

NATIONAL

SAFECON

2026



KMML

NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE FLYING ASSOCIATION
MAY 18 – 23, 2026 | MOLINE, IL

NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE
FLYING ASSOCIATION

**NATIONAL
SAFECON**

2026

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2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, & 2026
National SAFECONs

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*Safety through Education
Excellence through Competition*





May 18, 2026

Dear SAFECOM Attendees,

On behalf of the Visit Quad Cities Board of Directors, professional team, and our community, welcome to the Quad Cities! Thank you for choosing us to serve as your partner and host.

The Quad Cities regional destination is an extraordinary place to experience, offering a world-class, hassle-free environment ready to welcome you. This bi-state riverfront region is the global home of John Deere and the historic Rock Island Arsenal. Our region blends rich heritage with a dynamic and immersive arts and culture scene. With the breathtaking Mississippi River as our backdrop and diverse local attractions, you'll find countless opportunities to explore and connect with a destination shaped by its people and the warmth and energy they bring.

Along with our partners at the Quad Cities International Airport, we are honored to host you as you take to the skies during the National Intercollegiate Flying Association's 2026 SAFECOM competition. This prestigious event brings together remarkable talent, precision, and camaraderie, and we are proud to be part of that experience. Congratulations on your success.

While you're here, we encourage you to enjoy all the Quad Cities has to offer. If our team can assist you during your time here in the QC, please let us know.

We wish you the best of luck in the competition and hope your time here is both memorable and inspiring.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Herrell".

Dave Herrell
President and CEO

Dear SAFECON 2026 Competitors,

Welcome to SAFECON 2026 and to the Quad Cities International Airport. We're proud to host you here along the Mississippi River and excited to be part of a week that brings together some of the most dedicated and driven students in aviation.

What you're doing here matters. This industry depends on well-trained, safety-focused professionals, and SAFECON plays an important role in preparing you for what comes next. At the Quad Cities International Airport, we serve a diverse and growing region with commercial air service, cargo operations, corporate aviation, and flight training. Every part of that system relies on the kind of discipline and attention to detail you're developing this week.

I started my career in the cockpit and still make time to fly whenever I can. One of the things that has stayed constant over the years is how connected this industry is. The people you meet here—competitors, coaches, volunteers—will show up again throughout your career. Take advantage of that. Build relationships, learn from one another, and support each other along the way.

While you're here, I also encourage you to experience the Quad Cities. This is a community rooted in hard work and collaboration, and we're proud to share it with you.

Finally, take a moment to recognize the volunteers and organizers who make this event possible. Their commitment is what allows SAFECON to continue shaping the next generation of aviation professionals.

We're glad you're here. I wish you a successful and rewarding week.



Benjamin Leischner, A.A.E.
Executive Director
Quad Cities International Airport

Hello Friends!

Welcome to SAFECON 2026! I'm sure that many of you share my sentiment that this week is truly one of the most exciting weeks of the entire year. I know that our competitors have spent all semester perfecting their landings, memorizing regulations, and honing every possible skill they can in preparation for this competition. Being able to see your dedication, perseverance, and knowledge in action is one of the favorite perks of my position.

Rest assured that your hard work does not go unnoticed. In fact, it is being matched by the efforts of our diligent volunteers on the NIFA Council, our senior judging staff, and all our volunteers and sponsors that are preparing for their journey to Moline, IL. This is the first time that Quad Cities International Airport has hosted SAFECON and I am truly thankful for their support and cooperation leading up to this week! The Quad Cities International Airport, the Metropolitan Airport Authority and the Visit Quad Cities staff have done an outstanding job in preparing for our arrival. If you see them, please thank them. Also, thank a judge when you interact with them. All the judges are volunteers and many of them have been in your shoes before.

As some of you may know, this will be my final SAFECON as the NIFA Executive Director. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve you all recently, but I do believe it is time to hand the reins over. The great news is that NIFA will be in the incredibly capable hands of Andrew Ross whom you've gotten to know through his own articles in Roll Call over the last year.

As I depart, it won't be the last time you will see me. I'll be around helping NIFA some. I'll also pass you all in an airport, the sky, or if some of you are lucky enough, I'll see you in the backcountry around a campfire or on a trail.

Best of luck this week!



Taylor Newman
NIFA Executive Director





NIFA

2025-2026 NIFA LEADERSHIP

Region Representatives:

Region I
Sam Morris

Region II
Jeff Satterwhite

Region III
Jeff Guynes

Region IV
Phil Roberts

Region VI
Lewis Liang

Region VII
Cameron Laramée-Gonzalez,
Secretary

Region VIII
Andrew Ross, Chair

Region IX
James Hanover

Region X
David Hauth

Members-at-Large:

Eric Barton
Prescott Dean, Treasurer
Greg Weseman
Marty Coaker
Calvin Warren
Emily Coaker
Will Kratz
Erich Hess, Vice Chair

Directors and Managers:

Emily Coaker,
Director of Communications

Carlos Espinosa,
Director of Social Media

Greg Weseman,
Director of Sponsorship

Marty Coaker,
Manager of Archives

Nick Klepinger,
Manager of Student Representatives

Cameron Laramée-Gonzalez,
Manager of Alumni
Director of Standards & Training

Executive Director:

Taylor Newman

Student Representatives:

Dillon Mucha
Barbara Donovan

Council Members Emeritus:

Kent Lovelace
Glenn McConnell
Darryl Stubbs

Senior Chief Judge:

Ryan Perrin

NIFA SAFECON 2026 CHIEF JUDGES



Ryan Perrin

Senior Chief Judge

Ryan is excited for SAFECON to be hosted for the first time at Quad Cities International Airport. Active as a volunteer with NIFA since 2012, he is proud to serve as Senior Chief Judge. After graduating from the University of North Dakota, he flew several projects for Weather Modification, Inc. and then flew the Embraer 145 for 7 years at ExpressJet Airlines. Ryan now lives in Seattle, WA and flies for Delta Air Lines with Airbus 350, Boeing 737 and Airbus 220 type ratings. He enjoys backpacking, climbing, kayaking and sometimes having to wait out the rain inside on a woodworking project.



Jonathan Reigle

Chief Judge

Jonathan is looking forward to another great Nationals here in Moline! While attending LeTourneau University, he competed in six NIFA competitions, focusing on the SCAN and Navigation events. NIFA inspired him to strive for standards beyond what the industry might consider satisfactory, bringing him back year after year to help judge. Jonathan has been judging for NIFA since graduating in 2017 and has served as the Chief Judge for Region IV for the last three years. He is a First Officer for Southwest Airlines and the team lead for the Destination 225° program. He, his wonderful wife, and their three kids live in Dallas and love watching airplanes do pattern work over their house.



Elizabeth Bates

Associate Chief Judge

Elizabeth is excited to return to the senior SAFECON staff as Associate Chief Judge for Nationals 2026. She has been an active NIFA volunteer since 2016. Her passion for aviation was inspired by her father and grandfather, and she began flying in high school out of Alpha One in Plymouth, Massachusetts. She went on to study at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she later served as a flight instructor. Afterward, she flew the CRJ with SkyWest Airlines for four years before joining Delta Air Lines. She has spent the past seven years with Delta and currently serves as a First Officer on the Airbus A330, based in Detroit.

*Interested in becoming more involved with NIFA?
For information on volunteer opportunities please visit our [NIFA Resource Hub](#) subpage.*

NIFA COUNCIL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



Dillon Mucha

Hello Everyone,

I've been involved with NIFA for the past four years. During that time, I've had the opportunity to serve as a Safety Captain for my team and currently as the Senior Student Representative on the NIFA Council. I've also competed in four regional competitions and two National SAFECONs, and each of those experiences has pushed me to grow not just as a pilot, but as a teammate and leader.

What has stood out to me the most about NIFA is the people. The connections you build, the friendships you form, and the overall sense of community at competitions are unlike anything else. It's an environment where everyone is driven to improve, but also genuinely supports each other along the way.

If you're on the fence about getting involved, I'd strongly encourage you to go for it. NIFA gives you a chance to challenge yourself, build real connections in the aviation community, and be part of something that's bigger than just one competition or one team. It's one of those experiences that you really don't fully understand until you're in it, and once you are, it sticks with you.



Barbara Donovan

Welcome!

NIFA is a member-driven organization, and I enjoy the opportunity to be a part of it. My involvement as a Student Representative has allowed me to grow as a pilot, make connections, and continue to build leadership experience while representing other students. NIFA gives pilots the opportunity to develop their skills in a safe and meaningful way. Being able to compete against other flight teams helps pilots strive for excellence and build strong teamwork. NIFA allows for pilots to challenge themselves, meet new people, make new friends, and learn about different aspects of aviation. I encourage anyone interested to get involved. I look forward to seeing you all out there on competition days!

Interested in becoming more involved with NIFA during your time as a student? Consider running for a NIFA Council Student Representative position! For more information on applying, and the voting process at this year's Annual Business Meeting, please visit the [NIFA Resource Hub](#) subpage.

MONDAY**MAY 18**

0800-0900	Judges School	The Waterfront Convention Center
0900-1100	General Contestant Briefing	The Waterfront Convention Center
1200-1300	Computer Accuracy	The Waterfront Convention Center
1330-1430	Aircraft Recognition	The Waterfront Convention Center
1500-1615	SCAN	The Waterfront Convention Center
1700-2000	Monday Night Welcome	KMLI

TUESDAY**MAY 19**

0800-0900	Tuesday Morning Breakfast	KMLI
0800-1700	Navigation Event	KMLI
By appointment	CRM/LOFT, Ground Trainer, IFR, Preflight	Check Event page for details
By appointment	Individual Events & Awards	KMLI
Time TBD	Pilot Mental Health Seminar	KMLI
1700-1900	Tuesday Night Pizza	KMLI

WEDNESDAY**MAY 20**

0800-1700	Power-Off Approach & Landing Event	KMLI
By appointment	CRM/LOFT, Ground Trainer, IFR, Preflight	Check Event page for details
By appointment	Individual Events & Awards	KMLI
1700-1900	Ice Cream Social	KMLI

Contestant Briefing: Jeppesen Foreflight

Monday Night Welcome: Delta Propel in partnership with Endeavor Air

Tuesday Morning Breakfast: United Aviate

Tuesday Night Pizza: The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA)

Wednesday Ice Cream Social: Sporty's Pilot Shop

THURSDAY**MAY 21**

0800-1700	Short-Field Approach & Landing Event	KMLI
By appointment	CRM/LOFT, Ground Trainer, IFR, Preflight	Check Event page for details
By appointment	Individual Events & Awards	KMLI
1800-2100	Industry Reception	

FRIDAY**MAY 22**

0800-1700	Message Drop Event	KMLI
By appointment	CRM/LOFT, Ground Trainer, IFR, Preflight	Check Event page for details
1200-1300	Chik-Fil-A Lunch	KMLI
By appointment	Individual Events & Awards	KMLI
1700-2000	Friday Evening Event	KMLI

SATURDAY**MAY 23**

0900-1000	Annual Business Meeting	KMLI
1000-1100	Team Captain Meeting	KMLI
1000-1100	NIFA Council Meeting	KMLI
1700-2000	Awards Banquet	Rhythm City Casino Resort

Industry Reception: Frasca, A FlightSafety International Company

Chik-Fil-A Lunch: King Schools

Friday Evening BBQ: Aviator Assistant/Aviation Supplies and Academics

Awards Banquet: Frasca A FlightSafety International Company

NIFA MISSION STATEMENT

The National Intercollegiate Flying Association was formed for the purposes of developing and advancing aviation education;
to promote, encourage and foster safety in aviation;
to promote the communications and cooperation between aviation students, educators, educational institutions and the aviation industry;
and to provide an arena for collegiate aviation competition.



Quad Cities International Airport: A Century of Connection and Growth

From its earliest days as a simple grass landing field to its role today as a vital regional transportation hub, Quad Cities International Airport has evolved alongside the communities it serves. Rooted in innovation and driven by a commitment to service, the airport's story reflects both the history of aviation and the growth of the Quad Cities region.

Early Beginnings in Aviation



Flyover Franing Field -1920s

The airport's origins date back to 1919, when the first airplane landed in an open pasture selected as part of the first coast-to-coast military flight. Later named Franing Field, the site was formally established as an airport just a few years later and expanded to roughly 200 acres and supporting early aviation activities like joy rides and cargo transport.

The airport quickly became a place for innovation. Aircraft such as the Velie Monocoupe, designed by Iowa native Clayton Folkerts, were produced locally, while trailblazers like Phoebe Omlie set aviation records using planes connected to the region.

By the late 1920s, the airport had already gained national attention, serving as part of early airmail routes and welcoming American aviation icons Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh.

Growth into a Commercial Airport

As aviation transitioned from novelty to necessity, the airport grew in size and importance. Renamed Moline Municipal Airport, it underwent significant infrastructure improvements, including the construction of paved runways and taxiways.

