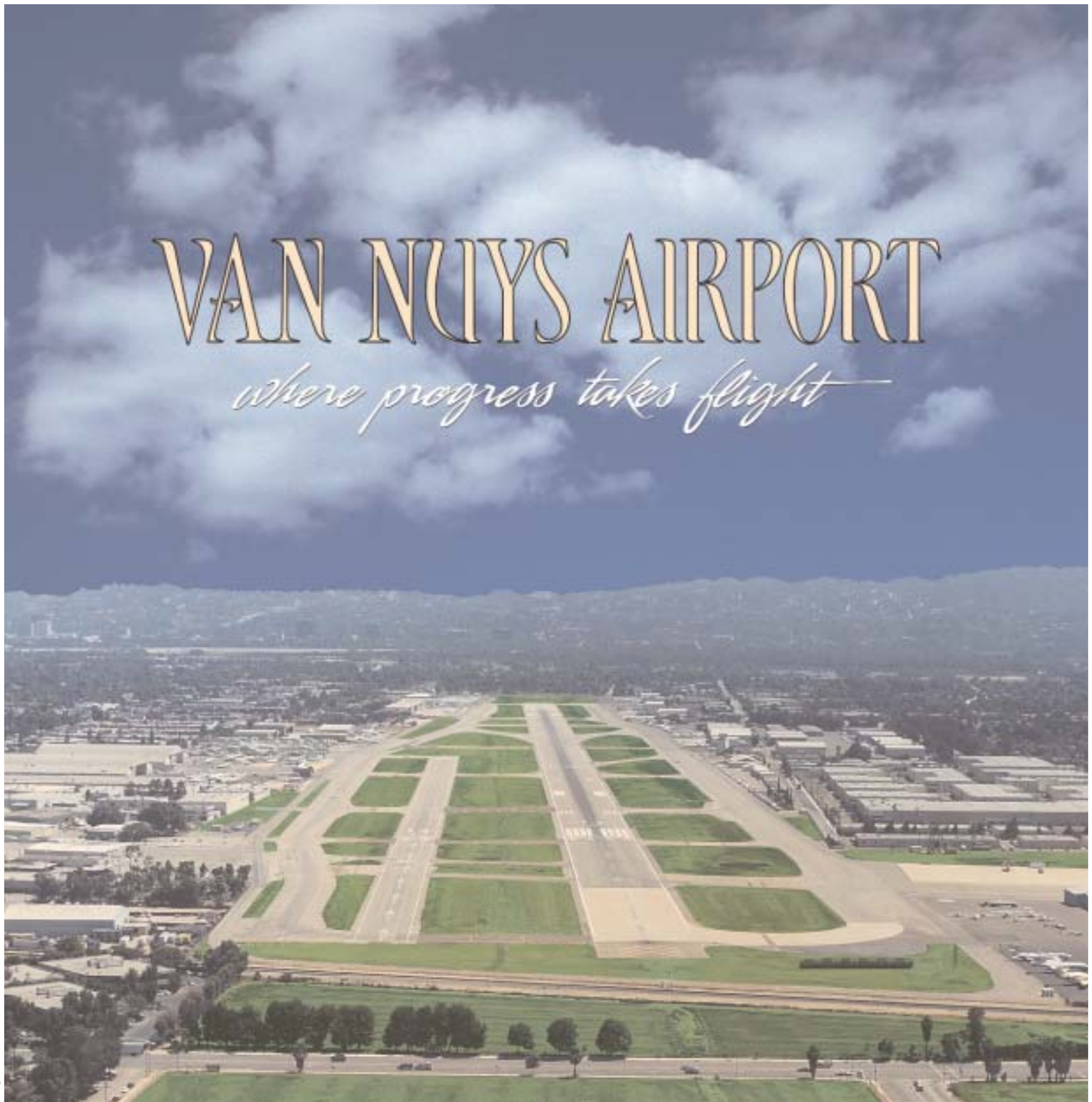
Van Nuys

Los Angeles
World Airports



CONTACT US

For general information about VNY, visit us online at www.lawa.org.

To schedule a tour or a presentation, or find out more about the ACE Academy or other community programs, call 818-909-3529.

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With its average of nearly 500,000 takeoffs and landings annually, Van Nuys Airport ranks as the world's busiest general aviation airport, meaning it handles all flights other than those for scheduled air carrier service or the military.

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The '70s and '80s

By 1971, VNY had become the busiest general aviation airport in the nation. In 1975, the FlyAway Bus Terminal opened, providing nonstop bus service between LAX and the San Fernando Valley, helping to alleviate freeway and LAX parking congestion.

