



Connecting Generations

Reflections

The Quarterly Journal of the Northwest Airlines History Center



June 2025

Volume 23, number 2

In this issue:

A 1931 Stinson in NWA colors is about to take flight once again

Big exposure in the most-read airline enthusiasts' magazine

Options for display space in a new location are reviewed - and an important decision is made!

Our mission:

We explore and celebrate the generational impact of commercial aviation by bringing together resources, experiences, and community.

Our values:

Welcome - We embody the encouraging and positive environment that has always been part of our story.

Preserve - Both the history and future of the industry

Educate - Learning comes in all forms, at all ages, in many methods. We encourage curiosity, exploration, discovery, and dreaming.

Connect - Just as air travel brings people together, we create spaces for those connections to happen.

Inspire - Flight shows us anything is possible.



The party table was set to greet guests for the post-flooding Grand Reopening on March 7

Improving what we can today - moving forward toward tomorrow

Concrete steps underway to building awareness, visits, and revenue — by Scott Norris

Winter's enforced hibernation at the museum due to flooding on the 10th floor of the Crowne Plaza AiRE back in October, and the agonizingly long process of insurance claims and remediation, was a drain both on our bankroll but also on our volunteer corps. Combined with usual seasonal "snowbird" availability gaps but also several staffers' medical issues, and the departure of our previous site manager, the ability to keep the museum open for more than one day per week was in question.

Winston Churchill's adage "never let a good crisis go to waste" certainly applied to this situation, and our board stepped up over the winter and spring to re-examine the operation and its challenges. Board Secretary Tim Haskin took on the position of interim Museum Manager and started talking with volunteers to identify functional opportunities and difficulties. These conversations took place at the same time as displays and fixtures were being moved from gallery to gallery in order to accommodate the hotel's work on our ceiling, carpets, and walls.

The feedback was thoughtful and practical - and in the pages ahead we'll show you what we have implemented so far.

— COME SEE WHAT WE'VE DONE to page 6

Preflight Checklist

The Northwest Airlines History Center, Inc.

We are an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the State of Minnesota. Volunteer-staffed and volunteer-managed. We have no organizational or financial tie to Delta Air Lines.

Founder: Henry V. "Pete" Patzke (1925-2012)

Management:

- Directors: Jeff Schwalen, Mike Vetter, Scott Norris, Kimm Viebrock, Tim Haskin, Jayne Stenstad, Ronn Lehmann, Gene Peterson
- Directors Emeritus: Jerry Nielsen and Wayne Snyder
- Collections Manager: Bruce Kitt
- Interim Museum Manager: Tim Haskin

Museum Address: *(do not send mail here)*

Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel

3 Appletree Square, Bloomington MN 55425

NEW PHONE **COMING SOON** - *check our social media / website*

Archives and Administration: *(our mailing address; open for research by appointment only)*

10100 Flying Cloud Drive, Ste A-306, Eden Prairie MN 55347

(952) 698-4478

Online:

Web www.northwestairlineshistory.org

Facebook: [NorthwestAirlinesHistoryCenter](#)

LinkedIn: [Northwest Airlines History Center](#)

Instagram: [Northwest_Airlines_History](#)

Bluesky: [NorthwestAirlines.bsky.social](#)

Threads: [Northwest_Airlines_History](#)

YouTube: [Northwest Airlines History Center](#)

Email: info@northwestairlineshistory.org

REFLECTIONS is published quarterly by the NWAHC and is a membership benefit. Submissions are welcomed, and are subject to editing for content and length.

Advertising in REFLECTIONS is accepted to help us defray expenses and tell more stories to more people! Ad placement does not imply endorsement by the NWAHC, and ads need to be respectful and relevant to readers.

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Editor: Scott Norris northwestairlines@comcast.net

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Visiting the Museum

The NWAHC Museum is located inside the Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel in Bloomington, MN, just south of MSP International Airport.

Current schedule: Thursdays - Fridays 11 am - 5 pm
Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm
Closed for major holidays.

Admission and parking are FREE. (Special events may incur a charge.)