In 1954, George Kirk, a naval flying ace during WWII, became the airport's first manager and guided its development for nearly three decades. Under his direction, the airport expanded services, strengthened airline partnerships and built the foundation for sustained growth.



METROPOLITAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY
OF ROCK ISLAND COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Passenger travel surged in the mid-20th century. By 1957, nearly 60,000 passengers were flying through the airport annually. Continued renovations in the 1960s introduced essential amenities like baggage claim, boarding areas and dining facilities, reflecting the rising expectations of air travelers.

A major milestone came in 1985 with the completion of a new terminal and gaining port of entry status. This modernization enabled the airport to expand airline service significantly, increasing from two carriers to seven within just a few years, and achieving the designation of an international airport.



Ozark Convair at QC Airport, 1961

Expansion and Modernization



*Allegiant inaugural
Las Vegas flight - 2010*

The airport entered the 21st century with renewed momentum. In 2001, a major expansion doubled the size of the terminal, adding concourses, enhanced baggage facilities and new passenger amenities.

While airline consolidation reshaped routes nationwide, the airport adapted by attracting low-cost carriers and focusing on leisure travel opportunities. The addition of Allegiant Air brought new nonstop destinations, particularly to popular warm-weather locations.

Today, the airport spans more than 2,300 acres and serves as a critical gateway for western Illinois and eastern Iowa.

Looking Ahead: A Mission for the Future

While its facilities and services have transformed over time, the airport's mission has remained consistent: to provide a safe, efficient and customer-focused travel experience for the region.

Quad Cities International Airport continues to invest in modernization efforts, including terminal renovations designed to enhance comfort, accessibility and sustainability. These improvements aim to position the airport not only as a transportation hub, but as a driver of regional economic growth and connectivity.

As the Quad Cities region grows, so too does the airport's role. With a focus on innovation, passenger experience, and community impact, the Quad Cities International Airport remains committed to being the region's gateway to the world, honoring its rich history while continually building toward the future.



Terminal Rendering



**METROPOLITAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY
OF ROCK ISLAND COUNTY, ILLINOIS**



QC THAT'S WHERE

YOU LAND AND THEN

EXPERIENCE IT ALL!

Welcome to the Quad Cities! We invite you to discover our family of communities on the storied Mississippi River. This bi-state regional destination is a place to explore, have fun and join in the excitement!

Music, culture, food, art and sporting events are just a few of the many adventures and experiences you can enjoy in this unique destination.

QUADCITIES
IOWA | ILLINOIS

SUPPORT



Sponsor

Become a corporate sponsor for individual or multiple events.

LEARN MORE

Volunteer

Volunteer your time to help support NIFA events and other activities.

LEARN MORE

Give

Help NIFA support the next generation through a variety of Legacy Membership levels.

LEARN MORE

NIFA runs off the generosity of our sponsors, volunteers, & donors.

Please visit our website to learn how you can support our mission for the next generation!

www.nifa.aero/support

ORDER YOUR NIFA & SAFECON MERCHANDISE!



STORE OPEN MAY 13-27



NIFA STORE

SHAPING SAFER PILOTS

SIMULATION PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN A PILOT'S CAREER

As a pilot, your education won't end with graduation. Throughout your career, you'll train continuously, earning type ratings and regularly demonstrating a mastery of skills. Even when you've landed your dream role, you will undergo recurrent training at least once a year—much of it with simulation devices that help build the skills and confidence needed to safely operate the aircraft entrusted to you.

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

The most obvious benefit of simulator-based training is the ability to practice the types of emergencies you hope to never face. This includes engine failures, flight control or avionics malfunctions, fire or smoke, and even extreme weather conditions.

Training for these high-stress situations in a simulator ensures you will know exactly what to do if the challenge arises in real life. Rehearsal provides the opportunity to evaluate a scenario and decide the best course of action; this builds muscle memory and prepares you for successful outcomes.

EFFECTIVE AIRCRAFT CONTROL

Beyond providing a safe environment to practice emergencies, simulators empower you to handle aircraft smoothly, safely, and efficiently. This type of training enables you to apply theoretical knowledge from ground school in a lifelike environment to see what happens—without dangerous or expensive consequences.

In addition, simulators provide a repeatable environment, so you can practice the same scenario until you have mastered it. Instructors can also put this repeatability to use by objectively tracking your improvement over time.

GLOBAL LEADER IN SIMULATION TRAINING

The simulation devices used at SAFECON are provided by Frasca, a FlightSafety International company. Frasca and FlightSafety International (FSI) design and manufacture flight training devices and simulators used to train flight operations around the world. In addition, FSI provides simulator-based training for aviation professionals each year, including pilots and maintenance technicians. Chances are, you will experience FSI's highly regarded curriculum throughout your career—from initial and recurrent training to specialized courses like Advanced Circling and Visual Approaches.

In 2026, FSI is celebrating 75 years of elevating aviation safety through its aircraft-specific training and innovative simulation devices. Many of the world's top pilots trust FSI and Frasca's philosophy that training isn't merely checking a regulatory box; it is a commitment to an unrelenting preparation that empowers them to safely navigate any scenario. In fact, pilots who train with FSI are 12 times more likely to avoid accidents and incidents.

Interested in learning more about Frasca and FSI? Visit www.frasca.com and www.flightsafety.com.



A HISTORY OF HOSTS & WINNERS...

The 1st official intercollegiate flying competition was held in 1920 at Mitchell Field in Long Island, NY. The winner was Yale University. Since then, competitions have been held under a variety of presiding organizations. In the 1930s, the National Intercollegiate Flying Club (NIFC) was formed and meets were hosted by/at the Hicksville Country Club of Long Island, University of Minnesota, University of Michigan, Purdue University, University of Akron, Kenyon College, and Piper/Lock Haven State Teachers College at Lock Haven, PA. After a pause for WWII, in 1947 NIFC air meets resumed at Willow Run Airport near Ann Arbor, MI - hosted by Michigan State College, University of Detroit, University of Michigan, and Wayne University. **In 1948, the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) was formed and the 1st Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference (SAFECON) was held in 1949.**

In 1929, the Loening Trophy was created as the prize for the best overall collegiate aviation institution; the inaugural winner was Harvard University. In the 1950s-1960s, the SAFECON Championship Trophy was born to honor the respective purpose of each award: Loening for overall achievement of the school's program, and SAFECON Championship to recognize the winner of the competition. For decades, the two awards overlapped in many ways. Today, the National Championship Trophy is awarded to the top scoring team at the annual National NIFA SAFECON.

	<u>Host</u>	<u>National Championship</u>	<u>Loening Trophy</u>
1949	Texas Christian University	UCLA (Top Team Award)	<i>retired to Smithsonian Institute</i>
1950	Stephens College		<i>retired to Smithsonian Institute</i>
1951	University of Oklahoma		<i>retired to Smithsonian Institute</i>
1952	Oklahoma State University		Macalester College
1953	University of Minnesota		Texas Christian University
1954	University of Illinois		University of Illinois
1955	Texas Christian College		Oklahoma A&M
1956	University of Oklahoma		Oklahoma A&M
1957	Oklahoma State University		Oklahoma A&M
1958	Macalester College		Oklahoma State University
1959	University of Illinois		Oklahoma State University
1960	Ohio State University		Oklahoma State University
1961	Texas A&M		St. Cloud State University
1962	Oklahoma State University		Oklahoma State University
1963	Southern Illinois University		Ohio University
1964	Montana State University		Oklahoma State University
1965	Purdue University		Oklahoma State University
1966	University of Colorado	San Jose State University	Ohio University
1967	Southern Illinois University	Parks College	Oklahoma State University
1968	Ohio University	San Jose State University	Parks College of St. Louis University
1969	Parks College of St. Louis	San Jose State University	San Jose State University
1970	Montana State University	Iowa State University	San Jose State University
1971	San Jose State University	Oklahoma State University	San Jose State University
1972	Purdue University	Broward Junior College	Oklahoma State University
1973	Southern Illinois University	Louisiana Tech University	Broward Junior College
1974	St. Cloud State University	Southwest Missouri State University	Southern Illinois University
1975	University of Albuquerque	Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University
1976	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach	Northeastern University - Lincoln College	Oklahoma State University
1977	Oklahoma State University	Southern Illinois University	Southern Illinois University
1978	Middle Tennessee State University	Southern Illinois University	Southern Illinois University
1979	Northeast Louisiana University	Southern Illinois University	Oklahoma State University
1980	University of North Dakota	Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University
1981	Northeast Louisiana University	Southern Illinois University	University of Illinois
1982	Palomar Community College	Southern Illinois University	Oklahoma State University

	<u>Host</u>	<u>National Championship</u>	<u>Loening Trophy</u>
1983	Western Michigan University	Western Michigan University	Western Michigan University
1984	United State Air Force Academy	Southern Illinois University	Oklahoma State University
1985	The Ohio State University	University of North Dakota	Oklahoma State University
1986	Texas State Technical College	University of North Dakota	Oklahoma State University
1987	Southern Illinois University	University of North Dakota	Mt. San Antonio College
1988	Northeast Louisiana University	University of North Dakota	The Ohio State University
1989	University of North Dakota	University of North Dakota	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott
1990	University of Illinois	University of North Dakota	Oklahoma State University
1991	Nicholls State University	University of North Dakota	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott
1992	Northeast Louisiana University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach	Oklahoma State University
1993	Central Texas University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Central Texas College
1994	Parks College of St. Louis	University of North Dakota	Parks College of St. Louis University
1995	Delta State University	University of North Dakota	Central Texas College
1996	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach	University of North Dakota	Central Texas College
1997	Western Michigan University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Ohio University
1998	Kansas State University - Salina	Western Michigan University	Central Texas College
1999	Kansas State University - Salina	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Minnesota State University - Mankato
2000	Delta State University	University of North Dakota	Ohio University
2001	University of North Dakota	University of North Dakota	Minnesota State University - Mankato
2002	The Ohio State University	Western Michigan University	United States Air Force Academy
2003	University of North Dakota	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Purdue University
2004	Middle Tennessee State University	University of North Dakota	United States Naval Academy
2005	Kansas State University - Salina	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Mt. San Antonio College
2006	The Ohio State University	University of North Dakota	Purdue University
2007	The Ohio State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Westminster College
2008	Middle Tennessee State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Jacksonville University
2009	Parks College of St. Louis	University of North Dakota	LeTourneau University
2010	Indiana State University	University of North Dakota	Kent State University
2011	The Ohio State University	Southern Illinois University	Metropolitan State College of Denver
2012	Kansas State University - Salina	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	University of Nebraska - Omaha
2013	The Ohio State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Lewis University
2014	The Ohio State University	Southern Illinois University	Kansas State University - Salina
2015	The Ohio State University	Southern Illinois University	The Ohio State University
2016	The Ohio State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	The Ohio State University
2017	The Ohio State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Liberty University - Lynchburg
2018	Indiana State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Liberty University - Lynchburg
2019	University of Wisconsin - Madison at Janesville	University of North Dakota	Liberty University - Lynchburg
2020	-	-	-
2021	NIFA (virtual)	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	-
2022	The Ohio State University	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Auburn University
2023	The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA)	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	Auburn University
2024	City of Janesville, Wisconsin	University of North Dakota	Liberty University
2025	The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA)	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott	-

2025-2026 NIFA MEMBER SCHOOLS

Region I

Aims Community College
Colorado Northwestern Community College
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Rocky Mountain College
United State Air Force Academy
Utah State University
Utah Valley University

Region II

California Aeronautical University
California Baptist University
Cochise College
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University -
Prescott
Mt. San Antonio College
San Jose State University

Region III

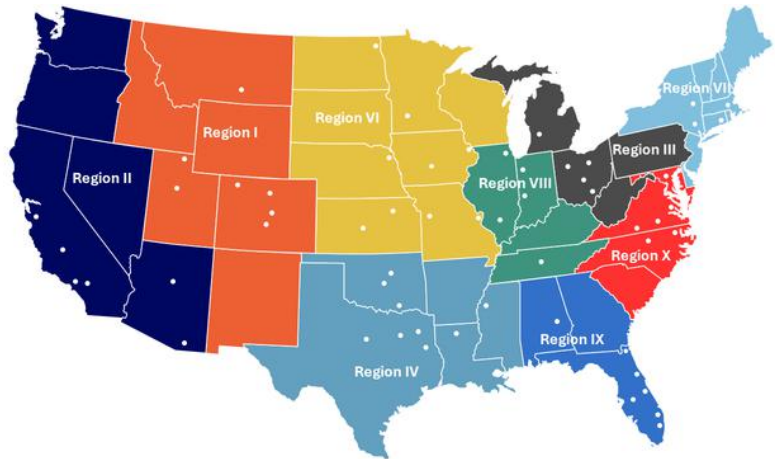
Bowling Green State University
Kent State University
Ohio University
The Ohio State University
Western Michigan University

Region IV

Central Texas College
LeTourneau University
Louisiana Tech University
Oklahoma State University
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Stephen F. Austin State University
Tarrant County College
Texas State Technical College
University of Oklahoma

