



COMMUNITY NEWS

Community Programs that Fly Under the Radar

BY DAVID BUNKER



▲ Susie Sutphin, Exec. Dir., Tahoe Food Hub and team with local, sustainably grown food. Photo Nicole Dreon.

More than two years ago, Susie Sutphin was deep into a search for a new home for her rapidly expanding nonprofit, Tahoe Food Hub, and coming up empty-handed. Her needs were fairly complex. The regional food system she was building required ample space and a network of coolers, condensers and generators to accommodate the organization's regionally sourced organic produce, fruit, meat and dairy items.

"We had been searching for a year and a half or two years, and we were looking at pretty high rents," said Sutphin, the organization's executive director. "It was a scary proposition looking at other spaces and thinking about how we would afford it."

Finally, with a growing sense of urgency, Sutphin's search landed her at what seemed like a highly unlikely place — the offices of the Truckee Tahoe Airport. "Out of desperation one day, I just walked in the door," said Sutphin.

When she asked if the airport was renting warehouse space, the answer was a surprising "yes."

Truckee Tahoe Airport General Manager Kevin Smith took Sutphin to look at an available space at the District's non-aeronautical warehouse

building. The rent, because of an airport policy to support local nonprofit organizations, started at a fraction of what the Food Hub was facing at other locations. After a review by the Airport District Board, an agreement was inked, and improvements began to shape the warehouse into the new home of the Tahoe Food Hub. Now, over a year into the new location, the serendipity of walking into the Airport seems like destiny.

"We don't know where we would be without the Airport," said Sutphin. "I am extremely grateful for everything they have done."

The Tahoe Food Hub is just one example of the widespread, and often under-the-radar, support that the Airport District generously distributes to a whole host of community organizations and efforts. Everything from land conservation, affordable housing, transportation, search and rescue organizations, firefighting, and community events have received substantial support from the District over the years.

The Tahoe Food Hub is now neighbors with two other vibrant nonprofits that the Airport houses at its warehouse off Soaring Way. The Truckee Roundhouse, a makerspace

that delivers valuable education programs, found a home at the Airport almost three years ago. Sierra Community House — an umbrella for critical nonprofits Tahoe SAFE Alliance, Project MANA, Family Resource Center of Truckee, and North Tahoe Family Resource Center — also now has offices in the same warehouse.

For an organization like the Truckee Roundhouse, a brilliant but unproven idea, the Airport's support was both a critical vote of confidence and vital financial aid that the new organization desperately needed.

"Without the Airport we wouldn't have been given that cushion to test the model," said Karyn Stanley, Truckee Roundhouse's executive director.

"Luckily, we have been really embraced by the community, but we couldn't have done that without the Airport."

The Truckee Roundhouse leads numerous education programs for local students — an effort that directly aligns with the Airport's goal of advancing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) education. Middle school and high school students combine engineering, math and tech-enabled machinery skills to see intricate building projects through to completion at the nonprofit.

"While people think about the Roundhouse as a place for people to learn new skills and launch new side businesses, what I really think we've been successful at is our school and community programs," said Stanley.

Reflecting the Community

One central idea guides the Truckee Tahoe Airport as it backs nonprofits and community initiatives year after year. The concept comes from a guiding planning principle that many airports embrace, but few as wholeheartedly as the Truckee Tahoe Airport District.

"There is a common airport planning term that an airport should mirror the community that it serves," says Truckee Tahoe Airport General Manager Kevin

Smith, "and we really try to take that to heart."

This philosophy has led the Airport to support land conservation deals loaded with recreation potential, affordable housing initiatives that house local workers, transportation solutions that benefit local families and vital community-serving nonprofits.

"Our philosophy with community partnerships is that, if we can lead and show people that it is possible, we extend our neck a little bit," said Hardy Bullock, Truckee Tahoe Airport District's director of aviation and community services. "But, if every special district did a little bit, many of the problems that our community faces could be better tackled."

Often, at the Airport, that means much more than writing a check or discounting a rental rate for a nonprofit. It usually means Airport staff rolling up their sleeves and working hand-in-hand with local community organizations.

"It can be challenging to administer these programs, but it can be incredibly beneficial for the people we help," said Bullock.

"We've spent almost a million dollars over the last four years transforming the warehouse into that use," said Bullock. The Airport District strikes an affordable, but escalating, lease arrangement with nonprofits at the warehouse that allows the nonprofits to save rental overhead in those critical early months and years as a nonprofit scales and invests in expanding services and partnerships.

