



Aviation Quarterly Newsletter

brought to you by the New Mexico Department of Transportation

FLY NEW MEXICO

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NEW RURAL AIR SERVICES FOR NEW MEXICO

by Pedro Rael / Director of the Aviation Division For NMDOT

After a long year, Senate Bill 133, as amended many times, passed the House and the Senate. This year, after various committees and several hearings before the floor of the Senate and the House, the New Mexico Legislature handily passed a bill that allows the establishment of new scheduled air services in rural New Mexico county or municipal airports. It is expected to be signed by Governor Lujan-Grisham.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The principal objective of the bill is to establish rural air services in New Mexico by granting funds to qualifying municipalities and counties that own airports.

WHAT MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES QUALIFY?

There are four absolute requirements in the bill:

1. The area around the airport involved must contain at least 20,000 persons residing within fifty (50) miles “unless the municipality or county has existing scheduled air service”;
2. Routes to be served shall be new air routes not being served at the time a grant is made;
3. Matching funds by the municipality or county involved in the following percentage amounts, calculated as a percentage of the grant amount:
 - a. Ten per cent (10%) if the municipality or county has no existing air service;
 - b. Fifty per cent (50%) if the municipality or county has existing air service;
4. New route scheduled air service is to be established.

Maximum funds in each grant are as follows:

1. \$1,250,000.00 for counties or municipalities with existing air service;
2. \$1,750,000.00 for counties or municipalities without existing air service.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL THE GRANT BE IN EFFECT?

Each fiscal year grants are to be awarded through a competitive process. The minimum time that they are to cover is two years. Be aware, however, that funds are not unlimited—the number of the two-year grants (or longer) will be limited by the size of the awards.

WHAT ARE THE FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING ALLOWANCE OF A GRANT?

1. Demand; and
2. Economic impact on the municipality or county; and
3. Feasibility of a common carrier licensed by the State of New Mexico servicing new routes.

ARE CERTAIN APPLICATIONS REQUIRED? WHERE AND WHEN ARE APPLICATIONS TO BE DELIVERED?

1. The applications are to be submitted to the Director of NMDOT Aviation Division—the specific address and email will be provided;
2. Deadlines and guidelines have yet to be published since the bill will not be in effect until July 1st, 2021 assuming the Governor signs the bill into law;
3. On July 1, 2021 rule-making begins and public notices and invitations to comment and any needed hearings will be held prior to enacting any regulations required;
4. The matters covered by the regulations are to set deadlines, define terms in the statute, and spell out required items to be included in the applications.

The planning for all of these events has already commenced and by July 1, 2021 all matters should be reduced to proposed regulations that meet the requirements of the act. We expect to have a proposed application as part of the final regulations and all requirements will be spelled out as part of the application.

ARE THERE LIMITS ON TYPE OR SIZE OF AIRPLANES?

The bill requires that aircraft to be used not exceed a carrying capacity of nine (9) passengers. This is considered a “pilot” program to begin what should develop into a long-term relationship between rural areas in New Mexico and the ability of its residents to have scheduled air service.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The best current source is this article. Otherwise, please go on the internet to nmlegis.gov, find SB 133 and click on “Amendments in Context 3/16/21” and you should acquire the bill in its final form. Be aware that some of the amendments are shown and some prior material is stricken. However, that bill is what is expected to become the law. The sponsors of the bill were Senator Roberto “Bobby” J. Gonzales of Taos and Representative Harry Garcia of Grants.

OVERVIEW

The bill was attempted last year but did not “fly.” This time around, due to a monumental effort by its sponsors, and a great amount of technical assistance provided by NMDOT Aviation Division, the bill is on the Governor’s desk. It has drawn a lot of interest for various reasons:

1. We all realize that Covid 19 is likely coming to an end and people are more anxious than ever to travel;
2. The communities expected to be served by the Act have no or very little access to air travel unless they first drive an extended distance;
3. Nearby access to travel will open many possibilities and the Department of Tourism is looking at this as a means of attracting more tourist trade into New Mexico;

4. Emergency services availability will be enhanced, as will business travel along with economic development in the longer term;
5. The general aviation community has expanded its influence and has been and will “lend a hand” at promoting all types of air travel to the rural areas of New Mexico;
6. It is generally believed that there has been a small but noticeable shift in people’s travel habits from large, difficult to navigate airports at the places of origin and destination, to smaller, handier and “no wait or long lines” airports;
7. Education is a key factor (see below).

Public’s education about small airplane travel—I have learned in over 40 years as a pilot that many people, probably the majority, will tell you that they would travel in a “large” plane but not in “small” planes like my Cessna 182. I have found, with rare exception, that once I educate them as to the plane and its capability and safety, they will get in and fly with me. After the flight, with maybe two exceptions of out over 100 people, they love it and will thereafter get in a “small” plane anytime. I believe that educating the public about the safety of small airplane travel (by “small” I mean anything up to a 30-passenger aircraft) will significantly enhance air travel from and into rural areas and enhance demand for more general aviation pilots.

