

Hawkins Flight Academy Recognized for Flight Training Excellence by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Hawkins Flight Academy Earns National Recognition for Safety-Focused, Student-Centered Flight Training

SHELBYVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, January 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Hawkins Flight Academy](#) has been recognized for its exceptional standards in flight training by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation association. The academy has earned a place among the 2026 Flight Training Experience Awards recipients as a Distinguished Flight School, a designation reserved for flight training providers nationwide that consistently deliver outstanding training and student experiences.

The Flight Training Experience Awards were created to celebrate the best flight [training programs](#) across the United States. Winners are selected based on feedback from flight students and pilots who voluntarily share their experiences. "This year, customers highlighted an optimal combination of well-run training programs and a warm, welcoming atmosphere," said Chris Moser, AOPA Foundation Senior Director of Flight Training Education. "This years winners have



2026 AOPA Distinguished Flight School Award



HAWKINS
FLIGHT ACADEMY

Hawkins Flight Academy's Logo

demonstrated this enviable quality in their flight training operations to the highest degree.”

Hawkins Flight Academy’s recognition reflects its unwavering commitment to safety, professionalism, and student-centered instruction. From personalized flight lessons to a supportive learning environment, the academy emphasizes preparing pilots not just to pass exams, but to thrive in the skies. The award highlights the dedication of Hawkins Flight Academy’s team of experienced instructors and staff, who consistently go above and beyond to ensure each student receives high-quality training tailored to their goals.



Hawkins Flight Academy's 2024 Vans RV-12iST

“

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Mike Harris, CoFounder and Chief Visionary

Hawkins Flight Academy offers a comprehensive range of flight training programs designed for students at every stage of their aviation journey. Programs include Private Pilot, Instrument, Commercial, and Certified Flight Instructor training, all structured to meet FAA standards while giving students hands-on experience in real-world scenarios. In addition to foundational training, the academy offers advanced courses to prepare pilots for careers in professional aviation.

The academy also boasts a modern and meticulously maintained [fleet](#), including Vans RV-12 iST aircraft for training and cross-country experience, as well as a Piper

Aztec twin-engine aircraft for advanced multi-engine training. This diverse fleet allows students to train in aircraft that closely mirror what they will fly in the professional world. From initial training to advanced certifications, Hawkins Flight Academy ensures students have access to safe, reliable, and well equipped aircraft to maximize learning and confidence in the cockpit.

“The safety and success of our students are at the heart of everything we do,” said Mike Harris, Co-Founder and Chief Visionary of Hawkins Flight Academy. “Being recognized by AOPA as a Distinguished Flight School is an honor, and it reflects the hard work and passion of our entire team. We are proud to provide a learning experience that is both rigorous and welcoming for aspiring pilots.”

The 2026 awards were determined through AOPA's online customer feedback process, capturing real-world student experiences from the past fall. Reviews evaluated training quality, professionalism, and overall satisfaction, shining a spotlight on schools that consistently exceed expectations.

For more information about the Flight Training Experience Awards, visit www.aopa.org/FTawards

Additional details about Hawkins Flight Academy can be found at www.hawkinsflight.com/new-to-flying/

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Hawkins Flight Academy's Newly Acquired Piper Aztec



Interior of Hawkins Flight Academy's Vans RV-12iST

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