The generous lease agreements are part of a plan by the Airport District, which benefits from local property tax revenue, to reinvest that money back into the community it serves.

"Six or seven years ago, airports

came to the conclusion that they had to be more than just a transportation asset — they had to be a community asset," said Bullock.

At times, those twin missions of aviation and community service align seamlessly — like the Airport's support of the Truckee Tahoe Soaring Association Youth Aviation Camp. That camp, and the Soaring Association's program that allows young volunteers to earn hours toward their pilots' licenses, has sparked a lifelong love affair in aviation for many local youth. The Soaring Association houses a wall of fame at their facility, featuring all of the photos of local participants who have come through the program.

"I would say that 70 percent of the kids with photos on the wall are pilots now," said Bullock.

For Truckee Tahoe Airport District General Manager Kevin Smith, who says the aviation industry has to do more to attract and retain the next generation of talent, seeing the Airport's investment in youth programs come full circle is gratifying.

The Truckee Tahoe Airport District is undeniably unique in the breadth of community initiatives it supports. Much of that can be traced back to the fact that it is one of only nine special airport districts in the state of California. The public nature of the District and the property tax revenue it receives enable it to act almost like a seed investor, germinating critical community initiatives with well-timed support that allows the organizations to grow into vital parts of Truckee-North Tahoe life.

"I think of the Airport District as an unsung hero. I don't think the community knows how much they support," said Stanley.

For more information on featured airport based nonprofits, visit

Sierra Community House: sierracommunityhouse.org

Tahoe Food Hub: tahoefoodhub.org

Truckee Roundhouse: truckeeroundhouse.org

Truckee Tahoe Soaring Association: soartruckee.org

AT THE AIRPORT

LOOKING ABOVE AND BEYOND TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

BY LAUREL LIPPERT

It's not unusual to meet someone in Truckee who has travelled to many parts of the world. But, it is rare to learn that the person has flown a privately-owned airplane himself across both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Chris Barbera, 39, CEO and Director of Operations at Mountain Lion Aviation, began learning to fly at age 14. His father and grandfather were both private pilots, but Chris's ambition to make aviation his profession was his own impassioned and uncharted path. Taught by a retired Navy pilot, Chris's first flight as a certificated private pilot was at age 17 to Nervino Airport in the Sierra Valley north of Truckee. His grandparents, who lived nearby in Graeagle and supported his aviation goal, insisted that they be Chris's first passengers as a private pilot, and he honored their wish.

From the time that Chris was a student at the University of Nevada, Reno, reluctantly studying to become a mechanical engineer, he knew there was another road he wanted to take. Just two years into his studies, Chris accepted a job at Fitch Aviation in Reno, the flight school where he had taken his commercial and flight instructor training. There, he met the director of maintenance, Jeff Byrns, whose main role was care of a privately-owned Falcon jet. In time, Chris discovered that solving aircraft problems with Jeff was very satisfying. When Jeff introduced him to the owners and chief pilot of the Falcon,

Chris was asked to come on board as co-pilot. By then, Chris had also earned his multi-engine instructor certificate and was teaching at Sierra Skyport, a Cirrus Certified Flight Training Center in Minden, NV.

"I have always enjoyed teaching," says Chris, "and it was the segue into my two biggest aviation careers." It was at Sierra Skyport where Chris met Jim Wilkinson who had bought a Cirrus and needed transition lessons. Chris gave him that training, as well as instrument and commercial flight instruction. They got to know each other, and, when Jim decided to

buy Sierra Skyport and create his own operation in 2017, he invited Chris to join him in forming Mountain Lion Aviation, a new independent charter company to be based at KTRK.

Today, Chris has over 7,000 hours of flying time, which includes 3,500 hours of jet time. As

well as directing operations at Mountain Lion, Chris continues to fly the Falcon jet over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. When Chris is asked what makes flying out of Truckee so special,

he says, "From a passenger's standpoint, it's the scenery--the mountains, the proximity to the lake, the changing views of the seasons. On the pilot's side, it's never boring and always a challenge with the high elevation and winds." Besides flying, Chris enjoys time with his wife Amy and two children, ages six and five, who do join him in an airplane but, more often, on a boat at a local lake in summer months.

