

AIAA Section Awards Presentation

September 1, 2026

Agenda

- **5:00-5:05PM ET: Welcome & Kickoff** by Jim Guglielmo, Membership Engagement Division Chief; and Clay Mowry, AIAA CEO
- **5:05-5:10PM ET: About AIAA Section Awards**
- **5:10-5:30PM ET: Awards Presentation**
 - STEM K-12 Award
 - Section-Student Branch Partnership Award
 - Young Professional Activity Award
 - Membership Award
 - Communications Award
 - Public Policy Award
 - Outstanding Activity Award
- **5:30-5:55PM: Outstanding Section Award Winner Showcase**
- **5:55-6:00PM: Closing Remarks**

Welcome Remarks

Clay Mowry, AIAA CEO

What are the AIAA Section Awards?

Section Awards are a way for your section to earn funding and recognize sections' efforts at a local level.

Award period: June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026

Categories: Communications, Membership, Young Professionals, Public Policy, Section-Student Branch Partnership, STEM K-12, Outstanding Section, and Outstanding Activity (just bragging rights).

Awards are given first, second, and third place (with ties!) and divided by five section size categories: Very Small, Small, Medium, Large & Very Large.

STEM K-12 Award

Presented to sections that have developed and implemented an outstanding STEM K-12 outreach program that provides quality education resources for K-12 teachers in the STEM subject areas

Presented By Oleg Yakimenko, Region VI Director

Third Place – STEM K-12 Award

Very Small: Delaware

Small: Northern New Jersey

Medium: Indiana

Large: Cape Canaveral

Very Large: National Capital



Second Place – STEM K-12 Award

Very Small: Wisconsin

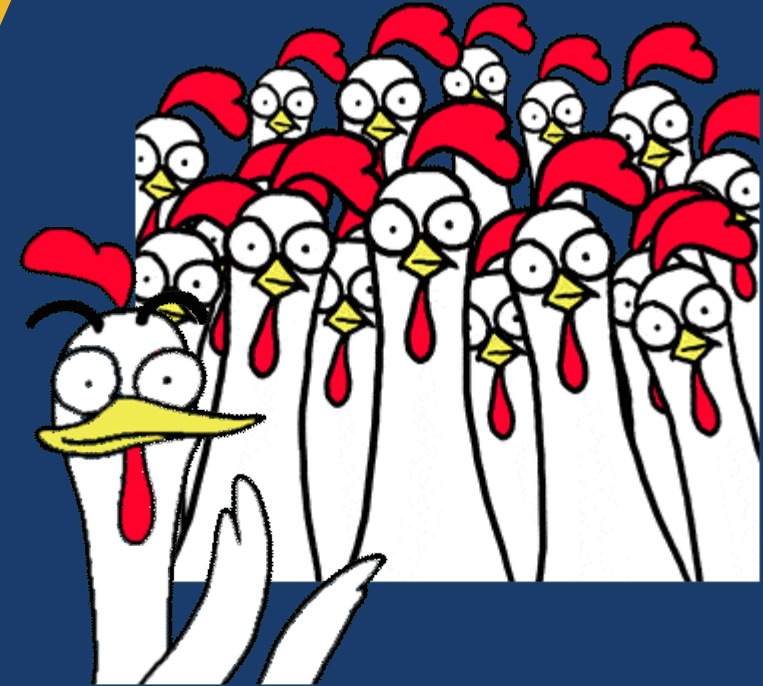
Small: Northwest Florida

Medium: Illinois

Large: Orange County

Very Large (tie): Hampton Roads

Very Large (tie): New England



First Place – STEM K-12 Award Very Small – Southern New Jersey, Lyndsay Digneo

Best Practices

- Heavy collaboration with local STEM outreach groups
 - Approximately 20 events held
- Recruit participation from section members for STEM outreach events
- Wide Variety of STEM events
 - Competitions, career panels, classroom visits, virtual presentations, mentoring, coaching, etc.
- Many schools have standing (annual) invites for various event



First Place – STEM K-12 Award Small – Palm Beach, Shawna Christenson

- ~32 STEM events and activities; collaborating with National Space Society and SmallSat Education Conf.
- Created Goddard Centennial student contest with SmallSat Education Conference (SSEC)
- Coordinated trip for 48 Pleasant City Community Center students to KSC
- Numerous school presentations and prepped students to speak at city councils and confs.
- Numerous visits to area high schools; prepared students to present at SSEC, SciTech, SEEC, AFF Annual Conf., FLAG



First Place – STEM K-12 Award

Medium – Antelope Valley, Rene Marchiano & Steve Sterk



Highlights

- 1.) Conducted 7th & 8th Essay Contest to over 30 A.V. middle schools, received 125 Essay's back, the Committee pick 3 Winners !
- 2.) Supported "Career Day" for over 7,000 Antelope Valley High School Students on March 13th, 2026.
 - Passed out AIAA Junior Membership Applications.
- 3.) Supported 3 Scouts Troops through the Air Force Flight Test Museum using special made eVTOL STEM Boards to conduct air flow flight research.



First Place - STEM K-12 Award Large - St. Louis, Jackie Blumer

St. Louis K-12 STEM Outreach

- **High-Impact Public Outreach:** Engaging broad communities and large audiences through strategic partnerships and interactive public events.
- **Hands-On Experiential Learning:** Delivering immersive, practical STEM workshops that teach core principles through real-world applications.
- **Authentic Mission & Space Simulations:** Providing students with unique, realistic astronaut simulation experiences and specialized curriculum.
- **Educator & Regional Collaboration:** Partnering closely with local school networks and teachers to expand educational reach and resource sharing.
- **Cutting-Edge Industry Partnerships:** Teaming up with industry leaders and specialized organizations to bring advanced technologies into the classroom.



First Place- STEM K-12 Award Very Large – Los Angeles, Arpie Ovespyan & Kenneth Lui

CAMS Career Day

- This type of outreach has high potential to lead to collegiate to memberships
- Create partnerships with school districts
- Prioritize hands on engagement, such as STEM activities



Section-Student Branch Partnership Award

Recognizes the most effective and innovative collaboration between the professional section members and student branch members

Presented By Jeff Marchetta, Student Branch Committee Chair

Third Place- Section-Student Branch Partnership Award

Very Small (Tie): Southern New Jersey

Very Small (Tie): Wisconsin

Small: Sydney

Medium: Indiana

Large: Cape Canaveral

Very Large: Dayton-Cincinnati



Second Place- Section-Student Branch Partnership Award

Very Small: Melbourne

Small: Oklahoma

Medium (tie): Tucson

Medium (tie): Southwest Texas

Large: Atlanta

Very Large: Los Angeles



First Place - Section-Student Branch Partnership Award Very Small – Adelaide, Zehao Liu

Adelaide University Student Branch and the Adelaide Section

We work together to ensure outreach success and member connection

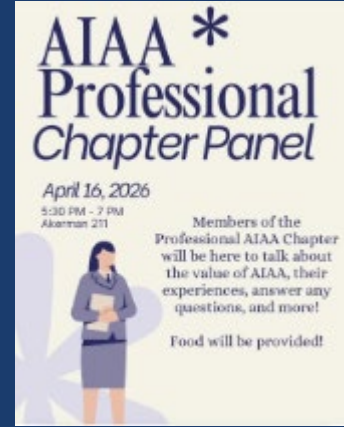
- Science Alive! is a large science fair, open to the general public, aimed at students from ~8-18 years
- AIAA Adelaide has sponsored a table for the past several years, and invited industry, the Student Branch, and other non-AIAA student clubs to help staff the table
- This leads to excellent connections between unii students and industry
- And shows school students that there are pathways through study and into industry available locally



