

Made in the Mid-Willamette Valley: Graham Aviation Services

September 19, 2010

Company Name: Graham Aviation Services LLC

Contact: Jim or Gwen Graham

Address: 3030 25th St. SE, Salem, OR 97302

Phone: (503) 581-4139

Website: www.grahamaviation.com

Business description: Graham Aviation provides flight instruction, aircraft rental, ground school, FAA-approved simulator, recurrent and advanced flight training for folks who want to pursue aviation as a hobby, for business use or a career. We are a part 141 certified flight school for the private pilot program. We also offer youth programs, introductory flight lessons, gift cards, "Right Seat Ready" for the non-flying companion and safety seminars. Graham Aviation is also the only flight school at Salem Airport that is authorized by the FAA to provide scenic and photo flights.

Employees: Two owners/employees

Business specialties: With more than 45 years combined flying experience, we teach people how to be the best pilot they can be in a supportive, friendly and fun environment. We are mentors, coaches, teachers. Our students become part of our aviation family.

Business history: After being laid off as a safety engineer in the Portland area, Jim Graham determined that his true passion was aviation. He had been teaching part-time at a local airport, but never thought it possible for him to have a career in aviation. With his wife, Gwen, they cashed in his retirement accounts and moved to Salem to open Graham Aviation Services in May 2005. With one airplane and entrepreneurial spirit and determination, their mission was to create a new, improved version of flight schools they'd seen over their years of flying. Customer service, active marketing and highest quality aviation education were and still are the hallmarks of the business philosophy.

What is biggest advantage of doing business in the Mid-Willamette Valley: Centrally located, easy access to the Salem Airport. For pilots, the valley is an excellent mix of terrain and multiple airports within short flying distance.

Essential business philosophy: Top-notch customer service, active, consistent marketing and only the highest quality of aviation education. We want to be the best in order to train the best.



Special to the Statesman Journal

Jim and Gwen Graham own Graham Aviation Services.

SEDCOR, the lead economic development agency for Marion and Polk counties, is pleased to offer you a glimpse of the multitude of products and services being manufactured and provided by local area companies. SEDCOR's membership is composed of more than 500 business and community leaders who support our mission to enhance and diversify the economy of the Mid-Willamette Valley.

Best way to stay competitive: Provide the best education available, which in aviation can save your life one day. Exceptional customer service and always look for ways to become better instructors.

What is most challenging in work: Balancing the running of the business with providing the services. It's a challenge every day for a "mom and pop" operation, but our awesome pilots and students make it worthwhile.

Best business decision: To move from our initial location to the new office across from the control tower. Very easy to find, single level, our own parking lot and a professional atmosphere.

Toughest business decision: How to reduce overhead when the economy turned downward.

What trends do you see happening in your industry: Pilot shortage. Every indicator says now is the time to start your training if your goal is to be an airline pilot or other professional-level pilot.

Company affiliations: SEDCOR, Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association, Oregon Pilots' Association, and National Association of Flight Instructors.

Major clients: Every student and renter pilot we have is a major client.

For additional information contact SEDCOR at 503-584-7303 or e-mail sappleby@sedcor.com.