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64th Annual Wisconsin Aviation Conference... Airports, Businesses, Awards & Recognition

by Dave Weiman

The Wisconsin Aviation Conference (WAC) was held in Green Bay, Wis., May 5-7, 2019, at the Radisson Hotel & Convention Center, directly across the highway from the host airport, Green Bay Austin Straubel International Airport (KGRB).

The conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin Airport Management Association (WAMA), and supported by the Wisconsin Aviation Trades Association (WATA) and Wisconsin Business Aviation Association (WBAA).

Sporting events and networking opportunities began on Sunday, continued with professional sessions on Monday, and wrapped up following sessions and lunch on Tuesday.

The conference was filled with timely topics for airport managers and commission members, consultants, fixed base operators, and representatives of the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and Federal Aviation Administration.

In between the luncheons, receptions and coffee breaks in which the vast majority of networking takes place, are the informational and educational sessions, such as one-on-one “speed dating” between airports and the FAA Chicago Airports District Office (ADO). There, airport managers and commissioners are able to meet with FAA officials on proposed and active airport development projects.

Sunday evening’s entertainment included dinner at the “Packers Hall of Fame” at Lambeau Field. Monday evening’s entertainment was a reception and dinner at the “Tittletown Brewing Company.”

Monday’s general session featured a panel of state and federal aviation officials: David Greene, Scott Brummond and Matthew Malicki of the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics (WBOA); and Sue Mowery-Schalk, Deb Bartell, and Christina Drouet of the FAA.

One of the hottest topic nowadays is the “labor shortage,” and John Chmiel of Wausau Flying Service; Alaine Olthafer-Lange of A&A Aviation, Platteville, Wis.; and Meredith Alt and Jared Huss of WBOA addressed the role our schools and universities are playing.

Other session topics included airport firefighting foam and the environmental impact of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS); airport protection through improved airport zoning; airport public relations and crisis management; non-aeronautical airport development; the Snowy Owl and wildlife mitigation at airports; a report on the condition of pavement at Wisconsin airports; drones – law, order and security; special



Wisconsin Aviation Conference award recipients: (L/R) Brian Grefe, WAMA Vice-President, airport director at Central Wisconsin Airport, Mosinee, Wis.; David Mann, recently retired airport manager, Batten International Airport, Racine, Wis.; Hal Davis, airport compliance manager, WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics; Mark Graczykowski, P.E., airport development engineer, WisDOT - Bureau of Aeronautics; Jed Mattmiller, engineer, Becher-Hoppe, Inc.; and Charles Sweet, WAMA President, airport superintendent, Sheboygan Memorial Airport, Sheboygan, Wis.

events at airports; AOPA on the airport, and what AOPA is doing to create a pathway to careers in aviation through scholarships and high school STEM programs; airfield electrical and navaid technology; and what ADS-B means for airports.

Awards & Recognition

Among the awards presented included the Distinguished Service Award to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to aviation; Blue Light Award to an individual in the media for their excellence in reporting Wisconsin aviation events and activities; Person of the Year Award to an individual for their contributions to aviation in Wisconsin during the past calendar year; Lifetime Service Award to an individual for their contributions to aviation in Wisconsin for at least 10 years; and Airport Engineering Award to an individual who has made significant professional contributions in airport engineering or architecture.

Receiving the “Lifetime Service Award” was David Mann, longtime airport manager at Batten International Airport, Racine, Wisconsin (KRAC). Mann was born and raised in Pineview, Georgia, and graduated the top of his class of which there were only nine students. He received a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from the University of Georgia. Following graduation, Mann enlisted in the U.S. Army where he flew fixed-wing aircraft and completed one tour in Vietnam. Following service, Mann flew for Eastern Airlines for 15 years; corporate in Austria; fire bombing missions in



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Alaska; and spent eight years as the aviation department head at Virginia Tech University. Mann holds an Airline Transport Pilot Certificate and has accumulated 17,680 hours of flying time. For 27 years, Mann served as airport manager at Racine.

Mann is a longtime member of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), Wisconsin Aviation Trades Association (WATA), Wisconsin Airport Management Association (WAMA), and Wisconsin Business Aviation Association (WBAA).

Receiving WAMA's "Blue Light Award" for excellence in journalism promoting aviation in Wisconsin was Hal Davis, Airport Compliance Manager with the WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics. Davis has written and coordinated the publication of "Wisconsin Aeronautics Report," published in *Midwest Flyer Magazine*, since 2012.

Davis is instrumental in sharing updates about bureau policy, programs, and activities; discusses hot issues in the aviation community; and positively promotes aviation in the state. In addition, Davis is a photographer and has his photographs featured on posters, banners and in numerous aviation publications, including the covers of the bureau's airport directory, pilot's guide, and the Wisconsin Aeronautical Chart.

Receiving WAMA's "Engineer of the Year Award" was Mark Graczykowski, P.E., of the WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics. Graczykowski was nominated for his outstanding contributions to both Chippewa Valley Regional Airport and Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport.

