

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 and trust 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 Truckee Tahoe Airport.

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 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.

At this challenging time, Mountain Lion Aviation is finding unique ways to contribute to the community. "The airport has been very



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

helpful to us from the start, especially welcoming and supportive in donated flights," says Chris.

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 round-trip 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.

In addition to the Truckee community, local pilot Grant Korgan greatly benefitted from Chris's help and encouragement. Nine years after Grant was paralyzed in a snowmobiling accident in 2010, Chris, whom Grant called "Charlie Bravo," helped him complete his flight training and get a special issuance medical certificate that allowed Grant to fly. "We proved to the FAA that he could do it," says Chris Barbera with a smile of satisfaction and accomplishment.

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

Truckee Tahoe Airport

PILOT NEWS

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Meet Larry Finney, KTRK'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.

At the air traffic control tower positioned over the Truckee Tahoe Airport's runways, the task is diverse each day — orchestrating an eclectic mix of air traffic into a synchronized and safe dance of takeoffs and landings. A screen tracking approaching aircraft and landline traffic from the FAA's Oakland Center, notifies him of incoming aircraft.

Finney is part of a six-member team from Midwest ATC, a company that is contracted to run the air traffic control tower at KTRK. He leads the team as the air traffic control manager for Truckee Tahoe Airport, a post he has assumed after working as an air traffic controller at the airport for two and a half years. That followed a decades-long career in aviation, where as an FAA controller he worked as a supervisor and Training Specialist. Finney retired from the Federal Aviation Administration after 28 years. His earlier military career includes flight engineer posts on the C-141B and C-130 aircraft. Finney flew missions in support of Desert Storm/Desert Shield while on the C-141B. With the Nevada Air National Guard, Finney flew missions in Iraq and Afghanistan supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. All that experience on aircraft and in air traffic control, including flying in military operations overseas, gives him a unique perspective for the pilots he guides at the Truckee Tahoe Airport every day.

"Having an aviation 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. Some airports might run 600 operations a day, and it is not as complex as Truckee running 250 operations a day, with big seasonal fluctuations and approximately 40,000 flight operations a year."

On a busy holiday weekend, Finney and his air traffic controllers may be dealing with speedy ultra-modern private jets, as well as small single-engine planes, and even specialty aircraft like gyrocopters. The wide variability in speed can make sequencing these aircraft a sophisticated calculation.

That is why Finney says three-dimensional thinking and mental math calculations are critical skills for him and his team.

This repertoire of air traffic control skills is especially important when wild mountain weather and challenging terrain combine during popular holiday weekends.

As Finney and his fellow air traffic controllers communicate with both arriving and departing planes once they enter the Truckee Tahoe Airport's airspace — a 4.2-nautical-mile area around the airport up to 8,400 feet MSL — they route planes primarily for safety but also for noise abatement procedures.

This gives the airport more control over flight paths since the tower started operations in 2017. Before that date, pilots entered and departed the airport on their own. While Truckee's tower is a non-federal tower — meaning it is funded extensively by the Truckee

Tahoe Airport District and not the FAA — the airport is constantly investing in new surveillance and flight tracking technology to improve tower operations and reduce community noise and annoyance.

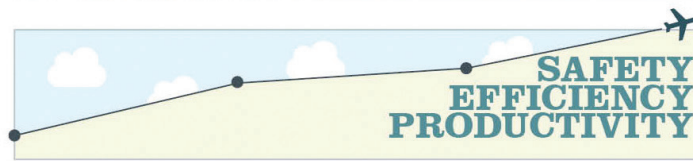
The airport's commitment to the tower operations, and the experienced and talented people Larry Finney gets to work with, are why he enjoys leading the tower operations.

"The airport has a great group of people, and we all work together seven days a week to complete the mission," said Finney.



Larry pictured in front of Truckee's tower. Photo Tom Lippert

THE BUSINESS OF THE AIRPORT IS YOUR BUSINESS



The Truckee Tahoe Airport District (TTAD) continually strives to improve safety, service and efficiency for Airport users and reduce annoyance for local residents. Following is an overview of projects and initiatives the Airport is currently working on to further these goals:

New Aircraft Wash Rack Now Open

Time to wash the bugs and grime off that beautiful plane! A clean bird always seems to fly better. The new wash rack is located near the southeast corner of the 100LL self-serve fuel island and includes a water runoff collection filtering system. The \$365,625 project was jointly funded via an FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant and Truckee Tahoe Airport funds. For more information on KTRK's summer construction projects, visit: truckeetahoeairport.com/aviation/construction.

ACAT Recruitment

Are you a local pilot and interested in representing your community at Truckee Tahoe Airport? The Airport Community Advisory Team (ACAT) is looking for a pilot-member. Airport staff is accepting applications from interested pilots for this Board-appointed volunteer position. **Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, September 18, 2020.**

The Airport Community Advisory Team, founded in 2005, works to develop solutions and strategies to minimize impacts of the airport on surrounding communities. Additionally, ACAT works to generate ideas around garnering public benefits from the District. ACAT is comprised of six community volunteer members (three non-pilots and three pilots), who are dedicated to serving both the local community and the Airport, and finding win-win solutions wherever possible. Recommendations from ACAT go directly to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis.

ACAT members typically meet in the Airport Terminal building, Board Room-A on the first Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am.

For information on how to apply and/or for more info about ACAT, please contact Hardy Bullock, Director of Aviation & Community Services at - Email: hardy.bullock@truckeetahoeairport.com, Phone: (530) 587-7940, or Visit: truckeetahoeairport.com/administration/acad.

