

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:*

**Post by Air: Fred Wiseman's Famous Airmail Flight**

Opening Reception: Friday, February 11, 5-7pm

Exhibition Dates: February 12 – March 13, 2011

Sonoma County Museum commemorates an important local historic event, the world's first airmail flight with the exhibition Post by Air: Fred Wiseman's Famous Airmail Flight opening to the public on February 12, 2011. Artifacts, maps and photographs will be on display in the East Gallery. A talk by Smithsonian curators in Washington D.C. will be broadcast at the museum on Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

This exhibition recounts the world's first airmail flight, made between Petaluma and Santa Rosa on February 17-18 1911, one hundred years ago. The Wright Brother's historic flight at Kitty Hawk in 1902 inspired innovators the world over to dabble in aviation, building and flying aircraft based upon the Wright flyer. It ushered in an age of amateur, air-born daredevils and record-setters determined to capture a bit of the glory of the dawning age of flight. It was this exciting time that produced Fred Wiseman, Sonoma County's own aviation pioneer. Born in Santa Rosa in 1875, Wiseman raced bicycles and motor cars. After visiting Ohio to see the Wright Brother's plane in 1909, he came home to build his own. In 1911 he made history, flying his innovative airplane between Petaluma and Santa Rosa on February 17-18 carrying groceries, newspapers and mail. It was the mail that made Wiseman a true pioneer, marking the first time that mail, sanctioned by postal officials, was delivered by airplane.

A live webcast of presentations by Smithsonian curators in Washington will be presented at the Sonoma County Museum on the day of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flight: Saturday February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 11 am PST. The special one hour live webcast program is jointly organized by Sonoma County Museum, Smithsonian Affiliations, the National Air and Space Museum, and the National Postal Museum. Curators Tom Crouch, Senior Curator, Aeronautics, National Air and Space Museum, and Nancy Pope, Curator/Historian, National Postal Museum, will speak for twenty minutes, after which the audience at the National Air and Space Museum and the audience in Santa Rosa at the Sonoma County Museum will have the opportunity to ask questions. This is an invaluable opportunity to connect with Smithsonian Curators so many miles away. For more information, please check museum website at [www.sonomacountymuseum.org/events/calendar](http://www.sonomacountymuseum.org/events/calendar).

For additional information about Fred Wiseman, contact SCM Curator Eric Stanley at (707) 579-1500 x15 or [erics@sonomacountymuseum.org](mailto:erics@sonomacountymuseum.org).

**About Sonoma County Museum:**

Founded in 1985, the Sonoma County Museum is the region's only art and history museum with a collection of over 20,000 objects.

Through the preservation of collections and the presentation of exhibitions and programs, the Museum attracts more than 28,000 people annually. As its flagship program, the Museum & Schools Program is ongoing throughout the school calendar year and provides students and teachers with free/subsidized bussing, guided tours of the museum, hands-on materials for additional learning, and free Educator Guides for teachers – following CA State Content Standards.

For more information, please visit the Museum's website at [www.sonomacountymuseum.org](http://www.sonomacountymuseum.org).

**Hours:**

Tuesday – Sunday, 11am -5pm, Closed Major Holidays

**Admission:**

\$5 general, \$2 for students & seniors

**Location:**

425 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**Website:**

[www.sonomacountymuseum.org](http://www.sonomacountymuseum.org)

**About Smithsonian Affiliations**

Established in 1996, Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program which develops collaborative partnerships with museums, educational, and cultural organizations to share Smithsonian Institution resources with Americans in their own communities. Smithsonian Affiliations works with Affiliates to enrich communities with Smithsonian scholars, public programs and professional development opportunities. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and current active Affiliates is available at [www.affiliations.si.edu](http://www.affiliations.si.edu).

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