
Aviation Education Foundation of Colorado, Inc.

In late 2001, a small group of aviation enthusiasts in Falcon, CO. recognized that targeted charitable educational activities could help resolve some of the educational budget/curriculum constraints at the community level, work force shortages at the aviation industry level, and late adoption of aircraft construction products and methods at the local level.

In March 2002, they formed The Aviation Education Foundation of Colorado, Inc. (AEFCO) for charitable and educational purposes. Specifically, to provide training and/or scholarships for youth with a desire to enter the aviation industry, to provide a knowledge base that keeps pace with aviation's continual and rapid advancement for general aviation enthusiasts, students, general aviation pilots, aircraft designers and builders; and to educate the general public on the importance of aviation contributions to the community.

Projects to date have proven to be excellent models for fundraising and program delivery. Lessons learned have provided the AEFCO Board with a high degree of confidence that the 2007 timeline is attainable.

Past projects include sponsoring a pilot from the Deaf Pilots Association to share aviation opportunities with deaf and hearing-impaired children during Deaf Awareness Week in September 2004, and placing on loan aviation materials received as donations in November 2004.

When fully operational, AEFCO will provide charitable and educational opportunities for young people and adults in the form of flight training programs, scholarships for aviation related education or training, sponsored classes, seminars or workshops on aircraft design, fabrication, operation, restoration, maintenance and repair, and an aviation resource library.

All of the foundation activities will be approved and managed by the AEFCO Board of Directors. The Board members, volunteer consultants, and instructors will carry out the actual activities. While volunteer consultants and instructors may be reasonably compensated for goods and services, AEFCO Board members will not be compensated.

The qualifications of the volunteer Board of Directors align with the goals of the foundations. The aggregate qualifications of the AEFCO Board include educational service at the middle and high school levels, distinguished military backgrounds, business ownership, community service, aircraft designer/builder/consultant, and flight instructor. While not a required qualification for AEFCO Board of Directors, all of the current Directors hold a minimum of Private Pilot certification.

Delivery of AEFCO programs will be primarily in the Colorado Springs, Falcon, and surrounding areas. While a dedicated facility is an identified goal for the AEFCO Board members, program delivery has been identified as the major component for providing immediate common good to the community. Therefore, the AEFCO Board will seek contributions in the form of loaned facilities and hangars to conduct classes, workshops, and seminars, as well as to store donated aircraft and aircraft projects.

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Nationally there is a shortage of pilots, mechanics, and engineers for military commercial and business aviation. Locally school programs are being drastically cut or removed due to funding constraints. Impacts to our community by these economic forces led AEFECO to initiate cooperative ventures with schools in Colorado Springs, Falcon, Peyton, and surrounding areas, to provide programs that inspire youths to pursue interests in aviation.

AEFECO will sponsor educational programs that promote awareness of aviation technology and operations to our youth. These programs will include reading, projects, research, problem solving, and writing essays over an agreed upon duration.

AEFECO will support and encourage teachers who seek to promote aviation education in our local schools by making awards available for additional classroom aviation related materials.

“Aviation Flight Experience” Program

AEFECO will offer “Aviation Flight Experience”, an Introductory Flight-training outreach program for students 15-19¹ years of age. Candidates who demonstrate a financial need will receive first consideration for acceptance. The number of accepted “Aviation Flight Experience” applicants is restricted to budget limitations. It is the intent of AEFECO to build a self-sustaining endowment to support a class size of 20-30 students.

Acceptance into this Introductory Flight training course and ongoing compliance with the criteria may eventually lead to the receipt of a Private Pilot license prior to graduation from high school. However, it is not the intention of this program to turn every student into a pilot but rather to expose them to flying, and the discipline and commitment required to achieve that goal.

There are many careers in the aviation industry in which the skill and knowledge gained as a pilot is a special asset, even though daily flying is not a part of the job. These careers include air traffic control, aeronautical science, electronics, and aviation safety; air carrier operations, airport, and general aviation operations management; flight navigation, communications, and maintenance; engineering, law, medicine, finance, and insurance.

Aircraft Maintenance and Repair

General aviation aircraft are becoming increasingly sophisticated, boosting the demand for qualified mechanics. Many of the students who have the ability and aptitude to work on planes are choosing to go to college, work in computer-related fields, or go into other repair and maintenance occupations. If the trend continues, the supply of trained aviation mechanics will not be able to keep up with air transportation industry needs..

AEFECO hopes to turn the trend around by providing scholarships in aviation maintenance and repair, with the ultimate goal of future job placement for these youths within the community. Using donated aircraft projects, engines, materials, and volunteer consultants, AEFECO will offer hands-on aircraft

¹ The lower age, originally 14, was raised to 15 in late 2008.

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maintenance and repair to students for career opportunities and adults who may be maintaining their own homebuilt aircraft. The number of training offerings will be limited by the available facilities and projects.

These offerings will be posted on the CDOT Division of Aeronautics event calendar and are open to the public. In some cases, a reasonable nominal charge for goods and services will be required.

Aviation Repository

AEFCO will maintain and manage a repository of books, magazines, videos, DVD's, photos, aircraft plans and other artifacts available to the general public for building aviation awareness within the community. Depending on the status or use of the materials, a category of "reference" or "loan" will be assigned. To meet the rapidly advancing innovations in general aviation, from time to time, AEFCO will purchase materials and post availability on websites as needed.

AEFCO programs will be funded by donations and the dedicated efforts of our directors, volunteer consultants and instructors.