

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Catherine M. “Kate” Lang
Organizational Achievement

Catherine M. “Kate” Lang exemplifies the spirit and intent of the Roger W. Jones Award through her dedication to government service and her superior leadership that has produced critical organizational achievements. Her support and mentoring of employees serves as a model for the next generation of managers and executives. She, like Roger Jones, believes it is an honor and privilege to serve this nation as a public servant. She is willing to make the hard decisions, especially in this era of decreasing budgets and resources, to advance the mission of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and its Airports organization, and to facilitate the safety and growth of this nation’s airports. She instills in her employees and colleagues a sense of pride of service and dedication to the agency, and actively supports their development and advancement as they move up the corporate ladder.

Kate embodies the essential qualities of a good leader - integrity, collaboration, innovation, and cooperation. She also has the inherent qualities that make a good leader great. She consistently encourages creativity, is cognizant of employee needs, and balances the difficult decisions and choices that not only affect the organization, but also the individual. She is an innovator and change agent who is willing to take necessary risks and recognizes when it is time to change direction by listening to her employees and the aviation community she serves and then carefully weighing risks and benefits. Perhaps more importantly, she encourages creativity and innovation in her employees, and in doing so, increases organizational capabilities as well as the talents of those who work for her. This will ensure a strong organization well into the future.

As part of her leadership skills, Kate provides a clear strategic view of the national system of airports. Kate views all airports both large and small as key and important to the aviation stakeholders.

At the direction of Kate, FAA convened a team to conduct an analysis and review of approximately 300 commercial service airports and 225 metropolitan areas across the United States to see if these airports were able to meet the projected future aviation demand. The original Future Aviation Capacity Team (FACT) Study was completed in 2004, updated in 2007 and is currently being updated a second time and due in September 2013. The latest update will identify airports and metropolitan areas that will not be able to meet the aviation demands of 2025 and 2030. The report will incorporate the latest NextGen technologies. These reports are very beneficial as a foundation in the long range planning process for these airports.

In the late 1980s and 90s the U.S. Aviation System was experiencing considerable delays in addressing significant increases in aviation demand. Kate recognized early that it normally takes approximately 10 -15 years to deliver a major airport development project such as a commercial service runway through the planning, environmental, design and construction phases. There was a need to streamline the processes if FAA was to deliver the necessary development in a timely manner.

As a result, and at the direction of Kate, national teams were established with managers, subject matter experts to address the necessary planning, and environmental processes in a streamlined manner. An example of the success of the national team can be seen in the delivery and completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Chicago O’Hare Modernization

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Catherine M. “Kate” Lang
Organizational Achievement

Program in just 3 years. The project was the reconfiguration of the total airfield of one of the world’s busiest airports while maintaining its operations. This exceeded the average of 4 years for projects of similar complexity and controversy.

Under Kate’s leadership and direction, the Office of Airports (ARP) undertook an initiative to add system capacity by delivery of needed airport infrastructure. Kate oversaw the completion of major planning and environment studies in support of major airport development at the top 35 commercial service airports in the United States. As a result, 23 airfield projects were commissioned at 20 of the 35 major airports in the country. This included 16 new commercial service runways, 3 major taxiways, 2 runway extensions, 1 airfield reconfiguration completed with a second substantially complete. These projects will provide the potential to accommodate more than 2 million annual operations and decrease average delay per operation at these airports by about 5 minutes.

In 2012, under Kate’s guidance, the FAA released the first-of-its-kind study on general aviation (GA) airports called “General Aviation Airports: A National Asset.” For more than a century, GA airports have evolved from unpaved landing strips to aviation hubs.

This in- depth analysis highlights for the traveling public the pivotal role GA airports play in our society, economy, and the aviation system. The FAA has conducted previous commercial service airport studies, and now with this GA new study it has examined both aviation segments — commercial service and general aviation.

In addition, through Kate’s leadership the organization was the first U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) agency to successfully complete implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) program, which provided an additional \$1 billion in airport development funding. In fact, ARP established the standard by which the DOT viewed ARRA funding. Through Kate’s leadership ARP successfully met all ARRA statutory deadlines, completing many ahead of time.

As the FAA finally received a long-term authorization bill six months into 2012, after operating under 23 short-term extensions over the previous four years, ARP, under Kate’s leadership, still issued 1,920 new and 418 amended grants totaling \$3.325 billion in approximately five months. In addition to the funding program, ARP began quickly implementing several new legislative provisions, many of which expanded ARP’s role in programs enhancing environmental sustainability.

Kate’s commitment to collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork also led to the success of the O’Hare Modernization Program (OMP) Settlement Support Team. In January 2011, the protracted negotiations between the city of Chicago and the airlines deteriorated rapidly when the airlines filed an unprecedented lawsuit, seeking to prevent the City from proceeding with certain elements of the OMP. Although the FAA frequently works to analyze and respond to user-group complaints against airports, it is rare for the federal government to intervene. The critical nature of the OMP made it necessary for the DOT and the FAA to actively facilitate resolution of this multibillion dollar dispute. Kate proved instrumental in the negotiation process

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Catherine M. "Kate" Lang
Organizational Achievement

and spent countless long hours with the team members to reach a resolution. On March 11, 2011, just over a month after being tasked by the Secretary of Transportation to facilitate a resolution, the team helped to achieve a clearly documented \$1.17 billion agreement between the parties to support the continued implementation of the OMP. In appreciation, the Secretary of Transportation awarded the OMP Settlement Support Team the Partnering for Excellence Award at the 2011 Secretary's 44th Annual Award ceremony.

While Kate is an avid proponent of airport development, she believes that it should occur in an environmentally sound manner. Her interest is not limited to just seeing that the FAA minimize environmental impacts required of federally-funded development, but also works to ensure airports become environmentally sustainable. Environmental sustainability initiatives provide a win-win situation where the FAA, the airport, and the community can move forward in a compatible and collaborative manner. One current and forward-looking initiative championed by Kate is the FAA's Sustainable Master Plan Pilot Program. This program offers a way for airports to achieve planning and operational objectives, while reducing environmental impacts, achieving environmental benefits, and improving relationships with local communities. This goal is pursued through preparation of comprehensive, long-range plans that incorporate sustainability as an integral part of the plan. Initiated in 2010, the program consists of funding 12 studies at airports around the country. All but 2 of the 12 studies have been completed and the remaining two are expected to be completed in 2013. Interest by airports is high, ten additional studies were funded with AIP grants in fiscal year 2012, and the funding of further studies is planned in fiscal year 2013.

Kate also supports environmental research programs to ensure that FAA's standards and the determination of environmental impacts are based on sound science. She has also supported other forward looking sustainability issues such as funding the preparation of airports Environmental Management System plans; increasing funding for the Voluntary Airport Low Emissions Program for reducing airport emissions; and pursuing additional environmental initiatives that will result in airports emissions reduction, reduced energy consumption, and establishing airport recycling programs.

Kate Lang is truly a person of remarkable foresight and leadership - unselfish in her ambitions and generous in sharing her time and energy to achieve organizational and employee goals. She is the perfect example of what Roger Jones would consider the consummate public servant.