

**2022-2023 Update to *FAA Historical Chronology: Civil Aviation
and the Federal Government, 1926-1996* (Washington, DC:
Federal Aviation Administration, 1998)
Compiled by Theresa L. Kraus, FAA historian**

January 13, 2022: FAA awarded \$5 million in Aviation Maintenance Technical Workers Workforce Development Grants to organizations that will teach technical skills and prepare participants to pursue aviation maintenance careers. (See January 19, 2021.) Grant recipients included:

- Macon County School District, Tuskegee, AL
- Pima County Community College District, Tucson, AZ
- North Orange County Community College District, Anaheim, CA
- San Bernardino Community College District, San Bernardino, CA
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Washington, DC
- DLK Aviation Inc., Kennesaw, GA
- Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs, IA
- Southern University at Shreveport, Shreveport, LA
- Dutchess Community College, Fairview, NY
- Guilford County School System, High Point, NC
- Columbus State Community College, Columbus, OH
- Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK
- Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport, PA
- South Carolina Department of Education, Charleston, SC
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Madison, WI

January 13, 2022: FAA awarded \$5 million in Aircraft Pilots Aviation Workforce Development Grants to accredited higher-education institutions, high schools, state and local governments, and flight schools. Grantees can use the funding to create and deliver a curriculum to prepare students to become aircraft pilots, aerospace engineers, or uncrewed aircraft systems operators. (See January 19, 2021.) Grant recipients included:

- Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL
- Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City, MI
- Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City, NC
- University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND
- County of Scottsbluff School District #16, Gering, NE
- Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, Flushing, NY
- Aerotrek Flight Academy, LLC, Wadsworth, OH
- Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, Oklahoma City, OK
- Harrisburg University of Science & Technology, Harrisburg, PA
- Spartanburg County School District #5 (James. F. Byrnes High School), Duncan, SC
- South Carolina Department of Education, Columbia, SC
- Florence School District One, Florence, SC
- Crowley Independent School District #912, Crowley, TX
- Utah State University, Logan, UT
- Randolph Macon Academy, Front Royal, VA

- Old Dominion University Research Foundation/Virginia Space Grant Consortium, Norfolk, VA

Grantees could use the funds to establish new educational programs, provide scholarships or apprenticeships for individuals pursuing employment in the aviation maintenance industry, conduct outreach about careers in the aviation maintenance industry to primary, secondary, and post-secondary school students, and support educational opportunities related to aviation maintenance in economically disadvantaged areas.

January 24, 2022: DOT announced a final rule that enabled it to speed up the rulemaking process and protect consumers by providing greater flexibility to appoint appropriate hearing officers, eliminate the requirement for the officer to issue a detailed report, and provide more options for the officer on when and how testimony would be presented at the hearing. It also clarified that hearings would only be granted in the public interest.

January 26, 2022: FAA and the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority finalized an agreement that allowed the two countries to share each other's evaluation and acceptance of flight simulators. (See March 25, 2021.)

February 23, 2022: FAA announced a new initiative that outlined how the U.S. could safely eliminate the use of leaded aviation fuel by the end of 2030. The effort was based on four action pillars involving FAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, fuel suppliers, distributors, airports, engine and aircraft manufacturers, research institutions, associations, environmental experts, communities, and other key stakeholders. (See December 9, 2021; April 22, 2022.) The pillars included:

- Develop Unleaded Fuels Infrastructure and Assess Commercial Viability
- Support Research & Development and Technology Innovations
- Continue to Evaluate and Authorize Safe Unleaded Fuels
- Establish Any Necessary Policies

March 1, 2022: FAA began installing eight new Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS) across Alaska that would provide continuous, real-time, and accurate weather information to remote areas of the state. The eight new stations were in Akiachak, Coldfoot, Crooked Creek, Kotlik, Nulato, Perryville, Tok Junction, and Tununak. Weather information from these locations provided pilots a preview of what to expect when arriving. It allowed IFR pilots to conduct instrument approaches to the lowest possible minimums, increasing the safety and predictability of operations. (See October 14, 2021.)

March 2, 2022: FAA issued orders blocking Russian aircraft and airlines from entering and using all domestic U.S. airspace as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The notice and regulatory orders suspended operations of all aircraft owned, certified, operated, registered, chartered, leased, or controlled by, for, or for the benefit of, a person who was a citizen of Russia. It included passenger and cargo flights, and scheduled and charter flights, effectively closing U.S. air space to all Russian commercial air carriers and other Russian civil aircraft. (January 8, 2020.)

March 23, 2022: A jury in federal district court in Fort Worth, Texas, acquitted former Boeing 737 MAX Chief Technical Pilot Mark Forkner on felony charges of deceiving FAA about a key flight-control system involving 737 Max jets. The jury cleared him of criminal charges of four counts of wire fraud brought by the U.S. Justice Department. (See October 14, 2021; September 22, 2022).

March 31, 2022: Steve Dickson resigned as FAA Administrator. Billy Nolen, the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, became acting administrator. (See August 12, 2019; July 6, 2022; March 31, 2023.)

April 5, 2022: FAA dedicated the newly commissioned air traffic control tower at Charlotte Douglas International Airport. The 370-foot-tall, 850-square-foot tower cab provides air traffic controllers with a clear view of the airfield. A 42,000-square-foot building houses an expanded terminal radar approach control (TRACON) that handles flights departing and arriving at the Charlotte airspace. The tower is the second tallest in the nation after the 398-foot-tall tower at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The existing tower was commissioned in 1979. (See June 6, 2016.)

