

ICAS *Fast Facts*

March 18, 2020

CANCELLATION/POSTPONEMENT UPDATE

To help all of our members keep abreast of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the North American air show community, ICAS is tracking cancellations and postponements. As of Tuesday, March 17, here are the changes we know about:

- March 14 -- Fiesta of Flight, Laughlin AFB, TX (*cancelled*)
- March 14 -- NAF El Centro 50th Anniversary Air Show, NAF El Centro, CA (*cancelled*)
- March 13-14 -- 2020 Yuma Airshow, MCAS Yuma, AZ (*cancelled*)
- March 21-22 -- Los Angeles County Air Show, Lancaster, CA (*cancelled*)
- March 21-22 -- Luke Days Air and Space Expo, Luke AFB, AZ (*cancelled*)
- March 27-28 -- Marvel of Flight Fly-In & Expo, DeFuniak Springs, FL (*cancelled*)
- March 27-29 -- Tampa Bay AirFest, MacDill AFB, FL (*postponed; date TBA*)
- March 28-29 -- March Field Air & Space Expo, March ARB, CA (*postponed; date TBA*)
- March 31-April 5 -- SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo, Lakeland, FL (*postponed; rescheduled to May 5-10*)
- April 4-5 -- Wings Over South Texas Air Show, NAS Kingsville, TX (*cancelled*)
- April 11-12 -- Warbirds Over Wanaka International Airshow, Wanaka, New Zealand (*cancelled*)
- April 18 -- Thunder Over Louisville, Louisville, KY (*postponed; rescheduled to August 15*)
- April 18-19 -- JB Charleston Air & Space Expo, JB Charleston, SC (*cancelled*)
- April 18-19 -- Beyond the Horizon Air & Space Show, Maxwell AFB, AL (*cancelled*)
- April 24-26 -- Vero Beach Air Show, Vero Beach, FL (*postponed; date TBA*)
- April 25-26 -- Wings Over Columbus, Columbus AFB, MS (*cancelled*)
- May 1-3 -- Wings Over Illawarra, Wollongong, Australia (*postponed; date TBA*)
- May 1-3 -- MCAS Cherry Point Air Show, MCAS Cherry Point, NC (*cancelled*)
- May 1-3 -- Manassas Open House and Air Show, Manassas, VA (*cancelled*)
- May 2-3 -- Ft. Lauderdale Air Show, Ft. Lauderdale, FL (*postponed; rescheduling for fall dates*)
- May 2-3 -- CAF Dixie Wing WWII Heritage Days, Atlanta, GA (*postponed; rescheduled to September 12-13*)
- May 5 -- JMSDF/MCAS Iwakuni Friendship Day, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan (*cancelled*)
- May 8 -- Arsenal of Democracy Flyover, Washington, DC (*postponed; rescheduled for September 25*)
- May 9-10 -- Dyess AFB Air & Space Expo, Dyess AFB, TX (*cancelled*)
- May 16-17 -- Power in the Pines Open House & Air Show, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ (*cancelled*)
- May 29-30 -- Go Wheels Up! Texas/AOPA Fly-In, San Marcos, TX (*postponed; date TBA*)

If you know about additional cancellations, postponements or other changes, please pass them along to ICAS headquarters.

ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY RESCHEDULES

In response to increasing concerns and government directives related to the Coronavirus and after coordinating with a large number of government agencies, veterans organizations and warbird operators, the organizers of the Arsenal of Democracy (AoD) flyover in Washington, DC, have

rescheduled the event for Friday, September 25 with the Victory Gala taking place at Historic Hangar 7 at DC's National Airport on the previous evening, Thursday, September 24, and a STEM-related event taking place at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia, on Saturday, September 26th, the day after the flyover. The flyover had previously been scheduled for Friday, May 8, the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day.

Despite delaying the commemorative activities, the AoD organizers and the partner organizations remain steadfast in their commitment to producing an historic tribute to the men and women who served in the U.S. and Allied armed forces, those who contributed on the home front, and those who suffered the horrors of the Holocaust during WWII. The AoD flyover held on May 8, 2015, in Washington, DC to commemorate the 70th anniversary of V-E Day included more than 50 warbirds and attracted 75,000-100,000 people to the National Mall in Washington, DC. The 75th anniversary edition of the flyover is expected to include more than 100 different warbirds when it takes place in late September.

For more information about the Arsenal of Democracy events, please visit www.wv2flyover.org/.

MILITARY CHECKS IN

Even as the impact of the Coronavirus epidemic continues to develop and unfold, the U.S. military is working to keep the air show community updated on its status.

