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# Arriving at Consensus: Airport/Aviation Administration Advice Provided to Airport Managers by State Aeronautic Agencies

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**ARRIVING AT CONSENSUS: AIRPORT/AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ADVICE  
PROVIDED TO AIRPORT MANAGERS BY STATE AERONAUTIC AGENCIES**

Robert W. Kaps and David A. NewMyer

**ABSTRACT**

Recently a study was undertaken to determine the depth of information provided to small airport managers throughout the United States by State Aeronautical agencies. The study centered on efforts to provide formal, written advice to airport managers about airport and aviation administration matters. For the purpose of the study, advice is considered as material provided to airports exclusive of regulatory codes and rules. More specifically, such advice provides airport managers with valuable insight on how to effectively manage various aspects of airport operations.

The survey material is concerned with a broad range of indigenous airport topics dealing with subject matter from General Aviation Airport Operations to Storm water compliance, and a host of topics in between. The many topics addressed in the state documents that were found in the survey were then compared with two key aviation industry sources of information to arrive at a recommended list of topics for inclusion in ANY airport management handbook for use in any state.

The genesis of the study and report was a grant received by Southern Illinois University Carbondale from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics. The goal of the grant was to develop and prepare a "small airport manager handbook" for smaller non-hub airports in Illinois.

Due to the varying nature of laws and regulations concerning airport management and operations from state to state, state aeronautical agencies are in the best position to provide small airport managers with much needed and necessary information on the totality of management functions. However, not all states aeronautical agencies have the human or financial resources to author a comprehensive guide to small airport management. This study found that, at the time the survey was accomplished, only nine states provided some form of advice to airport managers.

**INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Working under a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation to develop a handbook for managers and commissioners of small airports in the State of Illinois, a study was undertaken to determine the number of state agencies providing such information. Specifically the study sought to determine the number of states providing handbook information and, secondly to categorize information contained therein.

Once accomplished the study moved to evaluating the overall state submissions with reference to key sources of airport management information. This latter effort led to comparing and contrasting supplied information against industry training devices suggested by the *American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), Accreditation Manual* and a leading textbook, *Airport Management and*

*Planning* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Alexander Wells.

**METHODOLOGY**

The data collection portion of the study centered on a telephone survey of each state aeronautic agency. Inquiry concentrated on one particular theme, the existence of an airport management handbook. Thus the survey asked only one question, "does your agency distribute some type of 'airport managers handbook' to airport managers to aid in the day-to-day operation of their airports?" When response to the question was affirmative, the state respondent was requested to provide a copy of the handbook. If telephone contact could not be made, or if the representative of the state agency required a formal request to provide information, a letter, attachment A, was furnished. All telephone surveys and resultant mail requests were completed within a three-week period, and all respondent

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information was received and recorded within five weeks of the original survey.

Upon receipt of all tendered documents, an analysis of information contained in each manuscript was undertaken. Each was scrutinized for information and subject content highlighted as topical. This characterization was determined by selecting and utilizing a keyword topic search of information provided through the fourth level of document organization. Any topic or topics covered at the fourth level or higher was deemed "important." Identified subject matter comprised a matrix of topics used for comparison methods.

Four basic categories were used to summarize the data from this study and the following article is prepared using these categories. First, a listing of those states providing formal written *advice* to airport managers is provided. Next, an examination of the general types of *advice* provided by each state is summarized. Third, a determination is made whether the information is categorical or comprehensive. Categorical advice is information provided on obtaining select options such as Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program Funds. Whereas comprehensive in nature covers subjects across a broad range of topics (e.g. summary of applicable state laws, lease topics, hazardous material handling, etc).

### RESULTS

All states aviation agencies were contacted either by telephone or via mail communication. These agencies represent the entirety of the population under scrutiny. Of the fifty contacted, forty-three or 86% responded either affirmatively or negatively to the question of whether the state had a manual source of advice information. Of the forty-three, only nine indicated some model of formal *advice* is provided to airport managers.