First Place – Section-Student Branch Partnership Award Small – Twin Cities, Robert Halverson

2026 Highlights and Successes:

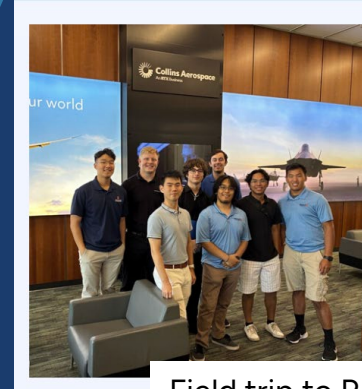
- Continued to leverage strong partnership with University of MN AIAA Student Branch
 - Annual 'introduction' of the new branch chair from the outgoing branch chair
 - Held 4 on-campus or virtual events with professional members supporting the student branch (resume reviews, speed-networking, professional section membership panel)
- Continued to grow relationship and engagement with the new and active University of North Dakota AIAA Student Branch
 - Connected the Branch with representatives and AIAA members from industries in the Grand Forks, ND area – has led to ongoing support of local UND branch events
 - Promoted the Regional Paper Conference – resulted in participation by a handful of UND AIAA students (the only Twin Cities section participants at the conference)
- Supported the creation of the new South Dakota State AIAA Student Branch and the rejuvenation efforts of the North Dakota State AIAA Student Branch
 - Provided awareness of both the people and financial support available to the branches from the professional section
 - Connected the faculty advisors and student branch chairs and made introductions to one another
- Promoted virtual judging opportunities for the regional student conference and helped provide in-person judging support
- Continued to utilize and leverage our section Student Branch Liaison: Robert Halverson
 - Former student branch chair and graduate student – well engaged on campus and with the professional section and versed in the different AIAA student offerings, programming, and awards



First Place – Section-Student Branch Partnership Award

Medium – Illinois, Laura Villafañe Roca

- Close partnership between Section and student branch leads at UIUC, UIC , IIT, WRC.
- Support student branches visit to IL Rockford area companies
- Annual New Student's conference at UIUC jointly organized between section, students and University.
- Section incentivizes and supports student participation in AIAA Region III conference.
- Section and Student branches co-organize annual hybrid AIAA Distinguished speaker
- Close collaboration in Engineering Open House, technical and professional development seminars, and opportunities for networking and recruitment



Rockford Trip

We traveled to Rockford to explore aerospace industry opportunities and connect with professionals in the field. We met with representatives from Collins Aerospace and Woodward, gaining insight into their projects, career paths, and capturing the experience through team photos along the way.

Attendees include: Luke McNamara, Gerard Alpas, Ben McDonald, Obed Han, Jeehyung Yoo, Vien Castor, Michael Maniscalco, Henry Engel

Field trip to Rockford IL Companies



Region III Conference



Distinguished Speaker

First Place – Section-Student Branch Partnership Award Large – San Diego, Gary Fogel

One Day Foam Glider Build

AIAA San Diego Section has held a one-day foam glider build for the past 2 years. This event provides university students with a chance to meet professional members and gain some hands on build experience using remote controlled model gliders

- Small student teams (4-5 people) paired with one professional
- Students design and build an RC glider out of foam board
- Professional member (from a local RC glider club) pilots the plane
- Whole event takes 4-5 hours, usually on a Saturday

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- Have students sign up ahead of time so that the right number of professional volunteers is present
- Coordinate with students to avoid busy times (midterms, finals, DBF)
- Find sponsors to fund materials



First Place (Tie) – Section-Student Branch Partnership Award Very Large – New England,

Peter Dentch, Shreyas Hegde, Durgesh Chandel, Krystina Waters-van Rossum, Elizabeth Romero

Grants Programs & Financial Supports

- AIAA student branch activities & projects
- Students presenting at Aerospace conferences
- The university level engineering competitions and design & build projects (DBF)
- Collaborative events with schools – student leadership social, night with industry

Student projects

- Mentorship from professional engineer
- Funding for material purchases
- Gain hands-on experience for your future career

Student branch honors&awards ceremonies

- Each student branch leadership is recognized every year. 50% of the budget goes into this. Each council member attends the ceremony at atleast 1 school



AIAA
SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AEROSPACE

NIGHT WITH INDUSTRY

MIT BUILDING 33
WEDNESDAY - 06.00 PM - 18 FEB, 2026
[Registration Link](#)

Listen from industry experts during this three-part event consisting of a panel discussion, networking dinner and reception.
A great opportunity to learn, connect and grow.

PANELISTS

 DR OSA OSARETIN MIT Lincoln Lab	 DR GLADYS NGETICH Boston consulting group (BCG)	 PETER DENTCH Pratt&Whitney RTX
 ENDRI LESHA Collins Aerospace, RTX	 JENNY SEMETER Draper labs	

Session Moderator: Dr. Durgesh Chandel
AIAA New England Section

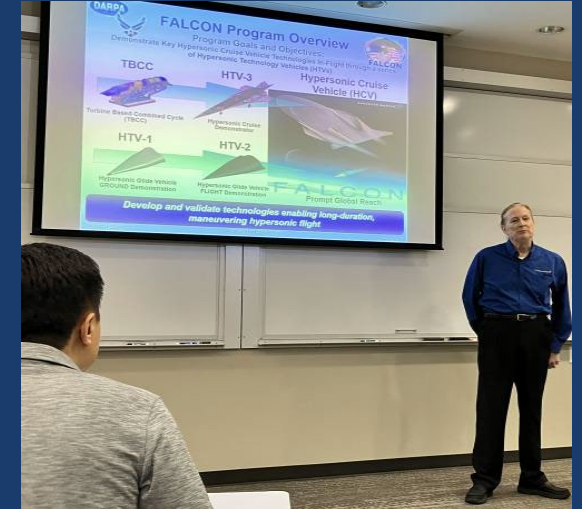
Event partners:

 Massachusetts Institute of Technology			
			



First Place (Tie) – Section-Student Branch Partnership Award Very Large – North Texas, Mi Vo, Lincoln Gammage & Ashlan Benson

- Most programs at Colleges with Student Branches
- Encourages student attendance/involvement
- Good AV systems/rooms
- Student chapters added pizza, drinks
- University catering fairly cheap & good (if order in time)
- Students best volunteers! Annual Moon Day STEM event
- 2nd North Texas “Taxy” Awards at UTA
- 2 x \$500 scholarships (1 HS & 1 Undergrad)
- Some awards named after UTA Professors who started Aerospace program
- Judging by NTX Officers & Advisory Board
- Most winners not announced until event itself
- Luft Org student intern App project continuing



Luft Org

Young Professional Activity Award

Presented for excellence in planning and executing events that encourage the participation of the Institute's young professional members, and provide opportunities for leadership at the section, regional, or national level.