From the airport: Use METRO Blue Line light rail from either Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 southbound and exit at the American Boulevard station. The Crowne Plaza AIRE is immediately east from the station. Or, call for the free hotel shuttle from either terminal.

From the Mall of America: Take METRO Blue Line light rail outbound; American Boulevard is the third stop.

In the Twin Cities Metro area: Head toward MSP International Airport. From Interstate 494, exit on 34th Ave. S. and go south one block to American Blvd. Turn left (east) on American and then immediately right into (and under) the hotel. The parking ramp is on the left - follow the signs for free hotel parking on the uppermost level (do not use spaces not reserved for the hotel) and cross into the hotel's second floor. You may need to buzz the door for entrance, as a safety protocol.

The museum is located on the third floor, above the pool area, and across from the Fitness Center. Patrons needing elevator access for mobility concerns must coordinate with the hotel's front desk due to security reasons.

For photo directions on navigating the hotel, please scan this QR code on your phone:



Memberships

Annual membership dues are the main source of funding for the NWAHC; we encourage you to join!

- \$35 level - receives REFLECTIONS digital edition early access via email
- \$40 level - receives REFLECTIONS print edition by USPS; US mailing addresses only

Boarding Announcements



From Chairman Mike Vetter

I always think of the Northwest Airlines History Museum as a wonderful time capsule of the history of NWA and its impact on the world. However, it is also a great resource that all of us can access and utilize. Recently, the museum just hosted the NWA flight attendant class

81-01 reunion and the memories that were made was priceless.

We get all kinds of requests at the museum. Recently we hosted a group of female pilots called the 99's and while their backgrounds were all different, they all shared a common bond of the love and wonder of flight. Their feedback was very positive and we certainly hope they will come back soon to visit.

A request for information from one of our retired pilots was if we had any information on the DC-7 engine leaning procedure. Apparently, it came up in a conversation and he wanted to recall all that was involved in that process. The manual was located and the procedure was found and emailed to the pilot. In fact, we have operating manuals for

almost every aircraft NWA operated. We even have manuals for the Boeing SST (2707) that was cancelled in 1971. It was all part of Boeing's marketing of the aircraft to NWA.

NWA's training department took great pride in their programs and for each aircraft type, developed their own proprietary flight manuals. One enterprising pilot, who was undergoing training for another airline, requested our Airbus 330 manual for self study. Again, the History Museum is a great resource that's still relative today.

Other requests we get range from STEM student group visits to requests from film producers for reference information and photos. I feel we are much more than a museum of old service uniforms and I encourage you to use your membership and reach out to us if we can be of service.

Lastly, the museum Board of Directors has decided to begin an oral history of NWA employees to archive for future generations. I will be reporting back to you with more information as we develop the program. Meanwhile, enjoy the summer months and feel free to visit the museum. Admission is always free!

Blue Skies,
Mike Vetter

Donor Thanks

The Board and all the volunteers at the Northwest Airlines History Center would like to thank our donors for their contributions this year. Donations enable our ongoing operations, cleanup and preservation tasks, outreach efforts, and work to design and gain approvals for a new permanent museum.

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Check your basements and storage boxes!

Do you have physical materials, recordings, or electronic files to contribute to our museum? Please contact our collections manager at bruce.kitt@northwestairlineshistory.org or (952) 698-4478 with details of your items, photos if possible, and how we can reach you. We can not accept materials without this vetting step. Also, please do not bring materials to our museum location in Bloomington as we aren't able to process them there.

Buy wise to support the NWAHC!

Visit our online store, with world-exclusive designs on a wide variety of items - from shirts to mugs, travel gear to golf balls, and more, at shop.northwestairlineshistory.org. Or scan this QR code to jump to our store directly.

We also offer surplus materials and new apparel and pins for sale on **eBay** under the handle "cyberglitz" - the assortment changes every week!



Compass Readings

Reopening triumph

On Friday, March 7, nearly six months of post-flooding restoration work to our space in the Crowne Plaza AiRE Hotel (see the December 2024 REFLECTIONS lead story) was completed and we opened the doors to the general public once again with a day of special sales, prize drawings, and bonus gifts for significant cash donations.

