



**Tara DeRonda, General Manager of Textron’s New York Service Center at Stewart International Airport, Newburgh, New York.**

Interview by Dave Schiavone Dec 2021

Tara DeRonda is a native New Yorker who joined Textron’s New York Service Center in 2000. With a strong passion for aviation, she has transitioned through different roles in business operations supporting the Service Center network prior to her current position. As the General Manager, she oversees operations for the New York Service Center where many expert technicians have worked since its inception in 1989.

“With our team of dedicated technicians and our vast Mobile Service Unit fleet, we service Citations, King Air and Hawker aircraft throughout the Northeast. Customer satisfaction is our top priority. We are always working to improve the ownership experience. We focus on hard work, hands-on management and utilizing our worldwide service network to get you back in the air as soon as possible.”

The interview with Tara continued with some general industry questions:

**As a member, what does WAMA mean to you?**

“WAMA is a great association for networking among aviation professionals in our area. It is really important, especially in our industry, to get information out quickly regarding safety and training.”

**What do you like about WAMA and where would you like to see improvements, if any?**

“I like the camaraderie it brings to our members and aviation professionals in the region. One thing I would like to see is more participation.”

**What do you like about our industry either socially or professionally?**

“Where do I start? There are many reasons I love the aviation industry. To begin with, the people are great. This industry has the most outstanding group of aviation enthusiasts who are passionate about their profession. How could you not love to be around people like that? Another thing I love is that you are constantly learning something new, especially with our evolving aviation technology.”

## Where do you see our industry going?

“This industry’s future is a bright one. The aviation sector is growing at a fast rate, and I believe will continue to grow. There is an increased demand in mobility across the globe, and in today’s world. Air travel is at the top.”

## With social media now the primary way of networking, do you feel organizations such as WAMA bring a benefit to the industry or to you personally?

“Yes, WAMA and many other social media groups have helped reach people to provide information from training to hiring.”

## What type of training do you feel is important for maintenance organizations?

“I feel that safety training, maintenance, IA training, training with manufacturers such as Garmin, Honeywell or Collins, are all very important. All this training and development will only enhance performance and productivity, WAMA ensures consistency is key.”

## Have you experienced difficulties in getting qualified job applicants?

“Yes, like so many others in the aviation community and many other industries, we are challenged with finding qualified people. Our industry knew this would be a challenge in the upcoming years. Additionally, COVID did accelerate this to the present.”

## How can we recruit or bring young professionals into the field of aviation?

“The best thing I think we can do is get involved in our local communities, schools, organizations and get them excited about the aviation industry we all hold close to our hearts.”

## Do you feel the schools are turning out the volume or level of knowledge and skills needed today?

“I believe the schools are providing the skills and comprehension that students need to be successful. I also believe it’s our job as mentors in the aviation profession to get them to reach their ability and goals as individuals.”

## What area of the industry do you think needs improving?

“There is no doubting the fact that 2020 was one of the toughest years ever for the aerospace and aviation industries. Cancelled flights, job furloughs and losses, carriers ceasing trading completely. Before this pandemic we were facing a talent shortage. We need to focus on increase recruiting in aviation and continue to be people focused.”



## **Textron**

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Citations jets are produced in various models, including the Mustang, X, CJ3 and Sovereign. The company operates several service centers and facilities within reach of many of their customer locations. They always listen to operator's needs while offering excellent support.