



Oklahoma Aeronautics Annual Report

2021 Aviation & Aerospace Industry Review



FY2021



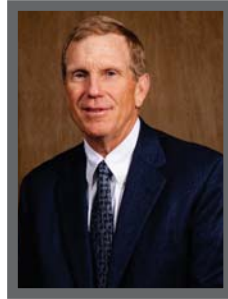
Chairman
Jim Putnam
Edmond - At Large



Vice Chairman
Jerry Hunter
Oklahoma City - At Large



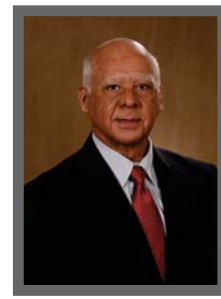
Secretary
Lindy Ritz
Norman - District 4



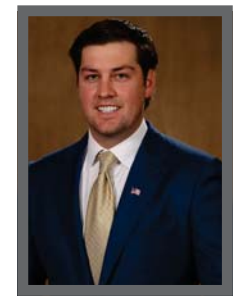
Kevin Potter
Bartlesville - District 1



Dr. David Conway
Durant - District 2



Charles Ortega
Altus - District 3



Blake Raney
Edmond - District 5

Meet the Director



Grayson Ardies has been the Oklahoma State Director of Aeronautics since November 2020. The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission's mission is to promote aviation and aerospace, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across Oklahoma are

met by the 108 public airports that comprise the state's air transportation system. Ardies emphasis is on promoting the aerospace industry, one of the state's largest industries and top employers; critical planning and development for the state's air transportation system; making the state's 49 regional business airports the best possible economic centers in their communities; and encouraging public-private partnerships to promote the aerospace industry.

Ardies began working for the Commission in 2009 as an intern. Rising through the ranks, he became the lone 5010 airport inspector as an Aviation Program Manager, conducting airport and pavement inspections at Oklahoma's public-use, general aviation airports to provide each community with a foundation for the federal and state capital planning process. In 2016 he became Manager of the Airport Division to oversee the development of the Commission's Five-year Airport Construction Program which directs approximately \$25 million of federal, state, and local funding per year. He was responsible for airport inspections, airspace zoning reviews in accordance with the State's Aircraft Pilot and Passenger Protection Act, the state's anemometer tower marking law, and providing



assistance to airports with their development, operation, and technical documents. Ardies served as Deputy Director from January 2019 through October 2020, and was unanimously selected by the seven-member Commission to fill the State Director of Aeronautics position, beginning November 2020.

He has led many statewide agency initiatives including a three-year effort working with the state legislature regarding the protection of military training airspace. He also managed a two-year project that conducted an Aerospace and Aviation Economic Impact Study which established the industry as the second largest economic engine in the state. Under his leadership the Commission developed a unique P3 (public/private) partnership at Carlton Landing Airport on Lake Eufaula, and guided the difficult but necessary five-year effort to close Lake Murray State Park Airport.

Ardies was awarded the honorable 2020 State Aviation Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO). The award, which was established in 1989, honors State Aviation personnel who have excelled in their service and dedication to aviation progress and development in their state. Ardies was also listed in the Power 15 List in Aviation and Aeronautics in Oklahoma by the Journal Record in 2020.

Director Ardies graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Aviation Management with double minors in Business Administration and Air Traffic Control. As part of his education through the aviation program, he also received a commercial pilot's license with single and multi-engine instrument ratings and is a certified flight instructor.



VISION

The Commission is considered the lead government agency for providing support, capital improvement funding, advocacy, and promotion of Oklahoma’s airports and the aerospace industry.

MISSION

OAC’s mission is to promote aviation, which includes ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across the state are met by the state’s 108 public airports that comprise the Oklahoma Airport System, and ensuring the viability of the state’s aerospace industry.

HISTORY AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

Empowered and directed to encourage, foster, and assist in the development of aviation and aerospace in this state and to encourage the establishment of airports and air navigation facilities, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) was formally created in 1963 by an act of the Oklahoma Legislature, succeeding the Oklahoma Aviation Commission. Since FY 2001, the Commission has invested \$274 million in federal funds and \$76.5 million of the \$94.5 million it has received in state funds into airport infrastructure. OAC is funded by users of the Oklahoma Airport System and the Legislature through aircraft excise and aviation fuel taxes, aircraft registration fees, and appropriated funds. On average, 81% of funds received go directly back into airports.

Revenue FY 2021

Miscellaneous Receipts	\$114,452.38
Aviation License Plates	\$7,272.00
Aviation Fuel tax	\$74,410.08
Aircraft Registration	\$942,582.14
Aircraft Excise Tax	\$4,207,079.85
Federal Grants	\$1,015,543.80
Total Deposited Revenues	\$6,361,340.25

Expenditures FY 2021

Capital Projects	\$6,514,147.87
Operating/Administrative	\$665,518.48
Aviation Education	\$207,452.81
Total Expenditures	\$7,387,119.16

OAC’s main revenue sources are as follows:

- Aircraft Excise Tax of 3.25% on new and used aircraft purchases and based in the state.
- Aircraft Registration Fees
- Aviation Fuel Tax

The only fee that OAC directly collects is the \$200 fee paid for OAC to process an application pursuant to its duty to administer APPPA.



Chris Wadsworth, CPO | Chief of Staff, Chief Financial Officer
cwadsworth@oac.ok.gov

Chris joined the Aeronautics Commission in September 2019, continuing his career with the State of Oklahoma that started in 2009. Prior to coming to the Commission, he worked at the Insurance Department, Department of Commerce, and State Regents for Higher Education. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oklahoma Baptist University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Oklahoma Christian University.



Nick Young, AAAE | Airports Division Manager
nyoung@oac.ok.gov

Nick served as an Airport Operations Officer for Westheimer Airport and Construction Assessment lead for the Oklahoma Disaster Recovery Project. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management from Oklahoma University and Master of Business Administration in Aerospace Logistics from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He is also a Certified Member of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE).



Sandra Shelton | Government Relations and Communications Manager
sshelton@oac.ok.gov

Sandra joined the Commission in April 2016 as the Government Affairs Liaison. She assumed the responsibilities of Communications a few months later. She was promoted to Government Relations and Communications Manager in 2021 and is accountable for the marketing and communication and legislative policy development efforts for the agency. She has served the State of Oklahoma for more than 25 years.



