WAI CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL FIRST VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

News / Events / Festivals



The 32nd Annual International Women in Aviation Conference accomplished its goal to Connect. Engage. Inspire. during WAI's first virtual conference on March 11-12, 2021."We made the decision last fall – for the safety of all our attendees during the pandemic – to take our annual gathering to an all-virtual platform with the goal of delivering the same content to include a wide variety of keynote speakers and exhibitors, seven education session tracks, professional development seminars and workshops, scholarship awards, and the Pioneer Hall of Fame induction ceremony," said Women in Aviation International (WAI) CEO Allison McKay.

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“Our strength is in the celebration of so many like-minded women who come together to share their passion for aviation and aerospace, and we successfully delivered that opportunity this week at WAI2021. From a NASA astronaut, top-level women executives, engineers, pilots of all levels right through young students, and all aerospace professions, we are united in a desire to help one another and further our careers and personal lives,” she added.

A highlight of every conference is the induction of women into WAI’s International Pioneer Hall of Fame. This year’s inductees include: **Joan Robinson-Berry**, a longtime, trailblazing Boeing executive in the field of aerospace; **Maj. Gen. Carol Timmons (ret.)**, the first woman to lead the Delaware National Guard; and **U.S. Marine Corps’ First Class of Women Aviators**, this group of 10 pioneers represented the first women to go through pilot and naval flight officer training in the U.S. Marine Corps.

At the WAI membership meeting, Capt. Deborah Hecker, Michaela Lucas, and Marci Veronie were re-elected to the board, and outgoing board members Brian Bolt and Abingdon Mullins were thanked for their years of support. Visits to the active exhibit hall were interspersed with general sessions on Friday and Saturday mornings, with dozens of education sessions held both days.

WAI continued its successful youth outreach with a virtual Girls in Aviation Day Reno on Saturday, March 13, where over 1,800 registrants from 16 countries were introduced to the possibilities of an aviation career though interviews with Jasmin Moghbeli, NASA Astronaut, and female members of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

This important youth outreach will continue with WAI's international Girls in Aviation Day on September 25, 2021, where WAI’s network of local chapters will plan and execute their own unique events for girls 8 to 17 years old.

"Our industry is significantly smaller than it was at the beginning of 2020, and any gains we made in creating a more diverse workforce have been impacted by industry wide furloughs and layoffs,” said Allison. “I invite companies to support WAI’s continued mission of creating a more diverse workforce by joining our organization. We have the opportunity to rebuild our industry with the diversity that was lacking before the pandemic.”
Other conference highlights include:

- A total attendance of more than 2,300 from around the world.
- The exhibit hall hosted 105 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects

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of the aviation community.

- 101 scholarships were distributed to WAI members at every stage of life for both academic use, lifestyle enhancement, and flight training, including type ratings. A total of $475,805 in scholarships was awarded during the conference, and another 48 scholarships totaling $256,000 are now on line with applications due May 18, 2021. These additional 2021 Spring scholarships will put the total scholarships awarded since 1995 to $14,000,000.
- The WAI chapter network reached 147 global chapters in 22 countries worldwide.

The 33rd Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held March 17-19, 2022, at Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tennessee. For more information, visit www.wai.org.



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