

FEATURE

» **Nearly 100 people** attended the Nashville COPA Event far exceeding the expectations of the planning committee.



Laurie Einstein Koszuta has been a freelance writer for many years and along with her husband, John, now owns a Cirrus SR22. With John as the pilot-in-command and Laurie as the partner, they regularly travel to see family, visit friends and enjoy our beautiful country. You can read more of Laurie's work on her website: www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com.

COPA Nashville Event Brings Safety, Learning and Community Together

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta

Beneath clear skies on a beautiful Saturday, COPA pilots, nonmember pilots and guests gathered in a locally donated hangar at John C. Tune Airport (KJWN) for the COPA Nashville Community Event held March 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



This marked the first community event organized by COPA Women Pilots and quickly proved to be an enormous success. Committee members included pilots Kelly Nimmo-Guenther, Linda Rebrovick, Margaret Burton, Shari Meyer, Betsy Johnson, Kristy Stengl, Teresa Polyak and Caitlin Farley.

Originally envisioned as a small gathering of about 30 attendees, the event far exceeded expectations. Nearly 100 participants attended, reflecting strong momentum across the aviation community and highlighting a clear desire for deeper connection, continued learning and meaningful engagement.

A Strong Turnout, a Clear Need

“The location was intentional,” said Nimmo-Guenther, vice president of COPA’s board of directors and one of the lead event organizers. “The COPA Women Pilots planned this as a safety and community event at its core.”

Rebrovick, who hangars her aircraft at KJWN and served as the event’s community lead, added, “We learned that many of the approximately 100 Cirrus aircraft based here at Tune are owned by pilots who are not COPA members. The feedback was extremely positive, and we are very grateful to COPA for

supporting our Nashville event. Thank you to our local pilots for your extraordinary turnout and participation.”

Both agreed that the event served as a powerful introduction to COPA, allowing pilots to see firsthand the organization’s benefits and value, leading many to join on the spot.

Built Around Safety and Community

Attendees were introduced to several of COPA’s safety offerings, including a COPA Pilot Proficiency Program (CPPP) training session, the COPA.fyi knowledge suite and opportunities to engage directly with subject matter experts from COPA University.

For many, it was their first exposure to the organization and one they found compelling.

The event was made possible through strong sponsorship. Aero Legal Advocates, PLC served as a Diamond level sponsor, with Harmony Air, Jet Access and Mack Air Aviation Services participating at the Gold level. Silver sponsors included Nashville International Airport (BNA) and CS&A Insurance, with Cirrus Aircraft contributing as an in kind sponsor.

Distinguished guests from the area included Doug Kreulen, president and CEO of the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority (MNAA); Adam Wolf, assistant vice president of MNAA and general manager of KJWN; Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, president of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU); Gregory Van Patten, dean of the MTSU College of Basic and Applied Sciences; Steve Smith, chair of the MTSU Board of Trustees; and Jimmy Granbery, MTSU board trustee and MNAA board commissioner.



Participants engage in a COPA safety session highlighting CPPP training, COPA.fyi resources, and direct discussions with COPA University experts.

Learning From Experience

The day’s programming blended education, recognition and hands-on experience. It began with a casual meet-and-greet over coffee and a light breakfast, followed by a series of safety-focused presentations.

- Chuck Cali, president of the COPA Training Foundation, presented *Fatal Flaw: Landing Lessons Taught Wrong*.
- Paul New, COPA University instructor and owner of Tennessee Aircraft Services, spoke on *In Flight: Normal, Abnormal, or Emergency?*

Recognizing Leadership

After a break featuring Hattie B’s hot chicken, a Nashville staple, the afternoon shifted to one of the event’s defining moments: recognizing two outstanding women in aviation.

Amanda Farnsworth, an AOPA board member and Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame inductee, and Ivy McIver, executive director of the Cirrus SR product line, were



Linda Rebrovick, Amanda Farnsworth, Ivy McIver and Kelly Nimmo-Guenther share a celebratory moment as Farnsworth and McIver receive their awards.

each presented with the inaugural COPA Women Pilots Distinguished Leadership Award.

“These women have broken barriers in a historically male-dominated field,” said Nimmo-Guenther. “Every Cirrus pilot benefits from their accomplishments. We wanted to recognize not only what they’ve achieved, but how they’ve impacted the industry as leaders and role models.”

In their honor, COPA donated \$2,500 to support three young women from MTSU’s highly acclaimed aerospace programs as they prepare to compete in the 2026 Air Race Classic in their Cirrus SR22T G7+, scheduled for June 23–26.

The ceremony was further elevated by personalized video messages from Cirrus Aircraft CEO Zean Nielsen and Todd Simmons, president of customer experience, and MNAA CEO Doug Kreulen, congratulating Farnsworth and McIver on their achievement.

Shaping the Future of Aviation

During a discussion moderated by Nimmo-Guenther, Farnsworth and McIver shared insights into key developments shaping the future of aviation. Farnsworth discussed AOPA’s organizational evolution and provided updates on the upcoming modernization of the NOTAM system. McIver addressed Cirrus Aircraft’s approach to regulatory shifts, reshaping operations and the transition away from 100LL fuel.

Farnsworth emphasized that organizations like COPA and AOPA are more than advocacy groups; they are ecosystems where pilots learn continuously, share knowledge and advance safety together. She also noted the increasing complexity of airspace and the critical importance of ongoing pilot advocacy amid rapid technological change.



➤ **COPA’s \$2,500 donation** supports three MTSU aerospace students as they prepare to fly their Cirrus SR22T G7+ in the 2026 Air Race Classic.



➤ **Amanda Farnsworth** and **Ivy McIver** shared their insights into the future of aviation.

Taking Learning Into the Air

The afternoon concluded with another popular session led by Will Garber, COPA Formation chair, who introduced attendees to the fundamentals of formation flying and its role in sharpening stick-and-rudder skills.

To bring the concept to life, 10 attendees were given an opportunity to experience formation flying in a live, in-the-air demo. Four seasoned and enthusiastic formation pilots donated their time, aircraft and expertise to take participants up and demonstrate the precision, discipline and teamwork involved in formation flight.

Moving Aviation Forward

“If you stop learning, stop flying,” one speaker emphasized – a message that resonated throughout the day.

More than a gathering, the event was a catalyst for connection and growth, and for the kind of community that makes flying safer and more meaningful for everyone. ☺