Kelly Fincannon, PE | Chief Airport Engineer
kfincannon@oac.ok.gov

Kelly began working for the Commission in 2021 as the Chief Airport Engineer. His focus is on airport planning, design, construction, and project management with a mission to provide development and improvement of the Oklahoma Airport System, working closely with the Federal Aviation Administration, airports, consultants, and construction contractors. He holds professional registrations in Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri.



Benjamin Naghavi, PE | Airport Engineer
bnaghavi@oac.ok.gov

Ben joined the Commission in November 2018 as its Airport Engineer. Ben obtained a Bachelor and Master of Science in civil and Hydraulic Structures Engineering from Ferdowsi University in Iran. He then earned a Masters in Civil Engineering and Environmental Science from Oklahoma University in December of 2013. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in Oklahoma and Texas.



Thomas Galloway | Aviation Program Manager
tgalloway@oac.ok.gov

Thomas joined the Commission in June of 2020. Previously, he worked as an Operations Specialist at the Crater Lake – Klamath Regional Airport in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Thomas is a private pilot in both gliders and powered aircraft as well as hang gliding. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and has Airport Certified Employee Designations from the American Association of Airport Executives.



Michelle Bouziden | Airport and Aviation Education Grants Administrator
mbouziden@oac.ok.gov

Michelle began working at the Commission in February 2015. She is responsible for the management of grants awarded through the Five-year Airport Construction Program, directing some \$25 million of federal, state and local funding annually for the construction, repair and maintenance of Oklahoma's public-use, general aviation airports. She works with communities and consultants to ensure state law and grant assurances are followed.



Paula Kedy, MA, Ed | Aerospace & Aviation Education Program Coordinator
pkedy@oac.ok.gov

Paula is a life-long educator, serving as the Executive Director of Academics and Instruction for the Ada City School District. Kedy was named the Oklahoma Supreme Court Teacher of the Year in 2004 and was recognized as a finalist for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. She currently serves on the national steering committee for the AOPA High School You Can Fly program.



Andrea Post | Executive Assistant to the Director
apost@oac.ok.gov

Andrea began her tenure at the Commission in August of 2019 and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Art and Museum Studies from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. Her public service includes working with the City of Guthrie as their Tourism Director. She also served in the Pioneer Library System for the Norman Public Library East. Andrea provides administrative support to the State Director of Aeronautics and Chief of Staff.

COMMISSION DUTIES

Model Legislation

As part of its broad mandate to encourage and foster the development of aviation and aerospace, the Legislature, consistent with this mandate, specifically and somewhat exceptionally, tasked OAC to “recommend necessary legislation to advance the interests of the state in aeronautics.” Fulfilling this responsibility, OAC has drafted and recommended legislation that has served this goal:

2021 UAS clearinghouse within Aeronautics Commission.
2020 Oklahoma Advanced Mobility Pilot Program.
2019 Protection for military airspace from tall structures.
2018 ACES program to support aerospace industry.
2018 Charter aircraft excise tax 50% use requirement.
2017 Airport Safety & Standards Inspection Program.
2017 Women in Aviation & Aerospace Day in statute.
2017 Oklahoma Aviation & Aerospace Day in statute.
2014 Meteorological Evaluation Towers (METs) marking.
2013 Recreational immunity for activities at private airports.
2010 Aircraft Pilot & Passenger Protection Act protects airports from incompatible land development.
2008 Aerospace Engineer Tax Credits.
2008 Aircraft Dealers Protection Act.
2005 MRO Sales Tax Exemption aircraft maintenance.

Airport Engineering

Preliminary Engineering Reports:

- OAC develops the scope of work, selects and contracts with qualified consulting firms.
- OAC submits FAA grant application for 90% funding.
- OAC administers the federal grant funds for the development of preliminary engineering reports.
- The reports produce a well-defined scope of work with a detailed cost estimate that the City, FAA, and OAC use to plan and program funding for airport capital improvement projects.

Design

- Ensures the development of airports meets FAA and State design standards by providing technical support to cities, consultants, and OAC planning staff.
- Reviews project specific plans and specifications to ensure the design is consistent with funding agencies' project scope of work and required standards and specifications.

Construction Oversight

- Makes periodic site visits to ensure construction is consistent with the approved plans and specifications.
- Reviews and approves progress pay requests for completed work items.
- Evaluates Change Orders and Grant Amendments for need and justification.
- Attends final inspection of completed projects.

Grants Administration

- Collects needed financial documentation that will confirm state grant funds are being expended appropriately and as the Legislature intended.
- Only advances pay requests that have the required supporting documentation (invoices from contractors and vendors).
- Makes timely reimbursements to the cities.



New Runway at South Grand Lake Regional Airport Opens

The South Grand Lake Regional Airport (SGLRA) in Ketchum hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony in April in honor of the airport's new and expanded 5,200-foot runway.

The \$4.58 million project began construction in 2019 and consisted of widening the runway from 60 ft to 75 ft, a new asphalt runway surface, and the installation visual guidance systems and LED runway edge lights. The project provides better safety to the users of the airport while continuing to improve the economic impact for the greater Grand Lake Area.

In addition to the ribbon cutting, attendees enjoyed a flyover performance by vintage warbird military aircraft and heard from dignitaries including Sen. James Inhofe, Speaker Charles McCall, Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz, Secretary of Commerce Scott Mueller, Sen. Micheal Bergstrom, Rep. Rusty Cornwell and State Director of Aeronautics Grayson Ardies.

"I have been flying into the South Grand Lake Regional Airport for years and I am thrilled to celebrate this momentous occasion alongside the Grand Lake community," U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe said. "Businesses, governmental agencies and recreational flyers all utilize this airport—from the Grand River Dam Authority, DSA Aviation, K & D Aviation to the Grand Aces Organization. Oklahoma's thriving aviation and aerospace industries are not done growing yet and I am excited to see this newly refinished runway as part of a larger growth opportunity for new businesses and economic growth in Oklahoma."

Speaker Charles McCall emphasized, "Air access to a community can be a deciding factor for many companies seeking a new or additional location. The further development of the Oklahoma Airport System is critical to the cities and towns that Oklahomans call home."

In 2004, nine volunteers formed a public trust to develop 54 acres of grassland into what has now become a 105-acre jet-capable regional airport

with almost 20 based aircraft serving the Grand Lake Area. "With the help of volunteers, grants, and hundreds of supporters making continuous donations, this airport has prospered for nearly 17 years," SGLRA Trust Authority Chairman Brent Howard said. "To date, more than \$500,000 has been raised from in-kind donations and \$1 million has come from cash donations and fundraising events."

