



# AzAA Matter of Fact

News from the Arizona Airports Association

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Arizona Airports Association  
Newsletter

July 2015

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## Lake Havasu City Hosts 2015 AzAA Spring Conference



WOW ...the AzAA 2015 Spring Conference in Lake Havasu City, Arizona has come and gone leaving in its wake some great memories, rekindled friendships, technical updates, and a renewed understanding of the issues and challenges facing Arizona Aviation today. Once again airport managers and operators, industry leaders, and government officials from across the State came together to exchange ideas, concerns, and to better understand the benefits that the aviation industry provides to the Arizona economy every day.

Attendance at this year's event was strong, with lots of familiar faces from AzAA, FAA, State officials, and all levels of Arizona Airports and Aviation Industry leaders. But it was more than just work. The Lake Havasu venue was spectacular, and most found time to escape from their daily conference responsibilities to take a walk on the beautiful beaches of Lake Havasu, visit the pool, walk the "London Bridge", and/or eat at one of the many fine restaurants the area has to offer.



This year's conference topics covered everything from FAA and ADOT updates, to various aviation hot topics such as current engineering and environmental issues, sustainability, NextGen/RNAV Implementation, Private Public Partnerships, and Aviation Fund & Legislative Impacts in Arizona's current environment. Some serious topics to be sure, and presentations were delivered by some of the top names in the Arizona aviation industry from the ranks of FAA and ADOT, numerous Airport Management and Operations teams, and private consulting and engineering firms. This is truly a business where the education never stops. Another great conference! Hope to see you all again in the Fall!



## History Rediscovered - The First Air Force One

*For some time now I have heard bits and pieces about the first Air Force 1, and how it was being restored in the desert of southern Arizona. Then CNN printed a recent article (shown below) about the aircraft, its history and its current location at the Marana Regional Airport. As an old airplane buff, I love this sort of thing so I recently took the opportunity to "look up" this particular piece of history, and was even able to get a few pictures and take a tour of the aircraft. Here is the first Air Force 1 story;*

**Marana, Arizona (CNN) May 1, 2015** In December 1953, an airplane named the "Columbine II" was on a flight over New York City, identified by air traffic controllers simply as "Air Force 8610." With President Eisenhower on board, it nearly collided mid-air with a commercial airliner also flight-numbered 8610. The near-tragedy prompted the Federal Aviation Administration to designate a call sign for any aircraft that the President of the United States is aboard. The Columbine II became the first Air Force One.

Today it sits on a patch of desert land, where grass struggles and gopher holes dot the arid ground—baking, and a Virginia aviation company wants to fly it home.

"It's an airplane with an incredible amount of history," Karl Stoltzfus, the chairman of Bridgewater, Virginia-based Dynamic Aviation said. "At the end of the day it's an airplane that should be preserved for the public to appreciate."

Stoltzfus and his associates have spent weeks in Arizona inspecting the Lockheed Constellation's four engines, cataloging and replacing parts, and trying to determine whether it could ever fly again. They think it can, and last week they committed to purchasing the plane. The asking price was \$1.5 million, though Stoltzfus would not confirm the final sale price. "We want to purchase it and refurbish it and bring it back to Bridgewater [Virginia] and have it for public display," Stoltzfus said.

The Columbine II is the only privately-owned presidential aircraft in the United States. A rancher and pilot named Mel Christler bought it in a 1970 military surplus auction. The Air Force never told him that the aircraft he wanted to use for crop dusting was Dwight D. Eisenhower's first presidential plane.

"He was getting ready to scrap this airplane [in 1980], and the Smithsonian had been doing some research into aircraft that had carried presidential entourage around and contacted him and asked him if he knew what he had," Christler's grandson, Tim Crowley said. "My grandfather was a World War II veteran. ... He just felt that since it's an important part of our history, that he had to preserve it."

The plane was never scrapped, but Christler couldn't pull together enough money to restore it. In 1990, a Wyoming rancher named Harry Oliver partnered with Christler to restore the plane to flying conditions.



