

AIAA Exhibit at the 2019 Space & Missile Defense Symposium

by

Ken Philippart

Images courtesy of Greg Simpson and Ken Philippart

The Greater Huntsville Section was an exhibitor at the 2019 Space & Missile Defense Symposium from August 6 – 8, 2019 at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. This was the section's fifth year exhibiting at Huntsville's largest annual technical forum. Participation in the symposium was part of Greater Huntsville's outreach to its Department of Defense constituents.

Building upon previous years' successes and lessons learned, the section continued to innovate and improve its processes, exhibit and results. Led by Vice Chair Nishanth Goli, the section promoted the Top Ten Benefits of Volunteering and divided the volunteer schedule into easily manageable 2.5-hour blocks. The membership responded to the call, with 18 members volunteering to work the table. The phenomenal turnout ensured that the exhibit was staffed by a minimum of two members, and often three, throughout the symposium, allowing volunteers to take breaks and wander the exhibit themselves during slow periods.

A Volunteer Handbook containing the shift schedule, volunteer contact information, general instructions, Frequently Asked Questions, and a list of benefits of AIAA membership was provided to all volunteers. The Handbook enabled a seamless transition between volunteers, served as a ready reference and standardized the section's message so all volunteers spoke with one voice.



Katherine Brewer, Nishanth Goli, Wayne McCain, Naveen Vetcha, John Lassiter and Section Chair Greg Simpson staff the booth.



A visitor looks over AIAA upcoming events while John Lassiter looks on.

The exhibit included a business card drop to encourage visitors to leave their contact information. One business card was drawn after the event and the lucky winner received a free ticket to the Greater Huntsville Section's August luncheon. Congratulations to James Buford for winning the business card drawing.

The exhibit displayed a wealth of information about AIAA and the Greater Huntsville Section including Professional Member, Student Member and Educator Associate brochures, section business cards,

copies of *Aerospace America* and announcements of upcoming events. A bowl of candy enticed visitors to stop by the exhibit. By far the most important part of the exhibit was the chance for members to relay their personal experiences and benefits of AIAA membership. Fourteen new contacts were made during the symposium.

The Tuesday evening hospitality social was especially popular with the AIAA volunteers, with many availing themselves of the opportunity to network with colleagues in a fun, relaxing setting with good food, drink and entertainment.

A big thank you to our volunteers: Dr. Ron Miller, Erik Nielson, Andes Hoyt, Dr. Arloe Mayne, John Lassiter, Ken Philippart, Dr. Naveen Vetcha, Nishanth Goli, Carlton Corbitt, Dr. Gabe Xu, Wayne McCain, Charles Porter, Katherine Brewer, Jill Brown, Alix Villanueva, Dylan Stapp, Saroj Kumar, and Mark Smith. We couldn't have done it without you!



Naveen Vetcha and Vice Chair Nishanth Goli enjoy the networking social.

Mark your calendars for August 6 –7, 2020 for the 2020 Space & Missile Defense Symposium.