Last night, via social media posts, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels reported that the team, "...remains focused and ready to return to the 2020 show season." As they finish winter training at NAF El Centro in California and return to the team's home base at NAS Pensacola in Florida, the Blue Angels continues to maintain their precision flying skills in the air as they look for opportunities to support their overall mission through ground appearances and other activities.

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds are also reporting that they have finished their winter training syllabus and are maintaining air show flight readiness with regular practice flights in anticipation of a re-start to the 2020 season later this spring. As always, the team's ability to re-engage will be subject to guidance and direction from both U.S. Air Force and federal public health officials.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris "Nike" McAlear, chief of the Aerial Events Branch at U.S. Air Force Air Combat Command, told ICAS today that he expects the ACC single-ship demo teams to continue training and remain prepared to start their 2020 air show season once the Air Force's suspension of outreach activities ends on May 15. McAlear also said that air shows seeking ACC support for rescheduled shows later this year should make contact with ACC Aerial Events as soon as possible. ACC will continue to honor those commitments already made to air shows later in the season, but will do what they can to reschedule demo performances at postponed events if and when possible. He emphasized that these decisions will not be made on an individual basis, but as part of a larger effort to make the best possible use of limited Air Force resources.

ICAS has also heard recently from the office of the Secretary of the Air Force which issued the following statement vis-à-vis air shows and open houses this spring and summer: "The Air Force will be reassessing the situation weekly in conjunction with DoD and CDC recommendations. We will provide specific guidance related to Air Force engagement activities occurring after May 15 at a later date. We will keep the air show industry updated as additional guidance is issued and as subsequent decisions are made."

ICAS has focused much of its recent efforts on encouraging shows – both military and civilian – not to make a decision about canceling or postponing if they don't have to. Air shows that cancel or

postpone prematurely will be difficult to restart. Delaying a decision will allow the situation to evolve during the coming days and weeks.

A WORD ABOUT TICKET REFUND POLICIES

Much of the air show community is discussing what a fair and appropriate refund policy is during the COVID-19 epidemic. And there are a wide variety of opinions, ranging from a complete refund under all circumstances when a show cancels, all the way to the other extreme with no refunds under any circumstances. As always, the best solution for your show will be specific to the circumstances of your event, but we thought it would be useful to share some of the opinions and perspectives of other event organizers as you and your team work to develop or refine your own policy.

A couple of factual considerations: First, if a customer buys a ticket from you via credit card and the show is subsequently cancelled, that customer has the right to contest the charge through the credit card company. His/her position will almost certainly prevail, with the credit card company refunding the purchase price no matter your policy or situation. Second, in many states and provinces, the ticket is treated as a contract, and the ticket buyer may successfully contend that your cancellation of the show was a breach of contract. This situation will vary from state to state, but it's an issue worth looking into before you finalize your refund policy. Third, refund policies for some shows are tied to when the request is made. A refund request made nine weeks before a show may be handled differently than a refund request made ten days before a show.

All of that said, the preferred goal is for this issue to never become contentious for the vast majority of your customers.

Several event organizers told us that they only offer a ticket for the next air show as compensation for a refund request from this year's air show. One show said that they provide a one-level upgrade as part of this transaction. So, for example, a customer who buys a general admission ticket to this year's show will get a ticket that includes an upgrade to the Bronze level hospitality suite. A spectator who wants a refund on a Bronze level ticket will get a ticket to the Silver-level hospitality at next year's show. Some event organizers have offered other incentives for the customer to keep their ticket and use it to attend the show the following year: t-shirt, coin, hat, etc. Obviously, an event organizer needs to know that there will be a show next year before making this offer to customers looking for a refund.

Some shows don't have a written policy that customers can see, but they start by offering a ticket to next year's show. If that doesn't work, they ask the customer to consider the cost of the ticket as a tax-deductible contribution to the 501(c)(3) that runs the show. And they only offer a full refund as a last resort.

Some shows offer a full refund, but not unless asked. A few shows reported that they offer a full refund, but minus ticketing fees and/or a small administrative fee. Others provide a full refund without being asked; they use the credit card information from the initial charge to refund the total amount of the ticket price to the purchaser.

Many shows see a generous refund policy as essential to maintaining strong pre-sales, particularly during a situation like the COVID-19 epidemic. In times like these, they say, if there is not a clear, visible and generous refund policy, pre-sales will drop like a stone as prospective customers wait to see if the event will be held.

