FLY NEW MEXICO

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Cover photo: Navajo Lake Airport
How to Court the Future
by William Fitzpatrick

As I go to airports around the state, I see the same tale. Aircraft sitting on the ramp just like the skeletons of cows from an old Wild West cartoon. From Luscombes to Cessnas, throw in some Pipers and maybe a Navion or two, airplanes that are relics of what they once were. There are about 1355 aircraft registered in New Mexico with the Aviation Division and there are over 4,000 pilots. While the FAA says there are over 5,000 aircraft in the state, where are they? Are they aircraft that are out of annual inspection and not being used? The same stories over and over, the owner says they will get it back to being airworthy, or that, It’s been sitting here for 10 years and needs a plethora of new parts to bring it back into operation. I think we have all seen this across all airports in the United States. So what do we do with all these rotting airplanes? Shouldn’t they be back in the air where they belong?

This alludes to the next topic, where are the young pilots? Where are the new maintenance technicians who will maintain these aircraft? “The 2018 Boeing Pilot & Technician Outlook, a respected industry forecast of personnel demand, projects that 790,000 new civil aviation pilots, 754,000 new maintenance technicians, and 890,000 new cabin crew will be needed to fly and maintain the world fleet over the next 20 years. The forecast is inclusive of the commercial aviation, business aviation, and civil helicopter industries.” (Boeing, 2018) These numbers all point to the other aspect that has been booming for years, a pilot shortage. While the rumblings of a shortage have been around for years, it is now being felt across the global aviation community. There are shortages of flight instructors due to the mass demand of the regional airlines, who are now hiring many of them. Airlines are now dumping money into initiatives to produce pilots. All of these, while good, are reactionary and create a strain on an already thin aviation community. Clay Lacy, a charter and FBO service, stated on their website, “The pilot shortage is heavily felt at the regional airline level and amongst business jet operators. Unfortunately, pilots are dispersing from the ranks of business jets to pursue more lucrative aviation jobs that include a more predictable schedule, signing bonuses or long-term stability. A well-known regional airline had to cancel over six percent of their scheduled routes in peak summer season. The reason for the over 500 flight cancellations? The company stated that it did not have enough pilots to fly the planes.” (Clay Lacy Aviation)

So why bring up the fact that we have airplanes sitting around inoperable and we have a shortage of pilots? What does this have to do with the great state of New Mexico? New Mexico aviators know about the wonderful flying weather. So much so that most IFR training is done simulated, and you will seldom see an IMC day. We are a gateway to the sky and our 54 public use airports are the onramps that we can use to access that wonderful realm. Sadly, the hay-days of aviation are gone. We do not have a large population of post-war pilots who just want to charge a few bucks to get in the air. This was the case in the 1960s and early 1970s, when World War II and Korean War pilots would charge little to nothing to go flying. When Avgas was cheap and airplanes hadn’t been taken over by the lawyers and insurance companies. These are all the stories that are told to younger individuals in the community. Airports had fewer fences and less paranoia about security, they weren’t the scary places that we see now. While not always true, the environment is one that even the older generations of pilots have noted. They aren’t inviting as they once were. The stories of the kid who rode their bike to the airport to get flight lessons are an anomaly and not the norm. “More and more of society aren’t intrinsically motivated, and most people only do things because they are made to. Being a public middle school math teacher I see this attitude daily, and it has sadly carried over into aviation. Because students have never had to guide their own learning, they are generally lost in the process. Having students that are self-motivated and able to accomplish things on their own is less and less common. Instructors now have to lead almost every aspect of the training. They assign the tasks and the learning, instead of the students taking on the responsibility of learning because they have the drive and desire.” says Commercial Balloon Pilot and 141 flight school instructor Jessica Makin. The other major issue is outreach. Many people just don’t know what is available to them. Like all other things, there is fierce competition to captivate an audience, and the importance of early marketing with sound strategy and narrative is imperative. Millennials and the newer generation of Generation Z are distinctly different from their predecessors. This has been identified in the way they learn, the way you teach them and the
way you reach them. Not too long ago, we were looking for ways to get the word out for an organization, to build perspective members and to reach a younger audience. It was suggested that we take out newspaper ads to publicize the organization. The suggestion demonstrated that the group didn’t understand the audience; these generations simply don’t read newspapers like the audience; these generations are just getting used to the idea of large-scale changes in future consumer behavior. They are influencing and accelerating shifts in consumer attitudes, spending habits, and brand perceptions and preferences among Gen-Xers and even baby boomers. As a result, this generational transition is ushering in the end of consumer marketing as we have long known it.” One of the big ways of doing this is to have user generated content. “According to Crowdtap and Ipsos MediaCT Research, Millennials are spending over five hours a day consuming user generated content – and this content influences what they buy. That’s because this same study revealed that user-generated content is regarded as 40% more trustworthy than information from traditional media sources.” (Ann, 2018) Aviation is not going to tell its story by airplanes alone; it is about what is on Instagram and Facebook and other social media outlets that are being utilized. This makes users feel that there is a global community you can build around it. The global community is twofold; it creates a sense of belonging while uniting a worthwhile cause. Both of these are major contributing factors in creating interest and keeping young generations engaged and proactive.

