



NATA's "FBOs: Above and Beyond" initiative highlights the extraordinary services provided by our Fixed Base Operator (FBO) members. The association's goal is to provide a well-rounded perspective on the FBO industry, directly from those with first-hand experience.



Westjet Air Center: A Soaring Passion for Flight Runs in the Family

RAPID CITY, S.D. – What began in 1975 as a job for Linda Rydstrom has turned into a multigenerational family business and a pillar in the Rapid City community. That is Westjet Air Center, the lone FBO at Rapid City Regional Airport (RAP). The business has been family-owned and operated by Linda and her husband Don – along with their daughter Miranda (Rydstrom) Maleki – for more than 40 years. Today, Linda and Miranda are majority owners, making Westjet one of the few FBOs that are female-owned.

All three of the Rydstroms are commercial pilots and, combined, have more than 100 years of experience in aviation. They bring a unique perspective to operating the business, and they know what makes a stellar FBO as each of them truly understands every aspect of the industry.

The Test of Time

During the 40 years of the Rydstrom's ownership of Westjet, they've seen a handful of other FBOs open for business and close at RAP. Perhaps it's their facility, their offerings or their impeccable customer service, but Westjet has proven to stand the test of time.

Just a few years ago, Westjet completed a full renovation, which included a brand-new executive terminal, a new 10,000-square-foot hangar and an expanded maintenance area. The new facility is designed to feel more like home than an airport and offers the convenience and amenities to match. Westjet offers a warm, cottage-like lounge complete with a stone fireplace, quiet rooms for resting, a pet relief area and a kids' play room. In fact, Westjet recently had the opportunity to serve Air Force Two, and the White House staff commented that the facility was one of the nicest they've seen.

The FBO also offers a full maintenance department – on call 24/7 – and line services, offering quick turnarounds. They utilize the NATA Safety 1st Training Program to ensure



proper care and handling of aircraft. Forty percent of their employees are U.S. military veterans.

But aside from their amenities and capabilities, the Westjet team really pride themselves on offering superior customer service – something Linda says is a result of the Rydstroms each having spent years as commercial pilots.

“We cater to everybody – not just corporations but also individuals who fly with their family and even pets. As commercial pilots, that’s something we learned how to do,” says Linda. “We feel our flying experience helps us truly understand the needs of all of our customers, and that gives us a competitive advantage.”

It’s that flying experience and perspective that the Rydstroms want to share with all of the Westjet employees. That’s why Westjet provides flight training to employees free of charge, which the vast majority of employees take advantage of. This service is provided by Miranda’s flight school – Plane Training, LLC – which she opened adjacent to the FBO in 2016.

Making an Impact on the Ground

Not only is the family instrumental in the aviation industry, but they’re incredibly active in the Rapid City community and especially passionate about inner city children and students.

For the past 10 years, the Rydstroms have hosted a Christmas party for the kids at Canyon Lake Elementary School, a Title I School in Rapid City, which Linda attended for four years in the 1960s. In 2017, the family provided 450 students with gifts, distributed by local police officers, firefighters and members of the National Guard. This year, the family looks forward to donating more Christmas gifts as a part of their 10th annual donation event in December 2018.

Westjet is also a proud supporter of Youth & Family Services Kids Fair, for which they’re one of three major sponsors. For 24 years, Kids Fair has provided children in the Rapid City community with a safe place to be active and engage in fun, hands-on activities while spending time with their families.

“People don’t realize the impact aviation can make in the community,” says Linda. “There’s way more to aviation than affluent people flying jets around. Where would we be if we didn’t have air ambulances? How would companies like Amazon, UPS or FedEx transport goods and services? Those are just two examples, but we certainly want to do our part to help our community.”


National Air Transportation Association
The Voice of Aviation Business

FBOs Above & Beyond

Westjet has been a Phillips 66® Aviation branded FBO since its founding in 1957, one of the longest Phillips dealers in the country and the sole provider of Phillips 66 fuel for all airlines serving Rapid City. They proudly participate in the [Partners-Into-Plane Contract Fuel Program](#), [Phillips 66 WingPoints® Rewards Program](#), and the [Phillips 66 Aviation Wings® Card](#) program.

For more details on programs and offers that Phillips 66 provides FBOs, [click here](#).





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