So the pair reassembled the plane in the fall of 1990 and flew it to Eisenhower's hometown of Abilene, Kansas, in honor of what would have been the 34th president's 100th birthday. Today the aircraft resides in Marana, but hasn't flown since 2003. This month, Stoltzfus and his colleagues ran the engines for the first time in 12 years. And soon, the Columbine II may fly again.



*Columbine II at Marana Regional Airport*

*Arizona is full of aviation history, and has become the final home for many of the nations historic aircraft. If you would like a chance to see this one before its gone, I would encourage you to visit the Marana Regional Airport and take a look through the fence at this particular piece of history.*

*The aviation industry in this country is not really very old. I remember the day when the Connie was the work horse of the military and airline industry. Keeping in touch with the past, helps us understand how far we have come today.*

Mr. Richard A. Crosman  
AzAA Associate Director  
Senior Vice President  
Genesis Consulting Group

Article Credit: CNN



## Legislative

Imagine you wake up tomorrow to a world with no airports in Arizona. No runways, no terminals, no hangars, just vacant land standing where once thousands of jobs and travel around the world was at our fingertips. If you wanted to fly to Hawaii for vacation or to Milwaukee to visit relatives you could drive to Los Angeles to catch a flight to both, or you could drive to Milwaukee. There would be no express next day cargo to anywhere. Medical transport might be helicopters based on hospitals, if they want to store jet fuel. Businesses would disappear along their jobs as well. Businesses cannot grow or compete without good air service. Before long Arizona would become an economic disappointment and show clear signs of a dying city.

A few years ago the State Aeronautics Division was a separate entity providing support to Airports with a full staff. Today they are a department within the Arizona Department of Transportation Intermodal Transportation Division. Registrations are now collected by MVD where customer service to aircraft owners is a step below automobile registration. The legislature continues to sweep the Aviation fund better than they sweep the freeways outside of the metropolitan areas of the state. In other words the State looks at Airports as a less than priority or "we don't care part" of the State economy.

The system is broken! It has been broken for a long time. Director John Halikowski spoke to AzAA when the changes began and assured Airports that the level of support would be as experienced prior to the reorganization of the ADOT Aeronautics happened. Since then Director Halikowski has not spoken to AzAA even after the sweeping of the funds. Maybe there is a message? Is the message "You don't count!"?

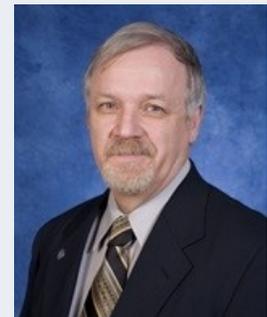
This Legislative session, Airports need to educate (local) District representatives on the importance of the Aviation Fund to our airports. It is necessary to make them aware of the fact that ADOT does not support the Aeronautics' Division or Airports as a whole. It is not just money they have swept, ADOT Aeronautics Division are understaffed, and see no sign of being able to become fully staffed- it is about awareness and support.

Aviation is not asking for additional funding. Airports only ask that the money collected for usage to maintain the system be spent on the system. Airports aren't even requesting that past sweeps be reimbursed, just protect the Aviation Fund from being sweep from this point forward and correct the system allowing the money to be spent where it is needed. If an airport cannot fund a project during a fiscal year then allow airports who are project ready to use the fund to perform needed work. The limits on annual grants do not protect airports, it almost appears that the current system allows for the fund to grow until smaller airports can afford to use the allotted funding or when the Legislature finds a need to sweep. Most of those who contribute to the Aviation are unaware the registration fees collected are not going toward the intended usage. It is time we educate our local general aviation pilots and get their assistance with the battle State Airports are in every year.

Every Airport is encouraged to reach out to your legislators and build the relationship. Build the relationship by providing them a tour and presentation of your Airport or attending functions to interact with their staff. They need to know the whole story. You are the one to tell that story to your legislator.

*Mr. Barney Helmick  
AzAA Past President*

*Airport Director  
Flagstaff Airport*



## Promoting Aviation Careers for Navajo Youth

In an effort to promote and encourage aviation careers among Navajo youth, and to grow our future leaders in the aviation and aerospace fields, the Navajo Division of Transportation – Department of Airports Management, in a successful partnership with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) and Armstrong Consultants, Inc. (Armstrong), is pleased to offer scholarship opportunities to two Navajo High School students to attend and participate in the 2015 ERAU Flight Exploration Camps this summer.

