



2023 Nevada Aviation Association Year in Review

January 30, 2024

By Kenneth G. Moen, A.A.E., President

I hope that you and your family enjoyed a pleasant Christmas holiday and I want to wish you and yours a Happy New Year. 2023 was an opportunistic year for the Nevada Aviation Association (NvAA). In 2022, the NvAA made several strategic moves to position the NvAA for opportunities over the year. I want to take a few moments to highlight some of those changes and outline next steps for getting off on the right foot for the new year.

The high point for the year was the NvAA gathering in Reno, Nevada at the end of March for our annual conference. Ninety-three in-person attendees (including presenters) and two virtual attendees attended the conference. A post-conference survey distributed by KCA (NvAA management service provider) indicates that attendees rated the agenda, accommodations, meals, and conference networking opportunities as “*excellent.*”

The NvAA Board approved the association’s Strategic Plan in October 2020 outlining the *Mission* and *Vision* of the NvAA and approved a name change from *Nevada Airports Association* to the *Nevada Aviation Association*. This name change has critical to growing the NvAA membership base that now includes government agencies, airport stakeholders, aeronautical service providers, and flight departments, and other industry operators that have a vested interested in the expansion and success of the aviation industry in the State of Nevada. Our membership has grown from 48 in 2021 to 99 in 2023. Membership growth is critical for our organization. The larger megaphone that the NvAA can speak with at the 2025 Legislative session will help us carry our message to the people who can support our agenda to obtain additional funding for the *Nevada Fund for Aviation*. Link for the membership brochure is here <https://nevadaaviation.org/Membership>. We will be updating our strategic plan this year and identifying our goals and initiatives for the next five years.

In 2022, we promoted the member’s use of the new and improved NvAA website to function as the primary resource of information and archive of information related to NvAA operations. We have continued to promote resources and activities to our membership and communicate with the public about who NvAA is and the importance of aviation to our state.

In 2023, NvAA and its government affairs team led by Susan Fisher of McDonald Carano focused on two main goals at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative session in Carson City. First goal was to obtain a \$2M appropriation for the *Nevada Fund for Aviation* and our second goal was amend state law to move the *Nevada Air Service Development Commission (ASDC)* from the Nevada Department of Tourism to the Governor’s Office of

Economic Development (GOED). The ASDC was constituted at the 2019 Legislative session but did not receive any funding and the Nevada Department of Tourism did not attempt to form the ASDC. It existed on paper only. We succeeded in receiving a \$2M appropriation to the Nevada Fund for Aviation and currently, the Nevada Aviation Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) submitted a list of \$13M in local airport improvement program projects to receive reimbursement 100% of local matching funds in FY 2023-24. The Nevada Fund for Aviation will be able to fund 100% of local matching dollars again in FY 2024-25.

This was a tremendous win for NvAA. We were also successful in moving ASDC to GOED and the Governor has appointed seven ASDC members to the commission by the end of 2023. However, the funding request was removed from the final language in the closing minutes of the legislative session. Although it is disappointing that the funding for this program was scuttled for pure politics, we are excited to have this commission appointed and to start working on a strategic plan for statewide air service development. More to come.

#### New Board Members

In October, the NvAA Board of Directors approved changes to the NvAA Bylaws concerning how the board is governed. As a result, the current board will remain in place, and we will be welcoming a new board member at our January meeting. Daren Griffin, CEO of Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority, will be appointed by the Board to fill the vacant Vice-President position. We look forward to adding Daren to our leadership group. Daren is a seasoned airport management professional with a strong history of managing airports at all levels of the spectrum. His background includes leadership positions in the Oregon Division of Aeronautics, the NW Chapter of the AAAE and other national organization leadership positions. We are excited to add Daren to our team and we look forward to his contributions to our strategic planning efforts over the next several months.

#### Next Steps

Continued membership growth is one of our top priorities. It should be the goal of all NvAA members to bring new members into the fold of the NvAA. We will be announcing new initiatives for 2024.

Spring conference. A conference committee has been formed to iron out conference details to include the program, location, networking events, sponsorship, and exhibition opportunities. The conference is scheduled for March 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> at the Eldorado Hotel and Casino in downtown Reno.

Below is a status report of the NvAA strategic plan initiatives:

#### **Promote public understanding of the value of aviation and airports.**

- **New Initiative: Pursue a separate Division of Aeronautics in State Government**
  - o **Task** – Advocate for the creation of a separate Division of Aeronautics within the Government. The vision for this division is that it would operate with autonomy and implement the initiatives detailed in the Nevada Airport and Heliport System Plan.

