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10-17-2022

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Recommended Citation

Williams, Hanna and Ouachita News Bureau, "From the "Ouachitonian": Joey Wisenhunt" (2022). *Press Releases*. 1176.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases/1176

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From the "Ouachitonian": Joey Whisenhunt



By Hanna Williams

October 17, 2022

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Joey Whisenhunt, a sophomore business administration/entrepreneurship and business administration/management double major from Conway, Ark., grew up engaged in the world of piloting. When he turned 15, his own journey to become a pilot began.

“My first introduction to flying was with my dad,” Whisenhunt said. “He is a private pilot and I started flying with him when I was eight years old.”

Once Whisenhunt turned 15, he got to follow in his father's footsteps to become a pilot. He started training with a flight instructor to learn how to properly fly a plane. He would practice taking off and landing, as well as taking practice solo flights approved by his flight instructor.

“At this point it is a lot like having a driver's permit,” Whisenhunt said. “I could practice within a certain radius of the airport, but there were still restrictions on what I could do by myself.”

When Whisenhunt turned 17, it was finally time for him to take his private pilot license test. There were a few steps he had to take to obtain his license. He had to have a certain amount of flight time with an instructor, a certain number of hours of solo flying and an extensive knowledge of the rules of flying and how to operate the plane. Whisenhunt passed each step with flying colors and was able to obtain his private license. As long as there were clear skies, he was able to fly wherever and whenever he wanted.

Whisenhunt's academic life challenged his flying career when he became a student at Ouachita.

"It was hard to balance school and adjusting to college life with flying; I couldn't fly as much as I used to," Whisenhunt said.

That was until he started preparing for his commercial license test. This license required a lot of responsibility, so he had to prepare months in advance for his exam. He took the written portion at the end of his first semester of freshman year, then halfway through second semester he took the oral and flying portion of the test.

"For these tests, you have to show the instructor that you know how to handle a plane so they can make sure you're safe enough to fly commercial," Whisenhunt said.

After months of preparation, Whisenhunt passed his tests and was able to add another license under his belt.

Since the beginning of his flight career, Whisenhunt gained licenses and ratings that make him a reliable and trusted pilot. Since he has been certified to fly, he enjoys taking trips with family and friends around the state and country. He also likes to get some practice in, usually flying one to three times a week around the area.

Whisenhunt looks forward to continuing his flight career and building upon the knowledge he has gained so far.

Photo by Levi Dade