Presented By Stephen Clark, YPG Director-Elect

Third Place – Young Professional Activity Award

Very Small: Delaware

Small: Oklahoma

Medium (Tie): Antelope Valley

Medium (Tie): Indiana

Large: Atlanta

Very Large: New England



Second Place – Young Professional Activity Award

Very Small: Melbourne

Small: Savannah

Medium: Southwest Texas

Large: Northern Ohio

Very Large: North Texas



First Place – Young Professional Activity Award Very Small – Adelaide, Daniel Kilonzo

Adelaide Section

Working to ensure connection through outreach beyond the student experience

- The Adelaide Section works with our local universities to ensure value in the student experience.
- After graduation, we work to bring young professionals together, either at dedicated events or by inviting them to more general meetings.
- We also use our networks to promote membership and the benefits it can bring.



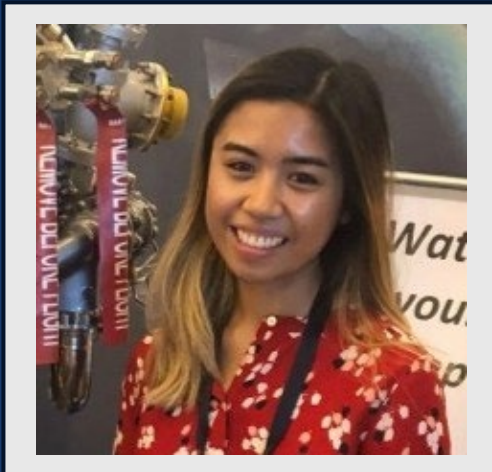
First Place – Young Professional Activity Award Small – Twin Cities, Geoffrey Nkansah-Baah

2026 Highlights and Successes:

- Re-engaged YPs through accessible networking
 - Hosted an AIAA Young Professional Happy Hour & Networking event on April 28, using a low-barrier format to reconnect YPs and re-engage members
 - Incorporated YP ideas into future social and networking programming, with plans for recurring events
- Built a pathway for YP leadership
 - Established and filled a dedicated Young Professional Officer position on the Section Council
 - Empowered the new YP Officer to lead event planning and shape section programming
 - Used YP engagement as a pathway toward broader section participation and leadership
- Connected Twin Cities YPs to the broader AIAA community
 - YP Officer engaged with the broader AIAA Young Professionals Group and its activities
 - Participated in broader AIAA YP initiatives, including prior service on the Lawrence Sperry Award evaluation committee
- Expanded professional networking opportunities
 - Participated in the Professional Society E-Week Mixer alongside a dozen local engineering and technology organizations
 - Provided YPs opportunities to build connections within and beyond AIAA



First Place – Young Professional Activity Award Medium – Greater Philadelphia, Karennia Buco



Karennia Buco
Young Professional Chair
AIAA Greater Philadelphia Section



Accomplishments:

- Lehigh Valley Student Chapter Visit
- Villanova Student Chapter Visit
- Drexel Student Chapter Engagement
- Monthly Networking Nights (e.g., resume clinic, TopGolf, social happy hours)
- Monthly Member Highlights

First Place – Young Professional Activity Award Large – Cape Canaveral, Jaxon Strank

Being the best YP Officer you can be!

Break down entry barriers

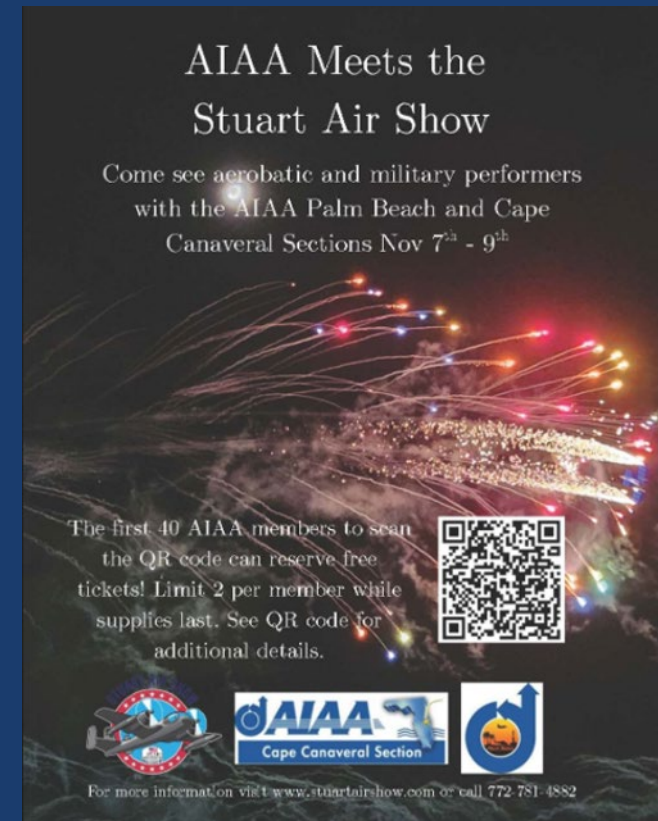
- Finding activities that have minimal barriers to entry (e.g. cost, distance, time) or find ways to break down barriers between people

Reducing cost, time, and distance for graduating seniors and YPs makes events hard to say no to!

- Having activities in members backyards is ideal!
Especially if those members normally get less spotlight

Advertise early and often

- The sooner you can nail down details, the sooner people can plan for your event after the advertisement → → →



First Place – Young Professional Activity Award

Very Large – Los Angeles, Luis Cuevas

Young Professionals Mixers

- Establish a consistent cadence at a time and place convenient to young professionals in the industry
- Encourage graduating students to attend by highlighting networking opportunities
- Explore different advertising channels to increase reach (Meetup, Eventbrite)



Membership Award

Presented to sections that have supported their membership by planning and implementing effective recruitment and retention campaigns

Presented By Ellen Gillespie, Region IV Director

Third Place- Membership Award

Very Small: Delaware

Small: Northwest Florida

Medium: Wichita

Large: Cape Canaveral

Very Large: New England



Second Place- Membership Award

Very Small: Wisconsin

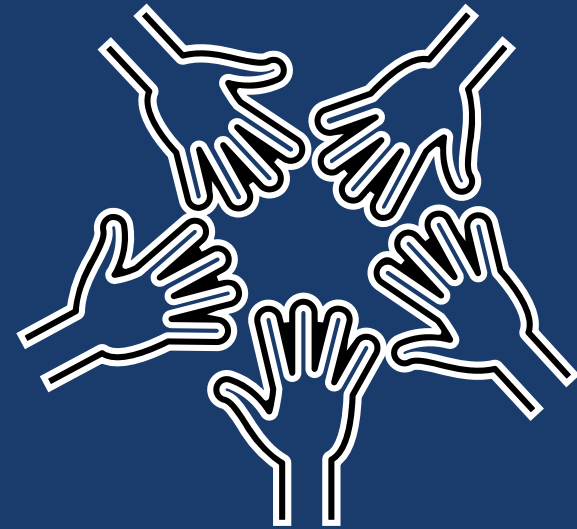
Small: Northern New Jersey

Medium: Indiana

Large (Tie): Northern Ohio

Large (Tie): San Diego

Very Large: North Texas



First Place- Membership Award Very Small- Southern New Jersey, Danielle Stephens



Best Practices

- Section-sponsored membership incentives
 - Discounts on events
 - Giveaways/food/snacks
- Membership Desk & Display at events
 - Printouts with membership info
 - Event websites link to AIAA membership page
 - Banners & Tablecloths at events
- Emails to expiring members
- 5-10 highlight on benefits of membership at events (networking/dinner/recruitment/etc.)
- Future planning – Fundraisers to subsidize membership costs



