

Meet NYAMA State Government Affairs Representative Bruce W. Geiger

As NYAMA's lobbyist for the last 15 years, Bruce W. Geiger has been a steadfast advocate for an organization that has become the leading voice for New York's airport industry.

Over the years, Geiger helped galvanize the New York Legislative Aviation Caucus, which grew from an initial 40 members to today's 120-plus-strong contingent. He campaigned for the New York Aviation Jobs Act, which when enacted in 2015 reformed the state's aviation tax law by dismantling barriers to business jets basing their operations at the state's airports. And he has worked tirelessly to carry NYAMA's message to the halls of the statehouse, where legislators and the governor's office have delivered unprecedented levels of capital investment to airports.

Yet Geiger demurs when he's asked to elaborate on his successes.

"I give a lot of the credit for all that we've accomplished to the NYAMA Boards and membership that I've worked with," he says from the offices of Bruce W. Geiger & Associates on Washington Avenue, a block from the state capital, where he has served as president of the firm since 2001. "I'll never forget one NYAMA meeting, Ann Crook was the new president, and she asked everyone on the board to talk a little about their backgrounds. And I was so impressed with the level of expertise in the room. You had former high-ranking military officers, people educated at the nation's top aviation institutions, vice presidents and key officers of companies, it was just phenomenal, and it left a great impression on me – this is the upper echelon of the state's aviation industry!"

"I've been lucky to be able to channel their talents and knowledge to communicate our positions, and because of that, NYAMA has been embraced as the state's top resource on aviation issues. We're the go-to organization for legislators, staff and policymakers when they need analysis of legislation, or have questions about the FAA and its jurisdiction, or other issues related to our businesses."

As Advocacy Day 2017 nears, Geiger expects that the members of the Legislative Aviation Caucus will again play a critical role in advancing NYAMA's agenda, which remains grounded in the notion that a vibrant, well-maintained airport

industry delivers jobs and economic benefits that grow with public and private investment.

“Almost every legislator either has an airport in their district or their constituents are served or employed by the aviation industry,” Geiger says of the caucus’s unifying principle, regardless of party affiliation.

“This critical mass of like-minded and motivated legislators proved to be the catalyst for some of the recent successes we had,” he adds, noting the passage of the AJA, the substantial increase in capital dollars available to airports – nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in the state’s most recent capital plan – and Governor Cuomo’s Upstate Economic Development and Revitalization Competition initiative, which to date has awarded more than \$150 million among several of NYAMA’s member airports to fund transformative capital projects of their own design.

Geiger says Advocacy Day, which brings together dozens of NYAMA’s members and legislators over two days for an informational reception and a series of focused meetings that some have likened to speed dating, is an excellent indoctrination into legislative procedure.

“We need to be nimble,” he says. “This process doesn’t always allow the time for people to deliberate as much as they would like, so we have to have boots on the ground, and Advocacy Day does that really well. I’d also encourage our members to meet with their legislators in their districts, invite them to their airports, keep them apprised of how the investments they approve in Albany make our airports more attractive for travelers.”

Geiger expects this year’s Advocacy Day to include discussions on emerging regulatory issues.

“As an industry, we face several challenges, like the one posed by some legislative proposals to regulate unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, along with how airports will manage a variety of new technologies, such as transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft,” he says. “This year, the legislature is debating legislation that would allow these TNCs to operate outside New York City, which will have a tremendous impact on upstate airports, because they need clear authority to manage ground transportation in and around their facilities in a way that provides security and convenience, and enhances the travel experience on the part of passengers. And as always, there is the continued need to upgrade facilities,

to attract state and private investment in revenue-producing enterprises at our airports.”

As Advocacy Day approaches, Geiger again is hard at work with NYAMA members helping to refine NYAMA’s message. This annual collaboration, he says, is one of many reasons he’s immensely enjoyed his relationship with NYAMA.

“I am privileged to represent NYAMA,” Geiger says. “It’s been amazing to see how this group continues to grow professionally as an organization, and to see how much influence it now has on aviation policy. That’s been really rewarding, and I look forward to continuing my role as NYAMA’s guide for navigating state government and creating opportunities to accomplish much more for airports and the aviation industry in New York.”