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RELEASE:

LOCAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN NASA AIRBORNE SCIENCE STUDY

PALMDALE, Calif – Altoona native Kate Cerully, a graduate student at the Georgia Institute of Technology, is currently engaged in a six-week NASA-sponsored Airborne Science field experience designed to immerse students in NASA's Earth Science research through the use of ground measurements, aircraft and satellite-data collection.

A doctoral candidate at Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Cerully is working towards a degree in chemical engineering. Along with her minor in Earth and atmospheric science, Cerully's research meshes perfectly with NASA's Student Airborne Research program occurring July 6 to Aug. 14.

The program began with lectures at the University of California, Irvine, given by university faculty members, research institutions and NASA scientists. Among those speaking is Sherwood Rowland of the University of California, Irvine, a Nobel Laureate in chemistry and a long-time user of NASA's DC-8 airborne capabilities for his research on atmospheric chemistry.

Using the DC-8 flying laboratory based at NASA's Dryden Aircraft Operations Facility, Palmdale, Calif., Cerully, along with the 28 other undergraduate and graduate students, will get a rare behind-the scene look at instrument integration, flight planning, and payload testing that is the basis of every successful Earth Science airborne campaign carried out by NASA. These airborne research campaigns play a pivotal role in the calibration and validation of NASA's space-borne Earth observations, remote sensing measurements and the high-resolution imagery for Earth system science.

The student program is one of NASA's tools for training future scientists for Earth Science missions that can assist with studies and the development and testing of new instruments and future satellite mission concepts. The program's goal is to stimulate interest in NASA's Earth Science research and aid in recruitment of the next generation of engineers and scientists. Through this and the agency's other college and university programs, critical skills and capabilities needed for NASA's engineering, scientific and technical missions will ideally be developed.

The Student Airborne Research Program is managed through the National Suborbital Education and Research Center at the University of North Dakota, with funding and support from NASA's Airborne Science Program. The NSERC was established through a cooperative agreement between the University of North Dakota and NASA.

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