



View of the runway from Vista Aviation's Balcony.

## Business Aviation Profile: The Little Airport Grows Up

Nestled in the northeast corner of the San Fernando Valley is Whiteman Airport. Following World War II, Marvin Whiteman opened the little airport with a 2000' runway that paralleled Pierce St. in Pacoima. Whiteman manu-

factured trowels and power buggies on the airport in a building that still exists on Pierce St. The power buggies were of all types whether to move people or cement and rocks. In the beginning the aircraft on the field were Piper cubs, Aeronca

Champs, Aircoupes, Twin Beeches and even a P51 Mustang. Soon there were the newer designs coming in such as Bonanzas and Navions. At the time there were 2 larger hangars on the field and 2 rows of T-hangars in the north corner of the airport, which still exist. There was a very small restaurant on Pierce St. and a small flight school named, believe it or not, Coffin Flight School, operated by Hank Coffin.

Whiteman Airport has had some interesting amenities through the years. Whiteman's sons were interested in stock cars and built a race track near the current Able Air facility. There was a park for family picnics and aviation enthusiasts where ARC Machine is today. There was a gun club and remaining for years were pillboxes left over from the war.

One major change to the airport was to move the runway to parallel San Fernando Rd, making the runway over 4000' in length. The airport was obtained by Los Angeles County in 1970, still the operator today. The airport is managed by American Airports Corp. They have made an effort to get involved with the community, creating harmony and proving the value of the airport. Whiteman Airport has become an appealing alternative for pilots and businesses. Some of the tenants are the Civil Air Patrol Sqd 35, Los Angeles County Fire Helicopters, EAA chapter 40, and Rocky's Café. Providing maintenance are Able Air Corp, Burbank Air Service, Schiff Aviation and Vista Aviation. Van Wagner Aerial Media specializes in banner towing and large signs. Angel City Air, Helitender, Summit Helicopters, and Adventure Helicopters are some of the newer expansion into helicopter businesses. KCBS 2, KCAL 9, and KTLA 5 news helicopters are based here. Argubright Construction, Hartman Hangars, and Specialty Aero Leasing, along with American Airports have hangars and tiedowns for rent. Glendale College, and Vista Air are the flight training schools based here.

Vista Aviation has been on the field for almost 30 years. Starting as a small parts shop, they just completed a 4 acre complex making them the largest business on the airport. They are a full service FBO and

Cessna Service Center offering parts, maintenance and inspections, avionics and installations as an FAA Repair Station, pitot static certs, pilot supplies, aircraft sales and much more. The sister company Vista Air is a Cessna Pilot Center where you can learn to fly and rent aircraft. Also a CATS testing facility, where you can take all your written FAA tests.

Whiteman Airport is a very happening place. Some of the group functions on the airport are Whiteman Airport Assoc., Young Eagles sponsored by the EAA giving free airplane rides to children, The Aviation Explorer program which teaches young people to fly, Latin American Pilot's Assoc., and the San Fernando Valley 99's (women pilots) who have numerous activities at Whiteman.

Whiteman Airport has grown from a local sport airport to a more friendly general aviation airport for the transient pilot wishing to visit the events, business meetings and attractions in the LA basin. In addition, the airport has untold value for emergency operations and a valuable relief outlet for any emergencies nationwide and internationally.

The President of the United States and Dignitaries from time to time stop at the little Whiteman Airport.

When the tower was added in 1988 this airport became more user friendly for learning to fly. Several flight schools opened here and flight training has continued to grow. Businessmen and professionals are learning to fly in larger numbers than ever. More jobs are opening up for the corporate pilot as well. Whiteman has proven to be an excellent choice for flight training. At Whiteman airport there is no waiting on the taxiway to take off, saving you money. Van Nuys Airport, the busiest general aviation airport in the country, has become a corporate jet center. This has made Whiteman more attractive to pilots learning to fly. They can receive the experience of busy airspace, without having to begin their training in it. From Whiteman there are dozens of airports to fly to in under an hour, making your training experience diversified and interesting. Approach and departure procedures have been estab-

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# Health Care Reform and the Small Group Employer

By Elliot L. Sanders

Health Care Reform is here but should probably be called Insurance Company Reform. Our leaders in Washington DC pushed through a bill which is still being written months later. Regulations are coming everyday to refine what is intended by the original Bill. At a recent meeting I attended, the speaker graphically depicted the bill by holding up a few small loosely bound notebooks with one hand stating that this was about 200 pages of the actual bill but that while the regulations are being drafted the actual end page count for this Health Care reform Bill would probably weigh in at 250,000 pages or more. That's a lot of reform!

Needless to say, the way we buy insurance for our companies is changing. Tax credits are now available for the employer who has a small group and qualifies. We have found that a number of employers who were considering dropping their plans are leaving them intact because they now have some financial relief. These rules are changing with the passing of time

and need to be considered in an employer's benefits planning. Change is coming and staying informed about them and their effect on you is critical. We see a number of services claiming to have the answers and would caution an employer to check out the promise before the nightmare of repairing a mistake has to happen. This is particularly true of Payroll providers claiming to have all the benefit answers. Face the facts that when a PEO approaches, (Professional Employee Organization) restrictive events occur that probably were not what you intended. How do you weather the Health Care Reform Act and the less than proper business tactics of some service providers?

