

'Planes, pancakes, flying chickens' – event celebrates America

By Ceili Cornelius
Correspondent

Sisters Eagle Airport treated Sisters residents to a full show of airplanes and vintage and hot-rod cars at the annual Sisters Eagle Airport Fly-In event on the Fourth of July. A typical dry, hot summer day on the tarmac at Sisters Eagle Airport had several hundred patrons out and about to see the air show and drag racing to celebrate America's birthday. The familiar sound of helicopters and other aircraft echoed down the runway all morning in Sisters Country.

The event began with a community pancake breakfast and the arrival of aircraft, then the 5K run/walk featuring a hot rod and a plane signal to send off the runners (*see related story, page 4*). Throughout the day, cars were on display across the tarmac, mostly old-school cars, with some modern sports cars and other rigs in the mix. The Sisters Camp-Sherman Fire Department was also there with an EMS station, handing out fire hats and stickers to kids, staffed by the Sisters Fire Corps and EMS personnel. Later in the morning, pilots began the famous "chicken drop," in which patrons bet on where the rubber chicken will land on the runway when it's dropped from a plane.

The day at the airport traditionally ends with drag races down the runway.

Brittany Meudt, sales analyst at Laird Superfood, was there with her family showing off one of her grandpa's signature old-fashioned cars. Her grandpa, Mick Hunter, was an avid car collector and his red 1955 Chevrolet 210 Del Ray, that he called "Ralph," was present at this year's event.

"We wanted to come out and honor Grandpa with this car, and we hadn't shown it off since the [2019] Glory

Daze Car Show and we thought it would be a good idea to come out with it for a local event," said Meudt.

Meudt's 16-month-old son, Beau, was also in attendance — his first car show honoring his great-grandpa.

Hunter bought the car in 1965 when he was 19 years old, and moved to Sisters with the Chevy in 2005. Hunter passed away in 2019. Meudt and "Grandpa Mike" were very close through her youth.

"It means a lot to come out and honor him at this local event," she said.

Leading Edge Aviation Inc, based in Bend, was also a lead in the event, putting on what they call "hop rides" in tour helicopters throughout the day. Leading Edge is a flight academy that trains recreational and commercial pilots.

Their representative at the event, Kate Ayres, said "We are out here doing tours in the Robison R-44 helicopters touring over the mountains. That is primarily the training

aircraft for pilots, and we get these pilots trained and a lot of them end up becoming EMS helicopter and plane pilots," she said.

Executive Vice President of Leading Edge Jack Walker is the lead instructor for over 200 students.

"We work with COCC (Central Oregon Community College) and veterans for flight training, and it is really good practice in the field rather than just working with professional training agencies," he said.

As the day continued, there were drag races, flights landing and taking off, and people out mingling and catching up with old friends as the state of Oregon begins to open up again.

"It is so nice to see everyone's smiling faces," said Sisters resident Heather Johnson.

Owner and Founder of Fika Sisters Coffeehouse Renee Reitmeier said, "It was so fun to enjoy a community festival! And this is one of Sisters' classics



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Leading Edge Aviation offered "hop rides" throughout the day on July 4 at Sisters Eagle Airport.

— planes, pancakes, and flying chickens."

Cathy Stadel, owner of C&C Nursery, said, "We loved seeing everyone out enjoying themselves, and seeing their smiling faces again. Nothing like fast cars and the smell of burning rubber to let you know summer is here! It's a wonderful

way to celebrate America's birthday."

The Sisters Eagle Airport's Fly-In event is an annual Sisters tradition that will carry on throughout the years, but this year was special because it is one of the first events of the summer for citizens to gather together with a sense of normalcy.

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