

***Reflecting on a Landmark Year: Flight Expo's Highlights of 2024***

As we step into 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the amazing experiences and milestones that made 2024 such a remarkable year for Flight Expo.

From thrilling events to innovative new initiatives, it's been a year full of growth, learning, and connection. Let's revisit some of the standout moments:



Photo credit to J Callahan Photography

**January:**

Flight Expo's *Build a Plane* students had the opportunity to build model boxes based on detailed plans.

**February:** The iconic S2F Tracker made its way to Princeton Airport under the cover of darkness. In February, our Flight Expo families took part in the annual *United We Shiver* polar plunge, raising funds for this fantastic cause. We were also honored by a visit from the 99er's, a group of dedicated women pilots, who joined us to support *Build a Plane* and the S2F project.

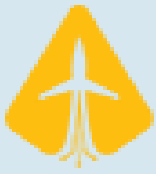
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**Inside this issue**

- 2024 Highlights
- Building Update
- Kruse Aviation

## Flight Expo's Highlights of 2024



# CHOOSE AEROSPACE

### March:

We proudly introduced a new, cutting-edge computer-based curriculum, *Choose Aerospace*, for students aspiring to become Aviation Maintenance Technicians.

### April:

The Spring *Build a Plane* project kicked off, while the S2F Tracker opened its doors for tours. Visitors, including families, veterans, and aviation history enthusiasts, came by to share heartfelt stories—some brought laughter, others, tears.

### May:

A special moment for Flight Expo as Joely Lewis was selected as the inaugural recipient of the John & Patty Sandberg Scholarship. A well-deserved recognition for a rising star in aviation!

### June:

We participated in the *Rum River Parade* with the Wag Aero Cubby, and the following weekend, our fleet of aircraft, including the S2F, Wag Aero Cubby, and Cessna 150 & 172, were on display at the Princeton Lions Pancake Breakfast at the Municipal Airport. Additionally, the *Man Cave Garage Sale* raised an impressive \$4,000 for Flight Expo by the end of summer.

### July:

The excitement of Oshkosh was palpable as Boeing revealed its 2024 Pilot and Technician Outlook, predicting a significant need for 123,000 new pilots, 123,000 new technicians, and 184,000 new cabin crew members. Notably, these numbers do not include the growing needs in business aviation, further underscoring the importance of our mission to train and inspire the next generation of aviation professionals.



### August:

Flight Expo took the mobile cockpit on its first visit to a local daycare, giving young children the chance to experience aviation up close.

After learning about the basics of

flight, each child had the opportunity to sit in the cockpit chair and wear a headset. This month also marked the debut of our first *Aviation Adventures* summer camp, held in partnership with IDS 477 Community Education. It was a week full of fun, learning, and hands-on experiences!

### September:

In September, Flight Expo was thrilled to partner with US Aviation Academy, a Part 147 school in Anoka, helping to further support the development of aviation maintenance professionals.





# ST. CLOUD TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## October:

The fall season brought exciting events, starting with the *Build a Plane* session in full swing. Our 2nd Annual *Halloween at the Airport* event delighted attendees with pumpkins, chili, face painting, and more. St. Cloud Technical and Community College also announced it will start a Part 147 school that will be fully active sometime in 2026. This month, we also submitted the nomination package for John Sandberg to be inducted into the MN Aviation Hall of Fame. Additionally, Flight Expo's mobile cockpit was showcased to an enthusiastic crowd at Kinship's *Pumpkin Chuckin'* event, where we inspired future aviators with hands-on opportunities.



## November:

November saw the return of the *Chili Jet Cook-off*, where four teams competed for the top spot. The event was a huge success, with a 50/50 raffle adding excitement to the evening. Here are the results:

- 1st Place: David Stanz
- 2nd Place: Josh Matoga
- 3rd Place: Anthony Leipus
- 4th Place: Eric Tester
- 5th Place: Jenny Golden
- 6th Place: Terry Kleinmeyer
- 7th Place: Dan Weimann
- 8th Place: Derek Rebischka
- 9th Place: Loren Brix
- 10th Place: David Stanz
- 11th Place: Ted Curtis



We look forward to the continued growth of our programs, our community, and our shared passion for aviation.

Here's to an even brighter 2025!

## Building Construction

As we look toward the future of our programs, it's clear that we're facing a pressing need: more building space. Currently, our program operates out of a 40x50 pole shed, which limits both the number of airplanes we can restore and the number of students we can serve.

To truly lead in aviation workforce development, we require additional hands-on space to accommodate the specialized tools that are vital to our students' learning. This includes dedicated areas for welding aircraft aluminum, riveting, cutting large aluminum sheets, wiring, fabric work, and more. Our goal is to build a facility that will support the growth of our program for years to come.



Flight Expo has been working to expand an existing building by adding a 60 x 72-foot wood-constructed hangar. The new space will allow Flight Expo to expand its reach and offer its innovative aviation programs to a larger number of students. By providing these programs to a wider community, Flight Expo will introduce more young people to the aviation field, especially those who might not have considered it as a career path. The availability of these programs in the community can spark interest in STEM subjects and aviation careers, providing students with an early start in technical education that can lead to future employment opportunities.

### Exciting progress is underway!

We've selected a location, finalized the plans, and received bids from four vendors. Now, we're moving forward with partnering with local organizations, pursuing grants, and launching fundraising efforts.

We're confident that this dream is within reach and will provide lasting benefits to our community for years to come!



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