

Lt. Governor Honors Winners of Annual Aeronautics Competition

April 17, 2012, Anchorage, AK – Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell honored students from six Alaska schools who participated in this year’s Real World Design Challenge (RWDC) and congratulated the state’s winning design team, Highland Tech Charter School, during an awards ceremony today.

An annual competition aimed at engaging youth in aeronautics and engineering, RWDC invites students to develop solutions to practical aviation design challenges posed by industry experts. Team Phoenix, a group of five 10th and 11th graders led by Highland Tech teacher Lori Gillam, produced their winning light sport aircraft wing design after hours of computer simulated testing and with the advice of local and national mentors.

The team travels to Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, where they will join winning teams from 39 other states and territories to demonstrate their work and defend their solution with a computer simulation model and an oral presentation at the National Air and Space Museum.

“We are an aerospace state and there are so many opportunities and applications for aeronautical innovation in Alaska: from unmanned aerial systems to NextGen safety technology, our state is a prime test-bed for advanced aeronautics systems,” Treadwell said at the ceremony. “It’s great to see students thinking about how they might contribute to that industry.”

Treadwell chairs the Aerospace States Association, an organization that works to promote safety, education, workforce development, and national security in the aerospace industry, and is also a major sponsor of RWDC.

This year’s challenge was to design an efficient, low-carbon-emission and environmentally-friendly personal light sport aircraft. The aircraft had to accommodate two team members and be capable of flying 200 miles in less than two hours at a minimum cruise altitude of 1,000 feet above ground level. Teams were required to perform aerodynamic, propulsion, sizing and weight estimation analyses to optimize wing geometry and minimize specific fuel consumption.

Other Alaska schools participating in this year’s challenge included Ben Eielson Jr./Sr. High School, Homer High School, Kashunimuit School District, Razdolna School and Whitestone High School. Hoonah High School won the state challenge and Governor’s Cup trophy in 2010.