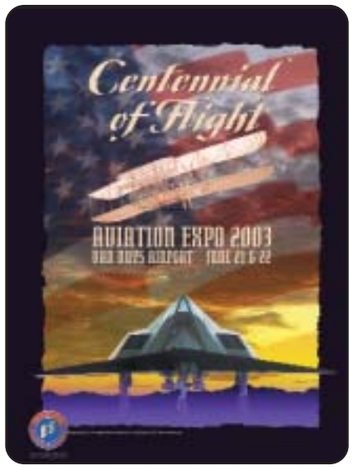
Several activities in the 1980s showcased VNY's commitment to working closely with the community. These included the implementation of a Noise Abatement and Curfew Ordinance governing aircraft operations, and the formation of the VNY Citizens Advisory Council to facilitate and promote closer, more direct interaction with community representatives on a variety of airport-related issues.

The public gets an up-close look at a U. S. Air Force rescue and recovery helicopter at a 1978 event commemorating the 50th anniversary of VNY.

Legendary performer Bob Hope embarks on his last USO tour from VNY in 1987.

VNY is used as a military staging area in 1992 during the period of social unrest in Los Angeles.

"Vinny," VNY's kid-friendly airplane and mascot, is launched in 1998 to give children a hands-on aviation learning experience.



A poster highlights Aviation Expo 2003, which celebrated the centennial of flight and the 75th anniversary of VNY and LAX.

The '90s

The 1990s brought many more changes and developments to VNY, which continued to serve a vital role in Los Angeles. In 1990, the 146th Airlift Wing of the California Air National Guard relocated from VNY to the Channel Islands. In 1994, the area formerly occupied by the Air National Guard served as a critical operating site for the American Red Cross as it prepared thousands of meals to aid victims of the devastating Northridge earthquake.

The renowned B-2 Stealth Bomber made its first public appearance over Los Angeles in 1996, before nearly 350,000 spectators at the VNY Aviation Expo.

Business activity at the airport continued to grow, and by the end of the decade, the airport was contributing about $1.2 billion annually to the Southern California economy and suporting more than 10,000 jobs.

2000 and Beyond

Los Angeles World Airports took a major step forward to further address noise concerns related to VNY when it initiated a $15-million residential soundproofing program in 2000. The new millennium also saw the groundbreaking for the FlyAway Bus Terminal improvement project, and the start of a $34-million bond project by the Los Angeles Fire Department to better serve and protect local communities by constructing permanent air operations and helicopter maintenance facilities on the former Air National Guard site at VNY.

In the years to come – through its ongoing leadership in general aviation, business and community service – VNY will continue to play a crucial role in the Southern California economy, the regional approach to meeting passenger demand, and the entire nation's air transportation system.

VNY today remains the world's busiest general aviation airport, serving as a focal point for business and industry in the San Fernando Valley.

VAN NUYS AIRPORT

THROUGH THE YEARS

Take a trip down memory lane, from the early days of VNY as a private airport in a still-rustic area, to today, when VNY supports the vibrant San Fernando Valley as the busiest general aviation airport in the world.

The ’20s and ’30s

In 1928, through the establishment of a corporation by a small group of citizens, VNY was born as Metropolitan Airport. Located amid 80 acres of trees and farmland, with initial landing fees of 50 cents, it was a place where pioneering pilots who had faith in the future of aviation could fly their “new-fangled flying machines.”

Although the Great Depression put an end to the corporation that established the airport, Hollywood film production – which had found a home at the airport and continues to use VNY to this day – helped to save it.

Metropolitan Airport, now 400 acres, is renamed the San Fernando Valley Airport in 1949.

Fighter aircraft park in front of VNY’s Lockheed facility in the 1940s. A 1944 joint venture between the U. S. Navy and Lockheed Corporation created an aircraft modification facility known as the Navy Lockheed Plant.

Several F-86s from the California Air National Guard’s 146th Tactical Airlift Wing, then stationed at VNY, wait on the ramp in 1955. The 146th began providing military air transport service in response to the Berlin Crisis in 1961.

The ’40s

With the outbrea k of World War II, in 1942 the U.S. government purchased the airport and converted it into a military base to help protect the West Coast. The military also purchased an additional 163 acres of land for the construction of the Van Nuys Army Airfield.

In 1949, the City of Los Angeles purchased the airport from the U.S. War Assets Administration for the token fee of $1, with the stipulation that the Air National Guard base continue to operate at the site.

