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COVER PHOTO

By Margot Voss
Ben Whitley's 1998 King Air
C90B (LJ-1504)

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A large, flexible, silver air conditioning duct is connected to the open cargo door of a white aircraft with a red stripe. The aircraft is parked in a hangar with a concrete floor and white walls. The duct runs from the aircraft down to the floor, curving towards the right. The aircraft has several circular windows and the word "PHOENIX" is visible on its side.

DIRECT FROM THE DPE

Keeping Your Cool in a King Air

by Joe Casey | Photos by Clint Goff

I'll never forget flying Saab 340s with American Eagle Airlines many years ago. I flew as a first officer and sweated more than the law should have allowed, not from unrelenting stressful situations but because the Saab 340B was not designed for hot weather. The aircraft is designed and built in Sweden, and Swedish aircraft designers must know little about Texas heat. I remember being in long lines of airliners awaiting takeoff clearance at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, the right engine feathered and the environmental switches set for full cold, yet the wimpy airflow from the gaspers was just not enough. We had a full load of passengers with everyone sweating bullets, complaining and occasionally getting sick.

There was nothing that could be done. The Saab 340 environmental system did not have the capability to keep up on even a mildly warm day. On a really hot day, the airplane was dangerously hot. The unofficial slogan of American Eagle was "American Eagle Airlines: Where

we're not happy 'til you're not happy." When it came to keeping passengers cool, American Eagle had no answers with the Saab 340.

With the events of Sept. 11, 2001, when I was at American Eagle with my paltry copilot yearly income of \$17,000, I knew my airline career was over. I moved out of the Saab into contract flying in the Beechcraft King Air 200 and never looked back. It was one of the best career moves I made.

The task of defeating the Texas heat did not end with my move to the King Air though. The King Air environmental system is also less than optimal, and a rookie (or untrained or uncaring) pilot can create a situation akin to a Saab 340 sweatbox too. If you have a hot day and you have a King Air flight, how do you beat the heat?

With any model King Air, you must first defeat the blazing sun. Judicious use of shade is critical. If the airplane is already in a hangar, we try to leave the



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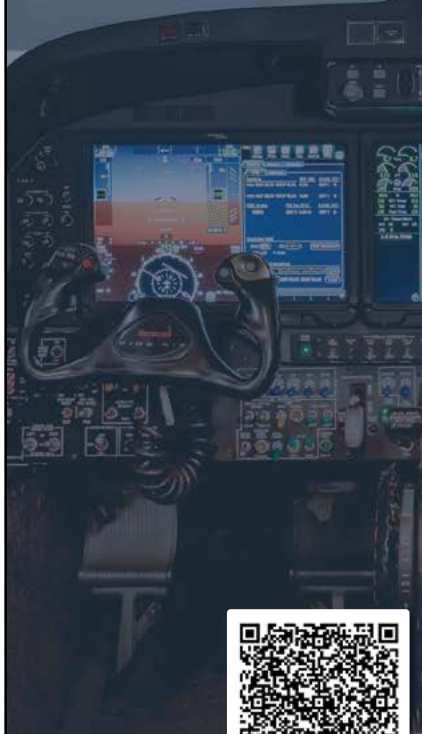
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airplane in the hangar for loading cargo and then pull the airplane outside just prior to passenger boarding. If at one of those nice FBOs with a big awning, palming a Thomas Jefferson to the line personnel might secure you a spot under the awning for your departure, and it'll be worth much more than \$20 if you get such prime parking.

If the airplane is in the sun, cockpit shades are critical. I recommend you only use white shades that fit the windows perfectly. Aluminum foil shades are a bad idea: The UV waves pass through the windshield and then are reflected through the windshield again by the highly reflective wind shades, giving them a double whammy of damaging UV sunlight. An even better option is to purchase a full cockpit cover from Bruce's Covers (aircraftcovers.com) that guards the cockpit from the outside, truly protecting your sensitive windshield.

The window shades should also be drawn in the back of the airplane. If you have the polarizers, make sure they are still effective at doing their job.

I've discovered that opening the two D-windows in the cockpit and leaving the cabin door open allows for the most airflow. If there's any wind, this trick paired with preventing incoming sunrays will stop the greenhouse effect and make your airplane far cooler for boarding.

Is ground air conditioning available?

If you live in a hot part of the world, you should own a ground air conditioner. We have one, and it is nothing more than a household window unit mounted on a rolling

cart with a long ducting system. We roll the unit up to the airplane and flop the 20 feet of ducting as far into the cabin as possible. Another good option is to push the ducting through one of the D-windows in the front, which makes the cockpit coolest and the airflow migrates to the back of the cabin because the cabin door is left partially open.

