

# BAPG impacts aviation future through networking airport/business/community

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tronics; SimFlite Minnesota demonstrates simulators. Fibrenew is off the field but Bob Lawson supports our on-field events. Twin Cities Aviation opened its classroom to the American Heritage Girls group this spring for a presentation by General Manager Paul Perovich, who provided information about careers in aviation, forces of flight, and directing the group through their merit badge requirements.”

Harvey Karth points out that, while students do enjoy themselves, the goal of BAPG is to make a real impact on the lives of the students.

“The students who come here are actually studying aviation,” said Karth. “We don’t bring them out just to show off. We show them aircraft so they get the real thing, not just pictures out of a book they work with in school.

“Out here students get to see airplanes, go inside, watch them land, take off, watch mechanics work on them, see what all happens at an airport. Their teachers say it makes a world of difference for students because students see the real thing. They are really enthused when they come here.”

BAPG has impacted public awareness of the airport by hosting events, and volunteering support of events held by its members. BAPG volunteers also support and participate in the airport’s main event of the year, Discover Aviation Days. According to Harvey Karth, at its inception in the mid 1990s, attendance at Discover Aviation Days ranged from 300 to 400 people on a weekend. In this year’s event, over 13,000 people visited over the weekend. Volunteers with BAPG coordinate vendors in the education tent on the grounds.

Educating visitors and school students about careers in aviation is one of the primary goals of BAPG. Hansen and Karth said being a pilot may be the most highly visible career in aviation but it takes more than a pilot to get an aircraft into the air.

“Air traffic control, mechanics, aviation manufacturers, engineers, the list goes on and on,” said Hansen. “Careers in aviation extend to insurance, communications, law, you name it.”

One of the original motivations for the BAPG founder was to address the issue of gates surrounding community airports. Though gates are often perceived by the public as a barrier to keep them out, Karth explains that visitors are welcome.

“We have two gates that automatically open when visitors can drive up,” said Karth. “All they ask is to watch the signs

so drivers know where they are and are not allowed to drive. Obviously there is no driving on runways.”

Anoka County Airport has also created a visitor area in the middle of the airport, near the control tower where community members are invited to spend time watching air traffic. Sheltered picnic tables are available that also provide a speaker system by which visitors can hear communications between aircraft and the tower.

“That gets used some but it could be used a lot more,” said Karth. “You’ve got planes coming and going from all directions there.”

With a solid foundation of four years of activities promoting the airport and building relationships with the community, BAPG is now prepared to accept donations that will enhance their ability to proceed. Roger Hansen noted that fund raising efforts are focused on specific projects rather than a general fund for the group.

“We are currently looking at several possibilities for fund raising including developing scholarships for students entering aviation studies, helping schools with their bussing costs, and others as needs arise,” said Hansen. “We want to remain competitive in our industry by taking action and working with young students to unlock their future potential by introducing them to STEM fields related to Aerospace.”

Activities with students are firmly in place BAPG is open to suggestions from participating members to move to the next level of promotion.

“If you go back to our origin, our idea was to promote the airport, and the businesses on the airport. In order to do that, we had to have a method. That method was through education, to build that program. Now we are moving towards business opportunities, not only on the airport but also for the businesses that reach beyond the fence. Though community airports appear small, they have the capacity to reach the world.”

With men like Harvey Karth and Roger Hansen at the helm, such capable board members, and the loyal crew of dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers, that would appear to be the goal BAPG is going for in its support of Anoka County Blaine Airport.

For more information, visit [www.ANEairport.org](http://www.ANEairport.org)



University Avenue Elementary School Aerospace Kindergartener Neveah Foster beams delight sitting in the cockpit of Chuck Datko’s T-6 during an April 2015 visit to Anoka County Blaine Airport hosted by the Blaine Airport Promotions Group.

Photo courtesy of University Avenue Elementary School Aerospace



Historian, author, speaker, and BAPG volunteer Tom Lymburn teaches Farnsworth Elementary students about air flow during a BAPG hosted event at the Golden Wings Aviation Museum.

Photo by Roger Hansen



The Blaine Airport Promotions group logo is a unifying symbol for businesses in the group who experiences special business benefits in displaying the logo in their advertisements.

Courtesy of BAPG