

ACRP Ambassadors: Sharing Research Peer-To-Peer

Greg Gobble needed help. Greg is manager of the municipal airport in Keokuk, Iowa and president of Lindner Aviation, which provides FBO services at the airport. Like many airport professionals, Gobble has numerous responsibilities that cover an array of technical topics. He wears many hats, some of which fit better than others.

“I am an aircraft guy first and an airport manager second,” said Gobble. So when he needed help to address a critical land use and zoning issue with his airport commission, what did Gobble do? He turned to an ACRP Ambassador.

The Ambassador Program is one of ACRP’s dissemination initiatives helping to strengthen its connection to the airport industry and get ACRP

research products into the hands of those who need them most—airport-industry practitioners. Ambassadors are volunteers who serve as liaisons among TRB and ACRP, the research community, and airport operators. They tell the ACRP story by presenting at state and regional airport conferences and engaging with conference attendees at the ACRP exhibit booth.

Enter Rhonda Chambers.

Chambers is the manager of the Fort Dodge, Iowa Regional Airport and member of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Public Airports Association. She is also an ACRP Ambassador.

“I’ve known Rhonda a long time and have relied on her knowledge and expertise in the past,” said Gobble.

“I first learned about the ACRP Ambassador Program from an ambassador who spoke at an airport conference. That presentation inspired me. The ACRP Ambassador Program is the best opportunity I ever said yes to.”

— Rhonda Chambers
ACRP Ambassador and Manager
Fort Dodge Municipal Airport

“When I heard her speak as an ACRP Ambassador I realized that, all of a sudden, I had access to a whole new level of assistance. So, when this sticky land use and zoning issue surfaced with my airport commission, I called on Rhonda.”

Chambers provided Gobble with a copy of *ACRP Report 58: Airport Industry Familiarization and Training for Part-Time Airport Policy Makers*, which he utilized extensively with his local airport commission, the Keokuk City Council, and in numerous public venues. “It was amazing how much information contained in that ACRP report independently supported my positions and recommendations in a much more concise manner than I could,” noted Gobble.



Above: ACRP Ambassador and Fort Dodge Regional Airport Manager Rhonda Chambers (center) with fellow participants at the 2015 Iowa Aviation Conference in Des Moines, IA. Ambassadors like Chambers engage with attendees at industry conferences and serve as liaisons between the TRB, ACRP, and practitioner community. Pictured (left to right) are Derick Anderson, McClure Engineering Company; Pamela Osgood, Mason City Municipal Airport; Rhonda Chambers; Robert Grierson, Dubuque Regional Airport; Mike Marr, Iowa DOT Office of Aviation; and Todd Dalsing, Dubuque Regional Airport. Photo courtesy of Rhonda Chambers.

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Through the Ambassador Program's first five years beginning in 2012, ACRP has identified, trained, and commissioned 37 Ambassadors. With support from ACRP, the Ambassadors:

- Identify, select, and attend industry events within their geographic regions;
- Staff the ACRP exhibit booth during conferences and conventions;
- Describe and promote solutions—in the form of ACRP research products—to a wide array of issues affecting airports;
- Encourage involvement in the ACRP research process; and
- Present on other topics as opportunities arise.

Each volunteer serves a two-year term as an ACRP Ambassador and attends four to six airport industry conferences and events during this period. Whether a current or recently retired airport employee, a representative of an airport consulting firm, or a member of academia, every ACRP Ambassador—like Rhonda Chambers—is a seasoned professional who is passionate about

aviation, airports, and ACRP. Each Ambassador has experienced the positive impacts of ACRP in his or her career, believes in the research program's need and purpose, and recognizes the importance and values the impact of being part of a professional family of airport colleagues.

The ACRP Ambassador Program now has a critical mass of alumni affectionately known as Ambassadors Emeritus. These alumni remain involved in ACRP's dissemination activities and lend expertise and experience to help guide new volunteers and develop our industry's young and mid-career professionals. Ambassadors Emeritus have numerous avenues to follow to remain engaged in ACRP, most notably as mentors to young professionals who have signed on as ACRP Champions, a separate initiative of the research program to help early- to mid-career young professionals grow and excel within the airport industry.

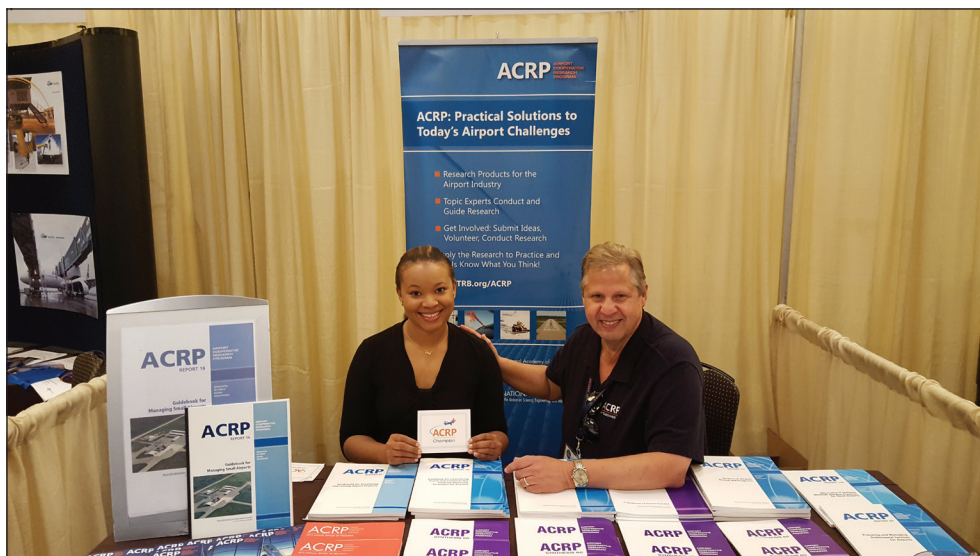
Each year ACRP recruits new members to join its family of Ambassadors.

ACRP Ambassador Program Fast Facts

- 37 Ambassadors since engaged since 2012.
- Representatives come from each FAA region.
- Participated in over 120 aviation industry events.
- Communicated ACRP research results to over 20,000 industry practitioners.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis throughout the year. If you have a passion for improving the airport industry is a significant way, the ACRP Ambassadors Program is an excellent opportunity. Visit the ACRP website at www.TRB.org/ACRP to learn more about the Ambassador Program and how you can positively impact our airport community.

In calling on ACRP Ambassador Rhonda Chambers, Greg Gobble quickly recognized how beneficial the program can be to his work as an airport manager. "I would have been hard pressed to find solutions to our land use and zoning issue without the help of an ACRP Ambassador", said Gobble. "I found great value in having a "go to" person who could help in my time of need."



Above: ACRP Ambassador and Savannah Airports Commissioner Fred McCosby (right) with executive assistant Meghan Dunn staffing the ACRP information booth at the 2016 Southeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives (SEC-AAAE) annual conference in Greenville, South Carolina.

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