

Stafford Museum honors military families



Julie Harding

Lifestyles Editor

Alongside being one of the top six tourist attractions in Oklahoma and becoming a Blue Star museum, the Stafford Air and Space Museum has a lot going on these days.

"We have people here from all over the world, every week," Museum Director Lynne Thurman said. "It's pretty exciting. We are in the top six, consistently, for information requests from the state Department of Tourism."

Blue Star Museums is a partnership among Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts and more than 700 museums in all 50 states to offer free admission to active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day (May 31) through Labor Day (Sept. 6).

"The museum volunteers to be a Blue Star museum," Thurman said. "We do it out of support for people in the armed forces. It's one of those things we hope is a small token of thanks for what they do for our country."

• Please see **Military**, Page 7A

Stafford Air and Space Museum space camp participants Michelle Mounsey, Eric Trybus and Joshua Pond take an imaginary flight in the commercial airline seats recently donated to the museum.

Julie Harding/WDN

Military

• Continued from Page One

The museum looks much different than it did a few months ago, with new story graphics in display cases, new exhibits and artifacts and even a new sit-down theater with a big screen that shows clips from the World War II era.

"It's got a 45 minute reel that shows how to identify a Japanese Zero (WWII fighter plane), a segment of Bob Hope entertaining the troops, and Humphrey Bogart and Jimmy Stewart in a recruiting video," Thurman said. "It's so fun to sit in there and watch it. Eventually we'll have a kiosk where you can push a button and select videos to watch – all about World War II."

The museum has gone through some big re-arranging changes and traffic patterns are easy and fun to follow. There is a new "star" tour, where visitors can follow stars which guide them to certain displays with information.

In the Luczo Educational Center, big changes are also in the works.

"We're planning to add a second story in here and make it all about the "nature of flight," Thurman said. "It will compare man-made flight to natural flight, and visitors can learn about wing shapes and their functions, landing gear, camouflage, communication and wind current effects."

Also in the Luczo Center, real commercial airline seats have been installed, and soon other parts of the display such as a food and beverage serving cart and an area for pilot and flight attendants will make it fun and realistic for kids to play real "airplane" games.

"We're also partnering with different aerospace companies in Oklahoma to set up interactive displays depicting what kinds of different things they do," Thurman said. "We'll have hands-on things for kids to do to possibly inspire them to go into careers in math, science, technology and engineering."

All this new activity, plus events such as Space Camp, the Okie Dust Devil (July 8-10), various workshops, and the Annual Stafford Family Star Party (August 12) keep the museum hopping during the summer months.

For more information about exhibits, events or becoming a member of the Stafford Air and Space Museum, call 772-5871.