

**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Human Resources**  
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*Agency of Administration*

**TO:** Joint Fiscal Committee  
Government Accountability Committee  
House Committee on Government Operations  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
**FROM:** Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner  
**DATE:** August 31, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Agency of Transportation Position Pilot Request

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In accordance with Act 179, Sec. E.100(d) as amended by 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 4, Sec. 74 and Acts and Resolves No. 172, Sec. E.100.2, Secretary of Administration Justin Johnson has approved the attached position pilot request from the Agency of Transportation (VTrans).

The written description required by Act 179, Sec. E.100(d)(4), including the method for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the positions, as provided by VTrans, and is attached for your information.

The Department of Human Resources fully supports the request to create five limited service positions with the Position Pilot Program to replace the use of temporaries and avoid costly contracts. We believe the request is an appropriate use of the Position Pilot. Department of Human Resources has reviewed vacancies and met with VTrans and has determined the Agency has a business operations plan that would not be suitable to transfer vacant positions to the Aviation Program. Each new position will assist VTrans to continue to meet the standards set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to increase the Agencies effectiveness and level of service provided to Vermonters.

### **Summary of Agency of Transportation Position Pilot Request**

VTrans proposes creating five limited service positions (State Airport Operations Worker I and II) funded within existing Agency appropriations. The positions will be paid for by the funds from replacing five existing temporaries to permanent as well as from revenue generated at state airports. VTrans has struggled to consistently maintain state-owned airports with the use of temporaries due to the limited number of hours a temporary can work per year. Five new limited service positions would allow for full-time coverage to provide Foreign Object Debris inspection, maintain vegetation to help minimize risk of wildlife entering, provide fuel as well as service customers who rent tie-down and hanger space consistently throughout the week. In addition, the new positions will take on projects at several state





airports that will limit the need of contractors that can often be costly. Each position will increase Aviation's effectiveness and level of service at several statewide airports as well as the Aviation Program.

Any questions should be directed to Molly Paulger at 828-3517.

c: Secretary Johnson  
Secretary Cole  
M. Paulger



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Agency of Administration

**TO: Justin Johnson, Secretary of Administration**  
**FROM: Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner**  
**RE: Agency of Transportation Position Pilot Request**  
**DATE: August 29, 2016**

APPROVED  


I recently received Position Pilot Proposal from the Agency of Transportation (VTrans). The written description required by Act 179, Sec. E.(100)(d)(4), including the method of evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the positions, as provided by AOT, is attached for your information. Below is our recommendation and summary of our analysis.

The Department of Human Resources fully supports the request to create five limited service positions with the Position Pilot Program to replace the use of temporaries and avoid costly contracts. We believe the request is an appropriate use of the Position Pilot. Department of Human Resources has reviewed vacancies and met with VTrans and has determined the Agency has a business operations plan that would not be suitable to transfer vacant positions to the Aviation Program. Each new position will assist VTrans to continue to meet the standards set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to increase the Agencies effectiveness and level of service provided to Vermonters.

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Any questions should be directed to Molly Paulger at 828-3517.

c: Secretary Johnson  
Secretary Cole  
M. Paulger



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*Agency of Transportation*

July 18, 2016

Mr. Michael Clasen  
Deputy Secretary  
Agency of Administration  
109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609-0201

Re: VTrans Aviation Limited Service Employee Position Request

Dear Deputy Secretary Clasen:

Vermont State-owned airports are a growing community asset around the state. With \$553,171 in fuel sales and hanger lease revenues, State airports are becoming economic engines for the communities they serve including Rutland, Stowe, Montpelier, Newport, Highgate, Middlebury, Springfield, Bennington, Island Pond and Lyndonville. On behalf of the Agency of Transportation, Aviation Section, VTrans is requesting five Limited Service Employee positions. These positions are critical to the day-to-day operation of our State airports; the positions are currently being filled by temporary employees. The body of work required to maintain the airports far exceeds the hours the temporary employees are allowed to work under both the State of Vermont Temporary Employment Conditions and the Affordable Care Act. For these reasons we are seeking approval from the Agency of Administration for five Limited Service positions.

### **Background**

From 1999 to 2010, the Agency's Highway Division provided administrative, financial and maintenance support to the 10 State-owned airports. The personnel and equipment necessary to provide this support were also provided by the Highway Division. Maintenance to keep the airports open was completed annually; however, the airports and their associated properties and buildings fell into a state of disrepair. Due to the condition of the airports they were significantly underutilized.

