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MATA Hosts "Total" Aviation Business Conference



Jamail Larkins



Earl Lawrence



(L/R) Greg Reigel of Reigel & Associates and Secretary of the Minnesota Aviation Trades Association, presents the 2009 MATA Flight Training Scholarship to Adam Kruse of Princeton, Minn.



Shawn Carrick

All aviation businesses deserve to be represented, and that is what the Minnesota Aviation Trades Association (MATA) is all about. The organization held its annual one-day conference, September 25, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza Minneapolis North Hotel in the Twin Cities. Featured speakers included Jamail Larkins, President of *Larkins Enterprises, Inc.*, an aviation sales and advertising company; Earl Lawrence, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Experimental Aircraft Association; Kate Dougherty, President, Kate Dougherty PR and former public relations director for

Cirrus Aircraft Design; Chris Roy, Director of the Minnesota Office of Aeronautics; and Shawn Carrick, a Supervisory U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) Officer based at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Chris Roy of the Minnesota Office of Aeronautics was appointed Director in August 2009. Roy briefed members on his career with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. He has extensive experience managing projects and programs that have significant public interest, such as the Lafayette Bridge and the nearly \$250 million in improvements on Interstate 494, including accommodations for the new runway at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).

Roy reviewed the upcoming budget, noting that aeronautics received a 10% increase, which will be used for airport development projects. Sixty-three projects were funded in fiscal year 2009, and of the \$1 billion in U.S. Stimulus Plan grants devoted to airports, Minnesota received \$20 million.

"Everyone benefits from the 136 public airports in Minnesota," said Roy, and emphasized the economic

impact of general aviation airports.

Roy said that he believes in listening, educating, learning, partnering, and innovating, and welcomes input from the aviation community. He will meet with the boards of all aviation organizations in the state in January 2010, to get input on industry concerns.

Shawn Carrick of U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) discussed international travel requirements for aircraft, crew and passengers; considerations for flight schools accepting foreign students; and what to expect when arriving into the United States at a port of entry.

"Our number one mission (at CBP) is anti-terrorism," said Carrick. In addition, CBP works to prevent illegal immigration.

Carrick said that CBP's definition of a "commercial operator" is different than other federal agencies. "If you depart the United States as a commercial operator, you have to return to the United States as a commercial operator, even if you are alone," said Carrick. "The local Customs agent has flexibility in working with pilots and operators, so be honest with the agent."

Carrick reviewed the procedures of the new electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS), and noted that the traditional Customs Form 178 can still be required, and is a good “back-up if CBP does not get the eAPIS because of a system “hick-up.” It is best to have all documentation completed in advance and “on hand,” said Carrick.

Annual aircraft decals are also still required. “As long as you have applied for a decal, you are good to go, in the event of processing delays,” said Carrick. For additional information on eAPIS and U.S. Customs procedures, refer to the article entitled “Streamlining Customs & Flight Service Would Enhance Security...Cut Costs!” in the August/September 2009 issue of *Midwest Flyer Magazine* (www.midwestflyer.com), and refer to the Customs procedures at the AOPA website (www.aopa.org).

Carrick says that it generally takes between 5-10 minutes to clear an aircraft at a port of entry, but if a pilot experiences a problem with an agent, they are encouraged to file a complaint with CBP online, or contact the local or area Customs office and ask for a supervisor. “We are not going to treat a pilot as a criminal,” said Carrick. Officers are required to sweep all aircraft for explosives with an electronic box, and some ports of entry have dogs to check for explosives and drugs. Searches are done at random, and are very thorough.

Carrick warns that Driving While Intoxicated violations (DWIs) by pilots are a big issue in Canada, but not so in the United States.

Earl Lawrence, Vice President of Industry & Regulatory Affairs with the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, flew in for the



L/R) MATA President Kevin Doering of North Star Aviation, Mankato, Minn., presents the “MATA Distinguished Service Award” to Bruce D. Jaeger, President of Jaeger Aviation, Inc., Willmar, Minn.

conference to provide MATA members an update on current regulations and issues facing the industry. Lawrence has been nicknamed the “Rocket Scientist,” because he used to be one. He worked for NASA on the Space Station project before coming to EAA, and before that, as an aircraft mechanic.