Some of my favorite King Air models are those with the air conditioner compressor in the nose compartment (90 and 100 models). This allows for operating the A/C without the engine running. I cannot emphasize how good this system works. Make sure you have a *really* good non-battery-powered ground power unit plugged into the external power port. Then operate the environmental control system of the airplane. You can close all the doors and windows and have a completely cool cabin when you board your airplane.

However, I have a warning for you, learned from personal experience. If you plug in a battery-powered GPU (such as is found on many of the tugs with batteries), the system will draw energy from the batteries – a lot of energy. When the GPU batteries are depleted, the system will then draw down the aircraft ship batteries. I once had a mission where I thought I'd be creative and cool down the cabin, and the battery GPU was drawn down followed by the ship batteries. I opened the door to a cool cabin, but then I could not start the engines.

Worse, your ship batteries must have minimal voltage (usually 20V) to allow GPU power to operate. When I found another GPU, the power ➤



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from that GPU was not available to me because the ship batteries were below 20V. I had no choice but to delay the mission by hours as I had the ship batteries removed and bench charged. I was totally embarrassed. My clients were forgiving, but I learned that systems knowledge is critically important and this is one of those things that rarely gets discussed in initial training events.

Nonetheless, if you have a good non-battery-powered GPU and a King Air model with a nose-mounted compressor, you have a unique ability that you should learn to use. Your passengers will be so impressed if you pull off that trick on a hot summer day.

For those 2XX and 3XX owners who want the ability to ground cool your airplane, Textron Aviation has a ground cooling system available (upgrades.txtav.com/products/king-air-ground-cooling). I've yet to see this system operational in the field, but this adds the ground cooling ability that is available in the 90 and 100 series of airplanes.

Engine-mounted compressors

If you have a King Air model with an engine-mounted compressor (2XX, 3XX), it'll be found on the right engine and you *must* start that engine before the air conditioner compressor is available to you. A hot climate pilot will learn how to load passengers quickly, close the door and move swiftly through the checklist to start the right engine. If the sun is beating down on the airplane, you'll have precious seconds before the sunrays and the greenhouse effect create a sweatbox. Seconds count. Move quickly, but deliberately.

If you have trained ground support personnel to help you, you have some other options available to cool your passengers. In this case, the pilot will move to the front left seat and start the right engine, feather the prop if desired, cool the cabin for about five minutes and then call for the passengers. The ground personnel will pull chocks, make sure everything in the back of the airplane is secure and close the door. This allows the pilot to shut

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A look at the King Air's environmental system panel.

off the environmental system, then quickly start the left engine and then turn the environmental system back on. It affords a cooler boarding process.

Now that both engines are running

Now that the passengers are loaded, it's time to taxi and depart. The air conditioning works far better when the airplane is flying, so do everything possible to avoid ground delays. The best plan to beat the heat in a King Air is to get airborne quickly and climb. The cold temperatures of higher altitudes are your friend.

But if you have a longer taxi or have delays on the ground, the right condition lever can be moved to high idle, ensuring the compressor has enough speed to properly work. If you see an N1 LOW caution light, you know you have insufficient gas generator rpm to allow the air conditioner compressor to operate. For symmetry in taxiing, the left engine can also be brought to high idle. Whether both engines are in high idle, or if the right engine only is brought to high idle, all King Air models taxi well regardless of the condition lever position.

From a maintenance perspective, it is critical that you have your system topped off with refrigerant in the spring of each year. It'll cost you a shop visit, but comfort throughout the summer will be worth the expense. We have a King Air B100 that has a supertight system that cools remarkably better than any other King Air we



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operate. It never leaks refrigerant and the blowers are strong. A mechanically sound system is critical to good operation and a worthy investment.

Another trick to cooling your cabin is to keep your bleed air valves in the ENVIR OFF position, ensuring no warm air from the bleed air system competes with your air conditioning system. You can start the initial climb



If you fly a King Air 3XX, the reset switch in the front wheel well should be a part of every preflight.

with the bleeds in ENVIR OFF and then turn them to the OPEN position when climbing through a comfortable cabin altitude. The system will begin pressurizing normally, and I bet your passengers will never know the difference.

A reset switch in the wheel well?

Most newbies to the 3XX series learn about the small reset switch (or a circuit breaker) located in the nose landing gear wheel well to manage high-pressure trips in the compressor. This is either the best-placed switch or it is the absolute worst position for a switch. In my opinion, it is the worst. I cannot tell you how many times I've cursed that its location makes it inaccessible in flight. There have been many times when the air conditioning would not work, and I suspected that the switch was open. Sure enough, after the flight and after everyone came out of the airplane sweaty and stinky, I went to the nose wheel area and discovered that the switch needed to be reset.

