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## Lone Star Flight Museum prepares to soar

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Douglas H. Owens is a passionate man who quietly, but eloquently, spoke of his passion during a recent presentation to the Education and Workforce Development Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

### Called out of retirement

Owens spent 33 years in the Air Force, which included service as vice commander of the Air Force Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. The command is responsible for 12 main operating bases, more than 67,000 active-duty, Reserve, Guard, civilians and contractors, and more than 1,300 trainer, fighter and mobility aircraft. AETC graduates approximately 250,000 students in its education and training programs annually.

Owens and his wife planned on spending a comfortable retirement in the Texas Hill Country in Boerne when he took off the uniform in 2013. Then came the call in 2016. A new Lone Star Flight Museum was being built at Houston's Ellington Airport. The \$38 million, 138,000 sq. ft. museum would include two large hangars for 15 to 20 featured aircraft, flight line access, class and meeting rooms, and a 250-seat auditorium. The museum needed a CEO.

After a lifetime of service to his country, would he be willing to take on such a massive new challenge? By September, Owens and his wife found themselves adapting to life in Houston. "We made a lifetime commitment to come here and be a part of this. This is that exciting for us," he explained.

### Education to be central theme of Lone Star Flight Museum

Education will be a central theme of the new museum. It will feature an immersive aviation learning center similar to the one at the Seattle Museum of Flight that focuses in on

science, technology, engineering and math.

These are the only two such learning centers in the country. Groups of 20-40 students will undergo a two-hour curriculum in a small hangar which will house a Mooney donated airplane and 10 flight simulators that can be configured in a multitude of ways at a multitude of educational levels.

Owens said, "When we open up the new facility, it will be all about education, all about inspiration — inspiring young people to futures of promise and purpose. Our clientele will be about 1.2 million young people in Houston, and we are absolutely thrilled.

"We are looking to partner with ISDs to provide an experience that will fill gaps in curriculum, and on top of that, our young people will have a great time at the museum. We're going to focus on the fourth, fifth and sixth graders, because it is that group of young people that still has the twinkle in their eye."

### Curriculum designed at three levels

The facility will offer instruction in the basics of flight, weather and flight

training in order to prepare student visitors to build a flight plan for an "out and back" from Ellington to Galveston. They will perform a preflight walk around a functional Mooney airplane, which will be deliberately configured with operational problems that the students have to identify. The curriculum is designed at three levels — elementary, middle school and high school.

Owens said, "When the students finish with that flight, they will have learned a little about physics, geometry, and algebra without ever uttering one of those words. They'll leave that learning center with a smile on their faces."

When complete, the new Lone Star Flight Museum will feature two large hangars, Heritage and Waltrip, named for museum founder Bob Waltrip, a Houston businessman and founder of Service Corporation International, whose private aircraft collection became the original basis of the museum.

The aircraft that are making the move from the current location of the museum in Galveston include a B-17 Flying Fortress, a



Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Douglas H. Owens (l) is the CEO of the new Lone Star Flight Museum, which is scheduled to open on Sept. 1, 2017, at Ellington Airport. Shown with him are Katie Jackman, vice president of Marketing, Sales and Communications, and Kenneth Morris, a former Navy air-crewman, who is director of Education.

North American B-25, P-47 Thunderbolt, as well as Boeing Stearman and PT 19 Fairchild military trainers. "Most of our fleet flies. We will have a significant shop that will allow us to continue to do the fabrication that keeps those planes flying," said Owens.

### Texas Aviation Hall of Fame finds new home

The museum will also be home to the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame located within the Heritage Gallery, which offers a chronological walk through time and the evolution of aviation. Owens concluded, "The museum

represents our aviation heritage on one hand and then the future and promise of our young people to carry on the traditions that got us to where we are today."

Lone Star Flight Museum is scheduled to open on Sept. 1, 2017.

## COM president meets with members of BAHEP for a get acquainted visit

Dr. Warren Nichols was named College of the Mainland's president on Jan. 30, 2017. He assumed his duties on Feb. 13.

Partnering with the community, staff and students is a priority, Nichols said. As part of this initiative, Nichols paid a get acquainted visit to the Education and Workforce Development Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership in late April.

"We have a great faculty, a great staff, and people's hearts are in the right place," stated Nichols.

