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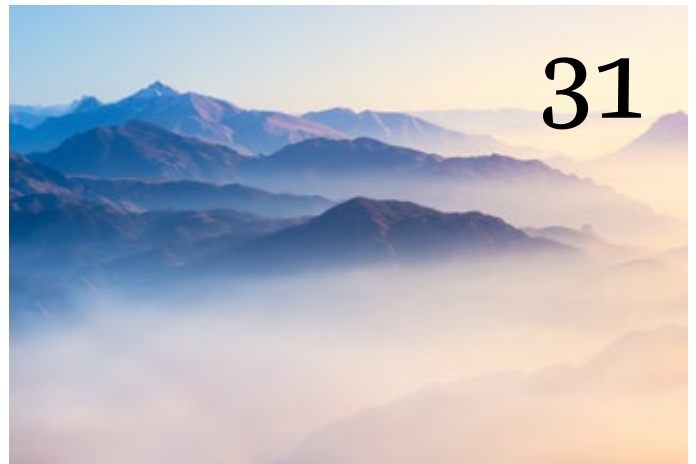


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JANUARY 2021



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Coordinate Fly-ins,
Make Connections,
Find a Flying Job.

CHAPTERS!

Connect with local
LGBT Pilots &
Aviation Enthusiasts,
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Greetings, Shared Flying
Expenses, and more.



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Newsletter.

ADVOCACY!

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Transgender support,
Discrimination Tracking,
Industry Outreach,
Training.

ENCOURAGE

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the LGBT community to
pursue their dreams in
aviation.

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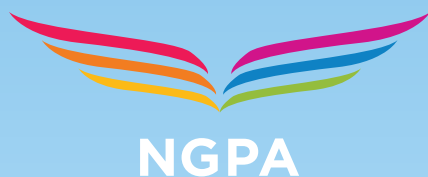
Foster equal treatment
of the LGBT aviation
community through
advocacy and outreach.

PROMOTE

Promote aviation
safety through training,
seminars, publications,
and best practices.

PROVIDE

Provide an affirming
social and professional
network for the LGBT
aviation community.



The Worldwide LGBT Aviation Community

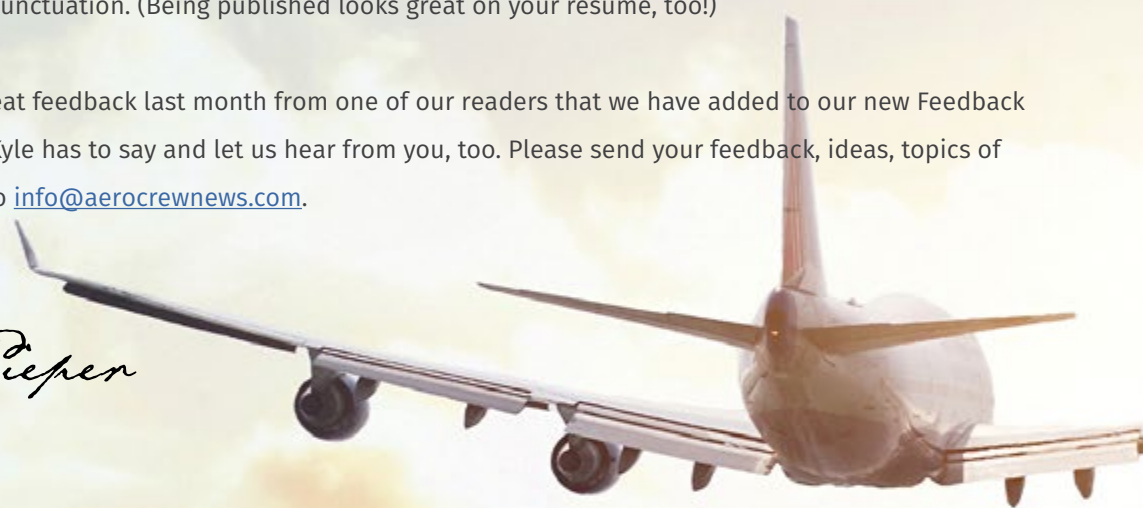
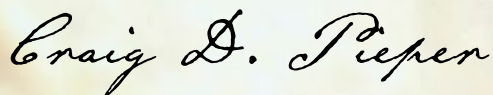


Dear readers,

This month, we welcome a new contributor to Aero Crew News. Justin Abrams is filling in for Anthony Lorenti with a new Squall Line on the topic of fog. Justin is a first officer for a major airline with a Bachelor of Science in Aviation who has a true passion for anything aviation-related. We are always looking for new ways to grow at Aero Crew News, so if you or someone you know has a passion for aviation, has Microsoft Word and some good ideas, we invite you to share with us and all of our readers. We are fortunate to have an amazing editor who for 23 years has made me a better writer and does so for all our contributors. We are more interested in having you share your knowledge and experience than your subject/verb agreement and punctuation. (Being published looks great on your résumé, too!)

We also received some great feedback last month from one of our readers that we have added to our new Feedback section on page 10. See what Kyle has to say and let us hear from you, too. Please send your feedback, ideas, topics of interest, and writer interests to info@aerocrewnews.com.

Fly Safe,



Craig D. Pieper

P.S. Our editor wants me to sign off with the grammatically correct adverb “safely” but since I say, “Fly safe,” I’ll write it that way, whether she likes it or not.



About the Publisher

Craig Pieper is the Publisher and Founder of Aero Crew News. Craig obtained his Bachelors of Science in Aeronautical Science, along with a minor in Aviation Weather, from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 2001. Craig is also a First Officer for a major airline with a type rating in the Boeing 737 & Embraer 145 and has logged over 8,000 hours of flying time since his introductory flight on November 14th, 1992.

January 2020

Last month's feature is a collection of amazing photographs to relax your mind. That's right, last month, we brought you our Aero Crew News & RAA 2020 Photo Contest winners!

We sent special congratulations to Jen B. from Mount Horeb, Wisc., our Grand Prize winner! She received a check for \$250 and an RAA embroidered Polar Bear Cooler. Her photo titled Sky Blue Dreams, received an overwhelming number of votes.

Our runners-up are, Aishwarya K. from Fremont, Calif., Aurelien C. from Memphis, Tenn. and Elizabeth J. from Lynchburg, Va. We also showcased ten additional honorable mention photos.

We will repeat the contest at the end of this new (and better?) year, so keep your cameras and discerning eyes at the ready. Stay tuned.

Your feedback is always encouraged and always welcome at info@aerocrewnews.com.



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FEEDBACK

Hello Aero Crew News,

I just wanted to reach out to you guys and tell you thank you. Your commitment and hard work during these stressful times in the aviation industry is well appreciated. As a senior at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical, my life was changed in a matter of weeks during the pandemic and your reliable source of news and writing have helped my friends and me have healthy and intriguing conversations about the industry. You have even sparked a few stories and tales from our professors about the cyclical nature of airlines and aviation. You guys are exceptional, and I look forward to reading your articles and stories in the future.

-Kyle, ERAU Class of 2021



United Makes Hawaii Travel Easier with Expanded COVID Testing and Pre-Clearance Program

Customers traveling to the islands can save time by showing proof of negative tests at United's hub airports and skip document screening process in Hawaii

Beginning February 1, United customers traveling to Hawaii who have a valid negative COVID-19 test can show their results before boarding to save time and skip document screening lines upon arrival. The new pre-clearance process will be in place for customers traveling on 110 of United's weekly flights to Hawaii.