Why did Beechcraft put that switch in the nose wheel area and not in the cockpit? My only guess is they knew pilots would use it with reckless abandon if the cabin got hot. It is so compelling to reset a circuit breaker in flight, but we all know that's usually a bad idea. A circuit breaker pops when more current flows across that circuit than the wiring is rated, and a reset switch needs to be reset because of a problem. A real fire hazard occurs when pilots reset circuit breakers, and flipping this switch too frequently cannot be good for the system. But, when it is sweaty hot in a King Air, I know of few pilots who would have the self-restraint to not reset the reset switch incessantly.

If you fly a King Air 3XX, that reset switch in the front wheel well should be a part of every preflight. If it needs to be reset frequently after flights, be sure to have maintenance take a look.

How to operate the system for maximum coolness

I'm a huge fan of using the auto position for any switch in an airplane, regardless of which system is being considered. If you can't remember the finer points of a particular system from your last training event and that system has an auto position on the switch, that's probably a really good position for that switch in most flight conditions. In all King Air models, there is an AUTO

position for the CABIN TEMP MODE switch, which is a convenient position for everyday use.

Tom Clements has an excellent article in the September 2020 issue of *King Air* magazine that details the internal operation of the environmental system. My favorite part is his articulation of how the bypass valves act like a water faucet in your house. You mix hot and cold water to get the exact temperature you desire from your faucet. Similarly, in the King Air you have bleed air (hot) and cooler ambient air (cold) controlled by two bypass valves to achieve the desired incoming cabin temperature.

If you operate in the AUTO position, then you can adjust cabin temperature using the enabled CABIN TEMP rheostat. Turning this switch fully counterclockwise usually activates the compressor and moves the bypass valves fully cold. This is not a bad way to get maximum cabin cooling, but if the system's automatic functioning is not working precisely (which is a distinct possibility), the bypass valves may not be fully cold. If this is suspected, you should operate in manual mode.

Manual mode confusingly has two positions: MAN COOL and MAN HEAT. The only appreciable difference (as applies to the discussion of cooling the cabin) is that MAN COOL enables the air conditioner compressor. If you suspect you are not getting maximum cooling, move the CABIN TEMP MODE switch to MAN COOL and hold the MANUAL TEMP INCR/DECR switch to the DECR (decrease) position for 30 seconds or more. By doing this you are driving both bypass valves to the maximum cooling position and activating the air conditioning compressor, which gives you maximum cooling.

On a hot day I begin a flight operating in MAN COOL and holding the MANUAL TEMP switch to DECR for more than 30 seconds. This way I know the system is set to provide air that is as cool as possible. Then, in flight at higher altitude, I'll move to the AUTO position and regulate temperature with the rheostat.

There are several fans that move air in the King Air and you want them turning as fast as possible. If it is hot in the cabin, make sure the AFT BLOWER is ON and the VENT BLOWER is in the HIGH position. This moves the most air and provides the best cooling.

There is more nuance to the system, of course, but the strategy shared in this column ensures you're operating the environmental system for maximum coolness.

You don't want to be known in your friend circle as "the pilot who is not happy until everyone else is not happy." Put some of these ideas into practice on your next hot weather flight and see if you can make a cooler cabin for your passengers. **KA**

Joe Casey is the owner of Casey Aviation, Inc., based at Angelina County Airport (KLFK) in eastern Texas. The company manages four King Air aircraft and provides flight training in many models of airplanes. He has 19,300 hours of total flight time, over 4,500 of which are in King Air airframes. He is a certified ATP-ME/SE commercial pilot with ASES, Rotorcraft-Helicopter/Instrument and Glider ratings. Casey is also a designated pilot examiner (DPE) with many authorizations from Sport Pilot through ATP, CFI-Initial and the BE-300 type rating issuing authority up to the ATP level and holds CFI, CFII, MEI, CFI-H, CFI-IH and CFI-G certificates. He has flown 83 North Atlantic crossings in King Air aircraft.



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OPERATOR SPOTLIGHT



Eyes on the Prize

Realizing an ownership dream

by Grant Boyd



PHOTO CREDIT: MARGOT VOSS

Ben Whitley is a Raleigh, North Carolina-based civil litigation lawyer who has owned a 1998 Beechcraft King Air C90B since October 2025. This aircraft is a milestone in Whitley’s lifelong interest in aviation and King Airs.

“I have always been fascinated with airplanes. All my toys were airplanes and as soon as I could get a job, I got one at the local airport in Kinston [North Carolina]. That little airport had a Part 135 operation with a King Air 90,

and I coveted that particular plane,” he said, noting that he soloed in a Cessna 150 at 17 years old.

“I always thought I wanted to be an airline pilot, knowing that it was best to either enter the military or work as a flight instructor to build hours. By the time I got to college and began studying political science, I got drawn to the law. I decided to take a different path at the time but have always kept aviation as part of my life.”