With State-owned airports being greatly underutilized and maintenance costs increasing, in 2010 the Legislature made a decision to align all aspects of Aviation by transferring the administrative, financial and maintenance duties directly under the Aviation Section. During the same Legislative session, Section 17 of Act 62 (H.443) required the completion of a statewide business plan to achieve the goal of reducing or eliminating the existing operating deficits of State-owned airports by June 30, 2015. This legislation excluded those airports that provide daily commercial, passenger service; the Rutland State Airport is the only State airport which provides daily commercial, passenger service. As required, this plan was developed and executed. Each of the Legislative recommendations were followed and the Agency now has 8 of the 10 airports operating in the budgetary black, with the following program goals as the Agency's priorities: Safety, Sustainability and Growth.

In 2010, the Agency reorganized and responsibilities for State airports was transferred from the Highway Division to the Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development Division, under the direction of the Aviation Section; none of the personnel or financial resources which the Highway Division had utilized to administer the Aviation program were transferred through this transition. The Agency, as a whole, had to make some operational decisions that ultimately directed the Highway Maintenance Section equipment and personnel to focus on day-to-day needs on the highways. As a result, the Agency attempted to address the airport maintenance needs by having the Aviation Section hire temporary employees to fill the need in order to accomplish the work associated with maintaining its top priority, aviation safety.

With a pool of temporary employees, and none of the financial and administrative resources which had been available to administer the State Aviation assets, the Aviation Section absorbed these duties with limited Transportation Fund revenue support and through seeking Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants for badly needed infrastructure asset upgrades and expansions. This was a significant burden on the Aviation Section which continues to strain the operations of the staff to this day.

One other significant impact resulting from the relocation of the Aviation Section from the Highway Division to the Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development Division was the loss of all of the equipment provided by the Highway Division which was located throughout the state to service the airports through the associated Districts. This required the Aviation Section to procure mowing and snow removal equipment, as well as write and execute a very intensive personnel training program that met the FAA's very stringent safety standards. This program requires employees to be with the Agency between six months to a year before they have received adequate training which enables them to operate independently.

#### **Comparison of State-Owned Airport Equipment & Administration 2010 v. 2016**

<u>Equipment</u>	<b>2010</b>	All equipment was provided by the Highway Division District Garages Aviation paid a possession charge of \$3,000 per month
	<b>2016</b>	Equipment now managed and maintained by Aviation 9 loaders and blowers <i>FAA funded</i> 10 zero steer mowers 1 dump truck 1 brush hog tractor with 15' deck 1 carrier vehicle with sweeper, blower and plow Inspection four wheelers 3 operations trucks 1 State Airplane maintained to FAA airworthy status



The temporary employees we have hired at the airports have been with the Aviation Section for several years. They have, with great honor and integrity, served the State of Vermont during all hours of the day and night, any day of the week and without any paid time off. Because of the nature of the job duties associated with overseeing the day-to-day operation of an active airport, these temporary employees frequently work during holidays. Moreover, these temporary employees, when ill, do not have sick time to utilize and no insurance to cover their and their family's medical expenses.

### **Risks Associated with Maintaining State-Owned Airports with Temporary Employees**

1. Safety. Part of operating the airports is to not only ensure that the airport is maintained to FAA standards, but also to ensure that the fuel sold meets a very high standard as it relates to quality. Our temporary employees have a duty to receive, test and qualify all fuel deliveries and current fuel on hand. Each day that fuel is sold on State airports that fuel needs to be tested; this is a Federal and State standard. It is quite different to receive bad fuel in a vehicle than to receive bad fuel in an aircraft. The results would be catastrophic.
2. The Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA cap for temporary hours which can be worked by an employee is 1560 hours annually. For the employees that start after January 1<sup>st</sup>, their measurement period begins when they start and goes for a full year. If within that initial measurement period, they do NOT exceed the 1560 hours, their measurement period reverts to January 1<sup>st</sup> and they are NOT considered full-time. However, if in that initial 12-month period, they go over 1560 hours, they have to be considered full-time for that same measurement period until there is a 13-week break or transition into a classified or exempt position. Given the FAA standards and safety requirements that VTrans is bound to meet, it is nearly impossible for the State to fulfill its responsibilities utilizing temporary employees. We frequently bump up to and, in many cases, exceed the maximum number of hours allowable under the Act. There are fines associated with exceeding the maximum number of hours which we are in danger of incurring; however, there would also be fines which could be incurred if we do not meet our FAA requirements (part of the agreement for accepting FAA funding which has improved our State airports).
3. The FAA requires that runways be inspected for Foreign Object Debris (FOD) each morning and afternoon, as well as for any damage or disabled aeronautical equipment or aids to navigation. Our temporary employees conduct these inspections, document deficiencies and write up work orders for corrective action. Again, the temps are running up against the maximum number of hours needed to conduct these inspections and the State runs the risk of not correcting a deficient or disabled runway. This puts the flying public at risk.

