

News Release

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International Aviation Ambassador Visits Detroit Metropolitan Airport

--Week-long visit will promote understanding of aviation's ground-based components

DETROIT (Dec. 11, 2012)—**Detroit Metropolitan Airport** (DTW) is honored to welcome internationally-recognized ambassador for aviation and space education **Skye Bleu** to Michigan this week as part of her ongoing effort to raise awareness of the various components of the aerospace industry and the exceptional personal and professional opportunities it provides.

Skye, a pig endowed with the special gift of flight, travels the world on behalf of the **American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)** exploring the varied aspects of aviation and aerospace and sharing her insights with her followers in classrooms around the globe. Skye will spend this week touring the ins-and-outs of the Detroit Metro Airport and meeting representatives of the Airport community on-the-job to learn about the diverse team of professionals that operate one of the world's leading commercial aviation facilities.

“We are delighted to welcome Skye Bleu to Detroit Metro Airport and look forward to showing her and her friends around the world what it takes to run one of the world's busiest air transportation hubs,” said **Wayne County Airport Authority CEO Tom Naughton**. “Skye's efforts to broaden awareness of the skills young people can begin to develop now in order to become part of our exciting and dynamic industry are truly exceptional, and it is a privilege to provide her with an introduction to airports' role in aviation.”

From her home base at AIAA headquarters in Reston, Va., Bleu has been traveling to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) concepts and the exciting opportunities those skills provide in the aerospace field since 2010. Her journey began as part of the crew of **BTS-1**, a space weather balloon flight, with fellow mascots, **Camilla SDO** from **NASA** and **Fuzz Aldrin** from **Bears on Patrol**. The crew launched out of Houston and was lost in the swamps of Louisiana for a week, attracting millions of followers. The rescue was covered in many on-line technology publications. Since then, her adventures have taken her inside the Space Shuttle training facility at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas; **Wright-Patterson Air Force Base** in Dayton, Ohio; the 2012 **Women in Aerospace Awards**, the Space Shuttle Discovery Welcome Ceremony at the **Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center**; and aerospace education events from Portland, Ore., to Lakeland, Fla. – just to name a few. Along the way, she's had the opportunity to meet **NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper**, astronauts, aviators and – most rewarding to her – thousands of educators and students.

But, this visit will be her first to a major international airport in her role as an aerospace education ambassador.

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“Airports are a huge part of aviation, so I’m super excited to go behind-the-scenes and see how the important STEM concepts I love are put to use everyday operating Detroit Metro Airport!” said Bleu. “Plus, with all of the cool people who are involved in aerospace, I never miss an opportunity to make new friends.”

In 2013, Skye will take-on her biggest adventure yet, as she climbs aboard **ThinkGlobalFlight’s** round-the-world flight aboard a single-engine, Cirrus SR-20 commanded by renowned aviation educator **Capt. Judy Rice**. Over three months, their journey will extend more than 14,300 miles around the Earth, broadcasting live to Student Command Centers in classrooms across the globe and spreading awareness of STEM concepts and aviation careers at stops on every inhabited continent along the way.

“I’ll be spending a lot of time at airports around the world next year, so this week is a great opportunity to learn more about all the parts of aviation that occur on the ground,” Bleu added.

Bleu, whose flight suit was custom made for her by one of her more than 560 Facebook friends and is adorned with pins she has collected throughout her travels, will leave Detroit with more than just a better understanding of what it takes to make an airport work. Before she departs, Bleu will be presented with a DTW pin to commemorate her visit and that she may proudly wear throughout her adventures to come.

NB: Due to her busy schedule throughout the week, Ms. Bleu will not be available for interviews.

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About Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport

Having welcomed more than 32 million passengers in 2011, **Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport** (DTW) is Michigan’s busiest airport and one of the world’s leading air transportation hubs. With service from 11 scheduled passenger airlines and three scheduled cargo carriers, DTW offers more than 1200 flights per day to and from nearly 150 destinations on four continents. In 2010, DTW ranked highest in overall customer satisfaction among large airports in the *J.D. Power and Associates North America Airport Satisfaction Study*. With two new, state-of-the-art passenger terminals, six jet runways, and an onsite AAA Four-Diamond Westin hotel, DTW is among the world’s most efficient, customer friendly and operationally capable airports in North America. DTW is operated by **Wayne County Airport Authority**, which also operates nearby **Willow Run Airport**—an important corporate, cargo and general aviation facility. The Airport Authority is entirely self-sustaining and does not receive any tax dollars to support airport operations. For more information about Metro Detroit’s airports, visit www.metroairport.com.