



photos by Heather Edwards/Review

Above, Chris Gardner of Navion Aircraft pets his cat, Waldo. Waldo goes to work with Chris every day. At right, Waldo spends his days in the hangar greeting customers and employees, and squeezing in the occasional nap.

Where's Waldo? Follow the purring

Heather Edwards
Review staff

Every morning, Waldo hops into an SUV and rides to work. Once he arrives at Navion Aircraft, he'll oversee the operations in the shop, greet customers and maybe take a nap or two.

Despite his excessive napping, he won't get fired—Waldo is a large, fluffy Maine Coon. He is owned by Navion Aircraft owner Chris Gardner and has been going to work with Gardner ever since he was a kitten in 2006.

Gardner's company is the Type Certificate holder of the Navion aircraft, a single-engine, four-seat plane built in the 1940s. Located at Fleming Field in South St. Paul, the company restores the existing Navion fleet; Waldo spends his days walking among the planes. As he makes his rounds, employees—and many customers—greet him by name.

"He's really nice to everyone,"

Gardner says. "He thinks it's part of his job."

Waldo takes his hospitality duties seriously, but that doesn't mean he allows customers to manhandle him. One customer who picked up and moved the 14.5-pound Waldo found himself receiving a disdainful stare from the cat.

Despite his catty mannerisms, Waldo has a growing fan base in South St. Paul. At his favorite fast food restaurant, employees offer him bits of chicken. Because Waldo loves to ride in the car, he meets friends wherever he goes. He's even had a few customers return to Navion Aircraft just to visit.

"They stop by just to see him," Gardner notes. "No one ever stops by just to see me."

Heather Edwards can be reached at southwest@lillienews.com.