4. The FAA requires the State, as owner of the State airports, to maintain the vegetation on the airport to ensure we minimize the risk of wildlife entering the aeronautical areas. Although not all wildlife can be mitigated, a properly maintained airport will reduce this risk. By not maintaining proper vegetation heights, wildlife is attracted. This places the flying public at significant risk. If our temporary employees are forced to remain below the maximum number of hours in accordance with the Act, the State may not be able to maintain the airport to standard.
5. Wildlife mitigation is needed daily at our airports. The temporary employees are trained by USDA annually to document all species of wildlife and, as needed, to harass them. This requires a great deal of focus and consistency so as not to allow the long-term inhabitation of wildlife. With a temporary workforce, it is currently a challenge to maintain an adequate level of wildlife control. To reduce or hinder this component would place the flying public at risk. Each of these efforts requires significant administrative duties related to documentation and reporting which require additional time and training. The completion of these administrative duties is not feasible in the available hours to temporary employees.
6. The Agency has been extraordinarily fortunate to have found the temporary staff we currently have. All are either pilots, former air traffic controllers or have significant experience in Aeronautics. The Agency has an extremely low turnover rate with the Aviation Section. To find a replacement temporary employee with the skill set required, while complying with the new requirement to only work 24 hours per week, would be a huge challenge. This alone places our airports at risk of being closed. The FAA mandates that public airports remain open; the Agency has a duty to keep them open and functioning.
7. The Aviation Section has made significant progress in repairing our airports, keeping them safe and open, and decreasing operating expenses while increasing revenues. With the limitation of hours for the temps it is a significant challenge to keep the airports properly attended to. The unintended impact is a loss of revenue to the State when staff are not available to provide fuel, service customers who wish to rent tie-down and hanger space, and establish long-term leases with aviation-related businesses. The duties assigned to the temporary employees at the State airports are outlined in Attachment I.
8. Converting the current temporary employees to limited service employees will help VTrans to manage its current workload more efficiently and effectively at a lower cost than we would pay contractors. This is all about running a business cost effectively and optimizing the rate of return. It takes personnel to convert budgets into actions and projects. This is a business decision and the right business decision. Contractor oversight is costly and time consuming; the overhead to procure, execute, administer, issue work orders, process payments, validate work completed, and close out contracts

adds both time and money. The estimated cost to have contractors undertake the work of the 5 Limited Service Personnel is \$755,000. Additionally, the Limited Service Personnel would increase Resiliency in the Aviation workforce, making us ready to respond to crises for less cost, meeting FAA safety standards and without delaying planned projects.

### **Summary**

The level of investment in the State-owned airports is significant. With close to \$53,000,000 of Federal and State funding over the past few years, our airports are currently in a place where they not only meet the standards set forth by the FAA, but also are being utilized by scheduled airlines, charter services, air cargo and the general aviation community.

There are currently a total of 13 temporary employees working at State airports; depending on the season, these employees work between 10-40+ hours. The five temporary positions that we are requesting to convert to Limited Service Positions would cost the program approximately \$69,000, including benefits for a total of \$345,000 annually. If we were to hire private contractors to implement the duties which these positions undertake, it is estimated that the cost would be \$755,000; concerns regarding a private contractor's ability to properly administer all FAA requirements is also a major concern.

