



Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission

Media Contact: Harve Allen, Director of Communications

**Phone: (405) 604-6916; Cell: (405) 301-3230; E-mail: harve.allen@oac.state.ok.us
3700 N. Classen Blvd., Suite 240, Oklahoma City, OK 73118**

NEWS RELEASE

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Henry Appoints Two to Aeronautics Commission, Reappoints Another

OKLAHOMA CITY – Rick Armstrong of **Tulsa** and Mel Stubbings of **McAlester** have been appointed by Gov. Brad Henry to the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission. Henry also reappointed current Commissioner Joe Harris of **Blackwell** to a second term.

The mission of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission is to promote aviation, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across the state are met by the state's 114 public airports that comprise the Oklahoma Airport System.

Armstrong replaces former District 1 Commissioner Mary Smith of Tulsa who resigned in May after being appointed to the Tulsa Airport Authority. His term expires Dec. 31, 2012.

"I am honored and enthusiastic about my appointment by Governor Henry to the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission," Armstrong said. "I have been involved in the aerospace industry for 20 years, and it is rewarding to have witnessed and supported the growth of the industry in our state. I look forward to working to drive the continued expansion of our industry and to ensuring Oklahoma has the appropriate environment to be attractive to an industry that creates high-quality jobs and products."

Since April 2007, Armstrong has served as vice president of FlightSafety International Simulation in Broken Arrow, Okla., where he is responsible for the development, manufacture and certification of flight simulators for military and commercial aviation markets. He manages FlightSafety facilities in Tulsa and St. Louis, Mo.

Prior to joining FlightSafety International, Armstrong worked 18 years for The NORDAM Group in Tulsa where he served as vice president for the Interiors and Structures Division and Transparency Division. His employment background also includes an eight-year stint with Xerox Corporation.

Armstrong, who was a member of the executive committee of the Aerospace Alliance of Tulsa, holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing from Oklahoma State University.

Stubbings replaces former District 2 Commissioner Joe Ogden of Claremore who resigned in November 2007 after accepting another job opportunity in Texas. Stubbings will serve on the Commission until his term expires on Dec. 31, 2010.

"Aviation has been and is a major contributor to Oklahoma's economy," Stubbings said. "I believe that growth in aviation provides excellent career opportunities that will help keep and draw young talent to Oklahoma. I am looking forward to serving on the Aeronautics Commission and applying my 30-plus years of experience in aircraft and spacecraft production to help grow the aviation industry for the state."

Stubbings retired in 1998 after spending nearly 35 years in the aviation industry, including 31 years with North American Aircraft Division in both McAlester and Tulsa. He held several management posts during his tenure with NAAD including director of quality assurance, production engineering and operations support as well as plant manager and director of the company's Joint Primary Aircraft Training System aircraft. The last two years prior to his retirement, he served as general manager for ASTA, a major aircraft subcontractor located in Melbourne, Australia, and as a private consultant.

Stubbings, who served in the United States Navy for four years, earned a bachelor's degree in engineering applied mathematics from the University of Tulsa. He is a member of the National Mathematical Honor Society and has volunteered as a mentor since 2003, helping local students improve their mathematics skills.

Harris will serve until his term expires on Dec. 31, 2013. He was originally appointed in May 2005 to fill the unexpired term of former District 3 Commissioner Joe Johnson of Mangum, who resigned after accepting a new job in Alabama.

"I appreciate the reappointment to the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission by Governor Henry," Harris said. "I feel that this shows his confidence in the direction that the Aeronautics Commission is going. I enjoy working with all of the Commission members in moving aviation and aerospace forward on behalf of all Oklahomans."

Harris has served as general manager and chief executive officer of Kay Electric Cooperative for the past 19 years. Prior to his work for the electric cooperative, he served as director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs for the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives from 1984 to 1989. He also served as assistant director for the Public Utility Division and director of Energy Conservation Services Division for the Oklahoma Corporation Commission from 1981 to 1984.

Harris' professional affiliations include serving as chairman of the board for the National Information Solutions Cooperative in St. Charles, Mo., and director of the Energy Co-Opportunity, Inc. Board of Directors in Washington, D.C. He also served for 10 years as chairman of the Blackwell-Tonkawa Airport Trust Authority and as a member of the Authority for 16 years. He is a member of the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association, Experimental Aircraft Association and Antique Airplane Association.

A licensed pilot for 35 years and whose hobbies include restoring antique airplanes, Harris earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science and industrial arts from East Central University in Ada.

Oklahoma's aviation and aerospace industry is one of the state's largest employers, resulting in approximately 150,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs statewide. The industry yields an annual industrial output of \$12.5 billion and generates an annual payroll of \$5 billion. One in 10 Oklahomans derive their income from the aviation and aerospace industry with an average salary of nearly \$55,000 compared to \$29,000 for the average Oklahoman.

Oklahoma is also one of seven centers in the world for the modification, maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircraft.