

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Catherine M. "Kate" Lang
Commitment to Effective Continuity of Government

Although organizational achievements are a testament to her dedication to the agency's mission, it is her unwavering dedication to the Office of Airports (ARP) employees that makes Catherine M. "Kate" Lang unique. Without a doubt, the single greatest challenge facing ARP today is the need to balance its mission and workload with resources. By actively involving employees through surveys, quarterly Town Hall meetings, and one-on-one conference calls, Kate has ensured that the voice of the employee is always heard and taken into account. For example, because resource allotment and alignment is so greatly intertwined with the success of ARP, she conducted a staffing study in 2008. With employee and management input, ARP now has a staffing model that defines a framework for discussion of staffing needs, which is aiding the organization in determining resources for the present and for the future.

The staffing study also revealed a need to standardize practices and processes across the ARP organization. Passionate and enthusiastic about the benefits of standardization, Kate quickly moved forward and worked with employees to establish much needed standard operating procedures (SOP) and a standardized field organization structure through geographic balancing. When fully implemented, the SOPs will adopt a combination of existing standardized procedures, now in use in one regional office, for all nine regions and 20 Airports District Offices (ADO). Standardizing the field operation will allow stakeholders to get consistent service from region to region. With geographic balancing, ADOs will range in staff size from 10 to 20 people, which will facilitate implementation of SOPs by allowing the staff to be specialists in a particular area. This will allow personnel to move from the generalist to specialist concept with engineers, planners, and environmentalists on staff. Under Kate's direction, ARP is reevaluating processes and determining the best ways to work with airport sponsors across the country to achieve common goals.

Kate's dedication to recognizing employee excellence is evident in her continued support of the Associate Administrator for Airports' Awards Program. The Airports Awards for Excellence Program is a means of recognizing the achievements of ARP employees across the country. The ARP organization recently held its 13th annual Airports Awards for Excellence Program this past January. Kate is a vital part of the selection process and celebrates the success stories of the employees. She is also a staunch supporter of the FAA's Program for Emerging Leaders (PEL), a rigorous 18-month leadership development program open to full-time, nonsupervisory employees. The program helps prepare employees for assuming leadership roles within the FAA.

In February 2005, the ARP organization began piloting the Airports Leadership Development Program (ALDP), a program designed to help managers and supervisors obtain the training they need to develop new leadership skills and strengthen existing ones. This program supplements agency-wide development initiatives. Along with the senior management team, Kate is very involved in the selection process of participants and provides continued support and commitment for this program.

Kate also rallies behind the agency's Senior Leadership Development Program. This is an agency-wide, 18-24-month structured developmental program consisting of mandatory core components and other activities that help FAA senior managers develop their leadership abilities.

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It is part of a comprehensive "succession management" process that projects executive staffing requirements and addresses those needs through various retention, recruitment and development strategies.

Kate has readily embraced and modeled the collaborative labor management culture of providing leadership and sharing. She has ensured that her ARP management team maintains a dialogue with the agency's Labor Relations office and is committed to labor management relations that are open and honest.

Believing that no idea is a bad idea, Kate is an active supporter of the DOT/FAA ideation platform called IdeaHub. IdeaHub is a DOT-wide online community that enables employees to "build" ideas in a collaborative environment. Employees are empowered to develop, rate and improve innovative ideas for programs, processes, and technologies. Its core objectives are to leverage employees' ideas to make the organization better, ensuring that FAA becomes one of the best places to work. Employees are so comfortable with the concept and with Kate's open door policy that they have brought ideas to her directly to advocate on their behalf.

Kate Lang's professionalism, dedication, and commitment to serve are an extraordinary example of public service. She is a team player who promotes and rewards the team idea throughout the ARP organization. She serves as a model for employees and colleagues alike. Because of her work ethic, dedication to employees, and desire to accomplish the agency's goals and missions, the aviation community is safer and more efficient and her organization is extremely motivated, committed, and energized to achieve success.