At 19 years old, Jodie Gawthrop has already amassed experiences that would make most aviators jealous. She was the 2 millionth young eagle and flew with Harrison Ford in his De Havilland Beaver, she is a private pilot, and has traveled to Australia with the International Air Cadet Exchange. There are even videos posted online of her flying with Sean D. Tucker doing aerobatics and her flying in hot air balloons over the landscape of New Mexico. While she has brilliantly paved her way in the aviation community and is well known to young aviators online across the world, she still has perspectives on the industry.

“But what older generations don’t always get is that there are many of us who want to experience all of what general aviation has to offer. I wasn’t raised in an aviation family, and along with plenty of other young people, are forging their own path in the aviation world. From vintage/warbird perspective, the older generation needs to understand that we want to keep the legacy alive just as much as they do.” (Gawthrop, 2019) I spoke with Jeffrey Price M.A., C.M. I spoke about why other aviation fields aren’t being filled; where jobs like airport management are afterthoughts; people who get into aviation and then for one reason or another, deviated from their original path. Then the other jobs in aviation become an option because they want to still be involved. These other careers are not options that are readily presented to youth, and so they don’t know that these jobs exist.

This in itself goes to show that there needs to be a consolidated effort in getting this message to teens. This is a difficult task in the industry. At 33 years, old I am still considered a very young professional in the industry. When we talk about reaching out to young adults before they have even graduated from high school, the usual response are blank looks and a quick snap about how they are unreachable, they can’t put down their technology, or they all lack the attention span or maturity to be in aviation. “The No. 1 rule of marketing to teens? Don’t market to teens. Condescension and gimmicks won’t do you any favors with this group. The brands and services that tend to thrive with teens are the ones that do it organically by meeting teens on their turf,” according to Issie Lapowsky from Inc.com. (Lapowsky, 2014) A question posed on Facebook about what stands in the youth’s way came back with some major themes. Money, money, money! Interestingly enough, 29% of teenagers in the United States come from homes where the household income is over $100,000 annual. While costs are a large contributor, priorities are another major aspect. While many parents will say that aviation is too expensive for their children to get involved in, it really comes down to how parents and youth perceive what the cost is going to. Competition with other activities is a key factor. Time reported, “One of Utah State’s surveys conducted last year found that the average family spends $2,292 per year on sports. The respondents to that survey include families with children as young as 8 and who participate at all levels, from recreational to elite. The same 2016 survey found that the maximum spending among the respondents was close to $20,000, as some families invest in travel teams and personal trainers.” (Barone, 2017) If a child started sports at age 8, over the next decade, families will shell out $22,000 as an average and at the high end of that could spend over $200,000. This is no small amount.
of money, but according to AOPA, private pilot certificates will run about $10,000. The difference might be the amount of time that the money is spent over. While a private pilot certificate should be attained in less than a year, compared to playing a sport for over a decade, the upfront cost might be one of the factors that turn people away from attaining a tangible skill that is now needed in a growing industry. While there is a significant amount of money that a teenager’s parents are willing to spend on things they do understand, the case of aviation is that those who hold the purse strings truly do not understand aviation. This can be seen in recent parody on CollegeHumor about why we need to turn off strings.

