NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION ASSOCIATION

FLY-ND

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QUARTERLY

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North Dakota Aviation Association
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CONFERENCE
March 8-10, 2026 • Minot

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QUARTERLY

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From the Editor

After an active few months of soaking up the sunshine and warm weather, I admit I am excited for the slower tempo of life that the change of seasons brings. With cooler weather upon us, it's the perfect time to sit back and take time to read through the fall edition of the Fly-ND Quarterly!

In this issue, you will find updates on North Dakota aviation scholarships, as well as highlights from the award-winning Fly-ND Career Expo. Learn more about the first-ever North Dakota Make-A-Wish airplane pull at the Williston Basin International Airport, or live vicariously through the adventures of a North Dakota aviator who built his own Pietenpol Air Camper and flew it to EAA AirVenture. We also pay tribute in this issue to two North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame recipients, who recently passed away, and honor our veterans who partook in the Western North Dakota Honor Flight.

As you prepare to hibernate for winter, don't forget to mark your calendars for the annual Fly-ND Conference! **It will be held in Minot, ND, from March 8-10, 2026.** Stay tuned for more info on our website: www.fly-nd.com

Wishing you clear skies and unlimited visibility, Nicolette

Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of officers and members of the NDAA or Fly-ND Quarterly staff. If you've received more than one copy of this newsletter, please share it with a friend. Email admin@fly-nd.com to update your address.





Tanner Overland, Chairman
North Dakota Aviation Association
chairman@fly-nd.com

A Season of Milestones & Momentum

Hello again and welcome to another beautiful North Dakota fall! Hopefully, you found time to log some summer flying adventures before the season slipped away — it always seems to pass faster each year.

We recently wrapped up the 2025 Fly-ND Career Expo, held at the Dakota Territory Air Museum in Minot, ND. Over 200 students joined us, along with nearly 20 exhibitors representing air ambulance operators, FBOs and flight schools, airline ground-handling companies, airport operations, colleges, and A&P schools. Together, we awarded $19,000 in scholarships — the largest single-event total in the history of the Fly-ND Career Expo!

The energy shared between future employers and students was inspiring, a true reminder of why we do what we do. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, NDAA has now awarded nearly $100,000 in scholarships over the past five years — an incredible investment in the next generation of North Dakota aviators.

On that note, North Dakota Aviation Association (NDAA) was recently recognized nationally at the 2025 NASAO Conference, where the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) received the NASAO Aviation Education Program Award for outstanding efforts in workforce development through the Fly-ND Career Expo. This national recognition highlights what's possible when industry, educators, and community partners work together to inspire tomorrow's aviators.

A sincere thank you to NDAA past-chairman Darren Hall and NDAC Aviation Education Coordinator Mike McHugh for their vision in bringing the Fly-ND Career Expo to life and helping it grow into a nationally recognized program.

Continued on the next page



On the topic of national recognition, we're proud to share that NDAA Board Member Ryan O'Rear was selected as one of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) 2025 "Top 40 Under 40" award recipients! Ryan, who serves as Assistant Airport Director at Williston Basin International Airport, was recognized this October at the NBAA-BACE Conference in Las Vegas. We're incredibly proud of Ryan's leadership and dedication to advancing aviation in both our state and our association.

Looking ahead to our next NDAA event, please mark your calendars for the 2026 Fly-ND Conference, to be held March 8–10, 2026, in Minot, North Dakota, at the Clarion Inn & Convention Center. Planning is already underway for another great lineup of speakers, breakout sessions, tours, and social events. Registration will open later this winter — stay tuned for more details!

We also take a moment to remember and honor two remarkable members of our aviation community who have embarked on their eternal flight: Don Larson, the 2017 North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame inductee, past NDAA Board Member, and co-founder of the Dakota Territory Air Museum. And Roger Pfeiffer, the 2009 North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame inductee, and longtime Assistant Director and Chief Pilot for the NDAC.

Their legacy, passion, and commitment to aviation will continue to uplift and inspire future generations of aviators.

As we look back on these milestones — from celebrating national recognition and inspiring the next generation, to remembering those who helped build the foundation we stand on — it's clear that North Dakota aviation continues to move forward with purpose and passion. The energy, dedication, and collaboration across our community keep us climbing higher each year. Here's to carrying that momentum into the months and years ahead and continuing to make North Dakota a leader in aviation.



A Snapshot of the 2025 Fly-ND Career Expo

Dakota Territory Air Museum • Minot, ND • October 9, 2025



A presentation by Justin Weninger.



Students from Minot High School.



Students from Bakken Area Skills Center.



Students from Surrey High School.



Jose Castañeda providing a great presentation.



More than 240 students listening to guest speakers.



Reneé Murrish, Manager
North Dakota Aviation Association
701-226-1640 | manager@fly-nd.com

FROM THE *Manager*

Autumn Skies & New Horizons

As the seasons change and autumn paints the sky in gold and amber hues, aviation reminds us that change can be breathtaking as well. There's something about fall that speaks to a pilot's heart than the crisp air that makes engines hum just a little stronger, the vivid landscapes rolling below like a masterpiece only nature could create, and the reminder that every season, just like every flight, can bring new perspectives. In aviation, we are constantly adjusting to the weather, the wind, new routes, and destinations.

Fall teaches us the same lesson...to embrace transition. Just as leaves let go to make room for new growth, we must sometimes release what no longer serves us so we can climb higher. This season invites reflection and renewal. Maybe it is time to take on that certification, visit that airfield you've always wanted to explore, or mentor someone just beginning their flight path. The beauty of aviation is that it never stands still, and neither should we.

So, as the days grow shorter and the sunsets deepen in color, take a moment to look out over the horizon. From the cockpit window or a runway edge, remember the same skies that mark the close of one season are opening the way to another filled with promise and lift. Remember just like in flight, the magic happens when we trust the climb.