The selected students were:

Charlie-Camp participant Mr. Tyler Tohee from Nazlini, Arizona,  
Echo-Camp participant Mr. Shawn Hongoeva from Forest Lake, Arizona.

During this week-long residential program the selected Navajo students all participate in the Embry-Riddle Flight Exploration Camp at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University campus in Prescott, Arizona. The program includes four hours of hands-on flight instruction, four hours of ground school, lectures on the latest technology in the aviation industry and 30 minutes in an advanced flight simulator. The scholarships include tuition, materials, lodging and meals.

According to Mr. Arlando Teller, (ERAU—PC “95”) “This will be a life changing experience for the three Navajo students, who have expressed a sincere interest in the Aviation/Aeronautical industry. We sincerely thank the sponsors for their enthusiasm, as they shepherded these youth through this exciting aviation experience.”

The Navajo Nation owns, operates and manages six primary public-use airports across the reservation and owns, operates and maintains a fleet of twin turboprop aircraft for conducting tribal business. Because of these activities there is a need for pilots, aircraft mechanics, airport managers, and airport operations and maintenance technicians within Navajo Nation. The objective is to educate and develop Navajo youth to one-day fill these aviation-related positions within our own communities.

With campuses in Daytona Beach, Florida and Prescott, Arizona, and more than 125 extended campuses across the globe, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is the world’s largest and most respected university specializing in aviation and aerospace.

Armstrong Consultants Inc., specializes exclusively in airport planning, engineering and construction administration. With offices in Grand Junction and Denver, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico, Armstrong has provided consulting services for numerous commercial service and general aviation airports across the country, including the Navajo Nation and other tribal airports.



*Aerial of ERAU – Prescott, AZ*



*Mr. Tyler Tohee's first night flight to Tucson AZ*

*Mr. Arlando Teller  
AzAA Executive Director*

*Program Manager, Navajo DOT  
Department of Airports Management  
(ERAU—PC “95)*



## Aviation Fund in Jeopardy Again

Yogi Berra said it best, "It's Deja Vu all over again." Yes—we are having the reoccurring nightmare of the Legislature sweeping the Aviation Fund. This past year \$15 million was removed by the legislature. It was uncommitted and they felt fair game. This year many anticipate a repeat of Aviation Funds being swept. The State continues to "kick the can down the road" through the last Administration and now the Piper is calling for his due.

The courts have ruled that the State had underpaid schools, and had to pay them over \$300 million dollars. This alone cannot be made up in one season. Negotiations continue to find a way to reduce this debt. Once the math is calculated it could go into the billions of dollars.

The Arizona Public Safety Personnel Retirement Program is underfunded. The amount varies from bad, to really bad depending on who you listen to. Either way it is going to cost both the State and municipalities several years to return it to a healthy situation again.

These two issues alone are going to require more than what the State generates in Revenue to balance in a single season. We could put our heads in the sand and say it won't happen, but it has happened in the past and will happen again. We can call our legislators and ask them nicely, or we could yell for help. Neither is going to make a difference in the short term.

In the short term it is necessary and important to educate the Legislature regarding the State Aviation Fund. This will take Airports, Consultants, Contractors, local politicians and anyone willing to assist with protecting the Aviation Fund from future sweeps. Our legislators only see uncommitted funds and may assume, "if it is uncommitted no one needed it." If you speak to a legislator they do not fully understand the Five Year Plan to meet the needs of Airport Capital Improvement Projects. Airports currently are limited to \$2.13 million per year from the State Aviation Fund. This may appear to be a lot until you look at the overall demands of Airports who have a codependency on the State Aviation Fund to get necessary infrastructure improvements completed. Legislators are unaware of the businesses in their districts paying into this fund with the expectation it will go back into airport infrastructure and planning. This year AzAA can anticipate a more focused approach and plan as to how we can collectively begin to education our Legislators. Education can help, but it is time to look at a long-term solution to this continuing issue.

