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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IOWA AVIATION VETERANS HONORED FOR LIFELONG DEDICATION

Jim and Michael Connell Receive Distinguished Award from Iowa Aviation Museum

GREENFIELD, IOWA (September 2, 2014) – As a way to celebrate the close of its 25th year in existence, the Iowa Aviation Museum in Greenfield recently hosted its annual “Wings” fly-in breakfast with a special ceremony. This ceremony honored the Fixed Base Operators (FBOs), pilots, and mechanics in Iowa whose hard work and long hours continued to mold general aviation in Iowa into what aviators enjoy today. Twenty-seven names were chosen to represent the “2nd Generation,” their names are on a commemorative plaque in the Iowa Aviation Museum.

“The award honors Iowa airport operators, pilots, mechanics, and salesmen who’ve had to change their business practice, build larger hangars, invest in more equipment,” said Richard Westbrook, Vice President/Treasurer of Iowa Aviation Museum. “And over time, that equipment becomes obsolete and replaced by newer, better equipment so that the public will fly in safer airplanes with better trained and capable pilots. That’s the nature of this award. Honoring those commitments.”

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Honoring Iowa's "2nd Generation" is the backbone of the new focus of the Iowa Aviation Museum in Greenfield. As Iowa's only aviation museum, the museum is working toward storing and telling the history of Iowa's rich aviation heritage. Beginning with the Wright brothers and continuing through space exploration, the museum is recording for future generations the efforts of the men and women of all eras who've made the contributions.

Of those recognized in Greenfield as part of the "2nd Generation" inductees are a father-son duo hailing from Northeast Iowa and from an esteemed Iowa-based aviation family, James and Michael Connell.

James started his flying business at the Independence airport in 1968 and like many small airport operators provided all services; flight instruction, aircraft maintenance, hangars and fueling. Even in semi-retirement, Jim continues his passion and works at the airport doing fabrication and restoration.

"It's an honor and privilege to be among these award recipients," said James Connell, longtime retired FBO/airport manager of Independence Airport. "To receive an award for getting up and doing what I love every day, that's amazing. But, we do it every day because it's just what we do. We fly. Or we make it safer to fly for tomorrow's pilots."

Like his two brothers, Michael caught the aviation bug from his dad, James. Michael not only runs the Decorah Airport but emulates his father by wearing all the hats; focusing on aircraft maintenance (particularly fabric covered tail-draggers) and is type rated in the Jet Commander and DC-3.

"Aviation is truly a vocation. There hasn't been one day of my life not immersed in general aviation," said Michael Connell, President of Connell Flying Service and FBO of Decorah Airport. "But, it's not only about the flying machines – but the great people that make this industry worth dedicating your life to."

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"It is due only to your efforts and those whom you represent that we enjoy general aviation in Iowa as we know it today," said Westbrook.

Jim Connell and Michael Connell are also two members of the Executive Advisory Board of the newly-launched Connell Aviation Group, a 100% focused aviation and aerospace communications firm.

"The Connell Family has a rich history of aviation excellence," said Alyssa Connell, CEO of Connell Aviation Group. "For two of our executive members to receive this distinction solidifies what we already knew – the aviation industry is better off for the talents of Jim and Mike Connell."

About the Iowa Aviation Museum

The Iowa Aviation Museum, located in Greenfield, Iowa, became operational in 1988 by order of proclamation from Governor Branstad. The original mission of the museum was "to preserve, restore and display antique aircraft of the 'golden era of aviation' and related memorabilia all for the education and pleasure of the public, and to honor Iowa aviators of the past, present and future." Now, the museum is working toward storing and telling the history of Iowa's rich aviation heritage. Please visit www.FlyingMuseum.com for more information.

About Connell Aviation Group

Connell Aviation Group was formed to answer a need in the aviation and aerospace industry – the ability for aviation professionals to have access to affordable, quality marketing, communications and public relations by specialists dedicated to their industry. Connell Aviation Group is 100% focused on aviation and aerospace. For more information, please visit www.ConnellAviationGroup.com.

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