



**MEETING DATE:** February 26, 2020

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Kevin Smith, General Manager and Rick Stephens,  
Board of Directors

**SUBJECT:** Summary Report on AAAE Aviation Issues Conference

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Director Stephens and I had the opportunity of attending the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Aviation Issues Conference in Maui, Hawaii on January 6-9, 2020. Approximately 350 attendees from every facet of the aviation industry attended to discuss aviation issues and policy important to aviation for the 2020 calendar year. Various panel discussions took place covering many topics. Some of these topics were:

- State of the Industry
- 2020 Election Review
- FAA Officials Meeting
- Aviation and the Environment
- Aviation Infrastructure
- Aviation Policy and Safety
- Aviation Security
- Customer Service
- Airspace – New Entrants, Operations, and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)
- Aviation Workforce of the Future

The following is a summary of key points of consideration applicable to the Truckee Tahoe Airport District discussed at the Conference.

**THE REAL IDENTIFICATION OR “REAL ID” MANDATE IS COMING:** David Pekoske, Transportation Security Administration Director spoke on the Real Identification or “Real ID” program deadline coming up on October 1, 2020. It was his opinion that more work needs to be done to assure the public is ready for this change. In order to pass through a TSA checkpoint after October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, your Driver Licenses must have a star on the upper right corner showing it is “Real ID” compliant or you need a Passport. There was some general concern that the public may not be ready for this change which could cause bottlenecks and delays at checkpoints this Fall. FAA and TSA are working with DMVs across the country to assure the public is aware. As of January 2020 only about 26% of the population is Real ID compliant. It was interesting to learn that you can Board an airliner without a passport or Driver License, however it requires a TSA interview process. Through that interview they can figure out who

you are and allow you to pass through TSA Checkpoints, however this is not recommended as it is time consuming and typically only used when IDs are lost or stolen.

**Take Away for TRK:** Staff is working on some media and outreach to let our constituents know about this requirement if they are not already aware. Specifically, not to wait until the Fall to update your Driver Licenses or to secure a Passport as lines will be long.

**PFAS (PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES):** There was a lot of discussion on this topic regarding concerns this product may be contaminating local water systems and affecting public health. Airports have been part of the discussion due to the high level of concentration of PFAS in airport firefighting foams (AFFF). For airports with fire and rescue training facilities this is a concern as AFFF is used regularly in training exercises and has been for years. Currently there is no viable replacement for it. All fuel fires need an AFFF type product. The FAA is working diligently on a viable solution to this.

**Take Away for TRK:** We do not use AFFF with any level of regularity. This product is carried aboard the local fire agencies equipment but not sprayed on the airport unless there is an incident where it is needed. Director Stephens did check with the NorthStar Community Services District who monitor the ground water around the Airport, and they have not found evidence of PFAS in their samples. We will continue to watch and monitor this issue.

**STABLE PREDICTABLE AIRPORT FUNDING:** There was good news on this topic. We are in the second year of the 5-year 2018 FAA Reauthorization Bill. The overall feeling of the group is that we are in better shape than we have been in a while. Full funding of AIP projects will be available sooner than in years past.

**Take Away for TRK:** We are starting to see the benefits of this program. The FAA San Francisco Airports District Office has been pushing out funding and grants much earlier than in past years. We are on track to have all our projects approved, designed, and built without a winter shutdown in 2020.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM FAA OFFICIALS MEETING:**

- They are looking at an "AIP Fast" program to get bids and funding out quicker and greatly streamline the process.
- We can apply for funding for a future certified Tower through the Small Airport Fund. This Fund receives \$500,000,000 per year nationwide. Competition is fierce but achievable especially if we will fund 50% of the tower.
- Safety Management System implementation and maintenance is AIP eligible.
- Airport Capacity is a huge issue right now with FAA. They typically will not allow any projects for FAA obligated airports that reduce capacity.
- They have created a Noise Liaison position for each Region and begun to staff positions. They are currently hiring the first 3 positions.

**STATUS OF UNMANNED AREAL VEHICLES (UAS):** This continues to be an important topic of Discussion each year. FAA currently has 17 UAS Request for recognition to operate in the National Airspace System (NAS). There is still some overall industry confusion about how this will all be sorted out. Uber, Lyft, UPS, FedEx and others are all pushing very hard on this issue, both for passenger and package delivery. FAA estimates they will be operating actively in the NAS by 2023.

**Take Away for TRK:** Due to the significant recreation and tourism economy in our region, UAS products and services will seek approval to operate in the Tahoe Truckee area soon. We will be watching this closely.

**OTHER INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- **Auto Land systems** in aircraft are ready for delivery into single engine and light jet aircraft. This will be an option available in Cirrus Aircraft this coming year. If a pilot becomes incapacitated for any reason, the passengers can easily instruct the aircraft to land, which it will do 100% automated in any weather conditions. It was discussed that all aircraft, no matter the size should have this function.
- Concern was expressed regarding the time it takes to certify a new **Aircraft engine** vs. some of the environmental mandates and Green New Deal provisions being proposed. It currently takes about 10 years to certify a new engine. This must be reduced greatly if we are going to make progress on quicker more fuel-efficient aircraft.
- **Aviation Education**, STEM and the workforce of the future was discussed multiple times. Mark Baker, Pres. of AOPA brought this up as his first and number one issue facing our industry in the future. All segments of the industry are having recruitment and retention issues. There is more competition for the attention of young people. We all must do a better job. There was some discussion regarding AOPA High School STEM curriculum and the Airline Pilot Association's "Cleared to Dream" programs and how to get more of these programs into high schools.
- **Infrastructure and Passenger Facility Charge (PFC)** was discussed multiple times. It was agreed by all except the airlines that a PFC increase needs to happen. Airlines still oppose a PFC increase. There is no question that more funds will be available in the Small Airport Fund and discretionary funds for General Aviation airports if the PFC increase is instituted. It was noted that most aviation issues are non-partisan. They typically enjoy support or disfavor equally from both major political parties. It typically depends on which industries are located in a particular state or congressional district as to whether the issue receives support.
- **Environmental issues:** Lots of discussion on PFAS, Biofuels, aircraft and engine technology, electric aircraft and battery technology, noise issues and noise reporting, as well as passenger shaming. We could go into detail on any of these issues. All were discussed at the conference.
- Retired **Air Traffic Controllers** need to be allowed to work in contract non-Fed towers after FAA retirement and not lose their Federal retirement benefits. This was an issue raised by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA). Many of their members would be willing to work in non-Fed Towers part-time but can't due to this requirement. This could help alleviate some of the staffing issues at many towers including at TRK.
- **Commercial Space** continues to grow. There will be 55 Commercial satellite launches in 2020. The amount of air space these launches require and their impact on the NAS was discussed.
- **Biometrics** is on the way along with digital ID. Biometrics is currently in use at the US Mexico Border. There will soon be opt in programs for Biometric TSA screening. More to come on this.

Please let us know if you have any other questions.

Thank You.