With an expanded fuel ramp, runway lights, and GPS all weather approach, this Craig County airport has reached a new level of 24/7 operation for business and personal aircraft, including coast to coast flights and destination leased aircraft.

"The dedication of the citizenry of Ketchum makes this airport unique," Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz said. "They have labored, raised funds, and dedicated their personal time and resources for the betterment of aviation in their community and are creating future pilots at their flight school, hosting on-airport businesses, and are the model for public/private partnerships."

As a Title 60 Public Trust, SGLRA is supported by nine volunteer Airport Trustees, the FAA, the Aeronautics Commission, HW Lochner Engineers, and Members of the SGLRA community.

"The runway expansion at South Grand Lake Regional Airport is another sign Oklahoma is open for business. Air access to a community can be a deciding factor for many companies seeking a new or additional location. The Aeronautics Commission has directed federal funds and provided grants across the state, including \$229K in state dollars for this project, and the airport raised an incredible \$229K match, to ensure the needs of commerce and communities are met throughout Oklahoma's air transportation facilities. Continuing to develop our airport system is critical to becoming a Top Ten state."

- Governor Kevin Stitt

CARES Act Paved Way for Nearly \$16M in Airport Projects in Oklahoma

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was a \$2 trillion package of measures introduced by Congress in 2020 in response to COVID-19. Due to that funding, airport construction projects totaling \$15,919,332 commenced across Oklahoma following the approval of funding by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). The Aeronautics Commission provided oversight and final inspection for these projects.

The fourteen grants were approved by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao. More than \$1.2 billion in airport safety and infrastructure grants were announced through the FAA to 405 airports in 50 states and the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Palau, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of those states, Oklahoma received nearly \$16 million in federal dollars.

The largest project included a \$3.2M grant for a runway rehabilitation project at Lawton-Fort Sill Regional Airport which began in October. The Lawton - Ft. Sill Regional Airport has served the Southwestern Oklahoma region since 1950 providing air transportation for the citizens of Comanche County and surrounding areas as well as to the Fort Sill Army Base. The airport has an annual economic impact of \$55M and several companies such as EZ GO, Dillard's, Goodyear, Republic Paper, and Bar S use the airport to oversee operations they have in the area.

Ardmore Downtown Executive received just over \$1.7M to install LED runway lighting in a can and conduit system to ensure 24/7 airport functionality, increasing situational awareness during landing/takeoff operations. Additionally, a crack seal and seal coat was completed while the runway was closed. The airport has an annual economic impact of \$6M and several companies such as Michelin North America, Dollar General, Dot Foods, Valero Ardmore Refinery, and IMTECH use the airport.

The Bristow Jones Memorial Airport in June opened a new 4,000-foot runway which began construction in 2018 to improve the safety and standards issues with the existing runway. The CARES Act grant allowed planners to focus on reconstructing the center portion of the old runway to turn it into the parallel taxiway system for the new runway. The project cost was \$2.7M.

Mid-America Industrial in Pryor extended their taxiway for \$1.4M, and Seminole Municipal reconfigure their existing taxiway with an \$800K grant. Skiatook Municipal rehabilitated their runway with a grant for \$2M.

Commission staff made routine site visits to the following projects as well:

Ardmore Downtown	Install Runway Lighting, Rehabilitate Runway, Rehabilitate Taxiway	\$1,776,226
Jones Memorial	Reconstruct Taxiway	\$2,722,222
Carnegie Municipal	Install Perimeter Fencing, Install Taxiway Lighting	\$266,666
Fairview Municipal	Construct Taxiway	\$37,400
Hollis Municipal	Rehabilitate Apron, Rehabilitate Taxiway	\$816,666
South Grand Lake Regional	Construct/Modify/Improve/Rehabilitate Hangar	\$496,803
Lawton-Fort Sill Regional	Rehabilitate Runway	\$3,274,251
State of Oklahoma	Update State/Regional System Plan or Study	\$221,814
Various Locations	Construct/Extend/Improve Safety Area, Rehabilitate Runway/Taxiway	\$340,000
Ponca City Regional	Rehabilitate Runway	\$1,118,764
Seminole Municipal	Shift or Reconfigure Existing Taxiway	\$816,172
Skiatook Municipal	Rehabilitate Runway	\$2,000,000
Thomas Municipal	Construct Apron, Construct Taxiway	\$628,590
OKC Various Locations	Construct/Extend/Improve Safety Area, Rehabilitate Runway/Taxiway	\$340,000



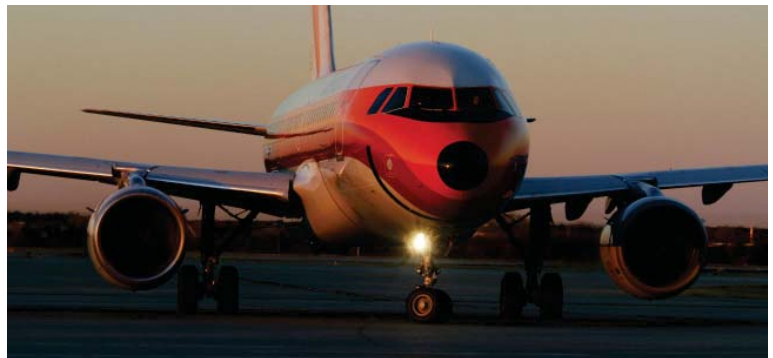
South Grand Lake Regional Airport hangar project.

HISTORY OF AGENCY AND RELEVANCE TODAY

Motivated by Governor Henry Bellmon and others, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) was created by the Legislature in 1963. The OAC was a successor agency to the Oklahoma Aviation Commission, which was created by the Legislature in 1946, predating the Civil Aeronautics Board and Administration, which became the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In view of the fact that Tinker Air Force Base was built in the early 1940s, American Airlines largest maintenance base was moved from New York's LaGuardia Airfield to Tulsa in 1946, and the Civil Aeronautics Administration's Standardization Center was moved from Houston to Oklahoma City in 1946, Bellmon, along with legislators and prominent business leaders, believed that it was essential for the state to have a state agency focused upon aviation, aerospace, and airports to ensure that state government did all that it could do to take full advantage of the opportunity presented by the rapid growth of aviation after World War II. Aviation was having a profound impact upon the everyday lives of all Americans; it was dramatically shrinking the world.