Lawrence said that the *USA Today* reporter that slammed general aviation in his September 17, 2009 article on general aviation airports, lied (see article entitled “USA Today Article Attacks GA Airport Funding In Support of Airlines,” October/November 2009, *Midwest Flyer Magazine*, www.midwestflyer.com). The fact is, said Lawrence, “fuel taxes pay for infrastructure at airports, not airline ticket taxes.” Lawrence continued: “Congress also said to USA Today, ‘you are wrong!’” Lawrence believes

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that the article originated from the airlines, because it suggests that money is wasted on general aviation airports when air carrier airports are in need of funding.

“Who is going to pay for NextGen?” Lawrence asked members. NextGen is the new air traffic control system being proposed.

“User fees!” answered Lawrence. “General aviation is already paying fees (through the tax on aviation fuel). What we are now debating are toll booth fees, in addition to all the other fees,” said Lawrence. “We are never going to avoid paying fees, but hopefully we can avoid toll booths.”

Lawrence expects Congress to come back in 2010 with requests for more and more fees, and he will ask them if they feel aviation is of benefit to society or only to itself?

“Congress is on our side for the General Fund still contributing,” said Lawrence, “but the Senate is not as supportive. We (GA) prefer an increase in the fuel tax over toll booths.”

Lawrence commented on the new Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) system. ADS-B is a crucial component of the nation's Next-Generation Air Transportation System, and its implementation over the next 20 years will turn NextGen into reality.

With ADS-B, both pilots and controllers will see radar-like displays with highly accurate traffic data from satellites – displays that update in real time and don't degrade with distance or terrain. The system will also give pilots access to weather services, terrain maps and flight information services. The improved situational awareness will mean that pilots will be able to fly at safe distances from one another with less assistance from air traffic controllers.

“ADS-B will cost the aviation community, but will cut costs to the FAA because radar will not be needed,” said Lawrence. “The Department of Defense will now pay for radar because they still want it.”

Concerning “national security,” Lawrence says that there are many problems with creating a new agency (Homeland Security), and in developing new rules. He noted that the Security Directive imposed on airports is hard to comply with, but they are the rules we have to live with for the time being.

“There was no comment period,” said Lawrence. Before Congress can pass a new bill, there must be a comment period, but not so with Homeland Security.

The Large Aircraft Security proposal is now being completely redone, because it was overly restrictive without just cause. The original rule is being rewritten because it would have been too costly and would not have improved security.

Lawrence said that U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) has been extremely cooperative in dealing with general aviation. CBP is making improvements to the eAPIS procedures and is making progress.

The head guy of general aviation at TSA was at Oshkosh for the first time, and Lawrence expects that cooperation and understanding will improve security and make the eAPIS filing process more efficient.

Concerning Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) like the “*Predator*” used by the Department of Defense and Homeland Security, Lawrence says that we need to learn how to deal with them, and there are airspace and equipment concerns for aircraft. Three people are flying each UAV, says Lawrence, “so they can see us, before we can see them.” EAA is working to develop policy on UAVs.

Lawrence urged members to write to their Congressman to avoid ridiculous national security requirements from occurring. There are more pilots training in Saudi Arabia now thanks to Homeland Security in the United States. The United States has long been a leader in flight training for foreign countries because of lower costs and fewer

restrictions.

Fuel is on everyone's mind, nowadays. Lawrence says: “Jet fuel is set, but leaded 100LL is getting scarce, as no cars in the world use lead.

“100LL is the target of environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A rule is coming out in 2010. January 2017 is the deadline to eliminate all leaded fuel. The problem is, there is no replacement for 100LL. We will end up with a 95-octane fuel, but the entire fleet will need new certification to handle a lower octane fuel except for the 70% of the fleet, which is already certified, and 87-91-octane capable. Continental and Lycoming are committed to building new engines, and GAMA is committed to converting the fleet.”

Lawrence gave a plug to the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association's program “*GA Serving America*.” The program is open to every aviation organization and governmental agency to educate the public.

“The EAA Young Eagles program has helped educate the public,” said Lawrence, “because it gets parents out to the airport.”

