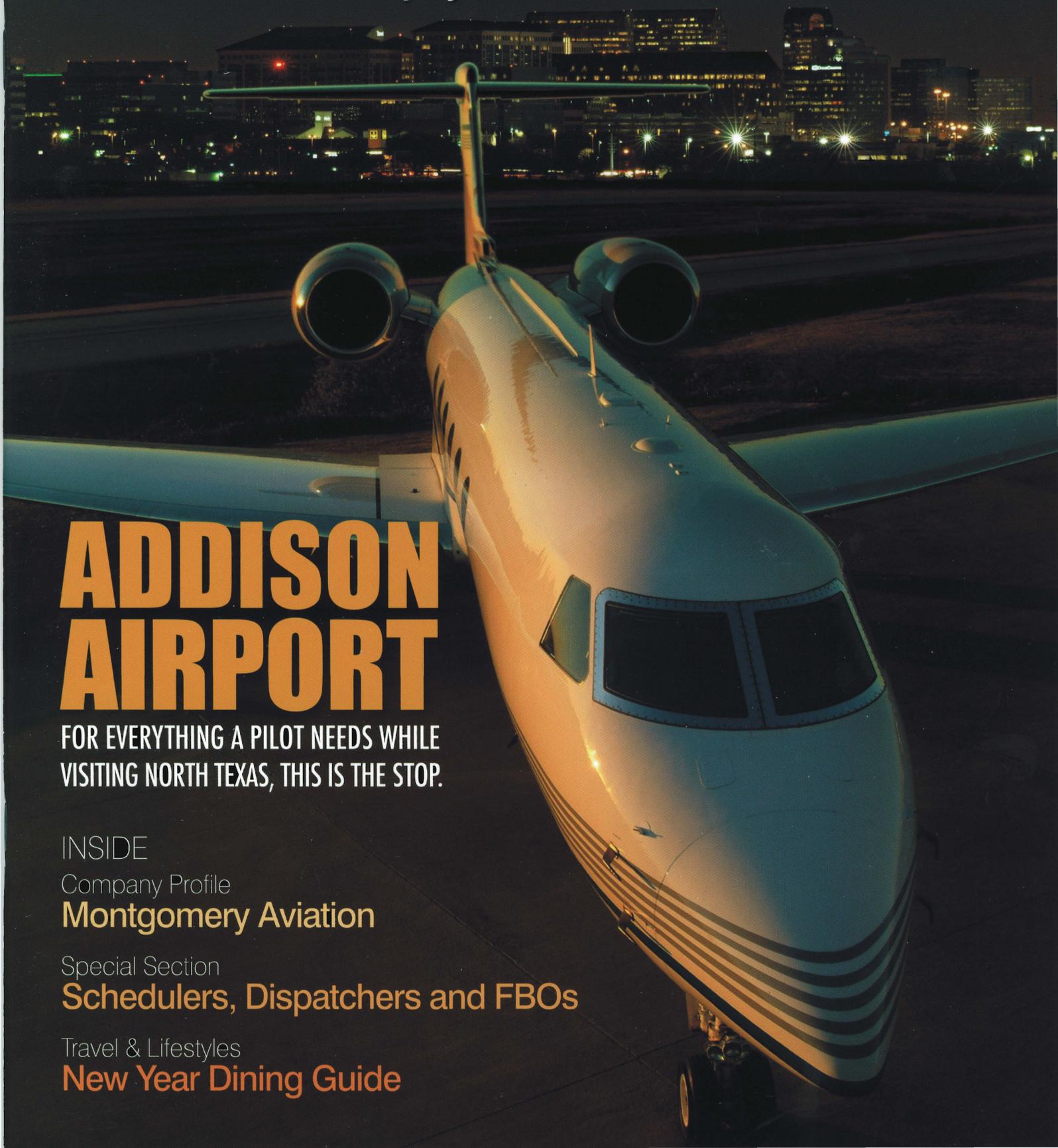


The AutoPILOT™

Southwest | January-February 2010

Lifestyles For The Aviation Enthusiast



ADDISON AIRPORT

FOR EVERYTHING A PILOT NEEDS WHILE
VISITING NORTH TEXAS, THIS IS THE STOP.

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No Plane, No Gain

Ways to bring business aviation's purpose and value to the forefront.

During the past year, the aviation industry has experienced two of its toughest battles ever—changing the erroneous public perception of business aviation as extravagant and the painful effects of a declining economy.

Between derogatory comments made by certain journalists regarding the value of GA airports to congressional quips regarding the use of business aircraft, the past year has kept our industry busy with damage control and attempts to alter misconceptions about aviation's value.

In response, NBAA formed a movement called the “No Plane, No Gain” initiative to help educate the public, media and policymakers about the value of business aviation. Despite the efforts of the NBAA and other industry groups, the real battle must be fought by those of us in the trenches: aviation businesses, flight departments and local airports.

As an aviation community, we're often required to maintain strict confidentiality of our operations. This can be part of our collective undoing, causing business aviation to appear to be an elite industry, mysterious to most of the general public. With much of the good that occurs as a direct result of business aviation, our insistence on operating under a cloak of privacy is a tremendous mistake. There are examples showing the good that occurs in aviation that, if the public knew about them,

could actually help improve our public image.

For example, did you know the General Motors flight department donated aircraft to fly more than 100 cancer patients to life-saving medical treatments, and the Ford Motor Co. flight department flew nearly 200 patients to receive treatment? Did you know that over half of the companies listed on the Fortune 100 list donate free patient transportation service through the Corporate Angel Network?

It's not just large flight departments that donate their aircraft for the greater good, either.

At our local airport, Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport (TRM), in Thermal, California, one pilot who flies his Pilatus PC-12 for business throughout the Southwestern United States recently flew 2,100 pounds of emergency supplies, food and fresh

water to small Mexican communities hit by a natural disaster.

Another local pilot flies monthly on Angel Flight missions, helping children and adults that need transportation for medical-related issues. And, pilots at our company, Desert Jet, even use our aircraft to fly animals rescued from puppy mills to foster homes.

This is just a small glimpse into the generosity and philanthropy that occurs in aviation. Because private aviation operations are just that—private—we tend to keep our comings and goings quiet.

A huge mistake! Before we ever have a need to defend our flight department, local airport or businesses, we should actively promote the good in GA, instead of expecting our industry organizations to advocate it for us.

When your local EAA chapter hosts a Young Eagles event at your airport, write a press release describing the event and talk about the value your local airport affords your community. If you're flying an Angel Flight mission, use that experience as an opportunity to get Angel Flight publicity just by calling your local news station and asking them to film your arrival. This not only gives your charity the visibility they need to garner more support but at the same time shows aviation in a positive light.

Advocacy starts with each and every one of us. Let's rise to the occasion and get the word out! →

For more information, visit www.desertjet.com and www.wai.org.



Catch **Denise Wilson**, president and chief pilot of Desert Jet—a La Quinta, California-based aircraft charter, management and acquisition company—as a keynote speaker at this year's Women in Aviation Conference. Wilson has been qualified by the NBAA as a certified aviation manager and is also an ATP-rated pilot with six type ratings. Desert Jet is one of less than 20 charter companies worldwide that's IS-BAO-registered, operating a fleet of two Citations and a King Air.