



## Airport Director's Letter

Greetings,

Summer 2021 is in full swing, and with its arrival we're seeing a continuing return to what appears to be normalcy after what can only be described as a tumultuous period for the aviation industry. The TSA reported a record number of passengers over Memorial Day Weekend, screening more than 7.1 million people from Thursday through Monday. That represented the highest traffic number since March of 2020, and indicates travelers are once again confident to take to the skies.

Looking closer to home here at St. Louis Downtown Airport and focusing in on the charter business that drives our operations, we're also seeing a rebound in traffic. After recording 273 charter operations involving more than 9,800 passengers in 2019, those numbers fell to just 77 operations and fewer than 2,400 passengers in all of 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the industry. But things are looking much more positive for 2021 with 24 operations completed during the first quarter of the year and that number is continuing to accelerate as air travel ramps back up.

In the latest issue of our newsletter, we take a look at the how the aviation industry is continuing to improve and evolve and what people can expect in the post-COVID-19 environment. As the charter and commercial flights we're familiar with continue their return to pre-pandemic levels, could they soon be joined in the air by air taxis offering an "Uber-like" experience for air travel, or even unmanned aerial modes of transportation? We see the possibility and are excited to see higher education institutions in the St. Louis region helping to prepare the workforce that will be needed for these promising new areas of aviation.

We also give you an inside look at the measures undertaken at St. Louis Downtown Airport to help maintain operations during most inclement weather scenarios and introduce you to "Bobby" Toenjes, who has been associated with the airport for nearly four decades and heads the maintenance department.

We round out this issue with our latest tenant profile, featuring Ideal Aviation, a full-service aircraft rental, flight training, fractional aircraft ownership, and aircraft maintenance/avionics facility serving present and future pilots.

As we continue to embrace a return to more normal operations, the future success of St. Louis Downtown Airport and our exceptional tenants here will be supported by our unmatched location in middle of the United States offering the most convenient access to all points in the St. Louis region. We hope you enjoy the articles in this issue and learn a little more about our operations and the ever-evolving industry in which we operate. I'd be happy to connect directly if you have questions or want to learn more, or feel free to explore the services the airport provides [here](#).

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# Business Aviation Looks Promising in the Post COVID-19 Environment



*Photo courtesy of Joby Aviation*

While the aviation industry sustained a huge decrease in the demand for air travel due to the ongoing impacts of the novel coronavirus, travelers are returning to the skies as the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines accelerates around the nation and world. The uptick in air travel actually began on the air charter side, as limited availability of flights from commercial carriers and social-distancing concerns led travelers to explore other options. Charter traffic experienced a major surge in recent months to the extent that it has nearly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, according to the latest data released by FlightAware.

Though the aviation industry as a whole is still far from a making full recovery, the business continues to improve, and in a post-COVID-19 environment, the industry will likely start to look quite different. Among the changes on the horizon are air taxis and autonomous modes of transportation, both of which highlight a promising new area of development for the future of aviation.

In December 2020, Uber Technologies invested \$75 million in [Joby Aviation](#), a transportation company developing an all-electric, vertical take-off and landing passenger aircraft, which it intends to operate as early as 2023. This investment was part of a broader transaction involving the acquisition of Uber Elevate – Uber's urban air mobility initiative – by Joby Aviation and an expanded partnership between the two parent companies. This partnership will create integration between ground and air travel for future customers by combining their respective services into each other's apps.

Uber Elevate was established in 2016 and has since played an important role in laying the groundwork for the aerial ridesharing market by bringing together regulators, civic leaders, real estate developers and technology companies around a shared vision for the future of air travel. Moreover, the company developed a unique set of software tools that build on more than a decade

of experience enabling on-demand mobility, which has been invaluable to Joby Aviation as it formulates plans for commercial launch. Its zero emissions aircraft can transport four passengers and a pilot, flying up to 150 miles on a single charge and can cruise at speeds of 200 mph. The aircraft is also designed to help reduce urban congestion and accelerate the shift to sustainable modes of transit.

If air taxi services like Joby Aviation's model take off and airports around the globe become more open to these alternative modes going forward, then there would be a rapid need for more trained experts in operations and maintenance of these electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft (eVTOLs), in addition to autonomous vehicles. That could prove challenging given the existing shortage of skilled professionals needed to fill a myriad of openings in the aviation field.

