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Historic WWII Hangar to House Aviation Museum Celebrating Golden Age Aircraft and Mustang Field Legacy

El Reno, OK June 30, 2025— This fall, a 1943 military hangar at El Reno Regional Airport will once again come alive with the hum of radial engines and the stories of the Golden Age of aviation. The newly established nonprofit, *The Caldwell Collection at Mustang Field*, will officially open its hangar doors to the public on October 4, 2025, during the City of El Reno’s annual Fly-In event.

Housed in a restored 30,000-square-foot WWII hangar, the museum will showcase up to 20 antique aircraft spanning between the two world wars. The curated collection includes iconic aircraft such as the Fairchild PT-19, Stearman PT-17, and multiple rare Waco models—several of which flew at Mustang Field when it operated as a military training base during World War II.

“What makes The Caldwell Collection at Mustang Field unique is that these are not static displays,” says founder Tony Caldwell. “All of the aircraft in this collection are airworthy or in active restoration. We want this to be a living museum, where aviation history is not only preserved but demonstrated.”

The hangar, being meticulously restored to resemble its original 1943 configuration, will also feature an operational restoration shop managed by Rob Lock of Waldo Wright’s Flying Service. Visitors will have the rare opportunity to observe vintage aircraft restoration work up close, offering an educational experience for aviation enthusiasts and future aviators alike.

Construction is being led by David French of D.H. French Construction, with architectural design by Dan Welle of Welle & Company. The interior design has been

thoughtfully finalized by Andrea Edwards of CRPDesign. As the museum continues to take shape, Emily Overand, Tony Caldwell's Strategic Executive Assistant, leads communications & event coordination, along with the organization's digital presence.

The project is made possible through a strong partnership with the City of El Reno and El Reno Regional Airport, both of which have been instrumental in championing the museum's long-term vision.

The museum's opening collection will include:

- Several Waco biplanes including the UMF-3, UBF-2, and ZPF
- Primary trainers such as the PT-19 and PT-17
- The Lincoln-Page PT and a Travel Air B-4000

Future plans include rotating displays, historical signage with QR-code-based digital content, and community fly-in events. The museum is also communicating with state leadership for educational outreach with aviation programs and pilot meetups.

The project's informal tagline, "From Grime to Glory," captures the transformation not only of the aircraft but of the hangar itself, a space that once trained pilots for war and now honors their legacy through preservation and flight.

The public, pilots, and aviation enthusiasts are invited to the Grand Opening Fly-In on October 4, 2025. Free tickets, details on aircraft displays, and information on how to participate or donate can be found at www.thecaldwellcollection.org.

About The Caldwell Collection at Mustang Field:

The Caldwell Collection is a living aviation museum based in El Reno, Oklahoma, featuring meticulously restored aircraft from the Golden Age of Aviation. Dedicated to preserving the legacy of flight and the stories behind each plane, the museum offers immersive experiences that connect history, innovation, and community.

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