



MARK R. BAKER
President and CEO

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Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of General Aviation!

As you know, our community is stronger when we work together and the ***Know Before You Go*** initiative is one where we achieved consensus by collaborating on FBO best business transparency practices that our collective organizations supported and signed two years ago. I have attached the document for your convenience.

I am also pleased to inform you that today, more than [300 GA pilot organizations](#) representing hundreds of thousands of pilots across the country have added their support to the ***Know Before You Go*** principles.

AOPA embarked on this program to promote the widespread voluntary adoption of online pricing and fee transparency, which undoubtedly will benefit pilots and general aviation. Unfortunately, we continue to hear complaints from pilots that are continuously surprised about ramp fees, and to be honest most of those are directed at the largest chain FBOs.

Ramp fees include, but are not limited to, infrastructure fees, security fees, tie-down fees, handling fees, parking fees, or overnight fees for piston and turbine powered aircraft.

We all strongly support the FBO industry as they provide the necessary services that keep GA flying. We need them and we want them to be successful. With recent announcements regarding acquisition efforts of the two largest FBO chains and ongoing mergers, we believe transparency and the ***Know Before You Go*** best practices are more important now than ever.

To date, and after two years, we estimate that only about 25% of the 3,300 FBOs across the country have instituted these best business pricing transparency practices and most of those who have complied are small-independent and municipally owned.

While hundreds of FBOs have voluntarily complied with online pricing and fee transparency, we still have a long way to go. By any measure, overall compliance has fallen well short of expectations. FBOs can use their company's website, their airport's website, AOPA's free online Airport Directory, or a combination of these to help all pilots make informed decisions in their pre-flight planning. I know we all agree on this point.

Of the 16 chain FBO companies, both small and large networks, representing 339 locations across the country, only three that we are aware of have complied with the full intent and spirit of voluntary pricing transparency - ACI Jet, Cutter, and Wilson Air, comprising 12 locations – a testament of their commitment to and support for general aviation pilots and an acknowledgement that on-line transparency can be achieved.



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Other large chain FBOs such as Jet Aviation, Flight Level Aviation, Million Air, Sheltair, Ross Aviation, Lynx F.B.O., Hawthorne Global, and Stellar Aviation also posted ramp fees for both piston and turbine operations, but not at all their locations. These 8 chain FBO companies consist of 105 U.S. locations and 57 of their locations are fully transparent. Similarly, Avflight with 20 locations posts ramp fees on-line for most aircraft except they do not do so for twin engine turboprops or jets. Million Air, with 17 of their 26 locations being fully transparent, represents the best large chain for compliance with **Know Before You Go**. We certainly hope that these companies can soon employ full transparency practices at all their locations.

Signature Flight Support does post fees for piston aircraft online while Atlantic Aviation is completely non-transparent with piston or turbine ramp fees. These companies, two of the largest FBO chains in the country currently representing 196 locations, in our opinion, circumvent the intent of transparency by requiring operator-owned turbine pilots to go online to join their loyalty programs for fuel discounts. Although, Atlantic Aviation does list a facility fee charge when accessing its loyalty program, it provides no other ramp fees online at any of its locations.

Most FBOs that charge ramp fees continue to not be transparent by providing them online. However, as I mentioned, many FBOs, small and large, have put all ramp fees for both piston and turbine aircraft online, so we know it can be done. I hope that together we can continue to encourage Signature Flight Support, Atlantic Aviation, and others to consider joining those in the industry that have accepted the full transparency model by making all their ramp fees for piston and turbine operators available online.

While we all strongly support our nation's free market system and the ability for companies to compete and remain profitable, we also support, on behalf of the users of the system, fair pricing and fee transparency at our public-use airports. Pilots, like any consumer, have the right to know the cost of goods and services at an airport, without requiring a pilot to join a loyalty program, so they can make an informed economic decision before flying.

Your continued commitment to the **Know Before You Go** program is appreciated and, on behalf of general aviation pilots, I request your encouragement and efforts to communicate online fee pricing for all aircraft, piston and turbine. Our team will be reaching out and visiting FBOs to encourage participation and I hope your organization will do the same.

We certainly prefer to accomplish FBO ramp fee transparency at public-use airports, for all aircraft, through an industry led effort but in order to do so we need full compliance, especially from the large chain FBOs.

Regards,

Mark Baker
President and CEO