Let's kick the tires and light the fires! Reneé



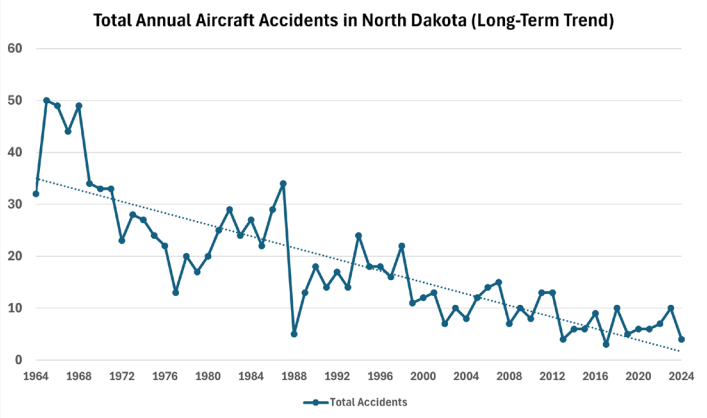


Kyle Wanner, Director
North Dakota Aeronautics Commission
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Safety in the Skies: A North Dakota Perspective

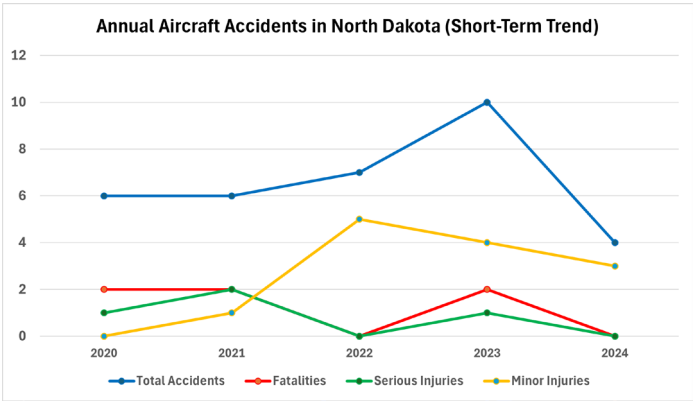
Aviation plays a vital role in connecting our communities, driving our economy, and creating numerous opportunities across North Dakota. From business travel and agricultural operations to flight training and commercial air service - aviation touches nearly every corner of our state. In recent months, high-profile accidents across the nation have understandably raised concerns about aviation safety. While such events in the modern era often capture headlines and significant social media attention, it is important to place them in context and look at the facts.

Data from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) confirms that North Dakota continues to maintain a strong safety record, with a long-term trend showing a significant decline in accidents over the past 50 years. Since 1964, the number of reported accidents has steadily decreased, reflecting decades of progress in pilot training, aircraft design, maintenance practices, weather reporting, and airport infrastructure. Taken together, these advancements have contributed to safer skies for everyone.



The above graphic details the total number of aviation accidents that were reported and analyzed by the NTSB within the state of North Dakota each year since 1964. The data shows a long-term decline in the total number of accidents. The data was retrieved from the NTSB website.

When focusing on the most recent full year of data, 2024, North Dakota recorded four aviation accidents. Importantly, none of these incidents resulted in fatalities. Three accidents caused no injuries, while one incident led to three minor injuries. Each accident occurred during day VFR conditions and represented a mix of operations, including two personal flights, one training flight, and one aerial application. In one case, an engine failure forced an emergency landing on a rural dirt road. Although the aircraft sustained substantial damage, all occupants walked away unharmed. Of the four accidents, three involved fixed-wing aircraft and one involved a rotorcraft.



The above graphic details the number and type of aviation accidents that were reported and analyzed by the NTSB within the state of North Dakota over the past five years. The data was retrieved from the NTSB website.

It is worth remembering that aviation continues to remain the safest mode of transportation. Every flight benefits from layers of protection—well-trained pilots, dedicated mechanics, strict regulatory oversight, and a culture of continuous improvement. When compared to highway travel or other forms of transportation, flying continues to offer unmatched reliability and safety.

At the same time, safety is never something we can take for granted. Preventing accidents requires constant attention through participation in safety programs, recurrent training, and a commitment to proactive reporting. Every member of the aviation community—whether pilot, instructor, mechanic, or airport operator—plays a vital role in maintaining and strengthening the safety of our skies.

While we reflect on our progress, it is equally important to look ahead. The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission continues to work closely with the state's aviation community, our network of public-use airports, and the FAA to identify opportunities that will continue to strengthen our aviation system and enhance safety. These partnerships ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most, from infrastructure improvements to workforce development support initiatives.

By staying vigilant, embracing innovation, and maintaining strong collaboration at the state, local, and federal levels, we can ensure that aviation continues to set a high bar for safety. Our shared responsibility, combined with advancements in technology, will keep aviation not only the safest way to travel, but also one of the most forward-looking industries - allowing us to build on past progress while also charting a strong course for the future.

Inaugural Make-A-Wish North Dakota Plane Pull



On August 16, 2025, the first ever Make-A-Wish North Dakota Plane Pull took place at the Williston Basin International Airport (XWA.) Teams raced to pull the mammoth 100,000 pound Sun Country Airlines Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

Six 20-person teams pulled the airliner a grand total of 100 feet. The official standings are:

- GO Wireline - 26.06 seconds
- XWA (Airport) - 26.67 seconds
- CrossFit Vokse - 29.47 seconds
- Overland Aviation - 32.45 seconds
- Magnum Services - 32.92 seconds
- Liberty Energy/Wolla Trucking - 35.86 seconds

Go Wireline LLC's team not only won the pull, but also received the first-place award as the highest fundraising team, with a total of $5,180. The event included a free lunch, as well as a showing of Disney's "Planes" movie and airplane rides.













It's Time to Learn and Build!

