



Wings Over Wayne Air Show | Fact Sheet

Largest free air show in North Carolina

With over 150,000 people attending this exciting event in 2019, the Wings Over Wayne Air Show has grown to become the largest free air show in North Carolina and has also become part of the community's legacy. The biennial air show is held in Goldsboro at the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, which pre-dates the U.S. Air Force itself. Since 1947, Goldsboro's skies have been home to some of the world's most impressive and vital airpower of our country's air force. The exemplary relationship between the community and its military installation is demonstrated in the planning and operation of the biennial Wing Over Wayne Air Show.

Awarded "2017 Event of the Year" by N.C. Association of Festivals & Events

In 2017, the Wings Over Wayne Air Show was crowned "Event of the Year," which is the most prestigious award given by the N.C. Association of Festivals & Events. The award was announced at the 2018 ShowFest Conference held Jan. 28-29 in Charlotte. When deciding the winner, the judges announced that the Wings Over Wayne Air Show was "chosen for their community partnership and the survey of the attendees." The air show surpassed the efforts of past years, setting new records for funding raised, volunteer participation, and the attendance of over 230,000 for the two-day event.

The air show gives back to the community in ways that are hard to define and has become more than a recruitment tool, or a feel-good event. Countless hours are given by the service men and women stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base who are a part of the planning and execution of the air show. Visit Goldsboro, also known as the Goldsboro-Wayne County Travel & Tourism Office, nominated Wings Over Wayne Air Show for "Event of the Year" because of the extraordinary growth and impact the event has had on local, regional, and state levels.

Wings Over Wayne is a biennial event that takes place every other year (years ending in odd-numbers)

When an odd-numbered year rolls around, the community partners with the 4th Fighter Wing of Seymour Johnson AFB to fundraise, provide manpower, and oversee its marketing for what has become the largest air show in N.C — Wings Over Wayne. The show is free, the parking is free, and the gates to the base are open to the public. As long as weather cooperates, the schedule of events is the same for both days starting at 10 a.m.

Seymour Johnson AFB has been the host and venue for WOW since 1947

The air show started out as a tool for military recruitment and local economic impact, but it has evolved into much more. The recruitment and economic impact remain at the event's core, but WOW has reached goals that were never thought possible. The Wings Over Wayne Air Show has become a family tradition for folks around the state and country. Children experience the thrill of fighter jets for the first time and adults rekindle their childlike excitement as they witness air and ground displays. The event unites people from different generations and backgrounds by calling on the common patriotic seams that bond us all – a blend of excitement, humbleness, and nostalgia. Military communities are known for supporting their bases, but the Wings Over Wayne Air Show and Seymour Johnson AFB breaks the mold and gives back to Goldsboro and the state of North Carolina in ways that can't be measured.

Wings Over Wayne crowd size estimates over the years

Prior to WOW 2019, crowd estimates had been provided by the headlining acts. Naturally, there is a bit of competition between major headliners to “out-do” the other. The estimate of the crowd size had been caught in the cross hairs of that friendly competition for years. Going into the 2019 air show, Visit Goldsboro, the travel and tourism office for Goldsboro-Wayne County, made it a priority to conduct reporting as accurately as possible. Crowd size estimates were measured internally, rather than leaving it in the hands of the main acts' public relations team. Car counting, determining available parking spaces, calculating vendor sales, and aerial pictures of the air show ramp were some of the ways staff and volunteers were able to determine the 2019 crowd size of 152,000 over the two-day show. 152,000 is a smaller crowd number than previous years, but it is not a smaller crowd. Meaning, the air show attendance is NOT declining. For the first time, we have been able to put more energy and focus into their reporting tactics on the event's impact on Wayne County's economy, how attendees heard about the show, feedback on their overall experience, and better insight on attendee demographics. It took a lot of work to gather the data, but now there is a more accurate benchmark for measuring and enhancing future air shows.

