

## **Press Release**

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### **For Immediate Release:**

## **Stafford Air & Space Museum Receives \$15,000 Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission Grant**

The number of flight simulation computers available for aspiring pilots of all ages at the Stafford Air & Space Museum has recently doubled thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission.

The grant has allowed the purchase and installation of sixteen new computer stations with Microsoft X Flight Simulator software to be added to the museum's new Rose and Tom Luczo Educational Center. According to Stafford Air & Space Museum Co-Director Chuck Dougherty, "This OAC grant will allow the museum to serve twice as many students at one time who are interested in flight simulation. Our existing lab is one of our most popular activities and often has a waiting line. This generous funding will alleviate that problem." The museum's flight simulation computer labs are also used by Southwestern Oklahoma State University for ground school instruction classes.

Former astronaut Lt. General Thomas P. Stafford stated, "I am grateful for this fantastic support by the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission. This project will hopefully motivate school children from all over Oklahoma to consider careers in flight, engineering, and possibly even space exploration."

Victor Bird, Director of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission added, "In a rather difficult time for American industry, the U.S. Aerospace Industry was, once again, the star in 2008, leading all American industries with a \$61 billion trade surplus. Oklahoma is one of the seven centers in the world for the maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircraft. There is one reason for our success. Our products and services are better because the people who make and provide them are smarter. Our success is due to having the workforce required to maintain and expand this critical industry. Having a quality workforce starts in places like Weatherford's Stafford Air & Space Museum, where an interest may be sparked that will lead a young person to a career in aerospace and aviation. The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission is privileged to award this grant to the Stafford Museum, as it does its part to make sure we have the next generation of aerospace workers."

The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission's mission is to promote aviation, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across Oklahoma are met by the state's 114 public airports that comprise the state's air transportation system. The OAC also has the responsibility for encouraging the development of aviation education programs within the state.

The Stafford Air & Space Museum is named in honor of Lt. General Thomas P. Stafford, who was born and raised in Weatherford, Oklahoma and graduated with honors from the United States Naval Academy. He piloted Gemini VI, and commanded Gemini IX, Apollo 10, and the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project Mission. Stafford was the eighth recipient of the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. Visit [www.staffordmuseum.com](http://www.staffordmuseum.com) for more information.

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