

PRESS CONTACT

Charlie Gregoire
VP Sales, Marketing and Services
cgregoire@redbirdflight.com
512-301-0718

“ONE WEEK READY TO SOLO” TAKES OFF AT SUN ‘N FUN

Three student pilots go from zero time to ready to solo in one week.

Lakeland, FL (April 20, 2015) – Three aviation rookies, one week, three solo flights—that’s the idea behind “One Week Ready to Solo”, a joint project designed to demonstrate that learning to fly is more achievable than most people think.

The project, which is a collaborative effort of Redbird Flight Simulations, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), Jeppesen, Sporty’s, Garmin, LightSpeed, and Sun ‘n Fun, will take three individuals with no aviation experience, put them through six days of intensive training, and have them ready to conduct a supervised solo flight at the end of one week.

“Millions share the dream of learning to fly, but most never make it to a flight school—in large part because they believe it’s too hard, too time consuming, or too expensive,” said Charlie Gregoire, vice president of Sales and Marketing at Redbird Flight Simulations. “We want to show people that learning to fly is within their reach—and it’s much more attainable than most imagine.”

The three student pilots, who do not know one another and have no prior aviation training, will each experience nine flights in a RedHawk Cessna 172, nine training sessions in a Redbird simulator, two flights with a renowned instructor, and five ground school sessions.

As part of the program, the students will receive the majority of their training from flight instructors selected from AOPA Flight Training Excellence recognized schools. The instructors include Dan Farrell from Cirrus Aviation in Sarasota, Fla., Doris Gatewood from Aviation Adventures in Warrenton, Vir., and Jeff Wolf from Paragon Flight in Fort Myers, Fla.

They will also have the opportunity to learn from renowned instructors, including Michael Goulian of Goulian Aerosports and a Red Bull air racer; Dave Monroe, a Team Aerostars performer; Sean Tucker, a Team Oracle performer; Patty Wagstaff, an aerobatic champion; Pia Bergqvist of Flying magazine; Dave Hirschman of AOPA Pilot magazine; Roger Sharp of Redbird; Craig Thighe of Jeppesen; and John and Martha King of King Schools.

The solo candidates are Nik Oekerman, a former Navy corpsman and now an aspiring actor; Chris Graves, a motorcycle designer; and Sherry Rosenkranz, a global advertising manager for General Motors.

Redbird Flight Simulations is providing the aircraft, simulators, curricula, fuel, and other logistical support for the week. Video crews from AOPA will tape the entire experience, including briefings, simulator and flight sessions, and the supervised solo at the end of the week. The video will be edited into “webisodes” that will be show how, in one week, a person can go from zero aviation experience to solo flight.

Other partners will provide promotion, media coverage and other resources and support before, during, and after the Sun ‘n Fun International Fly-In and Expo held in Lakeland, Fla from April 21-16, 2015.

“We’re excited to see this project take off,” said Gregoire. “What better way to show people what’s possible than to take aviation newcomers and turn them into pilots. We hope this will inspire others who dream of flying to make their dreams a reality.”

Flight training begins on April 18, 2015. Follow the progress of the student pilots www.aopa.org/OWRTS.

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Additional media resources can be found at www.aopa.org/News-and-Video/One-Week-Ready-to-Solo/Media-Resources

About Redbird Flight Simulations, Inc.

Redbird Flight Simulations of Austin, TX was established in 2006 with the specific purpose of making aviation more accessible by using modern technology and careful engineering. Since its inception, Redbird has delivered innovative, reliable, and high-quality training devices to flight schools, colleges, universities and individual pilots around the world. With more than 1,200 devices in service worldwide, Redbird has quickly become the fastest growing and most innovative simulator provider in the industry. For more information, please visit www.redbirdflight.com.

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