The range of *advice* proffered differed from state to state, however, heterogeneity of topical substance existed. Eight of the states responding provided copies of written *advice* or manuals while one submitted a videotape used in the conveyance of manual material to airport managers. The eight manual returns were examined for subject matter relevant to airport operations through four levels of each documents structural organization. In the specific case of the video tape presentation, sound bites were extracted pursuant to information coinciding with citations from the previous eight hard article submissions

In addition to the state study, a literature review was undertaken to determine key sources of airport management information available. Using keyword search methods of internet, library and other reference sources two authoritative works consistently recurred, the *American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), Accreditation Manual*, authored by Stephen Quilty, and a leading textbook, *Airport Management and Planning* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Alexander Wells.

Both these sources are representative of airport information as the AA AE Accreditation Manual is the key study source for those preparing for the certified Airport Executives written examination, while the Wells book is used as a key material source for that examination.

As with the state provided manuals, the two reference sources were keyword searched up to and including the fourth level of headings and subheading in each section.

The study then turns to specific topics within each handbook or document provided on a state by state basis. This information is summarized by listing the major headings contained in each formal written policy provide by participating states. Lastly, a comparison is made between the *advice* provided by the states in comparison to that provided by the selected two key national sources. Conclusions were then drawn about overall key topics among all sources.

The subject matter of each of the eight documents and videotape vary in their approach to information dissemination. Some provide general *advice* covering a certain category or topic (such as *advice* only directed to obtaining Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement funds), while other are more comprehensive on pecuniary and legal state issues such as summary applications of state law, lease arrangements and taxes. Results were tabulated and became the foundation for comparison.

Sixty-seven individualized concerns were identified from the keyword search. Of these, ten were found to be state specific and, although included in the totality of related subject matter in broad reference, were systematically eliminated for the total indexing used for the survey subject matter. These listings, excluding the state specific subject matter, are contained in Appendices A & B under the category of "Subject Matter." Table 1 identifies those state specific categories that have been deleted from Appendix A & B "Subject Matter".

**Table 1 State Specific Advice and State Providing Information**

Category	State ⇒	WI	IN	FL	VA	TX	ND	OH	MA	NM
Aircraft Licensing					X					X
Airport Rules & Regulations						X	X	X		
Annual State Airport Inspections			X				X	X		
Daily Airport Inspection Requirements			X							
Florida Airport Statistics				X						
Florida DOT Specific				X						
Indiana DOT Specific			X							
State Economic Information		X								
State Statistical Information		X								
State Taxes					X		X	X		

In some cases the introduction to each states manual forms a basis for the type information the manual contains. A brief description of each follows:

**Florida.** The purpose of the *Florida Guide to Airport Administration* is to provide Florida airport managers with comprehensive information about all aspects of general aviation airport management, including state-specific rules and regulation.

**Indiana.** The Indiana Department of Transportation, Division of Intermodal Transportation, Aeronautics section's *Airport Inspections Manual* provides information concerning airport standards and specification included in state initiated airport inspections.

**Massachusetts.** The Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission prepared videotape entitled, *How to Apply for Airport Grants*. The video describes methods of application, necessary requirements, responsibilities and commitments required to apply for and receive federal and state airport grants.

**New Mexico.** *The New Mexico Airports Manager's Handbook* addresses the diverse need of the airport user,

the constantly changing regulations, and the underlying need to perform all aviation activities in a safe and consistent manner. The handbook is designed to help airport managers identify strong points in their operation, as well as those that may require improvement.

**Texas.** The identified purpose of the *Texas Airport Management Handbook* is to create a single reference document that will address the most common problems facing general aviation airport managers.

**Virginia.** The Virginia Department of Aviation's *Airport Sponsor Information* provides discussion on topics of aviation law, airport regulations, and financial aid to airports specific to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Wisconsin.** The intent of the *Wisconsin Guide to Airport Administration* is to provide state airport managers with comprehensive information about all aspects of general aviation airport management, including state specific rules and regulations.

Table 2 identifies the particular states submitting documentary and video information and the type of advice contained, either comprehensive or categorical.