First Place – Membership Award Small – Twin Cities, Kristen Gerzina

2026 Highlights and Successes:

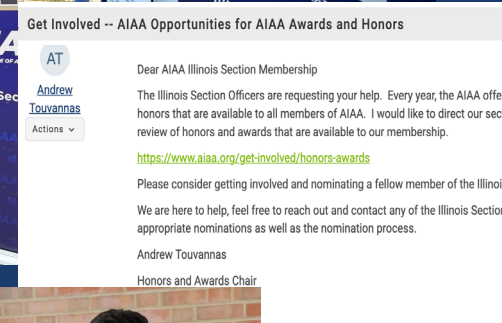
- Increased Engaged email communications and announcements with section membership
 - Including member recognition and 'kudos' and national AIAA information flow-down
- In-person Section Council meeting open to the general membership
 - Resulted in one perspective section member stepping into an open Young Professional council role
- Increased diversity of section activities – resulted in new and different section members getting engaged with and supporting section events
- Teamed with other local professional sections to offer joint membership, technical, and networking events
 - Including the second annual Professional Society E-week Mixer which AIAA helped plan, fund, and attend along with a dozen other local professional engineering and technology societies – bigger bang for the 'buck' and energy spent in planning
 - Table with some AIAA giveaways and member info
- Hosted an in-person panel discussion with the University of MN AIAA Student Branch on 'The Value of AIAA Professional Membership' featuring 4 professional members with different experiences on how AIAA has helped shape their professional career journeys
 - Professional section provided food and panelists
- Hosted an AIAA Membership Happy Hour and Networking event to re-engage and re-connect members
 - The first event in a planned series of happy hours – simple and easy to plan but effective
 - Incorporated an idea from the new section YP Officer – based on success from similar society events
- Bought a new custom Twin Cities Section AIAA Tablecloth from the AIAA Store for use at future events!
 - Utilized corporate employee volunteerism grant money to purchase tablecloth



First Place – Membership Award

Medium – Illinois, Andrew Touvannas & David Carroll

- Promote honors and awards opportunities through quarterly communications
- Identify potential candidates for National Award and member upgrades and support applications
- AIAA Outstanding Achievement Section Awards to student members at Section branches
- New members and those with expiring memberships are contacted individually
- Promote regional engagement with industry, attendance to Midwest Aerospace Conference
- Promote membership at event booths, in Newsletters, and yearly at New Students' conference



Student Awards

First Place – Membership Award Large – St. Louis, Miguel Olvera

AIAA St. Louis Membership

Year-round efforts

- **Member status is tracked using AIAA reports**
Expiring memberships receive a notification.
New members receive a greetings email.
- **Networking Opportunities**
Trivia nights with prizes.
Local university facility tours and student presentations.
- **Mentorship Activities**
Student Design Team Showcases across five local universities.
FIRST Robotics competition volunteer opportunities.



First Place- Membership Award Very Large- Los Angeles, Sherry Stukes & Kenneth Lui

Annual Awards Dinner

- Consistent member recognition is very important
- Cultivate a culture of gratitude towards membership



Communications Award

Presented to the sections that have developed and implemented an outstanding communications outreach program

Presented by Kristen Gerzina, Region V Director

Third Place – Communications Award

Very Small: Wisconsin

Small: Northwest Florida

Medium: Phoenix

Large: St. Louis

Very Large: Pacific Northwest



Second Place- Communications Award

Very Small: Melbourne

Small: Long Island

Medium: Indiana

Large: Albuquerque

Very Large: Los Angeles



First Place- Communications Award

Very Small- Delaware, Alyssa Lear

Monthly newsletter communication goes out to all members

Contains any news and announcements for the section

Monthly message from one of the council members

Upcoming events or plans

Technical activities including those at the institute level

Industry News

History corner, this month in aerospace

history

Membership information

Membership information



First Place- Communications Award

Small- Savannah, Kayla Greenfelder & Aparna Ravi



Key Events Held

- Lunch and Learns
- Girls Engineer It Day in collaboration with SWE
- Savannah Section Meetup @ SciTech

Best Practices

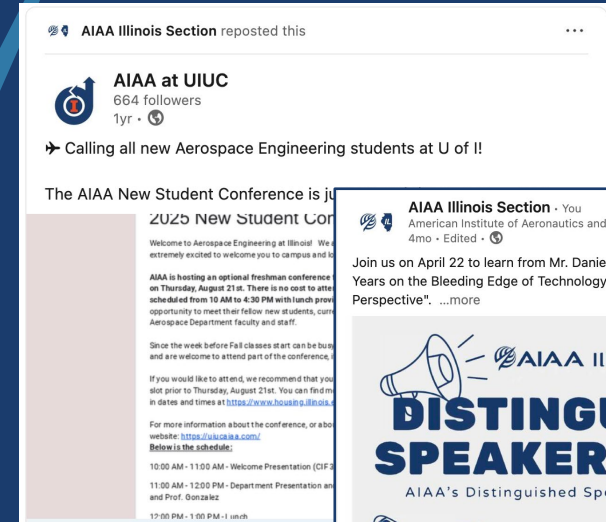
- Established dedicated Officers to coordinate section outreach.
- Shared section news and announcements through the community channels and organized records in the Engage Library.
- Delivered direct communications to Savannah Section members.
- Expanded visibility beyond AIAA through three features in external organizations (SWE, etc).
- Sustained engagement through information sessions, ongoing events, and development of a recurring section newsletter



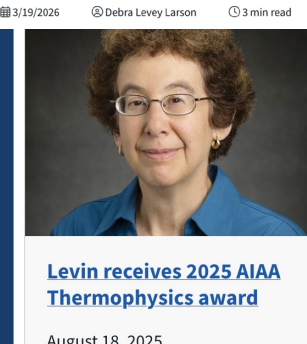
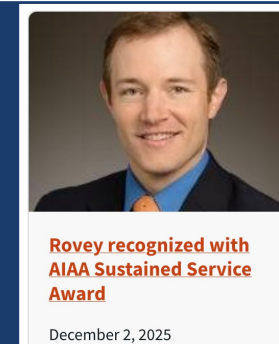
First Place – Communications Award

Medium – Illinois, Laura Villafañe Roca

- Diverse platforms are used to reach all audiences - Engage, LinkedIn, email, newsletters, University distribution lists and event fliers
- Member receiving National Awards and upgrades are contacted personally. Mail and Engage used for wide Award and member upgrades recognitions.
- Engage Library and Google Drive keep updated files accessible to officers and student branches, facilitating communication and record tracking
- AIAA IL news also shared for dissemination in non-AIAA newsletters and social media.
- Sent article drafts to Aerospace America
- Maintained Coordinated activities across officers and between academia, local schools, companies, and the general public
- Strong student engagement (students branch leads join officer's meetings)
- AIAA Distinguished Invited Speaker
- Scholastic Achievement Awards
- Promote technical seminars, Regional Conferences and local company visits
- Coordinate outreach activities, Engineering open houses



Illinois AIAA chapter nationally recognized



First Place – Communications Award Large – Northern Ohio, Edmond Wong

- Provide membership with news and information on section activities, events, and opportunities through a variety of communication outlets including newsletters, mailing list, social media, event flyers, and website.
- Enhance visual appeal of communication through quality design, consistent branding and extensive use of photography.

