

Active member candidate bios.

Aaron Rocereta - Director Operations Lynden

- Flight Instructor at UAA 2004
- 121 pilot in Alaska since 2004
- Assistant Chief Pilot Era Aviation 2008-2015
- Chief Pilot Ravn Alaska 2015-2018
- Director of Operations Ravn Alaska 2018-2020
- Director of Operations Lynden Air Cargo 2020- present

Tom Soderholm –Director of Operations, Smokey Bay Air

I have been flying my whole life—starting at seven years old with my dad in his Taylorcraft (after I promised him I would not tell my mother..) I soloed at 16 and license at 17, like many others with the passion. All the other ratings came early and I had my ATP by 25. I ended up with a lengthy and successful career as a corporate / business pilot and finished that stage in my life with 19,000 hours—mostly in Falcon 900's and the Bombardier Global Express and was lucky enough to visit and explore 106 countries. However, I wanted to end my overall career returning back to the smaller aircraft I learned on and in a position where I was not always on the other side of the planet. That is exactly what I've done and I am now the Director of Operations for Smokey Bay Air, in Homer Alaska. I've been very fortunate to have had enlightened ownership, who has encouraged me to put my imprint on the organization. We now have what I feel is the most professional fixed wing operation at the Homer Airport. As for sideline involvement, I have always been involved in aviation safety matters and even built from the ground up a safety department for a major corporate flight operation back in the 1990's. Also during that time, I was an airport commissioner for the Leesburg (VA) Executive Airport. Here in Homer, I was a member of the Board of Directors for the Chamber of Commerce for three years and now I have just started the second year of a two year elected term as Board President. I am also on the Board of Directors for the Alaska Chamber of Commerce. I would be honored to serve on AACA's board, if appointed. I feel anything that can be done to enhance aviation safety in general, and progress towards that goal in Alaska would be fulfilling and meaningful.

Scott VanValin – Director of Operations and Owner, Island Air Express

Scott Van Valin is the Managing Partner & Director of Operations at Island Air Express based at the Klawock Airport on Prince of Wales Island, Southeast Alaska. Scott was born in Anchorage, Alaska and raised on Lake Clark. It was here that Scott was immersed in aviation as it was the only mode of transportation in or out from this remote region. Scott started learning to fly from his father Glen at age 12 and soloed in his father's super cub on floats at age 14. Since this time, Scott has been involved in Alaskan aviation. In 1987 at age 15, Scott's family moved to Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska and built a fishing lodge business, El Capitan Lodge. Scott started managing El Capitan Lodge in 1990 and purchased it in 2002. Scott Air, LLC (now known as Island Air Express) was established in 1998 as a Single Pilot Operator using a Cessna 206 on floats to support El Capitan Lodge. As of 2015, Island Air Express is the sole carrier of US priority Mail to the towns of Craig & Klawock and the only IFR Air Carrier serving the region. Utilizing the Chelton / Capstone IFR system in each of its Aircraft Island Air Express provides a level of safety and reliability never before achievable in Alaska.

Scott Habberstad – Alaska Director of Marketing, Alaska Airlines

Scott Habberstad is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Anchorage with his lovely bride Amy, daughter Catheryne and son Jack. Scott graduated from Ketchikan High School in 1989, attended flight school upon graduation from high school. Scott earned his multi engine commercial land and sea ratings. He returned to Ketchikan to fly for Taquan Airlines in the summer and attended college in the fall at Boise State University. Scott graduated with a Bachelors of Business Administration in Marketing in 1997 and returned to Ketchikan to continue his flying career; shortly after returning, however, he went to work for the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau as the Director of Marketing. In 2001, Scott went to work for Alaska Airlines as an account executive in Anchorage and was later elevated to Manager of Regional Sales, Alaska and is now the Director of Sales & Community Marketing-Alaska. Scott is active in the community, sitting on the boards of the Resource Development Council, Visit Anchorage – past chair, Alaska Travel Industry Association – chair and Providence Foundation, Alaska.

Guy Pare – Owner, Eider Air

I have been flying commercially in Alaska since 1979 – everything from Cubs to C-119s -- all over Alaska. I own Eider Air Service out of King Cove. Because I live in the bush, I often see issues first: like cities wanting to charge landing fees, require operators to pay sales tax, necessary ground aids out of service for an unacceptable amount of time, the need to put pilots in the front of the line for vaccines.

Wilfred Ryan – Owner, Ryan Air

Wilfred Ryan, more commonly known to friends and associates as “Boyuck,” was born to Wilfred and Eva Ryan in Unalakleet on April 10, 1953. He was raised in Unalakleet, graduating from Covenant High School in 1971. He has six sisters and two brothers, and has a long history of Inupiaq, Irish and Russian heritage. Wilfred acquired his Private pilot’s license and acquired his Airline Transport Pilots and flight instructor certificates at age 23. He attended the Alaska Methodist University in Anchorage then Linfield College in Oregon. In 1991, he acquired his Associates degree from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Wilfred served as Chief Pilot from 1971 to 1977 for Unalakleet Air Taxi, a charter company that his father started in 1953. As President, he changed the name of the company to Ryan Air Service which once was the largest commuter airline in the State, serving 80 rural communities with 35 aircraft and 380 employees. In 1988, Wilfred left Ryan Air Service and worked for Baker Aviation in Kotzebue as a Chief Pilot. In 1989, the Bering Strait School District considered opening a new flight department and hired Wilfred as the Travel Manager and Pilot where he worked for seven years. From 1996 to 1997, Wilfred worked again for Baker Aviation as the Director of Operations. Finally returning to Arctic Transportation Services (formerly Ryan Air Service), in 1997, Wilfred now serves as the President of Ryan Air.

In addition to his aviation career, Wilfred served as a Board Member for the Unalakleet Native Corp., from 1973 to 1976; as Mayor of Unalakleet from 1983 to 1984; as a Board Member for the Norton Sound Emergency Medical Services from 1984 to 1986 and as a former Board Member with the AACA from 1985 to present.

Brien Salazar – Owner Taquan Air and Kawanti Adventures

Brien grew up in the Alaskan aviation industry, is a commercial pilot and owner of Taquan Air, a scheduled commuter airline operating 8 Dehavilland Beavers in Ketchikan. Brien spearheaded Capstone and the Medallion Program within Taquan, leading the company to achieving the Medallion Five Star Shield two years ago. Brien has served on the Alaska Air Carriers Board for the past 8 years, seven as treasurer. Brien currently serves on the Wells Fargo Bank Advisory Board, previously served on the University of Alaska-Southeast Advisory Board, S.E. Alaska Airport Advisory Board, Ketchikan Ports and Harbors Board, and is active within the Alaska Travel Industry Association and Ketchikan Visitors Bureau. Brien has earned recognition by the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau for outstanding leadership, Alaska Travel Industry Association’s prestigious Chuck West-New Pioneer Award, and the Alaska Journal of Commerce’s “Top 40 under 40” of Alaska business executives. Brien also has significant tourism and commercial real estate interests in his other businesses: Alaska Rainforest Sanctuary, Alaska Canopy Adventures, and Harbor Point Business Park. Alaska Canopy Adventures and Taquan have been recognized as “Tour of the Year” by cruise lines in 2006, 07, 08, 09. Combined companies include Juneau and Ketchikan employing over 200 people. Brien has an MBA from the University of Washington and a BA in Business Administration from Washington State University.