Region VI

Hesston College
Kansas State University - Salina
Minnesota State University - Mankato
St. Louis University - Parks College
University of Central Missouri
University of Dubuque
University of Nebraska - Omaha
University of North Dakota



Region VII

Bridgewater State University
United States Coast Guard Academy
United States Military Academy

Region VIII

Indiana State University
Lewis University
Purdue University
Southern Illinois University

Region IX

Auburn University
Broward College
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University -
Daytona Beach
Florida Institute of Technology
Jacksonville University
Polk State College

Region X

Averett University
Elizabeth City State University
Guilford Technical Community College
Hampton University
Liberty University
United States Naval Academy

2026 SAFECON NATIONAL COMPETING

TEAMS

AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Left to Right: Tyler Schell, Sam Walsh, Dustin Greiss, Sheldon Kim, Dalton Ellis, Tyler Brown, Jackson Mitchell, Burley Kleve, Kalin Kapra, Makiah Anderson, Annika Bender
Not pictured: Anders Schuler, Caitlin Webb, Doug Hamilton, Gavin Snyder, Thomas Veldhuizen, Wyatt Eklund

AUBURN UNIVERSITY



Front row (left to right): Hudson Williams, Timi Ogunade, Sam Sternberg, Bo Barlow, Austin Welde, Colin Tabinga, Spencer Black

Middle row: Caleb Lee, Liam Fisher, Evan Pelletier, Elizabeth Suber, Reagan Baker, Aliya Applin

Back row: Bobby Paine, Kevin Werner, Alex Gilluly

Not pictured: Andrew Tancredi, Garrett Jones, Logan Hunter, KJ Strunk, Lee Padfield, Victor Simionato

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY



Front Row: Catherine Smith, Lorance Morrison, Alex Birkhold, Gemma Corrado, Ken Chaffin, Ellie Powers, Thomas Hagan, Emmerson Hanna

Back Row: Brendan Kracht, Cayden Smith, Rohan Solomon, Mitchell Feldman, Micah Domingo, Ryan Arnold, Brian Heller

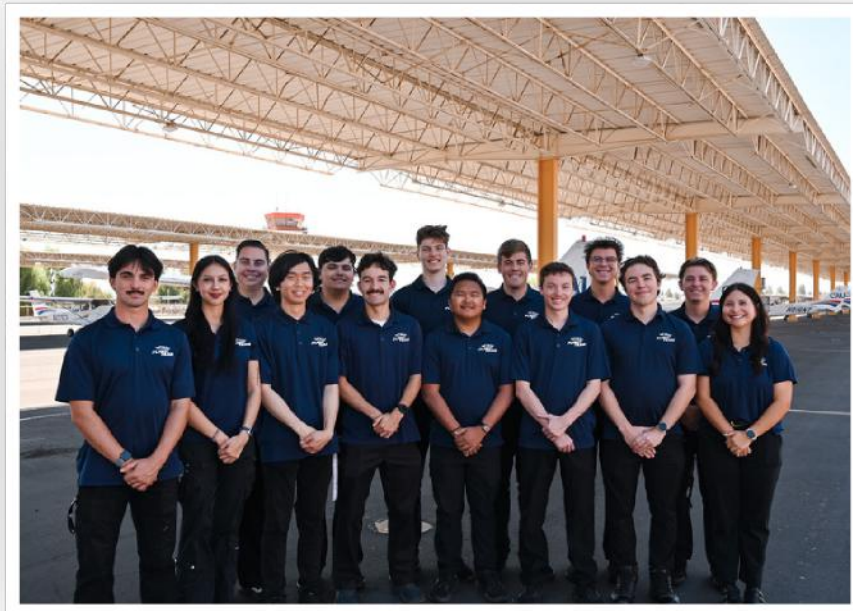
Not Pictured: Ethan Beegle, Alex Wentz, Phil Dworzanski, Ryan Kucera

BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY



From left to right: Mason King, Aria Healy, Caitlin Walker, Caden Jolly, Meaghan Toler, Brendan Ashworth, Yoham Oriz, Renna Kingsbury, Madelyn Dulong, Michael Farley, James Coach, Riley Reposo, Jack Gannon, AJ Carreia, Harry Galanis, Zachary Fedora

CALIFORNIA AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY



Back Left to Right: James Malanowski, Sebastian Bernal, James Devor III, William Roeber, William Rober, Jackson Kaspar, Matthew Anderson
Front Left to right: Jacob Sklaver, Paloma Ford, Shaun Okuda, James Lopez, Jared Libao, Nathan Adem, Jaiden Kohn, Vanessa Collazo (Coach)

COLORADO NORTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Left to Right. Wyatt Kimberly, Ethan Domb, Jacob Royer, Jack Basher, Zaylan Kirby, Tate Schmalz, Julie McCallister, Justin Langer, Cody Spice, Logan Svaldi.
Not Photographed: David Gendron, James Womack, Kessy Told

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY



From Left to Right - Back Standing: Talmage Turner, Sarah Kent, Noah Swinney, Mariah Ervin, Jordan Moore, Raine Caverly-Horn (Coach), Madelyn Knowles (Coach), Catherine Cummings (Coach), Hamadou Nkoyate, Cameron Putman, Caleb Velez, Colbyn Underwood, Jaydin Hobbs
Left to Right - Front Kneeling: Tyrese Andrews, Benjamin England, Ryan Brotherton, Mateo Lannaman

EMBRY RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY - DAYTONA BEACH



Coaches (L): James Hanover, Taegoon Bae, Ippu Shibuya; Front Row: Quinn Dooley, Marlana Gutshall, Ashleigh Sharkey, Julianna Hertzell, Isabell Johns, Aahana Yadav, Ainsley Smith, John Calvin, Carson Ruhnke Coaches (R): Dong Hwan Kim, Saiful Jihad, Korry Noyes Second Row: Alessandro Catalano, Tianhanshuo Zhang, James Jones, Gabriel Leonard, Michael Gow, Joel Sunil, William Junghans, Junho Lee, Sangwon Cheong, Parshva Trivedi; Third Row: Abishek Muthukumar, Preston Ettin, Ethan Hill, Younghwan Park, Wonmin Kim, Michael Desio, Jaemin An, Ho Yong Lee, See Yoon Lee; Fourth Row: Weston Egger, Ryan Kaupa, Sooho Lee, Ryan Kribbs, Noah Bosse, Joseph Burline, Garrett Linney, Jinwoo Gil, Ha Ram Kim; Fifth Row: Pedro Henrique Tanure Barbosa, Timothy McColough, Coleman Witcher, Luke Wadsworth, Sunghyan Moon, Jinghong Ju, Adam Krych, Matthew Bigley, Seonghwan Mo

EMBRY RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY - PRESCOTT



Top Row (left to right): Ben Sidlow, Sasha Markova, Jacob Ross, Alexander Palmberg, James Tyson, Austin Sanchez, John Ward, Myles Kopfle-Maurer, Austin Schwalm, Diego Martinez, Solomon Sharp, Kyungmu Min, Steven Micheal Diasnes; Middle Row: Sierra Iga, Meikha Navalta, Seobin Oh, Corto Cayrol, Jon Dylan Salvador, Ethan Tieskoetter, Ian Tarrago, Kellan Hoel, Brandon Zhang, Morgan Hinz, Vincent Tsai, Briana Taylor, Lillian Vincent, Mia Garcia; Bottom Row: Jonathan Chen, Nolan Boesch, Ian Schiller, Ethan Michon, Samuel Low, Jamison Wettergren, Ethan Kubin

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



Front Row, Left to Right: Devin Andrade, Riley Haley, Aaron Bethel, Victor Levonenko, Gillian Moisao, Braden Kearney, Jassim Mohyidin; Back Row, Left to Right: Rohit Nair, Jameson Pike, Ethan Brobst, Avery Karasinski, Brian Williams, Michael Lachut

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - SALINA



Pictured from Left to Right: Grant Williams, Isabella Budreau, Alex Mercy, Mary Barbour, Mac Doser, Timothy Mallari, Nathan Wallace, Nikolay Geube, Logan Dobransky, Claire Trapp, Roei Biton, Edison Santos Jr., Maris Flory, Hayden Cunningham, James Burk

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY



Front Row: Andrew McKinley, Na-Mi Leyland-Kim, Lucy Altwies, Isabelle Mello, Kasen King, Sadie Martin, Darren Barr, Amelia Ressler, Jack Williamson, Gavin Barzan, Zach Lach, Sam Maxwell, Jeff McCabe. Back Row: Ben Satyshur, Liam Henrie, Daniel Aurand, Linus Vazquez, Robby Karliak, Tommy Hindman, Avery Smart, Parth Ankolikar, Kayne Walters. Not Pictured: Tim Palcho (Head Coach), Brian Neff (Advisor), Jason Lorenzon, Neil Evans, Caleb Seymour, and Frederick Stamper.

LETOURNEAU UNIVERSITY



Left to Right: Phil Roberts (Advisor), Ethan Moore, Joshua Tarver, Thorin Phinney, Cason Staples, Ethan Mouser, Maxwell Cooper, Karuna Kotak, Holly Hepler, Monica Skibicki, Elena Jurado, Brynn Moore (Coach), Daylon Moore (Coach), Levi Garrett

LEWIS UNIVERSITY



Contestants: Nicolas Aiuppa, Nathan Garland, Filip Kapera, Jeffrey Lacca, Amelia Marsicek,
Jason Palka, Shiv Patel, Ethan Sykes, David Trevino
Coaches: Matthew Vineyard, Katelyn Gall

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



Contestants: Dylan Michael Baker, Bryce Nicholas Goble, Jacob True Hanson, Isabella Marie Hourl,
Chloe Elizabeth Leonard, James Michael Martin, Elvin Daniel Martinez, Caeden Miller Murray,
Daniel Paul Piazza, Christopher James Reynolds, Madison Rose Simkins, Carter Robert Smith,
Braxton Taylor Smith, Emmitt Wesley Snider, Jack Lundy Soutullo, Sydney Breann Sullivan
Coaches: Zeke Oliver Erickson, Jacob David Melanson, Nathanael Michael Brown

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



Left to Right: Mike Forney, Hser Lee, Emerson Zetti, Kyle Weber, Luke Shima, Ryan Hubbard, Brandon Garlock, and Noah Vigil

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY - MANKATO



Front row Left to right: Garret Wilson, Natalie Kienholz, Advait Deepak, Ciera Ruzek, Robby Warda, Bernie Kodet
Back Row Left to right: Jonah Antes, Charlie Bultman, Libby Kamp, Cailin Friary, Wyatt Williams, Gerrit de Looze, Nicklas Albrecht

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY



Left to Right: Charlotte Talafuse, Olivia Lassman, Kai Davis, Jack Bartlett, Ryan Cottrell, Grant Sammon, Tanner Trout, Zach Cohen, Thomas Kinser, Chris Hutchins, Michael Kelly, Zachary Berger, Dayon Wong, Abby Yates, Myles Gunsolley, Nathan Leech, Tyler Lansberry, Zach Puhala

PURDUE UNIVERSITY



Right to Left (Top): Dylan Garagiola, Ethan Nguyen, Ethan Li, Victor Zhang, Keegan Gregory, Brayden Snedigar, Nathan Chen; Right to Left (Bottom): Jack Lomer, Trent Criser, Samuele Wang, Matthew Chiu, Ella Slade; Not Pictured: Dario Stewart, Charlie Adler, Matthew Sakys, Jonathan Schecher, Ronda Cassens, Eric Savage

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY



Left to Right: Landon Abrar, Sohan Singh, Juan Hernandez, Cole Zamora, Agatha Vu, Justen Lim, Elijah Zepeda, Ethan Fletcher, Makoto Miura, Corbett Thomas, Robert Guevara, Zeke Amagasu, Kayla Szulc, Anthony Duran, Orion Darkes, Ben Gomez-Villafane, Ryan Chichakly

SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY



Back Row (Left to Right): Kyle Thomas (Team Advisor), Ella Puccio, Alexander Wall, Gavin Borgmann, Antonin Stoddard, Colby Hotaling, Frank Phillips
Front Row (Left to Right): Brooke Wilken, Bryanna Orr-Schimming, Jayden Warren (Co-Captain), Hannah Stout (Co-Captain), Annika Mortensen, Hannah Gorman

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



Left to right: Dale Miller, Matteus Thompson, Jeremy Murray, Ben Campbell, Thomas Nguyen, Michael Chebuske, James Cone, Jake Mack, Luke Barry, Gabriel Booth, Kyle Lowe, Kroosh Patel, Liam Harrison, Anja Ruxlow, Thomas Van Dorpe, Kyra Hilsabeck, Vassilios Georges, Raylynn Beasley, Collin Schmidt, Simon Zimmerman, Ryder Schwoerer, Benjamin Jones, Nate Lincoln, Mike LeFevre

