



NEWS RELEASE

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Aviation groups discuss promoting industry in challenging times

RICHMOND—Representatives from various airports across the state came together March 28 at the Virginia Aviation Museum to discuss promoting aviation in the current economic climate.

The seminar, "Promoting Aviation in Challenging Times," was hosted by the Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV). Topics included event planning, airport advocacy, DOAV's Aviation Promotion Program and media resources.

Passion for aviation fueled each speaker's presentation. Bill Dunn of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association discussed the importance of airport advocacy, while Betty Vinson from the Virginia Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, an international organization of licensed women pilots, discussed the planning of their annual Christmas Toy Airlift, which had its highest number of donations and participation last year.

Steve Craven, a pilot with AngelFlight, which provides free air transportation for any legitimate, charitable, medically-related need, moved the attendees with his experiences, as well as Peter Bacque of the Tidewater Soaring Society, who spoke about introducing children to the world of gliders.

Judy Sparks, general manager, and Dee Whittington, public relations and marketing manager, of the Virginia Regional Festival of Flight, along with Gordon Campbell, president of the Virginia Aviation Council, discussed current planning for this year's event May 30-31 in Suffolk. Whittington said the event's Web site, www.virginiaflyin.org, has been a great tool for promoting the event to the general public as well as attracting and signing up vendors and volunteers.

"Promoting Aviation in Challenging Times' will become an annual event as we look at how we did in promoting our Commonwealth airports and communities over the previous year and then make adjustments to most efficiently take advantage of our resources and plan for the coming year," said Randy Burdette, director of DOAV. "This will enable us to showcase our airports and all the super organizations that make Virginia aviation a success. Through this process we hope to introduce a whole new generation to aviation and all it has to offer."

For more information on DOAV, visit www.doav.virginia.gov.

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