

# ADOT AERONAUTICS



Photo contributed by Brett Shank

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## Group Manager's Report

As we move into 2026, I want to take a moment to wish everyone a Happy New Year and share an update on a major effort underway within ADOT Aeronautics, as well as recognize an important transition within our team.



**Matthew Munden**  
ADOT Aeronautics  
Group Manager

The State Aviation System Plan (SASP) continues to make strong progress and remains a top priority for our group. This comprehensive planning effort is critical to ensuring Arizona's airport system is well positioned to meet future needs—supporting safety, capacity, economic development, and community connectivity statewide. I'm pleased to share that the SASP is on track for completion in summer 2026, and we sincerely appreciate the continued engagement and input from our airport sponsors and industry partners throughout this process.

Regarding the Triennial Study, we're happy to report that PCI data will soon be available and the IDEA website will be updated. This should occur in the coming weeks.

A reminder that a GRR must be submitted to Aeronautics each quarter for all active grants. If no reimbursement for the quarter, a zero dollar GRR may be submitted or an email to your Grants Manager stating no reimbursement for the quarter.

I would also like to recognize Carmen as she transitions from her role as State Airport Engineer. Carmen's dedication, institutional knowledge, and commitment to Arizona's airports have had a lasting impact on our program. She has been a trusted resource for airport sponsors and colleagues alike, and her leadership will truly be missed. We are grateful for her many contributions and wish her the very best in her next chapter.

As always, thank you for your continued partnership and collaboration. The strength of Arizona's aviation system is a direct result of the dedication and professionalism of the airport community, and we look forward to the work ahead in 2026.

## Engineer's Corner

Happy New year and welcome to 2026! It has been an honor serving as the State Airport Engineer and supporting all of the Arizona airports. With your help we have made a lot of changes in a short timeframe and I know there are more improvements to come as the Aeronautics group continues to grow and evolve throughout this year. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in 2026 one way or another and I'm happy to be continuing to stay in the Arizona airport family. As of January 12, 2026 I'll be the Director of Engineering and Facilities at Mesa Gateway Airport. Thank you all for your best wishes and congratulations to date. It is an exciting opportunity to join an amazing airport team.

Below is my last list of reminders:

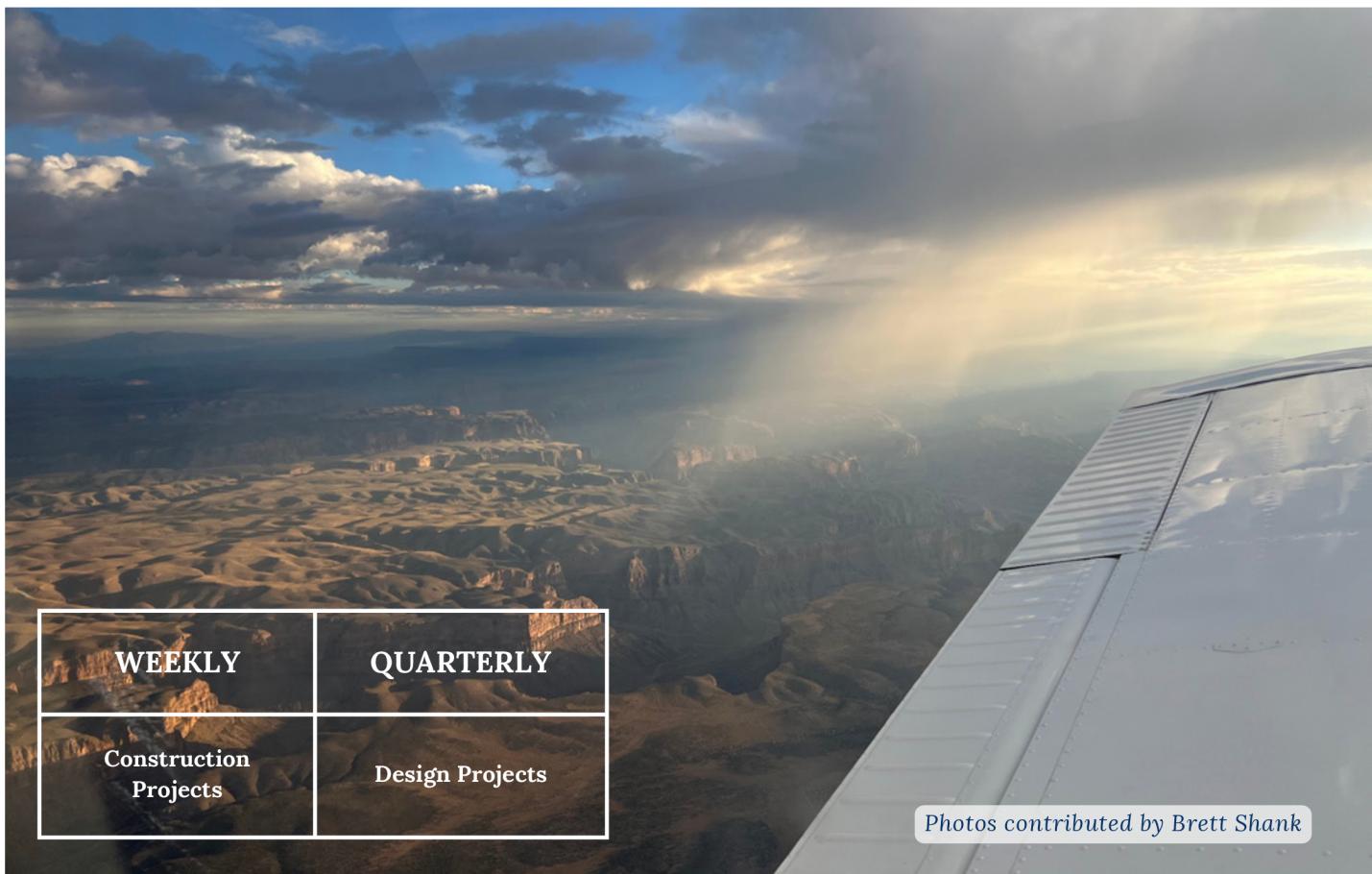
- All ADOT match grants should be issued. If you have not received your match grant yet please reach out to your assigned Grant Manager and Matthew.
- The beginning of the year is a great time to start fresh, therefore I recommend you take some time to read through the ADOT grant agreement from beginning to end and remind yourself and your team of the grant agreement requirements. (highlighter recommended)
- If you don't already have regularly scheduled check-in meetings with your grant manager, reach out and ask to get something scheduled as often as you would like. At a minimum we recommend quarterly meetings.

