

# AirVenture Cup Provides Purpose and Fun on Trip to Oshkosh

BY TI WINDISCH

**FOR THE 20TH** consecutive year, AirVenture attendees who are feeling fast and furious can partake in the AirVenture Cup cross-country air race, which began Sunday, July 23 at 9 a.m.

Eric Whyte, who founded the cup and set up the first race back in 1998, said this event answers the ever-important "third question" every homebuilder has.

"The first thing every homebuilder wants to do is fly their airplane," he said. "The second thing, from the day they build their airplane, they want to bring it to Oshkosh. After that, then what? The AirVenture Cup is the answer to that third question."

Eric said one of the best parts about the AVC is that it forces pilots to really learn their airplane, which gives them information that can benefit them during future flights.

"Racers look at themselves, how well did they do their flight planning, how closely did they look at weather, how did they adjust for the wind, how well did they set their engine setting," he said. "You have to really know your engine. It encourages participants to go out and become more proficient pilots, and as a result have more fun with their airplanes."

The field of racers this year is a varied group of around 100 aviation enthusiasts, with a group of roughly 40 participants who have 10 races under their belt, some brand-new participants, and others with just about every possible experience level in between. Accomplished pilots and former astronauts are just as welcome as new sport pilots in the AirVenture Cup.

AirVenture Cup festivities began before the race. Racers had a media day and informal meet-and-greet on Friday, and then an open house and Young Eagles day on Saturday when young people came out to see the racers and their airplanes before the race started.

More than 250 youths have flown with racers in



AirVenture Cup racers hosted an open house and Young Eagles day on Saturday.

a single day before the AirVenture Cup, but Eric said Young Eagles flights are just one form of community outreach the event provides.

"We hold an open house where people can come see the airplanes, meet the pilots, learn about them, and come out to the airport," he said. "It's really important for general aviation. Some folks don't even know there's an airport in their town."

This year's race started in Mount Vernon, Illinois, and goes to Wausau, Wisconsin. The finish line used to be in Oshkosh, but due to increased air traffic that correlates with the increasing popularity of AirVenture, it became too hectic to facilitate

an air race in addition to other attendee arrivals. Most racers make the hop, skip, and a jump from Wausau to Oshkosh together after the race is complete so that they can enjoy aviation's family reunion for the next week.

When asked to describe the AirVenture Cup to someone who had never flown it before, Eric said the most important part is having fun along the way, not gunning for first place.

"The Reader's Digest version of the cup is it's the most fun you can have on your way to Oshkosh," he said. "It's a race, but it's an experience. It's three days of camaraderie, flying, and fun." **AVT**

## AirVenture Text Alerts Keep Oshkosh Attendees Informed

**AIRVENTURE TEXT ALERTS** are a great way for those in Oshkosh to stay informed about what's going on. Any attendees with a United States-based telephone number can text OSHALERT to 69050 to sign up for important weather alerts, and OSHFUN to 69050 to sign up for notable features and attractions

alerts. A maximum of eight texts per day about features and attractions will be sent out.

Text message alerts will begin Friday, July 21, and will not continue past Sunday, July 30. Message and data rates may apply. **AVT**

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