



**For more information contact:**

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

### **Patrick A. Smith Earns Elite Balloon Instructor Accreditation!**

**3/6/2020** The Elite Balloon Instructor Committee is proud to announce Mr. Patrick A. Smith as an Elite Balloon Instructor!



Smith, from Frederick, MD, is the Program Manager for the Lighter Than Air Insurance Program offered by Aviation Insurance Resources (AIR). AIR offers hot air balloon insurance for individuals and commercial operators.

As an instructor and educator, Smith holds a commercial lighter than air, airplane single and multi-engine, instrument CFI and CFI-I ratings. Patrick has given over 2,750 hours of instruction and was previously an instructor pilot and regulatory information specialist for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

(AOPA). Smith has developed training curriculum and has helped numerous students achieve their dreams of becoming pilots.

Smith has provided great service to the aviation community and has kept his own professional education up to date. As a property casualty insurance agent, licensed in all 50 states, Patrick provides counseling to hot air balloon pilots and owners. Patrick is an advocate for safety and training pushing the industry forward. Smith attends many hot air balloon safety seminars across the Country. He was first introduced to ballooning in the early 1990s by his mother at a balloon event in Maryland and has logged over 1,150 hours of time in hot air balloons. He also operates the largest balloon operation in Maryland, Tailwinds Over Frederick Hot Air Balloons.

### **Elite Balloon Instructor**

*The Elite Balloon Instructor Program fueled by the National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) was created to differentiate between commercial balloon pilots. In the ballooning community, all commercial pilots are considered flight instructors. The Elite Balloon Instructor Program will separate those who provide flight instruction and are raising and maintaining the professional standing of the flight instructor in the ballooning community.*

*To learn more about the program visit: <https://www.theballoontrainingacademy.com/ebi/> or email [theballoontrainingacademy@gmail.com](mailto:theballoontrainingacademy@gmail.com)*

### **The Balloon Training Academy**

*The Balloon Training Academy is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with a mission to bring the launch field to students across the USA. Through online ground schools, flight instructor refresher courses, continuing education courses, and flight training syllabus we make quality hot air balloon education readily available. To learn more visit: [www.theballoontrainingacademy.com](http://www.theballoontrainingacademy.com)*

### **National Association of Flight instructors**

*Since 1967, NAFI dedicates its efforts exclusively to “raising and maintaining the professional standing of the flight instructor in the aviation community.” NAFI’s renowned Master Flight Instructor program is recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration and showcases CFIs who are raising the bar on flight instruction. NAFI is proud to fuel the Elite Balloon Instructor program! To learn more about NAFI visit [www.nafinet.org](http://www.nafinet.org)*