During law school and in the infancy of his legal career, Whitley continued to fly. He recalls memorable flights in rented Cessnas, including taking the Potomac River



Acquired by Ben Whitley in October 2025, this C90B had already been upgraded to Garmin G1000 NXi avionics by a previous owner.

feeling of the power of that plane, at that moment I realized that I was a twin-engine guy from that point on. I then acquired a 2006 G58 Baron and flew that for six years."

He flew that G58, serial number TH-2127, nearly 1,000 hours – a mix of crisscrossing North Carolina for the civil litigation firm he worked for and recreational flying.

"The Baron was perfect for this mission, for being able to get from one side of the state to the next and for getting down to the Bahamas," he said.

The Baron left an indelible mark on Whitley, literally – he tattooed an image of the airplane on his right arm.

Realizing a lifelong dream: King Air ownership

When deciding to expand his capabilities, the pilot with commercial and seaplane ratings briefly considered a few options from other manufacturers. It's not surprising that he quickly narrowed his choices to King Air C90 and 200 models, though, since he'd had his eyes on King Airs since he was a teen fueling up planes on the hot ramp.

"I have always been in love with the King Air, but being a prudent buyer, I talked to [others about the move up]. I had another lawyer buddy of mine who has a TBM and he let me come take a look at it. You had to crawl into it, and it was very uncomfortable. I had more room in the Baron and the TBM didn't seem like an upgrade, although I'm sure the [performance] numbers look great," Whitley advised, noting that the prospective new law firm

approach into Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (KDCA) and the Hudson River Corridor transition in New York City.

Transitioning to aircraft ownership

Whitley became an aircraft owner in 2013.

"I had an opportunity to get into fractional ownership on an SR22," he said. "I flew the Cirrus for a couple of years, up and down the East Coast which got me really comfortable with that type of ATC

work. I got a lot of time on it and part of my mission is going down to the Bahamas. And, of course, as soon as you go over the water, single-engine airplanes sound different – parachute or not."

Whitley chartered a Beechcraft Baron twin-engine piston to the islands once and the experience changed the trajectory of his aircraft ownership journey.

"They let me sit up front, which us pilots love to do when we get in charter situations," he recalled. "Just hearing those two engines and the

bird would be flown by himself as well as a professional pilot crew on select missions.

The decision-making process helped him realize that not only was he meant to be a twin-engine pilot, but he was meant to be a Beechcraft twin pilot.

"I had some folks who helped me manage the Baron and they helped narrow things down for me between the 90 and 200," Whitley said. "The debate of whether I really needed [space and payload] to take more people went on for a little bit. I think it came down to it's easier to hangar the 90 and I didn't need to be able to take that many people all the time. When I need to take four or six people, I have the capability to do that comfortably in the 90."



The Raleigh, North Carolina-based civil litigation lawyer earned his seaplane rating in Alaska.

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The inset image shows a close-up of an aircraft instrument panel. It features several indicator lights and switches. A green light labeled 'NOSE L R' is illuminated. Other labels include 'UP', 'DN', 'GEAR DOWN', 'TAIL FLOOD', 'HD LT TEST', 'GEAR', and 'HYD FLUID'. A yellow arrow points from the text to the gear status lights.

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Ben Whitley flew this 2006 Beechcraft Baron G58 for six years before moving up to the King Air C90B.



Flying the Beech Baron eased Ben Whitley's transition to a Beechcraft turboprop. He honors the Baron with a tattoo on his right arm, visible in this photo.

Timing of the acquisition also helped pull the smaller King Air to the top, as Whitley said there were a lot of good C90 aircraft for sale when he began looking in mid-2025. His goal was to find a Garmin-equipped bird with a strong maintenance pedigree. LJ-1504 met all his initial needs and offered more.

"This particular C90B had all the great modifications you could have on it already: the Blackhawks, wing lockers and winglets ... more than anything that drew me to this particular plane," he said. "The other thing that was important about this aircraft is that it had the G1000 NXi upgrade from a prior owner. I was hesitant about the avionics packages in other King Airs that I was looking at in my price range. I'm sure I would have been fine, but being able to go right into those avionics without an issue from what I was used to for six years was a real selling point for me."

Plus, LJ-1504 was a turnkey purchase; he began flying immediately after signing the closing paperwork in October 2025.

"The condition of all the things that matter was really good. I may do some new carpet but other than that, it was ready to go," he said.

Training to be a King Air pilot

Moving from the Baron to the King Air, Whitley felt there were similarities that eased the transition to the larger Beechcraft.