The core responsibility of OAC has been to ensure that the needs of communities and commerce across the state are met by a system of public airports, the Oklahoma Airport System (OAS). OAC has utilized federal, state, and local funds to make the investment for needed development and maintenance to the 108 airports that comprise the OAS. Beginning in 2001, with aviation-generated revenue provided by the Legislature from the aircraft excise and fuel taxes, and aircraft registration fees, OAC has been able to make a meaningful investment in our airport system that has also resulted in receiving additional federal funding from the FAA for our airport system.

Since 2001, OAC has received \$94.5 million from this aviation-generated revenue and invested \$76.5 million in airport infrastructure across the State—81% of the revenue that OAC has received since FY 2002 have been invested in airport infrastructure! That is a rate of return to the users of the OAS who pay the aircraft taxes and fees that fund OAC of which the State can be very proud. Many of these investments in infrastructure have been critical to airport projects. The 2,000 foot extension to the runway at Enid would not have been possible without the largest State/OAC airport grant ever of \$2.5 million. The extension was done so that T-38 trainer jets from nearby Vance AFB could land and takeoff from the Enid municipal airport rather than having to go to Wichita or Tulsa to train when the main runway at Vance is closed for maintenance; a significant step to help BRAC-proof Vance. The re-



cord investment from OAC was necessary because the FAA could not invest what it usually would because the extension was driven by military rather than civil aviation demand. This is just one example of several critical state investments in airports that the OAC has been able to do. Having funding to invest at the state level has also been leveraged to garner \$189 million in federal/FAA funding during this same time period. The state investment has been particularly pivotal insofar as the receipt of federal discretionary funding.

State investment and federal investment directed by OAC has also figured prominently in economic development and sustainment in many communities across the State. Major employers such as Michelin in Ardmore (Ardmore's largest employer), the Chickasaw Nation in Ada, Seaboard Farms in Guymon (Guymon's largest employer), and Conoco-Phillips (Phillips 66) in Bartlesville (Bartlesville's largest employer) all cite having immediate and ready access to their sites in those communities through the local airport as significant reasons they chose to locate or stay in those communities. These are just a few examples of similar stories across the State.

The statutory purpose of the OAC as stated in its original legislation in 1963 is "to encourage, foster, and assist in the development of aeronautics." Aeronautics is broadly defined to encompass about anything pertaining to aviation, aerospace, or airports. Due to this broad charge, OAC has engaged in many facets of aviation and aerospace beyond its core responsibility.

OAC has one of the most robust aerospace and aviation education programs in the country. Our nationally recognized program has invested on average \$240,000 annually over the last several years to not only expose young Oklahomans to careers in aviation and aerospace, but also adult Oklahomans who are being retrained for placement in the aerospace industry. OAC supports about 30 aerospace/aviation education programs, many of which are STEM, across the State. Such an endeavor is crucial to helping ensure the workforce necessary, today and tomorrow, for one of Oklahoma's largest industries.

AIRPORT PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

- Develops the Commission's five-year airport construction program (ACP) on an annual basis each spring.
- This directs an average of \$20M per year to the 108 public airports in the Oklahoma Airport System (OAS) for capital projects such as runway extensions, pavement rehabilitation, terminal building construction, and lighting projects. The ACP directs three sources of funding: \$4M OAC funding, \$3M local funding, \$13M FAA funding.
- Conducts safety and standards inspections for Oklahoma's 135 public-use airports on a 3 year cycle. These inspections provide the foundation to ensure a safe airport environment and determine where an airport doesn't meet FAA/OAC standards so those deficiencies can be addressed in the ACP.
- Conducts airport master record updates for Oklahoma's 135 public-use airports on a 3-year cycle. The master record provides data on each airport that is publicized to pilots through airport directories, aeronautical charts, and online aviation databases.
- Conducts pavement inspections at 82 airports. These pavement inspections determine the condition of the pavement on a 0-100 scale and the schedule for which the pavement should be rehabilitated.
- Oversees the development of a 20 year, long-term infrastructure development plan for each of the 108 airports in the OAS.
- Administers the state's zoning authority under the Aircraft Pilot Passenger Protection Act to ensure compatible development of structures and land-use in the vicinity of public-use and military airports.
- Administers the state's authority to require marking of anemometer towers (wind evaluation towers or METs) and development of a location database for these towers ensuring the safety of low level flying operations.
- Provides technical assistance for UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) operations to Oklahoma communities. Acts as a conduit and technical resource between the UAS community and existing users of Oklahoma's airports.
- Provides technical assistance to Oklahoma communities regarding the operation and development of their local airport. This includes assisting them with their capital planning and programming documents, primary guiding documents (minimum standards, airport rules/regulations, hangar lease/rates/charges policy), and general layout of the development of the airport.
- Led the Commission's Statewide Aviation and Aerospace Economic Impact Study Project that determined the industry was the state's second largest with annual economic activity nearing \$44 billion.
- Oversees the Commission's continuous system planning process for Oklahoma airports including administering any grants received from the FAA for these activities.



State System of Airports by the Numbers

- 108 - Number of publicly owned airports in Oklahoma
- 49 - Number of regional business airports
- 43 - Number of regional business airports that have jet-capable runways (5,000 feet or greater)
- 97 - Percentage of Oklahoma's population that is within 25 miles of one of the state's 49 regional business airports
- 94 - Percentage of Oklahoma's population that lives within 25 miles of an airport with a jet-capable runway

- 81 - Percentage of annual revenues the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission expends on airport infrastructure improvements
- \$4M - Average amount of state funding the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission expends annually on airport infrastructure improvements
- \$40M - Average amount of federal funds that Oklahoma's airport system receives annually for airport infrastructure improvements

AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Several cities across the state made some much-needed improvements to their local airports in FY2021, thanks to various state grants the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission awarded through its Airport Construction Program. Airport sponsors, which are typically the municipalities where the airports are located, are required to contribute local matches toward their airport projects. The amount of the local matches currently range from five percent for state funds to ten percent for federal funds (the Commission may make half the sponsor's required federal match). Effective in FY2010, the Aeronautics Commission began awarding grants to local municipalities for terminal construction or renovation. The grant awards for new terminals are for a maximum of \$500,000, and sponsors would be responsible for 50 percent in matching funds. Based on direct impacts to the economy, it is estimated that airport supported activities contribute almost \$500 million in annual tax revenues in Oklahoma. That is a great return on investment for all Oklahomans.

