

CAREER PILOT

Career Tips

Spending flying dollars wisely

By Karen Kahn

Misspent flying dollars are like bad landings, and everyone's done it. They can range from overspending on basic training to unnecessary expenditures for seemingly professional add-ons, such as "job qualification" courses that familiarize students with a large airline-type aircraft. Many newcomers forget that recruiters from flight schools are paid to sell you their specific type of flight training. For the basics, all FAA certificates and ratings ultimately appear on the same wallet-size card, regardless of where your training was obtained.

One of the unadvertised benefits of aviation is that those who have succeeded like to help those who help themselves. Great opportunities exist for pilots who demonstrate by their actions, rather than the size of their wallets, their dedication to and passion for flying. You don't

have to attend a fancy big-name school to get a good job. In fact, you might find a job sooner if you go to a smaller school because some of the networking opportunities can be far better when you've got fewer competitors in a narrow field.

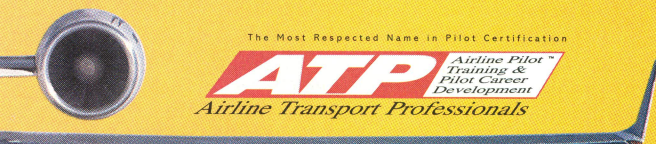
No reputable school should object to you paying as you go.

No reputable school should object to you paying as you go. If you've paid for everything up front, you may find yourself at the back of a line of creditors if the school closes its doors before you finish your training. If there's a financial advantage to paying in advance, limit your purchase to one rating at a time and check the fine print for the cost of extra flight hours, should more training be

required than the minimums advertised. Prepaying with a credit card may give you some protection if the business fails.

Many advertisements describe specialized courses that sound like official, career-enhancing programs designed to

move you up into the big leagues upon their completion. Unfortunately, taking such courses at an inappropriate time—early in your flight education, for example—usually does little to impress a prospective employer. Even a high-time pilot will derive little benefit from specialized training when there's minimal flight time included with the training and no guaranteed job offer to support



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