April 15, 2022: FAA announced \$4.4 million in drone research, education, and training grants to seven universities. The research focused on electromagnetic compatibility, detecting and avoiding classifications, and cybersecurity oversight. The grant awardees included the University of North Dakota, the University of Kansas, Drexel University, Ohio State University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Mississippi State University, and Oregon State University.

April 18, 2022: A federal judge in Florida declared the U.S. government's mask mandate for air travel unlawful. (See September 10, 2021.)

April 20, 2022: FAA announced it planned to make its zero tolerance policy against unruly passengers permanent. FAA implemented the policy on January 13, 2021, after seeing a disturbing increase in unruly passenger incidents. (See December 21, 2021.)

April 20, 2022: FAA announced it had added a new feature to MedXPress that allowed pilots to track the status of their medical certificates online throughout the application and review process.

April 21, 2022: FAA downgraded the air safety rating for Russia, restricting any expansion of service or partnerships since Russia's Federal Agency for Air Transport did not comply with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards. Under the International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program, FAA assesses the civil aviation authorities of all countries with air carriers that have applied to fly to the United States, currently conducting operations to the United States, or participating in code-sharing arrangements with U.S. partner airlines. Air carriers from countries with Category 2 ratings are not allowed to initiate new service to the United States, are restricted to current levels of existing service to the United States and are not permitted to carry the code of U.S. carriers on any flights. At the time of the assessment, no airlines operated regularly scheduled flights between Russia and the United States. (See May 8, 2020.)

April 22, 2022: FAA and U.S. airports launched an Airport Climate Challenge to help achieve a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. FAA offered several funding programs to meet the goal, including grants for low- or zero-emissions vehicles, renewable energy production, energy assessments, and other efforts. Airports could receive funding through the Voluntary Airport Low Emissions Program, Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Program, and the Airport Sustainability Planning Program. The agency also announced plans to develop a tool for airports to voluntarily estimate, track, and report on the emissions reduction achieved when implementing projects supported by the airport programs. (See February 23, 2022; June 15, 2022.)

May 3, 2022: Norman Mineta died. He served as Secretary of Transportation from January 25, 2001-July 7, 2006, the longest-serving Secretary in the department's history.

May 13, 2022: FAA issued a license to the Huntsville-Madison Airport Authority in Alabama to operate the Huntsville International Airport (HSV) as a commercial space reentry site. The license allowed the airport to offer its place for Sierra Space Dream Chaser vehicles returning to Earth from future NASA resupply missions to the International Space Station. The Reentry Site Operator License is valid for five years. The Huntsville site is the 14th FAA-licensed commercial spaceport. (See December 20, 2021.)

May 26, 2022: FAA issued a rule to improve and modernize training requirements for aviation maintenance technician schools (AMTS). The previous AMTS requirements were almost 50 years old, which limited schools from aligning curriculums with modern industry standards.

June 2, 2022: FAA sought public comments for its Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Conformity Determination of the Chicago O'Hare International Airport proposed terminal area plan and changes to air traffic procedures. The assessment would determine whether proposed projects could decrease environmental effects.

June 7, 2022: FAA awarded \$518 million to build safer, more accessible airports nationwide. The grants helped fund various projects like maintaining airfields, buying equipment, and fixing runways.

June 8, 2022: FAA launched the "Be ATC" campaign to recruit the next generation of diverse air traffic controllers. The application window was from June 24-27. (See July 30, 2021.)

June 8, 2022: FAA updated guidelines on developing and establishing sound insulation programs near airports to mitigate sound exposure. The updated "Guidelines for Sound Insulation of Structure Exposed to Aircraft Noise" provided standards, procedures, and processes for creating and facilitating a sound insulation program.

June 10, 2022: U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg announced the end of the requirement for a pre-departure COVID-19 test for U.S.-bound air travelers.

June 13, 2022: FAA required SpaceX to take more than 75 actions to mitigate environmental impacts before the next launch in Boca Chica, Texas. Measures included addressing effects on wildlife and resources protected by the National Historic Preservation Act and real-time

monitoring of the closure of State Highway 4. SpaceX also had to meet all the requirements for a FAA Launch Operator License and FAA risk, safety, and financial responsibility requirements. (September 15, 2021.)

June 15, 2022: FAA proposed a rule, *Airplane Fuel Efficiency Certification*, to require more fuel efficiency for subsonic jet aircraft, large turboprop, and propeller aircraft or for new aircraft manufactured after January 1, 2028. The proposed rule was part of the U.S. Aviation Climate Action Plan, hoping to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. aviation by 2050. The proposal also aligned with the ICAO CO₂ emission standards and EPA regulations. (See April 22, 2022.)

June 17, 2022: FAA released a statement on 5G regarding an update for C-band. The aviation and wireless industries have collaborated to protect air travel from 5g C-band interference while allowing providers to improve service around airports. FAA issued a phased approach to limit interference, ordering regional aircraft operators with susceptible radio altimeters to retrofit them with radio frequency filters before the end of the year. Filters for mainline commercial fleets will be available by July 2023. (See December 7, 2021.)

July 1, 2022: FAA awarded \$371 million in AIP funds for safety, airfield, and improvement projects at 169 airports in 40 states.

July 5, 2022: DOT reassigned with conditions 16 peak-hour runway timings from Southwest Airlines to Spirit Airlines at Newark-Liberty International Airport.

July 6, 2022: President Joe Biden nominated Phillip Washington as the next FAA administrator. A Chicago native, Washington spent 25 years in the U.S. Army, retiring in 2000 with the rank of command sergeant major. He joined Denver's Regional Transportation District and later became its CEO. In 2015, he left to head the Los Angeles County's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, where he stayed until becoming the CEO of Denver International Airport in 2021. (See March 31, 2022; January 3, 2023.)

