

Executive Director's Corner

Pennsylvania's Aviation Moment Is Here — And You're Invited

Glenn Ponas Presents: Aerium's Executive Directors Corner- April Edition

After 26 years in aviation education and workforce development, I've learned that real progress doesn't happen in single moments. It builds, event by event, partnership by partnership, until the needle genuinely moves. Last year we brought nearly 200 students to the Capitol for PA Aerospace Day, launched the nation's first operational BVLOS medical drone delivery network, opened Aerium West, and watched 14 regional aviation collaboratives take root across Pennsylvania. May 2026 is where a lot of that that work shows up. From the steps of the State Capitol to the hangars of John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport, this May puts everything we've been building on full display. Three important events — each with a distinct purpose, each connected to the same mission — give our community the chance to advance what we started. I want to make sure you're part of every one of them.

PA Aerospace Day

Pennsylvania Capitol Complex, Harrisburg • Co-hosted by the PA Chamber & Keystone Space Collaborative

Monday, May 4, 2026 | 11:30 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

We kick off the month where it matters most: in the halls of power. Pennsylvania Aerospace & Aviation Day is one of the most important gatherings on our industry calendar. When we show up in Harrisburg, we're not just attending a reception — we're making the case that aerospace and aviation are central to Pennsylvania's economic future. With approximately 43,000 jobs, nearly \$19.3 billion in economic output, and roughly \$7.3 billion in annual GDP contributions, this industry touches every corner of the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Aerospace Caucus is active. State and federal leaders are paying attention like never before. This is the moment to put our best foot forward — to celebrate what we've built, advocate for what we need, and forge the relationships that move our work forward. Aerium will be there in full force. Come join us— [click here to register](#). Contact us at info@aerium.org for more information.



Executive Director's Corner

Keystone Trauma and Emergency Medicine Conference (and ATSPA Half-Day Virtual Conference)

American Trauma Society, PA Division • Open to healthcare, EMS, and injury prevention professionals

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 7:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Virtual

Two days after the Capitol, Aerium shifts to a different stage — one that shows the full human potential of what we're building. Aerium will be participating in the ATSPA conference alongside injury prevention professionals, trauma care specialists, and emergency responders from across Pennsylvania. Our presence there centers on Drone814 — our BVLOS medical drone delivery platform, backed by a \$2 million U.S. Department of Transportation Smart Grant — and what it means for healthcare access in rural communities. Here's what I want every aviation advocate to carry with them: the drone operators, UAS technicians, and flight planners we're training today are the same people who will one day pilot life-saving systems to trauma centers and underserved communities. Workforce development and healthcare innovation are the same conversation. May6is where you see that connection in action. If your work touches health care, emergency services, or rural access to care — don't miss this. [To register for the event, click here.](#) Contact us at info@aerium.org for more information.

2026 Aerium Spring Innovation Summit

John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport, Johnstown, PA • Registration open now!

Wednesday–Thursday, May 27–28, 2026

And then — the Summit. The capstone of Pennsylvania's aviation month. If you've never been to an Aerium Summit, let me paint the picture: you walk through the door of an airport hangar that has been transformed into a hub of energy and ideas. Students stand next to company CEOs. Educators swap notes with FAA officials. Future drone pilots take the controls of simulators while their parents watch wide-eyed. It's organized, inspirational energy at its finest—and it's Pennsylvania's aviation community showing the nation what we're made of.

Executive Director's Corner

2026 Aerium Spring Innovation Summit *Continued*

After the May 4 advocacy and the May 6 innovation conversations, the Summit on May 27–28 brings it all home. This year's focus on innovation — from autonomous systems to workforce pipelines to next-generation aerospace partnerships — reflects exactly where Pennsylvania stands right now. We're not watching the future of aviation unfold from the sidelines. We're building it. Past summits have drawn 350+ participants from across the country, including industry executives, government leaders, educators, students, and entrepreneurs. This year's gathering promises to be our biggest and most consequential yet.

- Register for the Innovation Summit **by clicking here** or going to <http://www.aerium.org/innovation2026/>.
- Hotel block available through April 26: **Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Johnstown — \$175/night with free breakfast (Mention Group Code ASM)**
- Sponsor, Exhibit, or Attend — There is a seat at this table for everyone who believes in what we're building.

Closing Thoughts

I want to be direct about what May 2026 represents for all of us. It's not just a busy calendar — it's proof of progress. Three years ago, we were asking people to believe that Pennsylvania could become a national leader in aviation and aerospace workforce development and innovation. Today, we're proving it. We're at the Capitol because policymakers want to hear from us. We're at the trauma symposium because healthcare leaders want to partner with us. And we're filling the hangars at Johnstown because industry, education, and community all see the same thing we do: an extraordinary opportunity to grow careers, build companies, and shape the future of this industry — right here in Pennsylvania. Come celebrate what we've built. Come help build what's next. I'll see you in May.

Written By: Glenn Ponas

Executive Director, Aerium

glenn@erium.org | erium.org