
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EDVENTURE OPENS NEW FLIGHT EXHIBIT

Names Boeing 757 Cockpit for Retired Local General Stan Hood

EdVenture is opening its newest permanent exhibit, FLIGHT, with support from NASA and the City of Columbia, Saturday, July 15, at 10 a.m. Museum members are invited to preview the exhibit at 9 a.m.

The exhibit incorporates real airplane elements including:

- Boeing 747 engine cowling
- Learning theater made from real airplane fuselage sides and seats
- Child-sized wind tunnel
- Boeing 757 cockpit
- Flight School with three Boeing 777 simulators
- Video wall featuring local pilot video footage
- Kuka robot used in airplane manufacturing
- Paper airplane test flight practice station

“If we are going to have enough people ready for manufacturing jobs in South Carolina in the future, we have to get children excited about science learning at the elementary ages,” said Karen Coltrane, EdVenture president and CEO. “This exhibit was designed specifically to link the excitement of flying to the career opportunities available throughout the sector. If we can get children to experience science as a fun subject with real world applications, we will have more people in the workforce pipeline in the future.”

The exhibit’s design process was unique. Coltrane explained that original concepts from national museum exhibit designers did not excite the staff. “We sought feedback from the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness Aerospace Committee’s industry experts, and they had the same reaction we did. So we started working together to design the exhibit here and use their connections to source authentic airplane equipment.”

Coltrane herself picked the retired Boeing 757 cockpit from an air field “boneyard” in Tupelo, Mississippi. “The process of working directly with industry experts has made this a much better exhibit,” she said. “We are now smarter about the business of flight, and our community partners understand more about reaching and teaching younger audiences.”

The most visible element of the new exhibit is a real Boeing 757 cockpit that now protrudes from the museum’s west side. The cockpit has been named for General Stan Hood, a long-time Columbia resident who started flying at the age of 14 and was the South Carolina Air National Guard Commander. General Hood’s son, Mark Hood, owner and president of Hood Construction, oversaw the project to connect the cockpit to the building’s structure and install the 747 engine cowling. “We had never installed an airplane to the outside of a building,” said Mark Hood, “But our team understood immediately how this exhibit could inspire children to pursue aeronautical careers. My dad always said the government paid him to do something he loved. I hope sitting in this cockpit and having a pilot’s view across the Gervais Street Bridge will get children excited about how science in school connects to fun jobs in the future.”

“Mark Hood immediately saw what we were trying to accomplish and jumped in with both feet, recruiting area subcontractors who all gave assistance,” said Coltrane. “Likewise, I will always be grateful to Mayor Benjamin for not laughing me out of his office when I told him we wanted to hang an airplane out of the side of the building. His and City Council’s support of this exhibit really made it all possible.”

“We are so excited to bring this exhibit to the community,” said Dr. John Dozier, chief diversity officer and senior associate provost for Inclusion at University of South Carolina and chair of EdVenture’s Board of Trustees. “Many of our visitors have never flown before, and this exhibit not only gives them the sensation of flight, but shows that there is an entire industry behind the pilot for which science education can prepare them. Plus, how cool is it to see the Gervais Street Bridge from a real airplane cockpit?”

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About EdVenture

The mission of EdVenture is to inspire children to experience the joy of learning. EdVenture is dedicated to lifelong learning through its 92,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor interactive exhibit space and in its educational outreach programs and afterschool programs. The museum, located at 211 Gervais Street, Columbia, SC 29201, has welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 18 foreign countries, creating shared experiences and memories for families learning together. For more information about EdVenture, visit EdVenture.org or call 803-779-3100.