July 7, 2022: FAA announced it would award almost \$1 billion in grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to 85 airports to improve terminals, promote competition, expand accessibility for disabled individuals, increase energy efficiency, and build air traffic control towers.

July 8, 2022: DOT published an Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights and issued a notice urging airlines to guarantee that children aged 13 and younger would be seated next to their accompanying adults. After receiving input from the Air Carrier Access Act Advisory Committee, DOT crafted the bill of rights.

July 13, 2022: DOT approved American Airlines flight schedules between Miami and Cuba. The flights began in November 2022. The flights were the first approved flights since a May announcement regarding steps to strengthen US and Cuban ties. (See August 13, 2020.)

July 21, 2022: DOT issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to update the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Airport Concession program regulations. Both programs were created to prevent discrimination and alleviate the effects of previous bias toward small businesses owned and operated by disadvantaged individuals. The proposal included:

- Increasing the personal net worth (PNW) limit from \$1.32 million to \$1.6 million and excluding retirement assets from PNW calculations
- Formally adopting COVID-19 flexibilities such as virtual on-site visits
- Empowering certified firms to market themselves to prime contractors via expanded State directories
- Helping more small businesses participate in FAA-assisted airport projects by requiring airports to remove obstacles and adopt more race-neutral strategies
- Strengthening prompt payment monitoring and oversight requirements to help ensure that DBEs in all subcontracting tiers are promptly paid

July 27, 2022: FAA proposed mandating a second barrier to flight decks on select commercial aircraft to protect flight decks from unwanted intrusion when the flight deck door was opened.

August 3, 2022: DOT awarded \$16.9 million in grants from the Small Community Air Service Development Program to help 25 communities in 20 states improve local air service needs. The grants gave financial incentives to study, conduct marketing programs, and carry out studies on expansion. The money allowed communities to create new or first air services, provide support, or re-establish old services.

August 3, 2022: DOT announced a proposed rule to enhance protections for customers seeking refunds on airline tickets. The proposal responded to the increased complaints from consumers who were refused reimbursements because they could not travel due to Covid issues or airlines canceling or changing flights. If passed, the rule would clearly define “significant change and cancellation” and codify failure to refund passengers as an unfair practice. Additionally, the rule would require airlines and agents to provide non-expiring vouchers or flight credits when passengers could not fly due to Covid issues.

August 10, 2022: American Airlines formally accepted a 787-8 from Boeing’s Charleston, South Carolina, production site, officially marking the resumption of aircraft deliveries following a 14-month suspension because of production-quality issues. The resumption of deliveries followed FAA’s July 29 approval of Boeing’s plan to correct the issues and inspect the 118 undelivered aircraft. The plan, which addressed inspection and repair procedures, provided airframe-specific compliance processes that Boeing would use to show that each aircraft conformed to specifications.

August 18, 2022: FAA awarded \$2.7 million for drone research to support growing research on their effectiveness in assisting disaster preparedness and emergencies. Awardees included the University of Vermont, the University of Alabama Huntsville, New Mexico State University, North Carolina State University, and Kansas State University. The funding was part of the Alliance for Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE).

September 1, 2022: DOT launched a new [online dashboard](#) to help air travelers know their rights when they experience airline flight disruptions. The dashboard provided air travelers a one-stop location to obtain information on the services and amenities they should receive from airlines if they experienced delays or cancellations caused by something within the airline's control like a mechanical or staffing issue. The dashboard also clearly compared amenities the airlines committed to providing. The department said it would hold airlines accountable if they failed to provide the promised services.

September 7, 2022: FAA issued a new policy requiring Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) holders to protect employees authorized to act on behalf of the agency from feeling pressure to ignore possible safety risks and ensure they have direct lines of communication with the agency. The policy codified a 2020 law that called for more protection of ODA employees delegated to work on behalf of FAA. The new requirements included documented procedures for monitoring interference among UMs, annual anonymous surveys soliciting feedback on whether workers have experienced or witnessed pressure, clearly established protocols for addressing reports of interference, and clear lines of communication with FAA Organization Management Teams.

September 7, 2022: FAA issued type certificate to Matternet Inc.'s Model M2, a four-rotor copter capable of carrying a 4-pound (1.8-kilogram) package, the first flying drone explicitly built for shipping packages.

September 8, 2022: FAA announced plans to establish the agency's largest solar project at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City. The panels are expected to produce 2,600 megawatt hours annually, the equivalent needed to power 260 average homes. The project will reduce the Center's electric bill by an estimated \$170,000 - \$200,000 annually.

September 9, 2022: FAA and NASA signed a new memorandum of agreement outlining their roles in investigating commercial space accidents. Under the agreement, the NTSB will be the lead agency for investigating mishaps that involve a fatality or serious injury, as well as those that involve damage to property outside the launch site from debris that could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious injury. FAA will lead all other commercial spaceflight investigations.

September 14, 2022: Nextgov.com highlighted FAA's new interactive online dashboard designed to make the agency's data more accessible and understandable to the general public. The interactive Fact Book includes, in part, data and figures on air traffic, safety, airspace modernization, and uncrewed aircraft systems.

September 22, 2022: The Securities and Exchange Commission said that Boeing will pay \$200 million to settle charges that the company and its former CEO misled investors about the safety of its 737 Max after two of the airliners crashed, killing 346 people. It charged the aircraft maker and former CEO Dennis Muilenburg with making significant misleading public statements about the plane and an automated flight-control system that was implicated in the crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia. Neither Boeing nor Muilenburg admitted wrongdoing, but they offered to settle

and pay penalties, including \$1 million to be paid by Muilenburg. (See March 23, 2022; January 5, 2023.)