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY - PARKS COLLEGE



Left to Right, Front to Back: Zoe Kohrs, Peter Belmonte, Christian Brickman, Sam Lamaze, Sydney Nimerick, Jack Ingebretsen, Finn Ceyskens, Brendan Stoll, Daniel McGill, Luke Lehner, Samuel Kean, Etienne Moore, Evan August, Owen Sachar

TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE



Left to Right: Department Chair David McGarity, Aryn Silva, Andrew "Drew" Opry, Mahad Nur, Savannah Lejeune, Reid Martin, Mariano Guzman, Faculty Advisor Doug Campbell

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



Left to Right: John Ginley, Rob Numbers, Jackson Scolnick, Nick Mortensen, Joe Waxman, Megan Beaver, Will Reis, Charlie Jacobs, Matt Squires, Case McIntyre, Gray Healan, Emma Robinson, William Yang, Caleb Foote, Grace Read, Akhil Joshi, Sam Reiter, Ethan Ross, Hiro Horikoshi, Ben Wainwright, Logan Freeman, Everett Herald; Not Pictured: Oliver Taylor

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY



Back row (left to right): Lukas Simko, Tyler Bartick, Kellen Lester, Thomas Botkin, Sean Smith, Casey Garrigan, Lee McDonald, Nathan Vonic, Karl Westermeyer, Ryan Molleman, Jack Atwood, Pierce Alleyne, Austin Dawson Front Row (left to right): Jack Tregellas, Jeremy Dunn Ben Brooks, Jakob Brunsell, Lily Todd, Kyle Marder, Tyler Schoolcraft, Sydney Loos, Josephine Buckland, John Murphy, Henry Szumigala, Michael Hornby

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - OMAHA



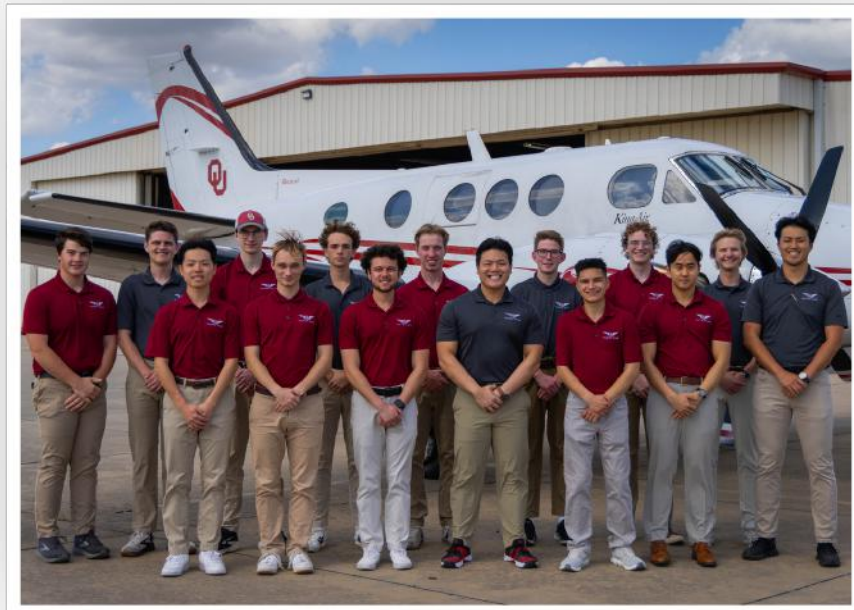
Front Row, Shay Sinnard, Calla Behney, Izzy Vlasek, Samantha Stojanov, Victoria Dannelly;
Second Row: Izzie Peetz, Talia Meyer, Kara Yoyo, Cullen Leitner, Caitlyn Musil, Shoichi Yasui;
Third Row: Thomas Reid, Aubrea Velner, Alex Hunt, Trevor Denker, Tyler Suing;
Back Row: Zach Nanfito, John Arthur, Alex Duman, Zaxon Tischner, Tyler Thieman, Jonah Majorins

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA



Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Advisor/Coach Lewis Liang, Coach Jered Lease, Co-captain Andreas Testerman, Safety Officer Myles Lucas, Collin Mallory, Kaden Robinson, Christopher Coleman, Evan Munzel, Co-captain Maxwell Schimelpfenig, Kacper Ryt, Kaden Young, Hailey Olson, Riley Drea, Roman Raposo, Cody Jacobson, Hannah Herring, not pictured Jacob Neuhaus

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA



Matthew Yu, Thomas Harrison, Mitchell Smith, Andrew Jeng, Mike Garcia, Jack Han (Coach) Satoru Okada (Advisor), Layton Wilder, Corbin Thompson, Brady Bentson, Kevin Huggan, Quinn Thompson, Nathaniel Parks, Gabe Newbrough, Jackson White

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY



Left to Right: Andreas 'Baron' Wesemann - Flying Aggie Team Advisor, Matt Kremer, Shafer Kam - Team Captain, Liam Brinkerhoff, Beckett Eames, Maeve O'Grady, Sean Asay, Ellie Moen, Rory McGratten, Korbin Kane, Tyson Pap, Mischa Brant, Patrick O'Donnell, Colby Harris, Billy Kowalkowski, Henry Knapp, Brandt Fiedler, Logan Fransted, Brian Van, Aydyn Bailey, Hyrum Albacaly: Not pictured: AJ Silianoff, Richard Rose – Flight Coach

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Back Row (left to right) · Tim Tews, Thien Lohavichan, Nicklas Pederson, Tasi Kim, Andrew Callaghan, Lucas Foster, Jerry Lucas, Nancy Hohlbein, Andrew Maciejewski, Dylan Van Holton, Naman Mody
Front Row (left to right) - Jack Grooms, Sean Edelman, Sebastian Osburn, Seth Shapiro, Daniel Souppa, Angela Sarzaba, Rachel Renshaw, Jett Boettcher, Andon Schmitz, Jack Kaminen

MENTAL HEALTH IS PHYSICAL HEALTH

From ages 15-19, mental health diagnoses make up 9 of the top 10 most common medical conditions reported on 1st class medical applications, and from ages 20-25, they make up 8 of the top 10.

(https://www.faa.gov/ame_guide/most-common-medical-conditions)

The FAA has made several changes in the past few years to encourage applicants to take care of both their mental and physical health:

- Updated AME guide that allows several mental health diagnoses to be issuable if there is no safety risk: [Anxiety_Depression_Disposition_Table.pdf](#)
- Continuous training of more AMEs, HIMS AMEs, and HIMS trained psychologists, including continuing education on mental health regulations for existing examiners
- Shortened application review times
- Updating the Antidepressant Program to reduce the observation time on medication from 6 months to 3 months, and expanding the approved medication list to 9 medications across 4 pharmacological categories

Learn more about Pilot Mental Health!

Stop by and see Dr. Jessica Auslander, aviation mental health professional (and aviation wife and mom!) at the Professional Wellness Management table.

DR. AUSLANDER WILL BE GIVING A PRESENTATION ON TUESDAY, MAY 19TH

CHECK THE ONLINE SCHEDULE FOR CORRECT TIME AND PLACE!



THE NIFA STORY

INTERCOLLEGIATE FLYING COMPETITION SINCE 1920

RECORDS SHOW THAT THE NATIONAL SAFECON PROGRAM HAS BEEN A LONGSTANDING TRADITION; FLIPPING THROUGH PAGES REVEALS DECADES OF OUR EVOLUTION. FROM LOCAL RESTAURANT COUPONS AND INDUSTRY ADVERTISEMENTS, TO WELCOME LETTERS AND TEAM PHOTOS, TO HISTORICAL ARTICLES AND AWARD DESCRIPTIONS, THE YEARLY PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS THE ANNUAL EVENT IN ALL ITS GRANDEUR, INVOKING A NOSTALGIC SPIRIT AMONGST ANY INVESTED READER. EDITIONS GOING BACK TO THE 1940S HIGHLIGHT NIFA'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORY, MEMBERSHIP, ALUMNI, SUPPORTERS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVIATION.

THE FOLLOWING HISTORICAL ACCOUNT WAS COMPILED FROM NATIONAL SAFECON PROGRAMS FROM 1949 - PRESENT. VERBIAGE OF THE PAST AND A BRIEF UPDATE FROM THE LAST 25 YEARS...A TALE OF OUR HISTORY, AND INSPIRATION TO PRESERVE OUR MISSION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



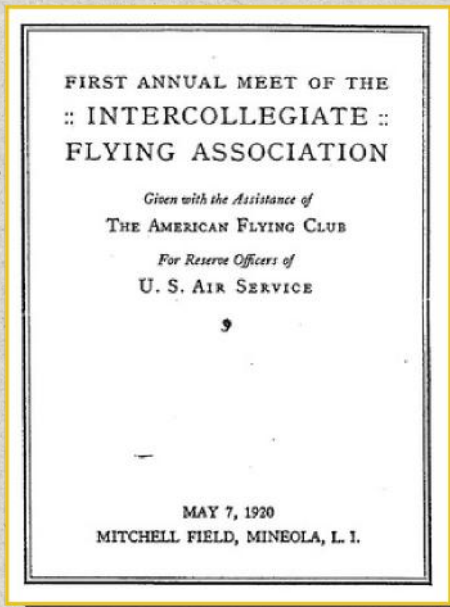
1956 Airmeet

THE EARLY YEARS

In 1911, AERO magazine documented the first known account of intercollegiate air meets. The likes of Cornell, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Swarthmore, Tufts, Volkman, and others were in attendance, bringing their finest gliders of the time. That same year, Yale formed a flight club and put their Curtiss biplane on display for an enthusiastic crowd of spectators, thus planting the seed for what was to come over the ensuing 115 years.

By 1919, interest bloomed throughout many campuses, as displayed by proclamations such as that recorded at Columbia University - declaring their club's formation, officers, constitution, and petitioning official recognition by the University - something many clubs/teams still seek today! Collegiate aviation enthusiasts saw the need for a unified organization to promote aviation education and competition among universities. In

response, representatives from five prestigious college aero clubs—Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Williams, and Yale—came together to form the **Intercollegiate Flying Association**. The Association was dedicated to advancing aviation education, fostering a culture of safety, and promoting collaboration within the aviation community.



On **May 7, 1920**, the first official intercollegiate air meet was held at Mitchell Field on Long Island, NY. This event saw fifty pilots, all reserve officers of the U.S. Air Service (the precursor to the Army Air Corps), representing twelve colleges. They competed in various challenging events, including a 100-mile cross-country race, maneuvering and aerobatics, takeoffs and landings to a mark, and an alert competition. Although an altitude test was planned, it was not conducted due to darkness. Yale emerged as the overall winner of this historic competition, setting a precedent for future collegiate aviation contests and cementing the importance of these events in fostering aviation skills and camaraderie among young aviators.

While there was more activity in the 1920s, the most notable addition, to collegiate aviation recognition at the time, was a sterling silver trophy created by Grover A. Loening in **1929**. Grover was the 1st holder of a Master's in Aeronautics, colleague of Orville Wright, and pioneer of dozens of aircraft designs. The Loening Intercollegiate Flying Contest differed from modern flying

competitions. Instead of focusing solely on flight maneuvers, the contest awarded the Loening Trophy based on each college flying club's success in their overall program. The Loening Trophy was presented annually and retired to the Smithsonian Institute in 1940. It was reinstated in 1952, and presented annually at venues that eventually became known as the NIFA SAFECONS. The trophy and traveling trophy exist to this day and their venue of presentation is currently chosen under the oversight of the award committee.

THE 1930s

1935 marked a rebirth of collegiate aviation with 74 delegates, representing 23 colleges and universities bringing to life the **National Intercollegiate Flying Club (NIFC)** under the auspices of the National Aeronautical Association (NAA). Bill Strohmeier, an Amherst student, was elected the club's first president; the NIFC's first New England Regional meet was held at Northampton, MA in **May 1935**. Eight schools competed before a crowd of 8000. The next month, Purdue hosted the first

National Air Meet in West Lafayette, IN and took top honors. Competitive events included spot landings, navigation, and "bomb" dropping.

By **1936**, 50 flying clubs had enrolled with NIFC and the 2nd national air meet was held in Ann Arbor, Michigan under sponsorship of the University of Michigan. Subsequent national meets were held at Hicksville Aviation Country Club on Long Island, the University of Akron, another at Ann Arbor, Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and one at Lock Haven, PA under the sponsorship of the Piper Aircraft Corporation and the Lock Haven State Teachers College.

