

PRESS CONTACT

Josh Harnagel
VP, Marketing
jharnagel@redbirdflight.com
512-301-0718



REDBIRD MIGRATION SETS THE STAGE FOR EXPANDING AND RETAINING THE POOL OF PILOT APPLICANTS

Houston, TX (March 7, 2024) – Redbird Flight (Redbird), a leading provider of flight training technology, concluded its 13th annual Migration Flight Training Conference (Migration), bringing together industry leaders from flight training and K-12 aeronautics for a dynamic exchange of ideas and insights. The event, held from March 5-6 at the Lone Star Flight Museum in Houston, Texas, provided an unparalleled platform for attendees of diverse backgrounds to engage with thought-provoking sessions and networking opportunities geared toward making progress in their shared goal of developing the next generation of aviation professionals.

Redbird VP of Marketing Josh Harnagel began the conference by sharing insights from the company's most recent edition of the State of Flight Training Report. Among the many trends observed in the report, which is now available to download via the [Redbird website](#), Harnagel shared how the data continue to suggest that learners, prospective learners, and pilots are more likely to value the use of flight simulation in ab initio training than are their flight instructors and flight schools.

A session led by Patrick Chovanec delved into the appeal and impact of flight simulators for learners and prospective learners. An accomplished economic advisor, Chovanec took up flight training during the COVID-19 pandemic after building confidence and foundational flying skills using flight simulation software at home. His flight training journey, chronicled in his celebrated book "Cleared for the Option: A Year Learning to Fly," underscores the positive outcomes possible for learners and flight training providers alike when they adopt a more personalized approach to training.

In a later session, Firecrown CEO Craig Fuller discussed how his company's data-driven approach to media revealed that Chovanec's foray into aviation is not an anomaly. According to Fuller, his company's subscribers have responded to content about flight simulation and even expanded because of it, dispelling long-held beliefs that pilots are only interested in real-world content. Like Chovanec, Fuller said that flight simulation was one of the primary hooks that drew him into aviation. He was exposed to simulation software at a young age, inspiring and motivating him to begin flight training at age 13.

The use of interactive tools to reach students in increasingly younger age groups was an area of focus of the K-12 aeronautics track at Migration. The Aerospace Center for Excellence led sessions on expanding aeronautics programs at lower grade levels and engaging STEM students in K-5 to provide educators and administrators with data and a blueprint to support introducing aviation to students in elementary schools.

Beyond expanding the potential pool of pilots, the conference focused on identifying and collaborating on solving the issues preventing learners from completing their flight training. In his opening remarks, Harnagel highlighted the top challenges identified by flight training providers in the State of Flight Training Report, including the cost of aircraft insurance, pilot examiner issues, aircraft maintenance, access to training aircraft, and finding and hiring CFIs.

Presentations led by Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association COO Elizabeth Tennyson, Vertical Aviation International President and CEO James Viola, General Aviation Manufacturers Association VP of Operations Jens Hennig, Federal Aviation Administration Training and Certification Group Manager Everette Rochon, Aviation Adventures Founder and Owner Bob Hepp, and designated pilot examiner Roger Sharp addressed both top-down and bottom-up solutions to those problems.

Retired NASA Chief Astronaut and aerospace executive Charlie Precourt expanded on the issue of finding and hiring CFIs, focusing not just on filling the pipeline but instilling professional habits in flight instructors. He characterized the flight instructors he has encountered over his illustrious career across military, commercial, and general aviation – from the one who wants to punch a ticket to the airlines to the one who won't stop talking when

a learner is trying to concentrate – and encouraged attendees to create an exceptional culture of professionalism that rubs off on learners.

Wednesday evening, the conference celebrated flight schools and instructors that established such a culture. Live on the main stage, AOPA recognized the top flight schools and instructors identified in its annual Flight Training Experience Survey and announced the highest-scoring school and instructor nationwide. Margaret Watt of Hollister, California, took home the top prize for flight instructors, and Mike Smith Aviation of Napa, California, the top prize for flight schools.

Redbird closed Migration 2024 by announcing the dates and location for next year's conference, slated for March 4-5, 2025, at Wings Over the Rockies Exploration of Flight and Colorado Skies Academy. To register for updates on Migration 2025, please visit <https://migration.redbirdflight.com>.

###

About Redbird Flight

Redbird Flight was established in 2006 to make aviation more accessible through modern technology and careful engineering. Since its inception, the company has delivered innovative, reliable, and high-quality training devices, applications, and content to flight schools, colleges, universities, K-12 schools, and individual pilots worldwide. With more than 3,000 devices in service globally, Redbird has quickly become the fastest growing and most innovative provider of flight training technology in the industry. For more information, please visit www.redbirdflight.com.