September 26, 2022: President Biden proposed requiring airlines and ticket sales websites to disclose additional fees up front, aiming to add a dose of transparency to booking travel. According to the Department of Transportation, the disclosures would cover any fees for passengers to sit with their children, change or cancel a flight, and bring checked or carry-on bags. The fees would be required to be displayed the first time a ticket price is shown.

September 26, 2022: FAA announced it would work with countries when it sees early indications that civil aviation authorities are not meeting safety standards. Previously, the agency would offer assistance only after the country's safety rating had been downgraded. The agency planned to work with a country to address developing safety risks before downgrading it. The agency said if it notifies a country of a safety concern, it will limit foreign operators' direct service and code sharing to current levels as it reviews whether to issue a downgrade.

September 26, 2022: FAA released new design guidelines for vertiports – infrastructure supporting Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft. The design standards will serve as the initial step to provide critical information for airport owners, operators, and infrastructure developers to begin the development of facilities that will support operations of AAM aircraft that are electrically powered and take off and land vertically.

October 1, 2022: ICAO voted to remove Russia from its governing council. Historically, G7 countries, Australia, Brazil, China, and Russia, have held permanent spots as “states of chief importance in air transport.” Russia secured only 80 votes to remain on the governing council during the vote, while 86 votes were needed.

October 3, 2022: FAA announced it had upgraded Malaysia's air safety rating to a Category 1 nearly three years after it took action to restrict the country's airlines from adding new flights to the United States. In November 2019, FAA lowered Malaysia from Category 1 to Category 2, meaning Malaysian airlines were restricted to current levels of any existing U.S. service and subject to additional inspections at U.S. airports.

October 4, 2022: FAA issued a final rule requiring that flight attendants receive longer rest periods between shifts. The new rule increases the rest period from 9 to 10 consecutive hours.

October 11, 2022: FAA announced it would publish 54 Global Positioning System (GPS)-guided routes in Alaska, allowing pilots to navigate direct flight paths at lower altitudes to avoid icing conditions. The 30 new and 24 amended Terminal Transition Routes, known as T-routes, are part of FAA's Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative. Pilots use T-routes to navigate along specific points while flying under instrument flight rules (IFR) using approved GPS/Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) equipment.

October 18, 2022: FAA and the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB) signed a Declaration of Cooperation to support future Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft development and operation. The declaration continues the safety agencies' long partnership and formalizes

ongoing discussions on certifying and validating new AAM aircraft, production, continued airworthiness, operations, and personnel licensing.

October 24, 2022: FAA issued guidance on how to become a FAA-recognized community-based organization for recreational drone flying. Under federal law, recreational drone flyers must follow the safety guidelines of a FAA-recognized community-based organization. The organization must develop its safety guidelines in coordination with FAA, and an applicant may wish to tailor them to a particular type of uncrewed aircraft.

November 15, 2022: FAA dedicated the Senator Kay Hagan Air Traffic Control Tower at Piedmont Triad International Airport, designed by women engineers.

November 16, 2022: FAA adopted a final rule requiring commercial hot-air balloon pilots to hold medical certificates when flying paying passengers. The rule mandated a second-class medical certificate, the same standard required for other commercial pilots.

November 21, 2022: FAA completed the environmental review of the proposed new passenger terminals at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. The study analyzed Chicago Department of Aviation projects, including new terminals, on-airport hotels, airfield and taxiway improvements, and support facilities. It also reviewed FAA's proposal to make permanent angled approaches to Runway 10R/28L to allow simultaneous arrival to multiple runways. The agency concluded that proposed construction projects and changes to air traffic procedures will not significantly affect any environmental resources, including noise, air quality, water resources, and historic sites.

November 23, 2022: FAA announced that the Republic of Rwanda had achieved an International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) Category 1 rating and complies with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

2023

January 3, 2023: President Biden renominated Phillip Washington for FAA administrator; he had first nominated him on July 6, 2022. On March 30, 2023, the Biden administration announced that Washington withdrew his name from consideration. (See September 7, 2023.)

January 5, 2023: FAA announced the names of 24 aviation experts to review Boeing's safety management processes and how they influenced Boeing's safety culture after two fatal 737 MAX crashes killed 346 people. The panel, required by Congress under a 2020 law to reform how FAA certifies new airplanes, included MIT lecturer and aerospace engineer Javier de Luis, whose sister was killed in a MAX crash, as well as experts from NASA, FAA, labor unions, Airbus, Southwest Airlines, American Airlines, United Airlines, GE Aviation, FedEx Express, and Pratt & Whitney. The panel had nine months to complete its review and issue findings and recommendations. (See September 22, 2022; March 30, 2023.)

January 9, 2023: FAA and the Korea Office of Civil Aviation agreed to partner on future Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft development and operations. The agencies signed a Declaration of Cooperation under which they will collaborate on AAM projects and share ideas, information, skills, and techniques. The two agencies plan to work together to promote the safety oversight of AAM, including airworthiness, licensing, and operations. The announcement followed FAA's partnerships with Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in the National Aviation Authorities Network to harmonize certification criteria and integration plans. (See October 18, 2022; May 4, 2023.)

January 11, 2023: When the NOTAM system failed, FAA issued a ground stop order on all flights. In the second such order in agency history, the agency ordered airlines to delay all departing flights just before 7:30 a.m. and lifted the order at about 9 a.m. The disruption, however, was far from over as airlines struggled to get back to normal throughout the day. Delays cascaded throughout the system, and by the afternoon, about 9,000 flights had been delayed and 1,300 had been canceled. FAA subsequently determined that contract personnel unintentionally deleted files while working to correct synchronization between the live primary database and a backup database. (See September 11, 2001; June 3, 2023.)

