

UWO's AeroInnovate welcomes Governor Walker to AirVenture 2012

by Mandy Potts - Tuesday, July 24, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/20083/uwos-aeroinnovate-welcomes-governor-walker-to-airventure-2012/>

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker made a trip to Oshkosh July 24 to see “where great ideas take flight” first hand.

Governor Walker spent the early afternoon in the AeroInnovate Innovations Hangar at the Experimental Aircraft Association’s AirVenture 2012 exploring new aviation technology and meeting with groundbreaking entrepreneurs who share their ideas about bringing jobs to the state via their products and initiatives.

“We are a catalyst for bringing jobs to Wisconsin,” said Meredith Jaeger, AeroInnovate director and co-founder.

AeroInnovate is a nonprofit founded by the [University of Wisconsin Oshkosh’s Business Success Center](#) and the Wisconsin Entrepreneur’s Network. It brings together local, regional, national and international aviation innovators, offers educational forums and introduces entrepreneurs and companies to investors and industry leaders. Small and large ventures have an opportunity to meet potential partners and investors through the initiative’s work at EAA AirVenture, where Jaeger and her team have set up camp for the last four years.

On the second day of the week-long AirVenture event, which annual takes over Oshkosh during the last week of July, the focus quickly shifted from the daily air show, exhibitions and speakers to the Governor’s visit. Aviation entrepreneurs – the local, regional, state, national and international innovators with big ideas who come to Oshkosh to showcase their technology, products and talents – were genuinely excited for Walker's visit.

AeroInnovate's "Innovations Hangars" provided the stage.

“We are here to showcase a product which we plan to manufacture right here in Wisconsin,” said Steve Weinzierl, vice president of Engineered Propulsion Systems, a company based out of New Richmond. “We really value Scott Walker coming today because he seems to have an interest in small businesses and what we’re trying to do.”

Weinzierl, whose company has been working with AeroInnovate to make industry connections, said he’s happy to have a Wisconsin-based business and is even more pleased to finally meet the Governor.

Like Weinzierl, Rob Nelson, a Wisconsin-native now working for California-based Makani Power, was glad to have a few minutes of Walker’s time.

“The Governor coming by is a nice vote of confidence for us,” Nelson said.

Makani Power is at AirVenture and partnering with AeroInnovate this year to find out if there is a feasible way to bring the manufacturing arm of their business to the state. Nelson has been working with AeroInnovate over the past year to figure out how to showcase their technology, Nelson said.

“We’re on the verge of scaling up to be more commercial so now is the time to talk about it,” Nelson said. “We are here to make more connections.”

Jaeger, too, was thrilled with Walker's visit and the opportunity to showcase all that AeroInnovate is doing to grow business and facilitate connections.

“We’re excited the Governor was here today because it’s important he recognized that we are a catalyst for these connections and bringing new innovations to Wisconsin,” she said. “We are really giving these businesses a voice to tell others what they are working on.”

AeroInnovate's AirVenture hangars serve as a showcase for exhibits for companies pushing the envelope of experiential aviation.

“They need our help to build their businesses. We help them understand all the pieces to take an idea and make a business out of it,” Jaeger said. “We can really build an aviation ecosystem in the state of Wisconsin so people will set up shop here and create jobs.”

AeroInnovate activities at AirVenture continue throughout the week. For more information, visit aeroinnovate.org.

Read more:

- [AeroInnovate set to host spotlight hangars at AirVenture](#)