December 30, 2025 • Dakota Territory Air Museum • Minot, ND

The Dakota Territory Air Museum will be hosting a Learn and Build Model Session on December 30, 2025, at 1:00 pm, featuring the P-51 Mustang!

Participants will learn all about the P-51 Mustang with an up-close and personal tour of one of the museum's P-51s. After the tour, attendees will be able to build their very own model P-51 Mustang!

This activity is recommended for kids ages 8 and older. An adult must remain with the participant for the duration of the session.

Registration is required. Please register online at www.dakotaterritoryairmuseum.com or by calling the museum directly at (701) 850-8500. The cost is $20 per participant.



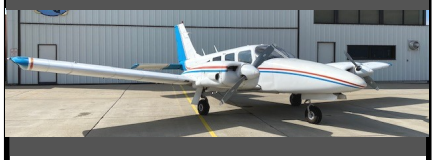
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North Dakota Honored with National Aviation Education Award for Fly-ND Aviation Career Expo

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) is proud to announce that North Dakota has been selected as the recipient of the NASAO Center Aviation Education Program Award in recognition of its outstanding efforts to advance aviation education through the Fly-ND Aviation Career Expo.

Presented annually by the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), this national award recognizes one state aviation agency each year for excellence in aviation outreach, workforce development, and public engagement. North Dakota was selected for its leadership in developing the Fly-ND Career Expo—a program that has made a significant impact in inspiring and supporting the next generation of aviation professionals across the state.

The Fly-ND Aviation Career Expo is an annual event designed to introduce North Dakota high school students to aviation careers. Since its inception in 2020, the Expo has welcomed approximately 200 students each year, providing hands-on experiences with aircraft, opportunities to meet industry professionals, and access to scholarships that support students pursuing aviation education.

"The Fly-ND Career Expo has been a tremendous asset in showing students the many opportunities available in aviation," said Mike McHugh, NDAC Aviation Education Coordinator. "It is an honor to receive national recognition, and I hope this program serves as a model for other states to help students begin their journey in our industry."

Over the past several years, students attending the Fly-ND Career Expo have gone on to pursue aviation degrees, enter pilot and maintenance programs, and explore careers across the industry—helping strengthen North Dakota's aviation workforce. The success of the Expo is made possible through strong partnerships with the North Dakota Aviation Association, local aviation businesses, and educators who mentor students and provide industry insight.

"This award is a shared honor that belongs to all who have worked together over many years to inspire the next generations of aviators. I want to especially thank the North Dakota Aviation Association (NDAA), educators, exhibitors, speakers, and volunteers who make the annual Fly-ND Aviation Career Expo possible," stated Kyle Wanner, Executive Director of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission. "We are grateful to NASAO for this recognition and excited to build on this momentum to further expand aviation opportunities for students across North Dakota."



Thank You to our NDAA Allied Members

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Mike McHugh, Aviation Education Coordinator
North Dakota Aeronautics Commission
701-328-9650 | mmchugh@nd.gov

Aviation Scholarships

We have concluded another Fly-ND Career Expo. This year, we gathered in Minot at the Dakota Territory Air Museum, to share the opportunities in aviation with a great group of high school students. For me, one of the highlights is providing the opportunity to award scholarships to students at this event.

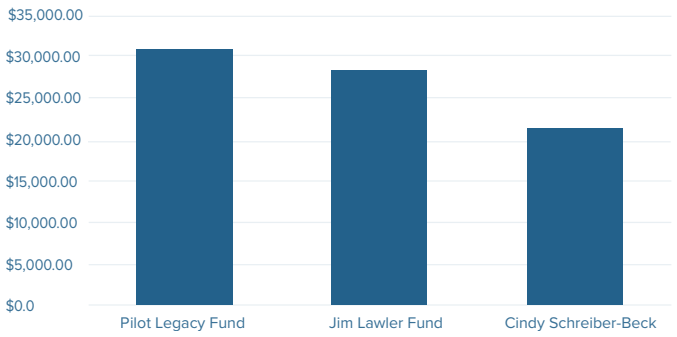
In order to make these scholarships possible, the North Dakota Aviation Association (NDAA) relies on donations from a variety of donors. The NDAA welcomes donations of any amount to help students grow in their education. Students are able to use these funds for any aviation related training, or in some cases, donors provide preference on how they would like to see the funds be utilized.

For those interested in contributing to the Fly-ND Scholarship funds, there are two different types of scholarship funds that can be contributed to. The first is a non-endowed fund; any amount received in a non-endowed fund is awarded annually at the Career Expo, and the amount of donations varies year to year. Contributions to this fund from an individual, family, or business in the amount of $1,000 allow the contributor to name the scholarship and provide the criteria for the student being awarded the scholarship. For instance, a fund could be created in which someone may prefer the funds to go to a student in their community, or a student who is studying to enter a specific aviation career field.

The next is an endowed fund. This fund is a good way to provide a lasting legacy; an endowed fund will generate a scholarship of $1,000 or more each year in perpetuity. This type of fund requires a minimum donation of $30,000, which may be fundraised over three years. Once the minimum amount is achieved, the fund generates interest for three years at which time, a $1,000 (or more) scholarship will be annually awarded. Once the fund is endowed, any additional contributions added to the endowment create the opportunity for larger scholarships to be awarded. There may be tax benefits for contributions to an endowment fund.

The scholarship funds are held with the North Dakota Community Foundation, who also handle dispersing the funds to the proper institution to ensure they are used properly. To learn more about contributing to a scholarship fund, talk to any board member or visit: https://fly-nd.com/scholarships

To date, we have three endowment funds and hope to grow this number over time. The Jim Lawler Memorial Scholarship fund is to be awarded with preference given to an Aviation Management student, the Pilot Legacy fund is to be awarded to an aspiring commercial pilot, and the Cindy Schreiber-Beck fund, our newest endowment, will be awarded to a student who embodies the spirit of Cindy's contributions to aviation. Below is a chart showing the current status of our endowed scholarship funds. We believe these funds are a great way to continue the legacy of those who have made an impact on aviation in our state.





