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Airport Day 1997 Press Release One

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Well, it’s history. The first NASA Aeronautics Day sponsored by NASA Nebraska Space Grant and EPSCoR took place on Monday September 29, 1997 at the Sioux Gateway Airport in Sioux City. The day began at 10:00 am when 203 5th and 6th grade Native American students and their teachers arrived by school bus at the airport. The participating reservation schools were from Walthill, Winnebago, Macy, and Santee, Nebraska. Each group was escorted for the day by a NASA Graduate Research Fellow.

The airport hosts for the day were Jetsun Aviation, TW Express, FAA Air Traffic Control Tower, Northwest Airlines, Sioux Gateway Airport Authority, the 185th Air Guard Fighter Wing, and University of Nebraska at Omaha Aviation Institute. Everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch furnished by Jetsun. During the day, the children saw airplanes, maintenance operations, air traffic control activities, air carrier operations, baggage handling, simulators, aircraft rescue and firefighting, and just about everything one might see on a busy airport.

The message that was featured throughout the day at most of the visitation sites was stay in school, do well (particularly in math and science), have nothing to do with drugs and alcohol, and work hard at your studies. Following a refreshment treat at 3:00 pm by FAA, everyone - including the teachers and all those that had worked so hard on this exciting project - returned home tired but happy.

There is one immediate follow-on activity. The students will be writing letters expressing what they found interesting at the airport. The letters will be sent to the Aviation Institute where they will be copied, bound, and sent to each of the airport sponsors, each school library, and to key NASA administrators. Numerous pictures were taken that will be shared at the NASA western region meeting and which will become part of the NASA Nebraska Space Grant and EPSCoR web site.

What a fulfilling endeavor this was for all of us.

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