

Michael Markowski Receives Pennsylvania's Highest Aviation Award

At its 29th Annual Pennsylvania Aviation and Aerospace Conference, the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania presented Michael Markowski with the state's highest aviation honor—the “2009 Achievement Award.”



Sara Walfort, Transportation Planning Manager, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, and Mike and Marjie Markowski.

Chosen for his lifelong dedication to aviation and continuing promotion of it to the public, Markowski, an aerospace engineer, pilot, and EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) Hall of Famer, initiated hanggliding on the east coast, is an ultralight expert, author of eight aviation books, and publisher of aviation and success books through his companies, Aeronautical Publishers and Possibility Press.

He humbly accepted the award then launched into a rousing motivational talk, starting by enthusiastically asking attendees, “Are you fired up about aviation?” Markowski, a science fair scholarship winner, nicknamed “Orville” in high school, obviously was! When he finished, the room started buzzing, many calling his talk “a breath of fresh air.”

Markowski stated leadership was no longer command and control, but encourage and empower. He shared that the aviation community needs to reach out to the general public and promote the dream of flying, encouraging both youth and adults.

He encouraged attendees to join the EAA, participate in its Young Eagles Program, and become a mentor to Boy Scouts earning their aviation merit badges. He suggested they show or take a kid to an aviation movie like *Amelia*, then about to be released. Markowski also encouraged attendees to assemble a scrapbook featuring their aviation life and accomplishments, and share it with others to excite them about aviation.

As an example of what encouraging and empowering can do, he held up a copy of *Harrisburg* magazine. It featured Markowski on the cover embracing a Flight Design CTS. He stated that the popular LSA (Light Sport Aircraft) is distributed by Tom Peghiny, president, his most successful mentee. The two met in 1972, Peghiny was 16, Markowski 25, on a hill in Framingham, MA. Markowski had been setting up his first hang glider when Peghiny approached, offering to help. They became best friends and Peghiny went on to win 35 hanggliding championships, design and distribute the Flight Star ultralight, and is now developing the electric eSpyder ultralight.

Markowski closed by saying his objective is to put aviation on the silver screen based on his memoir, *Wings of Dreams*, using his adventure-filled life to encourage people to get a dream and do whatever it takes to make it happen. He said he also envisioned it being shown in schools and colleges the world over. His intention is to inspire students to be and do more with their lives, no matter what their chosen vocation might be.