VNY serves as the base for many early record-breaking flights, including:

- A men’s solo endurance record of 37 hours, by Herbert Fahy, in 1929.
- A women’s endurance record of 2 hours, by Elinor Smith and Bobbi Trout, in 1929.
- A women’s speed record of 196 mph, by Florence “Pancho” Barnes, in 1930.

Another day of filming takes place at VNY. A few of the famous movies over the years with scenes filmed at VNY include *Hell’s Angels, Lost Horizon, Casablanca, The Presidio, Patriot Games, In the Line of Fire, Forever Young, True Lies, Air Force One, Lethal Weapon, American Beauty,* and *Pearl Harbor.*

The ’50s and ’60s

VNY experienced its final name change (to Van Nuys Airport) in 1957, the same year completion of the Sherman Way underpass enabled extension of the main runway from 6,000 to 8,000 feet.

During the 1960s, development of airport land continued, culminating in the completion of the 27-hole Van Nuys Golf Course on the clear zone at the south end of the airport in 1968. The control tower still in use today was also constructed that year.

Visitors look at aircraft on display at a 1960s air show at VNY. The custom of hosting air shows and community open houses, popular free events, began in 1963.

WELCOME TO

VAN NUYS AIRPORT

From its origins in the 1920s as a private airport favored by daring young aviators and Hollywood’s famous faces, Van Nuys Airport (VNY) has grown into the world’s busiest general aviation airport, averaging nearly 500,000 takeoffs and landings annually. A facility dedicated to noncommercial air travel, VNY meets corporate, private and government aviation needs – in the process providing vital aviation services, enhancing efficiency at the region’s commercial airports, creating jobs, promoting business, and serving as a valued San Fernando Valley community resource.

Administration

Located on 730 acres in the heart of the San Fernando Valley, approximately 20 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles, VNY is one of four airports owned and operated by the City of Los Angeles, including Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Ontario International Airport (ONT) and Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD). A seven-member, policy-making Board of Airport Commissioners appointed by the Mayor of Los Angeles directs the Los Angeles World Airports system.

LAX LOS ANGELES
VAN NUYS VNY
ONT ONTARIO
PALMDALE PMD

Aviation Services

More than 800 aircraft are based at VNY. The airport is also home to 100-plus businesses, including six fixed-base operators and numerous aviation companies. Some of the services provided include aircraft maintenance, fueling, aircraft parking/tiedown, charter service, flight and ground school instruction, aircraft manufacturing and avionics installation. VNY also provides facilities for fire, police, air ambulance, search and rescue, and news media aircraft that serve the region.

According to an economic study, VNY contributes more than $1 billion annually to the Southern California economy and supports over 10,000 jobs.

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VNY FEATURES

- **Two parallel runways:** One 8,000-foot runway with a full instrument landing system, and one 4,000-foot training runway
- **Federal Aviation Administration Control Tower:** Open daily from 6 a.m. to 10:45 p.m.
- **Public Observation Deck:** Open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset. Located off of Woodley Avenue at the end of Waterman Drive, adjacent to the east side of the airfield
- **Los Angeles Fire Department:** Provides crash, fire and rescue service for airport and community emergencies
- **Airport Police Bureau:** Provides dedicated 24-hour patrols and other services to ensure airfield security
- **Van Nuys FlyAway Bus Service:** This facility, located at 7610 Woodley Ave. (at the corner of Saticoy Street), provides convenient, nonstop bus service to and from Los Angeles International Airport, with low-cost fares and long-term parking

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Van Nuys Airport: Then and Now

	Then	Now
Airport Name	Metropolitan Airport	Van Nuys Airport
Airport Size	80 Acres	730 Acres
Ownership	Private	City of Los Angeles
San Fernando Valley Population	51,000 (circa 1930)[1]	More than 1.7 million[2]

1. Source: AmericasSuburb.com: History and Lore of the San Fernando Valley, based on the book by Kevin Roderick titled *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb*
2. Source: Census 2000 data, collected and assembled by the San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center at California State University, Northridge

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ECONOMIC BENEFITS

With its close proximity to local communities, business centers, the entertainment industry and recreational facilities, VNY serves as a major economic engine in the San Fernando Valley. An airport economic study found that VNY:

- Contributes about **$1.2 billion annually** to the Southern California economy,
- Supports over **10,000 jobs** and,
- Generates an annual earnings impact of approximately **$273 million**.

VNY, as a tax generator rather than a tax user, also produces **$73 million** in state and local taxes annually by leasing space to a variety of tenants.

The airport creates, supports and attracts both aviation and non-aviation businesses in the San Fernando Valley and Southern California area. The airport property itself houses a major home improvement store, hotel, golf course complex and restaurants.