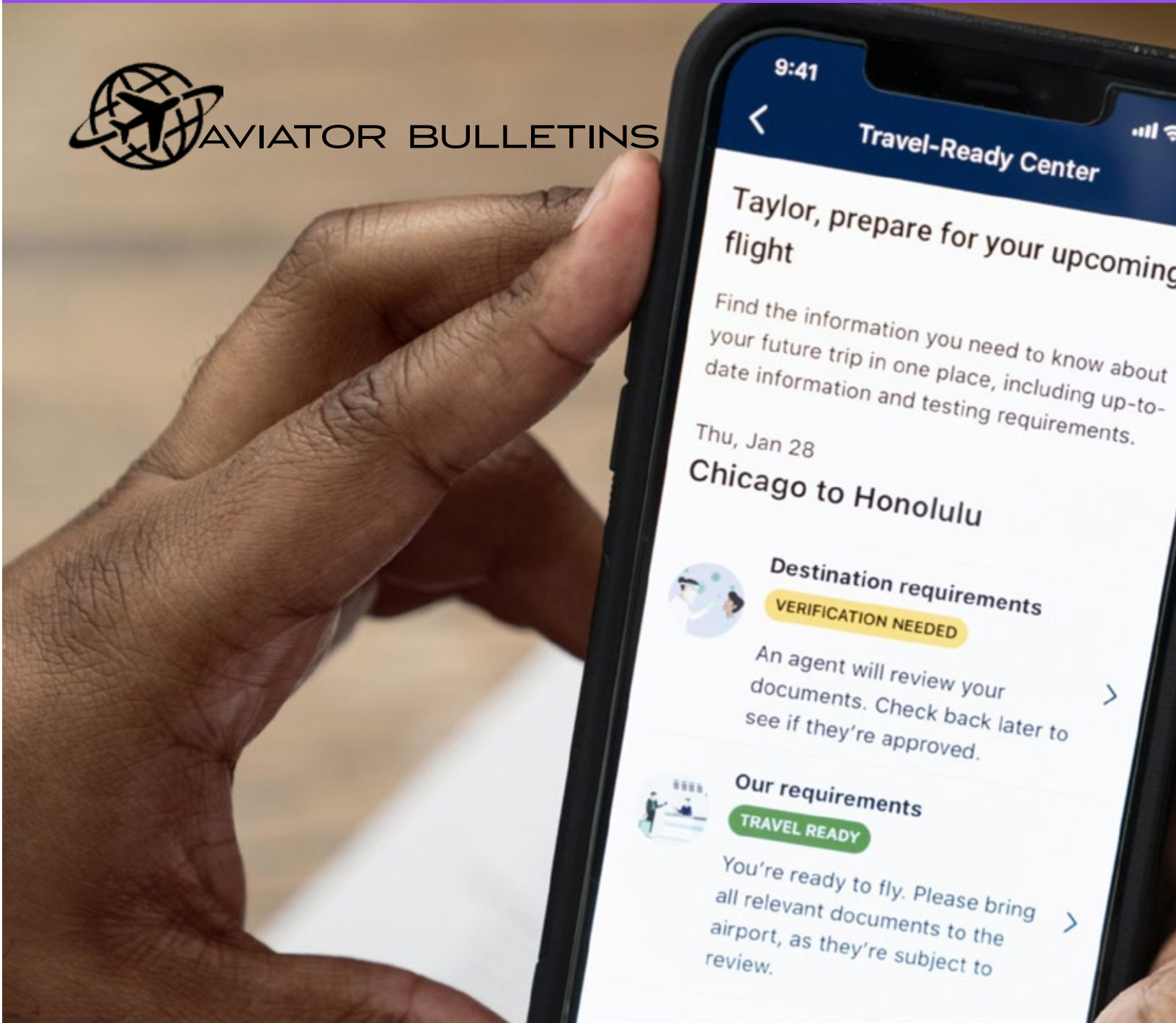
United is also making it easier to get the right tests to avoid Hawaii's 14-day quarantine by making approved COVID-19 tests available to all customers traveling to the islands no matter where in the U.S. their travel begins.

"We're making it easier for customers traveling to Hawaii to spend more time enjoying their trip and less time waiting in lines," said Toby Enqvist, chief customer officer at United. "Testing is the key to opening domestic and international travel so we'll continue to lead the way in rolling out solutions that are simple and safe so our customers have what they need when they take their next trip with us."

To begin the pre-clearance program, customers will enroll in Hawaii's [Safe Travels](#) program and complete Hawaii's COVID-19 questionnaire within 24 hours from departure. Next, customers will use the Safe Travels website to upload their negative test results from one of Hawaii's trusted testing partners which must be taken within 72 hours of their departure. At the airport, customers will see a United team member at the gate for their flight to Hawaii where they will receive a wristband if they qualify to bypass airport screening in Hawaii. Customers who have been pre-cleared will be able to skip test screenings in Hawaii and begin their trip as soon as they land.

United is also making it easier for customers to obtain approved COVID-19 test options with the expansion of mail-in tests to customers no matter where in the U.S. their travel originates. The airline will notify customers in advance of their Hawaii trip to let them know what testing options they have locally. Last year, [United also teamed up with XpresCheck](#) to open additional same-day testing facilities for United customers in select airports. XpresCheck currently has locations open in United's Denver terminal, and expects to open [additional locations in United's terminals](#) in Houston and Newark in the coming weeks. Customers who choose to take a test with XpresCheck can schedule an [appointment online](#) for a rapid molecular test on the same day as their travel. Walk up appointments are also available on a first come, first served basis.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, United made numerous enhancements to its business that improve the travel experience and make the airline a better company. Earlier this week, United announced a new [Travel-Ready Center](#) in the United app and online where customers can review COVID-19 travel requirements, find local testing options and upload any testing and vaccination records that their destinations requires. This year, United also began allowing all customers to fly standby on another flight to the same destination on the same day for free, and all MileagePlus® Premier® members now confirm a new flight on the same day to the same destinations at check-in when space is available in the same fare class. Last year, the carrier eliminated most [change fees](#), pledged to [reduce its greenhouse gases 100% by 2050](#), and as a part of its [United CleanPlusSM](#) program, teamed up with Clorox and the Cleveland Clinic to guide its cleaning and safety protocols. Last spring, United [extended MileagePlus Premier status](#) to all customers through January 2022 and made earning status for the next two years easier for all MileagePlus members.



United Launches Industry-Exclusive Technology to Ease the Burden of COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

United's "Travel-Ready Center" will allow customers to upload and validate test results, review local entry requirements, find testing providers, and store vaccination records - all in the United app and [United.com](https://www.united.com)

United Airlines launched the “Travel-Ready Center” - a new, digital solution where customers can review COVID-19 entry requirements, find local testing options and upload any required testing and vaccination records for domestic and international travel, all in one place. United is the first airline to integrate all these features into its mobile app and [website](#).

“While pre-travel testing and documentation are key to safely reopening global travel, we know it can be confusing for customers when they’re preparing for a flight,” said Linda Jojo, Executive Vice President for Technology and Chief Digital Officer, United. “Starting today, our ‘Travel-Ready Center’ gives customers a personalized, step-by-step guide of what is needed for their trip, a simple way to upload required documents and quickly get their boarding pass, fully integrated within our app and website.”

In the weeks and months ahead, United will add more innovative, industry-first features to the Travel-Ready Center platform to make navigating evolving entry requirements even easier. United customers will soon be able to:

- Schedule a COVID-19 test at one of more than 15,000 testing sites around the world, right from the app or website.
- Access the recently launched “[Agent on Demand](#)”, a United-exclusive feature that gives customers the ability to video chat live with a customer service agent to answer any questions about pre-travel requirements or documentation.
- View details about visa requirements for the countries they plan to visit.

Customers with an active reservation can access the Travel-Ready Center through the “My Trips” section of the United App and on [united.com](#). The Travel-Ready Center will provide tailored details on requirements for all travelers 18 and older on a customer’s itinerary, with

status indicators noting if they are travel-ready based on specific requirements each individual needs to meet in order to board their flight, including any additional requirements for connecting flights. Documents uploaded by a passenger will be reviewed by designated personnel for verification. The individual status indicators for each passenger will then note whether they are “travel ready” and they will be allowed to complete the check-in process. Customers should still plan to bring the physical documents to the airport in case further inspection is needed along their journey.

The Travel-Ready Center is just one of many new technologies the airline has introduced to create a safer and more efficient experience for customers. United recently [redesigned its mobile app](#) with new enhancements intended to make travel easier for people with visual disabilities, introduced [Destination Travel Guide](#), which allows customers to filter and view destinations’ COVID-19 related travel restrictions, and debuted a [new chat function](#) to give customers a contactless option to receive immediate access to information about cleaning and safety procedures.