**Odin wishes everyone a Happy New Year!**



**Carmen Rose**  
ADOT Aeronautics  
State Airport Engineer





## Regulatory Roundup

As a reminder, Federal/State/Local (FSL) projects that receive state match grants from ADOT Aeronautics are subject to the same requirements as State and Local (SL) grants. ADOT remains a funding partner on these projects, and all standard state grant coordination and compliance requirements apply.

Sponsors must include ADOT Aeronautics throughout the project lifecycle, beginning early in the process. This includes coordination on consultant selection and contract development, required design reviews, construction-related approvals, and ongoing reporting.

Maintaining early and consistent communication with your assigned ADOT grant manager helps ensure projects remain compliant and move forward without delay.



# 2026 ADOT Airport of the Year

*Airports of all sizes are encouraged to apply—what matters most is how your airport has made a positive impact within its operational context and community.*

## Call for Submissions

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Aeronautics Group is excited to announce the upcoming 2026 Airport of the Year award—and we encourage all eligible Arizona public-use airports to consider applying.

For more than three decades, the Airport of the Year award has recognized airports that demonstrate excellence, innovation, and commitment to serving their communities and the aviation system as a whole. This recognition celebrates not just facilities, but the people and partnerships that make Arizona's airport system successful.

## Submission Window

- Opens: January 12, 2026
- Closes: February 16, 2026

An email was sent to airport sponsors on January 12 with a link to the online application form.

## Why Apply?

Winning Airport of the Year is a significant honor that:

- Highlights your airport's achievements statewide
- Recognizes the hard work of airport staff, sponsors, and partners
- Strengthens your airport's profile with stakeholders and the aviation community

**More details, including the official application link, were shared in the January 12 email announcement. We encourage airports to gather examples and documentation that showcase their accomplishments from the past year, and apply. We look forward to reviewing your submissions and celebrating the outstanding work being done across Arizona's airport system.**

## Application Tips

To make the process easier, airports are encouraged to draft their responses in a Word or Google document and paste them into the online submission form. This allows teams to collaborate, gather supporting details, and ensure thoughtful, complete responses.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on demonstrated accomplishments, initiatives, and best practices in the following areas:

- Safety and Security
- Operations
- Environmental Sustainability
- Innovation and Technology
- Community Engagement
- Economic Impact
- Maintenance and Infrastructure

To help ensure broad participation and recognition, ADOT Aeronautics is formalizing an eligibility guideline for future awards. Beginning in 2027, airports that have received this award within the previous seven years will not be eligible to win again during that period. This guideline is being shared in advance so sponsors can plan future submissions accordingly. Airports that have won within the last seven years are still encouraged to apply for the 2026 award, as this guideline will not be applied until 2027.

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If you have an aviation event you'd like mentioned or featured in our newsletter, please send details to [aeronautics@azdot.gov](mailto:aeronautics@azdot.gov).