

## New York woman stops in Nebraska, Iowa as she hitchhikes across US by air

By CINDY LANGE-KUBICK Lincoln Journal Star  
August 10, 2013 - 1:50 pm EDT

Share / Save [social icons]



ADVANCE FOR WEEKEND EDITIONS AUG. 10-11 - In this Aug. 7, 2013 photo, travel blogger and self-proclaimed Jet Hiking Gypsy, Amber Nolan smiles before hopping in a plane headed for Boone, Iowa at the Lincoln Airport General Aviation area in Lincoln, Neb. Nolan is on a personal mission to "hitch hike" to all 50 states via general aviation. (AP Photo/The Journal-Star, Kristin Streff) LOCAL TV OUT; KOLN-TV OUT; KGIN-TV OUT; KLKN-TV OUT

We also have more stories about:  
(click the phrases to see a list)

Category:

- [Nebraska](#) [RSS icon]

Places:

- [Iowa](#) [RSS icon]
- [Lincoln](#) [RSS icon]
- [Nebraska](#) [RSS icon]
- [New York](#) [RSS icon]

Follow The Republic:



LINCOLN, Nebraska — The Jet Hiking Gypsy left Lincoln on Wednesday afternoon.

Amber Nolan hitched a ride on a Cessna heading to Boone, Iowa, a place she's never been . and might never see again.

"Hi, I'm Amber, are you flying with me?" the wavy-haired woman in aviator glasses asked the man standing beside the single-engine four-seater.

Share: [Email] [Facebook 0] [Twitter 0] [Google+ 0] [LinkedIn 0] [Twitter Share] [Link icon] [Copy] [Print icon]

He was.

The Lincoln Journal Star reports (<http://bit.ly/16ChkPa> ) she shook the pilot's hand, stashed her backpack, her tent, her laptop and a plastic bag of ramen noodles and granola bars in the back, then waited for takeoff.

The woman with wanderlust knows the drill.

For the past year, she's been on the road — and 10,000 feet above

the road — after hatching this plan: Hitchhike by plane to all 50 states.

She's snatched a domain name — see Jet Hiking Gypsy above.

She's blogged about her travels.

Been interviewed about them.

Plans to write a book about them.

And she's hoping to get to Alaska before winter, checking off states as she goes in an order that is part planning and part serendipity.

Lincoln, Nebraska, for instance.

Last week, the freelance travel writer from upstate New York was in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, attending Airventure — the Sturgis for small-plane enthusiasts.

She was having a good time, but, like always, she was looking for a new place to touch down.

She knew where she didn't need to go: Texas. Georgia. Florida. Vermont. Maine. New York. Arizona. New Mexico. Virginia .

And she knew where she did: North Dakota. South Dakota. Minnesota .

In Wisconsin, she was surrounded by pilots, so she wasn't terribly worried. Then she heard a voice behind her.

Amber?

The voice belonged to Dave White, an 18-year-old pilot she met in Texas last winter. He lives in Lincoln now, and he had a spare seat on his Mooney.

Amber took it.

"I've never picked up a hitchhiker in a car before," Dave said this week.

And he'd never heard of anyone hitchhiking on planes.

Neither had Eric Hartwell, the guy who helped Amber hitch out of Lincoln on Wednesday.

"We tend to get some interesting requests," said Eric, who met Amber when she showed up at Performance Aviation on Monday. "Tow a banner, fly in a helicopter, but not anything like this."

The good news was Eric did know about a couple of pilots heading to a small town near Des Moines and willing to take a passenger.

"At first, I'd go anywhere," said Amber, who turned 29 during her Lincoln layover.

"The more I've been checking off the states, the more selective I've been."

The idea to travel the country by air came after a few years of working as a travel writer and doing less and less traveling and more and more sitting.

She quit her job to backpack South and Central America, and, when she came back, she decided she wanted to see this America.

She started looking for ways to make that happen.

A friend who worked at an airport told her pilots always were looking to take someone for a ride.

And the propellers in Amber's mind started to turn.

How could she turn a plane ride into a gig? Satisfy her love of travel and her love of writing?

She talked to some pilots in her hometown of Geneseo, New York, near Rochester.

It could work, they said.

Approximately 15,000 air miles and 37 states later, it appears it is.

Amber connects with pilots on general aviation forums, relies on the help of pilots she's met along the way, hangs out at small airports and tells people what she's doing.

"There's a kind of subculture."

Her longest flight: 4 hours. Her shortest: 7 minutes. (She thought she'd landed in Florida, but it turned out she was still in Georgia.)

Her longest stay: a month in Texas. Her shortest: See above.

She's flown in all sorts of planes: single-engine, small jets, biplanes, open cockpits, planes from the 1940s, space age-looking experimental models.

And she's flown over all sorts of places: low along the Hudson River and the Rio Grande, high over mountain ranges, upside down in Georgia.

She's set down on grass landing strips, been stranded in a farmhouse after a runway was temporarily blocked by center-pivot irrigation, crawled across the runway when they planned to leave.

Along the way, she's stopped to work and raise money — table-waiting, barnacle-scraping, rabbit-feeding.

And she's met amazing people who love to fly.

"The biggest surprise was this whole community out there that I didn't know existed."

It's flying at its best, says the woman waving goodbye from the backseat of the Cessna on Wednesday.

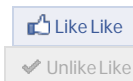
"I'm not really crazy about commercial flight. You can't see anything. And I hate those long lines at the airport."

---

Information from: Lincoln Journal Star, <http://www.journalstar.com>

**Think your friends should see this? Share it with them!**





 You like this. Be the first of your friends to like this.

[Click here to view comments on this story](#)

Story copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

**Feedback, Corrections and Other Requests:** AP welcomes feedback and comments from readers. Send an email to [info@ap.org](mailto:info@ap.org) and it will be forwarded to the appropriate editor or reporter.

All content copyright ©2013 The Republic, a division of Home News Enterprises unless otherwise noted.  
All rights reserved. [Privacy policy](#).