

# THE WATCH

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# Keeping Our Skies Safe Every Day



National Air Traffic Controllers Association,  
AFL-CIO

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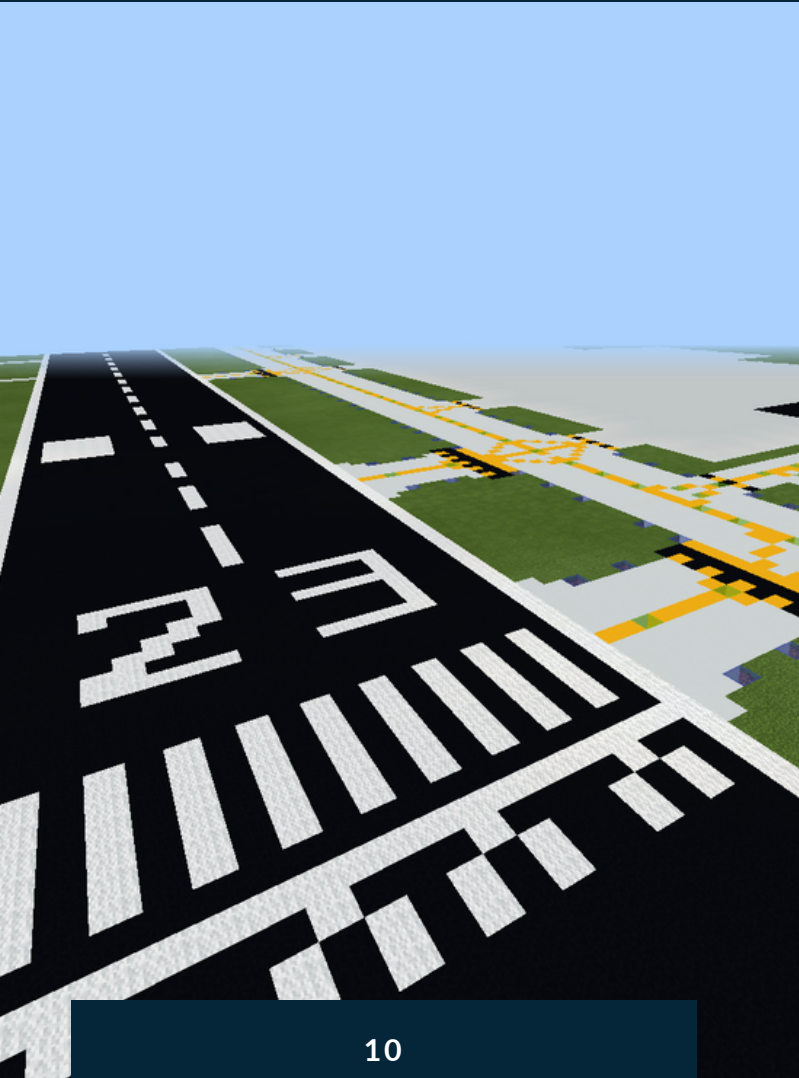
# THE WATCH

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# PWC

Professional Women Controllers, Inc.  
info.pwcinc@gmail.com | [www.pwcinc.org](http://www.pwcinc.org)

**PWC Purpose:** The purpose of Professional Women Controllers, Inc. (PWC) is to encourage women to enter the air traffic control profession; assist in professional and personal development; maintain accountability, responsibility, and professionalism; and promote a better understanding, cooperation and coordination among individuals toward the continual improvement of aviation safety.

**PWC Vision:** PWC's vision is to achieve a balanced workforce that reflects the demographics of society and creates a safe environment where all air traffic professionals have passion for their career, can excel, and feel a sense of community at work.

**PWC Mission:** PWC is a resource that provides support, training, encouragement, and camaraderie for all air traffic professionals. PWC advocates balancing work and family life, recruiting and retaining excellent employees, developing people, enjoying work, and maintaining a positive sense of community.

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# View from the Tower

By Jenn Dempster, Professional Women Controllers (PWC) President

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It is hard to believe that the holiday season is already upon us. I hope you all have the chance to enjoy a little bit of downtime with friends and family.

Speaking of holiday cheer, our friends from SkyOne are spreading the holiday cheer a little early. Sign up for a new checking account, and receive \$100 after your first Direct Deposit. Open a new primary savings account and receive \$100. Open an account for your kids and receive \$50.

Election season is open, and nominations are welcome for the following positions: Vice President, Director of Resources (Treasurer), New England, Northwest Mountain, Southern, Southwest, and Western-Pacific Regional Directors. Nominations are accepted via email to [pwinc.president@gmail.com](mailto:pwinc.president@gmail.com) until the close of business on February 15, 2024. Nomination forms can be found on the PWC website under the Board of Directors tab.

PWC Scholarship season is open, and application packages are available on the PWC website under the PWC Scholarship tab. Don't forget that election nominations and scholarship season are open. Nominations for elected positions and scholarship applications are both due by February 15, 2024. Information can be found on the website.

PWC has been very busy this fall season. We were able to represent at Communicating for Safety, Federal Aviation Administration Managers Association (FAAMA), Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA), along with the National Hispanic and Black Coalition conferences. We participated in multiple Girls In Aviation Day events, along with our continued support of the South Florida Aviators Fly-In and Educational Expo (SAFEE) event in South Florida. I cannot thank everyone enough who participated in these events. Our goal and mission is to spread the word of aviation opportunities to as many as we can, and your continued efforts are appreciated.

Finally, PWC will be hosting our 47th National Training Conference in beautiful Denver, Colorado. We are looking for some local support in the area to assist with planning. If you are interested but have questions about the commitment or requirements to this request, please reach out to me and I would be more than happy to let you know. We have a pretty good head start however having boots on the ground there would be a tremendous help.

Your PWC Board of Directors is wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. Please stay safe during this time.

*Jenn*

# EDITOR'S NOTE



¡Bienvenidos! Welcome!

The holidays are upon us and it is a wonderful time to reflect on people and things for which we are thankful. With that said, I wanted to take this moment to highlight the work of Co-Editor Laura Anderson. She has been working on The WATCH since I have: over two years ago! Laura is my go-to if I have a technical question and my second set of eyes. Laura has been a controller for 11 years working at Los Angeles ARTCC (ZLA). She has worked on the Metroplex (OAPM/ Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex) project in 2017 and is currently a Training Representative in her area. Laura is passionate about training and has taught recurrent and refresher training, instructed R-Side and D-Side training in the lab, and skill enhancement training. I am thankful to have Laura on the team and am proud to have met such a staunch and engaged person. Laura, thank you for your dedication to The WATCH, PWC and the FAA!

If you are interested in becoming a part of The WATCH team or would like to submit an article for the next issue, send it to [pwcinc.watch@gmail.org](mailto:pwcinc.watch@gmail.org).

*Alicia Barry Whitman*  
WATCH MANAGING EDITOR



## IN THIS ISSUE

As is customary with our membership, PWC takes part in many outreach opportunities. In this issue we will read about community involvement that our members have participated in. There is also more information regarding the PWC 2024 Conference in Louisville, KY.



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# NEW ARRIVALS



Welcome to the PWC family!

