



Armstrong's Arizona ACEC Award

How our team used master planning expertise to assist the Navajo Division of Transportation

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Armstrong Consultants received the Grand Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies' Arizona Chapter for our completion of the Navajo Nation Airport System Master Plan. The award was conferred in the category of "Studies, Research, and Consulting Engineering Services." We thank the Navajo Nation for their close participation in the award application process, and for serving as a valued partner in New Mexico and Arizona.

Think about the last time you took a flight in an airplane. If you live in a major metro or urban area, you probably drove to a large terminal, boarded a commercial flight, and arrived on-schedule to meet with your family members, friends, or business associates.

Your most recent flight probably wasn't a medical evacuation. But, for many people of the Navajo Nation, general aviation airports are their primary lifeline to critical care in times of trouble. That is why Armstrong took our role in the Navajo Nation Airport System Master Plan so seriously.

Airports play a significant role in rural, agrarian communities. In the case of the Navajo Nation, that role generally takes the form of hospital transport, visits by medical personnel to treat people locally, or tourism visits. Armstrong's system master plan provided the framework for those key community and economic activities. This project gave our team the opportunity to have a major impact on a population that depends on safe, reliable airports for reasons that may not be immediately obvious to others living in the region.

What did the master plan accomplish?

This system master plan was the result of a coordinated effort, led by the Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT), which provided direction for the future development of the Nation's system of key airports to meet the needs of the communities they serve. The plan focused on five airports within the Navajo Nation, spanning across Arizona and New Mexico.

Community input was particularly important for this master plan, which is why Armstrong enlisted the help of specialists to create a comprehensive bilingual public involvement plan. Our team prioritized:

- Listening to chapter representatives,
- Collecting input about airport design and function,
- Careful consideration of the input provided to Navajo DOT, and
- Communication plans involving local radio stations, ads in the newspaper, a dedicated project website, and a bilingual phone hotline.

What kind of information did we collect?

Most of the feedback from the chapters we collected related to the physical condition of the airports and the need for infrastructure



improvements. A series of workshops also yielded input from the chapters about economic development at and around the airports. The Navajo Nation's rich history, culture, etiquette, and traditions presented some unique elements for this master planning effort. Although Armstrong traditionally integrates community input, that effort was intensified. We worked with The Genesis Consulting Group to conduct Chapter House workshops, assemble a Planning and Technical Advisory Committees, and create a vision statement to accommodate unique cultural needs surrounding the airport system.

Demonstrating our technical and social capabilities

Armstrong's ACEC win showcases our company's ability to simultaneously manage multiple complex projects. Our system plan was designed to offer an organized, safe, and efficient system of airports to serve the Navajo Nation's specific needs. Our team demonstrated capabilities related to:

- Engaging diverse groups of stakeholders, including the Navajo Nation and federal and state agencies,
- Managing public outreach with the help of specialized consultants, and
- Facilitating public dialogue despite linguistic and cultural barriers that would have deterred most other consultants.

In today's increasingly global economy, the ability to manage complex projects while integrating sensitive cultural approaches has never been more important.

Armstrong's ability to provide high-quality technical expertise in this challenging environment gives us an edge over the competition – and it leads to recognition from major industry groups such as ACEC. Our system plan is designed to support the Navajo Nation's airport system through at least the next decade. We look forward to a bright future and continued relationship with this cherished partner.

Find out how Armstrong's public outreach and master planning process can benefit your airport by visiting www.armstrongconsultants.com or contacting me at cmcdermott@armstrongconsultants.com.



About the Author

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Jenny Watts has more than eight years of aviation planning, corporate aviation operations, airport administration, and aviation education experience. Ms. Watts has worked at large commercial service and general aviation airports in the Phoenix-Metro area, directly contributing to airside/landside operations, community relations, planning, and business development. Jenny spent two years at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide as an advisor and adjunct faculty member. She obtained a Master of Aeronautical Science degree with emphasis in Aviation Management from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide in 2009, and a Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in Aeronautical Management Technology in 2003. She has been affiliated with the Arizona Airport's Association for over fifteen years. She is also a freelance contributing writer for the *Arizona Aviation Journal*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Armstrong's Mesa office at 602-803-7079, or e-mail jwatts@armstrongconsultants.com.