

PRESS RELEASE



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CyberThon 2017 Announces Free Training, Open Enrollment

Third annual cybersecurity challenge now features financial security theme and open enrollment for locals
(links to event photos and promo video provided below)

PENSACOLA – Gearing up early for its third annual cybersecurity challenge event, CyberThon officials have announced improvements that include an online banking financial theme and enrollment open to any high school or college student in the Pensacola region. CyberThon 2017 is set for January 20-22 at the National Flight Academy, hosted by the [AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter](#). The event brings together community leaders, cyber experts and a cadre of cyber competitors from local schools to participate in real-world cyber operations and defense sessions.

[Multiple free training sessions](#) have been scheduled in the next three months in an effort to improve the event experience for students and mentors alike. “One of the best ways we can improve the effectiveness of CyberThon is to help the students be more prepared for the challenges,” said AFCEA Pensacola Chapter president Randy Ramos. “We’re excited to offer some basic cybersecurity training in advance that will bring students and mentors up to speed on the specific tools and environment they’ll be using when it’s time for the main event. It’s a time investment for us and the participants, but it’s an investment that will pay off with even greater personal skills and ultimately workforce development, which is the primary mission of CyberThon.”

The free, pre-event training courses will be hosted on Saturdays in computer classrooms at Global Business Solutions, Inc. in Pensacola beginning October 22 and running through early January. Classes are offered on various dates so students and mentors can choose a time that works for their schedule, and a free lunch is provided. Full registration details are posted on the AFCEA Pensacola website at www.afceapensacola.org/cyberthon. All training and the CyberThon event is free for participants, but space is limited and students are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

Another change for CyberThon 2017 is the implementation of a themed cyber environment. Major sponsor Navy Federal Credit Union is developing a simulated online banking environment that uses Jeopardy-style challenges that guide students to answer questions, find cyber vulnerabilities, and harden their network to defend against attacks.

In January 2016, CyberThon saw sponsorships and participation double in the event's second year, and AFCEA leaders expect more growth in 2017. "We were thrilled to grow from an exciting community event to one of our region's premiere cybersecurity challenges in just our second year," said AFCEA Pensacola Vice President of Awards and Education Tony Ferguson. "We've received fantastic support from sponsors and our community, so now our focus moves to improving the quality of CyberThon by maximizing the space and resources we have." Event organizers say they can accommodate as many as 70 student participants for the January, 2017 event. Sponsorships are already being formed, and organizations interested in being a sponsor can find details at www.afceapensacola.org/cyberthon.

In support of the Department of Homeland Security's mission statement that "Homeland Security Begins with Hometown Security," the three-day event will also include keynote addresses on cybersecurity trends and expert panel discussions. Cybersecurity continues to be a rapidly growing industry with strong demand for skilled technical workers, and Escambia County offers a wealth of training and career opportunities for interested students. Pensacola is also home to many of the leading tech firms in the region. As the leading organization for increasing technology information in the defense, homeland security and intelligence communities, AFCEA and the local Blue Angels Pensacola chapter are thrilled to be hosting CyberThon 2017.

About AFCEA: Founded in 1946, AFCEA International's roots trace back to the American Civil War. Today, AFCEA serves as a bridge between government requirements and industry capabilities, representing the top government, industry and military professionals in the fields of information technology, communications and intelligence. The AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter has been an active participant in raising scholarship funds for local technology students for more than a decade.

For more information and event updates:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CyberThonPcola

Twitter: [@cyberthonpcola](https://twitter.com/cyberthonpcola), #cyberthon

Email: cyberthon@afceapensacola.org

Website: <http://afceapensacola.org/>

2016 Event Photos:

https://www.facebook.com/CyberThonPcola/photos/?tab=album&album_id=432471093623952

2017 Promo Video: <https://vimeo.com/185993727>

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