Just as competitions were heating up, a period of time came which put a pause on intercollegiate aviation. World War II necessitated a pause as resources - both planes and personnel - were called to service. Looking back from the year 2026, collegiate flying has fitfully survived two World Wars, several smaller ones, riots, depressions, recessions, pandemics, inflations - and the advent of varying levels of technology which both assist and challenge the human component of



**1939 NIFC Air Meet
Lock Haven, Pennsylvania**

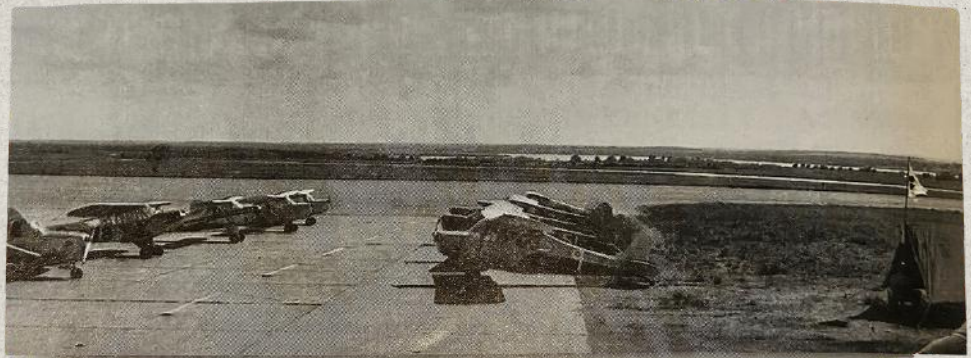


flight. Through it all the NIFA has played an integral part in world events. For example, volunteers from the 1911 glider contest provided designers and pilots for America's fledgling Flying Service of World War I.

THE 1940s

May 30 - June 1, 1947 - a return is made to collegiate flying and the NIFC is revived at the Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti, MI - in fact the 1947 and 1948 meets were hosted by Michigan State College, University of Detroit, University of Michigan, and Wayne University. Schools from as far away as Mississippi and British Columbia attended. Wayne E. Estra of Detroit took individual honors and Western Michigan College won the team prize.

The 1948 airmeet signaled a change for the NIFC. The National Aeronautic Association was demanding a \$500 deposit at the beginning of each year from the NIFC for continued sponsorship and recognition of the NIFC as an associate organization of NAA. The



Planes lined up on the ramp for use in the National Intercollegiate Air Meet. T.C.U. brought the first national air meet to the southwest.

NIFC membership voted to turn down the payment submission. Meanwhile, Professor Troy A. Stimpson of Texas Christian University, took it upon himself to figure out our next steps.

Professor Stimson borrowed \$250 from the Ft. Worth National Bank so he could travel by train to Kansas City to enlist support for the new organization. The Phillips Hotel in Kansas City, MO was selected as a central location during Thanksgiving of 1948. Professor Stimpson presided over the meeting, assisted by Mr. John Patterson (Chief of the Kansas City CAA), Professor Hoyt Walkup of Oklahoma State

Also present were representatives from UCLA, WMU, Stephens College, and the University of Minnesota. Dr. Hal C. Mehrens, educational consultant to the Civil Aeronautics Commission (CAA - forerunner to the FAA), John Patterson, Kansas City CAA regional office, and Frank Traumbauer, CAA regional Safety Board member, attended and lent their support to the reorganization. **The National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA)** was officially born and Troy A. Stimpson, Sr. was elected to serve as the first Executive Director.

Professor Stimson called a meeting of the NIFA at TCU in Ft. Worth, TX to draw up a constitution. College aviation was represented at the meeting by students from TCU, The University of Arkansas, University of Denver, Purdue, Colorado Women's College, Michigan, and Western Michigan State. NIFA adopted the motto "**Competition in the Spirit of Safety and Excellence**", and the regional and national competitions became known as **SAFECONS (Safety and Flight Evaluation Conferences)**.

The **May 5-7, 1949** National Airmeet was hosted by The Texas Christian University Flying Frogs, and dubbed the "World Series of Lightplane Flying". This event marked the beginning of NIFA's structured and competitive collegiate aviation programs.



NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE FLYING CHAMPIONS

WILLOW RUN MAY 31, 1947

W. M. C. SKY BRONCOS

LOYAL BEARS VIRGINIA JANSEN A. REID ARNOLD GILBERT SOMERS JOHN ALTHOUSE

University, Dr. Leslie A. Bryan of the University of Illinois, Professor Joe Coulter of the University of Oklahoma, and Ms. Lee Slocum of the University of Michigan acting as secretary.

Participating college and university flying clubs included: TCU, Texas A&M, UCLA, The University of Southern California, Stephens College, WMU, the University of Michigan, Michigan State, University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma A&M, the University of Minnesota, the University of Denver, the University of Nebraska, Georgia Tech, Auburn, Purdue, University of Illinois, and West Texas State. CAA officials made up the judging cadre. William A. (Bill) Piper was the Keynote Speaker at the first awards banquet. UCLA took top honors, with Western Michigan placing second. Since 1949, with the exception of the 2020 cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NIFA has held the annual airmeet each spring, usually in the mid-west.

As a part of the reorganization, perpetual trophies came to be - including early ones honoring **top male and top female pilots**, along with prizes over the years including engraved silver trays and Navtimer watches. In the 1940s, the name Bendix was high in the annals of competitive aviation. The Bendix Air Race was the most prestigious event to be won. At this time student planners got the idea of why not having a Bendix Trophy in collegiate aviation. So the Bendix people, who were then headquartered in Detroit, were approached and agreed to become the sponsor of the **Team Championship Awards**. They purchased large trophies to be awarded to the colleges whose team members made the highest overall score. Bendix continued to sponsor

organization standpoint, although a National Board of Advisors offered much support. As times have changed, a shift has been made, with volunteer support staff running the organization's logistics to allow more students to focus on competition, conference, and camaraderie.

THE 1950s

The 1950s witnessed much growth through support. In **1951**, the **Navigation Event** was officially added to the other 3 flying events thanks to sponsorship from AeroCommander (later taken over by Rockwell after their merger). The **Safety Award** (sponsored by American Airlines beginning in 1959) was also established. In **1955**, the University Aviation Association (UAA) assumed judging responsibilities for NIFA Air Meets and established a revolving fund for host schools. This transition helped to ensure standardized and professional evaluation criteria for collegiate aviation contests. In **1956**, NIFA members rejected a merger with the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) and voted to accept the UAA as sponsor. The UAA established a NIFA ad hoc committee to oversee and support NIFA's activities and competition. Raymond Mertes of United Airlines, who has served as secretary-treasurer of the UAA since 1949, retires. He is replaced by Harold Wood of Parks College of Aeronautics and Technology at St. Louis University. In **1958**, founder Troy Stimpson, stepped down as NIFA Executive Director and NIFA is managed by UAA oversight, under the fortunate guidance of Mr. Wood.



CAA official judge early air meets

Among the early flight sponsors present were Cessna, Piper, & Beechcraft; and they continued to sponsor Flying Events through the years. The **Top Team Award** was sponsored by Flight Magazine. **Bomb Drop** was sponsored by Piper. Supporters in the initial competition and early years also included the Ft. Worth Chamber of Commerce, local aviation operators, Southern Flight and Flying magazines, United Airlines, Continental Airlines, and American Airlines. Over the years, many returned and support from the likes of the UAA, Ninety-Nines, ALPA, GAMA, AOPA, and AHP, amongst other organizations, has kept us running.

this through the years and their large, sometimes spectacular trophies had dominated the awards table! These and other perpetual trophies have ebbed and flowed over the years and a return to ones such as the archived National Championship trophy are rumored to make a reappearance in the near future.

For decades, SAFECONs were run almost entirely by the host school, rotating from year to year, serving as the national headquarters and providing the officers and staff of the NIFA as well as planning the SAFECON. This was strictly a student function from the





Prepping flour sacks for the Bomb Drop Event

THE 1960s

In the 1960s, the evolution of sponsorships and trophies continued. For the next 20 or so years, Jeppesen-Sanderson sponsored the **Top Twenty-Five Awards** to recognize individuals - each contestant ranked by total points earned. Recognition was also given for "best improved"; it was in 1966 the honor was renamed the "**Ray O. Mertes Memorial Collegiate Aviation Progress Award**". From the earlier days, United Airlines and their School and College Service had been a staunch supporter. Ray was the long time Director of Educational Activities for United, attended each annual airmeet, and furnished valuable continuing leadership, serving as the Master of Ceremonies of the Awards Banquet for 10 years. He felt that recognition should be given to schools who made outstanding records of progress and approached then United President W.A. Patterson with the idea. United then bought and sponsored the trophy.

To cap off the decade, two more changes were made in 1969 at the airmeet at Parks College in Cahokia. The first involved creation of a **First-Timers' Award** to encourage new school participation. It was

sponsored by the Champion Spark Plug Company. The second change was that sponsors would make a "donation" to a support fund. In addition to just paying for trophies, this fund would support the total cost of the activity, thus reducing the cost burden of competing students. This overall premise remains today.

THE 1970s

The 1970s historical accounts are plentiful. So much so that an entire article could be written on their impact alone. To stay within the confines of reasonability, the highlights are as follows:

In 1970, Rudy Frasca, who had been on the 1955 University of Illinois Championship team, developed a competition using his new 100F Simulator. Thus, **Ground Trainer** was sponsored by Frasca Aviation, Inc. and trial run at the meet in Bozeman, Montana. This marked a solid history of Frasca's in-kind donation - not only sponsoring the event (and later Sim IFR) but donating the transportation, set up, and running of the simulator. Also this year, a second ground **Computer Event** was developed and sponsored by the Felsenthal Computer Company and later Telex after their takeover.

1971 saw the 1st airmeet held west of the Rockies, at San Jose State College. Their well documented goal was a good mix of educational industry events and competition - scoring places 1-5 on a 10-8-6-4-2 system. This year, FAA and state

aeronautics commissions officials made up the judging cadre.

Due to some "anti-war fever" on campuses, the Bomb Drop Event was changed to **Message Drop** and instead of dropping two-pound sacks of sand and white marking substance, the object became the balsa wood message container with colorful streamer attached being dropped into a Life Raft or other object on the ground. Additionally, the **Pre-Flight Safety Event**, sponsored by the National Aviation Underwriters Company, made it on the official roster of events after a successful trial run the year prior.

The financial responsibility of running the airmeet has always been assumed by the host school. The services and activities offered to participating students is greatly dependent upon the registration fees, sponsorships and assistance from industry organizations; thus the first development of a fundraising handbook came about. Today, national sponsorship attraction and retention falls under the Executive Director and Director of Sponsorship.

In 1972, Harold S. Wood, of Parks College and the UAA, assumed the role of NIFA's 2nd Executive Director, after having first become involved in 1950. He remained in the role until his retirement in 1985. There is no shortage of records on Harold's impact on NIFA and its members over the years. So much so that GAMA honored his contributions for many years presenting a trophy, in his name (the **Harold S. Wood Award**), to the undergraduate student who demonstrated outstanding performance in academic achievement and service to their collegiate aviation program, institution, and community.

As organized college flying became more and more popular, the national meetings began to outgrow the limits of feasibility. In late 1972 and early 1973, NIFA membership surged to 114 schools, with 60 schools competing at the National SAFECON. With as many as 60 schools entered, there could be more than 700 contestants and an impossible number of heats and eliminations. A major re-organizational meeting was held in 1972 to develop a new set of rules and a more manageable elimination procedure. Students, faculty, and interested industry advisors met in a workshop under the chairmanship of Professor Gerald Shreve of San Jose State University. They developed a chain of command, a system of continuity, and a new regional distribution of associations, condensed into a single volume of procedures known universally as **The Red Book** - thereby establishing standardized NIFA rules and ensuring fair and consistent competition practices moving forward. The reorganization also defined roles such as various Council positions, committees, student officers, etc. NIFA established 12 regions, conducted regional

elimination SAFECONs, and allowed the host plus 26 top teams to attend the 1973 national meet.

1973 also started the discussion of a fourth ground event, as proposed by the Navy - one modeled after their **Aircraft Recognition** training at Pensacola. It was first tried at the 1974 air meet at Saint Cloud State with Grumman-American Aircraft Company as the sponsor until 1979. Champion Spark Plug Company of Toledo recognized the importance of these additions to the original 4 flight events and decided to award 5 trophies, including the **Team Ground Events Championship**. Ground Events can loom large in the final ratings when weather wipes out aerial competitions.

Though American Airlines had been involved and a sponsor of NIFA since 1949, since at least 1959 they have sponsored the **Safety Award**. Originally, this trophy was awarded to the school who had impressed a "Safety Judge" with their conduct during the air meet. In 1973, American Airlines Captains Dick Kramer and Jack Calloway, presented the concept of expanding the award to include safety activities

for the entire previous year. A questionnaire was developed and the Safety Interview became a part of the competition. These two features plus the safety activities during the SAFECON went into deciding who won the trophy. American Airlines not only made donations in support of the trophy, but each year sent flight personnel to the SAFECON to conduct the interviews. This tradition continued until the late 2010s, as sponsorship changes came with new times and personnel.

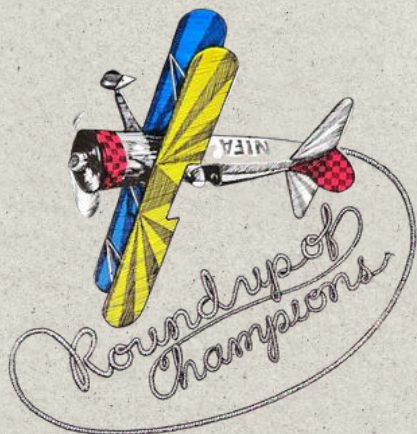
The 1970s saw increased interest in recognizing the achievements of both women and men pilots. The Ninety-Nines developed a cash prize honoring women, while a few years later, in 1978, Bill Kirshner sponsored the award for men. The **Women's Achievement Awards** and the **Men's Achievement Awards** continued until 2023 when NIFA decided to assume ownership and combine them into the **Achievement Awards** - thereby distinguishing collegiate aviators based solely on their achievements and accomplishments.

