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NASA Announces Aeronautical Centennial Challenge

NASA and the Comparative Aircraft Flight Efficiency (CAFE) Foundation announced their intention to pursue the first aeronautical competition in the Centennial Challenges program.

The announcement was made today at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture 2005 air show in Oshkosh, Wis. The Personal Air Vehicle (PAV) Challenge will award annual prizes totaling \$250,000 to the teams that can best design, develop, and demonstrate technology improvements in various general aviation aircraft capabilities.

NASA's Centennial Challenges promote technical innovation through a novel program of prize competitions. It is designed to tap the nation's ingenuity to make revolutionary advances to support NASA goals and the Vision for Space Exploration. PAV is the fifth NASA Centennial Challenge.

"The intent of the PAV Challenge is to encourage innovation in the amateur and sporting aviation communities to help enhance the general aviation transportation system," said NASA's Associate Administrator for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, Dr. J. Victor Lebacqz. "This prize competition is a great follow-on to previous NASA investments in small aircraft and complements existing industry consortia in general aviation," he added.

To win one or more of the five PAV Challenge purses, teams must modify their general aviation or sport aircraft to demonstrate the best performance in five technology areas. NASA predicts the technologies targeted by this competition will have a quick and positive impact on the general aviation industry and on public air travel. The first competition will be in mid-2006. The purses will be awarded at EAA AirVenture 2006 in Oshkosh.

"Centennial Challenges is partly modeled on the long and successful history of cash prizes being used to stimulate advances in air travel. We intend to continue that tradition," said NASA's Centennial Challenges program manager Brant Sponberg.

Fifty thousand dollars will be awarded for two technology developments related to aircraft noise. Twenty-five thousand dollars will be awarded to the teams that can minimize external noise measured outside the airplane. Another \$25,000 will be presented to the team that can minimize noise measured inside the aircraft's cabin.

Another \$50,000 will be divided between two teams whose aircraft demonstrate the best handling qualities and overall ease-of-use. The remaining \$150,000 will be awarded to the single team whose vehicle demonstrates the best overall flight performance measured in a calculated score that includes door-to-door trip velocity, energy consumption, and passenger carrying capability.

"Judging from our past experience in hosting flight competitions, the PAV Challenge should attract outstanding design efforts and give a tremendous boost to the technology, safety and usability of personal aircraft," said CAFE President, Dr. Brien Seeley. "The PAV Challenge rules that CAFE drafted with NASA's general aviation experts will make it a fair, safe and accurate competition and our team is honored to pursue this annual event," he added.

The Centennial Challenges program is managed by NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate. The CAFE Foundation is an all-volunteer tax-exempt educational corporation. It is dedicated to conducting and sharing accurate, detailed flight research and other information about personal experimental aircraft.

For information about Centennial Challenges on the Internet, visit:

<http://centennialchallenges.nasa.gov>

For information about NASA and agency programs on the Internet, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

For information about CAFE on the Internet, visit:

<http://www.cafefoundation.org>

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