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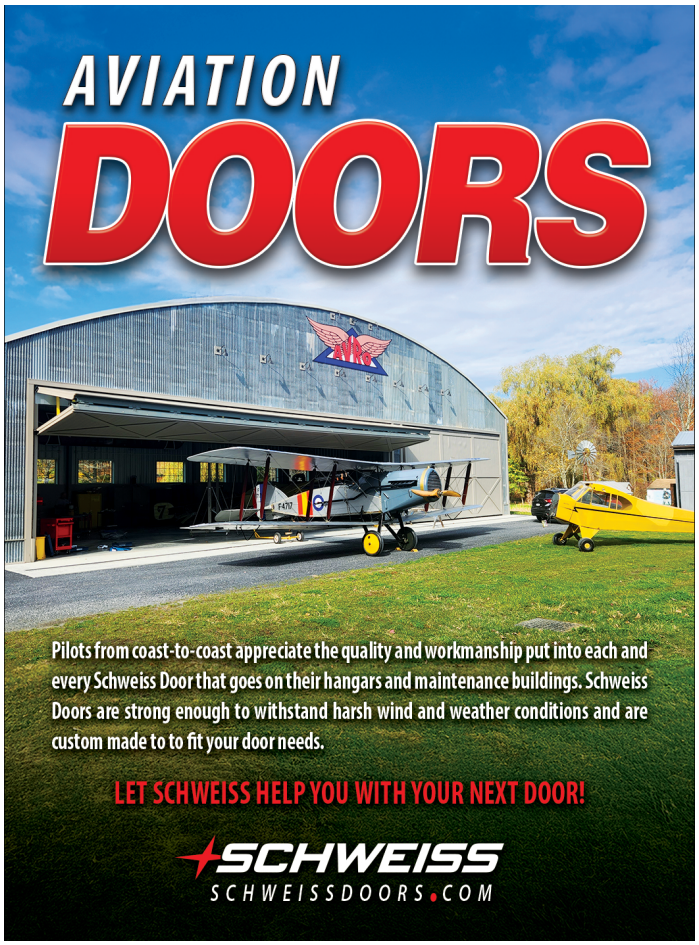
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Devin Cole
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The Fargo, ND, Flight Standards District Office is Hiring!

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is seeking candidates for a new Flight Oversight Aviation Safety Inspector (ASI) position. This role does not require a valid medical certificate or a current Flight Instructor Certificate.

We are looking for current or former pilots with a high level of aviation industry experience who are ready to help develop, administer, and enforce regulations critical to aviation safety.

With the increasing complexity of the National Airspace System, Flight Oversight ASIs play a vital role in ensuring certificate holders meet—and continue to meet—standards and compliance requirements for the safety of the flying public.

What to Expect as an ASI:

Every day brings new opportunities to positively influence aviation safety. After completing initial training, your responsibilities may include:

- Advising individuals and organizations on regulatory requirements
- Conducting inspections and surveillance
- Investigating incidents and accidents
- Supporting certification and oversight activities
- Providing technical guidance and support

Note: This ASI position does not involve certification functions requiring flight as a crewmember (e.g., pilot evaluation, testing, or checking, including safety pilot duties).

Career Growth

ASI roles offer excellent opportunities for professional development and advancement within the FAA. Career paths may lead to Principal Inspector roles or specialist positions in specific program areas. These roles are open to internal candidates.

General Aviation Flight Oversight ASI – Key Requirements

- Instructor Experience: Must hold a valid or expired Flight Instructor Certificate with an aircraft category rating or have served as an instructor in an FAA-approved program (e.g., Part 121, 135, 141, 142, or military equivalent). Minimum 200 hours of flight instruction must have been given in aircraft and/or approved flight simulation devices.
- Pilot Certification: Must hold a valid Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) Certificate or Commercial Pilot Certificate with an instrument-airplane rating.
- Industry Experience: At least three years of experience with one of the three below:
  - A certified air carrier, commercial operator, or air agency
  - An organization involved in the certification of airmen
  - An organization that operated aircraft
- Flight Time: Minimum 1,500 total flight hours.
- Ratings: Must hold airplane category ratings for single-engine and multi-engine land aircraft.
- Safety Record: No more than two pilot-error-related accidents in the past five years.

Application Process

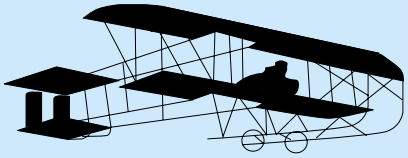
The FAA is using an alternative hiring authority, called On-the-Spot (OTS) hiring, to streamline the selection of entry-level candidates.

A $10,000 Permanent Change of Station (PCS) incentive is available for eligible candidates relocating 100 miles or more, contingent upon a one-year service agreement.

This OTS process bypasses the competitive application process—interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Fargo FSDO directly to take advantage of this opportunity.

Contact:
Fargo ND FSDO
Phone: (701) 492-5800
Email: 7-AGL-FAR-FSDO@faa.gov

North Dakota Aviation



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by Joe Banish
Reprinted with permission from UND Today

UND conducts joint training event in collaboration with National Guard, Grand Forks AFB



UND and military leaders gather at Gorman Field, to view counter-UAS and LVC experiments. Photo by Joe Banish/UND Today.

UND and local military leadership recently got a glimpse into training the University is conducting to accelerate the armed forces' Counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) capabilities and readiness.

Partnering with the North Dakota Army and Air National Guard, and U.S. Air Force, UND hosted the experiment — the fifth in an ongoing series — in mid-July at Gorman Field UAS Test Range, a facility located just south of Grand Forks Air Force Base.