Mountain Lion Aviation is charter-certified to fly anyone who needs transportation by air to any of 250 public airports in California and over 5,000 public airports in the U.S. In addition to being a charter operation and Cirrus Training



▲ Chris pictured with one of Mountain Lion's SR22s. Photo Tom Lippert.

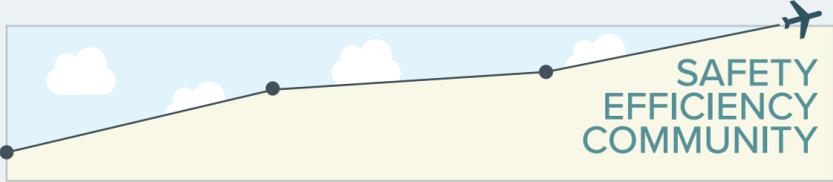
Center, Mountain Lion Aviation also provides aircraft maintenance since they recently acquired Sierra Aero, the aviation maintenance and rental shop based at Truckee Tahoe Airport.

In April, Chris flew a Mountain Lion Aviation-operated Pilatus to deliver 150 gallons of hand sanitizer from Truckee's Old Trestle Distillery to the San Francisco Police Department, a one-hour flight from KTRK to KSFO. Colchis Capital Management donated the aircraft time; Truckee Tahoe Airport bought the fuel; and Chris piloted the airplane at no charge.

In June, Truckee Tahoe Airport collaborated with Mountain Lion Aviation in a timely effort to aid a local COVID-19 patient. Locating the necessary medication Remdesivir was the task of Tahoe Forest Hospital, but getting it to the patient quickly was the hope of the Nevada County Health Department that reached out to Mountain Lion Aviation and the Airport. Chris was the designated pilot to pick up the drug from Stanford Hospital at San Jose Airport and return it to Truckee. The three-hour roundtrip flight was donated by Mountain Lion Aviation, and the fuel was bought by Truckee Tahoe Airport, another gift to the community by people and businesses committed to help in this uncertain time.

Mountain Lion Aviation and its qualified staff are an asset to the Airport thanks to the positive spirit, exceptional skills and foresight of Chris, Jim and their dedicated team.

THE BUSINESS OF THE AIRPORT IS YOUR BUSINESS



New Heliport at KTRK

Construction is complete on the new airfield heliport project at the REMSA Care Flight operations. The project relocated the helicopter staging area and now allows two helicopters with rotor diameters of 43' to park simultaneously. Included in the upgrades is a new portable 500-gallon Jet-A refueler that enables faster EMS quick turns.

Airport Rd. Sidewalk Project

Truckee Tahoe Airport District has contracted with SNC to complete the remaining 350 lineal feet of sidewalk on Truckee Airport Rd., connecting the existing sidewalk to Highway 267. The project is scheduled to be completed by October 2020.

Emergency Landing Guide

The Airport Community Advisory Team (ACAT) and KTRK staff recently worked to create an emergency landing map (and videos) that depicts flat, fairly unobstructed areas to land, if a forced landing was required. The map's intention is to bring awareness of these areas proximal to the Airport, but is not to be used as official aeronautical information and does not indicate a preference or recommendation by TTAD.

Reporting Noise

It's been a busy summer in the Truckee Tahoe region. Visitors and locals alike have been flocking to area businesses, beaches, trails, roadways and even the skies overhead.

Airport staff work constantly at mitigating aircraft noise and annoyance. The Airport's website includes information for residents about noise reduction efforts and what homeowners can do to report noise and annoyance.

Fire Crew Support

Did you know that, during every summer fire season, the US Forest Service has a fire-fighting helicopter crew based at your Truckee Tahoe Airport? The Airport donates use of its facilities and supports all wild-fire fighting operations. Recently, four helicopter crews were based out of KTRK fighting the Loyalton wildfire.

View more information at truckeetahoeairport.com.

AT THE AIRPORT

AIRPORT CONSIDERS NEW FLIGHT PROCEDURES

The Truckee Tahoe Airport District (TTAD) has begun the process of developing new flight procedures and will be asking the public for feedback.

Flight procedures are Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certified detailed instructions for an aircraft during specific parts of a flight. They determine the approximate position and altitude of the aircraft as it travels over the ground in both the arrival and departure phases of flight.

The Airport currently offers two departure procedures off two of its runways. Advancements in the aviation industry, including the introduction of Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) into all aircraft, allow pilots to fly more efficiently and with less impact on the community. TTAD is currently researching two additional departure flight paths to utilize this technology and guide pilots over safer, less-populated regions of the Truckee Tahoe area.

