



Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

2023 State Aviation Art Contest Winners Recognized Will Rogers World Airport Hosts Art Contest Students

OKLAHOMA CITY (April 27, 2023) – The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission recognized the students that placed in the 2023 Oklahoma Aviation & Aerospace Art Contest.

This year, Oklahoma Aeronautics received over 400 pieces of art from 35 participating school districts. The annual contest is part of a larger national and international effort to inspire youth to illustrate the importance of aviation and aerospace through art. Contest submissions were grouped into three separate age categories for judging, allowing students ranging from 6 – 17 years old to compete. The contest theme was “Air Sports & The Environment”.

The ceremony was opened by Jeff Mulder, the Director of Airports for the City of Oklahoma City. He welcomed the students to the Will Rogers World Airport and encouraged the students, parents, and teachers attending the ceremony to explore the airport during their visit.

The State Director of Aeronautics, Grayson Ardies, officiated the ceremony.

“This contest is a conduit for students to explore aerospace and aeronautics,” Ardies said. “we are starting to see some positive outcomes from the recent upturn in aviation education is now spreading through Oklahoma schools. Oklahoma is ranked #1 in the nation for the number of schools teaching the AOPA “You Can Fly” high school curriculum. We are now seeing these school districts implement the study of flight as early as kindergarten. We hope educators will use this contest at the earliest ages to start conversations about aviation careers.”

In the Junior Division, ages 6 to 9, [Anvika Menon](#), from Washington Irving Elementary in **Edmond**, took home first prize. This year’s second-place winner in the Junior Division was [Jessie Zhu](#) from Truman Elementary in **Norman**. The third-place winner was [Ryann Smith](#) from Stafford Elementary in **Weatherford**, and Honorable Mention went to [Jake Park](#) from Roosevelt Elementary in **Norman**.

[Chloe Childs](#) from the Academy of Classical Christian Studies in **Oklahoma City** took top honors in the Intermediate Division, ages 10-13. Taking second was [Grace Huang](#) from Truman Elementary in **Norman**, and third was [K. Samvruth Sreevatsava](#) from Dove Schools of Discovery in **Tulsa**. Receiving an Honorable Mention in the division was [Caden Day](#) from Stafford Elementary in **Weatherford**.

Norman North High student, [Elizabeth Yue](#), finished atop the Senior Division, ages 14-17, followed by [Jaylee Edwards](#), a student at Chisholm High in **Goltry**. [Carlos Becerra](#) from Dove Science Academy in **Oklahoma City** took third, while [Briana Macias](#) received an honorable mention in the division. Macias is a student at **Yukon** Middle School.

Allyson Carson, with the Oklahoma Defense Industry Association, served as the lead contest judge and gave an overview of the judging process. “The judging was conducted by representatives from Oklahoma’s aviation, aerospace, and defense industry and included: Commander Steve “Slater” Duran, VQ-7 Commanding Officer, Tinker Air Force Base; Maurice Compton, Chief Executive Officer at Ready 3; Col. Jason Davis, 185th Special Operations Squadron commander, and myself,” said Carson.

First-place winners in each of the three age categories receive \$200, while the second-place winners receive \$150. A cash prize of \$100 is presented to students who place third, and honorable mention will receive \$50.

The top three entries in each age division were forwarded to Washington, D.C., where they competed nationally against other winners from the U.S. for the right to advance to the international competition.

The national winners were announced in March and have been submitted for the 2023 International Aviation Art Contest, which will be judged in June by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. View the winning national entries [here](#).

The 2023 International Aviation Art Contest is sponsored, in large part, by the National Aeronautic Association, Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, National Association of State Aviation Officials, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, National Coalition for Aviation and Space Education, Federal Aviation Administration, and the Ken Cook Co.

(CUTLINE: The student winners of the 2023 Aviation and Aerospace Art Contest conducted by the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission were recognized during a ceremony hosted in the observation area of Will Rogers World Airport. Students, parents, and teachers that attended the ceremony were then given a tour of the airport.)

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Aviation Industry Facts:

The Oklahoma Aviation & Aerospace Industry produces just under \$44B in annual economic activity, making it the second largest economic engine in our state. Three segments account for the \$44B total: Military aviation, \$19.3B; off-airport aviation and aerospace businesses, \$13.9B; and the 109 commercial and general aviation airports, \$10.6B. Aviation & Aerospace supports 206,000 jobs totaling an \$11.7B payroll. The average salary in the industry is \$73,300 making it one of the highest average salaries in the state.

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OAC's mission is to promote aviation, which includes ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across the state are met by the state's 108 public airports that comprise the Oklahoma Airport System, and ensuring the viability of the state's aerospace industry.