"What was great about the Baron was that I got so familiar with the Beechcraft platform and the G1000 avionics," he said. "When it came time for an opportunity and ➤

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Ben Whitley, center and holding a copy of “The Barnstormer and The Lady,” was thrilled to get a photo with the grandson and great-granddaughters of Walter and Olive Ann Beech in front of his newly acquired Beechcraft King Air C90B. Left to right: Olivia Pitt, Jeffrey Pitt, Bella Pitt and Edie Pitt.

I felt comfortable enough in my own aviation journey to upgrade to a King Air, it was such an easy, natural transition. I feel like that was all in the design.”

He added: “I think the biggest difference between the two aircraft that people should be mindful of is that the King Air is a heavier aircraft. In some ways, it can be easier [to fly] if it’s all set up right. If approaches are flown on the numbers, and you are comfortable, it is steadier coming down. It sets up a different kind of landing, and I feel like that’s something folks work through. The King Air sits up so much higher and it’s a different feeling. But like all things, once you get it, you get it.”

Whitley did his initial training at King Air Academy in Arizona and praised the team’s customization of the training to his airplane, situation and needs.

“The folks at King Air Academy were able to re-create the exact panel [in his C90B] in a motion simulator,” he said. “We were able to do a lot of engine outs, and they even did a bird strike. It’s all based on your home airport, and everything was flown out of KRDU [Raleigh-Durham International Airport]. It was great to be able to get used to the switchology, the placement of the different things and to run through the clunkier, more difficult tests that

we would run as an initial flight, such as the governor test – things that are kind of tough and on the edge. So, to learn it that way [in the simulator] was really good.”

In addition to the simulator work at King Air Academy, insurance required 25 hours of in-aircraft training. He felt comfortable with flying the King Air before completing his training.

A serendipitous Beech connection

Not long after acquiring LJ-1504 last fall, Whitley was hiring a new work assistant on the ground in Charleston, South Carolina. During the interview, the candidate, Bella Pitt, perked up when he mentioned his use of a business aircraft.

“I was telling her about some plane stuff and she said, ‘Oh what type of plane?’” he recalled. “I said ‘Beechcraft’ and she kind of smiled and said, ‘Well, Olive Ann is my great-grandmother!’ As a Beechcraft nerd I was like, you’ve got to be kidding me.”

It just so happened that the Pitt family was going to be in the area about a week later, and Whitley thought there would be no better way to celebrate this new-to-him plane than by christening it with the grandson and great-granddaughters of Beech founders Walter and Olive Ann.

For the Beechcraft aficionado, this was a fun, novel way to bring new life to the C90B that he plans to fly about 150 hours per year in support of his legal business. For now, Whitley is content having achieved this lifelong ownership dream.

“The C90B has met the bill so far and it’s a great bargain for the type of capability that you get,” he said. “And I know that every guy or gal dreams and wants to keep going up to jets, and the more I know about them and the more I know about the King Air – I realize that there’s not a better platform for what I want to do, even if I could get there 20 or 30 minutes sooner. It’s not going to make a lot of sense.” **KA**

Grant Boyd holds a doctorate of education and is a private pilot and business aviation professional with a passion for writing. His background includes aviation marketing, communications, customer service and sales roles.



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KING AIR GATHERING

A Look Back at 2026's Gathering

by MeLinda Schnyder



Around 70 Beechcraft King Air enthusiasts traveled to Horseshoe Bay Resort in Texas Hill Country March 26-28 for the ninth King Air Gathering, bringing together aircraft owners, pilots, operators, maintenance professionals and industry partners.

This year's event was co-hosted by King Air Nation and BLR Aerospace, and 39 vendors participated by setting up booths in the vendor marketplace.

Pratt & Whitney coordinated a PT6 Customer Connect event on Thursday before the official start of KAG. P&W field and service personnel conducted the free event at Horseshoe Bay Resort Airport (KDZB), with nearly 100 people getting a deep dive into the PT6 through technical demonstrations and practical maintenance insights along with a chance to handle engine components and participate in hands-on exercises like borescope inspections.

A welcome reception Thursday night kicked off KAG, followed by educational sessions on Friday and Saturday that focused on strengthening pilot skills and deepening King Air knowledge. Topics ranged from a presentation on King Air incidents and accident trends by Textron

Aviation to interactive sessions covering avionics, engines and a new fuel system.

King Air Academy's Kevin Carson, who helped bring the King Air Gathering concept to life a decade ago, served as emcee for this year's event and also led a short presentation introducing an effort to create a King Air Safety Foundation. He shared that an organizing committee has formed and aims to establish actionable programs that improve safety, proficiency and education across the global King Air community.

Organizers reported 17 owners flew their King Air aircraft into KDZB. Thirteen of the aircraft were on static display Friday afternoon when KAG attendees took a short shuttle ride from the resort conference center to the airport. Textron Aviation brought a new production Crimson Edition King Air 360 demonstration aircraft featuring IS&S ThrustSense Autothrottle, Collins Aerospace Pro Line Fusion avionics, a distinct exterior paint scheme and special interior design elements.