**Table 2 State Agencies Submitting Information and the Type of Advice contained in Each**

State	Type of Advice	Topics
Florida	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration
Indiana	Categorical	Airport Inspections/Maintenance
Massachusetts	Categorical	Grant Applications
New Mexico	Categorical	Rules/Regulations, Line Service Ops. & Airport Inspections/Maintenance
North Dakota	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration
Ohio	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration
Texas	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration
Virginia	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration
Wisconsin	Comprehensive	Overall Airport/Aviation Administration

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Fifty-seven universal categories make up the total number of identified themes contained in state manuals. A total of 513 collective responses were indicated by the nine participating states (Appendix B). Table 3 indicates the number of times each state manual had a category

coinciding with one of the fifty-seven identified in the key word search. As can be discerned, the state of Wisconsin addressed a little more than fifty-two percent of the keyword searched subject matter while Maine addressed only four of the issues in their manual.

**Table 3 Total Advice categories Identified by Participating States**

Categories	State ⇒	WI	IN	FL	VA	TX	ND	OH	MA	NM
# of subjects coinciding with 57 identified		30	7	29	17	17	15	16	4	7
Percent of Total Categories		52.6	12.2	50.8	29.8	29.8	26.3	28.0	7.0	12.3

The most frequently addressed state airport subject matter related to financial and fiscal categories of airport operation. This coincides with Kaps & Widdick (1995) who found that airport managers believed the most critical element for a career in airport management is knowledge of financial management.

A capsulated overview of the advise information reveals that 77% of the survey participants address

financial management concerns; 67% capital issues and 55% rent and leasehold dealings as a part of their airport *advices*. Of the top five indicated *advise* concerns, sixty-four percent are pecuniary subjects.

Table 4 identifies topical matter where a high consistency of consensus exists as to its inclusion in state *advise's*.

**Table 4 Most Cited Subject Matter In Nine States Advices**

Most Often Cited Subject Matter	Frequency
Financial Management	7
Capital Improvements	6
Rents and Leases	5
Maintaining and Improving Facilities	5
Ground Maintenance	5

In order to have a better grasp on the thoroughness and detail of the *advise* provided by the states, it is helpful to compare those *advices* against the two key national sources of written *advise* for airport and aviation administrators. The two, Alexander Wells' (1996) book entitled *Airport Planning and Management* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), and the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) accreditation module are used for this purpose.

The book, *Airport Planning and Management*, is commonly used for teaching airport courses in many University Aviation Association approved colleges and universities offering specialized degrees in aviation management/administration. As such, it provides students with an introductory insight of the major elements of the planning, managerial and operational process of an airport. According the texts author (Wells, p.vii), it is designed to be supplemented with current applications drawn from the

professor's own experiences, timely articles and reports.

The accreditation modules produced by the AAAE are used to train airport managers/administrators concerning the specificity of their vocation. The modules, broken down by airport subject mater, provide a thorough overview of administrative and operational management subjects. Upon completion of a standardized test administered by the AAAE, the submission of a written paper covering an airport related matter, and a prescribed apprenticeship period, a student may be awarded the title of Accredited Airport Executive (AAE). This accreditation is recognized nationally as the mark of a person well versed in the administration of public airport facilities.

Whereas these two compendium are the primary subject texts used in the education of future and existing airport managers, a comparison of the *advise* given by the states to those each is apropos. Appendix C compares the

*advice* information received from participating states and compares it to subject matter contained in the seminal sources. To make valid comparisons, the indices of the Wells book was used for like mentioned items and the table of contents of each AAE module identified like subject matter.

Significantly, the totality of information contained in the two training information sources covered 86% of the state *advice* offerings. Individually, the modules of the

AAAE were more comprehensive, addressing 79% of state *advice*, whereas the Airport Planning and Management book addressed 58%. Of a the total of fifty-seven individualized subject matter items, only eight were void of subject matter coverage by the combined topical indices of the two sources. Table 5 below identifies these and the frequency of identification of these items in the nine state documents. This frequency of mention is a possible measure of the importance of certain topics.