Lawrence said that despite FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt's affiliation with the Air Line Pilots Association and his airline background, which concerns some in general aviation, Congress likes him, and aviation is more likely to get what it needs with him at the helm. “Whenever Congress does not like an Administrator, we have problems like the Southwest Airlines inspection problems,” said Lawrence.

Kate Dougherty of Kate Dougherty PR (Public Relations), formerly with Cirrus Design, discussed the importance of good public relations for businesses, combined with cost-effective advertising. She also noted that if we do not create and build our industry, some day it will not exist.

Dougherty said that “perception”

is everything. "What people see when they look at your business."

She warned members not to make it difficult for customers to do business with them. Be clear on what your business does, and make sure you provide good contact information (i.e. phone number, physical address, email address, website). Dougherty also urged members to take their mayors and civic leaders flying from time to time, and to join their local chambers of commerce to tap decision-makers. It's difficult for the community to get rid of the airport if they have a relationship with it," she said. "Have fly-ins and civic events at the airport. Make the airport a community meeting place."

Dougherty was asked to comment on Alan Klapmeier's future in aviation. Klapmeier is the cofounder of Cirrus Design, but is no longer employed at the company. She said not to worry...that Alan will resurface, and when he does, look out, "it will be something fantastic!"

Emphasis at the MATA Conference this year was on introducing area high school students to aviation business careers. Over 100 area

students attended the conference and luncheon featuring Jamail Larkins of Atlanta, Georgia. As a national spokesperson for EAA Young Eagles, Careers in Aviation, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and the first official Ambassador for Aviation & Space Education for the Federal Aviation Administration, Larkins described how he got started in aviation business at the age of 15. In addition to his public speaking, Larkins founded an aircraft sales and leasing company, and an aviation-consulting firm. Collectively, Larkins' companies have generated over \$7.5 million in annual sales.

Recognized during the conference with the "MATA Distinguished Service Award" was Bruce Jaeger of Willmar, Minnesota, for his service to the Minnesota aviation community as owner of Willmar Air Service from 1979 to 2008, and manager of Willmar Municipal Airport-John L. Rice Field from 1979-2001.

Willmar Air Service specializes in Mooney sales, maintenance and flight training, and Jaeger has been involved nationally with the Mooney Aircraft Pilots Association and its Safety

Foundation since 1993. He is currently serving on the foundation's board of directors, and has likewise served on the MATA board of directors. Jaeger sold Willmar Air Service in 2008, and now manages Jaeger Aviation, Inc., which specializes in Mooney flight training and the promotion of a unique new Mooney interior design.

Receiving the "MATA Flight Training Scholarship" for 2009 was Adam Kruse, 21 of Princeton, Minnesota, a student at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Kruse is working on his Private Pilot Certificate and is pursuing a career as a commercial pilot. During the summers, Kruse works in Talkeetna, Alaska at K2 Aviation as a tarmac worker and Spanish translator.

For additional information on the Minnesota Aviation Trades Association, contact Mike Higgins at 651-450-6200 or email mike@exclusiveaviation.com (www.mnaviationtrades.org).

Ground transportation from Minneapolis-Crystal Airport and the Crowne Plaza Hotel was provided courtesy of Thunderbird Aviation-Crystal. □

The Mormon Conspiracy

The book "The Mormon Conspiracy" is written by Dale Seitzer and set in Pierre, S.D. A pilot – Jerry Sherwood – gives a ride to a stranger in his homebuilt aircraft, who is asking about building a plane. The pilot is hijacked at gunpoint and trapped in a conspiracy that involves Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the FBI and the Mormon Church. Sherwood partners with the local police chief and an FBI agent to face danger, learn and grow, crack the conspiracy and corruption, and prevent the catastrophe. The flying



adventures include piloting a kit built Skyranger aircraft, Cessna 182 Skylane, and Piper Warrior.

The book is fast paced with twists and turns, and action. General aviation pilots will especially enjoy this book.

The book is 228 pages in length, sells for \$14.95, and is available through www.seitviewpublishing.com/.

The author, Dale Seitzer of St. Paul, Minnesota, is a pilot, and is now exercising his Sport Pilot Certificate. He keeps his plane at the Lake Elmo Airport (21D). His wife is also a pilot. Dale Seitzer works as a Business Analyst at Ameriprise Financial. He is also a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt. This is Seitzer's first novel. □

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