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June 12, 2007

Two flight students to represent Purdue in Air Race Classic

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Two aviation technology students from Purdue University's College of Technology will compete June 19-22 in the 31st annual all-female Air Race Classic.



Katie Sparrow, a senior from Greeley, Colo., who is the captain of the Purdue Air

Katie Sparrow (R), Marie Janus

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Race Team, and Marie Janus, a senior from Valparaiso, Ind., who is the co-pilot, will represent Purdue. The Purdue Air Race Team will be one of the five collegiate teams among the 47 total teams.

This year's race will begin in Oklahoma City and continue to McCook, Neb.; Denison, Iowa; Jefferson City, Mo.; Bowling Green, Ky.; Lewisburg, W. Va.; Elmira, N.Y.; Burlington, Vt.; Bangor, Maine, then finishing in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. The total distance covered will be about 2,573 miles.

The winners will be announced at a banquet June 24 in Saint John.

Members of the Purdue Air Race Team ground crew this year are aviation technology majors Josh Stroka, Halley Oleck, Jennifer Thomas, Crystal Mathews, Pascal Nguyen, Joe McArdle and Erik Myrom, all juniors; sophomore Johanna Hawkins; and freshman Juliana Lindner.

Purdue teams have competed in the Air Race Classic for the past 13 years, finishing first in 1996. The

Department of Aviation Technology sponsored the first all-student team to participate in the race.

Last year's team, made up of pilot Katherine Conrad and co-pilot Katie Sparrow, placed first among college teams and third overall.

The Air Race Classic is the longest-running all-female airplane race in the world. Its roots date back more than 70 years when the Women's Air Derby brought pilots such as Amelia Earhart, Bobbi Trout and Ruth Elder to an air race from Santa Monica, Calif., to Cleveland, Ohio.

Each Air Race Classic team flies a stock aircraft with no modifications. The teams are then assigned a handicap based on their airplane's predetermined average cruise speed.

Teams in the Air Race Classic win based on the efficiency and accuracy they exhibit in every aspect of the race. A team is rated based on its performance compared to its airplane's handicap.

Because of the nature of the scoring, it is impossible to gauge a team's performance in relation to other teams until the competition is over. It is even possible that the team that completes the course last could actually win based on the expected performance of its plane.

Additional information about the Purdue Air Race Team can be found online at <http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~nguyenp>

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PHOTO CAPTION:

Captain Katie Sparrow (right) and co-pilot Marie Janus prepare for departure Monday (June 11) at the Purdue Airport in West Lafayette for the 2007 all-female Air Race Classic competition. This year's race will begin June 19 in Oklahoma City and continue to McCook, Neb.; Denison, Iowa; Jefferson City, Mo.; Bowling Green, Ky.; Lewisburg, W. Va.; Elmira, N.Y.; Burlington, Vt.; Bangor, Maine, then finishing in Saint

John, New Brunswick, Canada. The winners will be announced at a banquet June 24 in Saint John. (Photo by Dave Umberger/Purdue News Service)

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