



## NEWS RELEASE

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## 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Virginia Aviation Conference held at The Omni Homestead

HOT SPRINGS—Nearly 300 airport managers and sponsors, consultants, Virginia Aviation Board members, industry professionals and other members of Virginia’s aviation community gathered at The Omni Homestead in Hot Springs for the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Virginia Aviation Conference August 20-23.

The 4-day conference, which took place during the annual Aviation Month in Virginia, kicked off with welcoming remarks from VAOC President Bill Kelly, Bath County Special Projects Coordinator Bill O’Brien, DOAV Director Randall Burdette and Virginia Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton.

Sessions following the welcome included “Insight from Washington” presented by Henry Ogrodzinski, President and CEO of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO) and “Perspectives on the Industry” presented by Jim Bennett, A.A.E. Followed by an option of breakout sessions and roundtables catered to both large and small general aviation airports and air carrier airports in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Virginia Aviation Awards Banquet was held Wednesday night to recognize outstanding contributions to Virginia’s aviation community. Becky Skidmore was named “Virginia Airport Manager of the Year” for her expertise and enthusiasm in operating, maintaining and promoting Ingalls Field Airport along with providing excellent service and advancing the benefits of the airport as an asset to aviation in Virginia. Leo Schefer was honored with the “Virginia Aviation Lifetime Achievement Award” for his lifetime contributions to aviation in Virginia as a founding member and President of the Washington Airports Task Force and for his dedication to the expansion and enhancement of aviation services including launching Dulles as an international gateway and reopening Reagan National after 9/11. Joe Love was also honored with the “Virginia Aviation Lifetime Achievement Award” for his 19 years of airport management experience and for his dedication to improving Chesapeake Regional Airport and establishing it as a valued air transportation facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Richard Largent, Demetrios Gellios and William Davis were recognized as the most active Young Eagles pilots in the commonwealth for introducing young people to flight. Judy Sparks received special recognition for over 16 years of leadership, dedication, hard work and perseverance as coordinator and event manager of the Virginia Regional Festival of Flight.

Just before lunch with Delegate Joe T. May on Thursday, airport managers, sponsors and consultants had the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions with the respective region’s Virginia Aviation Board member. The results of those discussions were reported later that afternoon in the Virginia Aviation Board Workshop. The 2013 Virginia Aviation Conference concluded with the August Virginia Aviation Board meeting on Friday morning where Virginia’s public use airports received their annual tentative allocations of state funds for capital projects. Total Commonwealth Airport Fund discretionary funds allocated were \$1,841,458.63.

The VAB has eight members representing seven regions of the Commonwealth. The Board approves funding requests brought to it by the DOAV.

The Virginia Department of Aviation's (DOAV) vision is to become the standard of excellence among state aviation agencies and make the Virginia aviation system the model air transportation system providing Virginia communities economic development opportunities and convenient access to the National air transportation system. DOAV's mission is to cultivate an advanced aviation system that is safe, secure and provides for economic development; promote aviation education and awareness; and provide the safest and most efficient flight services for the Commonwealth leadership and state agencies.

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