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FEATURED

Fly Iowa impressed with Ottumwa enthusiasm

Winona Whitaker 22 hrs ago



Skip Stewart and Kyle Franklin will perform The Immortals with Neal Darnell and his jet truck at Ottumwa's Fly Iowa later this month.

Photo by Larry Ralston



OTTUMWA — “I want to emphasize one point about Fly Iowa,” says Chuck McDonald, an advisor for Iowa Aviation Promotion Group. “It’s a community event that happens to take place at the airport.”

Each year IAPG selects a different Iowa city to host the event. “We look for a broad base of economically viable community that has good schools, good facilities, strong government leadership, [and] has enthusiasm for the airport, which your community has tremendous enthusiasm for.”

A nonprofit organization dedicated to growing aviation, IAPG has sponsored Fly Iowa for 25 years. Ottumwa will host the 25th anniversary event Aug. 26 and 27.

“Ottumwa has an amazing airport,” McDonald said. “You’re the right-sized community that does these events very well. [IAPG] had a very successful event in Mason City in 2015,” said McDonald, and Ottumwa is about the same size and has a nice airport facility.

Ottumwa hosted Fly Iowa in the early 1990s, McDonald said. Since then, “It’s gotten bigger.”

Fly Iowa is one of many events put on by IAPG. "We do things that advance aviation activity, interest in aviation," said McDonald. IAPG youth events include the Aviation Youth Rally last weekend in collaboration with the Indian Hills Community College aviation program and Ottumwa Regional Airport.

Ottumwa's new airport manager has had 30 days to learn the ropes at the airport in addition to preparing for Fly Iowa. "It's going to be a huge event for us to have out here," said Chris Cobler, and it's an honor for Ottumwa to host it."

Cobler said Ottumwa's airport is very busy with corporate jets flying in and out on a regular basis, personal aircraft stored at the airport and flown regularly and IHCC's aviation program which utilizes the facility daily.

The main runway will be open during Fly Iowa, Cobler said. "There will be people flying in for Fly Iowa."

During show hours, however, the airport will be closed to air traffic. "We put out a notam," said Cobler. "We call the FAA, and we give them a heads up. [Pilots] check these before they go on a flight."

Notams are issued for any circumstance that might close a runway or affect airport traffic such as construction, weather conditions, maintenance and airshows.

Fly Iowa's free airshows are scheduled for 1-3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 26 and 27 at Ottumwa airport and will include stunt fliers Skip Stewart and his biplane, Prometheus and Kyle Franklin and his biplane, Dracula performing The Immortals with Neal Darnell and his Flash Jet Truck.

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