## Health Insurance for Aviation Companies

Aviation companies have very unique issues on top of the items noted above. Our small flight department clients and some client repair facilities have people traveling not only around the country but off shore as well. This poses questions about coverage for benefits while engaged in these activities. Flight crews are regularly in countries where a health emergency can really cause concern as there may not

be coverage in place to help or the knowledge of where to go for help.

The answer lies in finding a reputable, established and well-informed Insurance professional who works for you and not for just one company. PEO representatives only work for the Payroll Provider like Paychecks or ADP. They want all of your business such as payroll, benefits, Workers Comp and what ever else you have including the employees! The employees are essentially leased back at a price to include all of the above mentioned items with fees and flat charges and restrictions that will bind you worse than bad pizza! Watch out! Don't get hood-winked into paying for insurance that doesn't cover the crews in other states or out of the country. Careful planning with a knowledgeable broker will solve this problem.

At Planned Approach Benefits, Inc., we provide all of the needed ingredients for your company's benefit plans including the Workers Comp, Payroll, Benefits, and the HR help that all companies need in today's business atmosphere. The difference is that all of the parts are not inter-linked and restrictive. You can get payroll services without buying the Workers

Comp and get the benefit plans that give choice options and the needed coverage for overseas travel and out of state coverage rather than a choice of just two options. We saw the need for the services that a PEO provides but found a way to provide it without the restrictions and the ability to tailor them to aviation companies. Our brokers are either private pilots or have been training in aviation. We understand the needs.

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*Elliot L. Sanders is a Pilot and Broker. For more information about Planned Approach Benefits, contact (818) 901-6500 or [info@pabinsurance.com](mailto:info@pabinsurance.com).*

## In the Cockpit:

# How to Get Started As The Pilot

No matter what your ultimate goal in aviation is - be it recreational flying or a more advanced training program - you must start by getting a private pilot's license. (Word to the wise: technically, pilots hold "certificates," not licenses, to fly, although hardly anyone except the FAA calls them that.) This private license allows a pilot to fly a single-engine airplane under visual flight rules (VFR), meaning visibility of at least three miles, as well as at night. A private pilot may carry passengers but may not be paid for doing so, although the pilot can share operating expenses with the passengers.

Once you have earned a private license, you can work toward other certificates: a commercial certificate allows you to be paid for your flying, a flight instructor certificate enables you to teach others, and an airline transport certificate permits you to fly an airliner. You can also add various ratings that allow you pilot multi-engine airplanes, navigate using instruments in bad weather, and fly different aircraft like seaplanes, gliders, helicopters, and balloons. But before you even think about doing that, you must get your basic private license.

The prerequisites for a pilot's license are simple enough that almost anyone can earn one:

- **Medical examination.** You must pass the basic medical exam that all applicants are required to undergo, certifying that you meet the medical standards for safely operating an aircraft.
- **Language.** All applicants for the private license have to be able to read, speak, and

understand English (the international language of aviation).

- **Age.** The FAA says you must be at least 16 years old to fly solo with a student pilot certificate, and 17 years old to get a pilot's license. There is no upper age limit, provided that you are healthy enough to pass the basic medical exam discussed above.

- **Time.** A private license requires a minimum of 40 hours of flight time, with most student pilots logging closer to 60-80 hours before their final check ride, as well as extra time for study on the ground in preparation for an FAA written test. The length of your training depends in part on whether you want to study full- or part-time. Intensive full-time programs can be completed in as few as two weeks or a month, while a part-time student typically takes between four and six months of flying several times a week.

- **Money.** Learning to fly is an investment that takes some money as well as time. While flying is certainly not restricted to the fabulously wealthy-you can learn to fly on a budget - it nevertheless is not an inexpensive endeavor. If you train part-time at a local airport, for example, plan on investing in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000, with costs varying widely by region. It is a good idea to consider whether you have the funds to start toward and reach your goal within a reasonable time period. Keep in mind that you do not need to pay for all of your flight training up front. Most training programs let you pay as you go, although you might get a price break by paying for a block of lessons in advance.



The Whiteman Airport office building and Rocky's Café.

## Little Airport Grows Up

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lished making it easy for access in inclement weather.

Once you are a pilot, the country becomes yours to explore whenever you wish. Becoming a pilot is not just about flying to San Diego or Las Vegas for the weekend, but it's nice to know you can without paying for checked baggage, waiting in long lines and having to share your armrest!

Career options are also numerous. Besides the obvious option of becoming an Airline pilot other choices may not be so apparent. Some of these options are Agricultural pilot, Air Traffic pilot, Corporate Jet pilot, Air taxi pilot, Military pilot, Helicopter pilot, Bush pilot, Cargo pilot, Flight Instructor or even Astronaut. Any

of these choices can lead to many other aviation careers in airport operations and services such as Law Enforcement, Sky Marshal, Airport Management, A & P Mechanic, Flight Dispatcher, Air Traffic Controller, Aerospace Engineer, Accident Investigator or FAA Examiner.

The little airport which started so many years ago is now home to over 600 aircraft. L.A. County continues to make improvements to the airport. Supporting our community with many businesses and jobs Whiteman Airport will continue to be a valuable asset to the San Fernando Valley for years to come.

*For more information, contact John "Dusty" Rhodes and/or Penny Alderson at (818) 896-6442 or [vista@vistaaviation.com](mailto:vista@vistaaviation.com).*