FY 2021 ACP Grant Recipients

- McCurtain County Regional Airport (Idabel) – \$488,031 to install ODALS.
- Miami Regional Airport - \$212,951 to seal taxiway pavement surface and joints.
- Mid-America Industrial Airport (Pryor) – \$466,077 to rehabilitate taxiway and apron pavements and replace taxiway lighting system.
- Robert S. Kerr Airport - \$169,210 to install ODALS.
- Seminole Municipal Airport - \$406,422 to install runway lights and REILS.

Total Funding for 2021 Oklahoma Airport Projects

FAA	\$23,699,223
State	\$3,529,514
Local	\$1,410,150
CARES	\$807,376
Total	\$29,446,263

What we've done in 2021, Oklahoma!



OKLAHOMA
Aeronautics

25 AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
31 AIRPORT INSPECTIONS
24 TALL STRUCTURE PERMITS

Airport Name	FY 2021 Airport Construction Project Description	Federal Share	State Share	Local Share
Ada Regional	"Construct Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$179,100		\$19,900
Ada Regional	"Rehabilitate Runway 18/36 and Improve Safety Area (PER) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$77,850		\$8,650
Altus/Quartz Mountain Regional	"Construct/Modify/Improve/Rehabilitate Hangar *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$559,368		\$62,152
Alva Regional	"Expand Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$596,998		\$66,333
Alva Regional	"Rehabilitate Parallel Taxiway System (PER) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$73,391		\$8,155
Antlers Municipal	"Install Guidance System, Apron, and Pavement - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$297,394		\$33,044
Ardmore Downtown Executive	"Install Runway Lighting, & Rehabilitate Runway & Taxiway - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$2,421,090		\$269,010
Boise City	"Rehabilitate Runway, & Runway Lighting - 04/22 (Design) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$115,623		\$12,847
Buffalo Municipal	"Reconstruct Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$123,354		\$13,706
Carnegie Municipal	"Install Taxiway Lighting and Perimeter Fencing *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$152,222		\$16,914
Claremore Regional	"Install NAVIADS & Perimeter Fencing *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$367,688		\$40,854
Clinton Regional	"Reconstruct Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$50,940		\$5,660
Clinton Regional	"Rehabilitate Runway 17/35 (PER) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$64,364		\$7,152
David Jay Perry (Goldsby)	"Seal Runway Pavement Surface/Joints - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$394,714		\$43,857
Durant Regional - Eaker Field	"Install Miscellaneous NAVIADS *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$25,308		\$2,812
Elk City Regional Business	"Rehabilitate Runway Lighting - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$128,277		\$14,253
Fairview Municipal	"Construct Taxiway (Design) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$33,660		\$3,740
Grove Municipal	"Reconstruct Taxilane *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$207,654		\$23,073
Guthrie-Edmond Regional	"Rehabilitate Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$563,535		\$46,134
Guymon Municipal	"Rehabilitate Runway & Taxiway 18/36 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$147,240		\$16,360
Hefner-Easley (Wagoner)	"Improve Drainage/Erosion & Seal Taxiway *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$62,010		\$6,890
Hinton Municipal	"Install Guidance System & Seal Apron/Pavement Joints - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$300,903		\$33,434
Hollis Municipal	"Rehabilitate Apron [Multi-year Funding] & Taxiway/Shift or Reconfigure Existing Taxiway *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$750,000		\$83,333
Jones Memorial (Bristow)	"Reconstruct Taxiway *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$2,148,582		\$238,731
Lawton-Fort Sill Regional	"Rehabilitate Runway - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$2,404,891		\$267,210
McCurtain County Regional (Idabel)	Intall Omni Directional Approach Lighting System		\$488,031	\$25,686
Miami Regional	"Seal Taxiway Pavement Surface/Pavement Joints *\$45,173 of the Local Share was covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$406,557	\$212,951	\$56,381
Mid-America Industrial (Pryor)	"Extend Taxiway *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$1,263,383		\$140,376

Airport Name	FY 2021 Airport Construction Project Description (Continued)	Federal Share	State Share	Local Share
Mid-America (Pryor)	Rehabilitate Taxiway & Apron pavments and Taxiway Lighting Sytem		\$466,077	\$24,531
Multiple	"PER's (Fairview, Guthrie, Miami, Pauls Valley) *State Share covered by FAA 2021 ARPA Funding**"	\$297,869	\$33,097	
Okmulgee Regional	"Reconstruct Taxilane *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$61,200		\$6,800
Perry Municipal	"Improve Fuel Farm *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$544,905		\$60,545
Ponca City Regional	"Rehabilitate Runway - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$7,266,299		\$807,367
Richard Lloyd Jones Jr (Tulsa)	"Reconstruct Connector Taxiway System (PER) *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$63,090		\$7,010
Robert S. Kerr (Poteau)	ODALS Installation		\$169,210	\$8,908
Sallisaw Municipal	"Construct/Improve Fuel Farm & Improve Airport Drainage *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$569,622		\$63,291
Sayre Municipal	"Reconstruct Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$508,114		\$56,457
Seminole Municipal	"Shift or Reconfigure Existing Taxiway *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$387,916		\$43,102
Seminole Municipal	Construct Hangars - (base bid is for 10-unit T-Hangars w. 12-unit as the alternate) [Multi-year funding] *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding*	\$749,555		\$66,617
Seminole Municipal	Installation of Runway Lights & REILS		\$406,422	\$21,391
Shawnee Regional	"Seal Taxiway Pavement Surface/Pavement Joints *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$155,513		\$17,279
Shawnee Regional	"Crack Seal and Seal Coat Runway 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$556,494		\$61,833
Skiatook Municipal	"Rehabilitate Runway - 18/36 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$1,812,606		\$201,401
South Grand Lake Regional (Ketchum)	"Construct/Modify/Improve/Rehabilitate Hangar *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$459,623		\$37,180
State of Oklahoma	"Update State/Regional System Plan or Study - OASP Phase 2 *State Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$199,633	\$22,181	
Stigler Regional	"Rehabilitate Access Road & Apron *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$327,819		\$36,424
Stillwater Regional	"Acquire Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting Vehicle *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$500,000		\$55,556
Stillwater Regional	"Reconstruct Apron [Multi-year funding] *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$5,753,155		\$600,000
Stroud Municipal	"Seal Apron Pavement Surface/Pavement joints *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$91,444		\$10,160
Sulphur Municipal	"Install Perimeter Fencing *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$254,780		\$28,309
Thomas Municipal	"Construct Apron & Taxiway [Multi-Year Funding] *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$580,183		\$48,407
Tulsa International	"Rehabilitate Runway - 18R/36L *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$6,164,580		\$684,953
Tulsa International	"Construct/Extend/Improve Safety Area *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$5,388,920		\$598,769
Watonga Regional	"Reconstruct Runway - 17/35 *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$213,390		\$23,710
Will Rogers World (OKC)	"Rehabilitate Access Road *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$8,285,767		\$920,641
Will Rogers World (OKC)	"Rehabilitate Access Road *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$3,000,000		\$333,333
William Pogue (Sand Springs)	"Improve Airport Drainage *Local Share covered by 2020 CARES Act Funding**"	\$240,871		\$26,763