These five positions service our most productive airports including Morrisville-Stowe where newly launched scheduled air service is now provided through Tradewind Aviation. Service by Tradewind followed a \$27 million renovation of the airport; Tradewind's new route is the first and only direct flight to the Stowe area. The new route began in mid-December, with flights departing White Plains, NY on Friday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and returning from Stowe on Sundays at 3:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Even with a terrible ski season due to undesirable weather conditions, over 500 enplanements were logged with the new air service. The next stages of private investment at the Morrisville-Stowe airport include the development of a 33,000 sq. ft. aviation facility to include charter operations to anywhere in New England; full service Fixed Base Operator to receive inbound charter aircraft including deicing, catered food and rental cars; technologically advanced flight school; aircraft maintenance; and restaurant.

At Knapp Airport in Montpelier the current temporary employee serves as the Master Electrician for all State airports servicing hazard beacons, rotating beacons, obstruction lights, box signs, runway lights, taxiway lights, ramp lighting, fuel farm lights and hangar lights which exceeds 3,200 lights. Northeast Kingdom International Airport in Newport hosts the most runway in the state outside of Rutland and is expected to see increasing growth in the coming years to service Jay Peak and Burke Mountain resorts.

The State is currently paying the salaries of these part-time employees. The increase in labor costs of moving these employees to full-time limited service positions is minimal compared to the increase in use of the State-owned airports since 2011 and dwarfs in comparison to providing these services using contractors. The State airports serve not only the air traveling

Mr. Michael Clasen

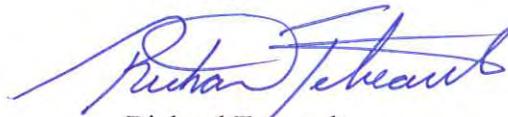
July 18, 2016

Page 7

public and businesses shipping by air cargo, they are also the home to a variety of businesses serving the economic interests of the state and contributing to the lease revenues generated at State airports. It is with the acknowledgement of these identified benefits that we request the approval to add five limited service employees to the Aviation Section of the Agency of Transportation.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this proposal in person, along with VTrans' Aviation Program Manager, Guy Rouelle. Please contact me to schedule an appointment or if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Richard Tetreault  
Deputy Secretary

Attachments (2)

cc: Chris Cole, Secretary  
Michele Boomhower, Division Director, Policy Planning and Intermodal Development  
Guy Rouelle, Aviation Program Manager

# Attachment 1

## Temporary Airport Operator/Maintenance Personnel

### Requirements

- Primary Knowledge and Indoctrination - Intensive one-year training program required
- Specialized Aviation background required (usually a pilot or Air Traffic Control background)
- Supervised on the Job Training and then Work is done independently
- Even with FBO on the airfield there is a full time need for this service
- Great deal of responsibility and decision making required to ensure the safety of the flying public and ground operations