PWC membership benefits can be found at [pwcinc.org/membership](http://pwcinc.org/membership)

Please reach out to Tawni Pettigrove, PWC Membership Director at [pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com](mailto:pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com) with any questions regarding membership.

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# **PWC 46th Annual Training Conference**

**Run Your Own Race**

**April 10-13, 2024**

**Louisville, KY**

**Omni Hotel**

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# Lowdown on

## **Run Your Own Race**

The 2024 Conference is very excited to invite you to Louisville, KY! We are hoping to help you “Run Your Own Race” by highlighting all of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) branches, leadership in NATCA and options for a retirement career. We want to shed some light on mental health issues and its affects on our medical clearance. Our keynote speaker is a professional career and life coach. As always, you will learn more acronyms than you thought possible... and don't forget your dancing shoes!



# AIRPORT DESIGN CHALLENGE

By Alicia Barry Whitman, PWC  
Managing Editor

One of my favorite outreach experiences was when I was a mentor during the Fall 2020 Airport Design Challenge (ADC). The ADC is an interactive learning opportunity for children grades K-12, put on by the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Aviation and Space Education (STEM AVSED) Program. Students are provided with a FAA aerospace and engineering expert (e.g. air traffic controller) to mentor them throughout the process and given general guidance to design virtual airports in Microsoft Minecraft. It is an opportunity to not only apply their academic knowledge to a professional simulation, but also meet aviation professionals, engage with other students around the world, and learn about aviation and the aerospace industry.

One of the founders of the program, Blair Hess, said the initial intention in creating the ADC was to keep in touch with some students in the Dallas Metroplex during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hess had been on a detail to support the STEM AVSED program and faced the worldwide question, "What am I going to do with no kids in schools?" The idea for the ADC came from his own kids who enjoyed playing Minecraft and knew providing a self-paced learning opportunity that could be done at home was the only way forward. And what interests a majority of kids? Love them or hate them... screens. "Meeting them (kids) where they are (on screens) and breaking the traditional barriers to reach more students with less resources in a meaningful way" became the goal.

At its inception, Hess had no idea that this program would take off in the way it had. "Since its creation in 2020, the ADC has had over 7,000 students from 48 countries and six continents, including all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, such as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands," the FAA website cited. Hess says the ADC "taught us what we can do in a virtual sphere and gave us a template for other opportunities for kids."

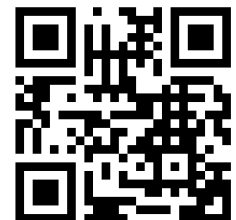
Earlier this year it was reported that more than 572 educators and 1,969 students from 33 different countries signed up to participate in the Challenge. Additionally, 400 public school educators are incorporating the Challenge into their curriculum.

Hess came from a low income background where opportunities were few and far between. The ADC "provides an opportunity to kids that may not have considered an interest in aviation in the past" and is an opportunity to give back to the community.

Child safety is very important in the program and requires adult supervision. Participants can sign up individually or as a team up to five people in grades K-12. The choice of airport is yours, though a local airport is encouraged for research purposes. The airport can be a primary or non-primary airport and ages are separated for K-6 and 7-12. Participants do not have to live in the United States to participate.

Speaking from my own experience of mentoring for the ADC, I found it to be extremely fulfilling. It rejuvenated my admiration for this career by seeing young children not only taking interest in what I do, but succeeding in a challenge that requires focus and determination. One of the teams I mentored, Team SoundPride, recreated Putnam County Regional Airport (Greencastle, IN) in the K-6 Non-Primary Airports category and won! Team SoundPride's final product blew my mind! Not only did they put together the runways with appropriate landscape, but they also put so much detail to the interior of the buildings that you would think you were actively playing a video game. If you are looking for a community engagement opportunity, I highly recommend the ADC. If you have kids or know of a class that wants a STEM project, this is a great one!

The 2024 season of Airport Design Challenge was launched on September 1, 2023 and will run through August 31, 2024. For more information to either participate as a contestant or a mentor visit <https://www.faa.gov/adc> or scan the code below:



Federal Aviation Administration. (n.d.). Airport Design Challenge. [www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/eps-17-4208-human-machine-teaming-systems-engineering-guide.pdf](https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/eps-17-4208-human-machine-teaming-systems-engineering-guide.pdf).



Aviation & Space Education

# AIRPORT DESIGN CHALLENGE

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# Improve Your Confidence and Marketability through Toastmasters

By Veneca Coulanges, PWC Southern Regional Director

**T**oastmasters is an international group focused on increasing its members' public speaking abilities and confidence. Toastmasters is organized into small supportive local clubs where members

prepare and deliver speeches, respond to impromptu questions, and give and receive constructive feedback. The group grew out of a single club at a YMCA in Santa Ana, California in 1924, to over 14,200 clubs worldwide today. They have empowered many to meet personal and professional communication goals and can do the same for you.

Effective communication is vital to the success in any career and is important for acquiring a new position. The impromptu speech practice helps with the thinking on your feet needed in the interview process. The give and receive feedback process helps with skills needed for supervisor and other management positions. Through regular practice, Toastmaster members learn how to articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively. These new communication skills are invaluable, enabling you to engage with colleagues and superiors with confidence.

Professional Women Controllers (PWC) offers an opportunity for its members to benefit from Toastmasters participation without joining a club. Periodically, a

workshop version of Toastmasters called "Speechcraft" is offered and hosted by PWC member Karrie Krear. The workshop teaches the fundamentals of public speaking in 4, 6, or 8 weeks and is led by club members. Speechcraft will go through writing a speech, organizing a speech, vocal variety, body gestures, powerful words, giving and receiving feedback, and impromptu speaking. Impromptu speaking will ask a question and then call on a speechcrafter to answer the question, just like an interview. Throughout Speechcraft, you will work with a mentor to craft your speeches and ask any questions. The mentor will stay with you throughout the program so they can help you progress.

Toastmasters can prove to be a transformative experience boosting your confidence and helping you to stand out and increase your career prospects. You can find and try out a local club near you using this website: <https://www.toastmasters.org/find-a-club> or you can join PWC's next Speechcraft workshop.



# Lowdown on

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# WOMEN OF THE COMMAND CENTER

## PART FOUR

By Alicia Barry Whitman, WATCH  
Managing Editor

## INSIDE THE SYSTEM

It has been over a year since we began taking a closer look at some of the positions inside the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC or Command Center). As a review, the ATCSCC's overall goal is to balance air traffic demand with system capacity; it identifies inefficiencies and collaboratively finds solutions with facilities and stakeholders. Constraints can be weather, emergencies, runway closures, and equipment outages. To mitigate impacts to the system, traffic management initiatives (TMIs) such as airborne metering, ground delay programs, ground stops, miles-in-trail, reroutes, and airspace flow programs are used. These TMIs are used to minimize delays and effectively manage the flow of air traffic.

In this series, we have reviewed some of the duties of Terminal and Severe Weather National Traffic Management Specialists (NTMS), National Traffic Management Officer (NTMO), Support Specialist, and Central Altitude Reservation Function (CARF).

We took a pause in this series last edition because SWAP (Severe Weather Avoidance Plan) season occupied everyone's free time to sit down for an interview. As we resume this series we will now discuss the National Operations Manager and Air Traffic Manager positions.

## NATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER (NOM)

The Command Center floor has multiple entities operating simultaneously and it is the NOM who oversees the operation. The NOM is the bridge between the stakeholders, programs, procedures to the operations. In January 2022,

Constance Mack stepped into this role and says that one must have strong fundamental knowledge of the National Airspace System (NAS), communications skills, ability to work as a leader, and maintain a cohesive team setting. Prior to becoming a NOM, Mack said she “had a strong background as an operational controller” but had an opportunity to gain “knowledge of other FAA organizations’ roll in maintaining one the safest airspace systems.” Mack says it was eye opening to “look behind and beyond the scope and see the hard work other FAA entities put in to keep the NAS moving.” Staying current with the technology being developed alone can be a fulltime job.

When asked what the biggest challenge of the position is Mack said one acronym comes to mind: “SWAP.” She goes on to say, “Sudden runway outages, growing arrival/departure delays, stakeholders or facilities with questions and requests, facilitating disagreements between parities with regards to what TMLs to issue are potential scenarios for one hour in any given day” in SWAP season. “Maintaining focus and prioritizing duties while not making anyone feel as though their needs are not important has been one of my biggest challenges,” Mack said. “This is an opportunity to prioritize what is most impactful to the NAS.”

## AIR TRAFFIC MANAGER (ATM)



Collaboration is an important skill that is valued throughout the FAA. The need and use of collaboration is at the forefront of the DCC ATM, Jeeva Vengal’s, mind. Vengal took over the role of ATM earlier this year and has

welcomed the opportunities the position has brought. “It is important to know how all organizations work together to function,” Vengal said when asked what skillsets are needed to be the ATM of the Command Center. “Having a large network helps when you need to lean into experts and ask for advice or assistance concerning specific areas of the NAS.”

Though every facility collaborates, the ATCSCC is the centralized component that brings it all together. In the one building there are multiple lines of business from air traffic and technical operations to safety and space. Additionally, stakeholders and contractors hold a place in the operation and the facility is co-located with Potomac TRACON. “A challenge that one can face when first entering the role is learning to balance the timing/transiting from strategic to tactical. There are a multitude of special events, VIP activity and constraints that require various phases of planning coordination and execution and it is important to be inclusive to create a

more holistic approach,” said Vengal.

A welcome opportunity has been working with the local National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA). Having an additional leader in the building has been beneficial to create the working environment that we want to be in together. ATCSCC is a great place to work and creates opportunities to share experiences and learn from others. When asked about wanting to work at the Command Center, Vengal suggests having a “strategic mindset and understanding on how each organization contributes to the FAA” will help you navigate your duties.

## SPOTLIGHT



Air Traffic Control can sometimes feel like a thankless job. There are times our peers have a fulfilling career and don’t get the accolades they deserve. Though she is thought of in high regard at the Command Center, I still wanted to showcase a few

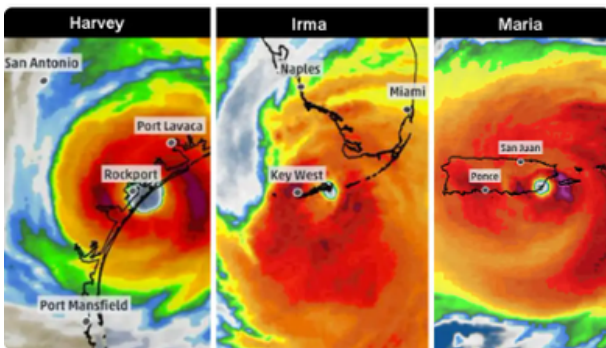
highlights of Jessica Strahley’s 22 year FAA career. Jessica started her FAA career at Kansas City ARTCC (ZKC) in 2001. “9/11 was my second day...a day I will never forget” Jessica said as she thought about the start of her career. After 12 years at ZKC (10 years as a controller and two years as a Traffic Management Coordinator (TMC)), Jessica became a National Traffic Management Specialist (NTMS) in Severe Weather (SVRWX) at the Command Center. “That’s right, I have survived 10 SWAP seasons.” If you work SWAP at your facility, you know it truly is a game of survival.

Without knowing the setup at CFS (Communicating for Safety) in 2019, Jessica was expecting to speak in an intimate setting of roughly 50 people or less. Imagine her surprise when she was put on the main stage in front of nearly 1,500 aviation professionals as part of a panel discussing weather impacts to safety only finding out the night before. Jessica says she is not comfortable being the center of attention, but if anyone knows her and her subject matter-expertise, she is exactly who you want front and center. “It was harrowing and exciting... I took a few deep breathes to calm my nerves,” Jessica recalls. The following year, March 2020, Jessica received the Systems Operations ABC Award for Communication

In 2021 and 2022, Jessica worked with Richard Kennington (NATCA Lead), Beth Bohnensteihl (Management Lead 2021), and Sarah Surline (Management lead 2022) to develop Traffic Management modules to be presented during Air Traffic Recurrent Training.

"I am very proud of my work as the DCC Space Operations Representative," Jessica said. Explaining further, she has worked closely with Space Operations, ARTCCs, and Severe Weather to develop processes and procedures to improve efficiency and safety of launches through more reliable and consistent TMIs for the last six years. "It has been an amazing opportunity to be actively involved with these launches. I'm very excited about the giant strides that have been made and the ones yet to come as we enter the Space Age."

Whenever a disaster strikes, you will always see Jessica stepping up to help where she can. "I am proud to have been a part of the amazing ATCSCC team that developed and implemented Traffic Management Initiatives for the 2014 ZAU fire, 2015 ZDC ERAM outage, 2017 Hurricane Season (Harvey, Irma, Maria), and 2020 COVID impacts," said Jessica.



Not everyone finds themselves in a job that they truly enjoy, but Jessica cannot decide which aspect she enjoys more, the work or the people! "The difference between a job and a career is that a job is something you do to collect a paycheck; a career allots you the privilege of doing something you enjoy, something you are passionate about, and you get paid for it! So, why do I love my career at ATCSCC? It's a tie between the work and the people!" she said.

The work is fast paced and challenging! We are constantly evaluating volume and complexity concerns caused by constraints in the NAS (from thunderstorms to hurricanes, volcanic activity to wildfires, military missions to rocket launches, facility limitations to equipment outages). This is not limited to US facilities but also includes international impacts that affect our traffic flows. The NAS is comprised of a lot of moving parts that all have to be working together to be successful. What we (controllers, TMCs, ATCSCC) do every day to ensure a safe and efficient day in the NAS is nothing short of incredible!

As for the people, I have had the honor to work with some of the finest people I have ever known. We are in the trenches together, we rely on each other, we support each other, we are family. They are absolutely amazing, and I appreciate every one of them. The ATCSCC truly is one team working together to achieve a common goal.

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# PWC IN PSP: A PERFECT COLLABORATION

**By Sandy Holcomb, Western Pacific Regional Director**

Theresa Parker, our very own PWC Northwest Mountain Regional Director, had an idea. A big and awesome idea! As accomplished pilots, she and her husband have a connection to the outstanding Palm Springs Air Museum, which became the inspiration for this idea. Theresa wanted to produce the first ever PWC Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) event for middle and high school kids to learn about air traffic control. There are STEM events that PWC has been a part of in the past, but this is the first event to focus specifically on air traffic control and put together by PWC.