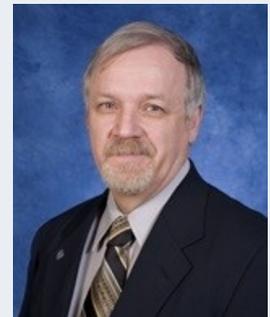
ADOT Aeronautics has been relegated from a "minor player" to a "non-status player" in the State Transportation System. There is a need to begin a working group which can discuss the changes that have occurred over the last few years regarding the State Aeronautics division as well as the Aviation Fund. The thought behind this is for the working group to assist with finding a solution as to how Aeronautics should function, be staffed and funded to meet the future needs of our state Airports. This group would also consider new methods or opportunities that may assist or fund airport projects. Maybe limited spending to single airports may not be the best method. The FAA has expectations for Airports to be self-sufficient and this working group could assist with the development of an outline on how to use the aviation fund to increase self-sufficiency and not just the limited projects eligible now.

Airports should approach problems in a more futuristic driven fashion and not confine how we meet the needs of all. A dramatic new direction is needed. Some may say this is crazy, and could possibly be right. Whereas others may feel any recommendations to ADOT will not be considered and ultimately rejected. Regardless, each of us can try and make a change, have a collective stance as a group, and offer justifiable changes or solutions.

A few years ago AzAA developed "Best Practices," with a similar method. In the past years it has been observed the Arizona's "Best Practices" being adopted and used by other states. This was successfully completed by partnerships between AzAA, FAA and ADOT. There is no doubt this partnership is beneficial in assisting with a plan to present to the Legislature to help Arizona's Airports achieve their best.

*Mr. Barney Helmick  
AzAA Past President*

*Airport Director  
Flagstaff Airport*



## A Message from your AzAA President

This year is about planning and more planning. I will echo the initial e-mail by restating how much I look forward to a productive and wonderful year with AzAA. As I serve as your President we will begin the focus on leadership, communication, professional development and organizational management to benefit the membership. Each of you make a difference as we begin working toward each of these objectives and form the Committees to gain some headway on how AzAA can be used as a resource in your business whether you are the Airport, Engineer, Consultant, Contractor, Student, or looking for that perfect spot in the industry! The AzAA membership has some of the greatest seasoned professionals and up-and-coming professionals proving why we are one of the strongest State Aviation organization in the Nation. Let's continue to be advocates of the industry that we love.

For members not in attendance at the AzAA Dutch Berthoff Conference this past Spring in beautiful Lake Havasu City, it is with great enthusiasm to introduce and welcome the newest additions to the AzAA Board of Directors:

- Ed Faron, Deer Valley Airport
- Arlando Teller, Navajo DOT, Dept. of Airports Management
- Charlie McDermott, Armstrong Consultants

I would also like to thank the returning Board of Directors for their continued efforts:

- Barney Helmick, Flagstaff Airport
- Brad Hagen, Falcon Field Airport
- Steve Johnston, Lake Havasu City Airport
- Carmen Williams, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport
- Rick Crosman, Genesis Consulting Group, LLC
- Cathy Herring, KCA

### COMMITTEE OPPORTUNITIES & ASSISTANCE WANTED!

As your AzAA President, I will continue with the plan from Past President Helmick striving to improve the communications with regulatory agencies, educational and professional development sessions at conferences, encouraging membership to be involved as well as the networking and resources that are accessible through the new website. This year I encourage everyone to take part in the various committees which contribute to the success and growth of AzAA. Provided are the following Committees and chairman information for your use.

AzAA depends on your participation to develop stronger programs for conferences, assist with legislative concerns and awareness, and a proactive approach to help address concerns or problems.

**2015 Fall and 2016 Spring Conference Committee-** Interested in the coordination and planning for the conferences? Contact 2nd Vice President Brad Hagen at [brad.hagen@mesaaz.gov](mailto:brad.hagen@mesaaz.gov) to begin assisting with upcoming conference planning for AzAA.