Here in the St. Louis area, Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) remains committed to helping address these shortages by offering Aviation Degree and Certificate programs. SWIC currently has A.A.S. Degrees in Aviation Pilot Training for both Airplanes and Helicopters, Aviation Maintenance (FAA Airframe and Power Plant Certificate), Aviation Management and Aircraft Dispatcher Certificate programs. SWIC also has

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## Business Aviation Post Covid-19 (continued)



Photo courtesy of Joby Aviation

the SIU Carbondale Extended Campus B.S. Degree in Aviation Management on the Belleville campus that runs on a weekend format. Students can save more than 40% of the degree costs by completing the program on the SWIC campus. Current plans include the development of an Avionics Certificate program and Unmanned Aerial Systems Vehicle (Drone) Certificate program.

“Aviation is continuing to grow and large numbers of qualified professionals are needed to fill the ever-expanding demand throughout the region, the country, our military and the world,” said Keith Mueller, Coordinator of Aviation Pilot Training/Aviation Management at SWIC. “With travel now spiraling back up and airline bookings expanding at a significant rate, now is the perfect time for anyone planning a career in aviation to join a program and become an aviation professional of tomorrow.”

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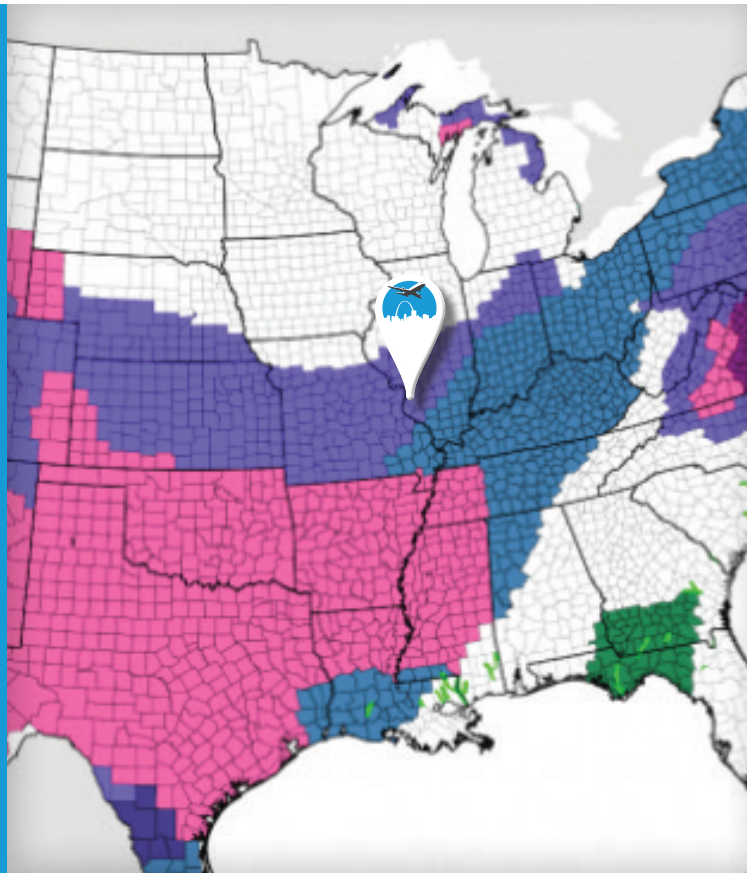
Also close to home, Saint Louis University’s Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology has forged a path of innovation by developing future-focused programs for engineers and aviators to address current and future needs of the industry and society. Srikanth Gururajan, Associate Professor for the Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Department, has extensive experience in the design and construction of the unmanned aerial

vehicle (UAV) platforms. This is reflected in his teaching interests that include student aerospace design competitions, which he believes are ideal avenues for students to express their creativity while complementing the knowledge gained in the classroom and promote greater collaboration and learning across disciplines.

Every summer, Professor Gururajan and a team of students travel to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station (NAS) in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, for the Student Unmanned Aerial System (SUAS) Competition, hosted by the Seafarer Chapter of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUUVSI). The competition serves to stimulate and foster student interest in UAS and is designed to engage students in systems engineering and create complete solutions to complex, real world problems. During the competition, student teams design, develop and fabricate an unmanned aerial system capable of completing specific autonomous operations, including takeoff, navigation, sense, detect and avoid (SDA) and more. Despite the cancellation of the event the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students are eagerly preparing for next year’s competition and keeping busy in the classroom with other exciting tasks, such as utilizing virtual reality to fly in Professor Gururajan’s AirCRAFT lab.

