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By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader The Ninety-Nines: International Organization of Women Pilots was founded on Nov. 2, 1929, at Curtiss Field in Valley Stream, N.Y., for the mutual support and advancement of women pilots. A
All 117 women pilots licensed at the time were invited, and the group is named for the 99 of them who attended the meeting or expressed an interest in forming a group.

Members of the original group included president Amelia Earhart, and the organization has grown substantially to a current membership of about 6,000 in chapters all over the world.

One of those chapters is located in Wichita, and members of that group will be flying into Liberal around 11 a.m. Saturday to tour the Mid-America Air Museum.

Treasurer Kay Alley said the Kansas Chapter of Ninety-Nines was established on March 31, 1951.

"We have a total membership of 38 in our chapter," she said. "Some of the women in the group are professional pilots. Some of them are Sunday afternoon pilots. Some of them have retired from flying."

One of the members of the Wichita group served in the Women's Air Service Pilots organization established in World War II to ferry planes from factories to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

"These planes were used in World War II," Alley said. "They were B-17s, B-29s. All of these planes that were used in World War II were built here in the United States by women pilots in order to allow the men pilots to be overseas in combat. We have some air racers in our group."

Alley herself is a professional ferry pilot.

"I pick up airplanes at the factory and deliver them to the customer internationally," she said. "I go to Asia and to Europe."

The Kansas Chapter includes teachers and other professional people, according to Alley.

"Some of them who fly just for fun on Sunday afternoon are not considered professional pilots," she said. "They use their flying as a hobby. Some of our members own their own airplanes, and some of the members rent airplanes from airports around the area."

Alley said chapters meet monthly, and every summer, about 400 of the members from all over the world come together for the international meeting.

"This summer, we're all going to Honolulu for our annual meeting," she said.

Alley said she is bringing a Cessna172 to Liberal Saturday, and the members of the Wichita

chapter will bring various Cessna, Beach and Piper model airplanes.

Alley said members of the Wichita group are primarily located in that city and the rest of western Kansas.

“There’s another chapter in Topeka that covers the more eastern part of the state,” she said. “We have a member out in Larned and Syracuse. We used to have a couple in Liberal, but they’re not members anymore. We have a member that lives in Great Bend.”

The Wichita Ninety-Nines financially support the Amelia Earhart Museum in Atchison. Alley said one of the members serves on the board of directors for that museum. The chapter also supports scholarships for women pilots.

The international headquarters for Ninety-Nines is located in Oklahoma City.

“We have a large building down there that’s located on the Will Rogers Airport that serves as our headquarters for all of our 6,000 members,” Alley said. “We have a full-time staff there that manages the membership. We have a museum there that we also support. It’s called the Museum of Women Pilots.”

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