This year, United made numerous enhancements to its business that improve the travel experience for its customers. The carrier eliminated most [change fees](#), pledged to [reduce its greenhouse gases 100% by 2050](#), teamed up with Clorox and the Cleveland Clinic to guide its cleaning and safety protocols as a part of United [CleanPlusSM](#), [extended MileagePlus[®] Premier[®] status](#) to all customers through January 2022 and made earning status for the next two years easier for all MileagePlus members. United also announced this year that beginning in January, all customers will be able to fly standby on another flight to the same destination on the same day for free, and all MileagePlus Premier members will be able to confirm a new flight on the same day to the same destinations at check-in when space is available in the same fare class.



Jet Linx Ushers In 2021 With 14 New Partners To Its Elevated Lifestyle Benefits Program For Members And Private Jet Owners

Jet Linx, the leading private jet management and Jet Card membership company in the United States, today announced it has welcomed three new partners to its [Elevated Lifestyle](#) (EL) client benefits program and further expanded its [Elevated Lifestyle Preferred Hotel](#) program. Joining the expansive portfolio of partners is [Clark International](#), [EMBARK Beyond](#) and [LimoLink](#), in addition to 11 new luxury hotels and resorts from around the world.

“We are excited to kick off the year with fourteen new partners across our Elevated Lifestyle and EL Preferred Hotel programs, each of which perfectly complement our clients’ travel needs and lifestyles,” said Jamie Walker, President & CEO of Jet Linx. “As part of our promise to providing our Jet Card members and aircraft owners with premium services and exclusive offerings, each of our new partners cater to what the discerning traveler of today wants – safety, security, privacy and peace of mind. We look forward to introducing our clients to each of these partners and continuing to provide new opportunities to further enhance their travel experiences.”

Each of the new partners introduce truly personalized experiences to the Elevated Lifestyle program, including:

- **Clark International:** The addition of Clark International provides Jet Linx Jet Card members and aircraft owners with an exclusive discount on a CI Platinum membership for enhanced protection services and security programs. Experienced in protecting high-profile individuals, Clark International uses risk analysis, secure driving, and close-protection services to ensure their clients are safe both in the air and on the ground when traveling.
- **EMBARK Beyond:** With luxury travel agency EMBARK Beyond, Jet Linx clients can experience a bespoke getaway tailored to each traveler’s personal preferences and claim a one-time discount towards travel planning fees.
- **LimoLink:** LimoLink provides reliable and secure chauffeured ground transportation services, with a team of professionals trained in private aviation protocol and committed to the highest standards of safety. Jet Linx members and aircraft owners can take advantage of preferred pricing with every LimoLink reservation.

Joining the Elevated Lifestyle Preferred Hotel program are 11 new luxury hotels and resorts from across the United States and international destinations. The program, which launched in September 2020, provides Jet Linx clients with exclusive access to over 70 of the world’s finest hotels. The newest partners are [Chablé Maroma](#) and [Chablé Yucatán](#) in Mexico, [Condado Vanderbilt Hotel](#) in Puerto Rico, [Madeline Hotel & Residences](#), An Auberge Resort in Colorado, [Kasiiya Papagayo](#) in Costa Rica, [Layan Residences by Anantara](#) in Thailand, [Silversands Grenada](#), [Six Senses Kocataş Mansions](#) in Turkey and three Belmond properties, including [Belmond La Samanna](#) in the St. Martin, [Belmond Cap Juluca](#) in Anguilla and [Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa](#) in Mexico.

The expansion of the Elevated Lifestyle program follows a record year of significant growth for Jet Linx, where the Company unveiled a new Base location in Minneapolis and a new private terminal for San Antonio, launched two new Jet Card programs, enhanced its partnership network and implemented additional advanced safety measures to its existing protocols in response to the growing concerns due to the pandemic. Jet Linx remains committed to elevating the Jet Linx private jet travel experience and will continue pursuing its nationwide growth strategy throughout 2021 through new initiatives, acquisitions, partnerships and new markets, including Los Angeles.

For more information on Jet Linx, the Elevated Lifestyle client benefits program and the Jet Linx Elevated Lifestyle Preferred Hotel Program, please visit www.jetlinx.com or contact a local Jet Linx Base.



Alaska Airlines takes delivery of its first Boeing 737-9 MAX aircraft

Five weeks of preparations begin to ready plane for start of passenger service on March 1

Alaska Airlines has accepted delivery of its first Boeing 737-9 MAX airplane, marking a new phase of modernizing the airline's fleet in the coming years. Alaska pilots flew the aircraft on a short flight yesterday from the Boeing Delivery Center at Boeing Field in Seattle to the company's hangar at Sea-Tac International Airport with a small group of Alaska's top leadership on board.

“We’ve eagerly waited for this day. It was a proud moment to board our newest 737 aircraft and fly it home,” said Alaska Airlines President Ben Minicucci. “This plane is a significant part of our future. We believe in it, we believe in Boeing and we believe in our employees who will spend the next five weeks in training to ensure we’re ready to safely fly our guests.”

Alaska’s first 737-9 is scheduled to enter passenger service on March 1 with daily roundtrip flights between Seattle and San Diego, and Seattle and Los Angeles. The airline’s second 737-9 is expected to enter service later in March.

Teams from across various divisions at Alaska will now follow a strict readiness timeline that guides the actions that must be taken before the start of passenger flights. The process – involving rigorous rounds of test flying, verifying and specific preparations – will take five weeks:

- Maintenance technicians will undergo training to become even more acquainted with the new aircraft. They will receive at least 40 hours of “differences training,” which distinguishes the variations between the new MAX and the airline’s existing 737 NG fleet. Certain technicians will receive up to 40 additional hours of specialized training focused on the plane’s engines and avionics systems.
- Alaska’s pilots will put the 737-9 through its paces, flying it more than 50 flight hours and roughly 19,000 miles around the country, including to Alaska and Hawaii. These “proving flights” are conducted to confirm our safety assessments and those of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and to ensure a full understanding of the plane’s capabilities in different climates and terrain.
- Our pilots will receive eight hours of MAX-specific, computer-based training prior to flying the aircraft over the course of two days, which includes at least two hours of training in

Alaska’s own certified, state-of-the-art MAX flight simulator. That’s where they fly several maneuvers specific to the aircraft and better understand the improvements that have been made to the plane.

“Our pilots are the best trained in the industry. With the 737-9, we’re going above and beyond with our training program, even more than what the FAA is requesting,” said John Ladner, an Alaska 737 captain and vice president of flight operations. “We have high confidence in this aircraft. It’s a tremendous addition to our fleet, and we’re ready to start flying it in March.”

Deliveries of Alaska’s 737-9 aircraft by Boeing will be flown with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), which helps the aviation industry reduce CO2 emissions on a life-cycle basis. The SAF will be used on all MAX aircraft deliveries and will be supplied by Epic Fuels.

Alaska [announced](#) a restructured order agreement with Boeing in December 2020 to receive a total of 68 737-9 MAX aircraft in the next four years, with options for an additional 52 planes. The airline is scheduled to receive 13 planes this year; 30 in 2022; 13 in 2023; and 12 in 2024. The agreement incorporates Alaska’s [announcement](#) last November to lease 13 737-9 aircraft as part of a separate transaction.

These 68 aircraft will largely replace Alaska’s Airbus fleet and move the airline substantially toward a single, mainline fleet that’s more efficient, profitable and environmentally friendly. The 737-9 will enhance the guest experience and support the company’s growth.

Learn more about Alaska’s confidence in the safety and certification of the MAX at alaskaair.com/737MAX.



Q&A: Accelerating the future of in-flight connectivity at Delta

- Coming this year: Fast Wi-Fi, a new user interface and personalized content
- Big leap in bringing vision for revolutionized customer experience to life, starting with better connectivity

Delta customers are one step closer to a seamless, personalized in-flight experience built on industry-leading Wi-Fi. Recently, Delta finalized a partnership with high-speed Wi-Fi provider [Viasat](#) and took steps to launch the Delta-developed Wi-Fi access portal – a user interface that enhances how you interact with Wi-Fi. Adding Viasat’s next-generation satellite technology (Ka-Band) to the fleet gives the airline more options to modernize how customers stay connected and enjoy content during travel.

