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PLANT CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WINS TONY JANNUS ESSAY CONTEST

--Statewide Essay Contest Received Record Number of Entries--

TAMPA, Fla. (November 5, 2009) – In a record setting year for entries, The Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society has selected Plant City High School senior Kathleen Hencke as the winner of this year's Tony Jannus Essay Contest. Her winning essay, "The History of Commercial Aviation," focuses on the technological advancements seen in the airline and aviation industries. Hencke, and her counselor Sherrie Mueller, will be recognized on November 5, during the forty-sixth annual Tony Jannus Award press conference at the St. Petersburg Museum of History and luncheon at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg. Southwest Airlines sponsored the annual competition.

The Tony Jannus Essay Contest is open to all Florida students in grades 9-12. The guidelines for the essay contest specify that the essay is to be 1000-1500 words and include the history of commercial aviation in the U.S. with emphasis on a previous Tony Jannus Award winner, discuss Florida's role in the development of commercial aviation and address the creation of jobs directly and indirectly through the growth of commercial aviation.

The Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society was established in 1964 by the Tampa and St. Petersburg Chambers of Commerce in honor of Tony Jannus, the pilot recognized by the Smithsonian as the founder of the world's first scheduled airline. The airline - which began flights on New Year's Day, 1914 - had only one plane, a single-engine Benoist flying boat that flew round trips daily between Tampa and St. Petersburg, Florida. The Society recognizes "outstanding contributors to the growth and improvement of the scheduled airline industry" and supports outstanding students and educators through the annual Tony Jannus Award, luncheon and banquet.

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