The day was heavily promoted on social media to NWA, Republic, and Mesaba affinity groups, the Twin Cities planespotting community, and through emails to Museum members and online shop customers. Attendance was over triple a usual Saturday, and we were able to garner several new volunteers - and hopefully a few new committee / Board members as well.

The success of this in-museum event - measured by engagement as well as earnings - tells us there is an appetite among retirees, current airline workers, and the general public for more get-togethers for more reasons. We are now working toward adding book talks, affinity group celebrations, and new-exhibit introductions to our calendar!

Our next event is a late afternoon / early evening celebration of all our new and refreshed exhibits. Join us at the museum for "New Night" from 5 - 7 pm, Friday, July 18th.



1981's Class 1 reunion

On Friday, May 16, we were delighted to welcome a reunion party from the Northwest Airlines 1981 Class 1 cohort of flight attendants. This tight-knit group gets together in different locales each year, with Minneapolis / St. Paul being the 2025 hub of activities.

Out of the original 69 crew graduated, about 40 made their way to our museum. While 7 of the group have passed, 14 are still flying!

Our museum is thrilled to be able to host events like these, with at least two weeks advance notice - to schedule your group, please call our new phone ([check our website - coming soon](#)) or email twhaskin@icloud.com.





Photo by Chuck Doyle, Jr. via Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame.

Historic Stinson restoration almost complete

Noel Allard at the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame has alerted us to an impressive aircraft restoration underway in the southern Minnesota community of Webster. The name of the person working on this project will sound familiar to longtime NWA staff: Chuck Doyle - but this is Chuck, Junior. Doyle Senior - much like 'Speed' Holman - was a motorcycle racer, self-taught pilot and aircraft mechanic, and quintessential barnstormer and skywriter. Doyle Senior joined Northwest in 1942 and kept flying and restoring aircraft well after retirement, living 92 fascinating years.

Chuck Junior inherited an aviation interest from his father, and has a full workshop of tools and machines to replicate parts for vintage aircraft. The ship in the photo above, NC443G, is a Stinson Junior-S, painted in Northwest markings of 1930-31. It has four passenger seats and one pilot position, with a top speed of 150 mph, powered by a 215-horsepower Lycoming R680 piston engine. It has a build date of 1931, but current airworthiness date from 1968, having passed through several owners, but seems to have stayed in Minnesota for the last 40 years; in fact NWA Captain Dan Neuman found this ship in a North Dakota field in the late 1970s and performed restorative work then.

Its history from the 1930s - 1970s seems to have passed through jobs as a crop duster, pipeline patroller, and towplane. However, it sat unflown for about 30 years following Neuman's death. Doyle and his wife, Jody, acquired NC443G in the early 2000s, taking it to fly-ins and airshows, and started rebuilding the ship in 2017. He estimates it should take to the skies once again later in 2025. We look forward to sharing more photos and video as the project is finished!

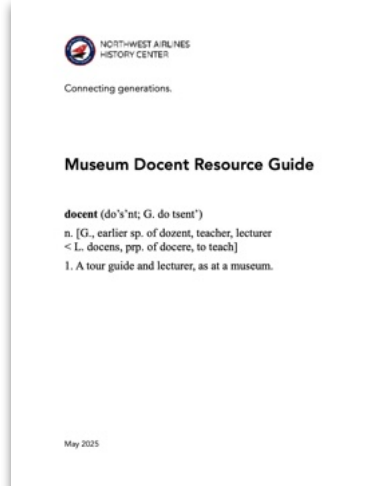
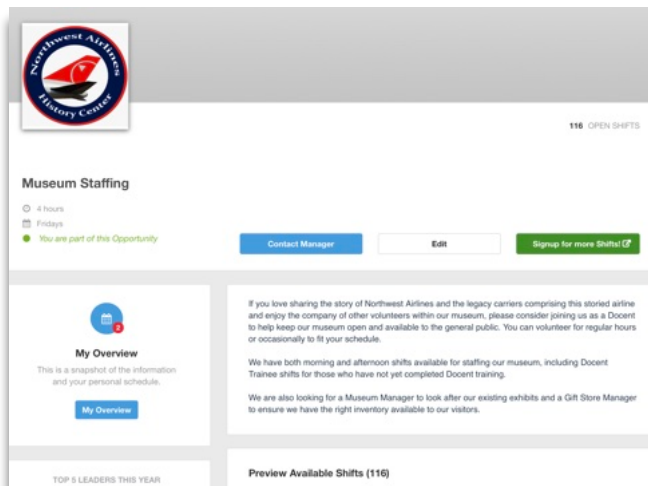