When she asked me if I wanted to collaborate, I was thrilled. As the Western Pacific Regional Director (WPRD), I couldn't have been more excited to have this kind of event in my district! We got to work on the long, and it was long, list of logistics.

Theresa reached out to the Palm Springs Air Museum and was put in touch with Maria Wren, while I reached out to the Palm Springs Air Traffic Manager (ATM), Christopher Robinson.

It all started with the Palm Springs Air Museum; they were enthusiastically supportive, which was the first hurdle. The second hurdle was easy, since Christopher fully supported the idea of having a control tower tour before the museum guided visit.

We flew to Palm Springs (PSP) ahead of time to set everything up and meet with the many other people that helped make this a reality.

PSP controllers, Shyan, Brianna and Taylor came out to chat about our plans at the fabulous PS Air restaurant. Retired Hayward Executive Airport ATCT (HWD)/Oakland ATCT (OAK) ATM, John Burger also made it out to visit with us. PS Air is a fun place to visit if you are in the area. It is owned by a former flight attendant and his vision is very well done. The seats move back and have seatbelts like in a real cabin. The servers were



dressed as pilots and the mocktails had ice shaped like airplanes. This was the kickoff for the big day ahead.

Of the 30 kids registered, we had 26 show up to PSP Signature Aviation fixed based operator (FBO). It just so happened that the Young Eagles were also using Signature as a base for taking kids up to fly, which made for a lot of kids running around. Thankfully, all of us had PWC badges and identifying FAA lanyards, so we were able to walk them across the tarmac for the tower tour. The kids were divided into three groups that rotated through three sessions. I handed out PWC Swag bags and went over the phonetic alphabet, the kids all learned what their ATC initials were. It was sweet to hear them use their initials throughout the day. Theresa went over ATC sectional maps while Shyan and Brianna conducted the tower and catwalk tour.

After the tower we were given a water show from the Palm Springs Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) unit when they sprayed water and showed us the nozzle!



From there we went to the Palm Springs Air Museum (PSAM) for a little classroom overview of ATC.

We had interactive discussions about separation rules, the different types of air traffic control jobs, flight progress strips, as well as the requirements for being a controller. The PSAM graciously supplied a delicious lunch for everyone and we ate under the wings of the B-17 bomber Miss Angela.



The kids got to try their hand at multitasking with a fun tennis ball exercise. They started with one ball and worked up to several balls in the air. This was a highlight for the kids as they all had a great time with this.



The culmination of the STEM was the museum tour led by Maria. The museum, in my opinion, rivals the Smithsonian in the respect that it is very hands on and interactive. The kids (and adults) really enjoyed sitting in replica fighter jet cockpits and being up close and personal with amazingly restored vintage aircraft.



This innovative event was so well received. The PSAM, the kids, parents everyone at PSP tower all were so helpful in ensuring the logistics, timing and content were in place for this to be successful. We had a great time and so did the kids. Having partnered with the prestigious Palm Spring Air Museum gave us this opportunity to teach and share about air traffic control in a fun and engaging way.



Many kudos to Theresa Parker for her leadership and dedication in making this STEM possible. The success of the event was a huge hit, with even the former mayor of Palm Springs taking to social media to praise it. The credit for this success goes to our amazing team, Shyan and Brianna, who left no stone unturned to make the tower tour and coordination with Signature FBO was a seamless experience for our guests. The Palm Springs ARFF unit gave the attendees a thrilling tour of their fire trucks and an incredible spray show. The icing on the cake was the visit to the Palm Springs Air Museum, which left everyone in awe. If you haven't been there yet, it's a must-visit. We are grateful to Chris Robinson, ATM at PSP, Fred and Maria at PSAM, all the PSP firemen, and Signature Aviation for their support in making this a great success. This was just the first of many more such events that we hope to host in the future.



# The Day-After Simulator

## Your Fire Drill for that fateful day

By Dennis Edmonds, ChFEBC<sup>SM</sup>, President, Federal Benefits Information Center, [Dennis@FederalBenefitsInfo.com](mailto:Dennis@FederalBenefitsInfo.com)

Do you remember those fire drills we used to do in elementary school? Drop your math workbook and go outside and gather by class on the playground or parking lot. Stay outside until the principal gives the all clear. We did these fire drills, of course, because in the event of a real fire there is a lot at stake and a severe risk to all of those involved.

In the Air Force, new pilots learn not only how to fly sophisticated aircraft, but they learn how to use them most effectively against an opposing force and under critical circumstances. As they learn and discover shortcomings, nobody gets hurt and nothing is destroyed, except perhaps their confidence from time to time. But that sure beats getting blown out of the sky or crashing from a malfunction!

In life planning, there are also opposing forces and critical circumstances. Why not work in a simulator like fighter pilots? Why not keep the potential danger, damage, and crisis of confidence to a minimum? How organized are you (and your family), and what level of preparedness have you achieved in life planning and retirement planning? Have you received your CABS (Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary) Report this year that shows you where you are and where you are headed?

### Here is what The Day-After Simulator looks like:

Are you ready for your fire drill? Here is how it works. You and your spouse/significant other must both participate in the simulator. It is essential that your survivors know what you want. There are three indisputable facts about a loved one dying that are almost always true. They are:

1. Most deaths do not include time to contemplate (and plan for) the future first. No invitation.
2. It just happens and never at a good time; and,
3. No matter how long you think you knew it was going to happen, you are still going to be shocked and surprised when it happens.

*"Nancy, I am very, very sorry for your loss. John was a great guy and I know he loved you very much. Based on my conversations with him, I think he at least left you in a fair financial position, even though it was irresponsible for him to sky dive from the Eiffel Tower and get himself killed."*

### On with the simulator...

There are a series of questions for the spouse (or partner) and you ask them one at a time. This is real life, and you don't give out grades. The consequences of not being prepared could be as simple as your funeral not happening as you picture it, or as dire as not leaving your family financially stable. The purpose is to discover the holes in your planning and fix them immediately. As questions are not answered properly or with uncertainty, make a note to fix it. The questions are asked by one spouse to the other. When the list is completed, reverse roles and the other spouse should ask the questions of the other. Here is your list:

1. Do you know where the insurance policies are located? (A safe deposit box is not the best place to keep them since it may be hard to get to.)
2. Have you discussed who the financial advisor should be that will help you with the lump sum distribution from the insurance company? (Your Federal Benefits Educator may be a good candidate for this)
3. Do you know all your advisors and how to locate them – including auto, homeowners, life, health, Federal Benefits Educator, etc. (There may be liability or other issues to deal with and you will at least have to remove names from policies.)