Newsletters

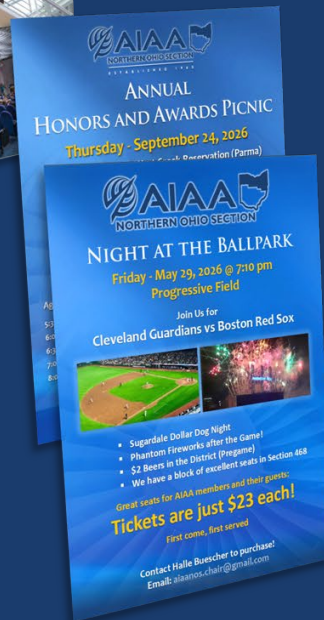


YOUNG ASTRONAUT DAY 2025



Photography

Event Flyers



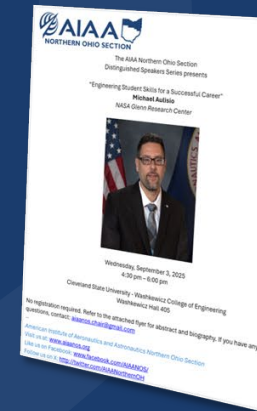
Design



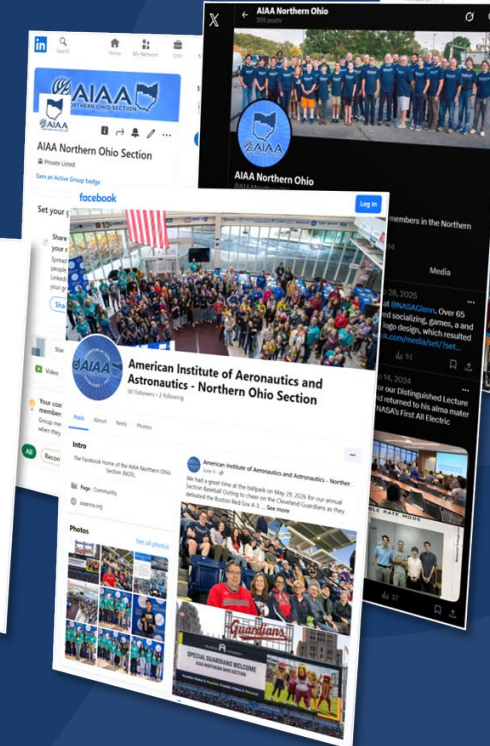
Banners, Signage, Merch



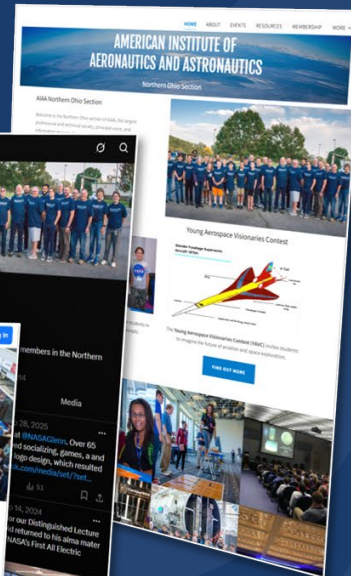
Email List



Social Media



Website



First Place (Tie) – Communications Award Very Large – New England, Krystina Waters- van Rossum & Peter Dentch

Communication strategies

- 1) AIAA engage- Upcoming events are posted on Engage and sent out through "events", announcements and discussion(including cross posting). We work with Niagara frontier, SAE, ASME Boston and RAeS Montreal sections to cross-promote events.
- 2) LinkedIn- Our biggest source of engagement is LinkedIn. In the past 2 years the number of followers has gone up by 8X. 1000+ post views are typical and event participation are significantly greater from LinkedIn posts.
- 3)Newsletter- Revamped this year with a new chair. We publish our quarterly newsletter "Waverunner" to highlight upcoming events both in-person and virtual and ways in which students and YP's can engage.
- 5) Listservs- Google group listservs help maximize engagement. We continue to have longtime members request sign-ups for the listserv to stay engaged in our activities. We have a listserv for student leaders, another for STEM educators, and a general listserv for interested members for notices about events, council meetings, etc.
- 6) We've grown our non-AIAA newsletter communications-- recent examples include the space consortium, Brockton Schools, ARC, MITLL, Draper. newsletters).



TECH TALK: DESIGN OF HIGH POWER ROCKET TELEMETRY SYSTEMS

UMass Amherst, November 2025

The WPI High Power Rocketry Club (HPRC) gave a tech talk on telemetry and avionics systems used in their rockets. They were hosted by UMass Amherst in collaboration with the UMass Amherst Rocketry Team and AIAA Student Chapter. Speakers including both alumni and current team members shared their experience and insights from developing these complex systems under the budget and time constraints of an annual competition. Telemetry is an area where HPRC has distinguished itself, having won the Best Live Telemetry Visualization award in 2024 and 2025. By sharing the lessons learned which brought them to this point, the team hopes to inspire other rocketry teams to take on the challenges of creating and testing custom systems for more advanced launch vehicles. After the presentation, attendees networked and were given a tour of lab workspaces.



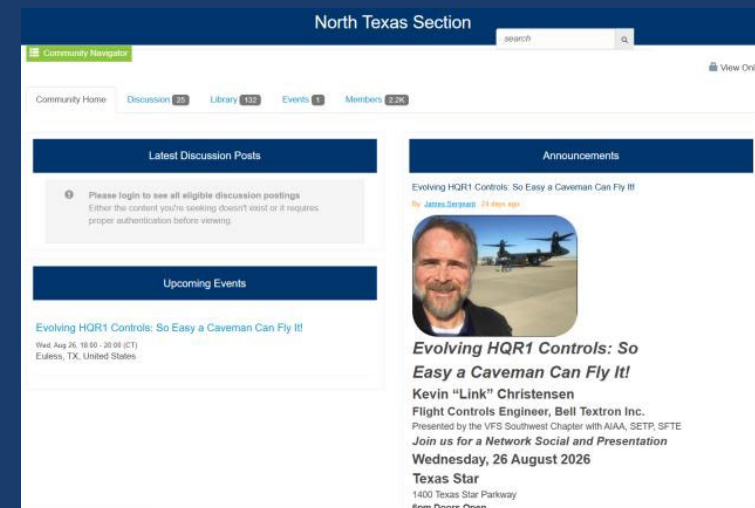
WAVERUNNER

OCT-DEC Q4
2025

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

First Place (Tie) – Communications Award Very Large – North Texas, James Sergeant

- Lots of e-mails! 30 for the Section FY
 - Included Newsletter-type info with pictures, event highlights, etc.
 - Attached/linked college newsletters (UTA & UTD) to increase their outreach
 - Continued & expanded postings to AIAA Engage website for Section Announcements, Photos, & Newsletters
- Continuing *Luft Org* App as UTA student intern project
- YP added to North Texas Advisory Board to assist with Social Media
- AIAA HQ Zoom very helpful for meetings & events
 - Lunch-and-Learn Events
 - Council Meetings
 - Critical Incident Response (CIRP) training & events



Public Policy Award

Presented for stimulating public awareness of the needs of aerospace research and development, particularly on the part of government representatives, and for educating section members about the value of public policy activities.