NWAHC Museum featured in July 2025 Airways Magazine

We were pleased to host travel writer Tom Edwards and his wife Cathy this spring, shortly after our post-flood reopening, for a personal tour and photo shoot of the museum. Their visit served as the basis for their 7-page article in the July 2025 edition of *Airways Magazine*, now at bookstores and available online at airwaysmag.com.



Airways has included the NWAHC in summaries of airline-specific museums in recent years, and is now starting a series of longer articles focusing on our fellow organizations. We hope this aids in boosting awareness and attendance for the rest of 2025!



Recruiting, training, and retention, plus more robust systems to make working smoother: Renewed effort to recruit museum docents via personal outreach and steady social media postings has netted four new staff since our March reopening.

Director Kimm Viebrock worked through the processes to set up our Bloomerang volunteer-management module and now we have an online tool for signing up for shifts, keeping track of hours, and messaging staff. This gives everyone more visibility on the timetable.

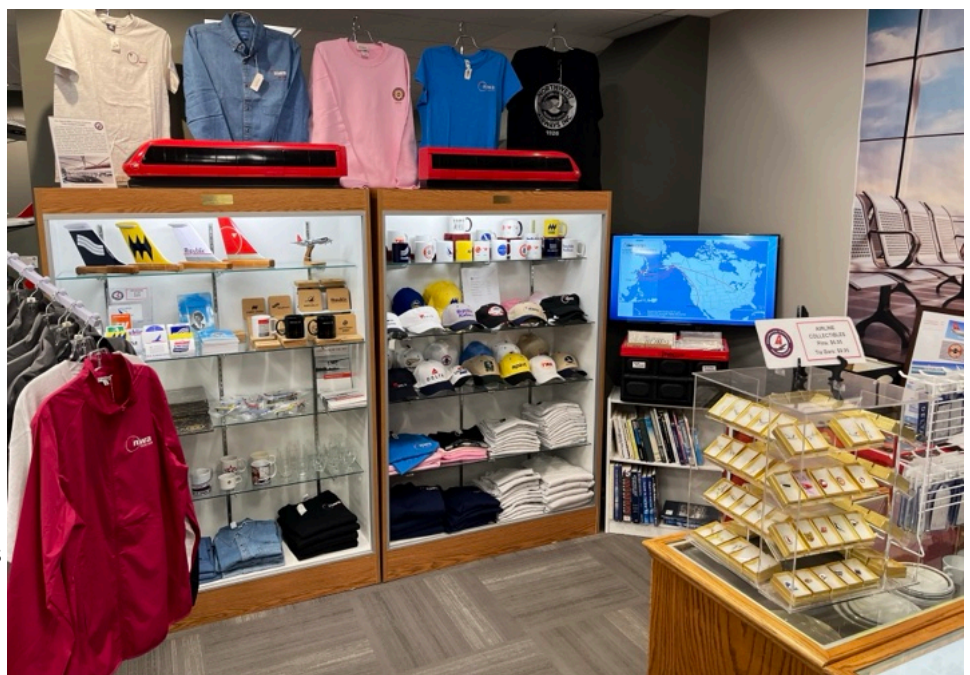
Director Haskin prepared a comprehensive resource guide for museum volunteers, including safety instructions, retail / cash register instructions, timeline information, and detail on museum exhibits, field-tested by Director Ronn Lehmann and several volunteers to much appreciation. Haskin has also begun a monthly conference call with museum docents to keep everyone up to date. For volunteer safety and to give a better visiting experience, we are now only opening the museum when we can schedule at least two docents per shift. And we've loaded snacks and refrigerated bottled water in the storage room for museum staff!

