

Kristine Volk

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As air show director, she is responsible for coordinating the performers — working on arrival and departure times, hotels, security, transportation, activities, hangar space, equipment — basically anything the performers need.

"I have to think of problems before they happen," Volk said. "And handle any curveballs thrown my way."

During the airshow, Volk will be coordinating volunteers on the grounds, adhering to manuals given by the performers and communicating with the Coast Guard to secure the centerpoint boat that pilots use to line up with during flights, and to ensure that boaters don't wander into the restricted area of the bay during the show.

"We take pride in the fact that this is a small city, but we put on a great air show," Volk said.

Stepping aside into the role of Air Boss, in order for Volk to take over as director, Steve Plamondon feels confident that Volk

is ready to shoulder the responsibility.

"She'll do a wonderful job," Plamondon said. "She's new, but very enthusiastic."

Plamondon has been involved in the Cherry Festival air show for over 15 years. During the show, he will be communicating with pilots over the air and coordinating with air traffic control to make sure the aerobatic box — a stretch of airspace over the bay where the show takes place — is clear of commercial traffic.

Unlike many air shows, the Cherry Festival air show is not held at the airport, which presents some tough logistical issues — especially now that Cherry Capital Airport has expanded and is receiving more arrivals and departures, said Plamondon.

According to Stephen Cassens, airport director at Cherry Capital, there will be around five flights scheduled for arrival and departure — not to mention general aviation service during the air show time-frame of 12:30-3 p.m. He's confident that coordination with the tower will keep the air show from affecting any of those flights.

"[Kristine's] definitely taken a hold of it and put in a great effort into figuring out what it all takes," Plamondon said.

Volk is still a student pilot, training through Bryant Aviation, at Oakland County International Airport in Waterford, MI. She has just completed her first solo flight in June, and hopes to have her private pilot's license by the end of the summer.

Although aviation is her passion, her duties to the festival are on a volunteer basis. She has spent the last decade working as a certified public and management accountant, with a Masters Degree in Science and Taxation from Walsh College. She's a past president of the Detroit chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants, and sits on the board of directors for the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants. She is currently a business development manager for Jefferson Wells International Inc.

As a longtime professional CPA, Volk speaks to high school and college students about careers in accounting.

"The funny thing is, when students hear

I'm a pilot and have a role in air shows, I generally get more questions about that," Volk said. "It's fine — I love promoting both."

"I especially would love to see more women pursue careers in aviation—only 6 percent of pilots are female," Volk said. "There's nothing quite like the sound of a jet, or landing a plane — everyone should have the opportunity to experience this."

Volk's passion for aviation has led her into the field of journalism as well. She has traveled much of the country as an air show photographer, and wrote a cover article for the May/June 2005 issue of Aviation for Women magazine.

"It was a really neat experience, and inspired me to take a more active role [in aviation]," Volk said.

This June she is being flown to Norfolk VA, where she will spend a night on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Harry Truman, as part of the Michigan Business and Civic Leaders outreach program.

"Once the aviation bug bites you, it's addicting," Volk said. "Who knows, maybe one day you'll see me perform in an air show!"



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