If anyone has any knowledge or experience on the topic of introducing persons to fly smaller airplanes, by all means send me an email about that experience and any ideas on how you would educate the public on the thrill, safety and time savings of traveling out of small airports. I think there is a “pent up” demand that has yet to be explored in any serious and deliberate manner that could promote aviation. Your ideas, please, to pedro.rael@state.nm.us.



NAVAJO LAKE STATE AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2021

This spring the Aviation Division will spending some time repairing the cracks and re-striping the runway and other pavements at the Navajo Lake State Airport. We expect to have this project completed by the end of April, 2021.

Additionally, we are developing a plan to determine if and how many camping pads can be developed around the airport apron. These will be primitive sites at this point with no power or water available. Once that is complete we would be looking at another construction project that would involve the excavation and grading for the campsite pads as well as a grading project to improve the access road to the airport. We anticipate completing these upgrades in the coming months. Hopefully, these proposed improvements will generate more interest in the airport and the surrounding community.



U.S. AIRLINE HEALTH MOVING TOWARD A POSITIVE FUTURE

By Tony Gilbert

There have been recent indications that the airline industry is ready to come back to live after taking the massive hit from COVID-19 restrictions. One example of this is USDOT¹ Bureau of Transportation Statistics reporting from this month that states that U.S. Airlines carried 13% more cargo in January 2021 than January 2020¹. Given the fact that this comparison is a net gain before COVID shutdowns and our current situation, it shows that the economy is still ready to go with the airline industry making some headway already.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics also reports that employment in the industry has also ramped up with almost 19,000 full-time employees higher in mid-January 2021 compared with mid-December 2020². This figure is still down by 12.8% year-over-year, but it is a bounce back from the lowest points caused by the pandemic in 2020.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has also reported daily checkpoint travel numbers, and while the 2021 figures are six times higher than when the pandemic officially started in the United States in March 2020, they are still only around 60% of same day numbers in 2019³. The data provided by the TSA shows

that travelers are feeling safer than they did before and are eager to start flying again.

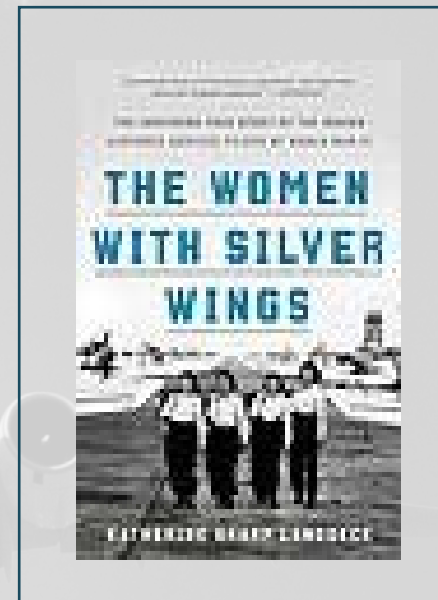
While any negative hiccup can disrupt this trend, such as a national spike in COVID-19 cases, the trend looks positive for the aviation industry. Hopefully, the positive effects of the bounce back to normal is felt throughout the aviation industry and all can prosper once again. We look forward to a sense of normalcy again, and wish everyone a safe and rapid economic recovery.

Stay safe out there, New Mexico!

Sources:

1. "U.S. Airlines Carried 13% More Cargo in January 2021 than January 2020." U.S. Department of Transportation, content. govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOT/bulletins/2c7e680.
2. "Mid-January 2021 U.S. Passenger Airline Employment Up Nearly 19,000 FTEs from Mid December." U.S. Department of Transportation, content. govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOT/bulletins/2c7a13e.
3. "TSA Checkpoint Travel Numbers (Current Year(s) versus Prior Year/Same Weekday)." TSA Checkpoint Travel Numbers (Current Year(s) versus Prior Year/Same Weekday) | Transportation Security Administration, www.tsa.gov/coronavirus/passenger-throughput.

LIBRARIANS CORNER BOOK BLURBS



THE WOMEN WITH SILVER WINGS:

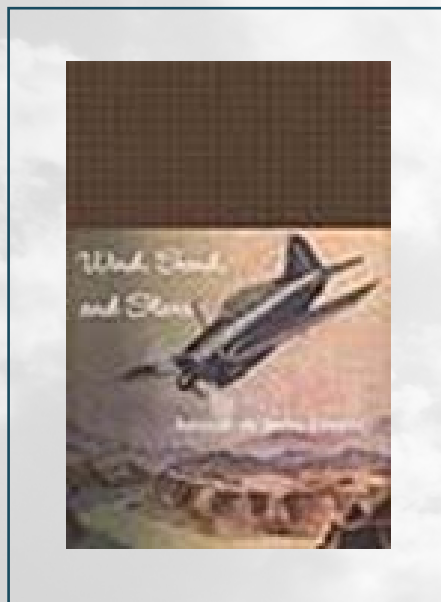
THE INSPIRING TRUE STORY OF THE
WOMEN AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOTS
OF WORLD WAR II

