

Kansas Aviation, Airports to be Highlighted

The 2016 Fly Kansas Air Tour lifts off from Wellington on Sept. 29 for a three-day, 9-city celebration of Kansas aviation.

This year's tour, presented by the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education and the Kansas Department of Transportation, will focus on raising awareness of the importance of community airports and promoting aviation to young people. More than 500 students are expected to visit their airports during the tour. Several dozen aircraft are expected to participate.

"The air tour is an opportunity to promote Kansas aviation. Kansas ranks number one in the country for per capita economic benefit from aviation," said Ed Young, president of the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education and Fly Kansas Foundation.

"We have an aviation cluster in Wichita and an avionics mecca in Johnson County. This is our chance to not only celebrate the on-going contribution aviation makes, but also introduce a new generation to their community airport," he said.

This is the third consecutive year for the revived tour, which first took place in 1928. The goal of that first tour was to promote the fledgling aviation industry in Kansas. After the next year's tour in 1929, there was a 79-year gap before the next tour in 2008, which included 28 stops and attracted more than 10,000 people across the state during the seven-day tour. After a short hiatus, the tour took wing again in 2014.

"This is a great opportunity for us to promote one of the largest industries in Kansas and provide an avenue for students to connect with aviators," said Merrill Atwater, KDOT's Division of Aviation Director. "With a specific focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) education and aviation history, we highlight the benefits of local airports to their communities, Kansas, and the nation."

The public is encouraged to visit the local airports during the tour stops to see the airplanes up close, talk to the pilots and learn about the role of aviation in Kansas. For more information please visit <https://2016flykansas.eventbrite.com>.