January 20, 2023: The State Department announced FAA would be opening its first office in Mexico. The office provided legal advice to help Mexico implement the requirements and recommendations through legislative channels to recover FAA's civil aviation Category 1. (See September 14, 2020; September 26, 2022; November 23, 2022; July 13, 2023.)

January 25, 2023: Construction began on a new air traffic control tower at the Asheville Regional Airport. FAA committed \$15 million for the new tower, which will be 127 feet tall, topped by a 440-square-foot cab with three air traffic controllers. The 13,300-square-foot base building will house the Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) with five air traffic controllers.

January 30, 2023: FAA announced new Optimized Profile Descents (OPDs) for planes heading to Orlando, Kansas City, Omaha, Reno, and six airports in South Florida. OPDs safely eliminate the need for the fuel-consuming stair-step descent procedure. Under traditional methods, aircraft repeatedly level off and power up the engines. This burns more fuel and requires air traffic controllers to issue instructions at each step. With optimized descents, aircraft descend from cruising altitude to the runway in a smooth, continuous path with the engines at near idle.

February 7, 2023: Boeing delivered its final 747 to Atlas Air.

February 16, 2023: FAA issued a new rule to help airports detect and mitigate safety problems before accidents or incidents occur. The regulation requires certain airports to develop and implement a safety management system (SMS). The final rule applied to over 200 of America's busiest commercial airports. The timeline to implement SMS ranges from four to five and a half years, depending on the airports' classification and operations.

February 27, 2023: FAA awarded nearly \$1 billion to 99 airports nationwide. The funding would help meet the growing demand for air travel and invest in key areas to help get travelers in and

out of airports more quickly and improve the passenger experience by investing in new baggage systems, larger security checkpoints, and improved ground transportation. Other projects focused on increasing terminal sustainability and improving accessibility for disabled individuals. Several grants addressed the needs of aging air traffic control towers. The investments went to airports in 47 states and two territories.

February 28, 2023: The new \$1.5 million terminal at Kansas City International Airport opened.

March 2, 2023: FAA announced grant awards to 23 schools to help attract and train students for careers as pilots and aviation maintenance technicians. Twelve schools received \$5 million from FAA's Aircraft Pilots Aviation Workforce Development Grants program. The other \$5 million went to 11 schools as part of FAA's Aviation Maintenance Technical Workers Workforce Development program.

March 27, 2023: FAA granted a limited waiver of slot usage requirements "due to post-pandemic effects" at high-density slot-controlled Level 3 airports JFK, LGA, and Ronald Reagan Washington National (DCA), and at Newark (EWR), a Level 2 slot facilitated airport. The limited waivers were valid from May 15, 2023, through September 15, 2023, for carriers who identified the slots and timings before April 30. The agency extended the slot and scheduling usage waivers through October 28, 2023.

April 6, 2023: FAA awarded \$19 million to 14 universities nationwide as part of the Aviation Sustainability Center (ASCENT). The research projects focused on noise reduction for new aircraft, noise and advanced air mobility aircraft, drones, rotorcraft, and noise and communities. (See January 9, 2023.)

April 11, 2023: FAA established a new office to provide independent reviews and decisions on allegations of manager misconduct at the agency. The Office of Investigations and Professional Responsibility's work helped protect whistleblowers and others raising safety concerns.

April 20, 2023: FAA announced the selection of a sustainable design for new air traffic control towers to be used primarily at municipal and smaller airports. The design by the Practice for Architecture and Urbanism (PAU) of New York met essential sustainability requirements. The design allowed for adjustments to tower height to meet each airport's traffic and sightline requirements while reducing construction and operational costs.

April 20, 2023: SpaceX's Starship, with its first-of-a-kind super heavy booster, exploded during its inaugural flight over its launch site in South Texas. (See June 13, 2023; September 8, 2023.)

April 26, 2023: FAA named a new independent National Airspace System Safety Review Team to examine ways to enhance safety and reliability in the nation's air traffic system. The team expected to complete its work by October 2023. (See November 15, 2023.) Team members included:

- Former NASA Administrator and astronaut Charles Bolden Jr.
- Former Air Line Pilots Association, International President Captain Tim Canoll

- Former National Air Traffic Controllers Association Executive Vice President Patricia Gilbert
- Former FAA Chief Operating Officer David Grizzle
- Former FAA Administrator Michael Huerta
- Former NTSB Chair Robert Sumwalt

May 1, 2023: FAA activated 169 new routes along the East Coast that were more direct, saving passengers time and airline fuel consumption and increasing safety. The change helped prevent delays by giving the agency more capacity to direct traffic to specific routes based on the aircraft's destination.

May 4, 2023: FAA created the UAS Detection and Mitigation Systems Aviation Rulemaking Committee to ensure that new technologies designed to detect and mitigate risks from errant or hostile UAS do not adversely impact the safe and efficient operation of the nation's airspace. The ARC's 58 members represented a diverse set of aviation stakeholders.

May 4, 2023: FAA released an updated blueprint for airspace and procedure changes to accommodate future air taxis and other advanced air mobility (AAM) operations. Under the blueprint, developed in coordination with NASA and industry, AAM operations would begin slowly with air taxis flying like helicopters. AAM operations would use existing routes and infrastructure, such as helipads and vertiports. (See January 9, 2023; July 18, 2023.)

May 9, 2023: Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Administrator Robin Carnahan of the General Services Administration led a ceremony announcing the naming of the headquarters of the Department of Transportation after the fourth Secretary of Transportation, William T. Coleman, Jr. (1975-1977) and the 14th and longest serving Secretary, Norman Y. Mineta (2001-2006).