### Duties

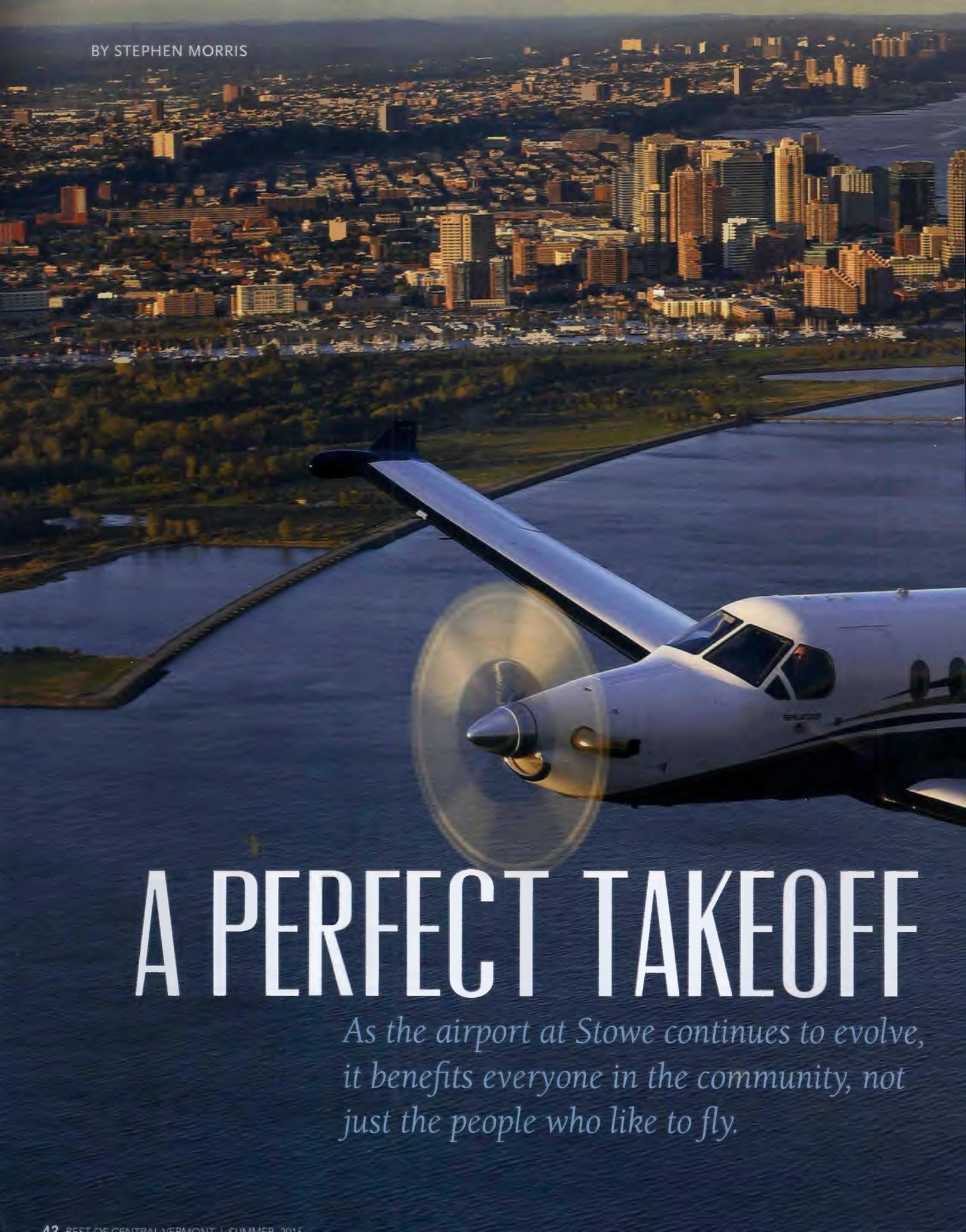
- Unique highly specialized skills required to perform this position
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Customer Service                             | Lighting and Navigation Aid Repair             |
| Sales  | Landscaping                                    |
| Fueling Assistance                           | Tree Cutting/ Brush Clearing                   |
| Marshalling                                  | Line Painting                                  |
| Preheating                                   | Crack Filling                                  |
| Aircraft Handling                            | Fence Repair                                   |
| Aircraft Towing                              | Clerical Work                                  |
| Baggage Handling                             | Event Coordination                             |
| Security and Surveillance                    | Weather Interpretation                         |
| Fuel Quality Inspections                     | Cleaning                                       |
| Aeronautical Communication                   | Computer Literacy                              |
| NOTAMS                                       | Light Carpentry                                |
| Snow Removal                                 | Inventory Control – Lighting/ Fuel/ Parts      |
| Snow and Ice Control                         | Vehicle Maintenance/ Tracking                  |
| Level of Service                             | Recordkeeping                                  |
| Emergency Reporting, Training and Responding | Snow and Ice Control Plan and Level of Service |
| Hazardous Material Handling                  | Wildlife                                       |
| FAA Airport Inspections                      | ○ Harassment                                   |
| Heavy Equipment Operations                   | ○ Mitigation                                   |
| Mowing                                       | ○ Depredation                                  |
| Airport Equipment Repair                     | ○ Record Management                            |

### Considerations

Depending on weather conditions employees work long hours, including weekend and holidays  
Employees call themselves out (available 24/7 during the winter months)

- Working in Inclement Weather
- No benefits
- No sick time
- No vacation time
- No job security or hope of advancement
- EAP not available to Temps

BY STEPHEN MORRIS

A twin-engine turboprop aircraft is shown in flight, viewed from a low angle from the side. The aircraft is white with dark accents on the wings and tail. The propeller is blurred, indicating motion. The background features a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, a large body of water, and a bridge. The lighting suggests a late afternoon or early morning setting, with a warm, golden glow.

