COLLEGE SENIOR DEVELOPS FBO FUEL-ORDER SOFTWARE

News / Business aviation

There's an old joke about being sure to hire someone who's young, while he still knows everything. But here, the laughs might be on those who dismiss this college senior who says he has a better idea.

John Hill went to work as a janitor at a local FBO at Leesburg (Va.) Executive Airport while still in high school four years ago. In the time since then, he's climbed a few rungs on the employment ladder, and also earned his private pilot's license. Now a senior economics major at George Mason University, Fairfax, Va., Hill took it upon himself to design software intended to eliminate fuel-order problems faced by FBO managers, line techs and their aircraft-owner customers.

EasyFBO is a web-based application that digitizes the fuel-ordering process. Customers place their fuel order via their tablet or smartphone (the app is free; pricing for the FBO's elements is still under consideration), including details on aircraft identification, location on the field and fuel type and quantity. The order is then routed to theFBO desk and relayed to the line tech driving the fuel truck.

While it's always possible for someone to tick off the wrong box in a program, the theory is that the risk of error is far less than that involved with verbal communication over telephones or radio. Once the fueling job is completed, the line tech relays the metered amount and other details electronically to the front desk and to the aircraft operator who placed the order, so any miscommunications or discrepancies can be flagged immediately.

Hill, who was named among the top five college entrepreneurs of 2014 by *Entrepreneur* magazine, is taking some time off from his fall semester to visit the NBAA Convention in Las Vegas, from November 17 to 19, to promote EasyFBO. He'll be working the aisles there with his business partners, Daniel Lehmer, a student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and app developer James Tobin, a student at Christopher Newport University.