



May 14, 2019

**Venice City Council
401 West Venice Ave,
Venice, FL 34285**

I wish I could be with the leaders of the Venice aviation community today as they share with the city leadership the efforts that have transpired within the past 9 months regarding the introduction to aviation education to the youth of Venice.

As you know, Venice has a rich aviation history dating back to WWII. What you may not be aware of is that the career opportunities in the aviation industry are greater now than they have ever been in the history of aviation. Nearly every facet of aviation is faced with a shortage of employees, including pilots, mechanics, air traffic controllers, and others. These shortages are projected to continue for the next 10 years. Several members of the aviation community in Venice are investing a significant amount of time in order to share with our students the opportunities that they likely never would have been exposed to otherwise.

Our students have received national recognition and significant exposure to aviation opportunities because of the work of Doug Griffin and several others. For example, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association is the largest association of pilots in the world and they have come to Venice twice to speak with our students and their parents. Another example is the SUN n FUN / Aerospace Center of Excellence. They are the largest non-profit in the world dedicated to aviation education and recently awarded one of only 6 full flight training scholarships to a Venice student because of the work that has begun locally. The EAA, an international organization dedicated to supporting and promoting recreational aviation around the world will soon be giving a Venice student a \$10,000 flight training scholarship because of the work that is being done. There are other examples.

It is my hope and strong suggestion that the City support Mr. Griffin and the others in their efforts. Great work has begun, but that work can only continue and grow with the City's active support.

Toby Blanton

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