



**HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST**  
A SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL LINK WITH GREECE  
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## **From the Cockpit to the Cosmos: My View of the New Aerospace Age**

**On Sunday, May 17, 2026, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present Dr. Pete Michalakos, in a live a lecture titled "*From the Cockpit to the Cosmos: My View of the New Aerospace Age*". The event will take place at 3 pm, at the lecture hall of The Holy Taxiarchi and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N Caldwell Ave, Niles, Illinois. Admission is free.**

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Growing up along the O'Hare flight line, Pete Michalakos watched planes take off and land and never stopped wondering how they worked. That fascination became a thirty-year career spanning commercial aviation, military systems, and human spaceflight—and a front-row seat to the most consequential transformation in aerospace since the jet age.

This talk traces that arc in three acts. The first is the foundation: commercial aviation as the proving ground for the engineering disciplines—air management, materials, thermal systems, life support — that make everything else possible. The second is scaling those disciplines to their limits: enabling supersonic military aviation, life support for pilots at the edge of the envelope, human spaceflight aboard the International Space Station, and the hypersonic systems now reshaping modern conflicts.

The third act is where we are headed. The rockets being built today are not an end—they are infrastructure. Near-term destinations include global communications constellations, rapid delivery of materiel across the globe, and the early foundations of permanent human presence beyond Earth. Further out: in-situ resource utilization, asteroid mining, and in-space manufacturing that once belonged to science fiction. That infrastructure is also now strategically contested, with consequences for how nations compete and how conflicts may be decided.

*Dr. Pete Michalakos* is building the road to space as Director of Thermal Protection Systems at Blue Origin. Prior to Blue Origin, he spent 25 years making the world safer, more secure, and energy efficient at Honeywell Aerospace. His work spans commercial aircraft, military flight and ground systems, and human spaceflight. He holds over 30 patents worldwide spanning air management, thermal and power systems, hypersonic systems, alternative fuels, and advanced materials. Pete was born and raised in Chicago and earned a PhD in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University. Outside aerospace, Pete mentors students from junior high to college, coaches soccer and basketball, and serves on the Parish Council of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

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