# A PERFECT TAKEOFF

*As the airport at Stowe continues to evolve, it benefits everyone in the community, not just the people who like to fly.*



Stowe has long been one of America's premier ski resorts, but its economic development has always been hampered by logistical issues. There is no rail service and no direct highway access. It is a solid six-hour drive from downtown Manhattan. The nearest major airport is in Burlington, which is on the other side of Mt. Mansfield. And the road through Smuggler's Notch is closed for half the year, and it's the half when people ski.

As for the local airport, Morrisville-Stowe State Airport (FAA call sign MVL) used to be fairly rustic. Several years ago, the runway pavement had a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 19 out of 100, indicating an urgent need for rebuilding. The ramp was cracked with weeds growing through. The pavement actually required occasional mowing. There were also safety issues with trees blocking the approach paths and the navigational lighting systems that were inoperative or insufficient.

In short, people who wanted to fly to a place like Stowe did not want to fly into an airport like MVL. The airport needed a major overhaul. And the State of Vermont, which actually owns the airport, was unwilling to use public funds for both reconstruction of the airside and the landside of the airport.



Touching down at Stowe Aviation. Aviators and passengers alike enjoy the professional facilities and service.

The National Business Aircraft Trade Association highlights how critical a transportation hub can be to regional economic development. "In many instances, business aviation is the appropriate transportation solution, opening the door to global commerce for small-community and rural populations by linking them directly to population centers and manufacturing facilities." This was clearly the case in Stowe.

Enter attorney and entrepreneur Russell Barr, Managing Partner of Barr Law Group in Stowe, Vermont and NYC. Barr assembled a team from the Vermont Agency of Transportation led by Guy Rouelle, the Vermont Governor's office, the Federal Aviation Administration, and a group of talented aviation professionals from across the country.

What emerged was Stowe Aviation, a public/private partnership with the mission of rebuilding this extremely valuable but woefully outdated aviation center. Barr spearheaded an effort to raise \$22 million in private funds to start the ball rolling on an ambitious revitalization of the Morrisville/Stowe State Airport.

Phase one began in April 2014 and included a total reconstruction of the runway, taxiway, and apron. Crews removed trees to

clear the approach, and installed a new lighting system featuring a sophisticated Vertical Glide Slope indicator. Once this first phase was complete, Stowe Aviation assumed management of all airport operations.

The difference was dramatic and eye-opening. A major piece in the economic puzzle fell into place and this past December Tradewind Aviation (see "A New Approach to Private Aviation," on p. 50) began offering four scheduled flights a week between Stowe and White Plains, New York. Those flights, which use eight-seat turbo prop planes, are often full. They bring business travelers, vacation residents and tourists to the area. Suddenly, Stowe was no longer that hard-to-get-to resort.

In the aviation industry, says Russell, the more activity at an airport, the more money



they receive from both the Federal and State governments. Stowe Aviation at the Morrisville/Stowe State airport has done so well the federal and Vermont state governments have already allotted an additional \$8 million in additional funds for further airport improvements.

Vermont Public Radio covered the airport renaissance in a feature story, quoting the facility manager as saying, "The growth with just the first two phases demonstrates the pent up demand. This last winter, even with poor snow conditions, we saw as many as 54 passengers arriving at MVL in the Friday evenings. This is about ten times more than history has shown."

No one describes the MVL Airport as sleepy or decrepit any more. These days, Stowe Aviation is a full FBO (fixed base





Above: Flying with Stowe Aviation means flying in style. Bottom: Final approach on the newly constructed runway. Opposite from top: A Dassault Falcon 7X Lands at KMYL. Center: A welcome reception at Stowe Aviation. Bottom: Coming soon will be a state-of-the-art 32,000 square foot aviation facility.

operation) that sells jet fuel and Avgas for planes and has the best state airport “snow fighters” in the Northeast. Stowe Aviation also provides a range of related services, including de-icing, aircraft maintenance, aircraft charter, concierge services and ground transportation coordination.

“We have a great team of professionals with a dual laser focus on safety and customer service,” says Russell

The story is just beginning, though. The next development phases will include a new passenger terminal complete with a cafe, new and expanded aircraft hangers, a planned customs and immigration building to facilitate increased direct traffic from Canada, a flight training academy with a full-motion simulator, aircraft maintenance facility, aircraft management facility, retail

space, on-demand aircraft charter service and Stowe Aviation’s own airline. All these improvements will be serviced by advanced aircraft maintenance, upgrades, retrofits, and enhancement facilities bringing high paying aviation jobs to the doorstep of the community. Construction of the infrastructure is scheduled to begin this summer.