The series of experiments were established through a Memorandum of Understanding with the North Dakota Air and Army National Guard. Previous experiments were also held at Camp Grafton, an Army National Guard installation near Devils Lake, N.D.

The experiment involves simulating adversarial drone traffic, with UND operating multiple small UAS aircraft to encroach on Army Air Defense Artillery command posts. Simultaneously overseeing the operations from above are the UND-owned Boeing Insitu Scan Eagle aircraft operating beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), 119th Wing operating General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper, and 319th Reconnaissance Wing and 410th Flight Squadron operating the Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk flying overhead from Grand Forks Air Force Base. Operations were further supported by industry leaders onsite such as Detect Inc. and Vigilant Aerospace Systems.

Gorman Field is a venue well suited to host these experiments, said Paul Snyder, director of UND Aerospace's UAS Operations program. Not only does Gorman UAS Airfield enable the experiment's partners to conduct these joint training operations safely, but also has the integrated technology to create a common operating picture with multiple entities that can be ingested into an LVC environment for a more immersive training experience.

Col. Ryan Ayers, deputy commander of the Fargo-based 119th Wing of the North Dakota Air National Guard, praised the robustness of Grand Forks' UAS ecosystem as an ideal proving ground. The level of collaboration between the private sector and defense communities, he noted, "contributes to continued innovation in the discipline." "This is the type of collaboration, integration, and initiative Defense Secretary (Pete) Hegseth has directed us get after, and we are all-in on unleashing U.S. military drone dominance," Ayers said.

"I can't think of any other environment like this in the world," he added. "We have the airspace, joint warfighter expertise, industry, and university partners all local and collaborating right here, learning from one another. Together, we're all overcoming our individual organizational constraints, and creating opportunities where we can train like we fight, research, and experiment — simultaneously."

Col. Alfred Rosales, commander of the 319th Reconnaissance Wing added, "harnessing the potential of unmanned systems is no longer a future aspiration, but a present-day necessity for maintaining our adaptability and dominance in the evolving landscape of modern warfare. This partnership with UND and our fellow North Dakota National Guard units is crucial to staying ahead of emerging threats and ensuring our continued readiness."

Additionally, the ecosystem fosters education and workforce development– key aspects in an environment of rapidly evolving technology that UND is poised to meet.

"Watching these students and recent graduates collaborate with accomplished professionals is truly inspiring," Snyder added. "They're not just learning — they're envisioning what's possible. They are going to come up with the next big idea."

Ryan O'Rear – 2025 Business Aviation Top 40 Under 40 Award Recipient



Education: Metropolitan State University of Denver
Bachelor of Science, Aviation Technology, Aerospace Operations

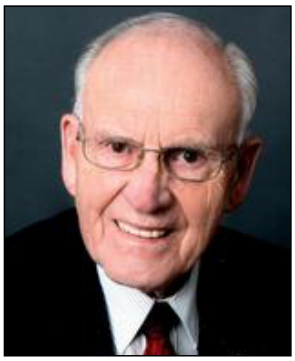
Ryan O'Rear first discovered business aviation as a child growing up near the local airport in Broomfield, CO, and attending airshows there. While he originally pursued a degree to become a pilot, he found his true passion in airport operations and management, where he's spent the past 12 years. In 2013, O'Rear started as an intern at Denver International Airport (DEN) before moving to XWA in Williston, ND, for two years in an entry-level operations position. He then was named airport manager at a small General Aviation airport in Brookings, SD, before working as an airport operations coordinator at Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH). Currently, O'Rear serves as assistant airport director back in Williston, where he's held the title for the past seven years.

"The most exciting part about business aviation is its ability to connect people, businesses and communities so seamlessly," O'Rear said. "I find it very rewarding to work in airport management to help create an environment where business aviation can thrive as a vital part of the airport ecosystem."





Eternal FLIGHT



Donald Irvin Larson, 88, of Minot, ND, took on his heavenly wings on September 18, 2025, after a courageous battle with CLL and pancreatic cancer.

Don was born January 9, 1937, on the family farm, to Irvin and Selma (Pederson) Larson. He was the oldest of seven children and grew up near Minot. In his youth, he attended elementary school in a one-room schoolhouse, and later high school at Minot High. Following graduation, he attended Minot State University. Thereafter, he proudly served in the North Dakota National Guard.

Don was united in marriage to Shirley (Pollock) Larson in 1962. Together they welcomed two sons, Jeff and Steve, who were the source of his deepest pride. While raising their young family, Don farmed with his brother Duane. In his mid-20's he earned his private pilot's license and his commercial license shortly after that. He began working as a charter pilot for Pietsch Flying Service. Extending his distinguished and impactful career, he served nearly 25 years as President of Town & Country Credit Union, before transitioning into a career with Farmers Union Insurance.

Beyond his professional career, Don was exceedingly committed to his community and his lifelong passion for aviation. Don was an instrumental partner in the incorporation of the Dakota Territory Air Museum, where his passion and leadership have left an enduring legacy to the youth and public of the Minot area. His contributions to aviation were acknowledged by the receipt of the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2014, and induction into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame in 2017.

Don was also a proud Lion, serving the Minot Lions Club for over 50 years. His dedication earned him numerous honors, including Lion of the Year, the Melvin Jones Fellow Award, and the Outstanding Service Award.

Family and friendships were central to Don's life. He cherished his close, lifelong friendships with the Pietsch family; specifically, Warren and Jolene along with Kent and Marney. He valued countless others in both the Lions and aviation communities.

He is survived by his sons, Jeff (fiancée Carrie) and Steve (Jackie) Larson; grandchildren, Jace (Kim) Bush, Parker Bush (Josh Vannett), Taylor (Colten) Haider, and Keenan Best; great-grandchildren, Bailee Bechtold, Beau, Barrett, and Bennett Bush, and Cooper Haider; siblings, Janet (Bill) Nichol, Duane Larson, Marilyn Conery, and Lyle (Paulette) Larson; as well as many nieces, nephews, extended family, and dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; Shirley Larson; sister, Marlene Skar; brother, Jerome, and sister-in law, Theresa.

