



VIRGINIA AVIATION BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



2023 Aerospace Day & Legislative Reception



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

2023 Aviation, Aerospace and UAS Legislative Reception

The Aviation and Aerospace Legislative Reception continues to be one of the best attended events by our General Assembly Members, giving your organization an opportunity to network with decision-makers from across the Commonwealth. Details regarding sponsorship opportunities and ticket purchases can be found [HERE](#).

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Wednesday, January 25, 2023, from 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Main Street Station
 1500 E Main Street
 Richmond, VA 23219

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Aerospace Day will take place during General Assembly on Wednesday, January 25, 2023. Be sure to check out the NextGen Aviators on-site simulator trailer.

IN THIS ISSUE

2023 AEROSPACE DAY & LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

- Registration is Open!

INDUSTRY WORKFORCE

- Connecting the Dots

VIRGINIA FLIGHT INFORMATION EXCHANGE (VA-FIX)

- Tool That Gives Agencies in VA the Ability to Securely Publish and Share Zoning, Operational, Emergency, Safety, and Quality of Life Advisory Information with Each Other, with Unmanned System Service Providers, Unmanned System Operators, and the Public

GHS AVIATION

- Ensuring Anyone in the World Can Travel Anywhere in the World, Safely
- The VABA Board Member Highlight

ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY

- Using Revolutionary Aircraft to Move People and Cargo Previously Not Served or Underserved by Aviation

LACK OF CAREER AWARENESS BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS DRIVES WORKFORCE SHORTAGES IN AEROSPACE AND AVIATION

The pilot shortage is just the beginning of the problem. Commercial, military, and private flights operations require a sizable number of skilled and professional workers to operate. These positions include skilled mechanics, ramp workers, electricians, computer programmers, meteorologists, schedulers, air traffic controllers, baggage handlers, flight crews, security, and a wide range of other support services. Each of these positions provide essential services required to ensure safe operations, and on-time movement of goods and people.

The COVID -19 pandemic magnified an existing problem industry had been talking about for at least a decade. The closure of schools and related training programs exacerbated the problem making it more difficult for prospective students to gain training and the required experience to become a member of the flight crew or an air traffic controller, etc.

An awareness problem exists. Whether K-12, or higher education, academia has done a poor job in highlighting these disciplines, thus shrinking the pipeline of viable candidates. A lack of outreach to teachers and youth highlighting the value of STEM aerospace education, and career & technical education opportunities, denies young people of the awareness of available opportunities.

Kathy Burcher, former Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education, states “The pandemic has exacerbated and laid bare the real need for Virginia to focus on career planning as well as CTE and STEM options for our K-12 students. We must all fully recognize and support our K-12 system as a key partner in Virginia’s workforce development plan.”

As the 2023 General Assembly nears, the VABA continues to advocate the importance of workforce training to meet industry’s demand. Ensuring that opportunities and resources are promoted and well-funded will greatly aid in making both teachers and students aware of career opportunities, ideally driving more young people into the aviation and aerospace workforce.



Virginia Flight Information Exchange



Three years ago, the UAS industry had little to no collaboration or information sharing. Under the leadership of Aviation Technology Manager Dr. Amber L Wilson, the Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV), together with its partners at the Unmanned Systems Center at Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPCC), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia base, ATA LLC announced the launch of the Virginia Flight Information Exchange (VA-FIX) pilot program on August 5, 2020, to ensure the advancement of Virginia’s UAS industry.

VA-FIX is a publicly available tool that gives agencies in the Commonwealth the ability to securely publish and share zoning, operational, emergency, safety, and quality of life advisory information with each other, with unmanned system service providers, unmanned system operators, and the public. North Carolina and Alaska have recently signed on to use the program, with three more states potentially joining in the very near future.

The market for UAS has continued to grow and change more quickly than expected, creating challenging realities for state and local governments. Representatives from industry, UAS operators, state and local government agencies, public safety, and the public comprising the DOAV UAS Work Group have discussed these challenges at great length.

VA-FIX provides the ability to publish advisories to the UAS community in a manner consistent with DOAV guidance while providing an easy mechanism for UAS operators to incorporate authoritative state and local information into operational flight plans in a clear, consistent, authoritative manner for both compliance and safety purpose.

Created in direct response to needs identified at the state and local levels, VA-FIX is part of Virginia's approach to address key policy and safety concerns while maintaining a UAS airspace that is one of the most open in the nation.

“The VABA has a great opportunity to partner with the state to educate and spread awareness around VA-FIX program. As the UAS industry continues to rapidly grow and change, it is important to think outside of the box,” said Dr. Wilson.

During the 95th Annual Apple Blossom Festival, in Winchester, Virginia, a demonstration involving UAS being operated by multiple state, local and commercial organizations took place. This “fly-in” activity demonstrated how VA-FIX is enabling Virginia to be on track to be a trailblazing, “drone-ready” state in the US.



Learn more [HERE](#).

VABA Board Member Highlight: GHS AVIATION GROUP, LLC.