The beneficiaries extend beyond the flying public and to the non-flying sector. The Morrisville/Stowe State Airport is the true gateway to the region. Area businesses, surprisingly, are the largest single category of airport users, nearly 40 percent of the total. Second-home owners, skiers, and general tourists make up the balance of the traffic. They bring many out-of-the-area dollars to the shops, restaurants, and hostelrys of Stowe and add tremendous economic





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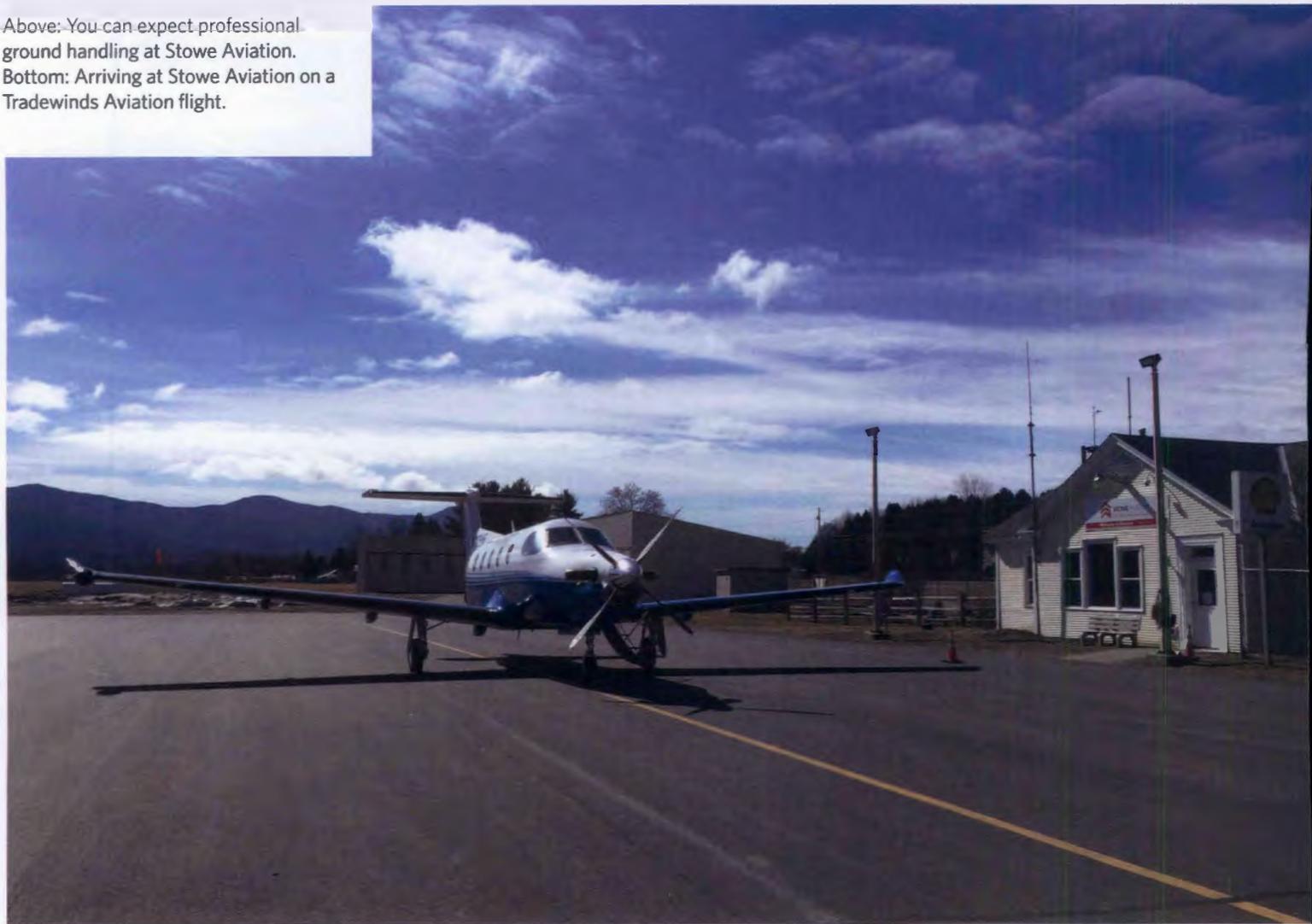
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Above: You can expect professional ground handling at Stowe Aviation.  
Bottom: Arriving at Stowe Aviation on a Tradewinds Aviation flight.





