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K-STATE – SALINA FLIGHT TEAM SOARS AT NATIONAL COMPETITION

SALINA – The Kansas State University flight team had a best-ever showing at the National Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference – SAFECON – held May 17-21 at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. The flight team is in the College of Technology and Aviation, located on K-State's Salina campus.

More than 250 students from 27 different schools around the country competed in the event. The K-State team finished 18th in flight events and tied for 19th place overall, its best placements ever at the national level. The performance at nationals follows a strong third place finish in the regional SAFECON competition, hosted on the Salina campus in October 2002.

"I was proud of the effort our team made to represent K-State and to compete on a very high level," said Troy Brockway, flight team coach and assistant professor of aviation. "When you consider the flight programs we were up against – Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the Air Force Academy, the University of North Dakota and others – we were so pleased with how we did."

Top individual accomplishments included:
* Brockway was named National Intercollegiate Flying Association Coach of the Year, based on a nomination submitted by the flight team members.
* Betty Pina, senior in airway science from Hays, was second place in the Women's Achievement Award.
* Dustin Graves, junior in airway science from Fairfax, Mo., and Justin Poe, junior in airway science from Keller, Texas, took tenth place in the message drop competition.
* In the simulator event, Brian Yager, senior in airway science from Marysville, Kan., placed 15th, and Mitchell Ochs, junior in airway science from Grainfield, Kan., placed 16th.

Complete team results can be found at the end of this story.

SAFECON is devoted to the skill, safety, sport and education in college flying. A series of ground and flight events are conducted during the competition.

Ground events include pre-flight inspection, aircraft recognition, instrument proficiency in a ground-based simulator and computer accuracy. Flight events include short-field precision landing, power-off precision landing, cross-country navigation and message drop.

ABOUT SAFECON EVENTS:

Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation exam – The exam includes all aspects of basic aeronautical skills, similar to current FAA written exams, but with a few extra challenges. The exam concentrates on computational problems involving cross-country navigation.

Landing events – In the power-off and short-field landings, a line is chalked on the runway. Points are given based on how close the plane gets to the line under given conditions, as well as overall technique. In the power-off landing, pilots reduce power and essentially glide into the landing.

Preflight – This event involves a preflight inspection of a plane that has been "bugged" with a variety of discrepancies. The student is graded on the number of discrepancies discovered in 15 minutes.

Navigation – Students have 30 minutes to plot a three- to five-mile cross-country flight, estimating time between checkpoints, total time en route and expected fuel usage. A check pilot then rides with the student to verify the accuracy of the estimates and ground judges record time over checkpoints.

Message drop – A pilot and drop master work together to drop messages from 200 feet in the air into two different barrels on the ground. The drop master earns points based on how close the messages are to the barrels.

Computer accuracy – Using an E6B, a circular slide rule made specifically for aviation, students work a variety of problems. Problems include time, speed, distance, wind correction and fuel requirements.

Simulator – Students are required to demonstrate instrument flight rules, proficiency and precision in a simulator. Scores are given based on how close students come to the target values in a pre-set flight.

Aircraft recognition – Slides of parts of a variety of aircraft are flashed on a screen for three to five seconds. The student must identify the aircraft by manufacturer, model number and common name. Worldwide aircraft are used, including Russian airliners and World War II planes.

IFR simulator – Competitors demonstrate instrument flight rules (IFR) proficiency and precision by flying a given route in a simulator. Pilots encounter a variety of situations, including holding patterns and instrument approach procedures.

Crew resource management – Two-person crews are assigned a cross-country flight in a simulator. Contestants are judged on their ability to work together in a cockpit environment, as well as their ability to handle in-flight situations.

Certified flight instructor – Certified flight instructors compete by preparing and teaching an assigned subject. If weather and time permits, the CFI then teaches the lesson in-flight.

Women's and men's achievement – Male and female competitors are interviewed by a panel that examines their accomplishments, community service and aviation involvement.

COMPLETE TEAM RESULTS

Mitchell Ochs, senior in airway science from Grainfield, placed 16th in simulator, 50th in Navigation, 90th in short-field landing and 99th in power off landing.

Betty Pina, senior in airway science from Hays, took second place in the Women's Achievement award.

Daniel Hewes, senior in airway science from Ingalls, was named K-State's Outstanding Team Member by members of the flight team. He placed 11th in the certified flight instructor event, 14th in IFR simulator event, 32nd in power-off landing, 49 in navigation, 57th in computer accuracy and 82nd in short-field landing.

Brian Yager, senior in airway science from Marysville, finished 15th in simulator, 83rd in short-field landing and 103rd in power-off landing.

Pat Rinearson, sophomore in airway science from Olathe, Kan., placed 90th in aircraft recognition.

Mandi Bellamy, sophomore in airway science from Sharon Springs, placed 104 in short-field landing and 121 in computer accuracy.

Jason Eichem, senior in airway science from Wamego, placed 77th in aircraft recognition and 105 in the Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation exam.

David Jones, senior in airway science from Wichita, placed 64th in the Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation exam, 98th in computer accuracy and 108th in short-field landing. He is a graduate of Valley Center High School.

Justin Poe, junior in airway science from Keller, Texas, placed 10th in message drop, 29th in preflight, 50th in aircraft recognition, 74th in the Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation exam, 81st in computer accuracy and 106th in power-off landing. He is a graduate of Broken Arrow High School, Broken Arrow Okla.

A team consisting of Poe and Graves placed 21st in the crew resource management simulator event.