



# Newsletter

## 2016 Chairman's Letter to WAA Membership December

Dear WAA Members,

As we look back at 2016, the board of directors would like to thank you for making this one amazing year! This board works hard to display our unwavering support and commitment to business and general aviation at Westchester County airport and our NE region. With over 175 members including business, corporate, and individual membership levels, we continue to grow and deliver more benefits each year. We genuinely appreciate your feedback and attendance throughout our development.

As your personal business and general aviation advocates, we arranged a heavy schedule in 2016. Filled with everything from barbeques to a NBAA regional event, there was a little sprinkled in for every one of our members.

We started the year off with a fresh reminder of the very real threat to the industry from a proposal that would create a privatized Air Traffic Control (ATC) system, funded through user fees, as part of legislation for the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). By utilizing NBAA's Contact Congress initiative, the WAA advocated against ATC privatization closely following updates throughout the year and providing our membership with real time changes, revisions, and avenues to voice your opinion. As the chairman of the board, this is the largest threat to business and general aviation I have seen throughout my career. With record WAA blog entries, continuous alerts, and even further newsletter articles, this was clearly a significant topic for the association and our industry in general. Although there was a 14 month extension on FAA funding, the fight is far from over. Therefore, expect further updates and call to actions in the coming year. We know that contacting congress may not seem to move mountains, but remember that we all have a voice in this. We urge you to act together with us to protect our industry.

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### WAA Board of Directors

*Chairman*  
Milt Hobbs

*Executive Director*  
Brittany Davies

Rocky Cipriano  
Kristen Cloud  
Scott Dyer  
Eric Faulkner  
Marietta French  
Hank Grudberg  
John Johnston  
Sal Lagonia  
Jeff Lee  
Len Levin  
Dan Shamir  
Bill Weaver  
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Moving into the summer months, the WAA once again held our barbeques for members and the surrounding airport community. Kicking off the season, we partnered with WAMA for our June event. Holding additional events in July and September, each barbeque had over 200 attendees even in the summer heat. We often ponder as a board: do we have such great attendance due to a rocking airport community or the free ice cream at the Mr. Softee truck? It must be BOTH!

Also in June, we held the 2016 Safety Standdown for business and general aviation professionals. This year's theme was "Enhancing Safety through Teamwork" and nationally renowned speakers addressed attendees in two different sessions at the Westchester Hilton. A corporate operator focused day session garnered over 200 attendees from various companies throughout the Northeast region. Morning speakers included NTSB Board member Robert Sumwalt; John Cox of Safety Operating Systems; Bob Hobbi of Service Elements; and Don Chupp of Fireside Partners. All four dynamic speakers delivered a message driving home the fact that the linchpin of aviation safety culture is indeed cooperation and collaboration between teams. Along with networking opportunities between various disciplines in an aviation department, attendees also qualified for one NBAA Certified Aviation Manager (CAM) credit.

Moreover, the evening session focused on the general aviation constituency of KHPN. With 68 attendees, members of the Westchester Flying Club, Civil Air Patrol, and other groups listened to the aforementioned Cox and Henricks as well as WAA board member and aviation attorney, Sal Lagonia. All attendees also received credit towards the FAA WINGS program. Planning for next year's event is already underway and we look forward to creating an even more robust event.

Furthermore, the WAA also had the pleasure of being a part of the NBAA Regional Forum in mid-September. Westchester County Airport hosted the final 2016 NBAA Regional Forum setting a record for the venue and becoming the association's second-highest attended regional forum in the event's history. In efforts to further accommodate their members for this important event, NBAA constructed a 52,000 square-foot pavilion, featuring 184 indoor exhibitors and 52 aircraft on display.

To further promote aviation education and understanding on the part of government authorities, the WAA hosted a cocktail party for airport and county officials to meet with NBAA's executive team the evening before the main event. Local political leaders praised NBAA and the business aviation community for what the industry brings to the region through the jobs, connectivity and economic activity that we support in the local area. Next year's fall forum will take place at Morristown airport.