4. Do you know where you can find the Last Will? (Again, the safe deposit box may not be the best place.)
5. Did he/she ever mention anything about an Ethical Will? (This is a highly meaningful letter left behind that expresses one's feelings and aspirations for others. It may also include funeral and business directions. While it is not a legal document, its guidance can be invaluable.)
6. Which accountant will be assisting you in filing the IRS form 706 – The Estate Settlement form? (This also is an opportunity to consider estate settlement issues.)
7. Do you know which attorney to ask to assist you through this process? (You should have an attorney in advance to deal with these issues.)
8. Do you know all the people he/she would like to be notified of his/her death?
9. Where did he/she want to be buried - or cremated? (This is a sensitive topic that is a discussion you should have soon.)
10. Did he/she want someone in particular to speak or not speak at the funeral? (This question can be addressed in an Ethical Will.)
11. Do you know of any other specific requests regarding the funeral service? (This question can be addressed in an Ethical Will.)
12. Do you know if any past employers or businesses continued life insurance benefits? (A small percentage of employers fail to remove participants from group life plans after their separation from service.)
13. Was there any credit life protection on his/her credit cards, mortgage, car loans or any other debt? (Take advantage of all benefits available.)
14. Where can you find all the outstanding bills, accounts, and contracts? (Name and title changes and transfers – not to mention tax ramifications.)
15. Where is the information about retirement accounts, IRAs, TSP, FERS Pension, stocks, annuities, and any other investments? (Same as above: titles, taxes, ownership, etc.)
16. Do you have a copy of their last CABS (Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary) report, so you know about the benefits to which you are entitled?
17. If death occurs during employment, are there any additional benefits available like Workers Compensation, Accidental Death, Common Carrier Death, benefits from the travel agency? (This might even include refundable outstanding travel vouchers – like unused purchased tickets.)
18. Finally, if you had the opportunity to spend one more day with this special person, knowing it was the last day together, what would it look like? (Opportunities abound.)

Following this exercise, your first task should be to organize your information by reviewing your current CABS report designed for federal employees. Know where you are and where you are headed, as well as how well you have prepared for your family. Just call 800-916-6115 or visit [www.FederalBenefitsInfo.com](http://www.FederalBenefitsInfo.com) to request your updated report or more information about the simulator. You have more influence over your outcome than you probably think. Take control and be sure your career, retirement, and life unfold as you picture it.



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# National Airspace System Safety Review Team

## Report Summary

### By Vanessa Shiners, PWC Vice President

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently submitted the National Airspace System (NAS) Safety Review Team (SRT) final report as a response to high-risk safety events that occurred in the beginning of 2023. The report focused on 4 main categories:

1. **Process Integrity** - Strengthening FAA organizational structures specifically Air Traffic Safety Oversight (AOV), institutionalizing roles and responsibilities, and advancing a proactive, data-driven safety culture.
2. **Staffing** - Accurately projecting and investing in hiring, training, and certification of the workforce. In August 2023, there were 1,002 fewer certified controllers in the NAS than in August 2012. The FAA has made limited efforts to ensure adequate air traffic controller staffing at critical air traffic control facilities. The agreement on hiring is aligned primarily on FAA Academy throughput versus the actual needs of the system. Only hiring 1,500 air traffic trainees in 2023 and 1,800 in 2024, as intended in the annual Controller Workforce Plan provided to Congress, does not adequately satisfy system needs regarding complexity, growth, and trajectory. The FAA Academy is a bottleneck, which hinders the ATO's ability to provide a sufficient pool of candidates into the pipeline to become air traffic controllers. The ATO must determine staffing needs based on actual system needs rather than on Academy throughput and budgetary constraints and take urgent action to address this crisis.
3. **Facilities, Equipment, and Technology** - Sustaining and modernizing NAS infrastructure and investing in technology to maximize safety and efficiency. The agency needs to be adequately funded to reduce risk in the NAS.
4. **Funding** - Adequately and consistently funding and authorizing the FAA to facilitate the provision and safety oversight of 24/7, 365 days/year operations. System efficiency is suffering and funding challenges are eroding the margin of safety and increasing risk in the NAS, which is unsustainable over the long-term. The SRT urges Congress to complete work to reauthorize the FAA and to ensure long-term authorizations are completed in a timely manner in the future.

"The NAS is complex, and as defined by ICAO, safety depends on the management of risk. A healthy, sustainable NAS must be fully funded, staffed, and equipped with the proper processes, infrastructure, and technologies.

Generally, the ATO employs robust policies, procedures, and programs to manage safety risk and enjoys a just safety culture. However, the FAA continues to be asked to do more with less in an already strained system, and the series of serious incidents in early 2023 illuminate significant challenges to the provision and safety oversight of air traffic services. These challenges, in the areas of process integrity, staffing, and facilities, equipment, and technology, all have ties to inadequate, inconsistent funding.

NAS safety is a shared responsibility. While there are no easy, short-term fixes to the challenges in the system, addressing risk in the NAS requires urgent action by all stakeholders. The FAA must work collaboratively with policymakers and industry to immediately begin:

- Strengthening FAA organizational structures, institutionalizing roles and responsibilities, and advancing a proactive, data-driven safety culture
- Accurately projecting and investing in hiring, training, and certification of the workforce.
- Sustaining and modernizing NAS infrastructure and investing in technology to maximize safety and efficiency.
- Adequately and consistently funding and authorizing the FAA to facilitate the provision and safety oversight of 24/7, 365 days/year operations.

Implementing these recommendations will ensure a healthy, sustainable NAS and enable delivery of the level of safety that the flying public deserves and has come to expect from the U.S. aviation system."

(NAS SRT submitted to FAA November 2023)



valuable partner, ensuring the skies remain safe and flights stay on track:

### 1. Safety Enhancements:

AI methods can assist in identifying of real-time potential safety risks. In Switzerland, the Swiss Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) Sky Guide developed an AI tool that enhances conflict probing and offers resolution suggestions between enroute aircraft, providing timely separation options to controllers based on historical actions.

### 2. Improved Communication:

AI methods can enhance communication between pilots and controllers. In Australia, a lab research project proposed the leveraging of speech recognition and natural language processing tools to enable more precise and faster responses in pilot-controller communications. Coupling noise reduction with a speech-to-text feature, such a method could reduce the chances of miscommunication.

### 3. Predictive Analytics:

AI methods show promise in predicting when and where surface or enroute congestion might occur. In the United States, a research surface congestion prediction prototype ingested thousands of surface congestion images and correlated them with past weather and traffic data. The model then tried to predict when an airport might encounter departure delays or gridlock from real-time data.

### 4. Data Analysis:

Because AI methods can process vast amounts of data quickly and accurately, new tools may rapidly analyze weather conditions, flight tracks, and historical system performance to identify potential efficiencies or systemic risks. Such tools are most likely to see initial validation in a quality control, post-operational environment versus real time situations.

## Benefits of AI in ATC

The integration of AI methods offers several advantages:

- 1. Increased Safety:** Reducing human errors, improving safety and reducing the risk of accidents.
- 2. Efficiency:** Streamlining operations, reducing delays and making air travel more punctual.
- 3. Enhanced Capacity:** Allowing timelier and more effective airspace and airport utilization.
- 4. Cost Savings:** By optimizing routes and fuel consumption, cost savings for airlines and airports are possible.

## Framework Considerations

As AI-ATC research develops, there are two critical element that must be included at each and every development stage. The first element is the human factor. Human-machine teaming is the field of study devoted to the engineering of future automation to assist human operators without disrupting or adversely changing their workflow.

