



Summit 2025

October 6 – 8, 2025

Flamingo, Las Vegas

AGENDA

Monday, 6th October

1200 - 1900	Registration Open
1200 – 1300	Lunch for ADF Board
1300 – 1600	Annual Board Meeting
1700 – 1900	Welcome Reception – Sponsored by INEMSOFT Kick off the Airline Dispatcher Federation Annual Summit in style! Join fellow dispatchers, industry leaders, and aviation professionals from around the country for an evening of networking, camaraderie, and celebration. This is your perfect opportunity to reconnect with old colleagues, meet new faces, and start building the professional relationships that make our industry so special. Whether you're a seasoned veteran with decades of experience or a newcomer eager to learn from the best, the Welcome Reception creates the ideal atmosphere to share stories, exchange insights, and discover common challenges and solutions. Enjoy great food, refreshing beverages, and engaging conversations as we celebrate our profession and set the stage for three days of learning, growth, and professional development. The reception isn't just about socializing – it's where partnerships are formed, mentorships begin, and the aviation community comes together as one. Come hungry, come thirsty, and come ready to make connections that will last long after the summit ends!

Tuesday, 7th October

0900 – 0915	Welcome
0915 – 1000	Keynote Speaker Jack J. Hersch -- "Automation in airliners can be a lifesaver... or it can be a murderer." This stark warning opens Jack Hersch's groundbreaking book " The Dangers of Automation in Airliners ," a work that couldn't be more relevant to today's aviation professionals. As an instrument-rated commercial pilot and acclaimed author, Jack understands firsthand how our increasing reliance on technology creates new risks for the flying public. His book traces the evolution of aviation automation from the first autopilot through the tragic crashes involving modern systems like the 737 MAX- examining how automation can crash an aircraft while "believing it is doing the right thing." Perfect for this year's summit theme of "The Future of Our Profession," Jack will challenge dispatchers to think critically about our relationship with technology and how we can maintain human expertise in an increasingly automated world. Learn more at jackhersch.com
1000 – 1130	Leadership Panel Dive into the operational front lines of aviation with this high-powered discussion moderated by Taylor Cornwall , Partner at McKinsey & Company. Watch as industry heavyweights Steve West (Southwest Airlines), Joe Hines (United Airlines), [American Airlines representative], and Matt Sparks (Delta Air Lines) tackle the critical dispatch and operations management challenges that keep our industry moving. From real-time decision-making and network optimization to crew scheduling innovations and weather disruption strategies, these operational leaders will share game-changing insights on the topics reshaping how we manage flight operations and deliver reliable service in an increasingly complex aviation landscape.
1130 – 1200	Networking Break Presented By eTT Aviation
1200 – 1230	IFALDA Join Russ Williams , President of the International Federation of Airline Dispatchers' Associations (IFALDA), for essential insights from the global dispatch community. Representing over 1,900 dispatchers across 25 countries, Williams will share cutting-edge developments in operational control, emerging international challenges, and breakthrough solutions being implemented worldwide. From ICAO safety initiatives to global best practices that can elevate your operation, this session delivers the international intelligence every dispatcher needs to know.
1230 – 1300	Digital Fishbowl: How the Public Tracks Your Operations Eye-opening insights from Mike Oberle , Delta Air Lines dispatcher, on the surprising extent to which the public tracks and monitors airline operations – including your ACARS messages! Discover the growing world of aviation enthusiasts, flight trackers, and data aggregators who are watching every aspect of your operation in real-time. From websites that decode your operational communications to social media accounts that track maintenance issues and delays, learn about the various sources that give the public unprecedented visibility into what happens behind the scenes. This fascinating session reveals how your day-to-day dispatcher decisions and communications are being observed, analyzed, and sometimes shared with the world. Understand the implications for operational security, public relations, and how this new level of transparency is changing the way we think about airline operations.
1300 – 1400	Lunch Provided by Our Generous Sponsors Grab your lunch and stay current on your jumpseat privileges! Phil Brooks , ADF Jumpseat Coordinator, provides essential updates on the latest changes, policies, and opportunities affecting dispatcher jumpseat access. Learn about new agreements, carrier-specific updates, and important procedural changes that could impact your travel benefits. This is your chance to get the most current information directly from the person who manages these privileges for ADF members.
1400 – 1500	Dispatch / Pilot Collaboration Discover how three major airlines are bridging the professional gap between the flight deck and operations center through innovative social networking initiatives. Moderated by Shelleyrae Niemi , Southwest Airlines dispatcher, this engaging panel features representatives from Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, and Alaska Airlines sharing creative programs that bring pilots and dispatchers together on a personal level. From meet-and-greet events to collaborative social activities, learn how these airlines are fostering genuine relationships that go beyond radio calls and flight plans. Get inspired by real-world strategies that humanize the pilot-dispatcher partnership, build mutual understanding, and create stronger working relationships through meaningful personal connections.
1500 – 1530	SITA: Emerald Sponsor Presentation Discover how SITA , the world's leading specialist in air transport communications and information technology, is revolutionizing dispatcher operations with cutting-edge tools designed specifically for today's flight operations challenges. From SITA Mission Watch's all-in-one platform that combines flight tracking, weather monitoring, and real-time pilot collaboration, to advanced flight trajectory optimization that enables seamless dispatcher-pilot teamwork, see how SITA's innovative solutions are transforming operational efficiency. As the IT provider powering nearly every passenger flight worldwide, SITA brings proven technology that's reshaping how dispatchers manage operations, optimize fuel consumption, and enhance safety across the global aviation network.
1530 – 1600	Networking Break Presented by Our Generous Sponsors
1600 – 1730	Dispatcher – Pilot – ATC Panel Experience operational challenges like never before in this unique three-way discussion featuring the voices that make every flight happen. This groundbreaking panel brings together a dispatcher, pilot, and air traffic controller to dissect critical operational topics from all angles. Watch as fuel planning, weather decisions, routing challenges, and emergency procedures are explored through the distinct lenses of operations center, cockpit, and control tower. This isn't just another panel- it's a rare opportunity to understand how the same operational realities look completely different depending on where you sit in the aviation ecosystem. Gain invaluable insights that will transform how you approach collaboration and decision-making in your daily operations.

