

# Interest taking flight: National Aviation Day at airport stokes kids' curiosity

BY TERRI HARBER The Daily News Aug 19, 2017



**BULLHEAD CITY** — The chance to view planes up close and enjoy breakfast, both for free, attracted about 300 people to the Laughlin-Bullhead International Airport on Saturday morning.

National Aviation Day is an annual celebration of the nation's history and future of aviation and this year's local event featured the display of about 18 mostly private-owned aircraft. The site at Signature Flight Support, near the main airport terminal, provides a good view of aircraft arriving and departing.

Several of the planes on display flew into and out of the airport during the event. Some larger commercial aircraft also arrived and departed. Each plane, whether coming or going, delighted the crowd. "This event gets a little bigger every year," Jeremy Keating, airport director, said with a smile on his face.

John Corey brought a Lancair 360. The Bullhead City man's kit plane is a two-seat monoplane painted white with blue lettering. He was in the military, and later worked in such positions as a corporate pilot and airline operations manager. He also has experience in search and rescue.

The Lancair is one of several planes he owns. Corey and a building partner obtained the kit plane about halfway constructed. It took four years to complete. Its canopy is large and lifts open like the hood on a sporty European automobile. This aircraft also sits fairly close to the ground. Both characteristics allow people to more easily see inside its cockpit.

He talked to many people — including boys and girls — about the plane on Saturday.

"When I was 5 years old I got on an airplane flight," Corey remembered about his childhood in Hollywood, Fla. "It was in a 1946 Ercoupe. I knew then aviation was what I wanted to do."

Watching young people get excited about aviation is a big reason why Corey enjoys coming to this type of event.

"Some of the kids might get as interested today as I was when I took that first flight," he said.

"It looks like a bird," said Braiden Wilde, 5, of Bullhead City as he stood nearby watched an aircraft take off. "It took off in the clouds."

Braiden and his sister, Hailey, 3, were wearing sunglasses and squeezing small plastic airplanes that were among some of the novelty items being given out on Saturday. Chase Pruitt, 3, had been posing for his mother, Nicole Pruitt, next to an aircraft with a shark face painted on both sides of its nose.

The Bullhead City family slowly made their way through the planes on display and stopped to look at one of the larger ones. Chase was carefully walking around underneath it and looking at its belly, which was at his eye level. "He loves planes," said Nicole Pruitt.

Nearby, three children were giving another small aircraft, silver with mostly yellow trim, a thorough viewing. A boy and girl were seen, one after the other, climbing in and out of the pilot's seat as the other boy carefully examined the left wing.

Though the children, ages 3-6, are more interested in tractors and dump trucks these days, "they watch planes in the sky," said Ashley Muehlhausen, also of Bullhead City.

Firefighters stationed at the airport brought out their truck and several groups, such as the Civil Air Patrol, handed out flyers about their various community activities.

Keating emphasized that this was one of the airport's bigger community events.