Within this paradigm, the full expectation is for the human to have the final say in all aspects of actual decision-making. In

many cases, the human operator will have access to information that an AI method simply cannot compute.

Human-machine teaming is critical to build confidence and trust in the information that AI methods provide. All AI methods should be built upon clean, pertinent, and relevant data that deliver useful outputs. "Black box" methods are likely to be mistrusted, or even ignored.

A second general need is an AI-ATC framework that will inform and guide the development and use of AI methods. On October 30, 2023, President Biden issued an Executive Order on the Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence. The executive order provides broad, government-wide guidance regarding design, privacy, and development of AI methods affecting the workforce and public. A common framework for AI-ATC at the early stages can provide important safeguards of users and pathways for enterprise success. The keyword in all aspects is transparency.

## Conclusion

Air traffic controllers and managers will ever remain directly responsible for the safe, orderly, and expeditious movement of aircraft at airports and in the skies. As air travel continues to evolve, the implementation of AI methods can support as a valuable partner, ensuring our skies remain safe and our flights stay on track.

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# Longevity Risk for Women in Aviation

By John F. Ripley, Certified Financial Fiduciary® (CFF), CLTC®, FRC<sup>SM</sup>, ChFEBC<sup>SM</sup>, Investment Advisor Representative at Smarter Retirement Solutions

What do you see as you look into the rear-view mirror of your life today? Hopefully, the reflection contains beautiful images of friends, family, loved ones, and coworkers smiling at your successes and cheering you on to greater heights in the future. If you tilt the mirror slightly to the left, can you see as far back as 2000 or 2008? Those days were rough for all of us, and the C Fund and S Fund in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) took it on the chin, and the recovery was years in the making. If you are younger, twist the mirror in the other direction. I am confident you will see the headlines from the nightly news sharing the financial devastation of the early months of the COVID-19 crisis and the tremendous uncertainty of the global economy. We had a “V-shaped recovery,” which was an enormous blessing but not the ordinarily slow and painful market recovery most people endure.

As I type these words just before Thanksgiving 2023, the Middle East is embroiled in a war that has the potential to expand globally. Ukraine and Russia remain mired in conflict with no end in sight. Great Britain, Europe, and China are



struggling with waning consumer sentiment and inflationary pressures hinting at future recessions in those economies.

Why am I asking you to look in the rear-view mirror? Hindsight is always crystal clear, while the road ahead is rarely as easy to understand and anticipate as we hope. Your future self will look back years from now and see many things you likely could have never imagined. I trust many, if not most, of these experiences will fill your life with joy. However, I am confident that as a resident of planet earth living in a fragile human body,

some seasons of life will also contain challenges. And, as a woman, you are likely to outlive your male friends and family **members by at least six years**, according to a study by Dr. Brandon W. Yan MD, MPH, published in the JAMA Internal Medicine November 2023 edition.

So, what challenges will women who live longer face? Statistically, you will experience a Bear Market in the economy every 5.1 years. That means, when you are younger, you can “buy TSP C Fund shares on sale” during downcycles in the market and enjoy expanding your overall net worth when markets recover. These market phenomena will create undesirable outcomes if you are closer to retirement or already in retirement.

For instance, if your TSP account drops by 25%, you will need a 33% return to restore its original account value. Like most retirees, you probably plan to use some of your TSP to fill the gap between your FERS Annuity and your monthly spending. This access to your TSP during down markets creates what economists call a “Withdrawal Rate Risk.” By taking funds from your retirement nest egg during a period of negative returns, you’re taking a more significant percentage of those funds than you realize, exacerbating the mathematical pressure on your account.

Consider an employee who has \$100,000 in her TSP. A \$3,000 annual withdrawal (3% withdrawal rate) might be sustainable for long periods. However, that account may lose value and not contain \$100,000 during the Bear Market, but rather \$75,000. In that situation, a \$3,000 withdrawal creates a 4% withdrawal rate, and the remaining \$72,000 TSP balance needs a nearly 39% recovery instead of just a 33% recovery to get back to the \$100,000 mark. Keep that up year after year during a Bear Market, and you can see that a full recovery comes slowly, if at all!

Regarding healthcare inflation, a woman with the blessing of longevity will pay for primary healthcare for many more years (six, according to Dr. Yan’s study) than men. As you have likely heard, the FEHB premium increase for 2024 is 7.7%, while the FERS Retiree COLA will only be 2.2%. If a retiree uses their TSP to make up the difference in the cost of healthcare, imagine the extensive damage that can occur during long periods.

LongTermCare.Gov reports that a person turning 65 today has a 70% chance of needing Long Term Care in the future. In comparison, only 11% of this group of people have taken any steps to develop a plan for their later years, and women currently experiencing an extended care event need that care



for seventeen months longer than men. In 2023, costs for this service vary wildly across America. A private room in Missouri costs \$6,292 per month, while the same one in Alaska costs \$33,431. At either end of the pricing spectrum, seventeen extra months is an unfathomable sum to pay for most people. The FLTCIP (Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program) remains closed to new applications, and current enrollees who are part of the 1.0 and 2.0 versions received notice this past September of a 90% cost increase rolling out at 30% per year over the next three years. For those who have not made provisions for the 70% likelihood of a future care event, please consider doing so immediately. Without a plan in place (and the options at your disposal are numerous outside of the FLTCIP), your TSP, the equity in your home, or other financial resources will be first in line to solve this fiscal crisis and limit your ability to use those funds for any other purpose such as spousal income, family enjoyment or legacy objectives.

The women in my family fall on both sides of the longevity equation. Sadly, my mom passed away shortly after her 67th birthday, while my grandmother lived until the age of 99, and her sister is still rocking out at 101 years old! For those centenarians in my family, the fiscal saving grace was the predictable, reliable, and sustainable lifetime income provided by their military and federal pensions. As a woman in federal service, you are poised to enjoy the blessing of lifetime income. Be careful, however, not to assume that your FERS Annuity and TSP are superheroes incapable of failure. Inflation and longevity are risk multipliers; you need a plan to stay well insulated from harmful effects.

Our team is at your service to develop a comprehensive Retirement Action Plan to mitigate these and many other risks unique to women preparing for or in retirement.

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*John Ripley is an Investment Adviser Representative at Smarter Retirement Solutions and a national seminar speaker who teaches federal employees to maximize their federal benefits. He is a Certified Financial Fiduciary® (CFF), a Federal Retirement Consultant FRC<sup>SM</sup>, a Chartered Federal Benefits Consultant ChFEBC<sup>SM</sup>, and certified in Long Term Care Solutions CLTC®.*





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**The Jacqueline Smith Burdette Scholarship:** PWC co-founder Jacqueline Smith Burdette created an annually funded scholarship to encourage those planning careers in aviation, or to advance their career in aviation. Pre-requisites include enrollment in an accredited college or technical school, in an aviation-related program and intention to pursue an aviation related career. PWC membership not required.

**The Sue Townsend Scholarship:** This scholarship encourages women who are active FAA air traffic controllers or operational supervisors to advance their aviation career. Pre-requisites include enrollment in an accredited college or technical school, in an aviation-related program. PWC membership not required.