As the audience at the airport searched for shade in the Texas sun, Ken Blow of KADEX Aero Supply delivered one of the most anticipated sessions of the gathering: How To Care for Your Windshields for Maximum Life.

The following pages provide a look at the 2026 King Air Gathering and the P&W Connect event.



PHOTO CREDIT: PLATEAU CREATIVE

PRATT & WHITNEY CUSTOMER CONNECT EVENT





KAG STATIC DISPLAY



Thirteen King Air aircraft were on static display at KDZB, alongside a locally owned Beechcraft Staggerwing.

PHOTO CREDIT: PLATEAU CREATIVE



Attendees had a chance to explore the interior of a new Crimson Edition King Air 360.



Textron Aviation brought its Crimson Edition King Air 360 demonstration aircraft to the event.



A vintage "Pilot's Check List."



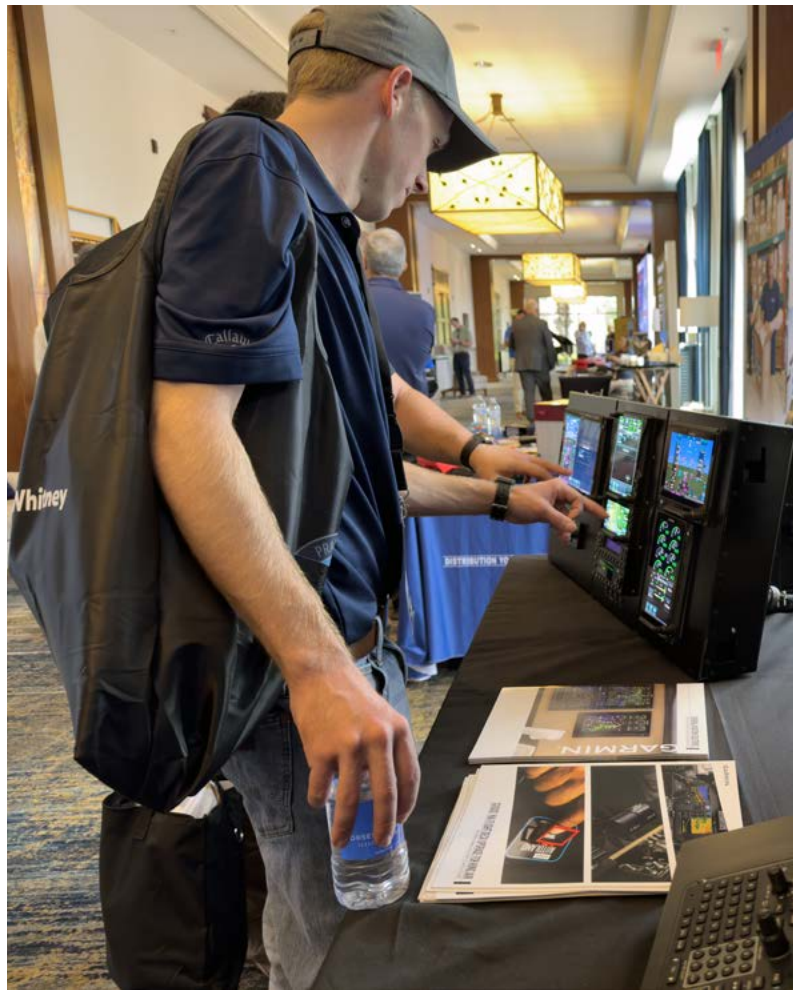
The crowd gathered for Ken Blow's discussion on windshield care and tips for avoiding needing a windshield replacement.