Two different shows explained that they see their refund policy as a reflection of their larger strategy of being a vital and visible member of the community in which their event is held. Their policy

assumes that, in a situation where a refund might be justified, they will ask the individuals requesting refunds to let the show keep it as a donation. Both shows emphasized that making this kind of request assumes that the show has done the work needed to be seen as a non-profit organization that is involved and engaged with the community in which the air show is being held.

TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER, STRONG COMMUNICATIONS ARE KEY

Around the world, events of every shape and size are cancelling and postponing: festivals, parades, conferences, sporting events, concerts, and more. For now, government agencies have mandated that these postponements and cancellations are a necessary part of mitigating public health issues related to the Coronavirus pandemic.

But there is a social cost to these cancellations that goes beyond the obvious financial and economic impact. Researchers in Canada have found that attending festivals (like air shows) can help to create a [sense of social and community connection](#). These researchers found that festivals and other types of community events (like air shows) build stronger, more resilient communities. They also serve as a tool to strengthen existing relationships between families and friends. As research Christine Van Winkle explained in a story that originally appeared on a website called [The Conversation](#), “Social interaction is a common driver of event attendance and is thought to contribute to both social and individual benefits. Furthermore, we have found that the sense of belonging that people value often motivates them to attend events so that they can spend time with family, friends and their community.”

Cancellations can sometimes put these events – and the many benefits they offer to their communities -- at risk of never returning. To minimize this danger, these same researchers have found that organizers must communicate clearly in order to minimize the risk associated with cancelling. In circumstances like those our industry is facing right now, this can be a challenge when government directives are changing rapidly and uninformed speculation is rampant. But it is for precisely those reasons that strong, clear communications are vitally important. Your shows prospects for long-term survival are directly connected to the attention you pay to keeping your community abreast of what is going on with your event as this situation continues to unfold.

When the emergency has passed and our social interaction returns to normal, our events will be an important part of the recovery...providing people with a sense of community, local pride and an opportunity to return to the kinds of social interaction that build and maintain strong communities.

CDC ISSUES INTERIM GUIDANCE

On Sunday afternoon (March 15), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidance related to large events and mass gatherings. ICAS passes along this information not as recommendation or direction, but strictly to make sure that you and your organization are aware of the new guidance:

“Large events and mass gatherings can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States via travelers who attend these events and introduce the virus to new communities. Examples of large events and mass gatherings include conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings, and other types of assemblies. These events can be planned not only by organizations and communities, but also by individuals.

“Therefore, CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next eight weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States.

“Events of any size should only be continued if they can be carried out with adherence to guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations, hand hygiene, and social distancing. When feasible, organizers could modify events to be virtual.

“This recommendation does not apply to the day-to-day operation of organizations such as schools, institutes of higher learning, or businesses. This recommendation is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus. This recommendation is not intended to supersede the advice of local public health officials.”

The CDC’s recommendation of an eight-week suspension of large events and mass gatherings will end on Sunday, May 10.

CANADIAN AIR BOSS COLLEGE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Air Boss College, presented by the ICAS Canadian Air Boss Committee, will take place this year on-line and over the course of two days (March 28 and April 4, 2020). This year’s “College” is expected to be well attended due to the fact that a recognized air boss will soon be required for any Canadian air show hosting an RCAF aircraft.

The college is THE place to get a strong foundational understanding of what you need to know to be an effective and authorized air boss. It is also a great place for existing air bosses to get a refresher on requirements, generally, and recent changes to policy, techniques and “best practices.” . We encourage any current or aspiring air bosses to set aside the time and take part in the college.

The course will be offered on-line to eliminate virtually all expense related to participating in the program. As it has been for some time, the Canadian Air Boss College will be offered without any registration fee. Even air bosses who have taken the course before or have taken the Air Boss 201 at the ICAS Convention in the past are encouraged to take it again. It is a great way to stay current on advancements and changes in our business. ICAS is working closely with Transport Canada and Nav Canada to improve safety and streamline the way we work together to correct issues. Updates on all of these developments will be explained and discussed during the two-day program.

If you have questions about the course or to help determine if it is right for you, please contact one of the faculty. They can be reached through ICAS headquarters and this year will include Lyle Holbrook, Bill Snelgrove, Trent Stenmark and David White.

Time is running out to register. The college is the simplest way to advance your interest in becoming a qualified air boss in Canada, or to refresh your skills. The world of air bossing in North America is changing rapidly as are the standards of performance and best practices.

For more information or to express interest in the attending the college, please email airbosscanada@gmail.com as soon as possible and get yourself registered.

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