OKLAHOMA WOMEN IN AVIATION & AEROSPACE DAY VIRTUAL EVENT



When state policymakers created the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission back in 1963, one of the primary responsibilities given to the new agency was to promote aviation in Oklahoma. Throughout its nearly 60 years serving the citizens of Oklahoma, the Aeronautics Commission has worked extensively with both public and private partners to promote the aviation and aerospace industry. Through its ongoing relationships with state lawmakers, Oklahoma's congressional delegation, elected officials, airport officials and other stakeholders, the Aeronautics Commission continues to help support the growth of aviation. During fiscal year 2018, the Commission was involved in making Oklahoma the first-in-the-nation to create a day dedicated to the contributions of Women in Aviation and Aerospace in our Great State.

A century ago, the State's earliest true municipal airport appeared in 1920 on land leased to Oklahoma City. Only a year earlier, Tulsa's first private airport was founded by former military barnstormer and New Zealand native Duncan McIntyre. When we look back to that time, the globe was just recovering from an 18-month pandemic of the Spanish flu, yet Oklahomans were dreaming of tomorrow by planning for the future. The vehicle to launch our growth was the airplane, and building airports was essential to support growing cities.

A century later, Oklahoma is considered an aerospace and aviation powerhouse, with 108 public-use airports supporting a \$44B annual economic impact generated by 1,100 aviation and aerospace companies. Though our industry and world have been challenged with a novel virus this past year, our missions continue to move forward. While aircraft design remains center stage for the majority of our transportation needs, today's leaders are focusing on spacecraft and unmanned aerial systems to meet future transportation needs of both people and cargo. Women are leading this charge developing strategies and formulating plans that will propel us through our current challenges and position our nation - and the world - for a future of opportunities beyond earth's boundaries. Today women are represented in all sectors of our industry - from commercial airports to military installations to the growing space sector. Women are turning wrenches, engineering avionics, piloting rockets, and some are leading us into this century's most consequential transportation development - commercial space flight.

In honor of the significant impact women have made to aviation in our State and to our industry, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission in community partnership with Tulsa International Airport commemorated the state's fourth annual Oklahoma Women in Aviation & Aerospace Day with a Zoom forum in lieu of their usual in-person luncheon. They welcomed honored guests, Kathy Leuders, Associate Administrator, Human Exploration and Operations and Janet Karika, Principal Ad-

visor on Space Transportation to the Administrator.

"I'm excited that we are able to continue the tradition of this event with speakers who demonstrate transformative leadership of the world's most prestigious space exploration program," said Alexis Higgins, CEO of Tulsa International Airport. "It was wonderful to unite our audience as we celebrated the success of women who came before us, recognizing the influence of women in our industry today, and committing to investing in activities that inspire future leaders in aviation and space."

The virtual forum, reserved for Aviation and Aerospace enthusiasts and personnel, provided an amazing opportunity to learn more about the journey of two of our nation's brightest minds, what prompted them to pursue a career path with NASA and how citizens can advocate on behalf of Aviation and Aerospace to encourage children of all ages to dream big and find their passion in our exciting industry.

"The history of Oklahoma Women in Aviation and Aerospace Day began in 2017 when the Aeronautics Commission presented a bill to the Oklahoma legislature, and it was enacted into law, to officially recognize the contribution of Oklahoma women in the State's aviation and aerospace industry December 9th annually," said State Director of Aeronautics, Grayson Ardies.

The date marks the birth of the famous Chickasaw aviator, Pearl Carter Scott, of Marlow, Oklahoma. Scott learned to fly at the age of 13 under legendary aviator Wiley Post. She became the youngest pilot in the United States with her first solo flight on September 12, 1929, the same year that Amelia Earhart established the female pilot group, the Ninety-Nines.

"For the safety of Oklahoma's aviation and aerospace community, this year the event was virtual. The challenge to adjust our program allowed us the latitude to reach more people, and we encouraged public school educators, colleges, and companies to utilize the forum to share the event with their students and employees," said Ardies.

SKIATOOK MUNICIPAL AIRPORT DEDICATES NEW RUNWAY



The \$2 million project began in 2020 with reconstruction of the existing asphalt runway with concrete and the upgrading of the existing stake mounted runway edge lights to higher quality base mounted fixtures. The grant also included funding for an obstruction survey to aid in the development of new Global Positioning System (GPS) instrument approaches at both ends of the runway. The project, included in the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission's (OAC) Five-Year Airport Construction Program, provides better safety to the users of the airport while continuing to improve the economic impact for the City of Skiatook and Osage and Tulsa Counties.

"The new runway at Skiatook Municipal Airport will be a huge asset for this community's economic growth," said Gov. Kevin Stitt. "It will attract new companies and retail development projects, improve the quality of life for residents and businesses owners, and continue the development of our state's overall airport system which is critical to compete as a Top Ten State."

Gov. Stitt served as the keynote and led the ceremonial ribbon cutting signifying the optimistic future of both the Skiatook Municipal Airport, the City of Skiatook and the greater Tulsa area.

Master of Ceremonies Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz has been active in the support of the OAC's aggressive efforts to improve pavement quality throughout the 108 public-use airports located within the state system of airports. The OAC's pavement management program fore-

casted a pavement condition index (PCI) rating of 33 for Skiatook's runway 17/35 for year 2021.

"This airport's runway pavement was exhibiting medium and high severity longitudinal and transverse cracks, raveling and some areas of base failures," Sec. Gatz said. "Since the pavement rating was significantly below 65 and experiencing rapid deterioration, this was an appropriate priority for the Aeronautics Commission. Skiatook has an airport they can be proud of for many years."