Taxiway Alpha Construction Update

The \$3,992,400 joint KTRK and FAA Airport Improvement Project to reconstruct parallel Taxiway Alpha has been funded but is now rescheduled for summer 2021. The project entails reconstructing the western half of Taxiway Alpha from Taxiway Echo (in front of the terminal building) to Taxiway Bravo at the Runway 11 runup. For

additional Airport summer 2020 construction information, visit: truckeetahoeairport.com/aviation/construction.

Airport Road 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 that terminates just south of the Town of Truckee Town Hall to the intersection at Highway 267. The \$162,000 project is scheduled to be completed by early October 2020.

Emergency Landing Guide

The Airport Community Advisory Team (ACAT) and KTRK Staff recently partnered 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 nearest to the airport. Refer to your Pilot's Operating Handbook for specific performance applicability. This guide shall not be used as official aeronautical information and is designed only as a reference for exploring and understanding local open spaces that may support an emergency landing. This guide does not indicate a preference or recommendation by Truckee Tahoe Airport for any particular emergency procedures. For more information and videos of the sites, please visit truckeetahoeairport.com/aviation/emergency-landing-guide.

New Heliport at KTRK

Construction is complete on the new heliport project at the REMSA Care Flight operations on the west side of the airfield. Meyers Earthwork was the general contractor on the \$382,500 heliport, jointly funded by KTRK and an FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant. The project moves the helicopter



A bird's-eye view of the completed Heliport on the west side of the airfield.

staging area to a safer location (away from the airfield's Gate 4) and now allows two helicopters with main rotor diameters of up to 43' to park simultaneously side by side. Included in the upgrades is a new portable 500-gallon Jet-A refueler that pumps at twice the volume of the old refueler, thus enabling faster EMS quick turns when needed.

Covey's News from the Flight Deck

NEW FLIGHT SIMULATOR

Your Truckee Tahoe Airport took delivery of a new Precision Flight Controls GTX G-1000 flight simulator in April. This Advanced Aviation Training Device allows pilots to practice and log required flight currencies, such as Instrument Flight Rating currency (six approaches, holding procedures, intercepting and tracking using navigational electronic systems, every six months). Designed and manufactured in nearby Rancho Cordova, CA the simulator features Garmin's G-1000 avionics suite that directly mirrors the flight deck on the district-owned rental aircraft N5901G turbo diesel Cessna 172. For more information please contact Mark Covey at mark.covey@truckeetahoeairport.com. To get trained and signed up to use the simulator, please email Mountain Lion Aviation at flightschool@mountainlion.aero.



Mark Covey performs year-round outreach to local and transient pilots.

AIRSIDE PILOT OUTREACH

Bluebird hot summer days draw crowds to our mountain lakes and the airport ramp. The Pilot Outreach Coordinator spends his days educating pilots on the Noise Abatement Procedures, recommended flight procedures and voluntary curfew hours. During summer weekends and busy holiday periods, Mark speaks to dozens of pilots and hands out Noise Abatement cards. Many of the pilots Mark speaks to are first-time visitors to KTRK!

PILOT'S SAFE HAVEN

ACAT and Staff recently developed the Safe Haven Initiative. This program is designed to provide assistance to transient pilots who may face a hardship during periods of unanticipated, unsafe weather so that they don't make an unsound decision to depart. The program enlists the help of local pilots to assist fellow pilots with accommodations in a time of need. The Pilot Outreach

Coordinator will help to facilitate the program and connect pilots in need to pilots with a spare bedroom. For more information, please check out our Safe Haven page at truckeetahoeairport.com/public_files/534-safe_haven_initiative_flyer.pdf.

KTRK SAFETY EDUCATION

On June 13, Mark Covey made a "Flying Into and Out of KTRK" presentation to 80 pilots across the nation via a Zoom meeting. The presentation highlighted flight safety considerations such as best route of flight, density altitude, weight and balance, mountain wave, turbulence, wind shear, icing, fuel mixture and wildlife. The program also covered Noise Abatement Procedures, curfew hours in depth, as well as service offerings and KTRK's Familiarization Program. Attendance at the presentation earned pilots one FAA WINGS continuing education credit. For future presentations, contact Mark Covey at mark.covey@truckeetahoeairport.com.

KTRK Hangar Incentive Survey

KTRK is in the process of surveying hangar tenants on their flying habits during the summertime and how they utilize hangar incentives. The 12-question, five-minute online survey asks tenants how their summer operations differ from other times of the year, how many times per year they perceive the need to fly during the voluntary curfew hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., as well as what considerations are taken for flights during those hours. We also ask what factors effect post-10 p.m. arrivals, such as weather or Air Traffic Control delays, or pre-7 a.m. departures, such as density altitude or convective activity.

If you are a hangar tenant and wish to participate in the survey, please use visit: surveyMonkey.com/r/VM8H7CM. We appreciate all of our tenants' assistance with the survey. More information will be presented after the survey closes on August 15, 2020 and the results are analyzed by Staff.

FLY QUIET INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- Level 1: 11 p.m. – 6 a.m. (\$0.02/sq ft/month discount)
- Level 2: 10:30 p.m. – 6:30 a.m. (\$0.02/sq ft/month discount)
- Voluntary Curfew: 10 p.m. – 7 a.m.

ADS-B & Flight Procedures Update

The ADS-B project is moving forward. The system should be operational by late fall. L3Harris is finishing completion of receiver sites in Truckee and South Lake Tahoe.

TTAD is examining new flight procedures to enhance safety and capacity, and reduce annoyance. In late summer, the Airport will reach out to pilots with conceptual overviews on potential departures off Runway 29 and Runway 11. Keep your eyes and ears open to new and efficient ways to fly out of the Truckee Tahoe Airport.



Conceptual depiction of possible procedures.

For more information, contact Hardy Bullock at hardy.bullock@truckeetahoeairport.com.