**Table 5 *Advice* Information Not Covered by Training Materials**

Most Often Sited Subject Matter	Frequency
Airport Zoning	4
Air Show Operations	2
Contract Liability	2
FBO/Line Services	2
Government Liability	2
Hazardous Wildlife Attractants	1
Land Acquisition	1
Physical Standards	1

### CONCLUSION

While state aeronautical agencies offer a wide range of *advice* services to their airports, only nine provide written *advice* to airport managers. Interestingly, large aviation states such as New York, North Carolina and California failed to indicate any formalized *advice* being provided to the small airport manager. Of those states providing such *advice*, six issue comprehensive coverage while the others disseminate categorical information. Of the topics covered 64% of the total top five categories related to airport pecuniary measures. Specifically, the most identified concern of *advices* centered on Financial Management followed closely by Capital Improvement and information concerning Rents and Lease.

When comparing the state information to a national "standard", or more specifically to that information disseminated in a vast majority of aviation collegiate classrooms, only eight of the total identified were not covered in their entirety. Specifically, Airport Planning and Management topically addresses sixty-eight percent of the material, while the Accreditation Manual of the American Airport Association Executive (AAAE) topically

covers in at least 80%. Combined the two works address 92 % of the topical subject of the nine state *advices*.

The 14,575 airports of this country, not eligible for federal funding are a key concern of state aeronautical agencies. Not all state agencies, however, have the human or financial resources to author a comprehensive guide to small airport management.

To circumvent this obstacle, it is recommended that those agencies not able to produce their own guides, contact the state agencies identified in this survey to obtain information on the development of such programs. Other organizations such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) also provide information helpful to this effort.

Where, however, generic information can be utilized, and this survey indicates that that is precisely what is contained in many of the state *advices*, it is recommended that each state add the two reference materials contained in this paper to their libraries of references. □

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**Robert W. Kaps, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor of Aviation Management at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale where he teaches in the Aviation Management baccalaureate and Public Administration Master's programs, with emphasis on airport administration. Prior to joining the Academy, he spent over twenty-two years in the commercial airline industry in various executive positions with both Major and National air carriers.

**David A. NewMyer** earned a Master of Arts in Metropolitan Studies from Drew University, a Master of Science in Transportation from Northwestern University and Ph.D. in Education Administration and Higher Education from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He is a Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Aviation Management and Flight at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

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**APPENDIX A**

Southern Illinois University  
College of Applied Science and Arts  
Department of Aviation Management & Flight  
Carbondale, Illinois

<<First Name>> <<Last Name>> <<Date>>  
<<Job Title>>  
<<Company>>  
<<Address>>  
<<City>> <<State>> <<Postal Code>>

Dear <<Title>> <<Last Name>>:

Dr. David NewMyer of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Department of Aviation Management and Flight is working under the direction of the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, to develop handbooks for managers and commissioners of small airport in the State of Illinois.

Has the State of <<State Name>> put together any similar documents? If yes, Dr. NewMyer would like to request copies of such documents. I am interested in learning about what other states have developed to guide small airport managers and commissioners. If you have any questions regarding this request, or require further information, please contact Dr. NewMyer or me. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXX  
Graduate Assistant