Based in Northern Virginia, the globally diverse GHS Aviation Group is made up of experienced aviation experts from around the world who are dedicated to the improvement of aviation safety. Captain George Snyder founded GHS Aviation Group, LLC in 2004. He has brought on aviation professionals like Captain Chinar Shah, a female trailblazer from the aviation industry in India, and has established a passionate team with experience from organizations around the globe. In addition to leading his team at GHS Aviation Group, Snyder currently serves as a Board Member of the VABA.

GHS Aviation Group provides services to clients across the industry centered around aviation safety-related auditing, training, and consulting services. GHS Aviation Group works to ensure that its clients achieve and maintain the highest level of global aviation safety and quality standards. For example, the GHS Team travels to parts of the world where most people do not care to travel for safety reasons. The team steps in and provides the necessary training, consulting, and auditing to ensure aviation is practiced to the highest safety standards. They help implement the practices that work for those locations.

Training and services offered to clients not only benefit the strength and success of GHS Aviation Group clients, but also encourage addressing the global, industry-wide labor shortage. When collaborating with clients from a consulting perspective, GHS Aviation Group encourages clients globally to create a pipeline of skilled workers for the future.

With a strong vision for Virginia's leadership in aviation and aerospace, Snyder is confident that the Commonwealth has the resources and ability to create a leading-edge Center for Excellence for commercial aviation. To strengthen and grow the pipeline necessary to support the current pilot shortage, the Commonwealth can offer an academy/training center with full flight simulators and advanced training aids to serve as a steppingstone to meaningful and rewarding jobs in corporate and commercial aviation.

In addition to pilots, this state-of-the-art training facility would allow for the presentation of "real-world" non-normal and emergency scenarios in a non-threatening, simulated environment conducive to learning. These opportunities would be afforded not only to pilots, but for the professional education of aircraft maintenance technicians, cabin crew members, licensed aircraft dispatchers, and ground handling personnel.

Captain Shah notes, "It takes a village to get an aircraft and its occupants off the ground and safely back again, and the "village" of aviation professionals continues to get smaller." By creating a Center of Aviation Excellence in Virginia, the Commonwealth would be able to complement its existing leadership position in the defense, aerospace, and military space with equal expertise in the global development and training of highly skilled personnel in the commercial aviation sector.

This deepening shortage of qualified pilots, cabin crew, dispatchers, and technicians is becoming only more critical in light of other workforce shortages whereas Captain Snyder says, "when America sneezes, the rest of the world contracts pneumonia." America is blessed with free airspace for flying, open access to airports for training, and weather that generally cooperates. Yes, Virginia should welcome the opportunity to become the national, if not global, leader in commercial aviation excellence.

Thanks to GHS Aviation Group, it is more possible than ever for "Anyone in the world, to travel anywhere in the world, safely."

Learn more about GHS Aviation Group [here](#).

ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY



TRACY TYNAN
Director
Unmanned Systems at
Center for Innovative
Technology

NASA is making soaring over traffic in an air taxi, providing medical and emergency response to the public, receiving packages faster, and participating in a sustainable and safe mode of transportation a reality. NASA's vision for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is to map out a safe, accessible, and affordable new air transportation system alongside industry, community partners, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Once developed, passengers and cargo will travel on-demand in innovative, automated aircraft such as electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft, or eVTOLs, across town, between neighboring cities, or to other locations typically accessed today by car.

NASA's vision for AAM mission is to help emerging aviation markets safely develop an air transportation system that moves people and cargo between places previously not served or underserved by aviation - local, regional, intraregional, urban – using revolutionary new aircraft that are only just now becoming possible. AAM includes NASA's work on Urban Air Mobility (UAM) and will provide substantial benefit to U.S. industry and the public.

The recently established Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA), comprised of aviation industry, education, and research representatives across the Commonwealth, consists of two divisions: The Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV) and the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC). Each division having its own distinct mission, shares one voice for AAM in Virginia. The DOAV Team, led by Dr. Amber L. Wilson, focuses on infrastructure, education and policy aspects that are necessary to enable AAM operations. The VIPIC team, led by Director Tracy Tynan focuses on technology development and implementation, pilot projects and operational framework.

Currently in Virginia, AAM systems, including small, unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS), are utilized for public safety, utility inspections, and package delivery, to name a few. Larger cargo and passenger air vehicles for Urban Air Mobility and Regional Air Mobility (RAM) are in development and anticipated to be certified and operational within the next few years. DroneUP, LLC, led by the VABA's very own Board Member Tom Walker, is just one example of AAM technologies utilized in Virginia today.

Read more about AAM and its delivery services and technologies [HERE](#).



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VIRGINIA AVIATION BUSINESS ASSOCIATION STAFF

Daniel G. "Bud" Oakey
President
boakey@thevaba.org

Craig C. Whitham
Vice President
cwhitham@thevaba.org

Lena Cary
Administrative Director
lcary@thevaba.org

VIRGINIA AVIATION BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
1011 East Main Street | Suite 400
Richmond, VA 23219
|804-525-1144|