Presented by Chris Crumbly, Region II Director

Third Place – Public Policy Award

Small: Northwest Florida

Medium: Illinois

Large: San Diego

Very Large: Rocky Mountain



Second Place – Public Policy Award

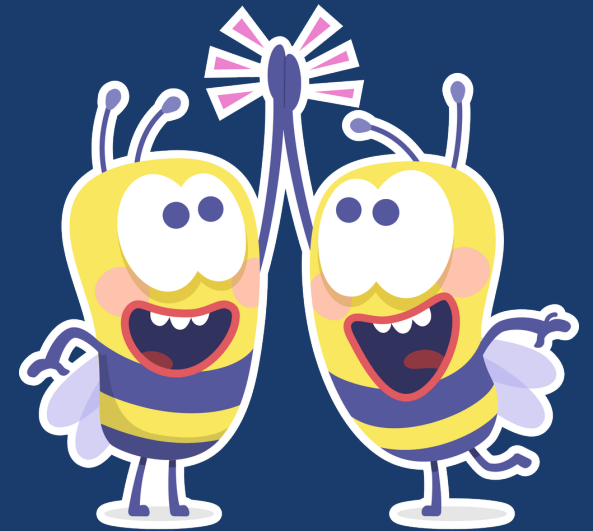
Very Small: Adelaide

Small: Palm Beach

Medium: Michigan

Large: Northern Ohio

Very Large: Greater Huntsville



First Place – Public Policy Award

Very Small – Wisconsin, Todd Treichel

Public Policy (Very Small Section Category)

Promote a strong aerospace sector through advocacy and support at the industry, academia, public, and congressional level.

- EAA – Oshkosh
- Rockets for Schools –Sheboygan
- Wisconsin Space Conference
- AIAA Host for 2026 Spring Space Grant Advisory Board Meeting
- Collegiate Rocket Launch (CRL)
- University of Wisconsin System & STEM -Public Lectures
- 2026 AIAA Jefferies Award & Presentation

AIAA Host Site – 2026 WSGC Spring Advisory Board Meeting



AIAA Jefferies Award for Space Medicine & Life Science



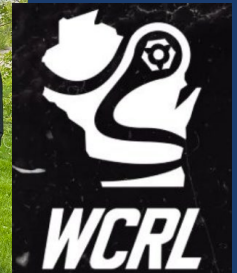
Wisconsin Space Conference – University Students



Deke Slayton Space Week



Collegiate Rocket Launch (CRL) Judges



Experimental Aviation Association

First Place – Public Policy Award

Small – Oklahoma, Imraan Faruque, Jamey Jacob, and James Grimsley



Imraan A Faruque as a panelist at the SPIE Defense & Security Symposium and advancing global space debris remediation in Prague, Czech Republic



James Grimsley at the Choctaw Nation's Emerging Aviation Technology Center and at a White House visit

Jamey Jacob on local PBS station (top) And testifying before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee (bottom).

Extras



First Place – Public Policy Award

Medium – Phoenix, Michael Mackowski



Michael J. Mackowski
AIAA Phoenix Section
Public Policy Officer, 2025-26

Retired electrical systems engineer with over forty years of experience in spacecraft design and development, contributing to major programs including Landsat 8, Fermi, Swift, Iridium, multiple NASA science satellites, and the Space Shuttle—and remains actively engaged in space advocacy and K–12 STEM outreach with the AIAA Phoenix Section.



Representing the AIAA Phoenix Section driving statewide policy debates, advocacy and collaborative aerospace initiatives and expanding our network in industry.



Help support and host a March '26 presentation with WISK Aero about autonomous all-electric vertical flight, public policy changes and how the public transportation market is evolving within Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) integration.



Hosted a conversation with Jonathan Roll, co-author of “Redshift: The acceleration of China’s Commercial and Civil Space Enterprise & the challenge to America,” examining the technical and social implications of China’s space efforts.

First Place – Public Policy Award Large – Cape Canaveral, Amir Yahyaeian

AIAA CAPE CANAVERAL SECTION | 2025-2026 SECTION AWARDS

Public Policy Committee

From a new officer role to a section-wide policy platform in under a year

Highlights

- Expanded the Section's first Public Policy Officer role (June 2025) into a dedicated committee
- Ran a year-long needs assessment across ERAU engineering, security studies and international affairs, and aeronautical science
- Built a network across campus faculty, industry and education leaders, government, and the local community
- Invited Florida State Rep. Tyler Sirois and tied AIAA national priorities, sustainability, space traffic management, STEM, and workforce to local research

"Public policy does not have to remain abstract or distant."



Public Policy chair and secretary at Kennedy Space Center during the SmallSat Education Conference, October 2025

First Place (Tie)– Public Policy Award

Very Large – Hampton Roads, Steven Dunn

- Be involved with a service approach!!
 - Utilize involvement in the national level AIAA Public Policy Committee for sharing key issues at the state and local levels – work to align messaging and interactions across the different levels.
 - Provide leadership and involvement to prepare and conduct the annual Virginia Aerospace Day in Richmond.
 - Involvement – be a presence – in regional aerospace and workforce development events to both share AIAA PP messaging and to gain broader insight to Virginia needs and best practices.
 - Teaming – involved and supportive Section leadership and teaming of very busy people to prepare and hold events is key to making things actually happen.

First Place (Tie) – Public Policy Award Very Large – Los Angeles, Daniel Scalese

AIAA LA/Las Vegas - NDIA Spaceport

- Focus on local developments
- Focus on facilitating networking between policy stakeholders and industry representatives
- Collaborate with specialized policy organizations



Outstanding Activity Award

Acknowledges sections that held an outstanding activity deserving of additional recognition.