**The Margaret Hoffman Scholarship:** This scholarship is for women in the FAA who are active air traffic controllers. This scholarship can be used for any course of study, either to advance an ATC career or prepare the recipient for a second career. Staff, supervision, and management are ineligible.

Go to <https://www.pwcinc.org/scholarship> for more information!

# HOW TO PLAN A STEM EVENT

By Theresa Parker, ANM Regional Director

Have you ever read a children's book, and months later realized the book actually came true? The book for me was "What Do You Do With An Idea," by Kobe Yamaha. It tells the story of a little boy who has an idea, it follows him around, and wants a lot of attention. He is scared to tell people about his idea because they could laugh or think it was silly, but he doesn't give up on his idea. He sticks with his idea and it grew and grew until finally it took flight and changed the world.

How did the story I read to my kids at bedtime come true? You can read about that in Sandy Holcombs Article "PWC in PSP" on page 17. How do YOU plan a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) ADVSED (aviation and space education) event? Well, it all starts with an idea!

This article provides some steps to formulate your idea for an event and watch it grow. You never know whose life you can change in just a few hours.



## STEP 1

If you are an FAA employee, complete the STEM AVSED eLMS training and be an approved outreach representative. If you are not an FAA employee, move onto Step 2.

## STEP 2

Have an idea? Share it with others and watch it grow. Who should you share it with? Each region has a STEM AVSED program analyst. Another option, is an employee association or union. Even just a group of professionals in your company or facility.

## STEP 3

Decide where you will host the event. Will there be a tour? Classroom learning? Is one space enough? Can it be outside? Is there cover? The season may impact you depending on the area you live in. An event can even be held online.

## STEP 4

Who will come? Elementary, middle, high school, college aged-kids, or is it open to all in the community? We wanted to have an event for older students, but maybe your idea is geared towards younger kids.

## STEP 5

Plan your day. Will you have a tour? Speakers? Educational session? Will there be meals provided?

- Tours in FAA facilities need to be pre-coordinated with Air Traffic Managers.
- Speakers can be expensive.
- Is there a lesson plan for what you want to teach?

## STEP 6

What is the budget? Are sponsors available? Who will cover cost?

## STEP 7

Advertise your event! Promote it via school e-flyers and social media.

## STEP 8

Share your idea with your manager then add your event to the Community Engagement Activity Tracking System (CEATS). This is where you can request swag and manpower requests if you're in the FAA. If you are not in the FAA, summarize your work for your company or team.

## STEP 9

Start, Stop, Continue: After the event, evaluate. Each event will have different issues come up. No one wants to invent the wheel. Share what worked and what did not with others.

ANYONE can have an idea and share their knowledge with others.

Professional Women Controllers is working to Engage, Excel and Evolve, not just our members, but the people who will follow in our footsteps.

If you would like to have a copy of the lesson plans, activities, or slide deck from our presentation at our recent STEM event, please reach out: [PWCINC.ANM@gmail.com](mailto:PWCINC.ANM@gmail.com)

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# Air Traffic Controller Experience Makes TEAM Work

By Rachel Parramore, Great Lakes Regional Director

**TEAM—the smoothly integrated, modern, unified data and recordkeeping platform—benefits from ATC input and experience.**

The modernization of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic controller training records from paper to the cloud is nearly complete—providing timely, accurate, and complete hire-to-retire record-keeping in a single system.

Training controllers is a critical task for the FAA because there is zero margin for error in operational air traffic control. Keeping track of when training is completed successfully—along with continued demonstration of proficiency—is vital for keeping the US Air Traffic Control (ATC) system functioning safely and efficiently.

## Training Enterprise Applications Management (TEAM)

Volanno's Training Enterprise Applications Management (TEAM) data processing platform consolidates 14 legacy electronic systems that followed no standardized architecture. TEAM is a smoothly integrated, modern, unified data and record-keeping platform.

This system, housed in FAA's cloud services, will be deployed throughout the FAA's technical training management organization, and may be accessed by other FAA data programs. The software will be used by 14,000 people at the FAA.

TEAM is now in use at 304 out of 314 FAA Air Traffic Control (ATC) facilities including Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCCs), Airport Traffic Control Towers (ATCTs), and Terminal Radar Approach Control Facilities (TRACONs).

Controller training was completed between July 2022 and April 2023, while administrative units in the field are now being briefed on program maintenance.

TEAM users are submitting enhancement requests to serve local needs, with each request being evaluated by the FAA, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), and the Volanno development team.

TEAM's success is a tale of collaboration. The FAA, NATCA, local facilities, and Volanno's software development team met frequently to ensure the features and enhancements needed for nationwide deployment were in place.

## Andrea White Informs the Volanno TEAM

Andrea White, a training specialist at Volanno, played a key role in working with FAA users of the system. She joined Volanno following a career as an FAA air traffic controller and remembers all too well how tracking training accomplishments used to happen in slow motion.

After she retired as an FAA air traffic controller, White worked as a

contract ATC training specialist in Arkansas for five years. According to White:

*"There was tons and tons of paperwork. Everything went into a pumpkin-colored jacket, an iconic type of standard folder with paper training records for each controller. The FAA has been using this type of folder for nearly 50 years.*

*I had to enter the same training report data into several computer programs, and it took literally half of my day. This is what it took to communicate with everyone in the FAA who wanted to know what was happening in training.*

*With the new TEAM system, the same tasks take 45 minutes, leaving more than three hours to do other things such as developing courseware for training classes."*

For example, once White wrote a training evaluation for an OJTI session, she had to enter it into three different electronic systems and save the paperwork for a year. Now such tasks are complete at the touch of a button with the report circulating immediately to everyone who needs to see it.

## Essential TEAM Training Creates Consistency

White says undergoing controller training is not easy—plus, change is hard and needs to be managed effectively. In recent months, she has been conducting countless video conferences to teach FAA field personnel how to use TEAM.

As Scott D. Brown, FAA Policy and Requirements TEAM Manager (AJI-2410), explains:

*"TEAM will create consistency throughout every facility as to how training is documented. We have worked to make sure this updated version of TEAM aligns and is compliant with the new Air Traffic Technical Training Order, JO 3120.4R.*

*While every facility uses the same training form, each facility may address those requirements a bit differently. With TEAM, we can improve the process for trainees and certified professional controllers in training."*

## Agile Scrum Methodology—Key to Efficiency

One key to the efficient development of software to handle all the complexity of FAA training requirements and reporting was the use of Agile Scrum methodology. Volanno instituted Agile techniques to improve communications on a development team and bring clarity to goals, tasks at hand, and to acceptance criteria. Mistakes, when they happen, are corrected quickly with open lines of communication.

TEAM is supporting the NAS as an info centric air traffic system for the near term—and for decades to come!

# Federal Employee Protections: Unions vs. FEPLI

By Starr Wright USA

## 5 Things to Know About FEPLI and Unions

There are several major differences between labor unions and FEPLI. Understanding them can help you to effectively protect your career and take advantage of the benefits available to you.

### 1. Unions work for the benefit of the group.

Labor unions focus on issues that affect all employees. They advocate for big-picture things that will help all their members, and they watch to ensure that agreements they bargained for are respected. The minimum wage, overtime, unemployment compensation, and much more were enacted thanks to the negotiations of labor unions. These are broad concepts that came about because of – and affected the lives of – countless American workers.