0900 – 0945	Keynote Jake Zelman – Get ready to glimpse into tomorrow's aviation landscape with Jake Zelman, ADF member and former board member, as he takes you on a journey through the revolutionary changes reshaping our industry. From Advanced Air Mobility transforming urban transportation to Artificial Intelligence revolutionizing flight operations, discover how emerging technologies will fundamentally alter the role of dispatchers in the coming decades. Jake brings a unique perspective from his deep involvement with ADF and his forward-thinking approach to industry evolution, offering insights into how these game-changing innovations will create new opportunities, challenges, and career paths for aviation professionals. This isn't science fiction – it's the reality that's rapidly approaching, and Jake will help you understand what it means for your career and our profession. Whether it's managing autonomous aircraft, coordinating urban air taxi operations, or leveraging AI-powered decision-making tools, the future of dispatch is arriving faster than you think. Prepare to be inspired, challenged, and equipped with the knowledge to thrive in aviation's next chapter.
0945 – 1130	Panel Discussion: The Future of the Profession Buckle up for a forward-looking exploration of how emerging technologies and evolving aviation sectors will reshape the dispatcher profession! Moderated by Jim Starnes , Delta Air Lines dispatcher, this dynamic panel brings together diverse perspectives on the game-changing forces transforming our industry. Join Ami Sanchez president & CEO of Landmark Consulting Services, who brings invaluable Washington D.C. policy insights on regulatory frameworks shaping new aviation technologies, alongside Ben Shermer and Jake Zelman as they dive deep into the critical topics defining our future. From artificial intelligence revolutionizing flight operations and decision-making tools, to the explosive growth of Urban Air Mobility and its operational complexities, to the expanding landscape of Part 135 operations and beyond – discover how these developments will create new opportunities, challenges, and skill requirements for tomorrow's dispatchers. This isn't just about predicting the future; it's about preparing for it and understanding how to thrive in an aviation landscape that's evolving faster than ever before.
1130 – 1200	Networking Break Presented by Our Generous Sponsors
1200 – 1300	Airline Hiring Panel Get insider insights from the people who make hiring decisions! Curtis Taylor (Delta Air Lines), Angel Morales (Allegiant), and Ken McNaught (Horizon) reveal what airlines really look for when hiring dispatchers. Discover the hard skills that get you through the door and the soft skills that land you the job. Learn what sets successful candidates apart and how to position yourself as the dispatcher every airline wants to hire.
1300 - 1400	Lunch Provided iNEMSOFT Advanced Communication Solutions for Modern Dispatch Operations Grab your lunch and discover how cutting-edge unified communication technologies can enhance your dispatch operations! iNEMSOFT presents innovative solutions that integrate radio, telephony, and conferencing systems for mission-critical environments. Learn about advanced communication tools and technologies that could revolutionize how dispatchers coordinate with flight crews, maintenance, and operations teams. This is your opportunity to explore new technologies that can streamline your communication workflows.
1400 – 1430	ASAP Trends Dive into the latest intelligence from the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) as we examine the trends emerging from voluntary safety reports across the industry. This data-driven session reveals the real safety challenges facing dispatchers and flight operations teams today, from the most commonly reported issues to emerging patterns that could impact your daily operations. Discover what your peers are reporting, which operational areas are seeing increased attention, and how these trends can help you identify potential risks in your own operation. This isn't just about statistics – it's about turning industry-wide safety intelligence into actionable insights that make your operation safer and more efficient.
1430 - 1530	NTSB Investigations Learn what really happens when the NTSB comes calling from a dispatcher who has been there. Discover what to expect during the investigation process, how to prepare for interviews, and the critical role dispatchers play in accident investigations. Get practical insights on documentation, communication protocols, and how to navigate this high-stakes situation while supporting both safety and your career.
1530 – 1600	Networking Break Presented by Our Generous Sponsors
1600 - 1700	ADF Update Join ADF President Ryan Makings (Delta Air Lines) and the dedicated ADF Board of Directors for an inspiring look at how your professional organization is driving real change for dispatchers nationwide. Discover the significant victories, strategic initiatives, and advocacy efforts that have strengthened our profession over the past year, plus get an exclusive preview of ADF's ambitious focus areas that will shape the future of dispatch operations. From regulatory advocacy and industry partnerships to professional development initiatives that directly benefit working dispatchers, see how ADF continues to be the powerful voice our profession deserves. The session culminates with a truly special moment as ADF Scholarship Committee Chairperson Michelle Betcher (Delta Air Lines) presents the 2025 Scholarship Awards – celebrating the next generation of aviation professionals and ADF's commitment to fostering education and career advancement. This is more than an organizational update; it's a celebration of our collective achievements and a roadmap for an even stronger future.
1700 – 1730	Closing