There have been some questions about the accuracy of these numbers since the FAA Registry reflects 3107 aircraft registrations which are down 5% from 2017. In 2018 we had 1363 aircraft registrations which are down 5% from 2017. There have been some questions about the accuracy of these numbers since the FAA Registry reflects 3107 aircraft registered in the state. To understand the discrepancy it should be understood that aircraft registrations are based on mailing addresses not necessarily aircraft based in New Mexico. Additionally, aircraft in the state do not need to be registered if the aircraft is out of annual inspection.

There are many good organizations that have aviation youth programs. EAA Young Eagles, the Local chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Aviation Explorer Scouts and Civil Air Patrol. While these might be household names to those of us in the aviation community, they are certainly not household names to the average American citizen. While competing against tons of other activities like school based extra-curricular, sports, and other community based youth clubs, until aviation youth initiatives become recognized to the general public, we will always be fighting for the outliers and scraps of a youth community that has plenty of options to choose from. The fact is, most Americans don’t know or don’t believe aviation is a possibility for them and their youth. The newer generations will not revert to old ways of information sharing to placate to their predecessors.

There is also push that airplanes are not a sport. While there is seriousness about work on, or understand them. Joking matters, and one needs to compete against. While there is a nutrient deficiency in the aviation community, not everyone is worthy of. We also push that airplanes are not a sport. While competing against tons of other activities like school based extra-curricular, sports, and other community based youth clubs, until aviation youth initiatives become recognized to the general public, we will always be fighting for the outliers and scraps of a youth community that has plenty of options to choose from. The fact is, most Americans don’t know or don’t believe aviation is a possibility for them and their youth. The newer generations will not revert to old ways of information sharing to placate to their predecessors. The community has to court the new generations on their turf, or it will seal its own fate. Once we solve the outreach issue in our local communities, only then will we begin to solve the problem of rotting airplanes sitting at airports, pilot shortages, an industry starving for talent and a sport that increasingly needs to expand its ranks.


Helicopter Safety Day
by William Fitzpatrick

This last December the Bernalillo County Sheriffs Office (BCSO) took the lead in just that. They hosted the Bob Martin Memorial helicopter safety day in which the helicopter safety day is named after. After lunch we got to hear about culture and lessons learned from a B200 crash. This crash was because of incorrectly set trim tabs after maintenance. It highlighted the need for all aviators to take care in confirming their checklists and the configuration of their aircraft. Sean Mulholland and John Norton of SevenBar Aviation showed us the importance of after maintenance actions and the devastating effects if not properly taken into account. Assumptions will kill people. Richard Hammer then talked about the effects of fatigue and fatigue countermeasures. Richard is from the Albuquerque FSDO (Flight Standards District Office) and highlighted just how dangerous fatigue can be while operating aircraft. From bad decision making, to lack of concentration, all of these things which we have all experienced at some point in our life.

We were also visited by academic programs in New Mexico, with representation of CNM’s Aviation Programs and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University sharing continuing educational opportunities we have here in our home state.

Our last presenter was from Bell Helicopters, Harry Versis, who comes with a plethora of experience in the helicopter world. His presentation was on Safety Ethics, a subject we all cover, but rarely digest. While we all know the consequences of adhering to proper safety ethics, it shows real world issues on why they have been ignored before. A word of advice from Harry is that safety is always the least expensive practice. It truly highlights that a good safety culture and adherence to safety ethics in the long run will always pay dividends. We all know the importance of safety, don't let excuses cloud the good aeronautical judgements that we are held to uphold. Larry Koren again gave the closing remarks to a day filled with great information. A deep thanks to all the presenters and to BCSO for hosting this year’s Helicopter Safety Day.
In 1928, Albuquerque was the birthplace of Cutter Aviation. In New Mexico and through most of the United States the Cutter name has been something many of us have associated with aviation. As a young child, Cutter Aviation was a place where I was not just familiar with but spent a fair amount of time at. I have had the pleasure of getting to know many of the employees and the some of the Cutter Family, it was when I read this release that I felt that I owe this same announcement to all of us in the New Mexico Aviation Community, and we celebrate a man who was devoted to the sport, industry and passion we all share.