Don lived a life of service, leadership, and love, leaving behind an example of faith, perseverance, and passion. He will be deeply missed but fondly remembered by all who were fortunate enough to know him.



Roger L. Pfeiffer, 86, passed away in Minneapolis on July 15, 2025, with his family at his side.

Born near Redstone, Montana, to Linden and Emma (Severson) Pfeiffer, Roger was deeply proud of his rural Montana heritage where he learned the value of hard work on the family farm. He graduated from Plentywood High School where he participated in the sport of rodeo, was a member of FFA, and went on to live a full life of integrity, humility, and hard work rooted in his deep faith in the Lord.

Roger proudly served in the Army Reserve in Montana before discovering his lifelong passion for aviation. In 1960, Roger traveled to Alaska to work as a mechanic's helper on the D.E.W. Line. That experience led him to pursue flight training at American Flyers in 1961. His aviation career spanned nearly 50 years, during which he flew more than 35 different aircraft models and logged over 18,000 hours of flight time.

In 1962, Roger began flying commercially for Dickinson Air Service where he did charter flights, flight instruction, power line patrol, crop spraying, and ski flying in the winter blizzards in 1964 and 1966.

He married Sally Zastoupil in 1964 in Dickinson, ND, after a courtship that started at the Buckaroo where he always ordered a ribeye steak with "no onions". They resided on

the Dickinson Airport with their dog, Turk, before moving to Bismarck where they raised two children, Karmen and Linden.

Roger served the State of North Dakota as a pilot for 39 years. He joined the North Dakota Highway Department in 1966 and later served as the Assistant Director and Chief Pilot for the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission for 26 years until his retirement in 2007. During his career, he proudly flew every North Dakota Governor from 1966 through 2007 and quite literally mapped the state by flying every section line—twice.

Roger was inducted into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame in 2009. In recognition of his exceptional service and safety record, he received the Flight Safety Achievement Award in 1991 for 10,000 safe pilot-in-command hours on behalf of the State of North Dakota.

Roger was an active member in numerous organizations, including the North Dakota Aviation Council (serving over 20 years as secretary), the North Dakota Flying Farmers (21 years as secretary), the North Dakota Agricultural Aviation Association, and the NASAO Aviation Research and Education Board. He loved attending annual NASAO conventions with Sally. Roger was a life member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and served on his church council. Those who knew Roger remember him as a kind, honest, and humble man who never met a stranger. Whether standing in line at the grocery store, at the FBO, or in conversation. He had a remarkable memory for names and faces and seemed to know someone in every town and airport he visited.

He is survived by his daughter, Dr. Karmen (Bart) Sorenson of Bismarck, ND; his son, Dr. Linden (Julie) Pfeiffer of Hastings, MN; his cherished grandchildren, Aiden, Elias, and Olivia Pfeiffer and Bridger Sorenson; his brother, Larry Pfeiffer of Great Falls, MT; his sister-in-law, Marcella Knight of Bismarck; and many dear relatives and lifelong friends. Roger was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Jackie; and his beloved wife of 56 years, Sally.

Roger's legacy lives on in the skies he loved and the lives he touched.







Adam Dillin, *CM, Airport Planner*
North Dakota Aeronautics Commission
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2025 ND Aviation System Plan & Economic Study Update

For states, aviation system planning is a vital element in the development of a safe, efficient, and robust aerospace network. Much like a routine wellness visit with a doctor, this is an opportunity for a state to periodically examine the health of its infrastructure and activities, note ways in which it's doing well and areas of improvement, anticipate future changes, and create a smart long-term plan for growth.

Airports and aviation businesses are tremendous economic engines. They create jobs, support agriculture and industries, and help draw numerous visitors who patronize local businesses and services. The economic benefits that aviation brings to North Dakota and its communities are considerable, and so it's beneficial to carefully analyze and quantify these impacts to aid business development and justify infrastructure projects.

Performing a statewide system plan and studying economic impacts takes a great deal of time and effort. The last time this was undertaken in North Dakota was in 2014-2015, and much has changed since then. Between oil production shifts in the Bakken, the downturn and rebound of both aviation and the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, sustained record passenger boardings at our commercial airports, and bustling population and business growth in many of our cities, the time has come to reevaluate aviation in our state to help prepare for the future.

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) has partnered with consulting firm Kimley-Horn to create a new 2025 North Dakota State Aviation System Plan and Aviation Economic Impact Study. To streamline processes and reduce data gathering efforts, both studies have been combined into a single master project. The NDAC was awarded a $1.3M grant by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)



in the summer of 2024 and work began shortly thereafter. Our eight commercial airports posted online surveys and received thousands of responses from travelers describing their travel experience and how they spent their money while in the state. Each of our 89 public airports was sent detailed questionnaires and provided a wealth of information on their airfield facilities, businesses, projects, and expenditures. A Technical Advisory Committee was assembled from various aviation stakeholders to provide feedback and input as our study advances. Currently, Aeronautics and our consulting team are in the process of analyzing all of that data, creating forecasts of future activity and system needs, and drafting chapters for the ultimate study reports and publications.

What's next? More data crunching over the winter. Then, in March 2026, we'll have an entire session at the Fly-ND Conference in Minot, ND, where we will present our findings and recommendations. A few months later, we will begin rolling out our publications, which will include a detailed Technical Plan document, a simpler Executive Summary and short fact sheet, GIS-enabled website features, interactive story maps outlining topics like aviation education and Unmanned Aircraft Systems in North Dakota, and many airports will receive individual reports describing their facilities and contributions to the aviation system and our economy. Finally, next August, we'll hold a series of public meetings around the state where residents can learn about aviation and how it impacts their lives both today and for the next twenty years.

