

Greater Huntsville Wins AIAA Outstanding Section and Seven Other National Awards

By Ken Philippart

Images Courtesy of Dr. Arloe Mayne and Ms. Lisa Philippart

The Greater Huntsville Section capped the 2014 – 2015 section year by winning eight national-level section awards given by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). Greater Huntsville took home an award in every category, the first time the section has dominated these awards in many years.

The Greater Huntsville Section, with over 850 professional members, competed in the Very Large Section Category that includes the 11 largest sections across AIAA.

Greater Huntsville was named the *Outstanding Section* for 2014 – 2015, beating out larger sections in Los Angeles-Las Vegas, San Francisco, the National Capital and the Pacific Northwest. The *Outstanding Section Award* is based on overall activities and contributions throughout the year. The nomination cited over

115 activities throughout the year spanning professional development, networking, public policy communications, honors and awards, recruiting, support to college branches and pre-college outreach events. The write-up noted the section's first out-of-area trips to the National Museum of the US Air Force, the Southern Museum of Flight, and the Beechcraft Heritage Museum, organized by Michael Dunning, along with implementation of hands-on engineering activities like Pumpkin Blast 2014, the suitcase rocket design project and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle course.

The section snagged first place for the *Communications Award*. The criteria for selecting winners include effectiveness of communicating local and national news to members, timeliness and breadth of articles, editorial content, variety of material covered, format and appearance of the publication. The nomination highlighted the section's outstanding resurrected newsletter, *Telemetry*, by editor Professor Gabe Xu, the innovative *GHSV eMag* feature by webmaster Dr. Arloe Mayne, and the chair's quarterly *View from the Chair* publication among other effective media and social media tools to communicate the AIAA message.



Greater Huntsville received second place for the *Career and Professional Development Award* for activities that are beneficial to career development. Led by Young Professional and Career Development Director Cody Crofford with major contributions from Vice Chair Dr. Kurt Polzin, Technical Director John Lassiter, Education Director Carla Shackelford, Liaison to Student Branches Neal Allgood, and Brandon Stiltner, the team organized and conducted numerous technical short courses, skills development training classes and hands-on engineering projects. The section's hosting of the 7th Annual Government CubeSat Technical Interchange Meeting and reception, led by John Dankanich, Kurt Polzin and Brandon Stiltner, was also feted.

The section garnered second place for the *Young Professional Award*, presented to sections that demonstrate excellence in planning and executing successful events that encourage the participation of young members in AIAA and provide opportunities for leadership at the section, region and national levels. YP Director Cody Crofford led the section's efforts. Highlighted were the section's new YP brunches, Lunch with a Leader mentoring program, Awards Dinner technical poster session and YP-oriented design projects. The success of the programs was demonstrated by YPs holding over one third of the Council positions and being fully integrated throughout all areas of the section's mission areas.



Section Members Touring Beechcraft Heritage Museum

For the *Membership Award*, the section tied for second place with the Dayton/Cincinnati and Los Angeles-Las Vegas sections. Led by Membership Director Roger Herdy with assistance from Anthony Bartens, the section dramatically slowed the years-long decline in professional membership

through recruiting events at the Moontown Airport Fly-In, Rocket City Blastoff, and Drone Day while also pursuing an aggressive member retention program. Courtney Kronenberger and Bob Coke were cited for their initiative in forming the section's first chapter in Mobile. The group's efforts resulted in an increase in student membership while halving the loss of professional members seen over the last five years.

Greater Huntsville took third place for the *Harry Staubs Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) K-12 Outreach Award*, presented to sections that have implemented a program that provided quality educational resources for the nation's K-12 teachers in the STEM areas. Pre-College Outreach Director Megan Beattie, with major contributions by Neal and Jayme Allgood, led activities that included Rocket City Blastoff, the First Flight Commemoration contest, STEM 5K Power Run, the Space Science Technical

Committee essay contest, the Human Exploration Rover Challenge, Great Paper Airplane Contest and the section scholarship program.

The section also garnered third place for the *Public Policy Award*, presented for stimulating public awareness of the needs and benefits of aerospace research and development and for educating members on the value of public policy activities. Public Policy Director Allison Cash led the section's efforts that included participation in Congressional Visits Day and a luncheon with Congressman Mo Brooks.

Finally, the section tied with the Los Angeles-Las Vegas and National Capital sections for the *Outstanding Activity Award*. AIAA extends special recognition to sections which held an outstanding activity during the section year. Greater Huntsville was recognized for its Engineers Week program that encompassed nine events including a kick-off social, a tour of United Launch Alliance, a short course, a technical lecture, the Great Paper Airplane Contest, the Science Olympiad and an orientation flight for the First Flight Commemoration Contest winner. Planning and conducting the E Week program was a section-wide effort and highlighted Greater Huntsville's key to success in 2014 – 2015: motivated professionals working together to better our profession, our community and ourselves.

The section will formally receive these awards at a future event. The awards include monetary prizes from AIAA totaling \$1,750 to fund additional section programs.

Congratulations to the 2014 – 2015 Council and the Greater Huntsville Section for working as a team to achieve professional excellence and national recognition!