KATHERINE SHARP LANDDECK

ISBN: 9781524762810

LC: D790.5 L36 2020

The thrilling true story of the daring female aviators who helped the United States win World War II--only to be forgotten by the country they served. When Japanese planes executed a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Cornelia Fort was already in the air. At twenty-two, Cornelia had escaped Nashville's debutante scene for a fresh start as a flight instructor in Hawaii. She and her student were in the middle of their lesson when the bombs began to fall, and they barely made it back to ground that morning. Still, when the U.S. Army Air Forces put out a call for women pilots to aid the war effort, Cornelia was one of the first to respond. She became one of just over 1,100 women from across the nation to make it through the Army's rigorous selection process and earn her silver wings. In *The Women with Silver Wings*, historian Katherine Sharp Landdeck introduces us to these young women as they meet even-tempered, methodical Nancy Love and demanding visionary Jacqueline Cochran, the trailblazing pilots who first envisioned sending American women into the air, and whose rivalry would define the Women Air Force Service Pilots. For women like Cornelia, it was a chance to serve their country--and to prove that women aviators were just as skilled and able as men. While not authorized to serve in combat, the WASP helped train male pilots for service abroad and ferried bombers and pursuits across the country. Thirty-eight of them would not survive the war. But even taking into account these tragic losses, Love and Cochran's social experiment seemed to be a resounding success--until, with the tides of war turning and fewer male pilots needed in Europe, Congress clipped the women's wings. The program was disbanded, the women sent home. But the bonds they'd forged never failed, and over the next few decades, they came together to fight for recognition as the military veterans they were--and for their place in history. (ALA, ARL, USLC)



WIND, SAND AND STARS

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

ISBN: 0156970902

LC: PQ 2637 A274 T43

An exciting realism of air adventure through the treacherous passes of the Pyrenees, above the Sahara, along the snowy ramparts of the Andes, combined with prose.

Recipient of the Grand Prix of the Academie Francaise, this book captures the grandeur, danger, and isolation of flight. Its exciting account of air adventure, combined with lyrical prose and the spirit of a philosopher, makes it one of the most popular works ever written about flying. The book was translated by Lewis Galantieri. (ALA, ARL, USLC).

For general assistance with informational resources, research, or general reading materials, please contact the NMDOT Transportation Librarian.

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NOT FOR TODAY, BUT FOR TOMORROW- THE FUTURE OF AVIATION AFTER A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Authors: Fischer, John and Beamer Mathew

Article abstract: Joseph G. Valdez, Librarian

Most would agree that the aviation industry has been disrupted and astonished by a global pandemic that has truly stunned the world. COVID-19 has most certainly hit every element of the aviation industry in some way. This article presents a general overview of the history and current state of airline operations.

In reference to the airline industry as a whole, the authors present information on the economic impact, air space system capacity, air traffic control, and environmental issues of concern with the pandemic in mind.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this article is the identification of future challenges or what some now refer to as post COVID-19 aviation industry concerns. In this regard, Fisher and Beamer highlight issues that are now of growing concern. The issues covered include increased air travel demand, airport capacity issues, airport financial challenges, automation, emissions mitigation, alternative fuels, and climate related concerns such as the negative effects of extreme heat on aviation infrastructure.

The authors do emphasize that the pandemic hit at a time when the aviation industry was operating at peak activity and looking towards new growth. The pandemic has brought the industry down to low levels of operation that have not been seen in decades.

In forecasting the future of aviation, the authors take a look back in history and remind the readers of when the aviation division began and how it earned its place within the larger organization of the Transportation Research Board (TRB). TRB Aviation began in 1974 with just two groups and, over the years has earned its place within the larger organization. The Aviation division grew by increasing its membership, scholarship and research activities. The Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) was created in 2005 with dedicated federal funding. The Aviation Group of TRB currently consists of nine national committees, which includes the new Users of Shared Airspace Committee. The authors refer to this committee as a forward-looking group that has reacted to events and has studied rising issues and forecast trends within the industry.

At this point, the future of aviation is uncertain considering what the world has been through over the last year or so. We are told that the future of aviation will be both exciting and challenging for airports, airport users, and all those who make up the aviation industry as we know it. As noted by the authors, "if history tells us anything, it is that continuing growth in aviation, communications, and other technologies will be needed to create the interconnected world that many anticipate".

John Fischer is a consultant and Emeritus Member of the Aviation Economics and Forecasting Committee in Annapolis, MD. Mathew Beamer is an Analyst with United Airlines in Chicago, IL.

For assistance with article access, please contact the Librarian.

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