growth to the area. Stowe's competitors, such as Telluride, Jackson Hole and Aspen airports bring in as much as a billion dollars a year to their individual regions. As Russell says "if we can do ten percent of what these competitive airports do, this will be an economic grand slam for Morrisville, Stowe and the surrounding communities."

The pieces are in place to support continued development. "With the momentum and the demand, we foresee no major obstacles," says Russell. "We have all of our permits—state, federal and local. We have support from our host towns, Morrisville and Stowe, and support from the locals and businesses in the region. If we do well, the area does well, and if the area does well, we do well. A rising tide raises all boats."

These days, when the conversation turns to the airport at Stowe, you'll hear words like "gateway" and "economic engine." With more than 72 million people living within a ninety-minute flight of the resort, the potential for growth is unlimited. No one will have to worry about mowing the runway at the Morrisville-Stowe Airport again any time soon. ❁

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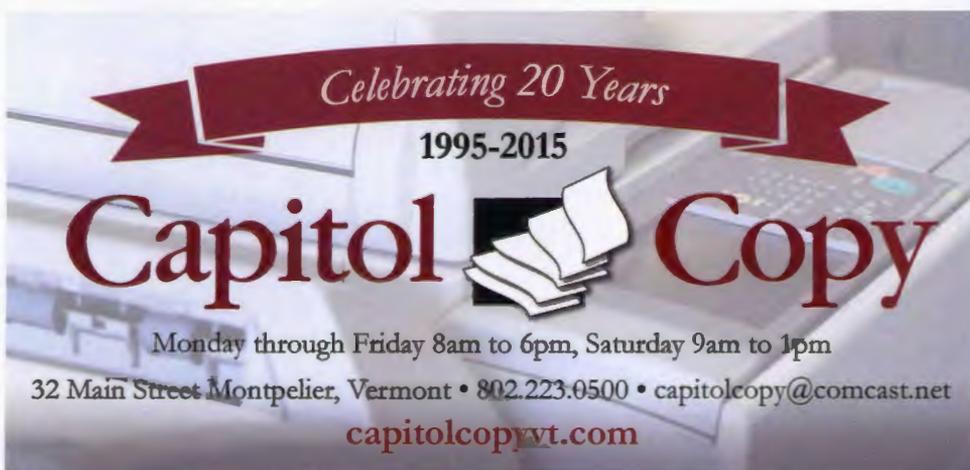
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Private aviation has only a single drawback—the cost. You'll need plenty of room on your credit card; or will you? Tradewind Aviation now has a solution and schedule that provides many of the conveniences and luxuries of private air travel at a fraction of the price. You no longer need to be a business tycoon, rock star, or member of a royal family to be treated like one.

Tradewind's shuttle service offers private aircraft convenience at single seat pricing on regularly scheduled flights between Stowe, Vermont and White Plains, NY (just outside the city). Second home owners and diehard skiers can now buy books of tickets based on a pricing schedule that offers significant discounts.

Unlike other airlines, tickets are interchangeable with family, friends, and colleagues. Itinerary changes are free, and the ticket value credit from cancellations and unused tickets do not expire. You can even bring your pet (limit one family of pets per flight).

Flights depart the Westchester County Airport (HPN) on Friday afternoons at 6:00 p.m. and from Stowe (MVL) on Sundays at 5:30 p.m. Passengers travel in style on a Swiss-built Pilatus PC-12 turbo-prop aircraft flown by two pilots with air-conditioning, a pressurized cabin and plenty of room for luggage. Comfort and safety are always the top priority on a Tradewind flight.

Tradewind Aviation was founded in 2001 by brothers Eric and David Zipkin, both experienced pilots with prior experience in the charter business. The company is headquartered in Oxford, CT, and has bases in Waterbury/Oxford, CT (OXC) and San Juan, PR (SJU). The company offers private charter and scheduled shuttle service throughout the Northeast and the Caribbean. ✨

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