If you're curious about the NDSASP-AEIS study, please visit our project website at https://2025ndsasp.com/. There you'll be able to learn about the purpose and goals of the study, check out the draft chapters we've written so far and have an opportunity to provide your own feedback, and sign up for email updates.

2025 North Dakota Aviation Economic Impact Study

2025 North Dakota State Aviation System Plan





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So, I Built An Airplane!

By Dan Loegering

How do I even begin talking about this crazy journey of building a wood and fabric airplane that was designed nearly 100 years ago? I guess right from the beginning.

For as long as I can remember, I have always had a fascination with airplanes; I blame my parents for that! Born in Fargo, ND, and raised here in the early 70's, our nightly entertainment was driving to Hector Airport and watching airplanes take off and land. This early exposure led to me building free-flight balsa and tissue airplanes through grade school and building many radio controlled airplanes into high school. It was sometime around here that our family began to go to EAA Airventure in Oshkosh, WI, every summer for our family vacation. I began my private pilot training as a junior in high school and received my license as a senior.

As I started college, my ability to rent airplanes diminished, along with my extra cash. I kept up with the radio controlled aircraft to satisfy my aviation itch as much as possible. During the next few years, I finished school, got a job, got married, and started a family. All of this definitely slowed down my aviation hobby, but the desire was always there. As part of my job, I found myself in charge of service departments located in various cities about 250 miles away from Fargo and needed a more efficient way to travel to those locations. I purchased a quarter share of a 1976 Cessna 177B and I was flying again!

Around the year 2000, I started looking into building an aircraft of my own and had a few criteria that I was looking at. First was cost; I knew I would not be able to afford a kit at that time in my life, so I began looking at plans built options. Second was building with materials that I was comfortable with and had experience with; this had me looking at wooden designs. Third was overall design and mission; I wanted an older design that would be fun to take out on local excursions. And lastly, I wanted to give rides in it. That really narrowed my choice down to the Pietenpol Air Camper. I ordered and received my plans on March 3, 2005.

What is a Pietenpol Air Camper?

It is a simple parasol wing homebuilt designed by Bernard H Pietenpol. The prototype first flew in 1928 with an Ace four cylinder water-cooled engine. In 1929 he mounted a Ford Model A engine in it and this became the standard powerplant for his design. The plans were originally published in a four part series in the "Flying and Glider" magazine in 1932-33. It is often considered the "grandfather of homebuilt aircraft". Bernard's goal was to create an aircraft that was affordable and easy to construct for home builders and his design remains so to this day. It is constructed primarily of Sitka spruce and plywood and covered in fabric. Constructing it requires basic woodworking skills and tools. It will also need some metal fabrication work to make fittings to attach the wood pieces together and some basic welding is required.



My Pietenpol Air Camper was built over a 19 and a half year period, with a few starts and stops along the way. Constructed from mainly Sitka spruce and Birch plywood glued together with T-88 epoxy, it was a slow but very enjoyable project. With my background in building many balsa radio controlled aircraft, the decision to build a wooden aircraft was easy at the time and I knew I could learn the remaining skills needed as those challenges arose. Many visits to AirVenture were used to gather those needed skills and were all put to good use as my project slowly progressed. The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) yearly AirVenture event in Oshkosh, WI, is not just a week long air show, there are many aspects to it including classes every day on just about any topic you can think of to learn skills needed to build an aircraft.



During my build, I followed the original plans as closely as possible, only making changes where modern materials and hardware were used instead of the original low carbon steel and solid bracing wires. I built it with the original style wooden gear legs and spoked wheels, because I like that era of aircraft and wanted mine to have that antique styling. One major change to the plans is I did not use a Ford Model A engine; rather, I rebuilt a Continental A-65-8 instead and it has performed very well. Using this engine did require changing the location of the engine to keep the center of gravity correct. Rather than adding length to the engine mount, I added two inches to the fuselage at the firewall. This allowed the lines of the plane to more closely match the original design and not appear that the engine was pushed forward.

The first flight in June of 2024 went very well and I followed the EAA Flight Test Manual and test cards for its Phase 1 flights. This is a program that the FAA has approved as an alternative to just flying the plane around for 40 hours. The structured test flight program was very helpful in planning the flights and expanding the flight envelope of the plane, eventually leading to a written flight manual for the plane. Over the test period and into the first year of flying, I continued to work on the plane to finish all of the "little things" on it, to complete the plane to my liking. The full construction time to when I considered everything complete was around 2,800 hours of work. At this point, I was ready to bring it to Oshkosh and fulfill my life long dream of one day flying a plane I had built to AirVenture.



The AirVenture Adventure

The trip to AirVenture was definitely an adventure! First, the Piet is not a fast plane, so cross country flights require a bit of planning and hope that the weather systems do not catch you. Normally I cruise at about 80 MPH but with my front cockpit full of camping supplies, tools, tie-downs, and gust locks, I was only able to manage a blistering 75 MPH. My first destination was Brodhead, WI, for a Pietenpol fly-in that occurs the weekend before Oshkosh. I departed at 7:00 AM on a record cold day in July at 43 degrees! A great way to start a long journey! After four stops and eight hours of flight, I touched down at Brodhead and met up with my parents and wife, who had driven to Oshkosh to set up the camper the day before. After a quick supper and lots of questions on the plane, I was able to set up my tent and have a great first night camping with it.