May 22, 2023: FAA announced it had awarded more than \$100 million to 12 airports nationwide to reduce runway incursions. Planned projects included reconfiguring taxiways that may cause confusion, installing airfield lighting, or constructing new taxiways to provide more flexibility on the airfield. The agency developed its Runway Incursion Mitigation Program to identify airports with risk factors that might contribute to runway incursions.

May 30, 2023: U.S. District Judge Jorge Alonso in the Northern District of Illinois ruled that relatives of people who died in a 2019 Boeing 737 MAX crash could seek compensation for the victim's pain and suffering before the plane crashed in Ethiopia. (See January 5, 2023.)

June 3, 2023: President Biden signed into law HR 346, which required the FAA administrator to establish a task force to provide recommendations for improving the Notice to Air Missions system. The task force would review existing methods for publishing NOTAMs and flight operations information for pilots; review regulations, policies, systems, and international standards relating to NOTAMs, including their content and presentation to pilots; evaluate and determine best practices to organize, prioritize, and present flight operations information in a manner that optimizes pilot review and retention of relevant information; provide recommendations to improve the publication and delivery of NOTAM information; and report to

Congress on its reviews and evaluations. By September 30, 2024, FAA must complete the implementation of a federal NOTAM system and implement a backup system and brief Congress on a plan to enhance information delivery through this federal system to promote further global harmonization and provide users of the National Airspace System a consistent format for domestic and international operations. (See January 11, 2023.)

June 4, 2023: A Cessna Citation entered restricted Washington, DC, airspace, leading the Air Force to scramble jets. The jets, which went supersonic, triggered a sonic boom in the region. The Cessna crashed in Virginia. Accident investigators believed pilot and passenger incapacitation may have caused the crash because of hypoxia.

June 8, 2023: President Biden designated Polly Trottenberg to serve as acting FAA administrator upon the resignation of acting administrator Billy Nolan. Katie Thomson, FAA's chief of staff, was selected as the agency's new deputy administrator. Keith Washington, DOT Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, became the agency's acting chief of staff. DOT also announced that FAA Deputy Administrator A. Bradley Mims was moving to the Office of the Secretary to lead the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization at DOT. (See March 31, 2022.)

June 12, 2023: FAA issued a special airworthiness certificate to a flying car model developed by California-based Alef Aeronautics, allowing the aircraft to fly in limited locations for exhibition, research, and development. The Armada Model Zero, dubbed the "Model A," was a fully electric flying car that could take off and land vertically.

June 14, 2023: FAA issued a final rule requiring a secondary barrier on the flight deck of new commercial airplanes to ensure the safety of aircraft, flight crew, and air passengers. The rule would be implemented 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*. (See July 27, 2022.)

June 22, 2023: FAA began operating a mobile tower at Leesburg Executive Airport after canceling the remote tower being tested there. The airport expected the mobile platform—a tower cab with radios and weather sensors mounted on a trailer—would stay in place until 2028 when the town hoped to erect a permanent ATC tower. The agency covered the cost of leasing the mobile tower through September 2023, after which Leesburg rented the structure for \$10,000 a month. FAA agreed to pay controllers' salaries through September 2028. (See September 29, 2021.)

June 29, 2023: In a six-day flight demonstration, FAA Japan, Singapore, and Thailand demonstrated the ability to jointly manage flights across multiple countries by using trajectory-based operations (TBO) to predict the location of an aircraft in flight. TBO used precise aircraft trajectory data (latitude, longitude, altitude, and time) to show where the aircraft expected to be on its route from takeoff to touchdown. It allowed aircraft to fly precise flight paths with seamless information exchange between air and ground systems.

June 29, 2023: FAA asked for public comment on the environmental assessment to replace 31 outdated airport traffic control towers at smaller airports nationwide. The agency had set aside

over \$500 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support site evaluation, preparation, and early construction activities. Comments were due by July 31, 2023.

July 8, 2023: Northern Pacific Airways announced it had received FAA approval to begin commercial flights. The Anchorage-based carrier expected to begin service on July 14 with weekly flights between southern California's Ontario International Airport and Las Vegas.

July 11, 2023: FAA announced nearly \$92 million in investments to help airports reach the president's goal of net zero emissions by 2050. As part of almost \$268 million in grants, about \$92 million went to 21 airports for solar panels, electric buses, charging stations, and electrification studies. As a part of this sustainability effort, the agency also provided funding to help general aviation airports safely transition to unleaded fuel for piston-engine aircraft. (See June 15, 2022.)

July 13, 2023: FAA announced that San Marino achieved its first International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) with a Category 1 rating. Under the Category 1 rating, San Marino's civil aviation authority followed ICAO safety standards. As a result of the rating, it could provide service in the United States and enter into code-share agreements with U.S. carriers without limitation. FAA's IASA program assesses a country's ability to follow ICAO's safety standards. Carriers from the countries FAA assesses have either applied to fly in the U.S., currently conduct operations in the U.S., or participate in code-sharing agreements with U.S. airlines. (See January 20, 2023; July 13, 2023.)

July 13, 2023: FAA announced that Latvia achieved its first IASA with a Category 1 rating. (See January 20, 2023; September 14, 2023.)

July 18, 2023: FAA released an implementation plan detailing the steps it and others must take to enable advanced air mobility operations in the near term. The "Innovate 28" plan included various components and the sequence needed for operations at one or more sites by 2028. (See May 4, 2023; October 25, 2023.)

July 26, 2023: DOT issued a new rule that required airlines to make lavatories on new single-aisle aircraft large enough to permit a passenger with a disability and attendant, both equivalent in size to a 95th percentile male, to approach, enter, and maneuver within as necessary to use the aircraft lavatory.

