



Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission

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Bird to be Featured Speaker During Norman Chamber Meeting at Max Westheimer

OKLAHOMA CITY – Victor Bird, director of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, will be the guest speaker during the Norman Chamber of Commerce’s Aviation Committee meeting scheduled for 11:30 a.m., March 13, on the second floor of the Max Westheimer Airport terminal.

Bird, who has directed the Commission for more than three years, will share his strong belief in “airvangelism” with those in attendance and discuss the importance of general aviation airports to Oklahoma’s communities, such as Norman’s Max Westheimer Airport. In particular, he will address the link between aviation and economic development.

During the event, he will also present a brief update on the progress of several aviation- and aerospace-related bills currently making their way through the Oklahoma Legislature, including House Bill 2082, also known as the Airport Modernization Bill. If approved, the bill would make Oklahoma’s 49 regional business airports, including Max Westheimer, eligible for grants that can be applied to specific airport-improvement projects, including the costs to construct or renovate terminals and hangars primarily used for general aviation.

HB 2082 easily passed the House on March 6 and is set to be heard in the state Senate in the coming days or weeks.

“Airports are ‘Gateways to the World’ for communities and are extremely important in helping generate economic activity around our state,” Bird said. “The businesses that fly in and out of our communities cite convenient access to a general aviation airport as one of the key reasons for either relocating or expanding to a particular community. And those are the same businesses that create jobs and invest in our communities.”

Bird said that aviation is Oklahoma’s largest industry, employing approximately 150,000 Oklahomans across the state. One in 10 Oklahomans derive their incomes from the aviation industry, he said. It also generates an economic output of nearly \$12 billion annually.

An attorney and veteran of state government, Bird served Oklahoma State University’s Board of Regents for five years, the Lieutenant Governor’s office for one year and the Attorney General’s office for nearly 12 years. Bird spent his last four years with the Attorney General’s office as chief deputy attorney general of the Civil Division, supervising more than 50 assistant attorneys general. He was also the driving force for the enactment of the Oklahoma Antitrust Reform Act in 1998 – the first significant revision to Oklahoma’s antitrust law since statehood – and for the formation of Governor Brad Henry’s 2004 Aerospace Task Force.

Bird currently serves as secretary on the executive committee of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO). Founded in 1931, NASAO is one of the most senior aviation organizations in the U.S., predating even the Federal Aviation Administration's predecessor – the Civil Aeronautics Authority. NASAO represents state government aviation agencies in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico.

The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission's mission is to promote aviation, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring the needs of commerce and communities across Oklahoma are met by the State's air transportation system comprising of 114 public airports.