

NATCA INSIDER

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ZJX Completes STARS Implementation



Pictured from left to right: ZJX members Cory Warters, Andrew Day, Kevin Vaughn, Daniel Westfall, Scott Jeffries. Not pictured: Jon Prather and Susan Oliver.

On Aug. 12, Jacksonville Center (ZJX) was part of one of the largest metroplex projects ever completed. The new Florida Metroplex Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and Standard Terminal Arrivals (STARs) systems into and out of the Tampa, Orlando, Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami terminal areas were implemented, marking a massive change to the daily operational procedures at ZJX. The metroplex team, led by ZJX member Andrew Day, have been working on this project for years to make it successful. "The amount of planning and coordination that went into this project was monumental," said ZJX FacRep Chris

Cappo. "Our metroplex team overcame every obstacle thrown at them during the middle of a pandemic to create one of the best implementations we have seen at ZJX. I would personally like to thank all of them for their tireless work and for a job well done."

NATCA Members Work Fire Towers Amid Heavy Wildfire Season

As wildfires continue to burn in the Northwest Mountain and Western Pacific Regions, NATCA members are volunteering their time and services at mobile fire towers. During wildfire season, temporary fire towers are brought in to help the National Forest Service and organizations like the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) control the airspace over wildfires. Aviation safety specialists support critical firefighting efforts at these towers.



"It's rewarding to interact with appreciative pilots despite their long hours and grueling conditions," said Spokane ATCT (GEG) member Ray Peters, who has had the privilege of supporting firefighting operations at three separate temporary towers: Coeur d'Alene Airport (COE), Idaho County Airport (GIC) in Grangeville, Idaho, and Methow Valley State Airport (S52) in Winthrop, Wash. "Controlling at these towers has brought perspective to a side of aviation that we don't often get to see from our radar consoles or tower perches. The experiences have also challenged me professionally to expand the tools I have and creatively adapt to unfamiliar environments."

Billings ATCT (BIL) member Scott Buchanan also worked at his first fire tower this past summer. "I had been hearing about them for years and was excited to head out 'into the field,'" he said. "I have experience working at deployed airfields while in the military and am always up for an adventure. This was a great experience and break from the normalcy of regular traffic and training."

At COE, Buchanan worked with three other controllers and a supervisor, all doing six-day details. "A local controller, ground



controller, cab coordinator, flight data person, and supervisor were all needed, and it took three people to run COE most hours,” added Buchanan. “While these fires are unfortunate and some of these fire towers can be intimidating, as long as fires like this are happening, it is a good learning experience for controllers to get a chance to work in a fire tower. I’m

staying on the volunteer list to go again.”

“It’s rewarding to assist with these important fire fighting efforts, and working these towers is a good learning opportunity,” said Peters. “We often get ingrained in our way of moving traffic under the procedures and airspace we’ve grown accustomed to at our facilities. Working a fire tower provides a challenge to step outside that comfort zone as you navigate new ways of controlling the safe, orderly, and expeditious flow of air traffic.”

American Rescue Plan Act MOU with FAA

On March 11, 2021, the President signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), establishing a \$9,000,000 fund for Emergency Paid Leave (EPL) for all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees.

On Aug. 16, 2021, NATCA and the FAA signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) regarding the implementation of ARPA which includes EPL.

Summary of the agreement:

- The life of the fund for EPL expires when there are no longer funds available for reimbursement, or on Sept. 30, 2021, whichever occurs first.
- For the life of the fund, BUEs are eligible for up to 600 hours, or 15 workweeks, of EPL for qualifying absences in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency with no charge to the BUEs leave balance.
- BUEs should be aware that use of EPL will reduce the total service time used in the calculation of the retirement annuity by the total hours of paid leave from the EPL fund.
- EPL is available for qualifying absences occurring between March 11, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2021, contingent on amounts in the fund remaining available for reimbursement.
- In any biweekly pay period, an employee may be credited with hours of EPL to the extent that the total amount of the payment for such leave does not exceed \$2,800 for each full-time employee or the proportionally equivalent biweekly amount for each part-time employee.
- BUEs may use EPL for the following qualifying reasons:
 - **(1)** The BUE is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine, or