By now you may have noticed that the records of "Championship" trophies and "Top Team" awards have varied in their accounts over the decades. However, it was well documented that in 1974, Champion no longer saw applicability for sponsoring a First Timers Trophy since the "Tournament of Champions" (regional elimination) changed the game. They decided to invest \$600 (in 1974 dollars!) in a **National Championship Trophy** - combining Flying Events and Ground Events to have one true Top Team. It was awarded for the first time in 1974 at St. Cloud State, to Southwest Missouri State University.



1967 Airmeet at Cardondale (courtesy Air Progress Magazine)

1975 marked a membership roster of 137 schools (!) and the first time (since the NIFA began) that two schools co-hosted: The University of Albuquerque and College of Sante Fe. In the early days when competing in the National Event was open to anyone who could get to the air meet, Trans World Airlines, in order to encourage attendance, sponsored the **Contestant Miles Trophy**. The winner was determined by taking the number of contestants traveled participating in the competition and multiplying it by the air mileage. In 1975, it was determined that with the qualifying round and the Tournament of Champions concept, this type of event was no longer valid. So, Tony Westcott, working with Captain James Boyter of TWA, developed a competition based upon the number of participants and the points each member of the team earned. Captain Boyter, working with TWA in Kansas City, had a special trophy built which included in its center a TWA Senior Captain's wings. These wings were worn for many years by Captain Boyter as he flew the world wide routes of TWA. Parks College was the original winner of the trophy. Since 1977, this concept is known as the **Judges' Trophy** and recent day sponsorship has been assumed by Delta Air Lines. It measures the depth of a team's achievements, rather than the sum of only the top placeholders in each event.



1977 SAFECON program



Collegiate pilots planning for the Navigation Event

1979 wrapped up a busy decade for NIFA. Events to challenge the "more advanced pilot" were the topic of conversation. Richard Collins and Alan Stevens introduced and ran the **FLYING Magazine IFR Precision Flight Event** to that year's SAFECON. The event has faded over the years as the logistics of running a one-pilot-at-a-time IFR check flight have proved to challenge the limits of both judges' and contestants' time.

THE 1980s

The 1980s marked a time of steady progress and popularity of flight teams at member schools. At the 1980 meet hosted by the University of North Dakota, the host committee had been looking at other intercollegiate sports competitions and came up with the suggestion that the Top Twenty Five Awards be changed to The **Outstanding Team Member Award**. This would give recognition to all participants in the "Tournament of Champions" and recognize that NIFA was a team effort. The NIFA Council agreed, as

did the sponsor, Jeppesen-Sanderson, so now each year on Saturday afternoon each team meets and elects the member from their school who made the outstanding contribution to that school's success in the SAFECON.

Republic Airlines took over sponsorship of the Computer Event. Changes in computers were taking place and it was felt that the old E6B was not competitive enough for this event. So David Schuster, representing Republic, got together with Gerry Shreve, Chuck Gifford, and Dick McClurg of the Pacific Coast Intercollegiate Flying Association and developed "**Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation Event**", S-C-A-N for short. While it was introduced at the competition at UND, the new rules were officially used for the first time in Bakersfield, 1982.



This period also saw shifts among event sponsors with the debut of Upjohn and Aramco Oil added to the mix. However, the biggest asset to the organization's next chapter came on September 24, 1985 with the official appointment of Gary A. Hemphill as the 3rd Executive Director of the NIFA. Gary's background with the USAF, time competing for NLU, coaching, advising, hosting, and serving as Region IV Rep played tremendously into the knowledge and experience brought to the role. His time serving NIFA began in 1978 and lasted beyond his retirement until his passing in 2020. His calm demeanor, detailed nature, student focus, and passion for preserving the historical significance of the organization into future years, define his legacy. In the 2021-2022 competition year, the NIFA Council established the **Gary Hemphill "Spirit of NIFA" Award** in his honor - presented to the competitor who exemplifies the same passion toward serving others and commitment to excellence in aviation.

THE 1990s

The 1990s were good to NIFA, with strong participation from both schools and sponsors alike. Fast forward to 1996 and a major change in NIFA operation when the **NIFA Council assumed all governance** responsibilities following a student membership vote to change the by-laws. This change also altered the appointment process of regional representatives to the NIFA Council, shifting to a majority vote by regional members instead of appointments by the UAA Board.

A few years later, in alignment with industry standards - the **Crew Resource Management/Line Oriented Flight Training Event (CRM/LOFT)** was added to

SAFECON 1998. Three schools participated in the first run and San Jose State University took first place. Today, CRM/LOFT has evolved into quite the event - with nearly all schools competing a team of 2 before 5-7 judges playing ATC, and grading crewmembers on their knowledge, skill, teamwork, and safe, sound decision making. The event even has its own FOM (Flight Operations Manual) to mirror the standard of airline and flight departments. In 2025, to respect its significance in preparing students for their future careers and recognizing the standard of simulator training in those environments, the NIFA Council & Membership voted to make CRM/LOFT score as full flight event points. **SAFECON 2026** will be the first time the event is weighted on the 40 point scale.



THE 2000s-2010s

That brings NIFA into the new century, and a continued focus on modernization, adaptability, and efficiencies. In 2003, the position of

NIFA Executive Director was made a full-time role. This change underscored the growing importance and complexity of NIFA's operations and activities. In 2004, NIFA began electronic scoring. Developed by Sam Potterf, Expédien was developed to be NIFA's entry into electronic scoring. It significantly increased scoring accuracy and display. Twelve years later, in 2016, electronic scoring took a step forward from Expédien. Developed by Jared Testa, the new scoring program gave the judges an upgraded user experience. It also allowed for further implementation of technology-based scoring.

In 2013, Gary Hemphill retired from NIFA leaving a robust organization for Richard G. Smith III to serve as NIFA's 4th Executive Director. Richard brought acumen from Ohio State University, Executive Jet/NetJets Inc. and the Knowlton Foundation - and moved NIFA's HQ to Don Scott Field - The Ohio State University Airport. His aviation-business experience and industry network gave NIFA a favorable boost in sponsorship and financial support.

In 2018, Taylor Newman assumed the role as NIFA's 5th Executive Director. Taylor's background as a former MTSU competitor, National Chief Judge, and Region VIII Rep finely complimented his industry experience as an aviation business owner to run NIFA's next chapter. The NIFA Archives, which were meticulously kept, transitioned from Monroe, LA (long time NIFA HQ and home to Gary Hemphill) to Chattanooga, TN (new HQ and home of Taylor). The move was conducted via U-Haul truck by Taylor, Taylor's son Cole, and then Council Vice Chair Marty Coaker.



1989 Airmeet (courtesy AOPA Magazine)

Over the years, an ever robust majority of aviation colleges field teams for SAFECONs. As institutions' programs and administrations change, however, school membership in NIFA has fluctuated. In 2019, NIFA altered the regional borders for the first time in decades to adapt to school and locale efficiency needs - thus combining Region V into Regions IV and VI, further reducing the number of regions to 9. Also this year, the NIFA Council voted to permit other entities to host the National SAFECON, allowing room for airport authorities, other organizations, and visitor bureaus to bid. The change in hosting requirements shifts the responsibility of logistics from the school officers and advisor to the NIFA Executive Director and volunteer staff. The first non-institution to host a SAFECON was the Experimental Aircraft Association in May 2023 at their home field headquarters at Wittman Regional Airport, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, home to the famous AirVenture.

Rounding out the 2010s, was the addition of the Council Member

Emeritus position - to recognize the valuable experience of retired members and allow them to return to meetings and provide background/insight as sought.

A NIFA Policy Manual was also put into play - defining organizational operation, policy, and items requiring formality outside the constraints of the NIFA Bylaws. It is intended as a standardized guide for current and future personnel and adds official Manager and Director positions to the volunteer team. And in the world of sponsorships, long-time sponsor ASA commits to nationwide sponsorship of the Computer Accuracy event under the new structure where sponsorship of regional and national SAFECON events are run through NIFA and not left to the individual regions. Overall, a theme of professionalism, organization, and respecting experience and long-time commitment leads us into the next decade.



THE 2020s

100+ years since this article began (and so it may feel if you've read to this point). Intercollegiate flying competitions have come a long way but took an unfortunate pause on this historic anniversary. The COVID-19 pandemic struck and the Council made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 National SAFECON. This was the first time since WWII that a national air meet was not held. Though it was not celebrated in person, a contest was run to design a commemorative logo. LeTourneau flight team alum Er-Jin Jang was the winner of the contest and the logo is displayed on the historical timeline section of the NIFA website.



By 2021, the effects of the pandemic were still restricting schools' ability to travel, host logistics, and judge personnel. Therefore, a virtual "ground events only" SAFECON was held. In 2022, FlightSafety International committed to a 5 year SAFECON National Championship sponsorship, lifting NIFA to a favorable financial position in the post-COVID recovery years.

Recently, improvements to processes and preservation of history have been the theme. A new www.nifa.aero launched after a significant redesign of look and content. The NIFA Resource Hub houses all organizational and SAFECON related materials and forms.

In 2025, the NIFA Archives are again moved from Chattanooga, TN to Kalamazoo, MI. In preparation for Taylor's exit from the Executive Director role, and with a generous offer from long-time sponsor ASA, the records moved to their new home office at ASA's headquarters in Kalamazoo, MI. Their home in Kalamazoo coincidentally allows Grand Rapids native Marty Coaker, Manager of Archives, to be closer to the office, and begin the process of organizing and preserving the collection, all while honoring a promise made to Gary.

In April 2026, internal improvements began with the launch of a Judge Standardization and Training program. Additionally, as sponsorships continue to evolve and grow, at SAFECON 2026, Frasca becomes the sole provider of simulation devices - providing financial and in-kind sponsorship of devices, judges, and support for Ground Trainer, IFR Sim, and CRM/LOFT.

At the beginning of the 2026-2027 competition year, NIFA's 6th Executive Director position will be filled by current Council Chair, former Region VIII Representative and Secretary/Treasurer, former SIU competitor and Ohio University coach, and United Airlines pilot, Andrew Ross. Andrew has a vision to strategically improve NIFA and continue to bring awareness to the organization.

A Reflection

It should reassure the present day membership to know that the early descriptions of NIFA's mission have remained consistent throughout the years. Accounts and programs from the mid-1900s state, "The role the NIFA plays with respect to collegiate aviation is that it provides a multi-faceted service..."

communication, leadership, and stimulation. The competing students are combining their flight training with a sound secondary education and practical aviation experience." and "The NIFA allows students from across the nation to come together once a year for an organized program of competition, guest speakers, static displays... Aviation personalities and leaders are on hand allowing the students to meet and talk with those people who are synonymous with the success of the industry." and "The NIFA, with its sponsors and supporters, provides young aviators of America with professional role models, educational opportunities, and career

We would be remiss to not continue mention of the finest product of The NIFA - our competitors and alumni. For they have done many great things in the world as both humans and aviators alike. So much so that a roster of their sheer numbers and accomplishments is an encyclopedia worth of pages to be fully written. Perhaps the most famous alumnus is Neil Armstrong. As a member of the Purdue Flying Club his speciality event was spot landings - a skill he demonstrated to the world when he touched down Apollo XI on the surface of the moon. Many recent NIFA graduates are peppered through the military services, regulatory departments, aircraft



counseling." Competition has evolved from solely flight events to embrace ground skills, simulator mastery, and various individual and team achievements. A previous article stated, "If you're wondering what's happening on the campuses, take a trip to a NIFA SAFECON. You'll get a look at energetic youth with a purpose in mind. They are dedicated fliers who know exactly what they are doing, and they have a heck of a good time doing it."

manufacturing and supplies companies, corporate departments, airlines, aviation associations, and business ownership.

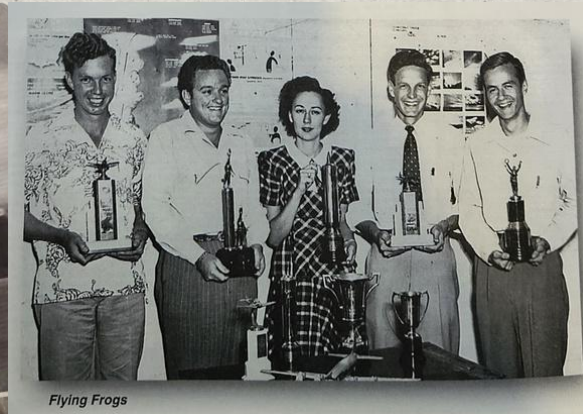


The Future...

