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NOTE: FAA's PHOTOS OF THE SIGNING ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Civil Air Patrol and FAA join forces in aerospace education

MAXWELL AFB, Ala. — Civil Air Patrol and the Federal Aviation Administration have signed a new agreement to collaborate on aerospace education.

Officials of the two groups signed a memorandum of understanding on Oct. 12, 2004 at FAA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Both CAP and FAA have national support programs for aerospace education teachers. As part of the new agreement, CAP will support FAA workshops and make its aerospace instructional materials available to teachers in the FAA Aviation Education Outreach Program. The groups will also collaborate on distributing information to educators in their respective newsletters and on their Web sites.

Signing the agreement were CAP's national commander, Maj. Gen. Dwight Wheless of Manteo, N.C., and FAA Administrator Marion C. Blakey. Also present were Judy Rice, CAP National Headquarters deputy director of aerospace education, FAA National Aviation Education Program Manager Sheila Bauer, Amy Corbett, FAA New England Region Administrator, and Dr. Mervin K. Strickler, a pioneering educator considered the nation's "father" of aerospace education.

Strickler has the distinction of being the only educator who has ever developed aerospace education programs for both CAP and FAA. He planned and directed the modernization of CAP's post-World War II aerospace education program from 1951 to 1960. Strickler did similar work for the newly formed FAA from 1960 to 1979.

Strickler praised FAA for its "leadership in getting many important aviation organizations to share resources and teaching materials for students and teachers.

"Throughout my teaching, consulting, aviation work and public service, I've found that one can do much more by developing partnerships to achieve mutual objectives," Strickler said. "This agreement will be a positive influence on thousands of educators and, ultimately, millions of young people. The ultimate winners will be a better informed and better trained generation of citizens and aerospace leaders for the 21st century."

As part of the agreement, CAP will promote FAA's education programs during the 2006 National Conference on Aviation and Space Education, an annual event which CAP has hosted for decades. The 2006 conference, scheduled Oct. 6-8 in Washington, D.C., will showcase a variety of aviation and space leaders and allow them to share information with teachers from throughout the nation.

“CAP and FAA have worked together for years,” said Wheless, “not only in the aerospace education arena, but through our respective ties to emergency services and general aviation. Organizations like ours that support aviation and space education have a responsibility to join forces. It’s only through public awareness and education that we’ll develop our nation’s future leaders in aviation and space technology.”

“The top pilots of tomorrow are earning their wings right now in CAP,” Blakey said. “Joining forces with Civil Air Patrol is going to pay dividends for the FAA and for aviation. CAP gives the youth of America a big horizon to reach for.”

Civil Air Patrol, the official Air Force auxiliary, is a nonprofit organization with almost 62,000 members nationwide. Among its members are some 1,700 teacher members who use CAP-produced materials to share the fascination of aviation and space technology with students nationwide. CAP also includes aviation and aerospace training in the promotion requirements for its 27,000 cadets between the ages of 12 and 20.

Outside the aerospace education arena, CAP performs 95% of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 60 years.

The FAA establishes partnerships with government agencies, aviation advocates, industries, learning institutions, and other organizations to promote skills and knowledge critical to accomplishing its mission of ensuring the safety of all who fly. A major focus in support of the agency’s goals is the FAA’s Aviation and Space Education Program, which sponsors Aviation Career Education (ACE) Camps where youth are exposed to math, science and technology through aviation education, as well as in-depth exploration of aviation career opportunities that might otherwise be unattainable.

The FAA-CAP agreement focuses on student outreach programs that lead to a better trained and better prepared future aerospace workforce, as well as joint initiatives that expose youth to aviation and aerospace careers through partnership opportunities.

For more information on CAP, go to www.cap.gov. For information on FAA, go to www.faa.gov.

For a copy of the official memorandum of understanding between CAP and FAA, go to www.cap.gov. Click on the Members button and select Aerospace Education from the menu. The link to the MOU is number 10 in the listing.