



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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AOPA CHALLENGES EVERYONE IN AVIATION TO FIND ONE NEW PILOT; AIRSHARES ELITE MAKES \$100,000 COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AOPA PROJECT PILOT

Frederick, MD -- The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is challenging all pilots nationwide to seek out interested and qualified individuals and help them become new pilots. In the first few weeks of the program nearly 1,000 AOPA members have answered the call to action. And now AirShares Elite leads the way as the first aviation company to respond to the challenge.

“It’s frightening to know that the pilot population has shrunk 25 percent in the last 25 years,” said AOPA President Phil Boyer. “Every one of us with a passion for flying has an obligation to help reverse this trend. For AOPA, the world’s largest aviation association, that means putting all we have behind the new Project Pilot.”

At the forefront of the program with Boyer is AOPA Project Pilot Spokesman Erik Lindbergh, pilot and grandson of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

“Imagine where we could take general aviation if each one of us who flies found just one more pilot to take to the skies,” said Lindbergh. “In a few short years, we could double the number of pilots — to more than one million. We would all benefit with lower costs and greater clout when it counts. We need everyone to meet the call of this obligation. No one organization or person can do it alone.”

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AirShares Elite, a popular general aviation fractional ownership company, is the first corporation to step forward in support of the Project Pilot objective of growing the pilot population.

“When I learned that the pilot population had declined by 25 percent over the past 25 years, I knew that we had to inspire more people to move from being wannabe pilots to gottabe pilots,” said AirShares Elite CEO David Lee. “Today, AirShares Elite, Inc. is announcing our support of AOPA’s Project Pilot by committing \$100,000 in aircraft flight time for our group of aircraft owners to use with the hope that after a pilot candidate flies in one of our fleet’s technically advanced Cirrus SR22’s they too will be moved by the excitement, safety and benefits that only general aviation can add to both your personal and business lifestyles. Using the great tools available through Project Pilot, we want to enable all of our owners to each convert at least one new prospect into a successful student pilot as well as challenge other aviation companies to step forward and support such a worthwhile cause.”

“We applaud AirShares Elite for stepping forward to help keep GA strong and growing,” said Jeff Myers, executive vice president of communications for AOPA with responsibility for the Project Pilot program. “AirShares Elite is a wonderful example of how each of us can use the resources at our fingertips, to support the GA of today and tomorrow.”

About Project Pilot

The online resources of AOPA Project Pilot can be found at www.AOPAProjectPilot.org. Originally launched in 1994, this program links student pilots with AOPA members as Mentors to help support them throughout their flight training. “Research clearly shows that having an AOPA Project Pilot Mentor increases a student pilot’s chances of becoming a pilot by three times,” said Myers. “It has helped tens of thousands of student pilots succeed in the past — and we need many more to assure a viable future for GA. In that respect, AOPA is clearly leading the way.” The new Project Pilot program introduces dynamic web tools and DVD-based multimedia resources to help facilitate a Mentor-student relationship that lasts from first flight to the new pilot’s first passenger and beyond.

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About AirShares Elite

AirShares Elite is general aviation's premier fractional ownership company with aircraft based in Atlanta, New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Columbus, Ohio, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Birmingham, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Ft. Myers, Sarasota, Tampa, Minneapolis and Raleigh-Durham, N.C. AirShares Elite is helping revolutionize the personal and business aircraft ownership experience by making the dream of owning today's most advanced aircraft more attainable and affordable without the hassles of sole ownership. AirShares Elite features the most advanced, safest, and trend-setting aircraft available in general aviation today, including the Cirrus SR20 and SR22. To see what the excitement is about or to realize your dream, please visit www.AirSharesElite.com for more information.

About AOPA

With more than 408,000 members, AOPA has represented the interests of general aviation pilots since 1939. General aviation includes all flying except the scheduled airlines and the military. Nearly two-thirds of all U.S. pilots, and three-quarters of the GA pilots, are AOPA members.

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Editors: AOPA provides two important resources for covering general aviation news – an online newsroom (www.aopa.org/newsroom) and a television studio and uplink (www.aopa.org/satellite). Contact us for more information.

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