

Mayor, UW Oshkosh welcome EAA visitors

by **David Williams - Monday, July 28, 2008**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1048/mayor-uw-oshkosh-welcome-eaa-visitors/>

An estimated 750,000 aviation enthusiasts will flock to Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture Oshkosh. Many of them also will make a layover at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

During the course of the world's largest general aviation gathering, July 28 to Aug. 3, UW Oshkosh will serve as the venue for an annual community breakfast, provide lodgings for guests and host off-site conferences.

Mayor's Breakfast

For the first time since its inception 19 years ago, the Mayor's Breakfast, which welcomes EAA visitors to the community, will be held at the University. In the past, the massive meal was served at the Oshkosh Convention Center or Commerce Street.

"The Convention Center is under construction, and we wanted to have the breakfast close to the downtown," said Oshkosh Mayor Frank Tower.

The University had not only a facility big enough to contain the expected 1,500 to 1,700 guests, but also ample parking — not to mention space for the giant-sized frying pans.

Eggs, sausage, doughnut holes, milk, coffee, juice and Culver's custard will be served from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 1, at Kolf Sports Center, 785 High Ave. The program will take place from 8 to 8:30 a.m.

Tickets cost \$5 and are available at Gruenhagen Conference Center, Festival Foods, EAA AirVenture Museum, Camera Casino, the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce.

"The breakfast is an opportunity to interact with individuals visiting us from out of town. It gives a chance to showcase Oshkosh," Tower said.

"What better way to meet folks than over a meal?"

Lodgings and learning

To say that the last week in July is the busiest time of the year for Gruenhagen Conference Center would be an understatement.

On any other given week, Gruenhagen manages 500 lodging rooms. For EAA, all of the UW Oshkosh's residence halls also open up to the guests for a combined total of 2,200 rooms.

Not that they will stay vacant for long.

“On certain nights, we get close to capacity,” said Marc Nysten, Gruenhagen and River Center director. He estimates the University will have 3,400 reservations for a total of 6,500 guests on average.

“Many people are returning year after year. We have a group of 160 from Brazil. They’ve been coming for probably more than 25 years,” he said.

Some repeat visitors have become interested in getting updates about University, which is why an ice cream social was planned last year, giving guests the chance to interact with staff and faculty.

UW Oshkosh Showcase Event returns 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, July 31, in Gruenhagen’s Terrace Room. There will be drawings for door prizes from University Books & More.

“For us, it’s like a family reunion,” Nysten said. “We really have the opportunity to showcase the campus as an integral part of the community.”

Visitors also have the opportunity to dine at Blackhawk Commons and participate in group sessions held in conference rooms at Gruenhagen. Some of the groups meeting on campus include EAA Royal Canadian Air Cadets, EAA Spread Your Wings and Women SOAR, which offers a unique program for more than 100 high school girls to interact with professional women who work in a variety of aviation and aerospace fields.

Working in coordination with UW System’s Women and Science program, the SOAR event also will feature science and technology faculty, who will talk about science careers as well as which majors can lead to those career paths.

“This is the first year that the girls will be staying on campus,” said Women and Science coordinator Susie Sandrin. “We are hosting planetarium shows so they will learn a little bit about space science.”

The Science Outreach program provides supplemental, hands-on science education programming for young scientists. For more information, visit www.uwosh.edu/programs/wis.

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