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Journal photo by Tim Hynd

Pilot Greg Finzen, founder of Siouxland Flyers, performs a preflight check on a Cessna 152 prior to taking off from Martin Field in South Sioux City, Neb.

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Finzen noted many people think about flying only in terms of airline service in and out of places like the Sioux Gateway Airport or Omaha Eppley.

"In many ways the local airport is an under-appreciated asset that generates and supports a lot of business and important activities along with just plain old recreational flying," he said. "I want to help encourage people to learn about aviation not only at the big airports like Sioux City and Omaha but in places like South Sioux City, Vermillion, Yankton, Mapleton, Norfolk, Sheldon, Wayne, Sioux Center, Orange City and elsewhere.

Although the group is only online, Finzen pointed out by being a member, people will learn about the many aviation activities and events in the tri-state area that are open to the general public.

"Almost every town with a general aviation airport has a fly-in pancake breakfast or some other event celebrating their airport's history," he said.

Finzen said the appeal of belonging to a group like Siouxland Flyers is that it provides a centralized location for people to express their love for and fascination with aviation and to find out how they can get more involved in it.

"Every day more and more people in Siouxland are getting involved with social media sites like Facebook," he said. "I wanted to make sure there was a place in the social media world where people with this interest could congregate online."

Not many people today may be aware or the importance of aviation in Siouxland and being a member of Siouxland Flyers may enlighten them, stated Finzen, a certified flight instructor who was honored as Iowa Flight Instructor of the Year in 2008, Nebraska Flight Instructor of the Year in 2009 and has been a licensed pilot since 1974.

"Sioux City had its own airplane manufacturing plant and one of the last surviving airplanes from that plant, Kari-Keen, can be seen at the Sioux City Public Museum," he said. "In 1943 Sioux City was a World War II B-17 aviation training base for people like the famous actor Jimmy Stewart. Just about everyone knows about Martin Field in South Sioux City but not many may know that my flight instructor and airport patriarch, the late Tommy Martin, had his original pilot's license signed by Orville Wright. To me that's a pretty neat link right back to the pioneering days of aviation."

Tags [Joanne Fox](#), [Greg Finzen](#), [Siouxland Flyers](#)

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