



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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RAMONA AIRPORT OPEN HOUSE SEPT. 24

Free Family Event Features Aerial Displays, Vintage Fighter Planes, Tours, Big Rig Truck Show

Kids of all ages are invited to Ramona Airport's 54th annual Open House Saturday, Sept. 24 for aircraft displays and a close-up look at vintage WWII fighter planes, experimental airplanes, firefighting air tankers, helicopters, and "Big Jimmy."

Cal Fire's "Big Jimmy" is a 1939 GMC fire truck which was originally built for the La Mesa Fire Department. It was recently discovered in a vineyard in Northern California where it was used as a water pump for grapes. The fire truck is back in San Diego County and a dedication ceremony for "Big Jimmy" will take place at 9:30 a.m. The vehicle will call the Ramona Airport home and will appear in parades and at school visits.

"Big Jimmy represents homegrown ingenuity and a strong commitment to fire protection," said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who represents East County on the Board of Supervisors. "I'm thrilled that San Diegans now have the chance to see this wonderful piece of equipment up close."

The open house runs from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and there will be plenty to see and do. Visitors can tour the airport's traffic control tower, the Classic Rotors Helicopter Museum, the U.S. Forest Service's Helitac Base and Cal Fire Air Attack Base. A free shuttle service is available from the main parking area to those stops. Parking is free and food is available for a nominal fee. A pancake breakfast will start at 7 a.m.

"There's something for everyone at our open house," said Bo Donovan, Airport Manager, "tours, a crafts fair, games for the children, and the big rig truck show. This is a great family event showcasing our airport and it's free."

The "Tricked-out Big Rig Truck Show" will feature more than 30 customized new and vintage trucks, including Peterbilts, Kenworths, Freightliners and others.

Ramona Airport, one of the County's eight community airports, also serves as the joint firefighting air attack base of Cal Fire and the U.S. Forest Service. Cal Fire started flying fire missions out of the airport in 1957, making it the state fire agency's oldest air attack base. The airport's flight schools and businesses will be open during the event. Ramona Airport is located at 2926 Montecito Road in Ramona.

For more information, call Bo Donovan at (760) 788-3366.

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