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Dear Editor:

Your recent story about funding for local airports appeared devoid of any understanding of business aviation, air traffic system funding or the needs of communities and towns nationwide.

First, local airports serve a critical role for towns with little or no airline service by supporting flights for small and mid-sized businesses, schools, universities, emergency medical services, postal services, and fire-fighting teams, among others.

Second, the airports are local economic engines, bringing people and goods from communities to national and global markets, stimulating local economic growth. The activity generated by flights through these airports helps generate billions of dollars of U.S. economic output annually, and employs more than one million people nationwide.

Third, your story blatantly mischaracterizes the business aviation community, which uses "general aviation," aircraft (those not used by the airlines or military) for a business purpose. The fact is, this community is made up mostly of small and mid-size businesses that often fly piston-engine and turboprop planes to maximize the efficiency and productivity of their employees.

Also misrepresented was the role of the pending proposal for funding the Federal Aviation Administration. That scheme, which is being pushed by the big airlines, would replace our ultra-efficient tax system for funding aviation needs with a schedule of fees that would favor giant hub airports over community airports.

In short, all Americans benefit from the nation's airport system. Any proposal for FAA reauthorization must protect aviation access for small towns and communities. That won't happen with a scheme that saddles businesses with tax hikes and fees, and disadvantages community airports.

Sincerely,

Ed Bolen
President and CEO
National Business Aviation Association