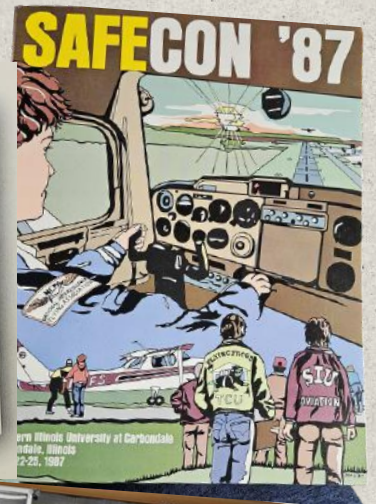
To see our mission forward, it is necessary to understand from where we have come. The evolution of our organization, and the role of its members, is not just a novel read, it is a flight plan of our journey thus far. A lot has changed over the course of time, but one thing is for certain - the dream of Professor Troy A. Stimpson is alive and well. As the next chapter of the NIFA Archives uncovers more of our story and fills in the gaps, "whys" will be answered, lessons will be learned, and our proud history will continue to reveal itself. It is incumbent upon us to carry forward the true mission for future generations. As Gary Hemphill was once quoted,



“Our direction for the future is by learning through our past.”



Flying Frogs



by Emily Coaker
NIFA Council Member-at-Large | Director of Communications

Judges & Volunteers,

Thank you for donating and sharing your time, travel expenses, talents, professionalism, and expertise to support our students!

SAFECON 2026 could not go on without your dedication!

We hope to see you again at a Regionals this fall!

Sincerely,





NIFA extends a special THANK YOU to

FRASCA
A FLIGHTSAFETY INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

*Exclusive provider of simulation devices for
SAFECON 2026*

The NIFA Archives & Keeping Our Word

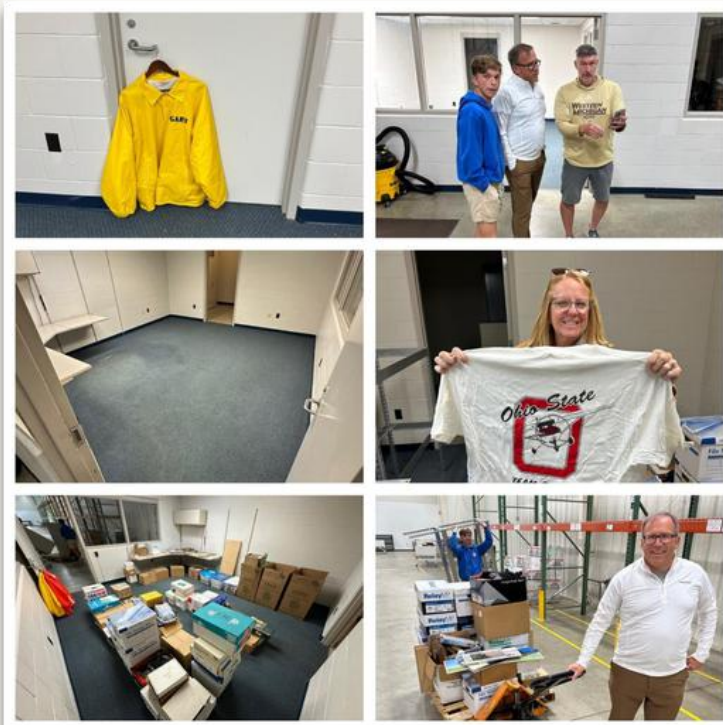
by Marty Coaker,
NIFA Council Member-at-Large and Manager of Archives

During the 2018 NIFA Mid-Winter Council meeting held at Envoy Air's Headquarters in Dallas, TX, NIFA was fortunate to have retired Executive Director and Founders Award Winner Gary Hemphill in attendance. Gary served as NIFA's Executive Director for 26 years and carried NIFA through decades of technological and social transition. Gary also kept immaculate records and curated a vast collection of archive materials.

At that time, NIFA desired to explore how to slowly showcase these archives while also increasing the number of digital archives. Knowing the importance of our history, Gary volunteered his collections if we gave our word to take great care of them, grow them, and showcase them. NIFA happily agreed and we remain thankful for the value that Gary saw in saving our history for all those years.



A few months later, a small group of NIFA volunteers made their way to Gary's hometown of Monroe, Louisiana to move NIFA's historical items to Chattanooga, Tennessee and what would be their new home at Crystal Air Inc. Crystal Air and its owner (and our current Executive Director) Taylor Newman would house the archives for the foreseeable future and work toward keeping our word to Gary. Over the years, Taylor and Crystal Air's staff have worked to fulfill historic requests and digitize paper files. Considering that the original contents of the files filled most of a 22' U-Haul truck, this was no small task indeed.



Last year, the archives were moved to the new headquarters of Aviation Supplies & Academics (ASA) in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This move brings the archives to a location where they can be displayed and more frequently utilized, along with being closer to the Manager of Archives. ASA has been gracious enough to allow NIFA to have captive space and full access to the building. ASA and building owners, Greg and Jill Robbins, have championed the effort to make the transition as smooth as possible.

At present, the NIFA Archive Room contains trophies, competitor and judge clothing, countless documents, and Gary's complete collection of NIFA competition programs. Many donated hours were spent cleaning and setting up the new space by Greg and Jill Robbins, Patrick Denney (former NIFA competitor), Jason McDowell (former NIFA competitor, judge, and test writer), and Emily Coaker (NIFA Director of Communications, and Member-at-Large).



What do we plan on doing with the archives? Our promise to Gary and NIFA's archive vision align identically. We look forward to sharing what we have and growing what we need; all while preserving our history from every competition year and SAFECON.

NIFA ALWAYS accepts both physical and digital archive material. Donations may even be tax deductible. If you have items that you'd like to donate or have digital records/photos that you would consider sharing, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Marty Coaker, Manager of Archives, at archive@nifa.aero or call (616) 443-1101.

EVENTS

TRADITIONAL & UNLIMITED NAVIGATION KING SCHOOLS

The Navigation Event consists of a cross-country flight over a 3-5 leg course between 70-120 nautical miles. Each contestant submits a flight plan before takeoff, which includes estimated time en route for each leg, total elapsed time, and fuel consumption. The contestant with the lowest penalty points wins. Traditional entrants may not use navigation equipment/electronics of any kind.

SHORT FIELD APPROACH & LANDING NIFA COUNCIL

The objective of the event is to test the pilot's airmanship while flying a clean takeoff, traffic pattern, and landing on a target line. The distance in feet from where the aircraft's wheels initially touch the runway to the target line is the pilot's score. The lowest cumulative score from the two landings, plus technique and pattern penalty points, if any, wins.

POWER OFF APPROACH & LANDING PIPER AIRCRAFT

Similar to the Short-Field Event, except that the power must be reduced and remain at idle on the downwind leg abeam the target line. The approach is made essentially by gliding for the remainder of the traffic pattern to touchdown, preferably on the target line.

MESSAGE DROP NIFA COUNCIL

The objective of the Message Drop Event is to hit targets on the ground with containers dropped from 200 feet AGL. A team effort by both the pilot and the drop master is necessary to maneuver the airplane so the two containers will hit their respective targets. The contestant whose containers land with the lowest total distance from the two targets is the winner.

IFR SIMULATED FLIGHT

FRASCA, A FLIGHTSAFETY INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

Competitors are required to demonstrate instrument flight rules (IFR) proficiency and precision by flying a given route in a simulator. All aspects of cross-country IFR flight are included such as receiving clearances, holding patterns, instrument approach procedures, and deviation to an alternate.

CRM/LOFT

FRASCA, A FLIGHTSAFETY INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

This is a simulated IFR flight with a crew of two pilots flying a multi-engine aircraft. They are scored on their ability to communicate, cross-check each other, divide duties, and problem-solve to safely complete the flight while reacting to any unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

GROUND TRAINER

FRASCA, A FLIGHTSAFETY INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

This event is designed to test the competency and skill of the contestant's ability to fly under instrument flight meteorological conditions (IMC) in a flight-training device. Flying a predetermined pattern, the competitor must show proficiency in maintaining altitude, heading, and airspeed.

CERTIFIED FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

PILOTS OF FEDEX

Certified Flight Instructors take part in a teaching competition. The event starts with the CFI preparing a predetermined subject. If weather and time permits, the CFI then teaches the lesson in flight.

PREFLIGHT INSPECTION

NIFA COUNCIL

An aircraft is "bugged" with at least 30 unairworthy discrepancies. Contestants are given 15 minutes to preflight the aircraft and find as many of the discrepancies as possible. Technique, proper handling of the aircraft, and thoroughness are also scored.

EVENTS

SIMULATED COMPREHENSIVE AIRCRAFT NAVIGATION

NIFA COUNCIL

The SCAN event is a written exam with problems that reference a simulated cross-country flight over a given route. Included in the flight planning are questions on weight and balance, aircraft performance, FARs, aeronautical charts, weather interpretations, and fuel consumption.

AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION

TEXTRON AVIATION

Slides of aircraft are shown on a screen for three seconds. Competitors then have fifteen seconds to identify the aircraft's manufacturer, model number, and common name, if any.

COMPUTER ACCURACY

AVIATION SUPPLIES AND ACADEMICS

Contestants work against the clock to solve mathematical flight planning computations using a manually operated flight computer. The exam includes problems on time, speed, distance, wind corrections, fuel requirements, and conversion factors.

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

AVIATION SUPPLIES AND ACADEMICS

This event involves questions ranging in topics from Human Factors and Safety to Inspection Concepts and Techniques. Standings are determined by overall test score and time to complete the exam.

AWARDS

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

FLIGHTSAFETY INTERNATIONAL

This award is presented to the team that accumulates the most points during the competition. National SAFECON scoring dictates points assigned, inversely, to the Top 20 contestants in each competitively scored event.

FLIGHT EVENTS CHAMPION

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES & DESTINATION 225°

SAFECON Flight Events Champion shall be the team who earns the largest number of points in the Flight Events. National SAFECON scoring dictates points assigned, inversely, to the Top 20 contestants in each competitive event. Flight Events include: Navigation, Short Field Approach & Landings, Power Off Approach & Landings, Message Drop, CRM/LOFT, and IFR Simulated Flight.

GROUND EVENTS CHAMPION

UNITED AVIATE

SAFECON Ground Events Champion shall be the team who earns the largest number of points in the Ground Events. National SAFECON scoring dictates points assigned, inversely, to the Top 20 contestants in each competitive event. Ground Events include: Computer Accuracy, Aircraft Recognition, SCAN, Ground Trainer, and Preflight.

THE JUDGES TROPHY

NIFA COUNCIL

SAFECON Judges Trophy shall be awarded to the team that earns the largest number of points, if points were awarded for every place. The metric expands the normal Top 20 scoring system to assigning points, in inverse order, to contestants in all competitive events. The results show true depth of a team.

TEAM SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

NIFA COUNCIL

Each team at the National SAFECON may nominate another team for this award. Nominated teams have demonstrated consistent sportsmanship throughout the week of competition (and during practice sessions), representing the spirit of what NIFA is all about. The team with the most number of nominations, wins.

AWARDS

COLLEGIATE AVIATION PROGRESS AWARD

NIFA COUNCIL

This award recognizes the team that has made the greatest improvements in the last year. A judging committee evaluates each team, taking into account the team's performance, safety, membership, aircraft operations and extracurricular activities.

COMPETITION SAFETY AWARD

NIFA COUNCIL

This award is presented to the team displaying the highest degree of safety during the week of competition. Teams are judged on their ability to maintain a safe environment while handling aircraft, as well as with their professionalism and behavior.

NATIONAL TOP PILOT

AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

The Top Pilot of the National SAFECON shall be the contestant who holds at least a Private Pilot Certificate, a current medical, and who earns the largest total number of points in Short Field Landings, Power Off Landings, Navigation, Ground Trainer, Preflight, & SCAN. The pilot must have scored Top 5 in any or all of the listed Flight Events.

REGIONAL TOP PILOTS

AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

This is awarded to the pilot who holds at least a Private Pilot Certificate, a current medical, and who earns the largest total number of points in both Landing Events, Navigation, Ground Trainer, Preflight, & SCAN. Top Pilots are recognized in their individual Region, as well as at the National SAFECON. Additionally, Regional Top Pilots may compete at Nationals, regardless of their team's qualification.

TOP SCORING CONTESTANT

NIFA COUNCIL

This is awarded to the individual contestant who accumulates the largest total number of points in the SAFECON.

AWARDS

GARY HEMPHILL “SPIRIT OF NIFA” AWARD

NIFA COUNCIL

This award honors the legacy of long time Executive Director, Gary Hemphill. Contestants complete a detailed application on their education, work, volunteerism, flight activities, and NIFA involvement. This, along with a video submission, is reviewed by a panel of Council members. The candidate who best represents Gary’s dedication to aviation excellence, professionalism, and giving back is awarded with a monetary scholarship.