More than 300,000 visitors utilize the airport every year, flying on corporate, private and charter aircraft. Travelers appreciate VNY's convenient urban location, and many spend money on local hotels, attractions and goods. The average expenditure per visitor is $309, resulting in **$96.7 million** per year for the economy.

VNY supports the community by, among other activities, working with its local adopted elementary school, hosting a weeklong motivational academy for high school students, and helping provide aviation career scholarships.

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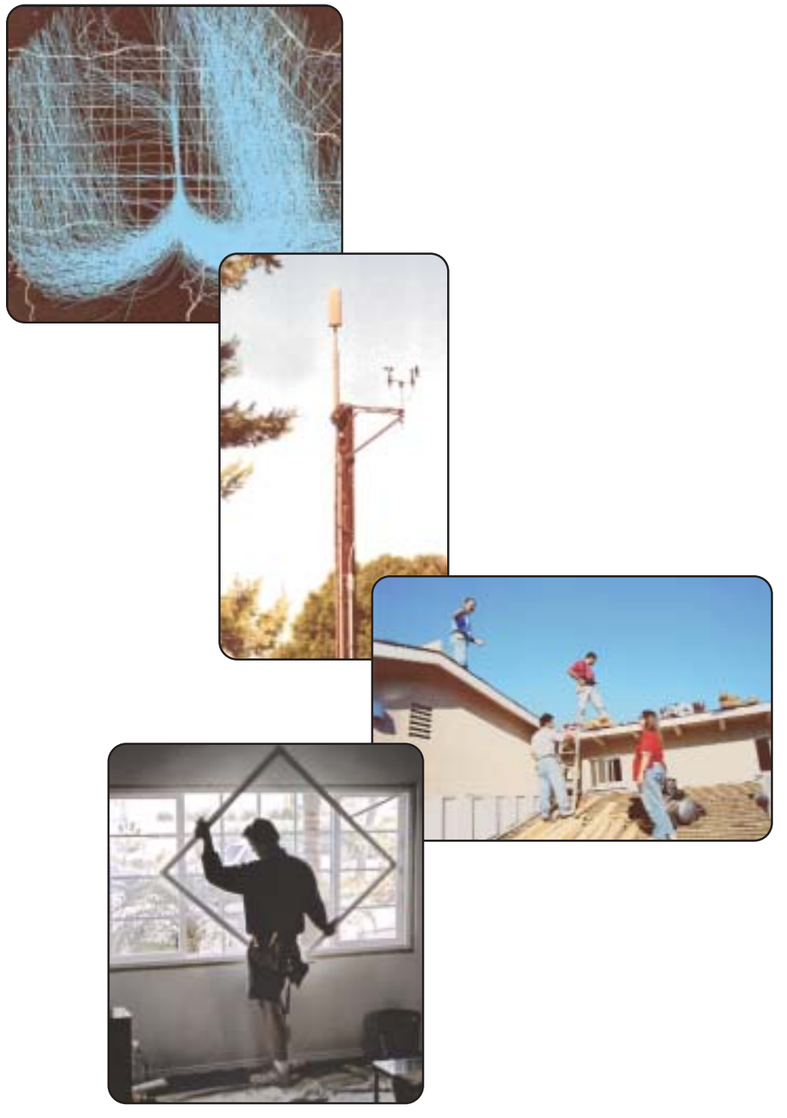

NOISE MANAGEMENT

Today, VNY devotes more resources than ever to its noise management program, which is designed to reduce aircraft noise and to provide meaningful response to the community on noise-related issues.

The airport's noise management program includes:

- Regulations that restrict certain jet departures during the airport's partial nighttime curfew and that limit the number of older, noisier Stage II aircraft that can be based at or use VNY;
- Voluntary use of predetermined, recommended procedures by pilots to reduce jet departure noise;
- A 24-hour monitoring program to detect pilots who do not comply with the airport's mandatory and voluntary noise mitigation procedures, including those pilots who turn too early after departure and subsequently fly over adjacent residential areas; and
- Notification of helicopter owners/operators of arrival and departure operations that deviate from established Federal Aviation Administration routes.

VNY continues to work with pilots and aircraft operators to increase awareness of the airport's noise management program, and to enhance the airport's noise abatement and monitoring tools to best serve the needs of the community.

One important way VNY helps those residents who live closest to the airport is through the residential soundproofing program, which uses modifications such as insulation and double-paned windows to significantly reduce noise levels at residences. Approximately 1,050 dwelling units are eligible for the five-phase, $15-million program. Participation is strictly voluntary and there is no cost to property owners.