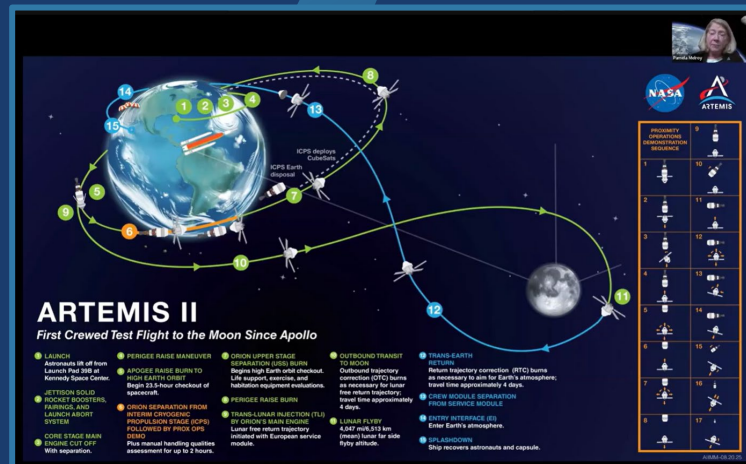
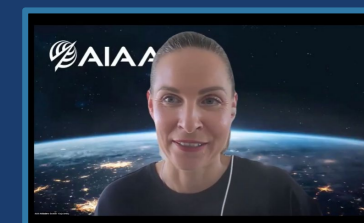
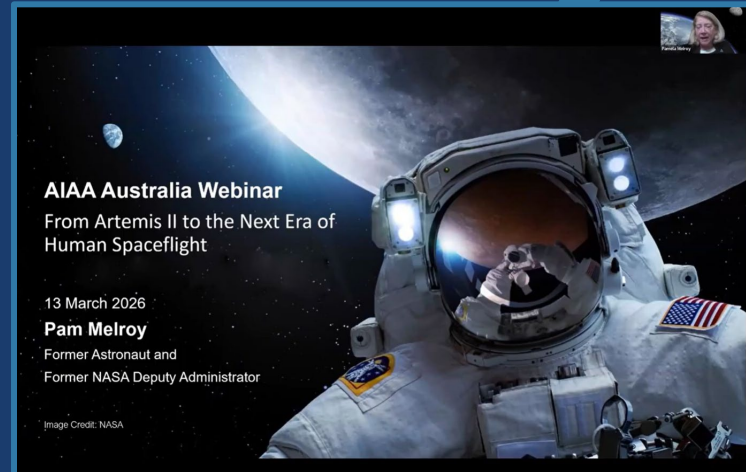
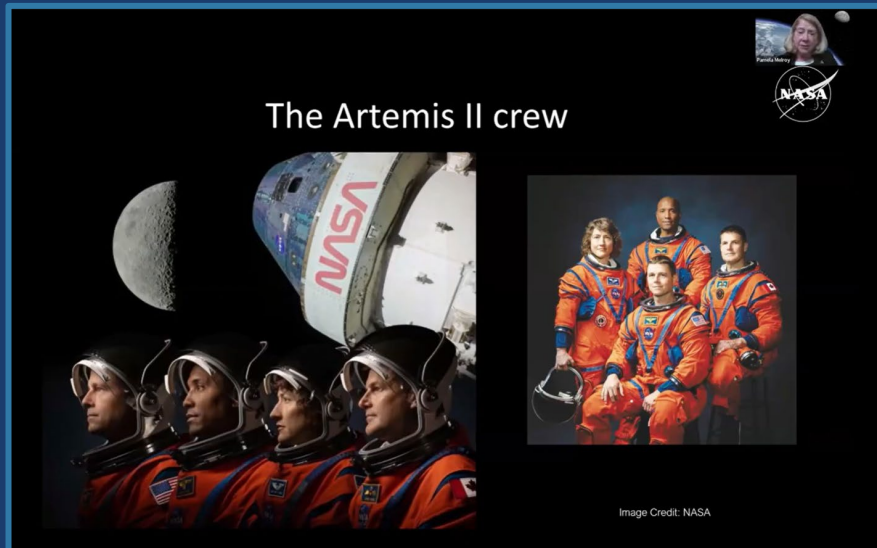
Presented By Lindsay Mitchell, AIAA Director of Regions and Sections

Outstanding Activity Award Very Small (Tie) – Melbourne

AIAA Australia Gathering: Pamela Melroy – From Artemis II to the Next Era of Human Spaceflight

Webinar Event

Over 150 registered attendees



Outstanding Activity Award Very Small (Tie) – China Lake

"Hidden Figures" STEM outreach movie night

Movie Night: 2001 Space Odyssey June 26, 2026

- Special guests from NASA!

Movie Night: October Sky October 15, 2026

- Second annual viewing
- It's an exciting time to be a space enthusiast!

Movie Night: Hidden Figures March 5, 2026

- New attendees: Girl BSA Scout Troop
- Inspired and challenged
- Representation Matters!



Outstanding Activity Award Small – Savannah

Lunch and Learn – Lt. Col. Charlie Gray, Vice President @ Gulfstream

AIAA – Savannah, GA Section



Key Events Held

- Lunch and Learns
- Girls Engineer It Day in collaboration with SWE
- Savannah Section Meetup @ SciTech

Best Practices

- Established dedicated Officers to coordinate section outreach.
- Shared section news and announcements through the community channels and organized records in the Engage Library.
- Delivered direct communications to Savannah Section members.
- Expanded visibility beyond AIAA through three features in external organizations (SWE, etc).
- Sustained engagement through information sessions, ongoing events, and development of a recurring section newsletter



Outstanding Activity Award Medium – Tucson

Distinguished Guest Lecture – Dr. Mary Roybal presents "A Perspective of the Future of Composite Structures in the Aerospace Industry"



Outstanding Activity Award Large – Cape Canaveral

Public Policy Outreach Event 2026

AIAA CAPE CANAVERAL SECTION | 2025-2026 SECTION AWARDS

May 1, 2026 (National Space Day) · Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, FL

Highlights

- Four linked sessions: space governance, workforce development, professional engagement, student research
- Student speaker Margaret O'Brien presented on space policy alongside invited speakers
- Research & Innovation Poster Symposium featured **40 student posters**
- Roughly **80 attendees** from academia, industry, government, and the community

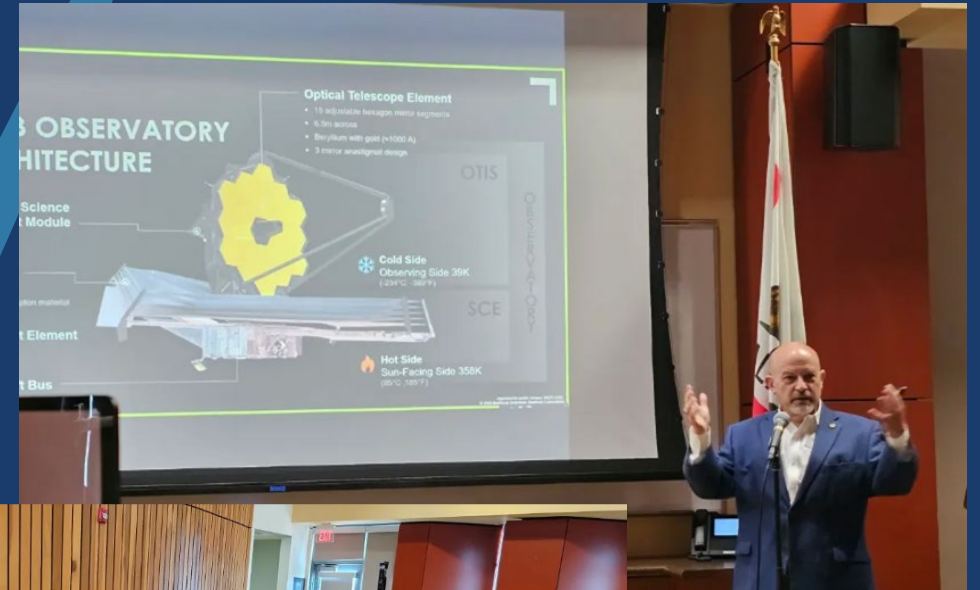


Outstanding Activity Award Very Large (TIE) – Los Angeles

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope: Origins, Development, Operation and Lessons Learned

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope: Origins, Development, Operation and Lessons Learned

- Host a distinguished speaker every year on a captivating topic
- Maximize reach with hybrid sessions
- Utilize different channels to promote event



Outstanding Activity Award Very Large (TIE) – North Texas Southwest Aerospace Symposium (SWAS)

- Co-hosted with UTA, SETP
Support from LM, Bell, VFS, ITPS, SFTE
- Keynote by NASA Astronaut Robert “Farmer” Hines
- Increased exposure in aerospace community, colleges, schools; + 25 new members
- Presentations included
 - Full Scale Stop-fold System Transition Demo on a High-Speed Test Track from Bell
 - Findings from FAA-sponsored flight tests of HQ Task Elements for VTOL A/C
 - CIRP: Mental Health Support for Flight Testers
 - UTD & UTA AIAA Project Teams



Outstanding Activity Award Very Large (TIE) – New England AIAA New England student leadership social

Student leadership networking weekend

- The AIAA New England Section organized a New England AIAA Student Branch Social in collaboration with several university chapters across the region. The event was hosted by the MIT AIAA Student Chapter and brought together students from the URI, BU, WPI, UMass Amherst, and UMaine AIAA Student Chapters for an afternoon of networking, professional development, and community building within the aerospace field.

