

# ON USER FEES, ATC AND SMART SKIES FOR ALL

Greg Herrick - Publisher

This summer as we enjoy and reflect on all that General Aviation does for America we must also redouble our efforts to combat those who would take it way. We are speaking specifically about the airlines' efforts to force General Aviation to further subsidize their inefficiencies, as well as their efforts to take over the Air Traffic Control System.

A number of the Big Airlines have recently completed fleecing billions of dollars from their creditors, the taxpayers and their own workers (of course airline management was well taken care of). Now, the airlines want General Aviation to help finance their poor management and operating models through new user fees.

### Why Should You Pay For Airlines' Flawed, Wasteful Operating Models?

Here is a great example of the wasteful operations of one particularly anti-General Aviation airline, Northwest Airlines. It involves a friend of ours who wanted to fly round trip from Minneapolis to Kansas City, a distance of 404 miles. The price for his round trip coach ticket came out to \$990. That seemed steep so he checked a bit further.

### Airline Waste Gone Wild

Logic would tell you that most efficient, cost effective way to fly from Minneapolis to Kansas City is to fly directly there and back. Flying direct saves fuel, time, money, ATC (Air Traffic Control) calls and all kinds of other precious aviation resources - right? Of course that's right - but we are talking about wasteful, subsidy loving Big Airlines here. Why should logic and efficiency apply?

### Big Airlines = Smart Skies? Not So Much It Seems

The anti-GA, pro-user fee Air[line] Transport Association has recently launched a propagandea effort called "Smart Skies". The airlines' stated goals include: eliminating delays, reducing aircraft emissions, and improving the efficiency of the ATC system. So, how about that Minneapolis - Kansas City round trip?

When Northwest priced the most sensible routing, Minneapolis to Kansas City and return at \$990, our friend, being a long time "Smart

Skies" Big Airline customer decided to check a more wasteful routing. That, of course, saved him money. The Northwest routing he came up with was flying from Minneapolis to Chicago, an immediate return to Minneapolis, then off to Kansas City, and back to Minneapolis for his return. That ticket - burning more fuel, using more ATC contacts and airport resources, as well as all the other wastefulness - came to only \$297 - total.

Minneapolis → Kansas City → Minneapolis:  
Two flights, 808 miles for \$990

Minneapolis → Chicago → Minneapolis → Kansas City → Minneapolis → [Chicago]  
Five flights, 1,840 miles for \$279

Think of it: Pay \$990 to fly direct from Minneapolis to Kansas City and return; flying 808 miles on two direct flights. Or, pay \$279 for Minneapolis—Chicago—Minneapolis—

Kansas City—Minneapolis and, if you don't get off the plane, on to Chicago again; that is 1,840 miles and five flights resulting in a ticket savings of \$693 and even more frequent flier miles! All the while, the airline is wasting passenger capacity, burning fuel, tying up ATC, and using all the other resources they want GA to pay for - apparently so they can keep running these lunatic operating models. So much for "Smart Skies."

### Airline & FAA Inbreeding Results In Poor Policy

Of course if you have a poor business model and poor management you can always turn to the government for help. But, if your logic is really bad then it's best to try and stack the deck in your favor.

If inbreeding is bad for a species, it is certainly bad for aviation policy. But that has not stopped the airlines and the FAA from cross pollinating one another, just in time to the user-fees fight. Consider these recent job swaps between the airlines, the FAA and the Air[line] Transport Association.

Not long ago the FAA's top policy official was Sharon Pinkerton. Sharon has a new job now - she's working for the airline's lobby group, the

ATA. There she is busy arguing that the airlines "pay too much" for ATC and that user fees are the only "fair" way to apportion costs. So who replaced Ms. Pinkerton at the FAA?

Pro user fees Sharon Pinkerton's replacement as the FAA's top policy official is a guy named Dan Elwell. Mr. Elwell came from ATA member American Airlines. Now if the FAA's top policy official is from American Airlines, guess where the FAA's new chief lobbyist is from? Her name is Megan Rosia and she came from that anti-GA, pro-user fees, Northwest Airlines.

FAA's top policy person, Pinkerton moves to Air[line] Transport Association → FAA gets Pinkerton's replacement, Dan Elwell from ATA member American Airlines → Anti-GA Northwest Airlines' "managing director for government affairs" moves to the FAA as their new chief lobbyist.

These job swaps are more than simple coincidence. They clearly indicate the airlines and the FAA are in bed together. The real objective is for the airlines to take over the ATC system, financed by more user fees from General Aviation.

### The Airlines Want Full Control of the Air Traffic Control System

In addition to demanding more user fees, the airlines are also boldly backing a scheme which gives them full control of the entire Air Traffic Control System. This proposed "Air Transportation Advisory Board" would be controlled by the airlines with absolutely no General Aviation representation. As part of the inbreeding between the FAA and the airlines, the FAA has proposed that the airlines receive three seats on the Board - and none for GA. And why not? The airlines, have only lost \$37,000,000,000 (that's in billions) in the last 10 years. Is that kind of management we really want running ATC? Absolutely Not!

This summer, when you are called to action by our General Aviation organizations to help defend GA against user-fees - heed the call. Contacting your elected representatives in the Senate and Congress will be crucial to our success. We are all in this together. By working together and defending General Aviation we and America's air transportation system will win. Then we will truly have "smart skies," shared by all.

**"SO MUCH FOR SMART SKIES!"**

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