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For immediate release

## **Local Pilots to Compete in Women's Air Race Denver Start Marks 80<sup>th</sup> Year of Women's Air Racing**

June 16, 2009, Aurora, Colorado – When the starter signals for the 2009 women's transcontinental Air Race Classic to begin at Centennial Airport on June 23, two locals will be among the 34 teams at the hold line. Stephanie Wells of Arvada and Roxie Juul of Broomfield are partnering to compete in their first air race.

Wells, a 13,000-hour pilot was introduced to the idea of air racing a few years ago, but it wasn't until she met Juul, a pilot who owns a Piper Archer, that their plans to compete crystallized. The Air Race Classic rules stipulate that each racing team consist of two women, one of whom must hold an instrument rating. "Since I have the rating and experience, and she has the airplane, it seemed like a great match," said Wells.

To say that Wells is an experienced pilot is an understatement. Armed with a meteorology degree and commission as a U.S. Air Force officer, she was among the second group of women admitted to Air Force pilot training in 1978, and went on to spend 8 years on active duty flying T-37s, T-38s, and the WC-130 "Typhoon Chaser." After joining the reserves in 1985, she added C5 Galaxy pilot and Desert Storm veteran to her resume. She went on to fly for NASA as a training officer, managing astronaut flying training at Johnson Space Center, before coming to Denver in 2003 to work for the FAA as an inspector for general aviation aircraft.

"About half of my flight time is military, and half is civilian," explained Wells, who flew in the 1977 Powder Puff Commemorative Race, a non-competitive event that marked the last of a series of 30 all-women transcontinental competitions. That same year, the Air Race Classic held its inaugural race, maintaining the 80-year tradition of women's air racing that began in 1929 with what humorist and aviation enthusiastic Will Rogers dubbed as the "Powder Puff Derby."

Juul, who will serve as pilot-in-command, is eager to compete in her four-seat, fixed gear, 180-hp aircraft. A certificated pilot since 1996, she decided to enter the race last year when she found out it would start in Denver. "I recently retired," explained Juul, a former Qwest employee of 30 years, "and had saved up to do something special. This will give me a chance to see the U.S. in a different light, and to meet other women pilots."

The two racers will be coordinating a lot in the coming year, since Juul and Wells were recently elected as president and vice president, respectively, in the Colorado Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, an international organization of women pilots. Their chapter, along with Centennial Airport and Denver-based Jeppesen, are major sponsors of the start of the race. Although many competitors look to sponsors to defray their expenses, Juul and Wells are funding the entire endeavor themselves. "We estimate it'll cost at least \$5000 from start to finish," said Juul, "but the experience will be priceless."

Powder Puff Pilot, a sponsor of the 2009 Air Race Classic Start, was founded in 2008 by Sue Hughes of Aurora, Colorado. She has authored *This Day in Women's Aviation*, a page-a-day calendar, and a series of children's picture books featuring Claire Bear, a pink-clad aviatrix. Her first two titles, *The Pilot Alphabet* and *Claire Bear's First Solo*, are currently on sale with a third, *What Pilots Fly*, in development.