



DUBAI AIRSHOW BIGGEST AND BEST EVER

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This year's Dubai Airshow is going to be bigger, better and more varied than anything that has gone before, says Michele van Akelijen, managing director of show organizers F&E Aerospace. "With over 160 aircraft due to appear and the possibility of seeing UAVs taking part in the daily flying program for the first time, it's going to be an exciting event," she says.

Dubai's Civil Aviation Authority has agreed that UAV demonstrations will be allowed to take place at this year's show. "We're still in discussion with potential exhibitors and with the UAE military in providing UAVs for the flying display. We're not talking about small drones either - we're talking large-size UAVs that will have to be displayed inside the confines of the airshow flying display box," says van Akelijen. Confirmation that the demonstrations will take place was awaited at press time.

There are several standout features at this year's show. The standalone 3-D Print Show Pavilion is a major new feature that will fascinate even those who think they're not particularly technology-minded. "Industrial 3-D printing/additive manufacturing is cited as a game-changer by Airbus, Boeing, GE and Rolls-Royce, who stress the importance both within their supply chains and for final manufacturing of components," says van Akelijen.

Although the Dubai World Central exhibition site is still very new, van Akelijen says that she will need even more exhibition space for the 2017 show. As part of a 10-year growth plan for the site there are discussions with the Dubai government for an additional 10,000 sq. meters of exhibition space and additional chalets as well.

"That number has yet to be determined but our chalets are sold out for this year. The Dubai Airshow has doubled in size since 2001 and this year's event is definitely bigger than 2013. We have seen growth across a number of areas, including new exhibitors and increased investment from many returning ones. We're expecting over 1,100 exhibitors from 60 countries, over 65,000 trade visitors and 1,750 media - it's a good job we've made the media center bigger," she jokes.

The newly formed UAE Space Agency is participating for the first time, underlining the potential importance of this sector to the region. "The global space industry is worth US\$300 billion and is currently growing at an 8% annual rate," explains van Akelijen. "We've already got exhibitors that specialize in space products, including ATK Space Systems, UTC Aerospace, Thales and a Russian Space Agency exhibit."

There are also three major conferences going on during the show. The "Offsets Conference" takes place on Nov. 9. Entitled "Utilizing Offset Investment to Develop Space and Aviation Technologies and Local Supply Chain Capability," it is organized by offset experts O2K in partnership with the Dubai Airshow. The conference will address the utilization of industrial cooperation, or "offset" investment to further develop aviation technology, supply-chain capability and the UAE's space industry.

The Airport Safety and Security Conference is being held in the conference room on the show floor for the first two days of the show, and then, on days three and four, the room will host the Gulf Aviation Training Event.

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