

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

FRIESEN EARNS STAFFORD MUSEUM VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Weatherford resident Jim Friesen was presented the first Stafford Air & Space Museum Volunteer of the Year award last Saturday by Lt. General (Ret.) Thomas P. Stafford at the museum's Volunteer Appreciation Brunch.

This honor will be awarded each year to an outstanding Stafford Air & Space Museum volunteer, as determined by the museum management and General Stafford.

According to museum Co-Director Chuck Dougherty, "It is impossible to explain the amount of time Jim has donated to the museum because the projects he has been involved with are too numerous to list. His expertise in so many areas has been invaluable. Jim has a unique mix of academic credentials, teaching experience, a successful corporate track record, hands-on mechanical engineering knowledge, and practical western Oklahoma common sense. Plus, lucky for us, I don't think Jim knows how to say no. In fact, Jim's help here has been so extraordinary that General Stafford, museum Co-Director Lynne Thurman, Mayor Mike Brown and I decided that going forward, the award will be called the Jim Friesen Volunteer of the Year Award."

General Stafford stated that, "We certainly wouldn't be where we are today at the museum without Jim's help. He has done work that has been recognized as beyond Smithsonian quality."

Stafford Air & Space Museum Co-Director Lynne Thurman said that Jim is the driving force behind many of the exhibit projects which have made the museum a world-class institution. "He sees a need, forms a plan, and then solves the problem through great organizational talent, fantastic people skills, and an amazing work ethic. Jim has a way of quietly getting more work done in one day than most could accomplish in a week. He is one of the most brilliant, yet most humble people I have ever met. We are so fortunate that Jim not only has an interest in our mission for the museum, but that he also works for free. Chuck and I keep telling him that we will soon be doubling his salary!"

Friesen also serves as the Chairman of the Board for the Stafford Air & Space Museum, and has donated his time to the museum for over two years.

Friesen is a retired 3M/Imation process engineer and former part-time Southwestern Oklahoma State University instructor. He has a master's degree in agricultural engineering from Oklahoma State University and a doctorate from Mississippi State University. Friesen is a member of the Lions Club, and an active farmer-rancher.

The Stafford Air & Space Museum is named in honor of Lt. General Thomas P. Stafford, USAF (Ret.), who was born and raised in Weatherford, Oklahoma and graduated with honors from the United States Naval Academy. He piloted Gemini VI, and commanded Gemini IX, commanded Apollo 10, and the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project Mission. Stafford was the eighth recipient of the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. Stafford later served as Deputy Chief of Staff, USAF, for Research, Development, and Acquisitions. The Stafford Air & Space Museum boasts one of the few Titan II rockets displayed indoors. Also on display is the flight space suit General Stafford wore on Apollo 10, a mission that included the first flight of the lunar module near the moon. There are displays featuring numerous space-flown artifacts as well as several full-size aircraft, including a Russian MiG21R and a USAF F-16 Fighting Falcon. Full-size replicas on display include the Wright Flyer, 1911 Curtiss Pusher, *Spirit of St. Louis*, Apollo Command Module, and Gemini spacecraft.

For more information visit www.staffordmuseum.com or call 580-772-5871.

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