**Progress Report:** NvAA will seek to contract for an in-depth study of the eleven western states and how they organize, staff, and fund aviation programs in their respective states. Once a study is complete, a strategy will be developed, and a sponsor identified for a BDR for the creation of a Nevada Division of Aeronautics.

**Develop and publish a statewide aviation economic impact report.**

- **Task** - Determine budget, scope of work, and enter into an agreement with University of Nevada, Reno, or other qualified contractors to prepare the report.

**Progress Report:** Economic impact study was completed as a part of the NASHP.

- **Develop and participate in a public outreach program.**
- **Task** - Prepare a PowerPoint presentation and other materials for NvAA Members and staff to make presentations to local governments, community groups, and schools in their communities.

**Progress Report:** PowerPoint was one of the deliverables as part of the Nevada Airport and Heliport System Plan and is available on the NvAA website under *Resources*.

- **Enhance the NvAA website and utilize social media.**
  - o **Task** - Add a paid advertising feature to the website.

**Progress Report:** Work with KCA to develop an opportunity to add an advertising feature for aeronautical/aviation service providers.

**Grow NvAA Membership**

- **Recruit all Nevada Counties to become Regular NvAA Members and actively participate in supporting the goals of NvAA.**

o **Task** - Develop a data base, including primary point of contact, for all county managers and develop and disseminate information on the benefits of participating in NvAA. Encourage public and private corporations that manufacture or provide aviation related products and services, including airline operators, charter companies and fixed based operators to become Corporate Members. Encourage helicopter and UAV operators to become Associate Members. Encourage other aviation related organizations, associations, and government agencies to become Associate Members.

**Progress Report:** NvAA strategy is members email membership brochure with to their email contact list. At the end of 2021 there were forty-eight members and at the end of 2023 there were ninety-nine members, an increase of 106%.

- **Sustain and improve airport infrastructure.**
  - o **Task** - Obtain permanent state funding for FAA matching grants.

**Progress Report:** NvAA retained the services of McDonald Carano to lobby for a \$2M appropriation in the Nevada Fund for Aviation Program would allow counties to fund airport maintenance and infrastructure improvements in the amount of \$23M. A permanent funding source is one of the goals in creating a Nevada Division of Aeronautics.

- **Identify other funding sources for asset management and capital improvement projects.**
  - o **Task** - Research the availability and use of federal and state grants including, Community Development Block Grants and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Grants for funding airport improvements and leveraging AIP grants.

**Progress Report:** This was a goal in 2023 and we have not been able to identify an initiative champion. Identify a project champion to develop a strategy in the second quarter of 2024 to identify other sources of grant funding available to Nevada airports.

- **Provide a unified voice on airport and aviation related policies and funding.**
  - o **Task** – Draft a legislative plan for the creation of Nevada Division of Aeronautics.

**Progress Report:** NvAA will be seeking to engage another government affairs firm for the 84<sup>th</sup> Nevada Legislature to assist in promoting the NvAA agenda.

- **Develop NvAA policy statements on relevant aviation issues.**
  - o **Task** - Monitor proposed federal, state, and local aviation related policies, regulations, and funding and develop NvAA positions as appropriate. Provide a forum for NvAA members on aviation technology and information.

**Progress Report:** Identify and recruit NvAA members by the second quarter of 2024 to lead a group of members to develop a process for developing position papers for NvAA Board approval and dissemination news outlets.

- **Conduct monthly conference calls, hold an electronic fall, and in-person spring annual conference.**
  - o **Task** – Monthly NvAA Board meetings are scheduled monthly, and the agenda and meeting information are posted on the website, emailed to members, and produce two conferences per calendar year. One conference in-person and one conference in an electronic format.

**Progress Report:** Monthly calls have been scheduled on the third Thursday of the month and began in October 2021. NvAA general meeting scheduled for September 2023 but a quorum not present. A subsequent electronic meeting was scheduled in October that allowed members to vote by email. The NvAA annual conference is scheduled for March 25<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> 2024 at the Eldorado Hotel and Casino in downtown Reno.

- **Develop downloadable templates for airport leases, permits, and other useable airport management compliance documents.**

- o **Task** –Develop “Resources” page on NvAA website [Resourceshttps://nevadaaviation.org/page-18065](https://nevadaaviation.org/page-18065)

**Progress Report:** Two items have already been developed and uploaded to website. Identify project champion to lead a committee to continue to make progress on useable materials for management compliance documents. First two documents are *Airport Marketing & Public Relations Guide*, and *Fire Support Resource Document*. Also, a History of the NvAA is also available.