



Appleton Airport hosts Pulling for Honor

Event is fundraiser for Missions of Honor Flights

What: Pulling for Honor Fundraiser FREE TO ATTEND

When: Saturday, Aug. 15, 2026, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. RAIN OR SHINE

Where: Appleton Flight Center, N259 Ares Dr, Appleton, WI

Timeline:

10 a.m. Gates open

10 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Food trucks, inflatables, veteran displays

10:45 a.m. Welcome and Star-Spangled Banner

11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Pulling competition begins

1:45 p.m. Veteran pull, awards ceremony & airfare giveaway (must be present to win)

2 p.m. Gates Close

(APPLETON, WIS.) Aug. 13, 2026— How far can 20 people pull a 140,000-pound jet plane? Far enough to give local veterans a life-changing flight to Washington D.C. to visit war memorials erected in their honor all at no charge to veterans. This year, regional teams will participate in Pulling for Honor on August 15, 2026. The event is the primary fundraiser for Missions of Honor and in 2025 raised \$122,000 to fully fund one flight of veterans to Washington, D.C. (the 2026 event was cancelled due to weather). Each flight costs approximately \$100,000 and honors 100 veterans per mission.

[Pulling for Honor](#) is a major fundraiser hosted by the Appleton International Airport (ATW) for [Missions of Honor](#). That organization hosts five honor flights annually—one day trips that fly WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans to Washington, D.C. memorials. The organization also hosts a Freedom to Liberty retreat honoring veterans who served during the Global War on Terror.

Pulling for Honor is a fun team competition where a team of 20 people competes to see who can pull a Boeing 757 plane 12 feet in the shortest amount of time. This year more than 30 teams are registered to compete, and each team is required to raise a minimum of \$1,500 in order to take part in the competition (\$75 per person).

"This event is great fun, but it also supports a serious need," said Diane MacDonald, executive director of Missions of Honor. "We've taken close to 8,000 veterans to D.C. and beyond since we started flights in 2009 and these healing journeys are possible due to the strong support we have from the community. We believe healthy veterans equal a healthy community and we're proud to honor them today and in the future," she said.

The Appleton International Airport has been home base for the flights since they started and has assisted with more than 70 flights. "We are proud Missions of Honor calls ATW home," said Abe Weber, director of the Appleton International Airport. "Our doors open to hundreds of friends and family who

welcome these heroes home and hosting a fundraiser for continued flights is another way to show how important it is to honor our veterans.”

This year, Pulling for Honor teams take the bragging rights seriously. There are teams from three fitness clubs registered: Burn Boot Camps in Green Bay and Appleton, and Iron Forge Fitness. Powerlifting teams from Hortonville and Neenah high schools will add their muscle to the competition. However, the perennial favorite of the pull is the Green Bay Rugby Football Club which has taken the winner’s trophy several years.

The rugby club participates because many former and current members are veterans and one team member who will pull just returned from active duty. Team leaders say there’s no secret to training for a plane pull.

“It’s just a scrum with a plane attached to your back,” said club member Nich Coehoorn (*pronounced Nick Coo-horn*). “These are guys we’ve played rugby with for 10 plus years, so it’s a lot of teamwork, working our sequence, developing a cadence and just pulling. There’s a lot of muscle on the team and we’re not coming to lose,” Coehoorn said.

Besides pulling, the event has a variety of family-focused activities including:

- Former WBAY TV’s Bill Jartz will host the event with Patrick Tracey who will also take turns in the dunk tank for \$5/throw, \$50 if you just want to push the lever!
- Children’s activities include a plane pull, face painting, inflatables, touch a truck with a variety of airport equipment, and touch a plane for kids to touch a real aircraft, plus remote control cars.
- Airfare giveaway – ATW will be giving away two \$500 Allegiant airfare vouchers; one for veterans and one for any event attendee (must be present to win).
- A wide variety of food trucks featuring sweet and savory treats.
- Veteran’s exhibits that provide vital information regarding services available for veterans in our community

Sponsors of the event include Presto Products, Menasha Corporation, Andrew and Camilla Schmidt Foundation, Belmark, Edward Jones, Gulfstream, and Network Health.

For more information on the event, [please visit this link](#).

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About Appleton International Airport

[Appleton International Airport](#) connects our community to the world through American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, and Allegiant Air. In addition to offering nonstop service to 22 destinations, Appleton Airport connects to 13 major international airport hubs from which travelers can fly to almost anywhere in the world. Using Appleton Airport, travelers can safely and more conveniently get to their destination and home again, leaving them more time for what really matters. Appleton International Airport is the third largest airport in Wisconsin according to arrivals and departures. Visit atwairport.com to learn more.