July 31, 2023: FAA named Kyle A. deCant, senior labor policy advisor. He will oversee strategic planning on labor issues and advise the agency's acting administrator and deputy administrator. This is the first time FAA's front office has had a permanent position focused on labor issues.

August 4, 2023: In connection with the official state visit between Vice President Kamala Harris and Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Mongolia Road and Transport Development Minister Byambatsogt Sandag signed the U.S.-Mongolia Open Skies Agreement. The agreement facilitates greater air connectivity between the United States and Mongolia and will provide the legal framework for nonstop passenger flights.

August 10, 2023: Virgin Galactic rocketed to the edge of space with its first tourists. The space plane glided back to a runway, landing at Spaceport America in the New Mexico desert after a brief flight that gave passengers a few minutes of weightlessness.

August 23, 2023: FAA approved an experimental airworthiness certificate for Boom Supersonic's XB-1 technology demonstrator, clearing the way for flight testing at the Mojave Air and Space Port, California.

September 7, 2023: President Biden nominated Michael Whitaker to be FAA administrator. Whitaker began his career in aviation as an attorney for TWA in New York and Washington and then spent 15 years at United Airlines in Chicago, where he served as senior vice president of alliances, international and regulatory affairs. After leaving United, he served as Group CEO at InterGlobe, India's largest travel conglomerate based in Delhi. In 2013, President Obama appointed Whitaker as deputy administrator of FAA, where he served until 2016. He earned a private pilot license while at the agency and holds bachelor's degrees in political science and French from the University of Louisville and a juris doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center. The U.S. Senate confirmed Whitaker as FAA administrator on October 24, 2023. (See January 3, 2023.) The Senate confirmed Whitaker on October 24, 2023, for a five-year term as FAA administrator. On October 27, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg (who had been running FAA on an acting basis) swore Whitaker into office.

September 8, 2023: FAA closed the SpaceX Starship Super Heavy mishap investigation. The final report cited multiple root causes of the April 20, 2023, mishap and 63 corrective actions SpaceX must take to prevent mishap recurrence. Corrective actions included redesigns of vehicle hardware to avoid leaks and fires, redesign of the launch pad to increase its robustness, incorporation of additional reviews in the design process, further analysis and testing of safety-critical systems and components, including the Autonomous Flight Safety System, and the application of other change control practices. (See April 20, 2022; November 15, 2023.)

September 13, 2023: FAA gave U.S. drone operators a six-month extension to March 16, 2024, to equip their aircraft with remote identification modules.

September 14, 2023: FAA returned Mexico's aviation safety rating to Category 1 following more than two years of close work between the civil aviation authorities in both countries. The agency provided expertise and resources via technical assistance agreements to Mexico's Agencia Federal de Aviación Civil to resolve the safety issues that led to the downgrade. With a return to Category 1 status, Mexico could add new services and routes to the U.S. U.S. airlines could resume marketing and selling tickets with their names and designator codes on Mexican-operated flights. (See January 20, 2023; July 13, 2023.)

September 20, 2023: FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that, if finalized, would require that upper stages of commercial launch vehicles and other components resulting from launch or reentry be removed from orbit within 25 years after launch, either through atmospheric disposal or maneuver to an acceptable disposal orbit.

September 26, 2023: Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg helped celebrate the completion of a nearly \$51 million stretch of taxiway at Denver International Airport. FAA funded the project.

September 27, 2023: FAA announced it had closed the closure of the Blue Origin New Shepard 23 mishap investigation. The final report cited the proximate cause of the September 12, 2022, mishap as the structural failure of an engine nozzle caused by higher-than-expected engine operating temperatures. FAA required Blue Origin to implement 21 corrective actions to prevent mishap reoccurrence, including redesigning engine and nozzle components to improve structural performance during operation and organizational changes. During the mishap, the onboard launch vehicle systems detected the anomaly, triggered an abort and separation of the capsule from the propulsion module as intended, and shut down the engine. The capsule landed safely, and the propulsion module was destroyed upon impact with the ground. All debris landed within the designated hazard area.

September 30, 2023: Congress passed, and the president signed a continuing resolution (CR) funding the federal government through November 17. Included in the CR was a three-month reauthorization of FAA. In December, Congress extended the short-term reauthorization to March 8, 2024.

October 25, 2023: FAA signed a memorandum of agreement with the Air Force Research Laboratory to exchange data and share capabilities and expertise to integrate safely Advanced Air Mobility aircraft into the national airspace system. (See July 18, 2023.)

October 31, 2023: FAA completed a safety review of the SpaceX Starship-Super Heavy license. The agency continued to work on an environmental review and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on an updated Biological Assessment under the Endangered Species Act. FAA and the USFWS must complete this consultation before the environmental review portion of the license evaluation is completed. (See September 8, 2023; November 15, 2023.)

November 9, 2023: The Sampson Sky Switchblade flying car made its first flight at the Grant County International Airport in Washington.

November 12, 2023: Joby Aviation, a company developing electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft for commercial passenger service, performed an exhibition flight in New York City, marking the first-ever electric air taxi flight in the city and the first time Joby has flown in an urban setting. The aircraft, a piloted, four-passenger electric aircraft, has zero operating emissions. (See December 1, 2023.)

November 15, 2023: The group of outside experts appointed by FAA in April issued a 52-page report, calling for “urgent action” to address safety risks in the nation’s aviation system, highlighting issues like staffing shortages among air traffic controllers and outdated technology. The panel recommended changes in how the agency is funded and warned about the risks posed by aging technology. (See April 26, 2023; November 17, 2023.)

