2026 RACCA Annual Conference: President's Opening Address

In aviation, there's an old saying:

"***Wisdom is learning from your own mistakes; safety is learning from everyone else's.***"

Every single operator in this room faces the same early mornings, the same winter icing conditions, the same tight turnarounds, and the same complex regulatory environment. When it comes to safety, we are never competitors—we are partners. When one of us learns a critical lesson, sharing that insight makes every single carrier in this room stronger, smarter, and safer.

Good morning everyone,

On behalf of the RACCA Board of Directors, welcome to Scottsdale and welcome to the 2026 RACCA Annual Conference.

Whether this is your first RACCA conference or your twenty-fourth, thank you for being here and for investing your time in our industry, our community, and one another.

Your participation matters. Your perspectives count. And your engagement makes RACCA stronger.

Looking around this room, I see operators, mechanics, pilots, dispatchers, regulators, manufacturers, suppliers, educators, and industry leaders. We represent different organizations, different business models, and different regions of the world, but we all share something important:

We understand that aviation is a team sport.

No airline succeeds alone. No regulator succeeds alone. No manufacturer succeeds alone.

And in our industry, perhaps more than anywhere else in aviation, success depends on collaboration, trust, and the willingness to share information.

That idea became the foundation for this year's conference theme:

"Stronger Together: Safety Through Shared Information and Insights."

Over the past year, RACCA has had the privilege of bringing your voice directly to Washington D.C. — meeting with leadership across the FAA, DOT, TSA, NTSB, and Congress. Every time, the message we heard back was simple:

"Continue bringing us your perspective. Continue sharing your operational knowledge. Continue making sure your voice is heard."

That message reinforced something we already know.

The safest organizations are not those that know everything.

The safest organizations are those that are willing to learn from each other.

Over the next two days, we will hear from industry leaders, regulators, safety professionals, frontline operators, maintenance experts, dispatchers, educators, and technology innovators.

My hope is that everyone leaves Scottsdale with at least one new idea, one new relationship, and one new insight that makes your organization stronger and safer.

Before we begin, I would like to recognize and thank the many people who made this conference possible.

To our speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, volunteers, scholarship committee, Board members, the RACCA Team: Natalie, Rachel, Frank, Nick, our Associate Members Council led by Tom Lajoie — and to my beautiful wife Laurie, Thank you.

This year's conference has reached record sponsorship levels, exhibit participation has sold out, our golf event is beyond capacity, and registration levels are among the strongest we have seen in years.

Those accomplishments belong to the entire RACCA community.

Finally, after over forty years in aviation, I continue to believe that our industry's greatest strength is not our airplanes, our technology, or even our infrastructure.

It is our people.

The willingness of this community to share knowledge, support one another, and work together is what makes our industry such a vital and resilient part of aviation.

We know there will always be headwinds and turbulence to navigate. But our strength lies in how we face those challenges — together, with shared purpose, determination, and a commitment to moving forward.

And as we embrace innovation and new technologies, we must never lose sight of the human factor. It is the combination of our people, their experience, and our willingness to innovate that will make our industry safer, stronger, and more resilient.

Thank you for being part of that community.

Thank you for your trust and for being part of RACCA.

And thank you for continuing to prove that when it comes to safety and operational excellence, we are truly **stronger together**.

Now, Let's Make a Difference and Let's have a Great Conference.