

NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Harold Vavra

Inducted: 1997



Harold Vavra was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He was hired as the first engineer when the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission was established in 1947. He became its second director in 1948 and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1986.

During Mr. Vavra's thirty nine years of service to the Commission, aviation grew from 59 municipal airports and 121 grass strips to 102 municipal airports and 485 grass strips. Aerial application increased from around 40 operators and less than 100,000 acres sprayed to 200 operators and 4,900,000 acres sprayed with 402 aircraft in inventory.

Mr. Vavra was actively involved in the development of Rules and Regulations and legislation for the rapidly growing aviation industry on both the national and state levels.

He authored FAR: Part 137, the Federal Operating Certificate for aerial applicators at the request of the Civil Aviation Board. He also wrote the North Dakota legislation generating aviation taxes dedicated to support the state airport system and the statutes for the Airport Authority Act, establishing independent airport commissions.

Under Mr. Vavra's guidance, the Commission took responsibility for developing airports at border crossings and recreational areas where no legal sub-division had an interest. The Garrison Dam Recreational Airpark and the International Peace Garden Airport are fitting tributes to Mr. Vavra's dedication and vision for aviation in North Dakota.

Mr. Vavra was a member of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) serving as president in 1975. He also held memberships in the International Northwest Aviation Council, the National Aerospace Education Council and the North Dakota Civil Air Patrol.