- isolation order related to COVID-19;
- **(2)** The BUE has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
 - **(3)** The BUE is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (as defined by the CDC) and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
 - **(4)** The BUE is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1), or self-quarantining as described in (2);
 - **(5)** The BUE is caring for a son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed, whose school requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model or requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or whose childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions;
 - **(6)** The BUE is experiencing any other substantially similar condition;
 - **(7)** The BUE is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19;
 - **(8)** The BUE is obtaining immunization related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.
- BUEs must notify the Agency as soon as practicable of their request to take EPL. After notification, the BUE will submit [Appendix 1 “NATCA/FAA Emergency Paid Leave Request Form”](#) and [Appendix 2 “NATCA/FAA Emergency Paid Leave Agreement”](#) electronically or via hard copy to their first-level supervisor.
 - Employees may begin submitting EPL requests on Aug. 23, 2021 as the Agency continues the process of establishing the necessary time codes.
 - Please note that BUEs can submit retroactive requests for EPL through Sept. 30, 2022, or until available funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first.
 - BUEs may elect to use sick leave, annual leave, accrued compensatory time, accrued credit hours, or Leave Without Pay for any EPL qualifying reason. EPL can be used intermittently, and intermittent use of EPL shall not be unreasonably denied.
 - BUEs who incur a debt to the Agency due to use of EPL may challenge the debt via any administrative, judicial, or collectively bargained process, including Article 109 of the Parties’ CBAs. When the fund is exhausted, the Agency will notify NATCA at the national level and all BUEs. Notification to BUEs covered by the Parties 2016 CBA shall be made via CEDAR.

Members with questions about this MOU should email ARPAMOUQuestions@natcadc.org.

NATCA Mourns Loss of Retired Member Rick Heckman

Rick Heckman, a retired NATCA member whose passion for air traffic control earned him wide respect and admiration as a beloved brother and friend, passed

away recently. He was 60.

Having worked at Philadelphia TRACON (PHL) for over 20 years, Heckman was instrumental in leading the Agency transition to ADS-B. He had nearly 30 years of air traffic control experience including working on the STARS system at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Tech Center. Prior to working with the FAA, Rick served in the Navy, deployed in the first Persian Gulf War. It was during his service that he met his wife, Laura; they have been married for nearly 35 years.



Updated 2021 Retirement Briefings



NATCA Advantage

A FINANCIAL MASTERY & RETIREMENT BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS AT ANY CAREER STAGE

DELIVERED ONLINE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th, 9a Central
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26th, 1p Central
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18th, 1p Central
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17th, 9a Central

LEARN HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR BENEFITS TO MEET YOUR GOALS

Whether you're building for your future in retirement or ready to put your retirement plan into action, we are here with information to help.

Personalized Benefits Report available for all attendees.
Spouses are encouraged to join us!

PRESENTED BY



4 Square Financial
Literacy Partners, Inc.

Your Retirement Benefits Educational Partners

**EXCLUSIVE BRIEFING FOR
NATCA MEMBERS AT ANY
CAREER STAGE**

**TSP, SOCIAL SECURITY
MAXIMIZATION, FEGLI –
STRATEGIES THAT WILL SAVE
YOU THOUSANDS**

**DIVORCE, MILITARY BUY-
BACKS – DOCUMENTATION
COMPLICATIONS THAT CAN
DELAY YOUR PAYOUT**

**CASH FLOW, DEBT
MANAGEMENT - IDEAS FOR
BUILDING AND SPENDING**

**TAX PLANNING, ESTATE
PLANNING, LIFE INSURANCE
AND THE BASICS OF LONG-
TERM CARE**

**REGISTER ONLINE AT:
[HTTPS://PORTAL.NATCA.ORG](https://portal.natca.org)**

For questions or problems
with registration contact:
Lisa Head, Membership
Services Coordinator
(202) 628-5451
lhead@natcadc.org

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases across the country and out of an abundance of caution for the safety of our members, their families, and our benefits partners, the decision has been made to cancel the remaining in-person Retirement & Benefits Education Seminars for 2021. In order to fulfill your retirement and career education needs, the National Benefits Committee (NBC) has scheduled monthly virtual sessions for the remainder of 2021. These sessions contain 100% of the information presented in person. We appreciate your understanding during these difficult times and hope you enjoy the virtual versions.