In addition to the ribbon cutting, attendees enjoyed a skydive performance from Skydive Airtight and heard from additional dignitaries including Representative Sean Roberts, the Mayor of Skiatook Robin Edens, and State Director of Aeronautics Grayson Ardies.

A project of the Federal Aviation Administration, the City of Skiatook, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, and the airport consultant, CEC Corporation, the runway is now open for air traffic.

Skiatook Municipal Airport has a \$1.5 million annual economic impact and the airport is home to Skydive Airtight, a USPA Group Member skydiving facility operating since 1999. They offer three types of training for first-time jumpers including Tandem Skydiving, IAD Solo and Accelerated Freerfall Progression. The Skiatook Flying Club is a non-profit also based at the airport promoting aviation for students and experienced pilots and visitors often fly to the area to visit Lake Skiatook.



AEROSPACE & AVIATION EDUCATION

During the Summer of 2021, millions of people around the world watched streaming video as Jeff Bezos and Wally Funk spent 11 minutes aboard the New Shepard rocket on a suborbital flight conducted by Blue Origin. Funk became the oldest person in space sixty years after she trained as an astronaut during the Women in Space Program in 1961. She was the first female air safety investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, the first female civilian flight instructor at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and the first female Federal Aviation Agency inspector, as well as one of the Mercury 13. Funk graduated from Oklahoma State University and earned multiple ratings, and has logged over 19,600 hours of flying time while earning multiple awards. Her remarkable achievement, the success of America's Space Program, and our robust aerospace industry would not be possible without the scientists, engineers, technicians, and other workers that built and maintained the spacecraft and aircraft, and administered the systems necessary for their operation. An adequate and competent workforce is the key, and aviation education programs like that of the Aeronautics Commission are critical to helping ensure that we have that workforce.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, 2021 marked some of the most challenging times the aviation and aerospace industry has ever experienced. In all those downtrodden moments for the industry, however, two great things stood out, first, aviation and aerospace has always turned things around and come out on top for the better, and second, a high-quality, well educated workforce was the main source behind that turnaround.

This workforce, and the need to attract new talent is the reason why the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) believed this decade is the perfect time to invest in our future and inspire today's youth to become pilots, engineers, mechanics, astronauts, and scientists. The Commission is determined to focus on vectoring young minds towards the exploration of aviation and aerospace through their nationally recognized and award winning education grant program.

In FY21, 38 different entities were considered for Aerospace and Aviation Education Program grants totaling \$335,400 from the Commission. The record amount of funding was used to bring more students in Oklahoma to STEM careers, particularly those in aerospace and aviation.

Grants were awarded for targeted learning programs that have a direct application to aerospace and aviation for primary through post-secondary education. The grant funds are part of the agency's initiative to give more Oklahoma young people access to STEM careers in the aerospace and aviation industry.

Funding requests totaled over \$474,323, which exemplifies the importance of aviation and the realization that an adequate workforce is the lifeblood of the industry. Charged with the mission by state statute, the Commission, which invests more money in aerospace and aviation education than any other state, encourages students to consider aerospace or aviation as a career. The Commission's education grant program has over 30 years of positive results. The initiative supports the Oklahoma Works project that aims to address the skills gap and connect students to programs that will help build the workforce of Oklahoma's second largest industry.

The commission's program has been recognized twice by the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), enjoying a positive reputation for investing millions in aerospace and aviation education programs statewide. Since FY2001, the program has awarded over \$4.15M in aerospace and aviation education grants.

In order for a program to qualify for an aviation education grant or contract, it must meet certain requirements. Most importantly, the program must demonstrate that its curriculum and goals are geared toward aviation and aerospace.



A priority for the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission is encouraging Oklahoma’s young people to pursue careers in the aviation and aerospace industry. This is mostly accomplished through the awarding of aerospace and aviation education grants and contracts to various programs and entities across Oklahoma. Since FY01, the Aeronautics Commission has awarded more than \$4.1 million in aviation education grants and contracts throughout the state. In fiscal year 2021 alone, \$335,400 in grants and contracts were awarded to several worthwhile programs designed to expose more students to the wonders of flight and to STEM education. Financial support for these programs is crucial if Oklahoma’s aviation and aerospace industry is to continue to flourish. Developing a pipeline of competent, well-trained workers is critical for the industry’s continued growth and viability. In August of 2021, the commission approved the following grants:

Ada City School District	\$25,000	Oklahoma Engineering Foundation, Inc.	\$5,000
Alva High School	\$2,500	Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics	\$1,500
Atoka Elementary School	\$2,000	OK Science and Engineering Foundation	\$5,000
Bishop John Carroll Cathedral School	\$1,100	Oklahoma State University	\$9,000
Boys and Girls Club of Oklahoma County	\$15,000	Okmulgee High School	\$5,000
Cameron University	\$1,500	Ponca City Regional Airport	\$8,500
Class Mattered	\$2,700	Putnam City High School (Air Force JROTC)	\$12,000
Davenport Public Schools	\$8,000	Rose State College	\$13,500
Dove Science Academy High School	\$6,650	Southeastern OK State University	\$6,500
El Reno Regional Airport	\$2,300	STARBASE Oklahoma Inc.	\$25,000
FIRST Robotics Competition	\$7,500	STARR Solutions (Tinker Air & Space Show)	\$28,000
Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma	\$2,500	Tulsa Air & Space Museum	\$10,000
Gordon Cooper Technology Center	\$3,000	Tulsa Community WorkAdvance	\$15,000
Grand Aces Aviation Ground School	\$1,750	University of OK, Sooner Flight Academy	\$46,000
Guthrie Edmond Regional Airport	\$1,150		
KISS Institute for Practical Robotics	\$7,500		
McAlester High School	\$5,000		
Metro Technology Center	\$13,250		
Metro Tech Mobile STEM Lab	\$10,000		
Mid-Del Technology Center	\$4,000		
Mustang High School	\$5,000		
Newspapers in Education	\$5,000		
Oilton Public Schools	\$3,000		
Oklahoma Career Tech Foundation	\$10,000		



2021 State Aviation Art Contest Winners Announced



The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission announced the names of students that placed in the Oklahoma 2021 International Aviation Art Contest.

The state-level Aviation Art Contest, sponsored by the Aeronautics Commission, encourages youth, ages 6 to 17, to reflect on aviation by designing a piece of art based on the year's chosen theme. The chosen contest theme was "A Friendlier World with Air Sports."