VNY also operates a 24-hour community response line for noise complaints. Callers receive letters that include data on the specific aircraft operation involved.

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More than 1,000 dwelling units near VNY are eligible for free soundproofing to significantly reduce airport-related noise heard by residents.

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COMMUNITY SERVICES

As an important member of the San Fernando Valley community, VNY provides and supports a number of programs that benefit the region. These include:

- **ACE (Aviation Career Education) Academy:** This free weeklong motivational program provides up to 20 high school students each year with a basic understanding of the aviation industry, plus general knowledge about VNY and LAX.
- **Career Scholarships:** VNY partners with the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, a nonprofit women pilots organization, to award aviation career scholarships. Since 1997, scholarship awards have totaled tens of thousands of dollars.
- **Los Angeles Unified School District Adopt-A-School Program:** Through this program, VNY has "adopted" Gault Street Elementary School in Van Nuys. VNY's support of Gault includes a weekly tutoring program, an annual Santa Fly-In during the holidays and special event participation. Plus, VNY has worked with the local community to raise money and supplies for the school.
- **Los Angeles Unified School District Aircraft Mechanics School:** Housed at VNY, this branch of the North Valley Occupational Center enables students to earn certification in general airframe and power plant mechanics. The program curriculum, approved and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration, consists of 45 subject areas to prepare students for a wide array of jobs in the aviation-aerospace industry.

Medical Flights

VNY serves as a home base for both routine and emergency services, providing ramp/hangar space and maintenance facilities for police, fire and other City of Los Angeles helicopters.

Specially equipped aircraft provide medical transport for relief to accident victims, hospital patients and those in need of life-saving transplant organs across the country.

The airport's former Air National Guard site acts as a central staging area for large-scale emergency operations.

Citizens Advisory Council

Formed in 1985, the VNY Citizens Advisory Council includes 18 members who meet regularly (usually the first Tuesday of each month) and are appointed by the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners, the Mayor and neighboring City Councilmembers. The Citizens Advisory Council provides a vital means of communication among the City of Los Angeles, the general aviation community and the public on airport-related issues affecting VNY and local residents.

To help the public learn more about the exciting world of aviation, VNY offers free activities such as a community open house, onsite tours, and presentations to schools and community groups.

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PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

Through a variety of free activities, VNY helps adults and youngsters alike learn about the exciting world of aviation in the San Fernando Valley.

Aviation Events

Through its annual aviation events, VNY offers the public the opportunity to see some of the world's most unique aircraft and meet the pilots who fly them, plus enjoy educational exhibits, entertainment and more.

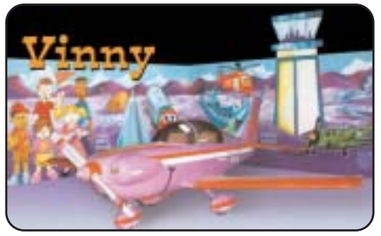
VNY's past Aviation Expos and community open houses have drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors and have helped support the community by raising more than a quarter-million dollars for local schools and nonprofit organizations.

Tours and Visits

VNY's 90-minute guided tours, offered to groups of 15 or more, take thousands of visitors a year on a captivating journey through aviation past and present. Let your imagination soar with a close-up look at a wide variety of aircraft and a glimpse into the many activities of aviation companies and operations at the airport. For the youngest visitors (first grade and up), a unique feature of the award-winning tour program involves a visit with "Vinny," Southern California's first kid-friendly, hands-on educational airplane.

Tours require reservations and are offered on weekdays and select Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. The airport can provide a large-capacity, air-conditioned bus for the 9:30 a.m. tour. You must provide your own transportation to and from the airport.

Although a tour will provide you with the most thorough look at VNY, you can experience some of the airport yourself by visiting the public observation area adjacent to the east side of the airfield, located off of Woodley Avenue at the end of Waterman Drive. Open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset, the site – refurbished in 2003 – features permanent educational and historical displays; special children's exhibits, including a miniature, to-scale rendering of the VNY runways; and a continuous live broadcast of air traffic controllers in the airport's control tower. Picnic benches allow you to take a break and enjoy the view.



Presentations

For those who don't have the opportunity to make it to the airport, the airport will come to you through the VNY Speakers Bureau.

Experienced personnel from all areas of the airport provide free presentations to homeowners groups, business associations, service clubs, schools and other community organizations. Topics include airport overview and history, airport security and safety, airfield operations, aviation careers, community outreach programs, noise management programs, and the soundproofing program.

VNY also offers slide presentations to school groups and participates in student career fairs throughout the San Fernando Valley.

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