Friday morning, I decided to change my plans and leave for Oshkosh a day earlier than I had intended due to the weather forecast on Saturday. I packed up camp, unloaded a few things with my ground crew and prepared for the "Fisk arrival" in to Oshkosh. This was my first time flying in to Oshkosh, and here I was flying a plane that is too slow for the approach, which is supposed to be flown at 90 knots. Knowing I was slow, I made one stop to top up with fuel and then started at the very beginning of the approach, even though others were starting near the middle of the approach. I wanted to be established so they would have a better chance of seeing me and passing by. This worked well as only six aircraft passed by me on the trek in. I would like to commend the last one to pass me in a V-tail Bonanza, he was doing an amazing job flying so slow off my wing until I pulled my throttle back a bit to let him by. Then the words every pilot wants to hear when approaching Oshkosh, "High wing half mile South of Fisk, rock your wings. – Good Rock!" and I was on my way to runway 36, cleared to land at the yellow dot. I would like to say I did a perfect landing in the middle of the dot, which technically I did, never mind that I was still five feet or so in the air.

The plane handled my terrible landing just fine and the ground volunteers directed me to my parking spot for the week, just north of the Homebuilt Headquarters building and right next to an elevated photography stand; what a great spot! I called my ground crew to let them know I had arrived safely and my dad started his long walk out to come meet me. I began tying down the plane and almost immediately had people coming over to ask about it and to introduce themselves. I eventually made it over to register the plane and was asked if I wanted to have it judged. With that taken care of, I met my dad back at the plane and gave him the best birthday present I could, arriving at a place we had been coming to for so many years on his birthday!

Continued on page 24



The next morning began an adventure that I could never dream of and will never top again. The plane was constantly surrounded with people asking about it, talking about their experiences with other Pietenpols, and lots of comments about it. A member from the EAA homebuilders review asked if I would like to fly it in the airshow on Tuesday. I of course said yes, because how can you turn that opportunity down! EAA media approached me and asked if I would like to do an air-to-air photo shoot with it, and again, I could not turn that down. Photographers were stopping by, other EAA media videographers stopped by, news media stopped by, and even a YouTuber stopped by for an interview. I could not believe the interest generated by my simple airplane. It was in the daily Oshkosh newspaper three times during the week and was on the cover on the last day. It was a very surreal experience.



And then there was the judging. If you are having your aircraft judged at Oshkosh, you receive a small sticker with three check boxes on it, for the corner of your info tag, that you hang on your propeller. An aircraft is considered judged once three judges initial these boxes. My sticker ended up with 21 sets of initials! On Tuesday, I received a call from the head judge asking if I could meet his team at the plane. They were starting a new process where all of the judges meet with the builder so they can perform a more thorough inspection and if they have any questions, the builder is there to answer them. This was the first year they were doing this and it went well. We were at the plane for around 45 minutes and I answered their questions and they were also able to give me feedback. Ultimately, they all left and the head judge departed with a “nice job.”

By Thursday, I had gotten to know a few of the lead volunteers at the homebuilt headquarters and they stopped by to ask if I was sticking around through the end of the show. I told them that I had planned on it but will be watching the weather. They replied with a slight smirk and said maybe I would want to stick around. On Saturday, the day of the awards ceremony, one of the pilots I had flown with in the Tuesday airshow stopped by and told me to wear a nice shirt. At the awards ceremony, the table started out with a lot of plaques and Lindy trophies on it; I would have been happy with anything. As the event went on, the trophy count slowly dwindled until it was just the silver and gold Lindy’s remaining and the suspense was building. My plane was drawn for the Reserve Grand Champion Silver Lindy – Plans built category!



The Journey Home

I left Oshkosh on Sunday morning for my return trip. This took an additional 10 hours, five stops, two weather delays, and one night in a hotel in Brainerd, MN. The hotel and shower were amazing! I got home Monday afternoon, once the low clouds and fog burned off, and I could finally relax now that the plane was back in a hangar. A total of 20 flight hours, around 84 gallons of gas, two quarts of oil, four thunderstorms (one of which I stood out by the tail and bystanders stood under the wings ready to help as the gust front blew through), countless new friends, one trophy, and an amazing experience to a journey that has taken over 20 years of my life.

I am thankful for all of my friends and family that have been along for the ride, especially my kids and wife who put up with a lot of nights in the garage or hangar as this came together. All of this, because this crazy guy wanted to build an airplane.

Western North Dakota Honor Flight

Gov. Kelly Armstrong and U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Mitchell Johnson, adjutant general, North Dakota National Guard, greeted veterans on their return after a Western North Dakota Honor Flight at the Bismarck Airport, Sept 23. (Photos by the office of Gov. Kelly Armstrong)

Western North Dakota Honor Flight is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. They transport heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at the memorials.









The Ninth Annual Props & Hops Fundraiser

October 2, 2025 • Mandan Aero Center (Y19)

Props & Hops was back for record-breaking ninth year! On October 2nd, over 336 attendees made their way to the Mandan Aero Center to enjoy a fun-filled evening of locally brewed beers, a delicious meal of ribs - smoked by Chef Roby Boehm - music by Shawn Oban, and shiny airplanes on display. There was also a silent auction with a lot of great items to bid on, courtesy of the local Bismarck-Mandan community.

All proceeds from this year's fundraiser benefit local aviators Chris Susie & Justin Weninger. Both of these young pilots suffered heart-related medical emergencies in recent years that resulted in them losing their medical certificates. A total of $26,264 was raised this year at Props & Hops. The event organizers hope this money will give them a boost in their recovery efforts.











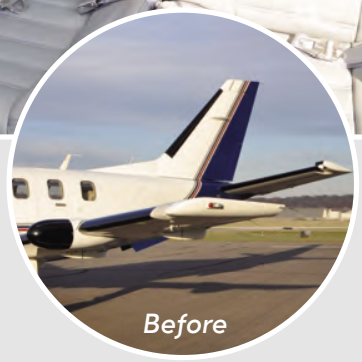
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CALENDAR of EVENTS

Check out the online calendar for details on these events: aero.nd.gov/events

February 2026

2026 Tri-State Aerial Applicators Convention

FEB 18-19 | Fargo, ND

Join us at the Delta Hotel in Fargo for the largest trade show in the nation for agricultural aviation professionals, great networking opportunities, and a dynamic line-up of speakers and events.

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