Unions naturally encourage membership, and members do receive heightened benefits. Still, non-members cannot be excluded from the positive outcomes of union bargaining. If you choose not to be an official member, you're still entitled to representation.

### 2. FEPLI works for the benefit of the individual.

FEPLI can offer access to help with personal legal defense that a union does not. The insurance administrators do not engage in collective bargaining or attempt to make any changes to the workplace. They do not make employment contracts with, or rules for, agency employers.

While thousands of federal employees have FEPLI, when you have one of these insurance policies, the representation offered with that policy is for you alone. If your claim is covered, you get assistance. That assistance is not dependent on your colleagues, or on any contract between your FEPLI provider and your employer. If provided, your legal counsel advises and defends you according to your own unique needs and situation.

### 3. Every federal worker can have FEPLI – but not everyone can join a union.

FEPLI is available for any civilian federal employee. Your role within an agency, the classification of your work, or the state you live in do not change your eligibility. If you are an employee of the United States federal government, you may enroll in FEPLI.

Union membership is a bit more complicated. For federal employees, eligibility to unionize can vary. Several categories of employee are excluded altogether. Managers and supervisors may not join unions, as this can create a conflict of interest. Confidential employees, employees engaged in national security work, employees engaged in audit functions, and those in personnel are also among those who are prohibited.

### 4. Neither is required. One could be reimbursed.

You can choose not to be a member in your union. You can choose not to have an FEPLI policy. There is no requirement that you do either – it's your own personal decision. If you do opt for one or both, there are annual costs associated with each which you must pay out of pocket.

When it comes to FEPLI, you may qualify for a reimbursement. Federal agencies are legally required to reimburse qualified employees up to 50% or up to \$150 of the cost of their FEPLI premium each year. There is no federal reimbursement for employee union dues.

## Caring For Your Federal Career

Your work is important – and valued. As you navigate the complexities of the federal workforce, remember that you have advocates.

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For more information on FEPLI, visit [wrightusa.com](https://wrightusa.com)! PWC members receive special member pricing at: <https://swu.insure/pwc>

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### **A network you can count on**

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### **Two free virtual doctor visits**

With telehealth services from Teladoc®, you can get care for minor injuries and illnesses, mental health support, dermatology or nutritional counseling—simply from your phone or computer.

### **Works with Medicare**

If you combine FEP with Medicare, we'll waive copays, deductibles, and coinsurance plus you get access to benefits not covered by Medicare Part A and Part B. You can also get up to \$800 back for paying your Part B premiums.

### **Helpful cost tools**

Our easy-to-use online tools let you search for the lowest prices for drugs, get procedure cost estimates and keep your health care spending in check.

**OPEN SEASON is November 13 – December 11**

[www.fepblue.org](http://www.fepblue.org)

# Meet Elisa Muise: New Chair of the NATCA National Constitution Committee



## By NATCA National Office Staff

Following the National Air Traffic Controllers Association's 19th Biennial Convention, Elisa Muise (Boston Center, ZBW) was elected as the new chair of the union's National Constitution Committee (NCC). She has been a member of NATCA since 2007 and first joined the NCC in 2012. Learn more about Elisa and her work with NATCA from our interview:

### **How did you first become active in NATCA or what was your first role serving on committees as a rep?**

I was lucky to have people at ZBW who really encouraged union activism. Months after certifying, I attended my first NATCA in Washington in 2009. In 2010, I became the New England member of the National Legislative Committee. In 2012, I switched over to the National Constitution Committee, which is where I have been since. Aside from my committee roles, I volunteered for a couple of workgroups including Curriculum Architecture and Web-Based Recurrent Training. I also served a term as an Area Rep at ZBW and as a Director on the board of the NATCA Charitable Foundation for many years.

### **Who are or have been your role models for leading NATCA's activism and efforts?**

It's hard to list just a few. Early on, I would have to say the people who first encouraged me to get involved were the ones at ZBW — my area reps Mike Dowd and Kristine Mooso, Jeff Aulbach (who encouraged me to attend NiW and who I eventually replaced on the NLC), and my FacRep Kevin Bianchi. Once I was on the NLC, the people who were on the committee with me were

so supportive and knowledgeable, but Steve Weidner went above and beyond. He did everything he could to be a mentor to me. I also had the great honor and privilege to work with Barry Krasner before I knew what a legend he was. He made a comment to me at one point about not wanting to step on my toes for a presentation we were giving together about Robert's Rules. He never acted like I should feel fortunate to work alongside him. As a woman, two people stand out to me.

Obviously, Trish Gilbert has done amazing things for our Union and profession and is someone to be admired. But, when I first joined the NCC, Renae Hultgren was taking over as the chair. It was impressive to see the hard work she did for our committee.

Honestly, everyone who works hard and gives their time and energy to this Union should be recognized and thanked, no matter what that looks like or what role they have. I have worked with some amazing people (many of whom don't hold national titles or positions) throughout my career, and I wouldn't be the same if I hadn't had their friendship and advice.

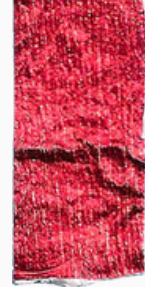
### **What has been the most pivotal or standout moment during your time advocating for NATCA members?**

I got hired under the White Book. Everything was a battle then. One of the biggest highlights of not just my career, but my life, was doing campaign work in 2008 and the resulting red book. Everything changed for the better. It was amazing how many people suffered through so much and how we all stuck with it and were rewarded for our solidarity.



# German Pancakes

Recipe provided by Rachel Parramore, Great Lakes Regional Director



Happy Holidays, PWC! Time is flying and the holiday season is upon us. This is my favorite time of year. The moment Halloween is over my holiday décor is on display for the world to see. The lights, time spent with friends and family and the delicious food are just a few of my favorite things about this season.

Today, I wanted to share one of my favorite recipes that my family has been making for years! Have you ever had German Pancakes? They are easy to make, fun to watch grow in the oven and fully customizable. German Pancakes are not only delicious but they grow and bubble up in an unexpected way while in the oven. The kids will love them! This is a perfect recipe for a festive morning or for when you are hosting a brunch. One great thing about this recipe is that each serving can be customized with different toppings including fruit, syrup, whipped cream or whatever you can dream up. This recipe can be sweet or savory (depending on what toppings you add). They have 6 ingredients and take about 5 minutes to prep! Give them a try and let me know what you think. Enjoy!

Prep Time: 5 Minutes  
Total Time: 25 minutes

Servings: 5

## Ingredients

- 6 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 tsp vanilla
- dash of salt
- 3 tbsp butter for pan only

## Method

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F.
2. As the oven warms up, put the butter in a 9x13" pan (or pan of choice) and place it in the oven until the butter is melted. Once the butter is melted, remove the pan.
3. Put the eggs, milk, flour, salt and vanilla in a blender and blend until smooth.
4. Pour the batter into the 9x13" pan over the melted butter.
5. Bake 20-25 minutes until the edges are golden brown and puffy.
6. Remove from oven and enjoy!





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