Ekrem Dimbiloglu, Director of Brand Experience – In-Flight Entertainment & Wi-Fi, and Glenn Latta, Managing Director – In-Flight Entertainment & Wi-Fi, explain what this new partnership and technology means for customers and how it unlocks the future of the onboard experience at Delta.

Why is Delta focusing on Wi-Fi?

Ekrem: Staying connected is a key part of our customers’ lives both at home and during travel, and we are taking big leaps forward to deliver an unparalleled experience that puts connectivity and personalization front and center. Best-in-class in-flight connectivity takes our vision for a reimagined brand experience to the next level and has long been a focus for us as a business.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we accelerated to deliver an enhanced customer experience in many ways – from [industry-leading cleanliness](#) to future-ready technology – to benefit customers as we welcome them back to travel.

Why are we partnering with Viasat?

Glenn: Viasat’s high-speed satellite-powered technology changes the game for what we can offer. We now have additional capability and next-gen technology to make sure you have a faster and more consistent connection to your favorite sites, including the ability to stream the entertainment of your choice on your flight. It also lays the groundwork for future enhancements and personalization with the seatback screen that customers will love.

Ekrem: Our team has big plans for customers, and

now we have the tools to overcome hurdles standing in our way. Whether Wi-Fi or in-flight entertainment, adding Viasat and our new portal together will help us offer high-quality streaming, more personalized content and a Wi-Fi experience closer to what you would find at home or work.

Where does the new Delta Wi-Fi portal fit in?

Glenn: Coming this summer, the Delta-developed Wi-Fi access portal is an interface that integrates in-flight Wi-Fi and other day-of-travel features under one roof. It is built to work with Viasat and acts as the front page to your experience – the first thing that will greet you as you connect to the onboard Wi-Fi.

At launch, you will have the opportunity to purchase Wi-Fi access and still enjoy free mobile messaging and access your favorite [Delta.com](#) services, with much more planned in the future. It gives us an interface to build on and is a dramatic step toward giving you great connectivity, personalized content and easy-to-use services that will improve your in-flight experience.

Ekrem: We are consistently looking for new ways to delight our customers, and the portal opens the door to new personalized experiences that our customers will look forward to every time they fly with us.

What does the future onboard experience at Delta look like?

Ekrem: We have come a long way since Ed’s [keynote address](#) at [CES 2020](#) where we [shared a vision](#) focused on creating a seamless, connected customer experience rooted in personalization. We want to continue to transform travel into a part of your journey to look forward to, not endure – and that is still true moving forward. Though 2020 required some shifts in focus areas as a result of the pandemic, we still clearly see a future rooted in deepened customer interactions with technology.

One of the best parts of my job is finding new ways to introduce customers to a world of entertainment

they might not have experienced before. In the past few years, we have added seatback screens to nearly all our mainline fleet and have expanded our offerings – from new partnerships with Hulu and Disney+, additional podcasts, and health and wellness options – to ensure every customer has an opportunity to unplug with options similar to what they would find at home. Whether you are catching up on a podcast, putting the finishing touches on an upcoming presentation or multi-tasking across devices, we want your journey to be as seamless as possible.

A connected ecosystem with high-quality Wi-Fi and amazing seatback content working together will be foundational to the future of our industry. Today is one of many bricks being laid in real time on the road to a better experience for customers. We have many plans in development, and I look forward to sharing more details soon.

Do you still plan to offer Free Wi-Fi in the future?

Ekrem: We are committed to delivering Free Wi-Fi in the future, and this is a significant step on that journey. Our [Free Wi-Fi pilot](#) in spring 2019 gave us valuable insights to better understand the challenges to providing a service that meets our standard – and having the right equipment was a key part of that. As Ed said at CES, delivering Free Wi-Fi that is high-quality and streaming capable requires thorough testing to ensure our technology can handle the demand.

Our vision for the future of travel will not come to life overnight. While we've had to shift our focus during the pandemic, our journey to offering the best customer experience possible has never stopped. Our teams are relentless in ensuring Delta customers have the very best experience onboard.

When will customers see this portal and Wi-Fi experience onboard?

Glenn: We can't wait to bring Viasat technology onboard, which is currently planned for this summer. It is no secret that bringing a brand-new Wi-Fi system onboard our aircraft will take time – the process from approvals to testing to implementation often takes several months.

We are starting with our new delivery A321ceo1, 737-900ER and select 757-200 aircraft. That is over 300 mainline narrow body aircraft, with opportunities for additional aircraft in the future. The portal will be rolled out in tandem with new installations of the Viasat system, with the goal of offering the unified and consistent experience across all Viasat Wi-Fi enabled aircraft.

To meet our long-term goals, we will work closely with multiple Wi-Fi suppliers, including both Gogo and Viasat. Working with multiple partners means we can pair the right technology with the right fleet. We want to ensure customers always have access to Wi-Fi when available.

Read more about [where Delta is flying](#) and the measures in place to [ensure your safety](#) throughout your journey.

¹New A321ceo aircraft feature all-new interiors featuring high-capacity overhead bins, in-flight entertainment with Delta Studio, full spectrum LED ambient lighting, and standard 110v available power at every row. As we work to make our fleet future ready, some newly delivered A321ceos will operate without Wi-Fi installed and will operate on select short-haul routes.



TIME TO EVALUATE

Professionalism through Reflection

Developing desirable traits through simple contemplation

WRITTEN BY: KRISTOPHER OLSON

In the 1980s, psychologist Ola Svenson conducted a study of drivers in Sweden and America. The drivers were asked to rate themselves relative to other drivers. Nearly 90% of Americans and 80% of Swedish drivers believed they were in the top 50% of drivers – a statistical impossibility. The challenge of self-evaluation is that we all have different criteria by which we evaluate our performance. One person may find that the ability to text and drive without incident is a great skill, while another may determine that refraining texting and driving improves their relative driving skill. Who is to determine what is safe anyway?

The year 2020 through today has been rough on the airlines, but more importantly, it has been rough on the people who make an airline what it is. Recollect your experience of the past twelve months. Did your carrier or your instructor cancel many flights during April through June, significantly reducing your flying opportunities (and therefore, your proficiency)? Did your company or flight school close down, slow down, downgrade or furlough? How did these dramatic changes affect your ability to focus on the job? Were you forced to commute or was your preferred schedule taken away from you? Has concern for your health, the health of your families and friends (including crew on overnights) taken a more central role than in years past? How has all of this affected you?

I ask these questions not to dwell on them but to bring concreteness to the nebulous concepts of threats from the virus and challenges facing the industry. The above issues are real in relation to safety. In June, I wrote We Have a Role in this Time of Crisis (June 2020) discussing how pilots can continue to play their part during a pandemic. In October, I wrote Contracts and Crisis, covering how airline management and labor unions have uniquely navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. So, how have you handled the challenges?

Before going any further, I want to cage our discussion in clear terms. Take out a pen and paper, and write down traits you desire to have, desirable traits of your peers, or desirable traits of your role models. Warren Buffett suggested that individuals should pick five traits from their favorite people, write them down and attempt to internalize them every day. So, who do you consider your peers? Who do you think of your role models? Why do you respect certain people? Is it their experience, education, demeanor, hobbies, beliefs?

Let's focus on those aspiring to become airline pilots, though the following can be applied to any career, at any level. Let us assume you dream of becoming an airline pilot. You probably wrote that your role models or peers in aviation have technical expertise, a calm demeanor, excellent flying abilities, and strong communication skills. Have you demonstrated these traits in the last twelve months? Look at the traits you've written down and ask yourself questions like the ones below:

- **Have you continued to study and improve your knowledge while flying opportunities have dwindled?**
- **Have you sought ways to continue your general education while aviation is "on pause," or slowed down? Have you started the hobbies you've always dreamed of but have never had the time for?**

- **If you're employed, have you had to explained new policies stemming from COVID-19 to customers? How did that go?**
- **How have you handled confrontation?**

In short, have you turned this challenge into an opportunity? It is your job to be harshly critical of yourself.

