



Meet a Local Leader: Todd Dalsing



Todd Dalsing is the airport director at Dubuque Regional Airport in Dubuque. Photo taken Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

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Todd Dalsing (right), airport director at the Dubuque Regional Airport, talks with a Transportation Security Administration agent at the airport.

- Jessica Reilly

Todd Dalsing, Dubuque Regional Airport director

Todd Dalsing graduated from the University of Dubuque with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Management and Flight Operations.

In 1994, Dalsing was hired as full-time Airport Operations Specialist. In 2004, he was promoted to Operation and Maintenance Supervisor. He became director in November.

He is a board member of the Iowa Public Airports Association, member of American Association of Airport Executives Great Lakes Chapter and adjunct professor at the University of Dubuque. He also holds private, instrument and commercial pilot licenses.

Dalsing lives in Dubuque with his wife, Candace, and two children.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader?

Robert “Bob” O’Brien, who was airport manager at Dubuque in the early 1990s. Bob hired me while I was still in college and saw potential to continue in aviation management. He encouraged me to continue with Airfield Operations where I was eventually promoted and continued up the aviation corporate ladder.

What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization? Safety and security.

Airfield can be a hazardous environment, with many moving parts, from working conditions 110 degree heat with high humidity to -50 (with wind chills) to propellers, intakes, jet noise, aircraft and helicopters taxiing, aircraft taking off and landing at more than 100 mph. And then there’s airfield equipment, from ground handling tugs to loading bridge, aircraft rescue fire trucks and snow removal equipment — to name a few.

As an organization gets larger, there can be a tendency for the “institution” to dampen the “inspiration.” How do you keep this from happening? We operate as a team with an open-door policy. And as a team, we also believe in staying up-to-date on the latest information. We belong to a number of organizations that help keep us keep up-to-date, whether it is about commercial or general air service, FAA regulations, fixed-base operator management or federal and state legislative issues. We do our best to keep up with our industry.

Which is more important to your organization – mission, core values or vision? I believe Dubuque Airport Commission Mission Statement encompasses core values and vision:

“To provide quality, viable, competitive airport services and facilities while promoting sustainable economic development within the region.”

What is one (two) characteristic that you believe every leader should possess? Good communication and interpersonal skills.

What advice to you have for future leaders? Be a TEAM leader. In the airport’s case, staff and tenants of airfield all work together to achieve similar goals. Work with all stakeholders to set goals, set a plan to achieve and put into action.

How did you get involved in the field you’re working in? I was “bit by the aviation bug” when I went on a flight in a family friend’s plane when I was very young which

eventually brought me to University of Dubuque flight program to become a pilot and earn a degree in aviation management.

What are two or three of the best things about being a leader? Being part of team always looking for ways to improve Dubuque Regional Airport commercial air service and general aviation customers, tenants and employees.