

40 Years
of empowering
our youth



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OBAP's Milestone 40th National Convention Welcomes 21 Notable Speakers, 53 Airline Companies and 1,500 Diverse Aerospace Professionals to Chicagoland, August 10 – 12th.

The Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals hosts 40th Annual National Convention and Career Exposition sponsored by 14 airline carriers.

Chicago, IL (August 4, 2016) – More than fifteen hundred aviation and aerospace professionals will gather August 10 – 12, 2016 for the 40th Annual National Convention and Career Exposition at the Westin Lombard Yorktown Center in Lombard, Illinois. The convention, presented annually by the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP), will feature notable speakers including Captain Howard Attarian, Senior Vice President, Flight Ops, United Airlines, Louis Smith, President, FAPA.aero, Bart Roberts, Vice President, Flight Ops, JetBlue, Captain Jim Bowman, Senior Vice President, Flight Ops, FedEx Express and Dr. Aprille J. Ericsson, Astronautical/Aeronautical Engineer, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and Bill Pritchett, Director of Education, Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) throughout its three-day program.

The convention will commence on Wednesday, August 10 with the **Airline Hiring Symposium**, one of five aerospace professional development events, sponsored by American Airlines, being held throughout the convention. Alaska, American, Delta, FedEx, JetBlue, Southwest, United, UPS, Emirates and Virgin America will provide attendees with an industry outlook, airline hiring and selection processes and career guidance. Following the symposium facilitated by OBAP's Aerospace Professional Development team and Louis Smith, President, Future & Active Pilot Advisors (FAPA), the sold-out **Career Exposition** will open and provide more than 1,300 registered aviation professionals opportunities to meet recruiters from 53 participating companies; Aero Crew Solutions, Air Wisconsin, Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), American Airlines, American Airlines Credit Union, Ameriflight, Bessie Coleman Aerospace Legacy, Cage Marshall Consulting, California Coast University, Centerline Interview, CommutAir, Compass Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Emirates Airlines, Endeavor Air, Envoy Air, ExpressJet Airlines, FAPA.aero, FedEx Express, Flight Safety International, Frontier Airlines, GoJet Airlines, Great Lakes Airlines, JetBlue, Kalitta Air, Lewis University, Mesa Airlines, National Gay Pilots Association (NGPA), National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), National Geospatial

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Intelligence Agency (NGA), Omni Air International, Piedmont Airlines, Professional Pilots of Tomorrow, PSA Airlines, Republic Airways, Silver Airways, SkyWest Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Trans States Airlines, United Airlines, United States Air Force, UPS, United States Air Force Reserve, United States Marine Corps, Virgin America, Walmart Aviation, Western Michigan University, Wings Financial Credit Union and XOJet.

“The Career Exposition at OBAP’s 40th Annual Convention is poised to be one of the largest aerospace fairs in the nation and history of the organization. The continued investment and participation of carriers each year prove the effectiveness of this three-day recruitment event and also speak to the desirability of OBAP’s highly qualified member base,” Captain Karl Minter, board chairman and pilot, United Airlines.

Day two highlights include the **Founders and Pioneers Breakfast**, sponsored by JetBlue, to induct the organization’s founding members and notable aviation pioneers including Captain Raymond Dothard, Captain Simon Patrick Gaskill, Captain Oscar Perry, Captain William C. Rand, Benjamin Franklin Thomas and Captain J. Georges Sulmers into the OBAP Hall of Fame on display during the convention, presented by the U.S. Air Force. These individuals are being honored for their unwavering commitment to aviation including an immigrant who left his home country to pursue the American dream, and five military combat pilots who served their country during the Vietnam war, including the first black Naval aviator to fly 100 combat missions.

To increase minority participation in future aerospace careers, the organization will also host seven events tailored to youth and young adults. Events include a **Youth Workshop**, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps, in partnership with representatives from NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and the American Model Aeronautics (AMA). The **Youth Luncheon**, celebrating 40 years of empowering our youth, sponsored by FedEx Express, will stimulate conversations in STEM Education in partnership with the U.S. Air Force and student presenters from AeroStar and Tuskegee NEXT 2025. A **Collegiate Series**, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps, includes career development workshops to transition from college to career facilitated by Vanessa Blacknall-Jamison, Leadership Coach, FAA and Dr. Aprille Ericsson, Capture (Mission) Manager for NASA's STAR-X Program, both OBAP Board Advisors. Finally, the Aviation Consortium Breakfast, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps, engages students, aviation college leaders and airline managers.

The **Corporate Luncheon and Strategic Industry Symposium**, being held on Friday and sponsored by Delta Air Lines, will address the future of diversity within the aerospace industry and explore strategies to reduce aerospace professional employment shortages. Michael P. Huerta, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration responsible for the safety and efficiency of the largest aerospace system in the world will serve as keynote speaker. Industry experts will serve as panelists: Greg D. Jones, Managing Director, Diversity and Inclusion, United Airlines, Letty Ashworth, Director, Global Diversity, Delta Air Lines and Shannon Brown, Chief HR & Diversity Officer, FedEx Express.

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“Each year convention attendees spend a lot of time focusing on how to advance their aviation careers and improve their skillset within three robust days. To establish a perfect balance of business and fun the convention will commence with a **Welcome Reception** sponsored by Alaska Airlines and conclude with the **Annual Awards Gala**, sponsored by United Airlines, to celebrate new captains, retirees and more than 15 scholarship recipients,” said Grant Walker Jr. convention chair and vice president of business development for Wings Financial Credit Union.

Additional sponsors of the 40th Annual National Convention and Career Exposition include Air Wisconsin Airlines Corporation, American Airlines Credit Union, PSA Airlines, Southwest, Walmart Aviation and Wings Financial Credit Union.

The full agenda can be found here: <http://goo.gl/QVU8Un>

For promotional photos, press passes and interviews, contact Shalishah Franklin by email at press@obap.org. Join the conversation using and searching the hashtag #OBAPCon2016.

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About The Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP)

Founded in 1976, OBAP is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the encouragement and advancement of minorities in all aviation and aerospace careers. The robust and diverse membership is also committed to supporting aspiring aviation professionals granting more than \$4.8 million in scholarships to date, mentoring, and training through initiatives like the Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy held in 30 cities annually.