KAG SESSIONS & VENDOR MARKETPLACE

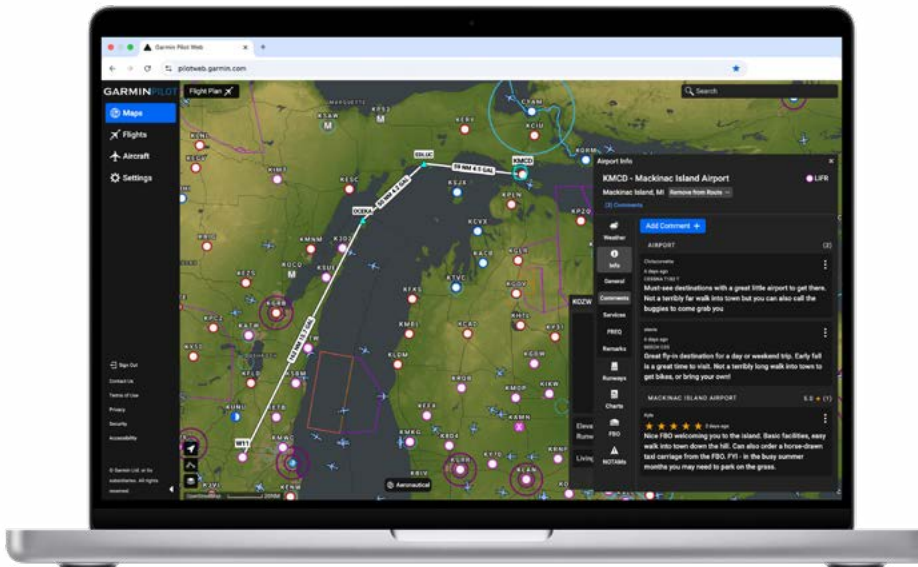




PHOTO CREDIT: PLATEAU CREATIVE



VALUE ADDED



and Canada can access the “Right Seat Rewards” program, giving 50% off a Garmin Pilot Standard or Premium plan. Both promotions run through July 26; find more information at garmin.com/aviationpromotions.

The Airport and FBO Comments features are available now on all Garmin Pilot platforms – iOS, Android and Garmin Pilot Web. *Source: garmin.com.*

Banyan Pilot Shop Launches New E-Commerce Website

Banyan Pilot Shop launched a redesigned e-commerce website on March 13. Banyan Air Service said in a news release that its upgraded platform on Shopify delivers a faster, more intuitive shopping experience tailored to pilots, aviation professionals and enthusiasts looking for gear, gifts and resources.

Found at banyanpilotshop.com, the new site introduces enhanced product organization, including clearly defined brand categories and curated gift guides. Previously limited to PayPal, a new checkout system now supports most major credit and debit cards, offering greater flexibility and convenience for customers.

The company encourages customers to visit the new site to explore educational content, including blogs, as well as to take advantage of special promotions and exclusive online offers. *Source: banyanair.com* **KA**

Garmin Adds Airport and FBO Comments Feature to Garmin Pilot

Garmin recently announced a new feature for Garmin Pilot Web and iOS platforms: Airport and FBO Comments. This feature allows pilots to leave comments and reviews on airport facilities as well as fixed base operators globally so that other pilots can be better informed of facility conditions and service expectations. A five-star rating system for FBOs also encourages pilots to give feedback based on their experience. Pilots can use this information while flight planning to choose the facilities that best meet their needs.

When visiting new airports, pilots can access knowledge shared in new comments by local aviators. This facilitates collaboration among pilots, as they exchange up-to-date information. Key details such as facility conditions, airport

configurations in certain winds and other local knowledge can be posted in the Airport Comments section of Garmin Pilot.

Pilots know that flight planning involves more than just planning their actual flight. Once they land on the runway, they need a place to go. Garmin said that decision can be made easier with the FBO Comments and Reviews feature in Garmin Pilot. Pilots can view and leave reviews of FBOs to give others information on recent experiences such as transportation, food or service while at the facility. Additionally, pilots can use a five-star rating system to rate FBOs based on their experience.

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EAA Aviation Museum Schedules New Summer and Fall Special Events for 2026

The EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, added four events to its 2026 summer and fall schedule. This year-round museum adjacent to the Experimental Aircraft Association's headquarters features more than 200 historic airplanes and a range of galleries and exhibits. See eaa.org/eaa-museum for details on visiting.

Wings on Strings returns on May 30 after a decade-long hiatus. Kids of all ages are welcome to bring kites or build one inside the EAA Aviation Museum to fly at Pioneer Airport. Members of the Wisconsin Kites Club will showcase premium kites during demonstrations throughout the day. All activities are included with regular museum admission.

Discovery Day debuts on June 6 at the museum's Youth Education Center. This one-day event is for kids ages 13 and up to participate in hands-on aviation experiences such as a drone challenge, soldering and flight simulators. Discovery Day is free to attend, though online pre-registration at eaa.org/education/eaa_discovery_day is required.

Roads and Runways takes over Pioneer Airport on Sept. 19. Classic car enthusiasts are invited to bring their vintage vehicles to the museum to take part in a car show at the airport. The event is included with regular museum admission.



The Eagle Hangar at the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, honors military aviation.

PHOTO CREDIT: CONNOR MADISON FOR EAA

ScaleVenture makes its long-awaited return on Oct. 17. Model aviation will be on full display throughout the museum as builders bring the best pieces from their collections to showcase. The October edition of the Museum Speaker Series will coincide with the event, with former F-14 pilot Meagan Flannigan leading a discussion and a Q&A session about the F-14 Tomcat, an aircraft that has been featured in movies such as *Top Gun*. ScaleVenture and the Speaker Series presentation will be included with regular museum admission. *Source: eaa.org*

Senate Committee Passes Pilot Mental Health Bill; AOPA Plans Online Resource Hub

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association applauded the unanimous passage of the Mental Health in Aviation Act by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation on April 14. The House of Representatives passed a similar bill in September.

