

Tourism News



For Immediate Release, April 7, 2016

Contact: Nancy Lutz, 845-463-5446 or
Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, 845-752-3200
& info@oldrhinebeck.org

Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum, “Spirit of the Aerodrome Gala” Event Developments *Saturday, May 21, 2016*

RHINEBECK, NY – April 5, 2016: Planning for the Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum’s **SPIRIT OF THE AERODROME GALA** is moving ahead rapidly and it will be the most elaborate event that the Aerodrome has ever undertaken to kick off an airshow season. The Gala will be centered around the Aerodrome’s recently completed and thoroughly accurate reproduction of Charles Lindbergh’s famed *Spirit of St. Louis*, which will celebrate its public debut with a demonstration flight and a 1920s themed fundraising cocktail party at the Aerodrome. This event will take place on the 89th anniversary of Lindbergh’s epic transatlantic flight from New York to Paris.

The Aerodrome’s *Spirit of St. Louis* reproduction made international headlines last December when it became the subject of an Associated Press article and video after its successful test flight. The project had been worked on over a period of twenty years, and it became the first aircraft reproduction to be started and completed at Old Rhinebeck since Aerodrome founder, Cole Palen passed away in 1993. Ken Cassens, Palen’s friend and longtime Aerodrome mechanic and pilot, headed up the project and duplicated every part of the original aircraft as accurately as possible, with assistance from the National Air and Space museum in Washington, D.C. The original had no forward visibility and neither does the reproduction, which makes it challenging to fly. A chase plane, a Curtiss Robin of the same vintage, will be used when the aircraft is demonstrated in flight to help ensure that the coast is clear.

The Museum buildings and grounds will open at 10AM and there will be casual demonstrations of vintage aircraft and vehicles throughout the day. Aerodrome staff and volunteers will be on hand to personally talk with visitors about the collection and current projects. The Heartstring Hot Club band will also entertain guests during the day with live music of the 1920s through 1940s. A full schedule of events and details can be found on a special website that has been set up specifically for the event: www.spiritoftheaerodrome.com. The site allows you to sign up for an invitation for the event. A “buy now” ticket feature will be added to the site in the next week or so.

The highlight of the day will be the grand rollout and flight demonstration of the *Spirit of St. Louis*, which will take place at shortly after 5:00 pm (weather permitting). After touchdown, the *Spirit* will be rolled into the gala hangar and celebrations will commence, with New York’s CBS 101.1 radio personality, vintage aviator, and former Aerodrome pilot, Dan Taylor as the Master of Ceremonies.

Guest speaker, Reeve Lindbergh (author, and daughter of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh) will discuss her father’s personal feelings about the original aircraft, which has had a permanent home in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. since 1928. Reeve says of the Aerodrome’s *Spirit* project, “When I

was growing up in Fairfield County, Connecticut, I used to fly with my father sometimes on Saturday afternoons out of Danbury. We flew in an Aeronca, but I secretly dreamed of flying in the Spirit of St. Louis over New England. I never thought I'd see the Spirit fly in my part of the country, but thanks to the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome and its wonderful work with their own Spirit of St. Louis reproduction project, it is happening!"

Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro will discuss the significance of the Aerodrome's reproduction project and the importance of this aircraft to New York's Hudson Valley as a functioning example of an American icon at the event. Aerodrome President Michael DiGiacomio stated, *"We are thrilled to have Reeve, Dan and Marc participating in the event. It will be an enjoyable and memorable night for all!"*

The Georgie Wonders Orchestra, a well-known regional nineteen piece swing band, will play music of the period during the gala. MainCourse, one of the Hudson Valley's premier caterers, will be providing period-themed food and drink, including *The Lindy*, an original "NYP" (New York-Paris) inspired cocktail. Participants are encouraged to dress in 1920s period attire to enhance the atmosphere. High school students are encouraged to submit essays for The Charles Lindbergh essay contest, and the winner will be presented with a \$250 scholarship at the Gala. Proceeds from the Gala will be applied to ongoing aircraft restorations at the Aerodrome. The Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum is 501(c) 3, non-profit organization, and donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Websites: www.spiritoftheaerodrome.com and www.ldrhonebeck.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rhonebeckaerodromemuseum