

Dear Fellow Employees,

This morning, along with Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson and others, I had the honor of representing the FAA at the National Air & Space Museum ceremony to kick off a year-long celebration leading to the 100th anniversary of powered flight. Relatives of the Wright Brothers, Charles Lindbergh, and Amelia Earhart, also participated.

This commemoration has a special meaning for the FAA because this agency and its predecessor agencies have helped chart the course of aviation for more than three quarters of a century -- a role that began in 1926, just 23 years after the Wright Brothers first flight at Kitty Hawk and a year before Charles Lindbergh first flew to Paris. It continues to this day as we work with the aviation community to shape aviation's second century.

The theme we have chosen to celebrate the FAA's role in this continuum is "Charting the Next Century of Flight," because it aptly captures, I believe, the agency's historical and future role -- charting the highways of the sky and envisioning and plotting the future course of aviation.

As we look back over the past hundred years, we have seen aviation progress from pioneering barnstormers and air mail pilots to regulated commercial flying, the advent of radar and jet aircraft, and now an increased reliance on satellites, computers, and a host of sophisticated electronic systems. Through it all, it has been the people in aviation, especially the people of the FAA and its predecessor agencies, who have stepped up to the challenges and made the crucial difference.

Thus, over the next year, as we commemorate aviation's achievements and milestones, we will try to focus special attention on the people who have made them happen. You'll be hearing more about the various planned events throughout the year. I urge all FAA employees to take part in these events whenever possible because as we lead the way in charting the next century of flight, the agency can look back with justifiable pride in what our predecessors have already helped aviation accomplish.

Marion C. Blakey  
Administrator