

# SHORT



# FINAL

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport  
Issue Twenty Four / Winter 2015

---

## From the Managers Desk



As we get ready to wrap up the year it is a good time to reflect upon the successes we have had in increasing usage of our Airport. Last year our Delta/SkyWest ridership increased by 9.4%, and so far 2015 passenger counts are up by 7.7%. With nationwide enplanement numbers generally increasing in the 3-4% range, our stronger-than-average performance

is a good sign that our region is increasingly supporting their convenient and friendly “fly local” option.

As we celebrate our successes however, it is also timely to consider the challenge that a changed airline landscape poses for the future of our vital air service link. Large shifts have taken place in the airline world in the past fifteen years, with mergers taking the U.S. from having eight or more major airlines down to what some call the “Final Four” - American, United, Southwest, and Delta. These survivors learned lessons from the tumult of airline boom and bankruptcy and became determined to set up models that assured they would make money. They cut less profitable routes, dropped smaller aircraft in favor of larger and newer fuel efficient planes - and left smaller cities to find service with a shrinking number of regional airlines.

For Brainerd, these changes meant that long-time air service provider Mesaba Airlines was downsized and ultimately folded into Pinnacle Airlines in 2012. Pinnacle continued service to Brainerd for a short time, but then went through bankruptcy themselves and were taken over entirely by Delta. Delta had Pinnacle change their strategy and pull out of small markets like Brainerd, so our community rallied and we were fortunate to attract one of the best regional carriers in the business, SkyWest. With over 650 aircraft, SkyWest is the fifth largest airline in the nation. They are a stable and profitable regional carrier that has committed themselves to flying 50-passenger jets into small markets like Brainerd. SkyWest has been the best partner we could ask for in this new airline environment.

But even with a solid partner like SkyWest, there are larger trends in the industry that will make it increasingly challenging for Brainerd to maintain air service. First and foremost, a shrinking pool of commercial pilots is already making itself felt in the regional airline world - just as Congress mandated a tripling of the number of hours it takes to become an airline copilot. The smallest and lowest-paying regional airlines are already having difficulty filling copilot slots, causing some small cities to lose air service, and others to hang on by their fingernails to flights with nine-passenger aircraft.

Another related factor that will affect small city air service in the future is the shift toward larger, more fuel-efficient

aircraft. The 50-passenger jet, a mainstay of cities like Brainerd, Bemidji and even Duluth, is no longer being manufactured. With a shrinking pilot workforce, airlines have told manufacturers they no longer want to dedicate an expensive flight crew to fly just 50-passengers, and the smallest new aircraft currently being made have 70 or 76 seats. The implications for small cities are clear - there will be a time in the not-too-distant future when we will either need to adequately fill a 70+ passenger jet, or risk being one of the 150 regional airports predicted to lose service in the next decade.

Again, however, BRD is fortunate in our airline partner. Even as the major airlines and even some regional carriers are eliminating 50-passenger jets, SkyWest has made a commitment to keep flying these aircraft as long as they can - even to the point of buying more of them from other airlines. SkyWest management has shared with us their plan to fly the 50 passenger jets until the point that they will need major refurbishing, a time they estimate to be about eight years in the future.

What all of this means for Brainerd is that we may have longer than some to prepare for the day when we will need to fill larger jets, but that day will be upon us sooner than we think. Filling a 76-passenger jet in eight years will require us to continue our current 8-9% pace of growth every year until the year 2023. This consistent very strong growth is not impossible, but it will take a community effort. Our recent “true market” study showed that only 12% of travelers from our Brainerd catchment area begin their air travels from our Airport. If we could move that number to just 19% - less than one in five travelers - we would easily be able to fill that larger jet by 2023.

The other good news that came out of our market study is that our pricing is in general, very competitive. After examining 5,000 tickets over a one-year period, our consultants found that adding the BRD-MSP leg to a trip costs an average of \$94 per person (round trip). On the other hand, travelers choosing to drive to the Twin Cities not only incur costs of about \$150 for mileage plus \$20-25 per day to park at MSP, they also spend at least three extra hours of their time driving, parking and clearing security. While airline pricing can vary widely, it is always easy and worth it for passengers to check Brainerd fares. Flying BRD can save both money and time, it supports a vital regional resource, and it can keep your blood pressure out of that “494 at rush hour” elevated state.

