

2nd Annual Kansas Aviation Expo

After a successful inaugural event last year, state aviation officials are gearing up and partnering with the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education to host the 2nd Annual Kansas Aviation Expo, Sept. 22-26.

This year's Expo will feature a week's worth of events, including the Fly Kansas Air Tour, two around-the-world pilots and business seminars. Last year's inaugural event featured several leading industry speakers and left attendees requesting an annual event.

"This year our theme will be 'where dreams comes true' because there is something for everyone when it comes to aviation," said Jesse R. Romo, Director of Aviation for the Kansas Department of Transportation. "One of our goals this year is to reach out and engage as many school kids as possible to encourage them to pursue their dreams and consider a career in aviation."

During the air tour, pilots will fly their aircraft throughout the state carrying the message that aviation is for everyone. For three days, three stops a day, the group will barnstorm in aircraft that range from a vintage Stearman to a modern Cessna 182. Each stop will highlight a different aspect of Kansas aviation and draw in several local school kids. Day 1 kicks off Sept. 22 in Wellington, moves to Hutchinson for lunch and ends in Dodge City with an evening event. Day 2 begins in Scott City, continues to Salina and ends in Topeka. The third day will go through Pittsburg and Independence before ending in Benton.

Following the air tour on Sept. 25, Barrington Irving, the youngest person to fly around the world solo, will bring his Flying Classroom to Wichita and demonstrate to high school students how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) is used in aviation. The Flying Classroom event will include a career fair at which hundreds of high school students will learn about all the options aviation has to offer.

On the evening of Sept. 25, Amelia Rose Earhart will talk about her around-the-world flying trip and her Fly With Amelia Foundation that helps high school girls learn how to fly. Amelia Rose, who is not related to her namesake, recreated the route the earlier Amelia Mary Earhart had charted for her ill-fated 1937 attempt to fly around the world.

The schedule for Friday, Sept. 26, will include speakers from the FAA, TSA, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and more.

Gov. Sam Brownback said the week's events are valuable to highlight the importance of aviation to the Kansas economy and to introduce young people to aviation and possible careers.

"Kansas is proud of its history in aviation," said Gov. Brownback. "The popularity of this event highlights the importance of aviation and the contributions Kansas and Kansans continue to make in this critical industry."

For more information on the event, go to the KCAE website at www.flykansas.org/ or visit the event Facebook page at www.facebook.com/KansasAviationExpo.