An ongoing issue since we opened in the Crowne Plaza was the building's WiFi - the signal was not strong in our part of the structure and would cut out daily, causing problems in handling sales and preventing streaming for meetings and presentations. We've contracted for our own T-Mobile wireless router, which seems to have cleared up those problems. The hotel's phone exchange likewise has been unable to let us change messages or check in remotely; there too we are setting up our own service on a new number.

Evolution of our retail offerings: Visitors to the museum are often in a shopping state of mind! For the past ten years, shelves have tended to be heavy with shirts, sweaters, and jackets - but stocking these is tricky because of the mix of sizes and so inventories have not turned over quickly. Large wooden / metal models likewise take up a lot of space but move slowly due to their prices.

You'll see more \$5 - \$35 items in our mix such as mugs, coasters, and bag tags, as well as kid-friendly toys and select favorites from our online shop such as magnetic bumper stickers and license plate covers.

We'll also incorporate more "treasure hunt" items from our donation overstocks great for gifting like glasses, flatware, timetables, books and other collectibles.



Rearranged display cases & better

explanatory notes: Haskin figured out that the enclosed display cases in the Republic Legacy area could be reoriented 90 degrees to open up more wall display space while still giving patrons a comfortable area to view the artifacts. This also presented the opportunity to prepare new placards to talk about each carrier's history and put up more photos.

Display cases in the other galleries will be gradually re-positioned and contents re-grouped to better tell stories and help us update exhibits more frequently. Aircraft models and uniforms will also see new notes so visitors can more easily understand when they were used and in what context.



Incorporating video displays: As the cost and weight of big screens has come down, it is easier to fit TV sets into more spaces. Our volunteers have collected commercials, news reports, and content off our own website, adding in NWA-created productions as we unearth them in our archive.

Two large displays are now mounted on floor stands and running, each with different content from USB drives plugged in.

Thanks to the now-reliable WiFi we can also dial in live content such as the YouTube video feed from MSP Airport or a FlightRadar screen.

We will likely add a few more screens as additional content from the archive is digitized and new productions are created.

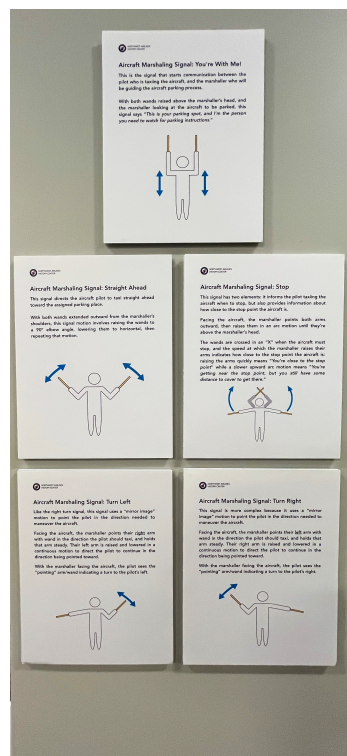
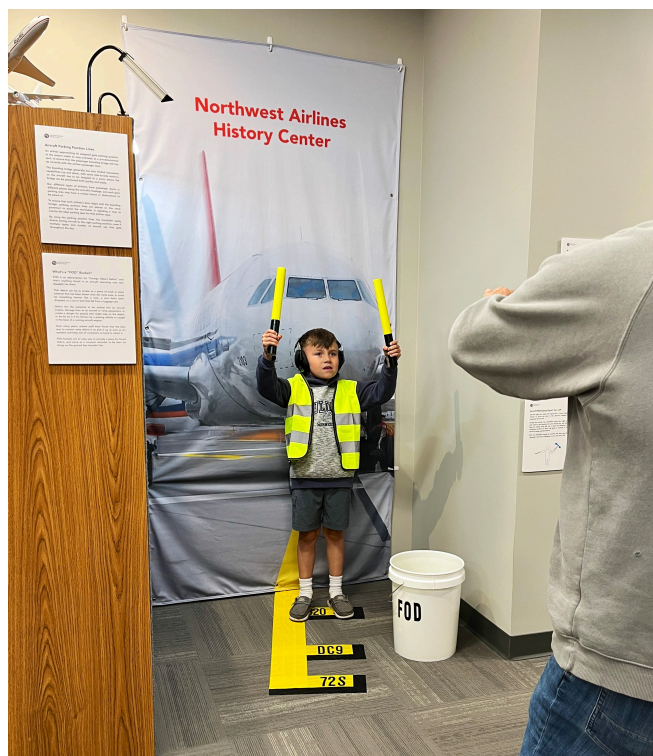
Bigger items moving around, plus a dedicated

