



## PRESS RELEASE

NOVEMBER 16, 2012

The Virginia Museum of Transportation announces the opening of its new Wings Over Virginia Aviation Gallery on Saturday, November 17, 2012

- Visitors will be able to explore hands-on exhibits and videos to understand the science of flight and aviation technology; listen to the heroic stories of our region's military and civilian aviators who have impacted our history; learn about the air ambulance service and the team that saves lives every day; and climb aboard a jet to see inside a real aircraft cabin and imagine being a pilot.
- The public is invited to the WHEELS UP! Grand Opening Celebration on Saturday, November 17, 2012, from 10 am to 5 pm.
- The WHEELS UP! Grand Opening Celebration will feature reduced admission, special guests and fun activities for the whole family.

ROANOKE, VA – November 7, 2012 – The Virginia Museum of Transportation announces the grand opening of its Wings Over Virginia Aviation Gallery on Saturday, November 17, 2012.

The Wings Over Virginia Aviation Gallery will trace the history and future of aviation in Virginia. Visitors will be able to explore hands-on exhibits and videos to understand the science of flight and aviation technology; listen to the heroic stories of our region's military and civilian aviators who have impacted our history; learn about the air ambulance service and the team that saves lives every day; and climb aboard a jet to see inside a real aircraft cabin and imagine being a pilot.

The Gallery has been six years in the making. The Gallery has been closed to the public since the Museum suffered severe damage from a storm in the summer of 2006. The roof of the Gallery was blown off, ruining the majority of the exhibits in the aviation gallery.

Before rebuilding the Gallery, the Museum undertook an ambitious public opinion survey to garner ideas and feedback about what the community wanted to see in new and existing exhibits. Over 1,000 Museum fans responded to the surveys. The Wings Over Virginia Gallery incorporates the best of those ideas. The Gallery will embody the Museum's new design philosophy that includes more educational components and personal stories.

## **WHEELS UP! Grand Opening Celebration will be held on Saturday, November 17 from 10 am to 5 pm**

A WHEELS UP! Grand Opening Celebration will be held on Saturday, November 17. Visitors will enjoy \$5 admission (members and infants 2 and under admitted free), special guests and fun activities for the whole family. The WHEELS UP! Grand Opening Celebration begins at 10 am and ends at 5 pm.

Visitors to the WHEELS UP! Celebration will have the opportunity to talk to balloonists, pilots and other special guests. Guests will be invited to sit in a flight simulator, learn how wind helps a kite to fly and get up close views of gliders from the Blue Ridge Soaring Society.

### **About the Virginia Museum of Transportation**

Home to two of the most powerful steam locomotives in existence today—the N&W Class A 1218 and the N&W Class J 611—the Virginia Museum of Transportation regularly attracts visitors of all ages from across the U.S. and around the world. Through exhibits, artifacts, and an outstanding collection of rail equipment, cars, trucks, airplanes, and more, the Museum tells the rich story of Virginia's transportation history.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation is the Official Transportation Museum of the Commonwealth of Virginia, but receives no state funding. The Museum celebrates 50 years of showcasing Virginia's unique rail heritage and contributions to the auto and aviation industries. The Museum is located in the historic Norfolk & Western Freight Station at 303 Norfolk Avenue SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. Open Monday-Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 1-5. 540/342.5670. [www.vmt.org](http://www.vmt.org).



## Exhibits in the Wings Over Virginia Aviation Gallery

### Aviation Technology and Principles of Flight

Learn how mechanical devices are able to fly, identify parts of an airplane and see airplane engines up close.

#### Principles of Flight:

- Models of Leonardo da Vinci's Orinthopter and Helical Airscrew  
*On loan from Captain Bob Breakell*
- *Bernoulli's Principle*, *The Four Forces* and *Airplane Parts and Function* panels are courtesy of NASA Langley Research Center.
- Airplane education video courtesy of Sporty's.

#### Airplane Engines:

##### Continental Motors O-200:

*Donated by Continental Motors, Inc.*

- Continental Motors has produced aircraft engines since the 1930s. The O-200 Model is used in the popular Cessna 150 airplane. Over the years, thousands of small Continental engines have been produced.

##### General Electric CJ610:

*Donated by William Cranwell*

- The General Electric CJ610 is a non-afterburning turbojet engine derived from the afterburner-equipped military engine.

#### How Wings Work

*Made possible by Foundation for Roanoke Valley*

- The colorful hands-on exhibit shows examples of different types of airplane wings.  
*Built by 4DD productions in Roanoke.*

## Ballooning

*Balloon basket donated by Natalie W. Hailey*

- Soon to be completed.
- How hot air balloons work and how they stay afloat in the air.

## Life-Guard Air Ambulance

*Exhibit made possible by Med-Trans Corporation and Carilion Clinic*

- Highlights the life-saving patient transport service in Southwest Virginia.

## Commercial Aviation

- Traces the growth and development of passenger air travel and air mail. Also on display are flight attendant uniforms from the 1940s to the 1980s and passenger aircraft models.

## Virginia's Commercial Airports

- Learn about the design, history, impact and function of Virginia's commercial airports. Take a detailed look at Roanoke Regional Airport and what it looks like to approach the runway in Roanoke during the day and at night.

## Airport Lighting

*Exhibit made possible by Foundation for Roanoke Valley.*

- Discover how pilots use runway lights to guide their airplane to a safe landing.

## Barnstorming

*Barnstorming video courtesy of Prelinger Archives, San Francisco, California.*

- See how barnstorming became a popular – and dangerous – attraction in the early days of aviation.

## Women in Aviation

*Exhibit made possible by Foundation for Roanoke Valley*

- Soon to be completed.

## Wes Hillman

### Roanoke Aviation Legend

*Exhibit courtesy of Wesley V Hillman*

*Hangar made possible by the Raymond C. and Anna T. Johnson Foundation*

- Local aviation legend, Wes Hillman, tells his story and how aviation in Roanoke took off.
- Meet Roanoke's early pilots and aviators.

## F-18E Drop Model

*On loan from NASA Langley Research Center*

- Get an up close look at the F18E. This drop model was carried by helicopter 10,000 feet into the air, dropped and flown by remote control to test the jet for safety and aerodynamics.

## Flight Talk

**Oral histories of some of our region's aviators**

*Made possible by the Raymond C. and Anna T. Johnson Foundation*

In their own words, hear the stories of regional aviators:

- **Chauncey Spencer:** A Lynchburg native, one of the founding members of the Tuskegee Airman.
- **Colonel Joseph G. Johnson, Jr.:** A World War II pilot who flew a B-26 bomber over Utah Beach and bombed Nazi encampments.
- **Captain Bill Overstreet:** A World War II pilot from Covington, VA, who shot down a German fight by flying beneath the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.
- **Major Frank McFadden:** A Roanoke native, Major McFadden flew helicopters during the Korean War.
- **First Lieutenant Evelyn Kowalchuk:** A World War II flight nurse in the Medical Evacuation Transport Squadron.

*The Virginia Museum of Transportation seeks both funding and stories to add more personal stories in the future. Please contact Deena Sasser by email ([dsasser@vmt.org](mailto:dsasser@vmt.org)) or by calling 540-342-5670.*

## NASA Langley Research Center

- Soon to be finished

## Careers in Aviation

*Exhibit made possible by Foundation for Roanoke Valley*

*Video courtesy of Aerospace Industries Association*

- Explore careers in aviation.

## Aero Jet Commander

*Donated by William Crandell*

- Soon to be finished.
- Visitors will be able to sit in the jet, get a close-up view of the cockpit and dream of becoming a pilot.

