

NOTICE TO AUTHORITIES
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2018 Cherry Point Air Show engineers improved traffic plan

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. (April 30, 2018) – Visitors to the 2018 Cherry Point Air Show, May 4-6, will see significant improvements in traffic flow to and from the air show, thanks to lessons learned from the 2016 show, which drew record numbers of visitors to the Cherry Point flight line.

For three days, visitors to coastal North Carolina's largest air show will witness a spectacular lineup of aerial performances from some of the best in the air show business. Meanwhile, along with the thousands of other moving parts behind the scenes, a virtual army of military and civilian law enforcement personnel from the Havelock Police Department, State Highway Patrol and the Craven County Sherriff's Department will be working to move thousands of visitors onto the air station and into parking areas at a reasonable rate.

The high turnout during the 2016 show, especially on Saturday, identified new challenges for the air show traffic plan. Subsequently, Cherry Point has been working with local law enforcement and the North Carolina Department of Transportation since early January to engineer improved traffic flow and parking plans for this year's air show.

“We really want to make sure our guests have the best possible visit to the air station for this year's air show,” said Jim Riemer, the Cherry Point air show director. “Re-engineering the air show traffic flow and parking plan has been a major challenge that we have met head on to make significant improvements for the visiting public.”

The first key feature of the new plan will be the closing of the Slocum Gate on Hwy 70. Although it may seem counterintuitive at first glance, closing the gate will greatly improve traffic flow to the Cherry Point Main Gate for air station residents not attending the show and VIP guests, and to the Cunningham Gate on Hwy 101 where the general public enters the air station for the show. In past years, non-air show traffic waiting to turn into the Slocum Gate caused a backup in the left eastbound traffic lane of the highway, effectively cutting the flow down to a single lane of traffic. Closing that gate will eliminate a major bottleneck in traffic flow.

Additionally, traffic flow for general public will be in a single direction entering and exiting the air station. Inbound traffic will be routed to parking from the Cunningham Gate and outbound traffic will be

routed in the same direction to a normally closed gate on Hwy 101, and then from McCotter Blvd to Hwy 70 for points east and west of Havelock.

Another key feature is a significant change in the parking plan, which will improve the flow of traffic through the parking areas and will allow for more vehicles to be parked. A new design in how vehicles will be parked will actually increase the number of cars that can be parked at any single moment. This new design, combined with over 140 additional Military Police and Marines from the 2d and 4th Law Enforcement Battalions and the Cherry Point Security Augmentation Force who will direct traffic into the parking areas, will speed up the flow of vehicles into parking.

Also new this year, the air station has nearly doubled the amount of shuttle seats available for public transportation between parking areas and the flight line by bringing in a commercial shuttle service to supplement the existing shuttle fleet.

Air station officials recognize that during the heaviest attendance periods, slower traffic is inevitable due to the limitations of the road system and due to competition with non-air show traffic. But they point out also that in 2016, Cherry Point had more than twice the number of visitors on Saturday as it did on Sunday – to see the exact same show! They are recommending that people take a look at their schedules and the weather and consider coming on Sunday to avoid the peak travel times. In any case, the public should plan to arrive early to avoid missing its favorite performers due to heavy traffic. The gates are open to the public starting at 8 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday and there will be plenty of things to see and do until the flying starts at 9:45 a.m.

For more information to include directions for handicap and special needs parking, visit: **CherryPointAirshow.com** or download the free MCAS Cherry Point Air Show app.

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