Cutter Family Announces Passing of Patriarch William “Bill” R. Cutter

PHOENIX, Arizona – It is with heavy hearts that we share very sad news with the aviation community; William “Bill” R. Cutter passed away peacefully on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. This is a profound loss for all that knew and loved Bill as the patriarch of his family and the aviation community.

A life-long aviation enthusiast, Bill learned to fly sitting on his father's lap and became an ATP rated pilot in fixed wing, helicopter and lighter than air aircraft, along with achieving several jet and turbo-prop type ratings. As an aviator, he accumulated thousands of hours during his life, with his most recent flying being in his treasured 1944 Beech Model 17 Staggerwing.

Continuing the family legacy started in 1928 by his father, William P. Cutter, Bill established Cutter Aviation's facility at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport in Arizona, which went on to become the company's largest facility and corporate headquarters. Bill, along with his son Will, grew the Cutter Aviation network by opening numerous locations throughout the Southwest.

In his lifetime, Bill was honored numerous times; most notably at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, the New Mexico Military Institute, the Pima Air & Space Museum (Hall of Fame, inducted with his father William P. Cutter) and was named “Man of the Year” by Beechcraft. Bill was also proud to have served his country as a member of the United States Army.

Throughout his entire life, Bill could always be found walking the ramp and halls of Cutter Aviation speaking with his employees on a first name basis. He had a larger than life personality and was quick to share anecdotes with those around him. He was a gentleman’s gentleman, humbleness surrounded his daily actions. He leaves us with a keen sense of loss and heartfelt gratitude - we are better people for having known him.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents William P. and Virginia, wife Gwendolyn and brother Sidney. He is survived by his children, son Will and daughter Kathryn “Kay”; along with four beloved grandchildren, Will 4.0., Brooke, Madison and Anna.

Godspeed Bill, and may you dance the skies on laughter-silvered clouds. You will be greatly missed.

"Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward. For there you have been, and there you will always long to return." - Leonardo da Vinci

Information regarding services will be released at a later date.
A New Direction for the Aviation Division

by Dan Moran

With the New Year will come a new direction for the Division. At some point in the next administration we will have a new Director to run the Division. The Division Director position is considered a ‘Governor’s Exempt’ or appointed position. The statute states that the position will be ‘recommended’ by the Cabinet Secretary and ‘approved’ by the governor. The Cabinet level and Deputy level positions will surely be decided prior to any consideration given to other positions being filled. In the meantime we will continue to operate ‘business as usual’ as best we can.

The Division has been in a transition itself and has reorganized its structure to create two Airport Planning positions. The intent is that the Division will assign approximately half of the airports in the state to each position. This will be more in line with how other Aviation/Aeronautics Divisions are structured in other states of comparable size and scope. This structure will allow for increased oversight, accountability and hands on approach to our airports and ongoing projects. Since the FAA, Airports group closed their field office in New Mexico our role as eyes and ears for project management has grown significantly. In our previous structure, this role was consolidated in one position requiring an inordinate amount of travel, time and effort for one person to accomplish effectively and maintain.

We will continue to move forward with the hiring process for the two other open positions within the Division. We are waiting on approval from The New Mexico State Personnel to advertise the open positions. From a timing perspective within our project schedule process we had hoped to have at least one of the positions filled by now. It would have been idyllic to have both positions filled now so we could hit the ground running in to the new construction season. Oh well, we'll just have to adjust and continue to move forward.