The bipartisan bill, introduced by Sens. John Hoeven, R-N.D., and Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., would require the FAA to revise regulations to encourage voluntary disclosure of mental health conditions and treatment, regularly review the special issuance process to expand treatment options and approved medications, and provides funding to reduce the special issuance backlog.

In addition, the bill would implement recommendations from the 2024 Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearance Aviation Rulemaking Committee, in which AOPA participated.

The committee examined industry culture, persistent stigma, mistrust of the aeromedical process and the often-complicated path to obtaining a medical certificate before issuing a 164-page report outlining 24 recommendations to encourage pilots and air traffic controllers to disclose mental health conditions and treatment.

Building on those recommendations, AOPA said it plans to highlight mental health in May in conjunction with Mental Health Awareness Month – delivering meaningful education, training and resources to general aviation pilots

and flight instructors. At the end of the month, AOPA will consolidate all its related content into a permanent mental health resource center on its website. *Source: aopa.org*

NBAA Cheers Grassroots Success in Repealing Onerous Washington State Aircraft Tax

At the end of March, the National Business Aviation Association welcomed the repeal of an unduly burdensome tax on most general aviation aircraft in Washington state, which was enacted last year and set to take effect on April 1.

Specifically, the repealed measure would have established a 10% tax on the purchase of new and existing aircraft valued at more than \$500,000. A new bill, signed on March 31 by Gov. Bob Ferguson, replaces and supersedes the annulled bill with a 7-cent per gallon increase to the state's aviation fuel tax and a moderate increase to aircraft registration fees.

The Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association and NBAA galvanized a broad coalition of stakeholders – including other allied associations, local business owners and representatives from across the business aviation community – to make their united voice heard about how the originally planned tax would harm businesses and communities in the state. *Source: nbaa.org*

A portrait of Jenna Reid, a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top. The background is a blurred interior of an aircraft, showing parts of the fuselage and a propeller.

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AOPA Seeks Member Feedback on Potential Bylaw Changes

In April, the AOPA board of trustees released for member input seven potential changes to its bylaws – changing among other things how trustees are nominated and elected, how long they may serve, the qualifications and term limits for the chairman.

AOPA said the board and senior staff based these governance changes, in part, on member requests. The board will review all member input before finalizing the bylaw changes that will ultimately be voted on in the fall.

The organization posted the current and potential bylaws at aopa.org/about/governance/aopa-by-laws/changes-to-aopa-by-laws along with notes explaining each change and a feedback form. *Source: aopa.org*

Wisconsin Enacts Landmark Legislation to Further SAF Production

Advocacy by NBAA, with support from the Wisconsin Business Aviation Association, recently culminated with



Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers signing an innovative bill to further the development and production of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) in the Badger State.

The bill authorizes the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to create a manufacturing zone to support production of aviation biofuel derived from woody biomass, including trees and tree limbs, needles, leaves and forestry residues. It further allocates up to \$120 million in tax credits for a company to produce SAF derived at least 80% from Wisconsin-sourced woody feedstocks over five years.

SAF is a drop-in jet fuel produced from bio-based feedstocks and can reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80% over legacy fuels. The new law reflects a key theme underscored by the U.S. aviation industry's CLIMBING. FAST. advocacy campaign (climbingfast.com): Business aviation is an incubator for sustainability innovation, with a united goal to achieve net-zero emissions from aviation by 2050.

In February, NBAA praised the bipartisan Senate bill – the Securing America's Fuels Act – that would restore the full value of the SAF tax credit (\$1.75 per gallon) and extend it through 2033, key steps to scaling domestic production of the low-carbon fuel. This is the companion bill to one introduced last year in the House of Representatives. Both proposals follow congressional passage of legislation in 2025 that extended the 45Z tax credit but reduced its value, rendering many new SAF projects less financially feasible. *Source: nbaa.org* **KA**

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2026 GENERAL AVIATION INDUSTRY EVENTS



PHOTO CREDIT: TEXTRON AVIATION

- **June 19 & 27:** Textron Aviation Special Olympics Airlift, across the U.S.
- **July 20-24:** Farnborough International Airshow, Hampshire, England
- **July 20-26:** EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- **Aug. 4-6:** Latin American Business Aviation Conference & Exhibition (LABACE), São Paulo, Brazil
- **Sept. 19-20:** National Championship Air Races, Roswell, New Mexico
- **Oct. 8-10:** Beech Party, Tullahoma, Tennessee
- **Oct. 20-22:** National Business Aviation Association Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), Las Vegas, Nevada

Let us know of additional events at
melinda@kingairmagazine.com

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