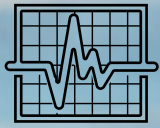
Even as time seemed to slow, progress has continued. Not the ideal year, but 2020 was a great time for to reflect, reassess, and recalibrate what matters in your life and your career. This year will likely offer our last respite before more years of hysteric growth, hiring, upgrades and all the associated hoopla. Take these next few months to assess your goals, progress and purpose. Think about who you want to be, not just in a professional sense, but a personal sense too.

This began with a story on self-evaluation of automobile drivers. Flying and driving are vastly different endeavors, but they share one major aspect (for now): both require a human operator. I have no doubt that 90% of pilots or aspiring pilots would rate themselves as top performers. Now ask yourself: **How would your peers rate you?**



About the Author

Kristopher Olson grew up in an airline family including pilots, mechanics, flight attendants and air traffic controllers for major airlines and the Federal Aviation Administration. [Read More...](#)



FITNESS



Six Factors of a Successful Relationship

BY: REINI THIJSSSEN

What makes a happy relationship? Is it humor, physical attraction, or merely enjoying things together? What makes a relationship work? Do opposites attract or does like attract like? Science answers: It comes down to shared views, stable personalities, constructive arguments, a strong friendship, and most importantly – acceptance of each other, even in a pandemic.

Views and Interests

When meeting someone new, it can be helpful for there to be shared similar interests. Talking about traveling, sports, TV and movies, or music helps build a strong connection in the early stages of the relationship. When moving on to the next stage, it is more important to have similar worldviews and opinions that both can agree upon. For example, similar views on essential subjects such as the type of relationship, hobbies, politics, and children are crucial. However, less obvious issues, such as eating preferences, seem to be critical. Research shows that couples that have similar eating preferences and patterns appear to be three times more likely to have a happy relationship.

Opposites Attract/Like Attracts Like?

In terms of character traits, partners do not necessarily resemble each other, but conversely, they do not complement each other either. People do not seem to choose each other on personality traits. Partner choice is primarily the coincidental result of availability and attraction. However, personality traits do influence the relationship. For a lasting and happy relationship, one needs emotional stability, a healthy amount of self-confidence, and a certain extraversion. For example, a partner with low self-esteem might get jealous, and an introvert might have more difficulty showing emotions. Both partners have to be equally as comfortable in the relationship.



Six Factors to Success

1. Emotional Togetherness - Do you show affection and appreciation? Do you enjoy being with your partner? Do you have a sense of belonging?

Feeling “together,” expressing feelings, and showing love to each other is emotional togetherness – the glue of all relationships. The sense of togetherness can be stimulated by fantasizing about the future, supporting each other in difficult times, sharing desires and day-to-day activities.

2. Independence - Can each of you function autonomously? Can you give each other freedom? Do you not feel the need to change your partner?

Togetherness does not mean you have to do everything together. It is healthy to maintain an autonomous identity as an individual with one’s own hobbies, friends, and interests. Similarly, it is crucial to respect your partner’s identity, as well.

3. Positive identity - Are you sure of yourself and your choices? How much self-esteem do you have? Do you feel like you have something to offer to your partner?

If you feel good about yourself, the relationship has a better chance of success. Equality will develop. Jealousy and dependency will disappear. Having a positive identity makes you a better person and partner.

4. Conflict handling - Are you able to communicate with each other respectfully? Can you calmly discuss challenges with each other?

Differences between people are normal, and so are conflicts. It is not about how often you have arguments, but how you both deal with them. If you argue in the right way and respectfully, one can learn from another, potentially improving your relationship’s intimacy.



5. Sexuality - Are you satisfied with the sexual contact with your partner?

Sexuality is not just about the frequency. It is about enjoying it, knowing each other's preferences, and the ability to talk about them.

6. Communication is Key - Success is mainly a matter of how partners communicate with each other. Arguing does not have to be a bad sign. Arguing is essential. When you disagree, you are exposing yourself. However, it is vital to do it the right way. Throwing plates or ignore one another is not the right way!

Final Note

Whether you emphasize shared beliefs, stable personality traits, or communicating constructively, the ability to accept each other is crucial. Do not try to change your partner – it is impossible. Personality traits are challenging to change. As a couple, you can learn to deal with problems differently and learn to communicate effectively. Communication and acceptance of each other is usually the focus of couples' therapy. Even in happy relationships, it might help to explore and get to know each other again through therapy. Your relationship is worth it!

Happy Valentine's Day!



About the Author

Reini Thijssen is a Dutch certified life coach and avid traveler. [Read More...](#)



MONEY



Trust Your Instruments, Not Your Gut, when it Comes to Flying AND Investing!

WRITTEN BY: CHARLIE MATTINGLY

As a brand-new pilot, one of the first things you learn is how to mitigate the risk of the potentially deadly physiological phenomenon known as spatial disorientation or spatial-D. In pilot speak, spatial-D is when your body is telling you one thing and your flight instruments (and airplane) are telling you something completely different. Sadly, spatial-D has claimed the lives of many pilots.

One of our newest Leading Edge team members and previous Marine F/A-18 fighter pilot, Mark Covell discusses just one example of spatial-D. Mark shares how carrier pilots tend to feel like they are pitching up as they are launched off the carrier at night due to the massive acceleration from the catapult. During daytime VFR conditions, this is probably a non-issue. However, in weather or at night, this type of spatial-D is potentially deadly.

What does spatial-D have to do with investing and retirement planning? Personally, I feel like all of 2020 could be compared to being catapulted off a carrier at night, not knowing what is up or what is down.

During the heat of the battle from February until the markets settled a bit in early April, investor emotions were all over the place. Years of stock market gains evaporated in days, even hours. Furthermore, many people thought, and the news media quickly suggested, we were headed for the second Great Depression. Don't get me wrong, anything was (and is) possible. Sometimes, the unknown can be terrifying.

One slightly humorous example of investor spatial-D was early in the pandemic when the share price of ticker symbol ZOOM increased dramatically due to investors buying up shares as quickly as possible. Zoom Technologies, a so-called penny stock had risen more than 240% in the span of a month before the SEC suspended trading. Unfortunately, the traders failed to realize the ticker symbol ZOOM did not represent the Cloud Video Conferencing company Zoom they thought they were purchasing - Ticker symbol ZM.

Here is the headline from MarketWatch.com dated February 27, 2020.

This stock has scored the biggest boost from the coronavirus outbreak — but the company has been out of business for years

Published: Feb 27, 2020 8:47 p.m. ET



Aa

Zoom Technologies trades on the OTC Markets lowest tier of stocks and is up more than 50% Thursday afternoon



In the airplane, pilots must fight spatial-D by cross-checking and TRUSTING their instruments. As an investor, if you did not trust your instruments during 2020, it may have been very costly.

So, it's a dark and stormy night, what are the instruments you rely on and trust? What are your primary and backup instruments? Here are four instruments that I think can save your investments as well as your financial sanity during uncertain times...

1. Cash reserves Emergency Funds. Having extra cash can prevent withdrawals from retirement accounts or excessive credit card debt in emergencies. Studies also show having cash in the bank makes people happy. In an article posted on PYMNTS.com, Can Cash Really Make You Happier, Joe Gladstone, research associate at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. and co-author of two recent studies about money and happiness said,