Speed Holman niche: As the display cases are starting to be rearranged, we were able to group the very large floor display aircraft together, which helps traffic flow while also creating an exciting photo station.

Next to this grouping, we've positioned the Speed Holman "grandmother" clock and another award he won. This area will be enclosed by an acrylic sheet to prevent damage, and we will add large photos and poster clippings about Holman and his many accomplishments that brought fame and flying expertise to Northwest.

Each move of the big pieces on the museum floor opens up space we can use in new ways. And on the next page, you'll see something really different!





Interactivity and appeal to children (and kids of all ages): As a museum with most of our materials under glass or behind barriers, yes it can be frustrating as a youngster to come through our space with the admonition “look but don’t touch.” Our motto is “Connecting Generations” and one of our aims is to get kids excited about aviation careers, so this is a dilemma we needed to solve right away. Therefore our newest exhibit is truly “hands-on”. We have procured several ground handling safety vests and ear protectors, created unlit marshaling wands, printed a banner backdrop, and used tape to lay out aircraft parking stripes.

Visitors are invited to study some of the common marshaling motions, practice them in front of the approaching A319, and have their companion take photos! There’s even an FOD bucket to place the wands in when done. For grown-ups, it’s a great spot for a social media post. And it also helps us communicate there are more careers in commercial aviation than just being a pilot, flight attendant, or mechanic. To that end, when it is time to rotate our current cabin crew uniform exhibit, Collections Manager Bruce Kitt assures us there are many “below the wing” uniforms, tools, and accessories to put on display.

We have also started producing coloring pages and other activity handouts with airline artwork for youngsters, secured a supply of NWA kiddie wings to hand out to well-behaved kids, and even have sets of Northwest aircraft trading cards (where Delta got the idea...). All part of our effort to ensure the museum is perceived as a family-friendly destination with something to offer to all ages.

BELOW: Director Scott Norris constructed a 1:200 scale model of taxiway Whiskey at MSP Airport and printed a 3-foot wide backdrop to use for scale model photography. We have this taxiway and backdrop stored in our back room at present; Norris plans to build a few more dioramas to represent other locations that we can then use as backdrops for display cases to feature the many carriers and regions in the Northwest Family timeline (a desert setting for Hughes Airwest, for instance). These dioramas could also be used as interactive elements at a scale model collectors’ themed event!





“Pop-Up Display Fixture”: Volunteer Don Moran and his family lived in Bolivia from 1964-1966 when North Central was contracted by the US Government to assist that country’s airline LAB establish modern and consistent management and promote economic and social development. Nine younger NOR managers, representing all key departments, and their families integrated into local culture and successfully completed their mission. This experience led to all those staffers reaching key leadership roles at North Central in the 1970s. David Moran, Don’s father, would eventually become VP of Sales and Marketing at NOR, and Senior VP in that role at Republic. Don’s family photos and stories of the experience, plus excerpts from company documents, bring those years to life and illuminate a little-appreciated way that commercial aviation from the Northland helped influence world events and culture.

The white wireframe column is an easy way for us to quickly display text and pictures without taking up much floor space, and will allow us to spotlight stories like this on a more frequent rotation.