The virtual seminars are loaded in the NATCA portal, and you may register

at <https://portal.natca.org>. If you previously registered for an in-person seminar, you do not need to do anything concerning that registration as the national office has canceled your registration for you.

We hope you will visit the [NATCA Portal](#) and sign up for one of the virtual sessions listed below.

If you have any questions about this or any of the other benefits offered by NATCA, please reach out to the National Benefits Committee at benefits@natca.net.

OSHA Webinar: How Temperature, Humidity and HVAC Performance Affect Your Comfort



The NATCA Academy is offering a new webinar for members, **How Temperature, Humidity, and HVAC Performance Affect Your Comfort**, on Sept. 9 at 1 p.m. EDT. In this 60 minute webinar, we will discuss the requirements for temperature and humidity in our buildings. We will cover the concept of humidity ratio, which is the best measurement of comfort and HVAC performance. Finally, we will discuss how you can measure the humidity ratio in your buildings and how high moisture in the air can foster mold growth, as well as the HVAC systems role in controlling moisture levels.

[Sign up](#) to join the webinar no later than Sept. 8 at 3 p.m. EDT.

National Office Staff Employee Spotlight: Chris Gant

We have an amazing National Office staff of which our membership can be very proud. They work hard every day and are committed to providing our members with the very best service and representation in organized labor. Today, we feature NATCA Labor Relations Representative Chris Gant. Thank you for all you do, Chris!

Where are you from, or what places have you lived?

Gant: I was born in Dallas. I currently live in Vienna, Va. I have lived in many states, including Missouri, Nebraska, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. I am married to Christine Gant. We were hitched in 2007, and we have three children – Mayumi, Kidlat, and Buhawi. (Their names are Filipino.)

Where did you go to school, or what other education do you have?

Gant: I went to college at the University of Texas at



Austin and earned a BA. I went to law school at the Rutgers School of Law in Newark, N.J., and earned a JD. I am admitted to practice law in New Jersey, New York, and Washington, D.C.

How did you come to work at NATCA?

Gant: Prior to going to law school, I worked as an organizer for a health care union (and some other unions and community organizations). I went to law school to gain the knowledge and skills to enable me to continue working for the labor movement. After law school, I worked at a law firm in New York City, which represented only labor unions. That was a great experience. Nonetheless, I wanted to be more a part of the labor movement (instead of being hired only to work specific cases), so I moved to the Washington, D.C., area to work for NATCA.

Do you have family members who are involved in unions?

Gant: I have family who are union members working as nurses, journalists, and engineers.

What's the most rewarding part of being a member of NATCA's staff?

What's the most challenging?

Gant: My favorite parts of being a labor lawyer are arbitrations and contract negotiations. Arbitration is fun because it's kind of like a fight. There's a clear-cut winner and loser – and I like to win! I find it especially gratifying when we have been able to save a member's career. I have argued two cases for NATCA where the arbitrator issued a decision that reversed a removal.

I also really like contract negotiations. Negotiations are very different from arbitration. There's no winner or loser per se. Rather, the two sides need to reach a mutual agreement. That is a different sort of challenge. At times, it can be frustrating. As a lawyer, you may want to shout, "I'll see you in court!" and then storm out. But that's not how it works. We have to find the right words that will persuade management to do the right thing. Nonetheless, negotiations are the best way to make real improvements that benefit the largest number of people. I've been fortunate and honored to serve on a NATCA bargaining team with each of the three FCT program employers.

Another thing I really like is working on organizing new bargaining units. As a lawyer, my role is pretty minimal – I basically just fill out some paperwork and resolve some technical legal issues relating to the election details or the appropriateness of the bargaining unit or whatever. But I am always inspired when I get to work with the NATCA Organizing Committee and see NATCA grow its membership.

Do you have any hobbies or any other activities you enjoy outside of your work for NATCA?