"I'm extremely interested in the CTE (career and technical education) component of our college. College of the Mainland was the first to have a process technology program. Our graduates, after 18-24 months, are making over \$73,000 per year base salary in the plants. Our nurses have one of the highest first-time pass rates in the area.

We're very proud of what we do, but I don't think we do enough.

"Our vision, our mission moving forward is to keep doing what we're doing well and do it better. We really want to partner with our Rotaries, our chambers of commerce, our economic development units. When you're trying to recruit new businesses, new industries, bring us to the table so that we can help make sure that when the employers are ready to be here that we have the qualified workforce," Nichols stated.

He also pointed out that COM is a 50-year-old institution with many original buildings. To date there have been two failed bond referendums. Part of his job, as "the new kid on the block," is make sure that the college will be successful when moving forward with another referendum.

Texas City is the home base for COM; however,



Dr. Warren Nichols  
President  
College of the Mainland

Nichols wants to expand to "make sure that the full, comprehensive offerings are available in the north part of COM's service area," as well. One of the difficulties COM faces is that part of that service area is not within the college's taxing district. He is cur-

rently working with area mayors and business partners to develop strategies on how to extend the college's offerings as part of the college's new five-year strategic plan.

Nichols added, "We are heavily invested in dual credit with our ISDs, but, again, we know that we need to do more with the workforce programs, the CTE. Honestly, that's where we really ought to be concentrating the majority of our time and our effort in dual enrollment and dual credit. If you capture that workforce student who is interested in workforce programs rather than a university degree, those students come to us and stay with us. It's a win-win-win all the way around."

Nichols concluded his

remarks saying, "Bottom line, we're here to partner with you. We want to be a good community partner. We want to make sure that we are serving the needs of everyone, not just those who are closer to the main campus.

"Part of the reason I'm here, not only here with you in this meeting but with the college, is to make sure that you are getting everything that you need from us. Whether it's working with our community partners to create internships or working with our ISDs on even greater ways to do business, we want to do that."

A native of Fort Worth, Nichols is a former police officer who holds a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Houston. He graduated with his master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Texas at Arlington.

## BAHEP welcomes global firm AECOM as newest member of organization

### AECOM

It's good to be No. 1, but it comes at a very high cost. That cost is excellence. Ranked No. 1 in *Engineering News Record's* "Top 500 Design Firms" for the seventh consecutive year, AECOM has attained this lofty status by delivering integrated, sustainable solutions that help clients and communities in every region of the world create and unlock new opportunities.

AECOM is the newest member of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

BAHEP President Bob Mitchell noted, "AECOM has been an active participant on our International

Maritime Advisory Committee for some time as we've been seeking solutions for storm surge suppression. We welcome their unparalleled expertise within the committee and now as a new member."

Rod McCrary, PE, AECOM vice president, represents the firm within BAHEP. He stated, "AECOM is proud to serve many clients throughout greater Houston, Galveston, and surrounding counties. We have followed BAHEP's work for quite a while and look forward to assisting in

their initiatives in whatever manner is appropriate."

While AECOM's official founding was in 1990, some of its predecessor firms had distinguished histories dating back more than 110 years. With its global headquarters in Los Angeles, AECOM employs more

# AECOM

than 92,000 people who serve clients in more than 150 countries around the world. In 2015, AECOM was recognized by *Fortune* magazine for the first time

as a World's Most Admired Company.

What is AECOM? Perhaps the words on its website at [www.aecom.com](http://www.aecom.com) explain it best. "We are a global network of experts working with clients, communities and colleagues to develop and implement innovative solutions to the world's most complex challenges.

"Delivering clean water and energy. Building iconic skyscrapers. Planning new cities. Restoring damaged environments. Connecting people and economies with

roads, bridges, tunnels and transit systems. Designing parks where children play. Helping governments maintain stability and security.

"We connect expertise across services, markets, and geographies to deliver transformative outcomes. Worldwide, we design, build, finance, operate and manage projects and programs that unlock opportunities, protect our environment and improve people's lives.

"We are AECOM. Built to deliver a better world."

In Houston, AECOM is located at 5444 Westheimer Road, Suite 400 and can be contacted at 713.780.4100.

BUSINESS to BUSINESS is a monthly Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership publication in partnership with THE DAILY NEWS. BAHEP is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeastern Texas. Its members include more than 265 business partners encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, the Houston Airport System, and Port Houston. For membership information, contact Membership Director Harriet Lukee at 832.536.3250.

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