



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **WICHITA AERO CLUB AND UNITED WAY OF THE PLAINS ANNOUNCE FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR DISPLACED AEROSPACE WORKERS**

*Experimental Aircraft Association CEO Tom Poberezny Will Speak at June 6 Dinner at Hyatt*

**Wichita, KS**— The Wichita Aero Club, in cooperation with the United Way of the Plains, will raise funds for displaced workers by hosting an evening gala and silent auction at 7 PM on June 6, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The “No Black Tie” Black Tie Ball will feature Tom Poberezny, Chief Executive Officer of the Experimental Aircraft Association and the unveiling of the Wichita Aero Club trophy which will be presented to a person or organization with ties to the local community who has contributed significantly to the advancement of aviation during the previous calendar year or over an extended period.

“In the charter of the Wichita Aero Club we established a plan to recognize special achievement in aerospace by annually presenting a trophy to deserving individuals or organizations at a black tie event,” explained Wichita Aero Club Executive Director Dave Franson. “This year is, however, unique, in that it’s our first year and one in which our industry has been extremely hard hit by the economic downturn. For that reason, we decided to ‘adjust’ our focus in 2009 by simply introducing the award rather than presenting it to a recipient, and concentrate our efforts on doing what we could to assist the thousands of our colleagues and neighbors who have lost their jobs or been severely impacted by the state of the economy. Instead of an event that simply celebrates accomplishment, we are collaborating with the United Way of the Plains to do something that will literally provide a way to help people in need,” he added.

The “No Black Tie” Black Tie Ball is a unique twist on the originally planned event. “We’re suggesting that attendees save the money they planned to spend on tuxedos or evening wear and use it to purchase items at the silent auction, thereby contributing to the Laid Off Workers Fund. ‘Cocktail attire’ will be the appropriate dress code for the evening,” Franson explained.

“We appreciate this gesture on behalf of the Wichita Aero Club and its member companies and individuals,” stated Pat Hanrahan, president of the United Way of the Plains. “The aircraft industry is a vital part of our nation’s economic strength and its employees annually are among the highest donors in the United Way system. Now they need us and we will be there for them,” he noted.

The event is designed to benefit the more than 10,000 aviation workers who have been laid off or displaced in recent months. “Since the annual Wichita Aero Club trophy will not be presented this year, our board of directors felt that it was imperative that a prominent and appropriate speaker be invited to the event in order to attract significant participation from the local community. We are extremely happy that Tom Poberezny, whose long association with the airframe manufacturers, suppliers, and EAA members

who annually attend the EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin each summer has agreed to be our keynote speaker. He's an ideal choice and we greatly appreciate his willingness to join us," Franson said.

The evening's event will also feature a silent auction. Its proceeds, along with most of those from ticket sales, will be donated to the United Way of the Plains Laid Off Workers Fund. The auction will include a variety of unique items, many with an aviation flavor. Donations are being accepted by the Wichita Aero Club for inclusion. Tickets are priced at \$125 per person for non-members and \$100 per person for WAC members and their guests.

The Wichita Aero Club was founded in October of 2008 and hosts monthly networking luncheons at the Wichita Airport Hilton Hotel. The organization was established to foster and promote interest in aviation, provide a forum focused on the industry's issues and achievements and bring together those with a passion for flight in an environment that expands and enhances professional relationships and furthers cooperation and understanding. For more information, contact the Wichita Aero Club by calling 316-681-4491 or 316-641-5962 or via the internet at [aeroclubinfo@wichitaeroclub.org](mailto:aeroclubinfo@wichitaeroclub.org).

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