The program featured lunch, interactive games, networking opportunities, and a professional speaker panel consisting of aerospace industry professionals from a variety of backgrounds and organizations. Students were provided an opportunity to engage directly with student leaders and professionals while also building connections with peers from neighboring universities who share common academic and professional interests in aerospace engineering and related disciplines.

This event represented the first collaboration of its kind among AIAA New England Student Branches and demonstrated the value of regional engagement between student chapters.



Outstanding Activity Award Very Large (TIE) – Pacific Northwest 18th Annual Pacific Northwest Technical Symposium

AIAA PACIFIC NORTHWEST SECTION · MUSEUM OF FLIGHT, SEATTLE · 2026

Built by a small, dedicated group of volunteers who care deeply about PNW aerospace.

18th Annual Tech Symposium

20

TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

125

ATTENDEES

6

GENEROUS SPONSORS

1

INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY



The main hall at capacity for the keynote session



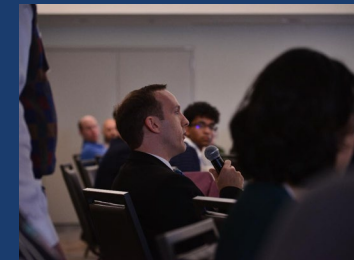
Keynote on stage



NASA HUNCH students



Student–professional networking



Q&A in action



The evening reception



Exploring the Museum of Flight

THANK YOU, SPONSORS: Ed Wells Partnership · Royal Aeronautical Society, Seattle · Agile Space Industries · Raisbeck Engineering · Aerojet Rocketdyne · John Somerville · Richard Wendt

Outstanding Section Award

Presented to sections based upon their overall activities and contributions through the year.

Presented by Jim Guglielmo, Membership Engagement Division Chief

Third Place- Outstanding Section Award

Very Small: Adelaide

Small: Savannah

Medium: Indiana

Large: Orange County

Very Large: New England



Second Place- Outstanding Section Award

Very Small: Wisconsin

Small: Oklahoma

Medium: Illinois

Large: Cape Canaveral

Very Large: North Texas



First Place- Outstanding Section Award Very Small, Delaware

As a very small section, we need programs to keep people engaged

- We try to have a large variety of events
- Different council members are responsible for the event planning depending on the event type
- Meet monthly as a council to have frequent check-ins and build enthusiasm for planning events

AIAA Delaware Section PRESENTS
AIAA DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES
RSVP Required! Open to Everyone!

Putting the 'P' in 'JPL': The Past, Present, and Future of Propulsion at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory
By Todd Barber



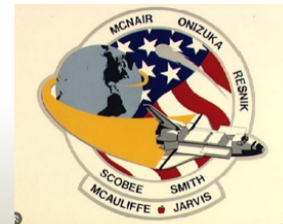
Todd Barber, a senior propulsion engineer at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, will discuss his abstract: "Putting the 'P' in 'JPL': The Past, Present, and Future of Propulsion at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory". Following the presentation, a Q&A session will be held.

RSVP for the event [here](#) or via the QR code by Sunday, May 3rd. Tickets are \$7 for AIAA members, \$12 for non-members, and free for students. We look forward to seeing you there!

For AIAA Members and Guests
Wednesday, May 6th, 7-9PM
Klondike Kate's Restaurant & Saloon
158 E Main St, Newark, DE

STS-51-L CHALLENGER MISSION

January 28, 1986
16:38:00 GMT



AIAA Delaware Section PRESENTS
CAREER ENHANCEMENT/EDUCATION LUNCH LECTURE SERIES PROGRAM
\$1 Pizza Available! Open to Everyone!

Propelling History - A Walk through the Decades in the months of December and January
By Dave McGrath



Mars Pathfinder integrated vehicle with STAR 48 upper stage

Last human-rated mission to the Moon, Apollo 17

Dave, a 40 year veteran of the NG Elkton site, will discuss either significant tests or flights at the Elkton site during these two months and how they made either national or Elkton history. Join us and enjoy some \$1 pizza while walking down memory lane.

For AIAA Members and Guests
Tuesday, December 9th, 12-1PM
Northrop Grumman Elkton
ECC Conference Room or [Microsoft Teams](#)

First Place – Outstanding Section Award Small – Northwest Florida

Significant 2025-2026 Activities

Student Engagement

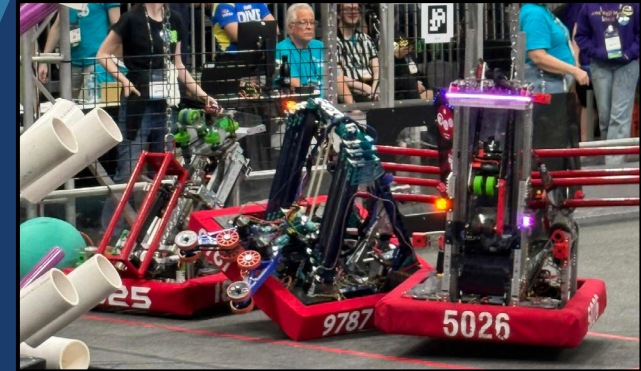
- FIRST LEGO League Tech Challenge Participation & Sponsorship
- East Panhandle Science Fair Judging & Special Awards
- STEM Summer Camp Presentation
- STEM Enrichment Days Program
- Elementary School Science Night Presentation

Member Engagement

- Joint Engineering Week social event with Society of American Military Engineers

Council Engagement

- Multiple council members participated in RAC, RLC, Council Integrated Training & Workshop @ SciTech, and AIAA Town Hall
- Multiple new council members keeping the section active



First Place – Outstanding Section Award Medium – Southwest Texas

MEDIUM SECTION SIZE – OUTSTANDING SECTION AWARD – FIRST PLACE

Lots of work to reinvigorate the section over the past couple of years!

- More regular engagements with student branches
- Bringing in new/more officers
- Consistent meetings and higher cadence of events



First Place – Outstanding Section Award Large – St. Louis

AIAA St. Louis Section

Some AIAA STL best practices include:

- **Structured Leadership Succession:** We maintain a section leadership pipeline (Vice-Chair -> Chair -> Region V Rep.), ensuring seamless transitions between Chairs and continuity for the section.
- **Strategic Semi-annual Planning:** Beyond our standard monthly meetings, we gather as a council biannual planning sessions, utilizing the annual report for inspiration.
- **Targeted Membership Engagement:** We customize communication channels for specific audiences (e.g., dedicated website for STEM Outreach, YP Discord server, message board posts)
- **Active Committee Ecosystem:** We maintain a regular cadence of diverse programming (technical talks, dinner programs, STEM K-12 initiatives, social events) to appeal to all members



First Place- Outstanding Section Award Very Large – Los Angeles

Establish Leadership Structure and Progression

- Establish succession plan in order to avoid burn-out
- Document everything, share access

Diverse Speaker Events

- Balance between technical speakers and other topics
- Utilize hybrid meetings to expand reach and impact

Focus on Quality

- Constantly check in with membership
- Be strategic about where you put resources



Congratulations Everyone!

Up Next:

Regional Leadership Conference – In-Person Edition

January 10, 2027 at SciTech in Orlando, FL

Conference Registration Not Required

Formal Invitation Coming Soon

Thank You