

Chief Operating Officer's Message

I've been to a number of aviation events around the country this year and I am reminded of how much of aviation has changed over the last 100 years, and, also, how much of it has remained the same. 100 years ago, pilots were rare, mysterious creatures who bent the wind to their will, viewing the earth from a vista known only to a privileged few. Today, almost 1 in 500 people in the U.S. have an active pilot's license, over 220,000 general aviation aircraft are registered, and 6,500 plus commercial aircraft fly 853 million people annually -- enough for every man, woman and child in the U.S. to fly more than twice. Aircraft and aviation travel have come a long, long way since the 167 feet traveled by the Wright brothers in 1903.



Jerri's 1941 Porterfield CP-65, NC37895, at one of these airports, Eagle's Nest in Lone, Calif.

But as I rumble past tiny country airports in the Midwest, I can still regularly find someone pulling onto the ramp in the early morning light, a small, single-seat, fabric-covered aircraft, hand-propped and flown with four instruments or less. And in that airport's community there will still likely be one more small child, wide-eyed in wonder, getting a ride over the cornfields, or learning the joy of the wind and clouds rushing by.

Government employment statistics predict an increase in pilot employment to rise consistently over the next decade, to fill retiring spots, and to support ever increasing aviation travel demand. Many of these pilots will get their start as a young child on a grass strip in the Midwest, or they may transition from military service into pilot employment, or, choose this profession as adults. The average learning costs to begin a pilot career is steep, around \$100,000 in 2022. And it's not just pilots, but other vital aviation industry positions, A&P mechanics, air traffic controllers, engineers and other career choices require training that can become cost prohibitive.

We've been focusing on our move consolidation thus far this year, but we are still committed to supporting the next generation of aviation professionals through partnerships with local aviation school programs. AAHS has acquired, through member donations, over \$15,000 in the AAHS Scholarship Fund that we look forward to distributing to deserving aviation program students, midway through their training programs. It takes time and communications with school programs, counselors and students themselves to effectively distribute the AAHS Scholarship Fund, and we'd like you to consider this important and very fulfilling role at AAHS. Contact AAHS HQ at 951-777-1332 if you feel you can support AAHS and future aviation professionals with your volunteer time today.

Jerri Bergen
AAHS CEO