The new flight procedures—one for departing Runway 29 and one for Runway 11—will enable the Airport to reduce noise, enhance safety, improve efficiency and allow for operational dispersion. They are being developed to take into account the region's terrain, populated areas, and compatible land areas like highways. More efficient departures will also help pilots burn less fuel and reduce emissions.



Cockpit screen in N590IG, TTAD's diesel powered C172 trainer.

Because the FAA has authority over all flight activity in the air, TTAD is required to use a specified set of criteria to develop new procedures that allow the Airport some influence over the location of arriving and departing aircraft. The Truckee Tahoe Airport District is about to undertake rigorous public outreach efforts in order to ensure the community has a chance to weigh in on the new procedures. In addition to articles in publications like this, the Airport will offer a range of public meetings and informational digital sessions for the public to provide input starting this December.

The entire process to develop and gain approval through the FAA is expected to take between 18 and 36 months. TTAD has completed the preliminary steps. More information will be coming soon via the Airport's digital channels.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Open Space for All



Three generations of the Murphy Family enjoy a round of golf. Photo Tom Lippert.

Did you know that your Truckee Tahoe Airport District (TTAD), as part of its Community Partner "Open Spaces" program, purchased the Ponderosa Golf Course in 2008? A long history of Airport Boards has supported a legacy of regional land purchases that promote open spaces and support important environmental community projects. Many of these land purchases have resulted in agency partnerships and financial support in not only purchasing of the land, but also in the stewardship of the land. The Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District has partnered with TTAD in the daily operations of the Ponderosa Golf Course.

Today, TTAD is the largest land owner in Martis Valley with nearly 3,000 acres, including approximately 1,200 acres at the Airport, 1,462 acres at Waddle Ranch, 20 acres near Martis Estates subdivision, 60 acres at the Ponderosa Golf Course, and an interest in the 45 acres at the Tahoe City Golf Course.

Larry Finney, Truckee's Eyes in the Sky

BY DAVID BUNKER

From Larry Finney's perch high above Truckee Tahoe Airport, mountains, valleys and a wide panel of Sierra sky open up in a wrap-around view. Finney's eyes scan the sky looking for the faint dots of approaching planes; his ears are trained on the radio. The task is diverse each day — orchestrating an eclectic mix of air traffic into a synchronized and safe dance of takeoffs and landings.

Finney, as the tower manager, leads a six-member team from Midwest ATC, a company that has been contracted to run the air traffic control tower since its inception in 2017.

"Having an extensive aviation and military background and understanding how challenging an airport it can be to get in and out of, I do have an appreciation for what the pilots are dealing with," said Finney.

While Truckee Tahoe is a smaller airport than other air traffic control posts Finney has staffed, including Reno ATCT and NorCal Approach Control in Sacramento, he says that what the airport gives up in size, it makes up for in complexity.

"This is a unique airport," said Finney. "The fleet mix makes this airport challenging with the terrain, and then you throw in the glider and sky diving traffic. It is a complex little airport. Some airports might run 600 operations a day but they are not as complex as Truckee running 250 operations a day."

The Airport's tower is not federally funded, so KTRK supports the tower and is also constantly investing in new surveillance and flight-tracking technology to improve tower operations and reduce community noise and annoyance.

"The Airport has a great group of people, and we all work together seven days a week to complete the mission," said Finney. To read the full story on Larry Finney and the KTRK tower, visit truckeetahoeairport.com/public_files/543-pilotnews-summer-2020-pdf.



Larry pictured in front of the Tower. Photo Tom Lippert.

ABOUT THE AIRPORT

Hours of Operation

Dispatch: 7 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Fuel: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Red Truck: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Daily)

Contact

10356 Truckee Airport Road
Truckee, CA 96161
(530) 587-4119
(530) 287-2799 (Community Hotline)
info@truckeetahoeairport.com

General Information

www.truckeetahoeairport.com

Executive Staff

Kevin Smith
General Manager
kevin.smith@truckeetahoeairport.com

Hardy Bullock
Director, Aviation & Community Services
hardy.bullock@truckeetahoeairport.com

Kelly Woo
Director, Finance & Administration
kelly.woo@truckeetahoeairport.com

Dave Hoffman
Director, Operations & Maintenance
dave.hoffman@truckeetahoeairport.com



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