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CIVIL AIR PATROL NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Citizens Serving Communities

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Top-level training helps teens hone leadership skills

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – Civil Air Patrol's Cadet Officer School, one of the top professional development opportunities available to America's youth, will be in session this week at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., beginning Saturday.

Maxwell AFB is the home of Air University and professional military education for the U.S. Air Force, making participation in Cadet Officer School, or COS, a top choice for CAP cadets from across the nation who compete for selection each year. Only the top 15 percent of all CAP cadets are invited to attend.

This year, 120 cadets from 42 CAP wings, including Puerto Rico, are participating in the 10-day, executive-level course.

At COS, the cadets have a unique opportunity to learn about the Air Force, airpower history, leadership, teamwork, communication skills and problem solving. Patterned after the Air Force Squadron Officer School, COS is an academically challenging program combining lectures, seminars and hands-on training. Throughout the week the cadets participate in a variety of group projects that tests their ability to overcome obstacles through planning and teamwork. All of these are very valuable learning opportunities. Cadets also practice what they learn through a series of comprehensive writing and speaking assignments that will culminate with graduation ceremonies on July 18.

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. James K. "Kevin" McLaughlin, who led a session on the evolution of space power at the 2010 COS, said such a leadership opportunity can help advance anyone's career, military or otherwise.

"In COS, these cadets learn to take diverse skill sets and weave them together to solve problems," he said. "They gain confidence and learn to work with others. From the Air Force perspective, I love COS and the cadet program for the basic leadership skills and discipline they give cadets, some of whom may not get those skills elsewhere. It makes a positive difference, whether they end up in the military or not. It builds our nation's future leaders, no matter what they end up doing."

COS is just one of about 30 National Cadet Special Activities sponsored by CAP this summer. These activities allow cadets to hone their skills in a variety of areas, including search and rescue, flight and emergency services, science, citizenship, military customs and courtesies,

character development and physical fitness. The cadets also explore aerospace technology and aviation careers. In 2010, 1,100 youth participated in CAP-sponsored summer activities.

Through its cadet program, CAP builds strong citizens for America by providing leadership training in addition to technical and career education to young men and women ages 12 to 20.

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 61,000 members nationwide. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and was credited by the AFRCC with saving 113 lives in fiscal year 2010. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the more than 26,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for 69 years. It is a major partner of Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. For more information on Civil Air Patrol, visit www.qocivilairpatrol.com or www.capvolunteernow.com.