

## RMC FLIGHT TEAM EARNS BERTH AT NATIONALS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS -- The Intercollegiate Flight Team at Rocky Mountain College has been selected to compete at the National Competition of the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) held in Cahokia, Ill., beginning May 17, 2009. The event, hosted this year by Parks College of St. Louis University, is six days long, and pits the best 30 collegiate flight teams in the nation against each other.

In October, Rocky attended the Regional Competition in Greeley, Colo., hosted by Aims Community College, and finished third overall out of six teams. Rocky's showing was strong enough to be offered its third invitation to nationals in the past five years. The competition includes nine different events in which students compete in both flying skills and ground knowledge. Flight events included navigation, precision landings, and message drop. Ground events include precision flight in a simulator, flight planning, aircraft preflight, and aircraft recognition.

About 80 students took part in the Regional Competition this year. From Rocky, Team Co-Captain Lukas Johnson finished in third place for the simulator, sixth in SCAN, and 10<sup>th</sup> in the power off-landings, finishing 16<sup>th</sup> overall. Team Co-Captain Brandon Templeton took fourth place in aircraft recognition, fifth place in the simulator, and fifth in power-off landings, finishing sixth overall under the Top Pilot award.

Other strong performances included Amy Hyde and Heather Kasubowski, who finished fifth place in the navigation event; Taylor Capers and Ryle Evanoff, who finished eighth in navigation; Connor Lockwood and Brandon Templeton, who finished 10<sup>th</sup> in navigation; and Dmitriy Nesmeyanov and Kevin Keegan, who took 10<sup>th</sup> in message drop. Kevin also took ninth in the short field landings and seventh for aircraft recognition. Other members earning points for Rocky were Grant Gagnon, Jacob Keierleber, Brian Kelleher, Jase Korol, Hannah Neel, and Jesse Taylor. The team was coached by Chris Wiens, RMC director of flight operations, and full-time flight instructor and Flight Team veteran, Matt Cichosz.

It's important to note that there is only one level of collegiate flight competition, unlike football, for example, which has various divisions based on the size of the school. Though Rocky is a small school, the team is in competition with the largest programs in the country, including the United States Air Force Academy.

“Like everything else at Rocky, our size is our strength,” said Dan Hargrove, RMC director of aviation. “When we went to Nationals in 2004, we finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall -- our committed students and excellent coaching make us capable of performing very well.”

Hargrove added, “Students on our flight team have an added competitive advantage in their careers. They've learned even more about excellence, teamwork, and commitment. We're very proud of their hard work and success.”

The Intercollegiate Flight Team is one of many activities offered in Rocky's professional aviation program. Students graduate as commercial multi-engine pilots, with flight training in technologically advanced glass-cockpit aircraft and simulators, readying them for professional careers throughout the aviation industry.

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