TOP TWO-YEAR SCHOOL

NIFA COUNCIL

This award is presented to the team who places highest amongst the group of attending schools which offer two-year degree programs in aviation.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND

Competitors submit an application in advance of SAFECON, highlighting their academic accomplishments, community service, and aviation involvement. Through the week of SAFECON, applicants are interviewed by a team of judges.

COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD

TALON SYSTEMS

This award is presented to the coach that has demonstrated the best qualities in coaching, support, and leadership. Team members nominate the coach they feel best meets these criteria by submitting an essay. A panel of NIFA judges and Council members evaluates the nominees and determines the year’s honoree.

OUTSTANDING TEAM MEMBER AWARD

NIFA COUNCIL

This award is presented to the team member who has been voted by their own team as displaying the best commitment to their overall success. Members demonstrate leadership, humility, drive, passion, respect, integrity, and encouragement of others. One member from each team at Nationals is honored.

THE 2025-2026 GARY HEMPHILL “SPIRIT OF NIFA” AWARD



The “Spirit of NIFA” Award was established in 2021 in honor of the late Gary Hemphill. Gary’s NIFA involvement began in 1978 as a student in Region IV. He humbly volunteered as SAFECON support, host school advisor at Northeast Louisiana University (NLU), and a Region IV Representative. Gary served in the U.S. Air Force and later completed his Master’s Degree at NLU, where he also taught and coached. From 1985-2011 he guided the organization as Executive Director of NIFA, while also spending his career as an Aviation Professor, Department Chair, and Flight Team Advisor at Delta State University. Not only did Gary carry NIFA on his shoulders and in his heart for over 26 years, but without him NIFA would not be where it is today.

In 2011, NIFA awarded Gary its highest honor, the Founder’s Award, for his dedication and service to the organization. There have been only 10 recipients of this award in NIFA history. NIFA owes Gary much more than this award. NIFA owes its future to Gary.

The Gary Hemphill “Spirit of NIFA” Award will be presented to a person who exemplifies the same passion toward humbly serving others, while leading a life of dedication and commitment to excellence for future generations. The application window runs January-April of each year and details are announced on www.nifa.aero. The winner is presented with the Award at that year’s National SAFECON.

You can support NIFA in a special way and support the Spirit of NIFA Award by becoming a Hemphill NIFA Member at any amount. Your membership will directly support the Award. Students and recent graduates can apply for the Award.

THANK YOU, SAFECON 2026 SPONSORS!

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

FlightSafety International

TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

United Aviate

Southwest Airlines & Destination 225°

EVENT, AWARD, & SOCIAL SPONSORS

Air Line Pilots Association, International

Aviation Supplies and Academics

Aviator Assistant

Delta Propel in partnership with Endeavor Air

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United States Air Force Reserve Command

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Quad Cities International Airport

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WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!



PROGRAM

• •

11th Annual

National *Intercollegiate* **AIR MEET**

• •

Eagle Mountain Air Base

Fort Worth, Texas

May 6-7-8, 1949

• • •

Sponsors:

National Intercollegiate Flying Association
Texas Christian University Flying Frogs Club

With cooperation of Ft. Worth Chamber of Commerce,
Ft. Worth Junior Chamber of Commerce, Civil Aero-
nautics Administration, Fourth Region, and Southern
Flight Magazine.

Schedule of Events

Thursday, May 5

1:00 P. M. Registration and Lodging Arrangements
7:00 P. M. Transportation to Downtown Ft. Worth
10:30 P. M. Return to Air Base—Cars will leave from
Texas Hotel and from T.C.U. Drug Co.
on T.C.U. Campus

Friday, May 6

9:00 A. M. Registration and Lodging Arrangements
10:00 A. M. "SKY QUEEN" Contest—Judging begins
12:00 Noon Lunch at Base Canteen
1:00 P. M. Spot Landings Contest—180° Side
Approach (Event limited to men with 100
hours or less)
3:00 P. M. Spot Landings Contest—180° Side
Approach (Event limited to women with
100 hours or less)
4:00 P. M. Navigation Contest
6:30 P. M. Barbecue Supper—Texas Style
7:30 P. M. Business Meeting, National Intercollegi-
ate Flying Association
8:30 P. M. Texas Starlight Dance—Air Base
Pavillion

Saturday, May 7

7:00 A. M. Briefing by Air Meet Officials and
Breakfast
7:00 A. M. Navigation Contest, Second Phase
8:30 A. M. Precision Flight—180° Side Approach,
Power-Wheel Landings
10:30 A. M. Spot Landings—180° Side Approach,
Power Off Landings
12:00 Noon Lunch at Air Base Canteen
1:00 P. M. 360° Bulls-Eye Landings

Schedule (Sat., May 7, Cont.)

3:00 P. M.-4:00 P. M.-- Display of American Air Power

3:00 P. M. Low Contour Formation Flights
Light Aviation Section
49th Armored Division
3:15 P. M. U. S. Naval Reserve Flights, Naval
Air Station, Grand Prairie, Texas,
Chance-Vought F4U Formations
3:30 P. M. 181st Fighter Squadron, Texas Na-
tional Guard, Hensley Field, Texas,
Formation Flight and Display, North
American F-51's
3:45 P. M. Flight demonstration, Seventh Bom-
bardment Wing (Heavy) U.S.A.F.,
Eighth Air Force, Carswell Air Force
Base, Ft. Worth, Consolidated Vul-
tee B-36, World's largest bomber
4:00 P. M. Parachute Jump, Courtesy Pioneer
Parachute Company, Love Field,
Dallas, Texas
4:10 P. M. Resume National Intercollegiate Air
Meet, Bomb Dropping Contest
7:00 P. M. Annual Banquet— Presentation of Tro-
phies and Awards.
Speaker: Dr. E. O. Rushing
9:00 P. M. All College Dance sponsored by Texas
Christian University Students

Sunday, May 8

NOTE: In the event of inclement weather on either of the two
preceding days any remaining contests will be com-
pleted. Visitors free to visit city prior to take off for
home port.

Committee

General Chairman.....	Troy Stimson, Asst. Professor of Aeronautics, Texas Christian University
Co-Chairman.....	Wm. M. Berry, Asst. Administrator for Personal Flying Development, Fourth Region, CAA
Co-Chairman.....	George E. Haddaway, Editor, SOUTHERN FLIGHT Magazine

Members

Col. Burton Lyons, Commanding Officer, Eagle Mountain National Guard Air Base
 Wesley Brubaker, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Ft. Worth
 C. L. (Stoney) Henry, Russell Field, Fort Worth, Texas
 Paul Ridings, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth
 Frank Trumbauer, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Ks. City
 E. J. Reeves, President, Soaring Society of America, Dallas
 J. Fred Reed, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Fort Worth
 R. L. Bowen, Chairman, Aviation Committee, Ft. Worth Chamber of Commerce
 David Hodgkins Junior Chamber of Commerce, Fort Worth
 Bobby Taylor Bennett, Southwest Aircraft, Fort Worth
 Charles A. (Buck) Rowe, Gulf Oil Corporation, Dallas
 Dr. Fred Weick, A & M College of Texas, College Station
 B. M. Hackedorn, Humble Oil & Refining Company, Houston
 Mrs. J. W. Heard, San Antonio, Texas
 John Maxwell, Texas Engineering & Manufacturing Corp., Dallas
 Ed Keller, Magnolia Petroleum Co., Dallas
 Dr. M. J. Thompson, University of Texas, Austin
 John Robb, Premier Oil & Refining Company, Longview, Texas
 L. H. P. Klutz, President, Luscombe Airplane Corp., Dallas
 Major E. B. (Pop) Gaither, Civil Air Patrol, Pearland, Texas
 Charles F. Davis, Air Traffic Control, CAA, Ft. Worth

Howdy, Pardner, and - - - Welcome!

Although intercollegiate flying activities are known to date as far back as 1911, the first intercollegiate flying conference, made up of delegates from ten northeastern colleges and universities, met at Yale University in 1928. Amherst, Harvard, Yale and Smith College formed the New England Intercollegiate Flying Club in 1934, and with other colleges, drew up plans for a national meet. The following year the National Intercollegiate Air Meet was held under the sponsorship of Purdue University at Lafayette, Indiana. Bill Strohmeier of Amherst College was president of the NIFC at the time. The host school won the meet.

The second annual air meet was held the following year at Ann Arbor under sponsorship of the University of Michigan. Subsequent annual meets were held at Hicksville, Long Island, at the University of Akron, another at Ann Arbor, one at Lock Haven, Pennsylvania under the sponsorship of Piper Aircraft Corporation and Pennsylvania Teachers College. The meets were suspended during the war years but were resumed in 1947, both the meets for that year and for 1948 being held again at Ann Arbor with Michigan State College, University of Detroit, University of Michigan and Wayne University serving as hosts.

This, the 1949 National Intercollegiate Air Meet, marks the first time for the "World's Series of Lightplane Flying" to be held in the wide open spaces of the Great Southwest. The Flying Frogs Club of Texas Christian University is proud of its role as host school and genuinely hopes that your visit with us has been pleasant and that all your landings have been good ones. Please come back to see us!

-- William Padon
 Flying Frogs Club
 Texas Christian University
 Fort Worth, Texas

Acknowledgments

The Flying Frogs Club of Texas Christian University and the Air Meet Committee gratefully acknowledge all of the help and cooperation provided by organizations and individuals who have contributed so materially to the success of the 11th Annual Intercollegiate Air Meet.

For the array of beautiful trophies we are grateful to the following:

Bendix Aviation Corporation	Pioneer Parachute Company
Mooney Aircraft Company	Piper Aircraft Corporation
Cessna Aircraft Company	Air Associates, Inc.
Beech Aircraft Corporation	Link Aviation Devices
Southwest Airmotive Co., Inc.	Aeronca Aircraft Corp.
Premier Oil & Refining Company	American Aviation Publications
Texas Engineering & Mfg. Co., Inc.	Aviation Operations Magazine
Magnolia Petroleum Company	McMillan Oil Corporation
	Southern Flight Magazine

For the individual medals and for the sponsorship of the Texas Style Barbecue we extend our thanks to the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.

For the airplanes used in the various contests we are grateful to the following flight schools of the North Texas area:

Russell Field, Incorporated	Southwest College of Aeronautics
Ft. Worth Flyers	Water Wings, Inc.
Jack Robinson Flying School	Midwest Airport, Inc.
Pulley Flying Service	Saginaw Airport
Aero Enterprises, Inc.	Ritchey Flying Service
T. C. U. Airport	American Flyers
	Fort Worth Squadrons, Civil Air Patrol

Annual Awards Banquet

National Intercollegiate Flying Association

SATURDAY, MAY 7TH, 1949

Eagle Mountain Air Base Fort Worth, Texas
 7:00 P. M.

BANQUET HALL

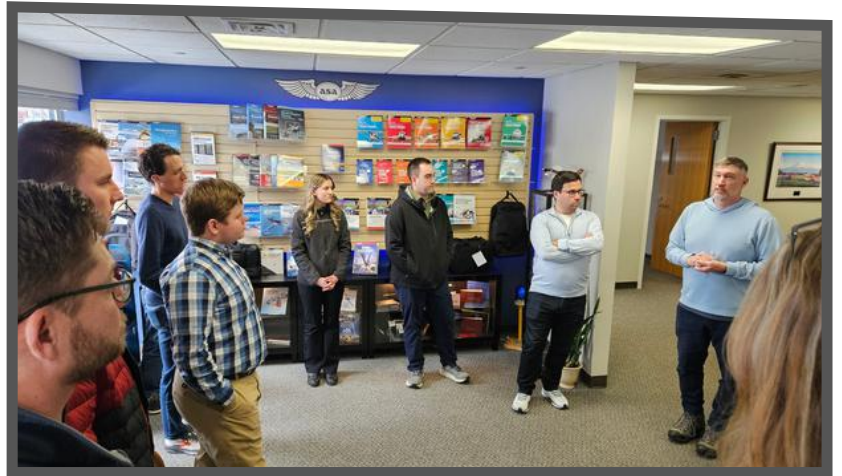
Toastmaster:	William M. Berry, Personal Flying Development, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Co-Chairman, 11th Annual National Intercollegiate Air Meet.
Introduction:	C. K. Holsapple, Dean of Evening College, Texas Christian University.
Address of Welcome:	Dr. M. E. Sadler, President, Texas Christian University.
Introduction:	Frank Trumbauer, Assistant Regional Administrator, Personal Flying Development, C. A. A. Kansas City, Missouri.
Address:	Dr. E. O. Rushing
Awards:	Troy A. Stimson, Chairman, 11th Annual Intercollegiate Air Meet, Assistant Professor of Aeronautics, Texas Christian University.
Presentation:	SKY QUEEN OF '49 David Hodgkins, Chairman, Aviation Committee, For Worth Junior Chamber of Commerce.
Concluding Remarks:	Wm. M. Berry, Co-Chairman.

DANCE—9-12—Informal

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

NIFA is deeply grateful to the following individuals whose generous financial contributions have made our mission possible:

Ryan Austin
Aaron Barthol
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