With these new displays and other improvements, we are still all too aware of the limitations of working inside the Crowne Plaza hotel. In May, during museum hours, staff heard water noises in the ceiling above the cash register area and investigated above the ceiling tiles. YES - once again there was a leak in progress! Hotel management was called and this completely rusted-through drain pipe was replaced.

While this chapter of our story ended with no harm done, it underscores the need for us to find other spaces to interact with the public. In the next pages, we’ll look at work done recently to investigate new options.

How can members help right now?

- Storytelling is made so much more vivid when we can add video content - whether from your home movies of taking a trip or company parties, corporate training tapes and DVDs, taped stories with commercials, or news reports. We have the ability to convert VHS tapes and DVDs into digital files and put that content into new presentations and features. Search your closets and desk drawers!
- Consider recording your own stories - easily done now on your smartphone - or get in touch with us to arrange an interview. Tell us about your uniforms, favorite stations, wacky coworkers, maintenance wizardry, your most vivid experiences or your everyday routines! Like with video, hearing others’ voices helps make connecting generations more concrete.
- We can still use more volunteers - at the Bloomington museum, a few more folks to help with four-hour shifts on Saturdays, Fridays, or Thursdays. At our Eden Prairie archive, for reviewing and digitizing old video media; sorting, filing, and photographing / scanning materials. And anywhere, to help interview retirees, current airline workers, and passengers.

Cover Story

Next steps in Eden Prairie

As the NWAHC has evolved its “Go Big” plan to ultimately operate an on-airport facility large enough to house aircraft, classrooms, event space, archives, and multiple displays, we have met with managers at the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to jointly evolve the vision and determine where space could be found. Since 2022, the MAC has indicated our best option is at Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie, in the southwest corner of the Twin Cities metro.

This part of the city houses a robust number of aerospace manufacturing and services companies, schools for flight training, dispatch, and avionics & propulsion, two general colleges, and two school districts with high school aviation programs. Flying Cloud is only a 20-minute drive from MSP Airport and is the home of the NWAHC archives. These factors suggest our operation would be well received by families, education, and industry!

Jumping straight to building a massive museum, however, is not yet within our budget or staffing abilities - and we need to “learn how to walk before we run” so examining intermediate options is how we can build experience and public awareness.

Following our February 14 meeting with David Lindahl, Economic Development Manager for the City of Eden Prairie, Director Scott Norris met May 23rd with leasing agents from the Eden Prairie Center shopping mall to learn about space options and costs.

Three options have been presented:

- Display kiosks / carts in the central corridor. These would lease for \$500 - \$650 per month, plus insurance, on a 3 month to 1 year term. No staffing would be needed, and we could build and swap out small exhibits that include video and artifacts, protected inside Plexiglas windows. QR barcodes would be used to link to more information about the displays and our online shop.
- Larger displays in vacant store windows. These would run \$700 - \$850 / month on 3-12 month leases, plus insurance. We could construct even larger exhibits behind glass, but would need to vacate if a store decides to move in. For both of these options, we would measure interactions against overall mall traffic to see how well we were capturing public attention.



SW entrance to Eden Prairie Center. This is the Twin Cities' #3 most-visited mall.



ABOVE: Central atrium at Eden Prairie Center. The mall has four strong anchor stores, as well as theaters, sit-down restaurants, and is near the terminus of the new Green Line light-rail extension. BELOW: examples of the enclosed kiosks in the main promenade of Eden Prairie Center like what we plan to lease.





Northwest Airlines History Center, Inc.
Archives and Administration Office
10100 Flying Cloud Drive, Suite A-306
Eden Prairie, MN 55347 USA

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- Greeting and guiding our museum guests
- Designing and building museum exhibits
- Growing our e-commerce functionality
- Grant application and fundraising
- Community outreach & event planning
- Scanning and indexing historic documents and photos



Many of our ongoing projects are flexible to fit your schedule. And airline experience isn't necessary - just a love of history, adventure, and storytelling!

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Photo by Zach Bogart

12R-301

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