As always, thank you for your support of your Airport. Happy Holidays, and Happy Travels!

Jeff Wig  
Manager - Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport

**Upcoming Events**

- January 21, 2016 Airport Commission 9:30 a.m.
- February 18, 2016 Airport Commission 9:30 a.m.
- March 17, 2016 Airport Commission 9:30 a.m.

*Meetings held in airport conference room unless indicated.*

**Terry Stern Awarded Master Pilot**

The morning of September 26 greeted us with a dense fog, but failed to dampen the day for local pilot Terry Stern. The Brainerd airport played host to a ceremony held to present Terry with the prestigious FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.



Terry joins only 56 other Minnesota pilots as a member of this select group. The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for 50 or more years. Master Pilots are awarded a certificate and a

lapel pin and are recognized in the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award - Roll of Honor located online. In addition, Terry was presented with a thick volume journaling his entire flying career as recorded by the FAA. Intensive bedtime reading at the very least!

Pictured above presenting a plaque to Terry is Jay Flowers, experienced pilot and FAA FAAST Safety Team director from Fargo. Jay was quick to report that these presentations are one of the very favorite parts of his job.

Flying since 1964, as a private and corporate pilot, Terry has logged more than 6,500 hours in the air and flown a wide variety of aircraft. An avid warbird fan, he currently owns a North American T-6 warbird, and with a group of other T-6 owners flies formations for air shows and patriotic celebrations. He is also one of very few pilots in the U.S. to hold a type rating certificate in a North American B-25 bomber!

Hearty congratulations to Terry for his aviation achievement and may he continue to enjoy blue skies for many years in the future.

**Airport Property Logged**

September brought a major project to the airport property, harvesting timber blowdown from the July 12 storm. Harvesting nearly 2000 cords of Aspen, Oak and Pine, Great Northern Logging of Pierz utilized the "cut to length" process, harvesting cut 100 inch logs. This process provides a higher yield of logs, particularly from blowdown. Generating nearly \$18,000 in revenue, the threat of serious fire is now greatly reduced.



**B-1 Bomber For Sale**

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Sunday and now Big Plane Monday.

A B-1 bomber was in Billings, MT doing practice approaches and touch and go's. On one of the landings the pilot set his brakes on fire. He taxied in, the airport parked him on a taxiway, and placed cones around him until parts and mechanics can be brought in from Ellsworth AFB, Rapid City, SD the next day.

The next day is a Saturday, which is a pretty slow day, so we get to laughing in the control tower that maybe somebody should hang a For Sale sign on the plane. We convince one of our guys, who's well known for doing things like this, that it would be a good idea and off he goes to the hardware



store in search of a For Sale sign. To make the joke even better, he stopped at a car dealer and talked them out of one of those "As is/ No Warranty" signs that hang in all used cars. On that sign was written something like low miles, new engines, needs brakes and tires. Those signs were taped together, and our hero goes out to hang them on the airplane.

He climbs over the fence, leaving some skin on the barbed wire, and makes his way the 1000 feet or so to the aircraft. As he's doing that, we see a couple of airport vehicles starting to gather with the recently arrived mechanics as well as the plane's crew. Not looking good for our intrepid airplane salesman, he gets to the nose wheel and tapes the signs to the nose strut. Then he starts to make his way back from the plane as the vehicles start to head out from the shop on the way to the bomber. Somehow he makes it back undetected.

The vehicles arrive at the plane, and of course they notice the sign right away. The Air Force guys are in stitches, funniest thing they've seen in a long time. Airport guys are not sure what to think, Airport management is livid as they've been tasked with security. Pretty soon cameras appear and all the Air Force guys are taking pictures of each other by the sign. Our hero is back in the tower now, and notices the bomber's commander is talking on a cell phone. Calling on the radio to the airport truck, he asks for that guy's phone number. As soon as he finishes that call, our guy calls the aircraft commander. When he answers, our guy says "I'm calling about the plane you have for sale." The aircraft commander about falls over from laughter. The chief photographer for our local newspaper is a pilot and he *may* have been called prior to the sign being placed. He was told to get up here with a big lens. His photo and story appeared in the paper the next day. When that came out, the Colonel running Ellsworth called the airport director and read him the riot act, wondering what kind of dog and pony show he was running up there. We were told later that the sign was framed and is now permanently mounted inside the aircraft.

