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Pilot gives Father's Day gift at Nampa air show Thunder Over Nampa drew thousands of spectators on Sunday, including a family with a special request

June 16, 2008
By: Brad Talbutt

Boise stunt pilot Greg Poe corkscrewed his Fagen MX2 up into the sky above Nampa Sunday, leaving a curlicue of smoke trailing 500 feet below him.

Then, the stunt plane stopped.

It hung still in the air, as if mounted on top of a twisting, white column, before its nose flipped downward, and Poe accelerated toward the ground like a dart.

"Do you think my Dad is giggling?" wondered 5-year-old Andrew Christofferson.

Andrew's father, Andy Christofferson, died in November, but Andy's children, Lexi, 11, Kaden, 7, and Andrew, came to the Thunder Over Nampa airshow to see family friend Poe fly, and to give Dad one last Father's Day gift.

Before taking off Sunday, Poe tucked a small package of Christofferson's ashes into his flight suit.

"Andy always said, 'Someday I want to fly with Greg,'" said Vicki Christofferson, Andy's mother.

Poe agreed to the gesture, and it wasn't the only good deed he did on Father's Day.

The airshow proceeds are going to benefit Idaho Meth Project, a statewide prevention and public awareness campaign designed to reduce the prevalence of first-time methamphetamine users in Idaho.

Executive Director Megan Ronk says Poe lost a son to drug abuse, and when he heard about the benefit, he volunteered to help.

"He did an enormous amount, to bring all the pilots together. They donated their time, their fuel, their travel costs and their talent," she said.

The Idaho Meth Project's annual budget is about \$2.4 million, and the project will use money collected from the airshow to continue promoting its slogan - "Not even once" - through an aggressive advertising campaign.

Ronk said the show appears to have been very successful. A \$5 donation was requested per person at the gate, and she estimated that 17,000-18,000 people visited the show.

The Idaho Meth Project targets teens and young adults with sometimes graphic and shocking ads to convince them to never try the drug.

As some fathers and their families wandered past displays of military and civilian aircraft, others

craned their necks, pointing out incoming aerial acrobats to children perched on their shoulders.

Lexi Christofferson thought about her Dad roaring across the sky in a fire-engine-red stunt plane.

"It's been a good Father's Day," she said.