Graczykowski has been with the bureau for only 18 months, but his dedication to his projects demonstrates an excellent work ethic, especially in meeting timelines desired by airport managers. Graczykowski's willingness to take on difficult conversations and project issues speaks to his passion for the projects he manages.

Jed Mattmiller, airport engineer with Becher-Hoppe, Inc., received WAMA's traveling trophy for sporting clays competition. The trophy is awarded to the participant receiving the highest score. The event provides yet another networking opportunity for attendees.

Clinton Torp, former airport director at La Crosse Regional Airport in La Crosse, Wis., received WAMA's "Distinguished Service Award" for outstanding contributions to aviation in Wisconsin. Torp has distinguished himself amongst his peers for the past 12 years, serving the La Crosse community, first as assistant director and then as airport director.

Torp has been a long-time member of the WAMA board of directors, and also served as an officer and president. He was instrumental in the behind-the-scenes work for the organization, keeping up its website and registration databases. Torp also represented Wisconsin in the Great Lakes Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). He is highly respected by state and federal aviation officials alike for his forward leading, and can do/will do attitude. Torp recently accepted an airport operations manager's position at Des Moines Regional Airport in Iowa, and was unable to attend the conference.

WAMA awarded \$3,000 in collegiate scholarships to students who are either attending a Wisconsin university or technical college, or who are Wisconsin residents seeking a degree in aviation. The collegiate scholarships are sponsored in part by WAC sponsors, exhibitors and attendees through a silent auction at the conference. Another \$1,000 was awarded in the "Professional Development Scholarship" category for those WAMA members seeking to further themselves in the airport management profession.

Exhibitors & Sponsors

The conference would not be possible without the support of sponsors and exhibitors, including: Aero Insurance, LLC; Alfred Benesch and Company; Airport Lighting; Arconas Corporation; Arrow Energy, Inc.; Avflight Corporation; Becher-Hoppe Associates; Bird Strike Committee; DBT Transportation Services; Endpoint Solutions Corp; Ennis-Flint, Inc.; Epic Fuels; Erect-A-Tube; Executive Air; Fabick Cat; Fahrner Asphalt Sealers LLC; Fortbrand, Inc.; iFirst Class Concessions; Fortress Fence; Gee Asphalt Systems, Inc.; Genetec; Greater Green Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau; Hinshaw & Culbertson, Inc.; HUB Parking Technology

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ZERO GRAVITY FROM PAGE 31

Conjuring the curiosity of moon-bound astronauts in the past, the specialized anniversary flight will demonstrate the feeling of exploring the moon's surface by recreating lunar gravity and allowing participants to float with the ease of carrying one-sixth their normal body weight.

Talented ZERO-G pilots will perform a series of parabolic arcs while flying in FAA-designated airspace. At the top of each arc, participants will soar through the plane in a floating playground, perform effortless tricks and flips and share a world known only by a small fraction of the population. The flight will also include several zero gravity and Martian gravity parabolas.

The historic Apollo 11 program paved the way for future research and development and opened the door to boundless discovery. Taking place exactly 50 years after the

Lunar Module *Eagle* landed on the Moon, the unique flight opportunity is as close to landing on the moon as fans can get.

A limited number of tickets for this exclusive flight are now on sale to the general public. For ticket and flight information, visit (www.gozerog.com).

Space Florida was created to strengthen Florida's position as the global leader in aerospace research, investment, exploration and commerce. As Florida's aerospace and spaceport development authority, it is committed to attracting and expanding the next generation of space industry businesses. With its highly trained workforce, proven infrastructure and unparalleled record of achievement, Florida is the ideal location for aerospace businesses to thrive – and Space Florida is the perfect partner to help them succeed (www.spaceflorida.gov). □

WISCONSIN AVIATION CONFERENCE FROM PAGE 38

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Sheboygan County Memorial Airport (KSBM) will sponsor the 65th Annual Wisconsin Aviation Conference, May 3-5, 2020, at The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin (<https://wiama.org>). □

N966CD FROM PAGE 43

was fortunate to have an assistant, the assistant could hold the banner pole in the air and Doyle would pull it out of his hands. Chuck Doyle Jr. held his first banner pole at the age of 9.

Upon Chuck Doyle Sr.'s death in 2008, his son, Chuck Doyle Jr., acquired N966CD. Doyle rebuilt the biplane, and then had it rebuilt again by Rare Aircraft of Faribault, Minnesota.

Chuck Doyle Jr. had his first solo flight in the Stearman at age 16. After a day of making up banners and running for them as they were dropped, Chuck Doyle Sr. felt it was time for his son to take the Stearman "around the patch" for the first time. So, Jr. took off, and did a couple more things to his father's displeasure.

Now retired from the airlines, himself, Chuck Doyle Jr.

has continued the tradition started by his father in collecting and restoring vintage aircraft at his shop at Sky Harbor Residential Airpark in Webster, Minnesota, and the beautiful biplane is flying better than ever. But he has not continued his father's smoke-writing or banner-towing business. Instead, Doyle rebuilt the Stearman with four ailerons, an inverted fuel and oil system, installed a real front seat under the fairing cover, and licensed the aircraft in the experimental category. □

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