## APPENDIX B

Topics Included in State *Advices* to Airport Managers

SUBJECT MATTER	STATES⇒	WI	IND	FLA	VA	TX	ND	OH	MA	NM
ACIP					X	X				
AIP & PFC Funding									X	
Air Show Operations								X	X	
Aircraft Licensing					X					
Airport Access					X					
Airport and Runway Lighting			X			X	X	X		
Airport Assets	X			X						
Airport Employee Functions	X			X	X					
Airport Funding					X	X				
Airport Liability/Aviation Law	X			X						
Airport Licensing					X					
Airport Management/Practices	X	X	X	X						
Airport Ownership	X			X						
Airport Parking/Hangars	X			X		X				
Airport Planning	X			X		X				
Airport Risk & Insurance	X			X						
Airport Rules & Regulations						X	X	X		X
Airport Security	X			X						
Airport Zoning					X	X	X	X		
Airspace Obstructions					X	X				
Airspace Use and Protections	X			X	X	X				
Annual State Airport Inspections			X				X	X		
Capital Improvements	X			X	X	X	X	X		
Compatible Land Use	X			X						
Contract Liability	X			X						
Daily Airport Inspections			X							
Economic Impact of Airports	X			X						
Emergency Operations/Accidents					X		X	X		
Environment Reg/Impact Studies							X	X		
FAA History/Current Operations	X			X						
Facilities & Property (functions)	X									
FAR pts. 139 & 150	X			X						
FBO Liability	X			X						
FBO/Line Services	X			X						
Federal Airport Act					X					
Financial Aid to Airports					X		X	X	X	
Financial Management	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Florida DOT				X						
Florida State Statutes & Rules				X						
Ground Maintenance						X	X	X		X
General Aviation Airports	X			X						
Government Liability	X			X						
Grants & Loans					X		X	X		
Ground Maintenance	X	X	X	X		X				X
Hazardous Wildlife Attractants			X							
Indiana DOT			X							
Introduction to Airports	X			X						
Issuance of NOTAMs			X				X	X		X
Land Acquisition					X					
Line of Sight			X							
Maintaining/Improving Facilities	X			X	X	X				X
Master Plans	X			X						
Passenger/Visitor services	X			X						
Petroleum Operations										X

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Physical Standards									X
Public Relations	X		X						
Rents & Leases	X		X		X	X	X		
Revenue Facilities	X		X						
Runway Markings		X			X				
Safety Procedures				X	X	X	X		
Snow Removal/Winter Safety		X				X	X		
Storm Water Compliance						X	X		
Taxes (paying & collecting)				X		X	X		
Weather/Atmospheric Effects					X				
Why Communities Need Airports						X	X		X
WI Bureau of Aeronautics,	X								
WI State Statutes	X								

## APPENDIX C

## Generic Advices (Excluding State Specific) to Airport Managers v. Wells &amp; AAAE

SUBJECT	STATES⇒	WI	IN	FL	VA	TX	ND	OH	MA	NM	WELLS	AAAE
ACIP					X	X						
AIP & PFC Funding									X			
Air Show Operations								X	X			
Airport Access					X							
Airport and Runway Lighting			X			X	X	X				
Airport Assets	X		X									
Airport Employee Functions	X		X	X								
Airport Funding					X	X						
Airport Liability/Aviation Law	X		X									
Airport Licensing					X							
Airport Management/Practices	X	X	X									
Airport Ownership	X		X									
Airport Parking/Hangars	X		X			X						
Airport Planning	X		X			X						
Airport Risk & Insurance	X		X									
Airport Security	X		X									
Airport Zoning					X	X	X	X				
Airspace Obstructions					X	X						
Airspace Use and Protections	X		X	X	X	X						
Capital Improvements	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
Compatible Land Use	X		X									
Contract Liability	X		X									
Economic Impact of Airports	X		X									
Emergency Operations/Accidents					X		X	X				
Environment Reg/Impact Studies							X	X				
FAA History/Current Operations	X		X									
Facilities & Property (functions)	X											
FAR pts. 139 & 150	X		X									
FBO Liability	X		X									
FBO/Line Services	X		X									
Federal Airport Act					X							
Financial Aid to Airports					X		X	X	X			
Financial Management	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Fuel Storage						X	X	X		X		
General Aviation Airports	X		X									
Government Liability	X		X									
Grants & Loans					X		X	X				
Ground Maintenance	X	X	X			X				X		
Hazardous Wildlife Attractants		X										
Introduction to Airports	X		X									
Issuance of NOTAMs		X					X	X		X		
Land Acquisition					X							
Line of Sight		X										
Maintaining/Improving Facilities	X		X	X	X	X				X		
Master Plans	X		X									
Passenger/Visitor services	X		X									
Petroleum Operations										X		
Physical Standards										X		
Public Relations	X		X									
Rents & Leases	X		X			X	X	X				
Revenue Facilities	X		X									
Runway Markings		X				X						
Safety Procedures					X	X	X	X				

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Snow Removal/Winter Safety		X				X	X				
Storm Water Compliance						X	X				
Weather/Atmospheric Effects					X						
Why Communities Need Airports						X	X		X		

Gray color indicates information included