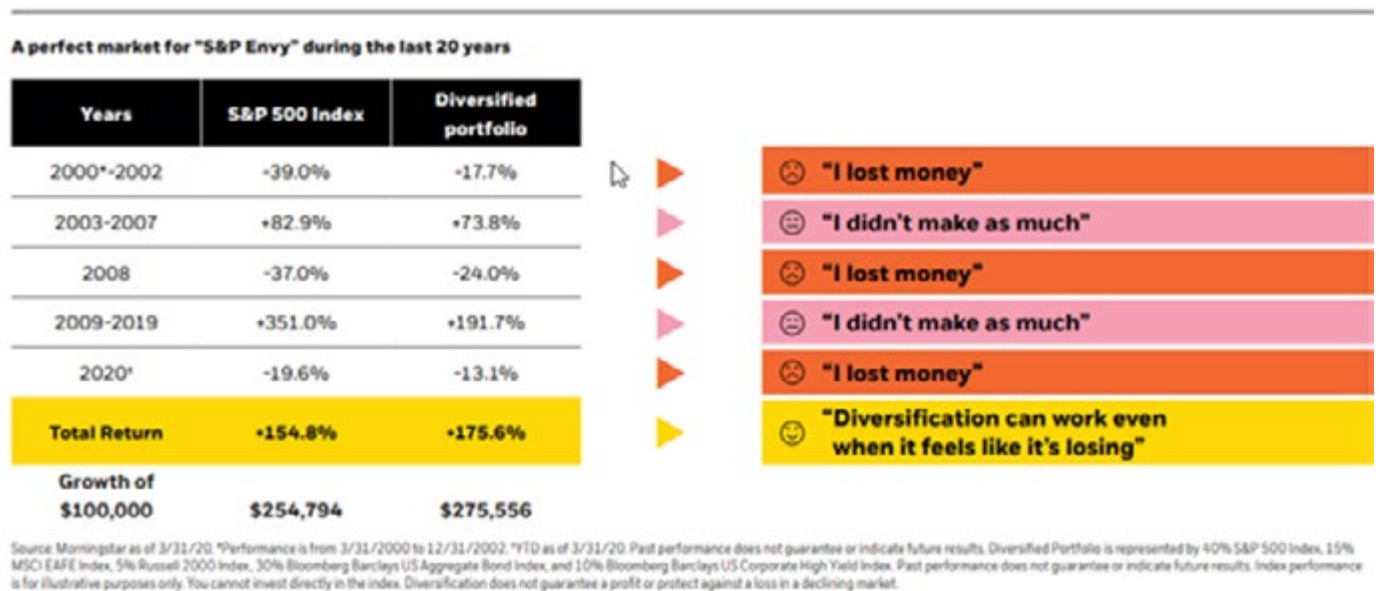
"We find a very interesting effect: that the amount of money you have in your bank account right now is a better predictor of happiness than your aggregate wealth," Gladstone explained. "Having more money in their bank account makes people feel more financially secure, which leads to an increase in happiness."

2. Have a working knowledge of financial history. You don't have to be an expert or financial historian, but I believe being familiar with financial history is akin to training before you go on a flying mission. New military pilots call this chair flying. Athletes and musicians use a technique called visualization that helps them prepare for uncertainty and reduce anxiety before a sporting event or concert.

3. Admit that times are scary and you do not know what's going to happen. This may sound obvious, but I've seen many people get themselves into a "square corner" because they assumed that something was going to happen when in fact there was no indication or possible way of knowing what the future may hold. We have heard investors say, "My gut tells me..." many times. Don't ever make investment decisions based on what your gut tells you!

Some of the best investors in the world invest with the mindset of preparing to be wrong. In other words, they diversify their investments. Diversification is not popular or sexy because it's like admitting that you're not all-knowing and you do not know what's going to happen in the future. Diversification allows you to be successful in multiple investment and economic scenarios. Furthermore, diversification can feel disappointing but prove to be a profitable strategy over the long term.

BlackRock Investment Management Company posted the graphic below on their investor education website about diversification and “S&P Envy” over the last 20 years.



4. Prepare and Plan by having a clear vision of your goals and priorities.

If you don’t understand the “why” behind your investment strategy as well as why you’re investing and saving in the first place, you will most likely bail out on your plan during difficult and uncertain times. Changing your investment plan mid-crisis creates a very high likelihood that your investment returns will be significantly lower than had you remained invested as originally planned. Simon Sinek started a movement by encouraging businesses to “Start with Why.” It’s a powerful mindset that leads to trust, inspiration and success. I believe the same applies to your financial and investment game plan.

5. Remember you are invested in companies – not politics.

Sometimes our politics cloud the investment and retirement planning picture. This rule falls under the axiom; “control the controllable.” If you’re allowing your politics to affect your investment game plan than you may want to see rules number two and three above.

<https://leadingedgeplanning.com/trust-your-instruments-not-your-gut-when-it-comes-to-flying-and-investing/>



About the Author

Charlie Mattingly a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional, is a first officer for Southwest Airlines based in Atlanta.
[Read More...](#)



SQUALL LINE

Foggy Days, Foggy Nights

Understanding the types of ground-level clouds

WRITTEN BY: JUSTIN ABRAMS

When it comes to weather phenomenon, a deeper understanding of formation allows pilots to better understand the associated risks and prepare more thoroughly for a flight. In the case of fog, knowing when a certain type is likely to form is especially helpful as weather reports and forecasts lack the ability to specify different types of fog (with the exception of freezing fog). Though fog forms throughout the year, certain types are much more prevalent during the winter months and warrant individual discussion. Analyzing each type separately brings to light the different risks that each one poses and how long each may stick around remaining an aviation nuisance.

Before diving into the types of fog that are common winter hazards, let's briefly review how fog forms. Simply, fog is a surface-based cloud. In order to form, there needs to be little to no difference (spread) between the temperature and the dew point. A dew point at any given time is the temperature to which air must be cooled to become saturated with water vapor. Digging in a bit further, the spread can be reduced by decreasing the surface temperature to the dew point, or by increasing the dew point to the current temperature - which is done by adding moisture to the air- or a combination of both actions. When this occurs, the moisture in the air will condense and produce fog. The manner in which the fog forms determines how it is classified.

Radiation Fog

Forming under conditions consisting of little wind, a clear sky, and relatively high humidity, radiation fog is commonly seen in the evenings through early morning. Through terrestrial radiation, the ground cools after sunset thereby cooling the air above. Once the air's dew point is reached, water vapor condenses, and fog is formed. Radiation fog needs calm conditions to be sustained; it will dissipate with wind speeds greater than 10 knots or with the rise in temperature that occurs after sunrise.



<https://photolib.noaa.gov/Collections/National-Weather-Service/Other/emodule/627/eitem/18737>

Advection Fog

Often seen in coastal regions, advection fog occurs when warm, moist air moves over a cooler surface. This can occur over both land and water but is formed the same way, regardless. Advection fog requires wind to form, and the stronger the wind (up to about 15 knots), the more widespread the fog. As the wind speed increases above 15 knots, the fog is lifted and will form low level stratus clouds.



<https://photolib.noaa.gov/Collections/National-Weather-Service/Other/emodule/627/eitem/20822>

Steam Fog

This type of fog occurs when cold, dry air over land moves over warmer water. As water evaporates, it very quickly condenses once it reaches the colder air above. Named because its appearance resembles steam rising from the water, steam fog can result in low level turbulence and potentially dangerous icing conditions. The impact of steam fog is dependent on the size of the body of water over which it forms. Generally speaking, the bigger the body of water, the more widespread the fog.



<https://photolib.noaa.gov/Collections/Historic-Fisheries/Other/emodule/710/eitem/24839>

Freezing Fog

Fog that occurs when the temperature is at or below 0°C/32°F is classified as freezing fog. Water droplets in freezing fog are supercooled; they exist in liquid form but will freeze on contact with a surface. Freezing fog can provide significant icing impacts and deserves extra attention when known to exist at your departure point or destination. In a situation involving freezing fog, it is crucial to understand the de-ice/anti-ice capabilities of your aircraft. It may be very difficult, if not impossible, to operate when there is freezing fog in the area, especially when additional threats like freezing rain may be present. This is the one type of fog that can be indicated on METARs and TAFs and will appear with the qualifying descriptor “FZ” before the obscuration code for fog, “FG”.

Ice Fog

Not surprising given the name, ice fog consists of very small ice crystals suspended in the air. The conditions for the formation of ice fog are similar to those of radiation fog, but with frigid temperatures of roughly -30°C/-22°F and below. Due to the very low temperatures required, it is mostly a threat in the Arctic and Polar regions, but still possible in parts of the United States during the winter months. A big issue with ice fog (aside from the fact that you have found yourself somewhere so unbelievably cold) is that visibility can be severely reduced if you are flying into the sun.

A greater understanding of fog can make a big difference when it comes to making safety decisions. In both air carrier and general aviation operations, fog has the potential to disrupt operations and cause dangerous icing scenarios. By understanding what conditions may result in fog’s formation and dissipation and respecting the threats it may bring with its ability to form very quickly, you can feel more confident on those cold, foggy winter days.