**Teenie Weenies and the TriMotor**

June of 1914 launched the debut of what was to become a very popular single frame comic. The Teenie Weenies made their debut in the Chicago Tribune and with a few breaks ran until 1970. Childrens writer and illustrator William Donahey created some 45 different two inch high characters who lived under a rose bush and existed in a world of regular size. Living in and amongst discarded full size things like cans, bottles, hats, these characters were found in school readers, childrens literature, lunch boxes, clothing, and of course the Sunday newspapers. Their popularity soared for a time but the Chicago Tribune temporarily suspended the comic in 1924. Out of work Donahey quickly looked for opportunities to exploit the popularity of his little people world, and began offering licensing opportunities for commercial promotion.

One of the first to pick up on this opportunity was the Reid Murdoch Company of Chicago, owner of the Monarch Foods, distributor of canned products to independent grocers. After all, the Teenie Weenies lived in a world of discarded cans, why not Monarch cans! Monarchs ad people soon realized that bringing large amounts of people to be exposed to the products was the quickest route to brand awareness and sales. In the "plane crazy" world of the late 1920's there was no better way to do that than by airplane!

Acting swiftly, Reid Murdoch bought the 48th Ford 4AT TriMotor(registration NC7863) off of the Ford assembly line in November of 1928. Naming the giant plane Independence, in honor of their grocer customers, they hatched a unique plan. Gutting the interior of the aircraft and lining it with shelves full of Monarch brand can goods and packaged goods, the worlds first "Flying Grocery Store" was born! The airplane was soon plying the countryside, large cities and small, to introduce Monarch products to the throngs of people who turned out to see the airplane.

To help leverage the popularity of the Teenie Weenies, a couple of young boys dressed as Teenie Weenie characters, the General and the Policemen, often accompanied the aircraft as it visited a town. As soon as the aircraft landed, a platform would be set up to let the locals look inside and see the entire line of fine Monarch products. So you might ask, "What does this have to do with Brainerd?"

First advertised in July, and preceded with full page ads several days before, the great "Flying Grocery Store" Independence arrived at Brainerd's Rosko Airport on Tuesday October 8, 1929. The arrival drew large crowds to the airport to see this unique spectacle on Tuesday evening and Wednesday.

The aircraft was piloted by Vernon "Crazy" Johns and his copilot Jimmy Minser. Johns was a former Tulsa Oklahoma motorcycle cop turned barnstormer and earned his nickname because of his fearlessness. Despite his nickname Johns was an experienced and safe pilot, once quoted as saying "I never want to be the best pilot in the world, but I want to be the oldest." His skills and experience helped develop copilot Jimmy Minser, only 20 years old, who reportedly started his relationship



with Johns as a stowaway. Together the duo campaigned the TriMotor Independence throughout the United States.

All of the Brainerd independent grocers participated in the advertising for the Tri-Motor. And talk about shameless promotion, with two representatives of the Brainerd



Dispatch on board, the TriMotor dropped 1,000 late edition newspapers from the TriMotor over Crosby, Deerwood, Riverton, Ironton and Cuyuna bringing those communities to a halt. The Dispatch reported, "Citizens came running from their homes to gaze skyward. All traffic was stopped as motorists left their cars to obtain a better view. Workmen stopped their toil all but awed at the spectacle. Crazy Johns,

pilot of the mammoth ship speeded up to 97 miles an hour to reach the range towns as early as possible."

And what of the Teenie Weenies? It is unknown if any of them accompanied the Brainerd flight, but given the October timing it would be unlikely as the children would have been in school. Alas, the campaign came to an end with the sale of the Trimotor in 1931 and a crash in Alabama, destroying the aircraft in 1935.