Despite the pandemic, as new technologies continue to be developed with the recent growth of urban passenger-carrying, autonomous or semi-autonomous aircraft, air travel may be on the cusp of a major transformation. [n](#)

# Weathering the Storms at St. Louis Downtown Airport



While severe weather conditions impact operations at airports around the world every day, it is critical that airports stay ahead of the storms by implementing preventative maintenance measures for key infrastructure systems.

At St. Louis Downtown Airport, which is located in Cahokia Heights and Sauget, Illinois, the skilled professionals of the maintenance department have the equipment and manpower to maintain full airport operations during most inclement weather scenarios. They are trained to ensure continued compliance with 14 CFR Part 139, an airport operating certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Robert “Bobby” Toenjes has been associated with St. Louis Downtown Airport for nearly four decades and heads the maintenance department, which provides oversight on construction projects, engineering consultation on prospective capital improvement projects, as well as preventive and unscheduled maintenance on a variety of equipment and structures. Toenjes and his team are responsible for pothole patching on the two miles of road leading up to the airport

and sealing any cracks on runways and taxiways. The department also maintains a dozen different buildings on the airport’s property, fixing roof leaks and hangar doors.

“No matter the season, there’s always something for us to do,” said Toenjes. “In the weeks leading up to the snow season, our team inspects and prepares each piece of snow removal equipment and takes inventory of required fluids, replacement parts and other snow removal equipment components. When snow, sleet, or icy conditions occur or are anticipated, we monitor the changing weather and runway conditions and conduct snow/ice removal operations across the entire airport as needed. We also pick up the pieces after extreme summer weather events like tornadoes blow through.”

## Weathering the Storms (continued)



*An aerial view of St. Louis Downtown Airport during a winter storm. Those familiar with the airport might notice that a runway is “missing.” The airport maintenance team typically doesn’t plow the north runway during winter storms, which is why it is not clear of snow. They instead focus on keeping the primary runway open and operational.*

Toenjes and his four-man team have the airport covered seven days a week, and stay busy year-round on the airport grounds with 400 acres of grass to mow, seven miles of fence line to maintain, plus the preservation of all the runway and taxiway lights, telephone poles, fire hydrants and culverts. This also includes field wiring projects to dig up any sections of lights on the taxiway that go out, the testing of primary cables, isolation transformers and more. Regular preventive maintenance of the airfield promotes overall safety and provides pilots with the resources they need to fly safely. Other aspects like well-kept facilities create a safe environment for pilots while they’re on the ground as well, which Toenjes noted, is a key part of the job to keep delays and cancellations minimal for the primary runway.

“We clear all the taxiways and runways for the airport, because if the snow piles up or if the grass grows up above the point where pilots can no longer see the lights, then they ultimately can’t go anywhere,” he added. “With the airport being located just minutes away from downtown St. Louis and the Gateway Arch, we have a lot of traffic come through here this time of year and sports teams coming in too, so it’s especially important to keep operations running smoothly and efficiently to provide travelers with a convenient experience.” [n](#)

# TENANT NEWS

## Tenant Profile: Ideal Aviation Illinois LLC



Bill Macon  
Ideal Aviation's  
Managing Partner

### At a Glance

Ideal Aviation provides flight training, aircraft rental, aircraft maintenance and avionics services to the general aviation community.

### Business Type

Full-service aircraft rental, flight training, fractional aircraft ownership, and aircraft maintenance/avionics facility serving present and future pilots. Ideal is the St. Louis area's only privately owned FAA Part 141 certified flight school.

### A Closer Look

The Ideal Aviation facility spans three hangars at the St. Louis Downtown Airport, where they offer the broadest array of flight training options in the St. Louis area. The company has more than 20 Certified Flight Instructors (CFIs) on staff to meet all training needs, whether it be for someone seeking Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) Certification or just someone who has always wanted to learn to fly. Ideal Aviation's fixed wing program includes technically advanced aircraft, both single and multi-engine, featuring Garmin 1000 avionics, and they also fly Cessna 172s with the traditional six pack. Rotary wing training is offered in the modern Guimbal Cabri G2, a European helicopter designed specifically for training. FAA certified flight simulators also are available.

Ideal Aviation also provides maintenance and avionics services, and with more than 100 years combined experience, the company's mechanics provide a quality experience that will meet or exceed expectations. Ideal's maintenance crew stands ready to serve customer's general aviation needs, from oil changes to engine swaps, and they work on most major makes and models.

The company is committed to meeting the needs of both present and future pilots.

### Learn More

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# ST. LOUIS DOWNTOWN AIRPORT



A Bi-State Development Enterprise



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