About the Author

Justin Abrams is a first officer for a major US airline. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation with a minor in Security and Intelligence from the Ohio State University in 2015. [Read More...](#)



Conventional Mortgages

First in a series to explain the smörgåsbord of mortgages – the smörtgågebord!

WRITTEN BY: ERIC HOOLIHAN

Think back to a time when you made a major purchase; maybe it was a car or some new appliances. You may have financed your purchase through the dealer or retailer, and it was probably a pretty straightforward process. You can show up unannounced at a car dealership in the morning and be leaving with a financed new car purchase by lunchtime. The same is definitely not true for mortgage financing. In certain situations, the process may only take a couple of weeks, but many purchase contracts allow for a month or more for the loan process to complete. And when you financed your car, there probably weren't many choices as to which type of financing you used. You probably picked the term and interest rate but not much more than that.

In the mortgage world, there are many types of loans available, each with specific requirements, known in the mortgage industry as guidelines. There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to mortgages and having a variety of programs available allows a lender to find the most suitable program for each borrower. Over the next few months, we'll cover some of the loan programs available and why a borrower may choose one over another.

When most people think of a mortgage, they think of a conventional mortgage. Simply put, a conventional mortgage is not offered or secured by a government entity. These are available through banks, credit unions, and mortgage lenders. Because they aren't secured by a government entity, a conventional loan tends to have stricter requirements than a loan secured by a government entity. Some conventional loans, however, can be guaranteed by one of two government-sponsored enterprises (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac). Qualifying requirements for these include minimums for the applicant's credit score and debt-to-income ratio, among others.

If later, a lender wishes to sell a conventional loan to Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, that loan must also be, what's known as, "conforming," meaning it conforms to the guidelines of those government-sponsored enterprises. For example, one of the conforming guidelines is the maximum loan limit. The conforming loan limit for 2021 is \$548,250. (There are exceptions to this amount in higher cost geographic areas.) Why would a lender sell their loan to Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, you ask? A lender only has a finite amount of money to lend. By selling a loan on the secondary market (such as to Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac), the lender is able to replenish their own finances to be able to offer more loans. The secondary market plays a critical role in ensuring a flow of funds to mortgage lenders.

A conventional loan also requires a down payment which can be as little as 3% for qualified borrowers. However, if a borrower puts less than 20% down, the lender can require the purchase of private mortgage insurance (PMI). Plus, a lower down payment may require a higher credit score. Generally, the minimum credit score for a conventional loan is 620. Conventional guidelines will also dictate what kind of documentation a lender must collect from the borrower, e.g. W2s, tax returns, pay stubs, bank statements, and more. The guidelines also specify which type of appraisal may be necessary.

When a bank or loan officer receives an application for a loan, it is usually submitted through an automatic underwriting system which helps determine if the loan will qualify for conventional financing and specify exactly what documentation may be required.

Conventional mortgages are very common, but they aren't the only option out there. Next month, we'll examine FHA mortgages and their critical role in the mortgage lending industry.



About the Author

Eric Hoolihan has been an airline pilot for over 14 years having flown the D-328Jet, EMB-145 & A320. He is licensed as a loan officer in Minnesota and Texas. [Read More...](#)



Epic Flight Academy

In 1999, husband and wife Danny and Amy Perna launched their flight school with a single aircraft, a used Cessna 152. They were the only two staff members. As he does today, Danny held both FAA flight instructor and A&P licenses. Danny served as flight instructor and Amy kept the books. Fast-forward 22 years: Epic Flight Academy now employs 115 people, and the fleet has expanded to 21 new aircraft and five flight simulators. Epic's training facility occupies 44,300 square feet located at the New Smyrna Beach Airport on Florida's east coast. Epic Flight Academy is recognized as one of the fastest-growing flight schools in the world with an unblemished safety record. The company's motto has always been, "Safety first!"



"The Perna family 22 years after they launched their flight school standing next to Epic's Beechcraft King Air B200."

Located just ten miles south of Daytona Beach, the New Smyrna Beach Airport (EVB) is in Class D airspace with an Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower. There are two Class B airports and two Class C airports within a 40-nautical mile radius of New Smyrna Beach. With 12 other Class D airports nearby, Epic's student pilots learn how to fly and communicate in highly controlled airspace, land on soft grass runways, and practice different types of approaches, including ILS, RNAV/GPS and VOR. Epic's location is just one reason it has become a popular flight school.

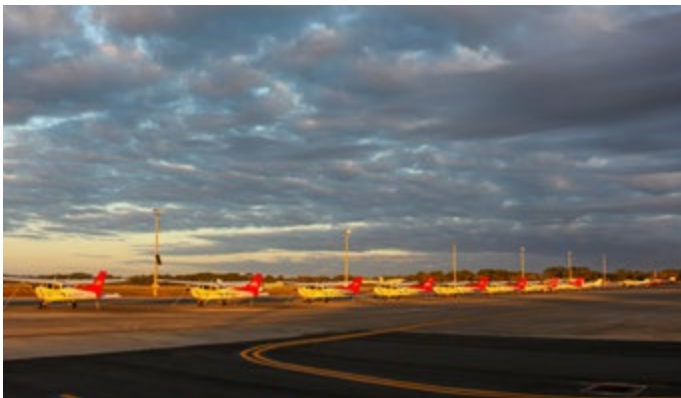
Flight Training

Epic Flight Academy, originally established as Epic Aviation, began as a flight school and FBO. By 2001, the flight school became the focus. Within the first few years of operation, the organization expanded quickly with the purchase of new Cessna 172s and the hiring of more than a dozen qualified flight instructors. The fleet and staff continued to grow exponentially as student enrollment swelled. The 2008 financial crisis substantially impacted domestic flight training propelling Epic to launch an international outreach initiative, enrolling students from Nepal, Vietnam, Colombia, and Brazil. Epic is authorized to issue the I-20 under the M-1 Visa for international students. By 2019, with the Part 141 flight school celebrating its 20th anniversary, Epic had trained more than 5,000 commercial pilots from more than 80 countries.

Currently, Epic enrolls 200 to 250 flight students annually, with roughly half coming from outside the U.S. In 2020, with international travel restricted due to COVID-19, Epic experienced a surge in domestic flight students. Epic has always embraced the newest technology, so having the capability to provide online ground school became a tremendous asset in 2020. Epic Flight Academy uses Schoology, a virtual learning environment that allows instructors and students to interact during ground school

classes. Instructors also use this platform to host virtual demos each month for prospective students who want to get a feel for Epic.

Epic maintains professional relationships with numerous airlines, which gives a hiring edge to Epic graduates. These include Air Wisconsin Airlines, Ameriflight, CommutAir, Endeavor Air, Envoy, ExpressJet, GoJet, Horizon Air, Mesa Airlines, Piedmont, PSA Airlines, Republic Airways, and Silver Airways. Epic also hosts career seminars for its graduates.



"Sunrise at Epic Flight Academy – Flight students benefit from training in Florida's beautiful climate."

Epic Fleet and Flight Simulators

Epic purchases its aircraft new from the factory and maintains its aircraft on site with its team of FAA-certified A&P mechanics. Epic's fleet is recognizable by its distinctive red tails, which makes the aircraft more visible to other pilots. The Epic aircraft fleet includes:

- 17 Cessna Skyhawk 172s, all with G1000 avionics. 2016 Models and newer, with three new Cessnas scheduled to arrive in 2021
- **3 Piper Seminoles PA-44, 2 G1000 avionics from 2017 and 2019 and 1 six-pack with Garmin 430**
- **1 Beechcraft King Air B200**

In the fall of 2020, Epic became the first and only flight school in the world to acquire a custom-built Frasca Cessna 172 Advanced Aviation Training Device (AATD) with Frasca's motion-cueing system for fixed-wing devices (FMCS-FX). Both students and instructors compare the realistic motion to flying in actual aircraft. This new sim was designed to accurately represent an actual Cessna 172 in flight using motion-cueing and true-to-life graphics with the goal of reducing the amount of time students would need to spend in the aircraft to acquire a pilot's license. Epic's instructors are reporting great student progress in the sim with smooth transitions to actual aircraft. In addition to this new simulator, Epic's ground fleet also includes:

- **Frasca Truflite Cessna 172 with 180-degree visual system, full enclosure G1000 cockpit**
- **Frasca Truflite PA-44 multi-engine sim, full enclosure, one large screen for visuals**
- **Precision Flight Control GTX Max Cessna Trainer, partial motion platform, G1000 cockpit**
- **Frasca Mentor Cessna 172 sim, a smaller unit mainly used for instrument training, G1000 cockpit**



"Epic is the only flight school in the world to offer this custom-built Frasca Cessna 172 Advanced Aviation Training Device with Frasca's motion-cueing system for fixed-wing devices."