**Legislative Committee-** If you have the passion to tackle challenges and enjoy politics, this Committee may be one that you will find very rewarding as you contribute to solutions with State, Federal and partnering agencies to address current issues. Start today and contact Past President Barney Helmick at [bhelmick@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:bhelmick@flagstaffaz.gov).

**2016 Arizona Aviation Day at the Capitol Planning Committee-** The planning committee will begin later this summer regarding Aviation Day. Arizona Aviation Day at the Capitol began over 10 years ago as an event to bring awareness and opportunity as well as interface the aviation industry with our legislators and support staff. If you would like to be on the planning committee, please reach Past President Barney Helmick at [bhelmick@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:bhelmick@flagstaffaz.gov).

**Quarterly Newsletter (Public Relations Committee)-** Do you like writing or editing articles regarding aviation events, best practices, or happenings around the State? Join our public relations committee to assist with the AzAA Quarterly Newsletter by contacting Associate Director Rick Crosman at [Rick@genesis-aviation.com](mailto:Rick@genesis-aviation.com).

**Membership Committee-** Wonder where past colleagues have gone or why there are some airports not taking advantage of AzAA? Join our membership committee to help with retention and recruitment of AzAA by reaching Executive Director Arlando Teller at [ateller@navajodot.org](mailto:ateller@navajodot.org).

**Updating the Arizona Best Practices Guide-** It is time to make the necessary revisions to the Arizona Best Practices Guide and new Corporate Director Charlie McDermott will be leading the Committee. If you would like to help with this useful document, please contact Charlie at [cmcdermott@armstrongconsultants.com](mailto:cmcdermott@armstrongconsultants.com).

## A Message from your AzAA President

There are other committees willing to welcome additional support from the AzAA membership if you have a passion in a committee not listed. Please feel free to reach out to the assigned chairman and let them know you are interested in learning and helping them with their committee. The information can be found on the website under "Committees".

### SAVE THE DATES FOR FUTURE AzAA CONFERENCES & EVENTS

There are some date changes since providing the dates at the Spring Conference. The tentative dates to remember for this upcoming year regarding conferences are:

2015 AzAA Fall Conference: October 8th in Chandler, AZ at SoHo63

2016 Az Aviation Day at the Capitol: January 28, 2016

2016 AzAA Spring Conference: May 1-3, 2016 in Flagstaff, AZ

I look forward to the months ahead and the support as your AzAA President. Thank you for your participation and membership in the #1 State Aviation Association in the nation!

Mrs. Gladys Wiggins, C.M.  
AzAA President

Airport Director  
Yuma International Airport



## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information or things you might like to see in future newsletters. We can be reached at:

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## ADOT Update

As I write this column, I am revising many of the aspects of MPD-Aeronautics' (Aero) work program. As most of you saw in my email, Kenn Potts has returned to his roots of airports management as the Airport Administrator of the Glendale Municipal Airport. I wish him well and I know Glendale is getting one of the best airport experts for their facility.

I am working with the ADOT Executive Team to fund and recruit new Grant Managers and a new Airport Engineer. I cannot give you any idea of when this will all happen, but I am working in that direction. What must happen in the meantime, however, is to reduce the work effort to the bare minimums for the remaining team. This affects airports in five areas:

1. Airport assignments have been redistributed to the two remaining Grant Managers, Scott Driver and Jennifer Grunest. Those new assignments were sent out to each airport on Friday, July 10th.
2. The State's matching funds to an airport's FAA grant will continue; however, we will only process those items necessary for the grant's specific purposes. Basically, if the FAA approves, Aero approves. A list of the specific suspended requirements will be soon forth coming.
3. Issuance of reinvestment grants is suspended. This was already in the process because of the soon to-happen sweep. Now, this suspension will remain until we hire new staff.
4. The Airport Development Loan program is suspended.
5. The state Aeronautical Charts will not be published.

Aero is moving ahead with the APMS Program, the State/Local grants program and the update of both the SASP and the APMS Triennial Study. We will strive to support each airport in their needs in a responsive manner. We ask for your understanding and patience if we don't respond in a quick manner as you have expected in the past. Please be patience with us.

Mr. Michael A. Klein  
Director, ADOT MPD Aeronautics Group



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