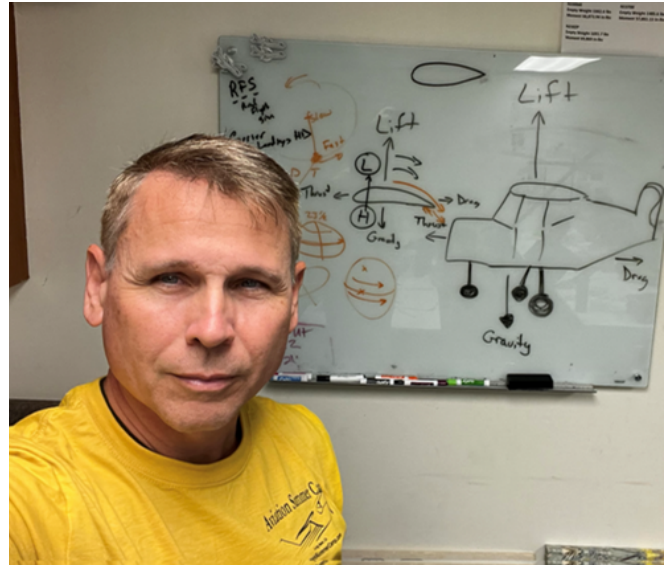


LGB Business Partner Spotlight: Tom Sutfin

This month we'd like to spotlight Tom Sutfin, owner of Flight Test Prep Academy and Aviation Summer Camp, both based at Long Beach Airport. He's also a schoolteacher, retired from Long Beach Unified and currently working at Cypress College, where he is proud to have helped support the Cypress College Flight Team to a first-place finish at the National Intercollegiate Flying Association's SAFECON safety conference. Tom's extensive knowledge and care for his students is remarkable, and we're grateful to have him here training pilots in Long Beach!



Q: Understanding that you have a number of professional roles, can you share what your operations at Long Beach Airport consist of?

A: Aviation Summer Camp and Flight Test Prep Academy have grown mainly through word-of-mouth advertising. Our modern aircraft include safety features like ADS-B In, which provides operators of properly equipped aircraft with weather and traffic position information delivered directly to the cockpit, and our curriculum efficiently works towards finishing private pilots about 20 hours under the national average. I have focused on effective training in nice aircraft.

I've lived in Long Beach for over 30 years, and I see substantial value provided to the community the airport serves, especially in terms of opportunities for children who want to learn to fly. The deficit of pilots in the industry will only improve through flight training. Since 2008, our summer camps have provided opportunities for hundreds of young people to explore aviation.

Q: What do students enjoy most about Aviation Summer Camp?

A: Students enjoy the specialty nature of the camp. Every summer we provide the opportunity for students who love airplanes and anything that flies to come together around a topic they're passionate about. It's amazing to me when a 10-year-old can describe the livery of an F-15 and its principal fighter role. The kids really enjoy training simulators and they especially love the tours that we've been able to work out with the airport, operators on the field and area aerospace businesses. I believe in what Albert Einstein said: "Inspiration is more important than knowledge."

Q: How long have you been based at LGB and what do you enjoy most about your job?

A: I moved to Long Beach in 1991 for a teaching position at Jordan High School and began flying in 2001, a lifelong dream since I was 10 years old. I feel the same today as I did when I started flying. It has its ups and downs, but I sometimes pause to think how amazing it is that I get to do what I enjoy.

Q: Your son is also a pilot?

A: I'm very proud of my son Matthew, who received his pilot's license at age 17. He is now 20 years old and working on his commercial certificate. A U.S. Air Force ROTC scholarship recipient, he is enrolled at UC Davis and makes the trip to UC Berkeley for his ROTC classes.