Aircraft Mechanic School

Epic continued its expansion in 2020 with the opening of its FAA-approved Part 147 aircraft mechanic school. The inaugural class began in October. The program takes 18 months and prepares graduates for careers as aviation maintenance technicians (AMTs), airframe and powerplant mechanics (A&Ps), space industry technicians, and more. Epic's location in New Smyrna Beach, Florida is near Kennedy Space Center. The surge in space travel and research has led to an increased need for qualified technicians, which is why Epic has been working for the past few years to open its mechanic school.



"The Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Epic Flight Academy's new aircraft mechanic training facility."

Epic Flight Academy has established hiring relationships with Aerotek, AirGate Aviation, American Aero Services, AOG MX Maintenance, Ascent Aviation Services, Baker Aviation, Cape Air, CommutAir, GT Aero Accessories, Hop-A-Jet Worldwide Jet Charter, LAUNCH Technical Workforce Solutions, March Aviation, Mountain Air Cargo, Pinnacle Aircraft Engines, Southern Airways Express, and STS Aviation Group. When these companies have openings, they guarantee interviews to Epic graduates.



"Epic recently hosted an Open House for its new aviation maintenance technician school. Recruiter Stephanie Babian provides a tour for prospective aircraft mechanic students."

College Credit

In 2018, Epic Flight Academy signed an articulation agreement with nearby Daytona State College. Epic flight school graduates can transfer flight training hours for a total of 23 credit hours toward an Industrial Management Technology associate's degree. This AS degree can then be transferred toward a bachelor's degree at Daytona State College or another college or university. The Epic graduates who are enrolled at DSC are looking forward to the added benefit of having a college degree along with their flying credentials. They know this is especially important if they ever lose their Class 1 medical certificate. Most of the college classes are offered online and last only eight weeks, so Epic graduates find the partnership to be convenient and affordable.

Scholarships

Since 2016, Epic Flight Academy has awarded approximately \$125,000 in flight training scholarships and \$100,000 in aircraft mechanic scholarships. The flight school offers annual aviation scholarships to high school students and hosts an annual fishing tournament to support the scholarship program. Epic recently partnered with Latino Pilots Association, National Gay Pilots Association, Organization of Black Aerospace

Professionals, and Women in Aviation International by providing a full aircraft mechanic scholarship annually for each organization to award.



"The first class of aircraft mechanic students started in October 2020. Students pictured are working on their wiring skills. The entire program takes 18 months to complete."

Student Life

With half of Epic's student population coming from countries throughout the world outside of the United States, the flight school takes steps to welcome its students and make them feel at home while they're away from their families. Epic Flight Academy housing is available just a few miles away with an Epic shuttle bus to provide transportation to school and shopping. The school also hosts regular Student Appreciation Days with food and games. Students form lifelong friendships among themselves and with their instructors at Epic. Since New Smyrna Beach is already a popular tourist destination, Epic students also take advantage of the close proximity to the beach where they enjoy swimming, surfing, and other sports.



"Epic students and staff celebrate Student Appreciation Day"

Distinguished Staff

Epic Flight Academy prides itself on its discerning hiring policies. For example, Epic is known for hiring many of its own graduates as flight instructors. Why? Because Epic knows the rigorous and thorough training program its students complete. Hiring their own graduates make sense because they have been trained with Epic's emphasis on safety. Founder and CEO Danny Perna has always encouraged hiring and promoting from within the company. For example, Josh Rawlins started at Epic as a teenager sweeping hangar floors. He took accounting classes, earned his A&P license, and received his inspection authorization. Josh became the lead mechanic, director of maintenance, VP, and now serves as Chief Operating Officer.

Epic boasts many distinctive staff, such as Chief Instructor Vic Johnson, who has logged more than 24,000 hours of flight time; Ground School Instructor Captain Judy Rice, who set a world record in 2014 with the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) and who flew around the world in 2015 in a Cessna Citation Mustang CE-510, working with 20,000 plus international students and visiting 35

countries; CFI Hal Maskiell received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2017; and Captain Mike Thompson, who teaches Epic's flight instructor courses and authored *Telling Is Not Teaching: The Flight Instructor's Handbook*. This sampling of staff reflects the talent and commitment Epic values.

Awards and Recognition

Epic Flight Academy has been recognized by numerous organizations for its contributions, excellence, and community involvement. Epic strives to serve students, staff, and the community. Epic Flight Academy has been a member of the Better Business Bureau since 2018 and the Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce since 2017. Other recognitions include:

- **2019 – Daytona News-Journal Top Workplace Award**
- **2019 – FAA 100% Pass Rate**
- **2016 – National Guard: Patriotic Employer Award**
- **2007 – Cessna Flight Training Excellence**
- **2006 – AOPA Special Citation**
- **Cessna Safety Standards Award**

DC-7

One unique feature in particular makes Epic Flight Academy stand out from other flight schools -- its vintage DC-7 aircraft displayed on site and visited daily by tourists and aviation enthusiasts. Featured on the Atlas Obscura website, the decommissioned DC-7, which was built by the Douglas Aircraft Company, was part of the American Airlines fleet. In 2012, Danny Perna saved the aircraft from the scrapyards, and it has become a local landmark and popular "selfie" spot. Students and staff can often be spotted taking a lunch break in the shade of this massive aircraft.



"Epic's vintage decommissioned DC-7 has become a popular local landmark."

Online Presence

Although Epic Flight Academy's flight school and aircraft mechanic school are physically located in sunny New Smyrna Beach, Fla., its web presence is global. Epic employs staff who engage in live chats 24 hours a day, seven days a week through its website, epicflightacademy.com. The website is a resource for aspiring aviation professionals everywhere. Its content includes aviation resources, student achievements, online articles by Captain Judy Rice, and information about all aspects of aviation careers. Epic publishes a monthly newsletter, the Epic Buzz, which is archived on the website along

with press releases, events, and other news. The site also features interactive campus maps, webcams, an online store, and links to useful resources, such as the KEVB control tower. Epic Flight Academy also has a robust social media platform featuring alumni news, current events, and other news. These include:

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/epicflightacademy>
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/epicflightacademy/>
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/epicflightacademy>
- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/epicaviation>
- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/epic-flight-academy/>



“Epic Flight Academy’s website includes webcams, campus maps, aviation resources, training information, and much more, including Epic’s recently launched online store featuring Epic branded merchandise and pilot supplies.”

Alumni Relations

Epic graduates frequently refer to the “Epic family” in their posts and online reviews. Epic Flight Academy is a family business, after all, and staff members welcome students into the Epic family with genuine sincerity. From the first contact online, to new student orientation to the ringing of the first checkride bell, to the new job as First Officer, Epic Flight Academy takes great pride in its graduates’ achievements. Epic strives to keep in touch with its alumni and shares their success stories on the website and in social media. As Epic grads go on to serve as captains and first officers for major airlines, the entire Epic community celebrates every milestone.

Epic Flight Academy’s Mission Statement

“Our mission is to provide exceptional training to aspiring aviation professionals through innovative technology and instruction in a safe and timely manner.”

Contact Epic Flight Academy

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Aero Crew Solutions is a group of professionals committed to providing you outstanding service to solve your employment needs. We do this by hosting job fairs throughout the United States. We also provide various career services that include career consulting, application review, interview prep and résumé services.

Career Services

Application Review

Career Consulting

Résumé Critique

Interview Prep