**The Quarterly Newsletter of the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport**  
**Issue Twenty Four / Winter 2015**  
**Page Four**

---

**It Happened in Aviation**

January 1, 1914... The world's first scheduled airplane passenger service operated by an airline company - the Airboat Line - begins at 10:00 A.M. when Anthony Janus flies his first passenger from St. Petersburg to Tampa, Florida. The fare for 22-mile over-water flight was \$5 with a surcharge if the passenger weighs more than 200 lbs. The Benoist XIV flying boat and its sister ship flew over 1200 passengers that winter and returned to its home, Duluth Minnesota, as the "Lark of Duluth" flying the summer of 2014.

January 26, 1910... The first practical seaplane is flown. Built and flown by American Glenn Curtiss, it lands and takes off in the waters off San Diego, California. municipal airport in the United States opens in Tucson, Arizona and is still in use today.

February 5, 1929... Frank Hawks and Oscar Grubb land their Lockheed Air Express in New York after a record flight of 18 hours 20 minutes from Los Angeles.

February 8, 1988... The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) **retires** an aircraft registration number for the first time - that of Amelia Earhart's airplane, which disappeared over the Pacific in July 1937.

February 28, 1918... Regulation of the airways begins as US President Woodrow Wilson issues an order requiring licenses for civilian pilots and owners. Over 800 licenses are issued.

March 3, 1911... With Capt. Benjamin D. Foulois navigating a course and Phillip Parmelee at the controls, the Wright Type B on loan from Robert F. Collier sets an official U.S. cross-country record from Laredo to Eagle Pass, Texas. It flies the 106 miles in 2 hours 10 minutes.

March 10, 1925... One of the most outstanding flying boats of its day and a stunning demonstration of the skills of aircraft designer R. J. Michell, the Supermarine Southampton, makes its first flight with Henri Biard at the controls. It remains in service for 12 years, longer than any other flying boat previously. 

**Humor in the Air**

After a particularly rough flight, the airline pilot addresses his passengers:

"The turbulence we passed through was rough, but we are through it now."

The pilot was unaware that his PA switch was stuck on, and leaned over to the copilot and said "Boy, was that rough! What I need now is a hot woman and a cold beer."

A flight attendant in the rear of the aircraft heard this, and ran forward to warn the pilot. As she neared the cockpit, an elderly woman passenger in first class stopped her saying "Honey, don't forget the beer!" 

**Name the Plane**

If you think you can identify this airplane send an e-mail to: [info@BrainerdAirport.com](mailto:info@BrainerdAirport.com) with the name and model number.



One lucky winner will receive a great airport prize! Hint - the answer can be found somewhere in this issue of *Short Final*.



Last issue Richard Gruenhagen correctly identified the Vought VE-7SF

**Venison Stir Fry w/Brown Garlic Sauce**

*Got that deer this season? Venison makes great stir fry with this homemade sauce.*

<b>Sauce:</b>	<b>2/3 cup low sodium soy sauce</b>	<b>1/2 cup low sodium chicken broth</b>
	<b>1/3 cup rice wine (Saki)</b>	<b>3 tbsp. sugar</b>
	<b>1 tbsp. sesame oil</b>	<b>1/4 tsp. white pepper</b>
	<b>2 tbsp. cooking oil</b>	<b>1 tbsp. minced garlic</b>
	<b>1 tbsp. minced ginger</b>	<b>2 tbsp. cornstarch</b>
	<b>1/4 cup water (for cornstarch)</b>	

*In a bowl combine soy sauce, broth, rice wine, sugar, sesame oil and white pepper. Dissolve cornstarch in 1/4 cup water.*

*Heat a pan over high heat; add the cooking oil, swirling to coat; add garlic and ginger; cook stirring until fragrant about 15-20 seconds.*

*Add soy sauce mixture and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook for 1 minute. Add cornstarch solution and cook stirring until sauce boils and thickens.*

*Slice venison chops or steaks into small strips and stir fry in Wok. Stir fry vegetables as desired. Combine vegetables and venison with sauce in Wok.*

*Heat through and serve with rice, brown rice or fried rice. Sauce recipe makes enough for two meals, refrigerate leftover portion for later use.*