In the Junior Division, ages 6 to 9, Chloe Childs, from the Academy of Classical Christian Studies South Campus in Norman, took home first prize. The year's second-place winner in the Junior Division was Lane Ward from Ada Public School in Ada. The third place and honorable mention categories for this age group were not supported by the number of entries.

Jodessa Hamlett from Hobart, a student at Kenneth O'Neal Middle School took top honors in the Intermediate Division, ages 10-13. Taking second was Alan Rodriguez, and third was Harper Talley also from Kenneth O'Neal Middle School. Receiving an Honorable Mention in the division, Marian Winchell, was a homeschool student from Noble.

Vanoss Public School's, Emma Slaton, from Ada finished atop the Senior Division, ages 14-17, followed by Kaci Anderson, a student at Hobart High School in Hobart. Patience Williams took third, while Joan Willis received an honorable mention in the division. Both were from Ada Junior High School in Ada.

First-place winners in each of the three age categories received \$200, while the second-place winners receive \$150. A cash prize of \$100 was presented to students who placed third, and honorable mention received \$50. The top three entries

in each age division were forwarded to Washington, D.C., where they competed nationally against other winners from the U.S. for the right to advance to the international competition

"As a pilot, a civil engineer and most importantly a homeschool father, I love to teach and celebrate young people who choose a path in life that not only improves their quality of life, but the quality of life for others too! Seeing aviation thru the eyes of our youth in this year's competition clearly showed that aviation in Oklahoma has a bright future! Congratulations to ALL of the contestants for their hard work this year," said Matthew Ranck, P.E., C.M., CFM. with Delta Airport Consultants.

Judges for this year's art contest were all pilots, including State Representative Wendi Stearman, House District 11, a student pilot; Adam Fox, El Reno Airport Manager, a private pilot with a degree in Aviation Management; Matthew Ranck, P.E., C.M., CFM. with Delta Airport Consultants who also recently earned his private pilot license; and, Chase Rutledge, a KOCO Channel 5 News helicopter pilot and journalist.

"It was my pleasure to join fellow aviation professionals in judging the 2021 Aviation Art Contest. This contest could very well be the event that encourages these young students to pursue careers in aviation and aerospace," said Adam Fox, El Reno Airport Manager.

The 2021 International Aviation Art Contest is sponsored, in large part, by the National Aeronautic Association, Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, National Association of State Aviation Officials, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, National Coalition for Aviation and Space Education, Federal Aviation Administration and the Ken Cook Co.

Oklahoma a Top 3 State for AOPA High School Pilot Curriculum

Recognizing the need for a skilled workforce in the aerospace and aviation industry, the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) is working to support Oklahoma high schools interested in offering aviation curriculum developed by the Aircraft Owners Pilots Association (AOPA). The four year, "You Can Fly" curriculum is offered free to schools committed to providing high quality aviation STEM pathways for students.

In 2017, under the leadership of Ada Schools District Superintendent, Mike Anderson, and Director of Academics & Instruction Paula Kedy, Ada High School was the first in the state to offer the new curriculum. Fifteen Oklahoma schools have launched aviation programs since.

After the creation of the new curriculum, members of the local Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) chapter expressed concerns about the lack of pilots and other aerospace professionals during a visit to elementary school children. Members encouraged students to explore the newly rehabilitated Ada Municipal Airport.

From that initial visit, EAA offered to pay for Kedy to attend an Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) symposium in Washington State. At the end of the symposium, AOPA encouraged schools to sign up for the "You Can Fly" Initiative. Ada was the first in Oklahoma to participate.

"Some 29 schools field tested the AOPA High School Aviation Curriculum across the Country. Paula Kedy was right there representing Ada Public Schools and the State of Oklahoma at the beginning. It was at that time we knew that Paula would change the course of aviation education in Oklahoma, and just this year, we recruited her to lead our education programs for the Commission."

State Director of Aeronautics
Grayson Ardies

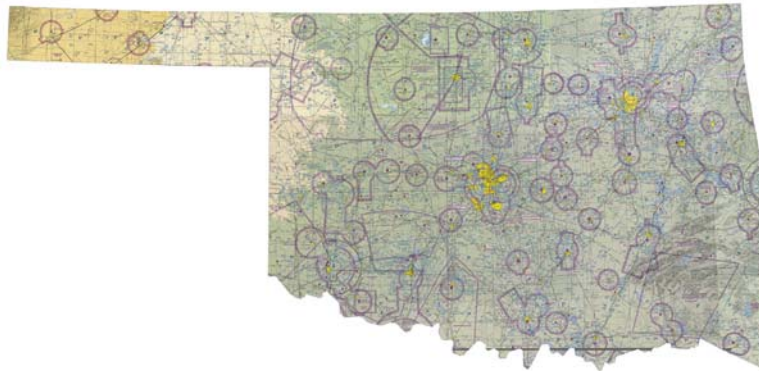
The AOPA curriculum program consists of two pathways, the pilot pathway and the UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) pathway. Schools may choose to implement one or both. The difficulty of the course work increases each consecutive year, building upon the knowledge required to become a private pilot or UAS pilot.

Kedy, the Commission's Aerospace and Aviation Education Coordinator, is working to assist schools in the development of aviation and aerospace education programs. "I am very excited about the number of school district administrators who have contacted the Commission about creating aerospace STEM pathways for students. It is critical that schools begin offering course work that leads students to strong post-secondary programs and to careers in Oklahoma's second largest industry," stated Kedy.

"We know that most urban school districts understand the need for a skilled aerospace workforce because they are aware of Tinker Air Force Base, the American Airlines Maintenance Facility, Boeing, and other large companies," said Kedy, "and we are proud to foster and encourage pathways to aerospace engineering and airframe and overhaul mechanics. But, I also feel that it is critical to serve rural students through our programs. It has been rewarding to help build partnerships between Oklahoma schools and many of the 108 airports that are a part of Oklahoma's airport system. Industry leaders, local aviation enthusiasts, and airport personnel are now volunteering to work with students. That's a win-win for Oklahoma students and for the industry!"

"This program, by design, works with superintendents, counselors, and educators, to bring aviation into the classroom. One of the most important things we do at the Commission, is to foster and encourage aerospace and aviation in Oklahoma. The AOPA curriculum is one of many ways we achieve that, but we need schools to partner with us," said Ardies.

For more information about the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission programs, visit <https://oac.ok.gov/aviation-education>.



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