Gant: I play guitar and like to build scale models.

Member Benefit Spotlight:
SkyOne Federal Credit Union



In our day-to-day operations, rates are extremely important! Nothing



good ever comes from a rate that is too high. The same can be said when you have items to finance. The higher the rate, the bigger bite out of your bank account.

NATCA wants members to always have access to rates that work for them, both on and off position. SkyOne Federal Credit Union can get you a rate that is well below rates offered by traditional banks. SkyOne has been a trusted partner with NATCA for nearly two decades. If you need to finance a home, car, or one of the many toys we love, start with SkyOne by clicking [clicking here](#).

Union Members Feature: International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

NATCA continues to highlight our union sisters and brothers who are also essential contributors across our nation's workforce, and also AFL-CIO affiliate unions. Today we highlight and thank our siblings of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB). IBB represents more than 50,000 skilled craftspeople and industrial workers who work in heavy industry, shipbuilding, manufacturing, railroads, cement, mining, and related industries. IBB members construct and repair electric power plants, refineries, pulp and paper mills, and steel mills; build naval ships and commercial tankers, repair locomotives, make cement, and mine coal, gypsum, and talc; forge tools for industry and make consumer goods. IBB strives to be an innovative, forward-thinking union. [Read more](#) about what IBB is doing for its members.



NATCA Store Item of the Month: Beverage Glass

Features of this product: The 16 oz. NATCA Beverage Glass is the ultimate drinking buddy! Featuring a sleek and clean shape, this glass is a nod to the classic beverage can design and is a perfect addition to any space. No matter the occasion, this glass fits right in your hand and is great for serving your beverage of choice. This glass includes a black NATCA imprint and is union-made in the USA.

Price: \$7.



To see the item and how to

order: [Click here](#). Select USPS or UPS as your shipping preference on your orders. To check on stock availability or for further assistance, call 800-266-0895 or email natcastore@natcad.org.

Operation Traffic Counts Across the U.S.

Aviation System Performance Metrics (ASPM)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021

ASPM77 Airport Ops

-15.4%

47,985 CURRENT OPS

56,697 SEASONAL AVG

Core Airport Ops

-19.5%

29,394 CURRENT OPS

36,517 SEASONAL AVG



Center Ops

-15.2%

var from baseline

104,737 CURRENT OPS

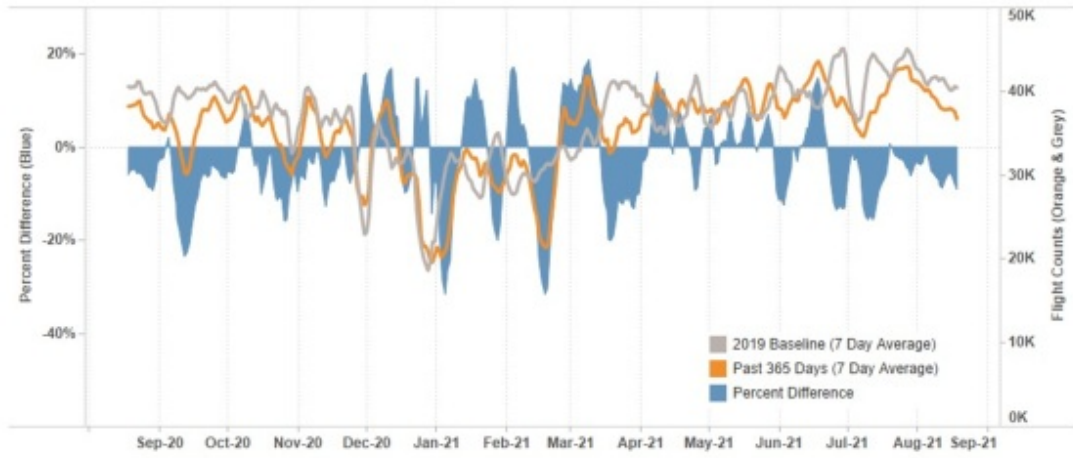
Top 7 TRACONs

-20.2%

var from baseline

25,574 CURRENT OPS

SOURCE: Federal Aviation Administration



4



**Federal Aviation
Administration**