For Immediate Release

Spirit of ’45 Day Express to Helping to Rally Support for Preserving Iconic WWII Aircraft Plant

The Spirit of ’45 Day Express will be visiting the Yankee Air Museum in Bellevue, MI on Wednesday, April 15 to help rally public support for the “Save The Willow Run Bomber Plant Campaign” that is raising $8 mm to restore the plant.

The Campaign has been organized by the Michigan Aerospace Foundation, the fund raising arm of the Museum, and is chaired by former astronaut Jack Lousma and GM CEO Bob Lutz. A portion of the restored aircraft plant will be used as a new home for the Museum. More than $7 mm has been committed so far. Approximately $1.5 mm remains to be raised by May 1.

The Spirit of ’45 Express is on a 2-year tour to help raise public awareness about the annual day Congress unanimously passed in 2010 that honors the legacy of the men and women of the WWII generation. It has already traveled more than 7,000 miles since February helping to promote the events and activities that are being planned for next year to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. which will include flyovers in more than 100 communities on the weekend of August 15 – 16, 2015, to pay tribute to the role American airpower played in winning the war.

“We are pleased to have the support of the Spirit of ’45 Day community to help us meet our goal of saving the historic Willow Run plant, said Dennis Norton, president of the Michigan Aerospace Foundation and founder of the Yankee Air Museum. “This project pays tribute to the men and women who built the planes that were the deciding factor in the victory of democracy and symbolizes the ‘can do’ spirit of our Greatest Generation.”

The Express was the brainchild of Auston and Bonnie O’Neill, Jr. of Centerville, VA. Auston is a member of Bugles Across America, whose members perform “Taps” during Spirit of ’45 Day events each year in August, and are participating in a round the world wreath laying ceremony as part of the 70th anniversary commemoration next year. O’Neill’s father who was a decorated WWII veteran. The O’Neill’s son and daughter-in-law are currently serving in Afghanistan.

Media Contact:
Warren Hegg
Warren@Spiritof45.org
(408) 857 5252
“The purpose of our tour is to remind America of how our country came together as a community during WWII so that we can be inspired to help each other in time of need,” said O’Neill. “The efforts of groups like the Yankee Air Museum are an example of how important it is to preserve this heritage and how much we can accomplish when we put aside our differences and work together in common cause.”

The Express will continue making whistle stops throughout the Midwest and Northeast states en route to Washington, DC where it will appear in the National Memorial Day Parade.

This summer, the Yankee Air Museum will be helping promote the WWII Airpower Legacy Project during its annual “Thunder Over Michigan” Air Show that will be held on Spirit of ’45 Day weekend, August 9 -10.

Spirit of ’45 Express tour at the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front Historical Park (upper left), the Louisiana State Veterans Home in Monroe, LA (center left) and the Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA (lower left).

For more information, please contact Warren Hegg, National Coordinator, “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive!”

Warren@Spiritof45.org
(408) 857 – 5252