Another initiative revamped this year was the WAA hosted Pilot/ATC meeting. Our first October meeting garnered nearly 15 pilots and with great dialogue from the group, many questions and concerns were addressed. Leading the meeting along with me was Mike Wold (HPN Tower Chief) and Ben Stuck of the FAA FSDO. Having held these types of meetings before, the WAA hoped to spark further interest between the GA community of the airport. With a great show of support, this meeting now qualifies for Wings Credit and future gatherings will be held quarterly.

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Membership in the Westchester Aviation Association is the best way to stay informed with developments that affect General Aviation at Westchester County Airport, and ensure that the voice of General Aviation is heard.



For complete recaps of each meeting, please refer to the WAA blog on the website for all highlights and pertinent information.

Sound like one heck of a year yet? Well there is even more! In recent airport news, Westchester County officials announced a proposal to lease its airport to an investment firm in early November. On November 28th, the WAA held an airport community meeting in response to County Executive Rob Astorino unveiling the \$140 million deal for a public-private partnership with Oaktree Capital Management to run the airport for the next 40 years. Keeping true to our mission to inform and educate our membership, the WAA Board of Directors held this explanatory meeting for Oaktree Capital Management to further clarify the terms of the proposal.

Among 70 attendees, Oaktree explained more about their background in infrastructure capital investing in airports, ports, and rail currently owning 83 ports in the US. The Oaktree team further described the freeing up of \$150 million of capital to the County and making HPN better by growing capacity and creating opportunities for economic velocity.

However, many concerns were voiced throughout the meeting. Most alarming being that 80% of the airport includes General Aviation who currently has no representation penned within the proposal. Additional problems include why other airports have fought back against similar proposals and why Oaktree thinks their model will work here at HPN. Hoping to win the trust of General Aviation, the Oaktree team went on to state that they would be open to put representation of the 80% at the table. Furthermore, they described three committees for possible participation: General Aviation Affairs Committee; General Aviation Technical Committee and General Aviation Operational Committee.

Earlier this month, the board of county legislators voted against the proposed program. However, there was an additional vote to hire a company to administer a RFP program and search out potential bidders which passed. The WAA is monitoring this closely and will continue to provide updates throughout the process.

Finally, we had a few board highlights to mention this year as well. To keep fresh eyes within the board, we elected two additional board members. Our board officially welcomed Dan Shamir and Scott Dyer this fall. Dan started his aviation career with the airlines and then made the leap into corporate aviation, spending 7 years at The Hertz Corporation and 3 years at Bloomberg LP. He currently is an International Captain for Interlaken Aviation.

Scott is currently a flight instructor at Academy of Aviation and has been flying for over 30 years (the last 25 years based at HPN). For over 10 years he has been the liaison between WAA and ATC and has facilitated dozens of meetings between local pilots and flight departments who participate in our WAA/ATC working group and our ATC counterparts. He also was the principal author of our HPN response to a proposal by FAA to expand the NY Class B airspace laterally and with lower floors. We are eager to have such dedicated aviators join us this year!

Additionally, WAA board member and past chairman John Johnson, was presented with NBAA's Silk Scarf Award at the 2016 HPN regional forum. The silk scarf award honors



outstanding business aviation community members and was given to John for his long-standing contributions to the industry during his career. He has been in aviation for more than 38 years, and has type ratings in 10 different aircraft.

Last but not least, I am excited to also announce that I have officially been elected to NBAA's Board of Directors and recently attended my first meeting this December. We hope that my appointment on a national level can bring further value for you as a WAA member.

This year was a whirlwind of activity and seemed jam packed with advocacy and education. The board can all agree that the year's events kept us on our toes, but did not deter us to work even harder for our membership next year. Thank you once again on behalf of myself and the entire board. Your membership and support mean so much to us! We wish you and yours a very happy holiday season!

Cheers to 2017!

**Milt Hobbs**  
**WAA Chairman of the Board**

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