continued throughout his life. Doug and Amy owned several successful businesses in the area, including APEX Builders, Peterson Properties, Peterson Hospitality, L&H Inc., and he was also a realtor with Next Home.

In 2020, Douglas expanded his impact in this world by running for State Senator. His mother, ready to ride the campaign trail with him, would drive Doug door to door as he passionately shared his vision with the community during the height of the COVID pandemic. He would either stand six feet away and talk with people or be welcomed in their house. Either way, he was ready to share his passion for bettering the community in which he lived. His determination proved successful when he was announced as Mandan State Senator and was currently serving North Dakota in that capacity.

Doug had a special and unique way of bettering the world around him. Doug was the foundation of his family, offering his love and support wherever needed. He would offer his worldly advice when asked or a listening ear when needed. Doug's quick wit and dry sense of humor would be inserted into

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situations when needed to lighten the mood (and sometimes when not needed, but that was just Doug's way). Doug had a reputation for speaking his mind, especially when it was something he felt strongly about. Doug would not think twice to offer his help, from rescuing baby kittens found along the side of the road to helping families find a home to raise their family. No ask was too big or too small for Doug. He had a one-of-a-kind personality that will leave an empty void in many people's hearts.

Douglas is survived by his step-son, Dylan Stevens, Mandan; his parents, John and Carleen, Granville, ND; sister, Peggy (Ben) Larsen Steimel, Scottsdale, AZ, and their children, Madison, Charles, and Tyler; sister, Rebecca (Patrick) Hoglund, Phoenix, AZ, and their children, Anna Lise, Aidan, and Clara; sister, Danielle (Austin) Hilzendeger, Minot, ND; aunts and uncles, Virginia (Carl) Myers Portland, OR; Ralph (Joanne) Larsen, Granville, ND; Kathleen Brewer, St. Petersburg, FL; Mark (Terese) Kelly, Cotton, MN; John (Sue) Kelly, Virginia, MN; and Mary (Rob) Heilman, Ham Lake, MN; and many cousins.

Preceded in death by his nephew, Keenan Hoglund; his paternal grandparents, Alf and Agnes (Peg) Larsen; and maternal grandparents, Thomas and Jean Kelly.



Mark Sundby

Mark S. Sundby, 72, passed away after a valiant battle with cancer on July 27, 2023.

His sweet and heartbroken wife Bonnie was there holding his hand as he went to sleep.

Mark was born to Carol (Brown) and Leroy (Buster) Sundby on February 1, 1951. Raised and educated in Turtle Lake, he attended UND after which he

taught school in Rapid City, SD, for a year. He then came back to work on the power houses being built in the Bismarck area as a crane operator. Alongside with the best boilermakers in the nation, they assembled and set the pollution control devices.

In 1976, he attained his flight instructors license and worked for OK Aviation and Executive Air. He instructed over one hundred students with their flying.

Mark was adamant that he would never get married. However, on July 1, 1979, he placed a ring on Bonnie Dockter's finger. They enjoyed 44 years of laughter, tears and pickled fish.

In 1984 he started his career with North American Coal at the Indian Head mine at Zap. In 1989 he transferred to the Coteau mine north of Beulah where he enjoyed over 20 years of employment as a heavy equipment and crane operator.

Retiring in 2010 he had a dozen years of fishing, hunting, riding motorcycle, and flying his 1946 Taylorcraft airplane.

(Bonnie often thought he was having too much fun.)

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie; father-in-law, Reuben; two sisters, Joanne (Jim) Britton of Turtle Lake and Lori Allison of Indio Ca.; a brother, Dennis also of Turtle Lake and seven nieces and nephews whom he adored.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Alan, and mother-in-law, Deloris Dockter.

The family extends sincere gratitude to Sanford Hospice who provided excellent care to both Mark and Bonnie during this ordeal. A special thank-you to Mark's niece Stacey, who provided round-the-clock nursing care in Mark's last days. Her familiar voice and gentle touch gave Mark and Bonnie both confidence and peace knowing he was in her capable, loving hands.





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CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

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DECEMBER 2023

Casselton FAA Seminar

Dec 5 • Casselton Airport - Hangar 10
Speakers: Jeff Boe/Bob Laux

FEBRUARY 2024

2024 Tri-State Aerial Applicators Convention

Feb 06 to Feb 07 • Waite Park, Minnesota
The Tri-State Aerial Applicators Convention heads back to Minnesota in 2024! Join us at the Park Event Center, Waite Park, Minnesota February 6 & 7, 2024. This year's program will feature one of the largest trade shows in the nation for agricultural aviation professionals, great networking opportunities, and a dynamic line-up of speakers and events.

MARCH 2024

Fly-ND Conference - 2024

Mar 03 to Mar 05 • Alerus Center, Grand Forks, ND
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