November 15, 2023: FAA reinstated SpaceX's Starship launch license, noting "SpaceX met all safety, environmental, policy and financial responsibility requirements." SpaceX applied for and received authorization for one flight. The license indicated FAA was satisfied with SpaceX's modifications to its rocket and launchpad. (See September 8, 2023; November 18, 2023.)

November 17, 2023: FAA announced it is taking steps to enhance air traffic controller training and safety reporting following the release of the National Airspace System Safety Review Team report. (See November 15, 2023.) Those actions included:

- Providing additional support to colleges and universities in the Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) Program. The FAA will work with AT-CTI programs to ensure that graduates from these programs have the necessary skills to begin on-the-job training at a facility. These graduates still must pass the Air Traffic Skills Assessment (ATSA) exam and meet medical and security requirements. Previously, these graduates were required to attend the FAA Air Traffic Controller Academy before being assigned to a facility.
- Announcing a year-round hiring track for experienced military and private industry controllers.
- Filling every seat at the FAA Academy and increasing classroom capacity beyond current limits.
- Expanding the use of advanced training across the country.
- Finishing deployment of tower simulator systems to 95 facilities by December 2025. The first system will be delivered to Austin by January 2024.
- Providing reports from the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service to the FAA Administrator and Aviation Safety Associate Administrator.

November 18, 2023: SpaceX's uncrewed spacecraft Starship failed shortly after lifting off from its launch site near Boca Chica, Texas. The rocket's Super Heavy first stage booster exploded over the Gulf of Mexico shortly after detaching. The launch was the second attempt to fly Starship mounted atop its towering Super Heavy rocket booster, following an April attempt that ended in explosive failure about four minutes after lift-off. (See November 15, 2023.)

November 30, 2023: FAA proposed to increase the cockpit voice-recording requirement from two to twenty-five days for all newly manufactured aircraft. The change would align the FAA regulations with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency rules.

December 1, 2023: Miami-based Dornier Aerospace announced its all-electric flying car, the Dornier HI, received FAA airworthiness certification, the second flying car, or vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft to be certified. Powered by ten independent propulsion systems, the all-electric flying car has a claimed top speed of 140 mph (100 mph cruising speed) and a 60-mile range. (See November 12, 2023.)

December 3, 2023: Alaska Airlines announced a deal to buy Hawaiian Airlines for \$1.9 billion.

December 3, 2023: FAA's thirteenth administrator, David Hinson, passed away in Roseville, CA, at the age of 90. He served as administrator from 1993-1996.

December 5, 2023: FAA announced that the agency had officially established the Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearances Rulemaking Committee (ARC). FAA expects the ARC to submit recommendations by the end of March 2024 on how the FAA can identify and break down any remaining barriers that discourage pilots from reporting and seeking care for mental health issues.

December 13, 2023: FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker directed the executive director of Air Traffic Safety Oversight to report to him and the Associate Administrator of Aviation Safety to address better safety risks.

December 18, 2023: The Transportation Department announced a \$140 million fine against Southwest Airlines over a meltdown last winter that disrupted travel for about two million people during the holiday season. Of the \$140 million, Southwest Airlines will pay \$35 million to the federal government. For the remaining amount, the department is giving the airline credit for providing frequent-flier points as an apology to customers affected by the meltdown and agreeing to give out tens of millions of dollars in vouchers to customers affected by future delays and cancellations. The fine is roughly 30 times what had previously been the department's largest penalty against an airline for consumer protection violations, a \$4.5 million settlement with Air Canada in 2021 over customer refunds.

December 20, 2023: FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker announced he had established a three-member panel, led by former National Transportation Safety Board member Mark Rosekind, to "examine how the latest science on sleep needs and fatigue considerations could be applied to controller work requirements and scheduling." He asked the panel for their recommendations in six weeks. The other two members of the panel were Charles Czeisler, chief and senior physician, Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders, Departments of Medicine and Neurology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Dr. Erin Flynn-Evans, head of the NASA Ames Research Center Fatigue Countermeasures Laboratory.

December 26, 2023: Mexico launched its army-run airline when the first Mexicana Airlines flight took off from Mexico City bound for the Caribbean resort of Tulum. It was another sign of the outsized role that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has given to Mexico's armed forces. The airline's military-run holding company now also operates about a dozen airports, hotels, trains, the country's customs service, and tourist parks.

December 28, 2023: FAA announced it was closely monitoring targeted inspections of Boeing 737 MAX airplanes to look for a possible loose bolt in the rudder control system. Under consultation with FAA, Boeing issued a Multi-Operator Message (MOM), urging operators of newer single-aisle airplanes to inspect specific tie rods that control rudder movement for possible loose hardware. FAA said it would remain in contact with Boeing and the airlines while the inspections are underway. The agency will consider additional action based on further discovery of loose or missing hardware. Boeing recommended the inspections after an international operator discovered a bolt with a missing nut while performing routine maintenance on a mechanism in the rudder-control linkage.

December 28, 2023: Chinese manufacturer EHang demonstrated the world's first commercial eVTOL air taxi flight. Inaugural trips aboard the two-passenger, self-flying air taxi took place in Guangzhou and Hefei. Passengers—including high-ranking government officials and citizens alike—were invited to fly and did not need to pay for their tickets. The cities posted no-fly notices to keep the airspace clear.

December 29, 2023: SpaceX conducted a dual test of engines on the giant Starship and Super Heavy rocket stages at SpaceX's Starbase proving ground in Boca Chica, Texas. The test, which lasted about 10 seconds, successfully fired all 33 Raptor engines on the Super Heavy booster, which serves as the first stage of the Starship rocket.