Airports for the Future “2.0” Coalition Building and Education Campaign Critical For Successful FAA Reauthorization

Over the past three years, we have succeeded in implementing the Airports for the Future campaign, creating tools for our members to use in publicizing the economic impact that airports have on the U.S. economy and in their local communities. We have provided our members with numerous opportunities to use resources created not only to promote their economic impact but also to respond to questions regarding flight cancellations and delays, security and air service development. Our plan is to continue to work to with airport and WBP/Associate Members to build momentum to further educate community leaders and Members of Congress on the value of U.S. airports.

Moving into FAA Reauthorization in 2015, we will be evolving the campaign to update the economic impact statistics and build a broad coalition supporting airport priorities. It is critical that we continue emphasizing that airports create jobs and economic development, using the campaign materials and talking points, as well as expanding our reach by adding coalition partners to tell our story.

Expanding Coalition-Building and Outreach at the National Level During 2014 – 2015

It is important that we band together with a wide variety of organizations and businesses to further our cause, building partnerships not only with our allies but also with those we have not previously engaged. With Kevin Burke taking over as CEO and his participation in the U.S. Chamber “Committee of 100”, there are new opportunities for “principal to principal” contacts to secure the support of new partners to support airport issues. In July, we will convene the first meeting of our coalition members at DCA to formalize our work with outside groups. Below is a listing of the organizations that we have contacted in our national coalition building efforts:

- National Restaurant Association
- National Retail Federation
- National Association of Manufacturers
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Americans for Tax Reform
- National Taxpayers Union
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- American Road and Transportation Builders Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Reason Foundation

- Brookings Institution
- Airports Consultants Council
- Portland Cement Association
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- American Legislative Exchange Council
- Associated General Contractors of America
- Competitive Enterprise Institute
- Progressive Policy Institute
- National Fisheries Institute
- Bipartisan Policy Center
- Citizens Against Government Waste
Additional potential coalition partners are being identified and contacted. We will leverage existing and future relationships to promote the importance of airport modernization and the jobs and economic development generated by airports.

**More Resources for the Grass-Tops in Local Communities**

We will continue to provide support and materials for airport members to use with local leaders in their communities. Upcoming support from the campaign includes:

- An updated national economic impact study that will document the economic importance of airports at the state level in creating jobs and creating economic development. This state-level data will assist airports in promoting their importance in the local and regional economy to their media and with community officials. This will be particularly important in reaching Members of Congress through their local media.
- Updated resources based on the findings of the economic impact study including new videos, signage and fact sheets for airport.
- Talking points and sample letters for airport members to use to educate and raise the profile of airport issues during the upcoming campaign season in reaching out to existing Members of Congress and political candidates.
Airports for the Future: Successful in 2013 -2014

We are leveraging existing coalition partner relationships, whenever possible asking organizations to participate in events that help further our message. In December, we participated in a transportation panel facilitated by ALEC, and organized a tour of DCA that involved NCSL state legislative members and staff. At the ACI-NA/AAAE Legislative Conference, we put together a coalition panel to provide vision to airport members as to how to build coalitions and the value that they offer. The panel consisted of participants from the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and US Travel, all to show and explain the diversity of those supporting some of our issues, sometimes for different reasons than we do.

Recently, with Myrna White becoming chair of the Marketing and Communications (MarComm) Committee and her passion for the Airports for the Future campaign, there have been renewed efforts to see more involvement by the committee. Through monthly calls, the “Activation Team” that Myrna put together, and opportunities to spread the word at conferences, we are building more momentum within the committee. Myrna has asked airports to take simple steps to speak with one voice and tell our story as well as asking MarComm members to be more active in telling their community about the airport’s importance to the local and national economy. She has asked members to:

- include economic data in press release boiler plates; it is an easy way to publicize economic data in the press for the public to see;
- include a line in email signatures that includes economic data. By doing this, airport employees will educate every person you email about the economic importance of the airport in the community. This is an easy, but impactful idea that airports can put into action immediately;
- give tours of the airport to local elected officials and stakeholders, talking about the economic impact of the airport, improvements to the airport (current and future), how the airport is funded, and the needs of the airport.; and
- ask local businesses and stakeholders to do op-eds or letters to the editor touting the importance of the airport to their business and/or the community. Another valuable asset is a statement in support for the airport and that value it brings to the community from a business or important stakeholder. This is an asset that they can then use on the airport website or quote for social media content.

Lastly, Myrna has asked the MarComm community to commit to spreading this message of airports as economic engines in a more unified way. The activation team is communicating “peer to peer” to build more participation through increased use of campaign materials as well implementing the ideas discussed above.