

# STEVEN SITKO

Jackson, Michigan | United States of America

## EVENT & CHAMPIONSHIP LEADERSHIP

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### **Balloonmeister / Board of Directors** | *Hot Air Jubilee, Jackson, Michigan* | 2020–Present

Provides aviation leadership and serves as the primary liaison between participating pilots and event leadership for the annual Hot Air Jubilee. Participates in event governance, planning and execution, with extensive knowledge of balloon operations throughout Jackson County and southern Michigan.

- Coordinates participating pilots and balloon teams, pilot communications and briefings, flight operations, launch and landing activities, and operational planning.
- Works with event leadership, weather and safety personnel, volunteers, landowners, sponsors, community partners and other stakeholders; advises the Board on aviation and pilot matters.

### **Assistant Director** | *BFA U.S. Women's National Hot Air Balloon Championship, Jackson, Michigan* | 2023–2026

Served as Assistant Director for all four BFA U.S. Women's National Hot Air Balloon Championships conducted in Jackson. Supported the Event Director and championship leadership in planning and executing competition operations and coordinating officials, competitors, competition personnel, volunteers and the local organizing team.

- Provided senior operational support for championship activities, including coordinating among the Event Director, competition officials, competitors, scoring and measuring teams, safety and weather personnel, volunteers, and the local organizing committee.
- Assisted with competition logistics, pilot communications, operational decision-making, and resolution of issues throughout the multi-day championship.
- Developed extensive experience with standards, personnel, infrastructure, and operational requirements necessary to successfully conduct a national-level hot air balloon championship.

### **Assistant Director** | *Michigan Challenge Balloonfest, Howell, Michigan* | 2023–Present

Served as Assistant Director for Michigan Challenge Balloonfest in Howell. Supported the Event Director and championship leadership in planning and executing competition operations and coordinating officials, competitors, competition personnel, volunteers and the local organizing team.

- Assist with pilot coordination, briefings, launch operations, competition logistics, and communication between balloon operations and event leadership.
- Provides operational support throughout the event, drawing on extensive familiarity with the Howell flying area, launch sites, logistical conditions, landowner relations and event resources.

## ORGANIZATIONAL & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Professional background includes management, procurement, project delivery, operational planning, and stakeholder coordination. This experience complements hot air balloon leadership and provides a strong foundation for managing complex event operations, coordinating diverse teams, resolving operational issues, and working effectively with officials, pilots, organizers, volunteers, and community partners.

## HOT AIR BALLOON EXPERIENCE

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- Hot air balloon pilot since 2012; earned U.S. Commercial Pilot – Lighter-Than-Air, Free Balloon privileges in 2016.
- Pilot of Maveryx, based in Jackson, Michigan, with more than a decade of flight experience.
- Experience includes flight operations, weather assessment, launch and landing operations, pilot briefings, landowner relations, event logistics and balloon flight safety.

## **COMPETITION EXPERIENCE**

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Active competition pilot with regional and nationally ranked experience, including the Michigan Challenge Balloonfest, Battle Creek Field of Flight, Angola Balloons Aloft and Balloons Over Bavarian Inn.

## **EDUCATION**

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**Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania** | 2000–2003