

March 2013

2014 AMAA
CONVENTION
January 27 and 28
Heritage Inn
Great Falls, MT

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"Can the magic of flight ever be carried by words? I think not."

Michael Parfit,
"Smithsonian"
Magazine
May 2000

AMAA NEWSLETTER

"Professional Aerial Applicators Providing Crop Protection Products and Services to Production Agriculture Across Montana"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to start off with a thank you for attending the convention in January. It was a success: our attendance numbers have increased, the PAASS presentation was great, and we had loyal vendor support. If you have any ideas on how to make the convention better, please let a board member know and we'll discuss it at the spring meeting in April. We've received a couple ideas already and are working on arranging for presenters 2014. One item we'll talk about is setting aside more time to visit with vendors so we're not so rushed during our short breaks.

Several of us, myself included, attended a legislative hearing in Helena on March 8 to testify on behalf of House Bill 546. This bill requires marking of MET towers. John Semple has been working diligently on bringing this bill to fruition. Thank you to John Semple, Cody Folkvord, Dana Ness, Darrin Pluhar, Justin Ferguson and Russell Ferguson for attending. This showed great support from the AMAA due to the distances traveled. Many other organizations were represented including AOM, Montana Wool Growers, AOPA, Montana Aeronautics, MATA, MPA and Gaelectric. There was no one present who spoke in opposition to HB 546. Please read John Semple's legislative update (page 6) in this newsletter for more information.

The billboard this year will be placed between Laurel and Billings. Due to costs and lack of funding, we will only hang one billboard this summer. The second one will be shipped to Campbell Aviation in Dutton and will be hung on my hangar which is a prime location for anyone traveling north on I-15.

Operation SAFE will be in Lewistown on April 16, 17 and 18. Our team will be Scott Bretthauer and Tom Karsky. If you're bringing an airplane, please do as much at home as you can (i.e. fix leaks, replaces hoses, etc.).

The Stanford Airport Biggerstaff Field dedication is slated to take place on Saturday, April 20. This will be in honor of Mike Biggerstaff who selflessly gave of himself to the AMAA, his local community and anyone who ever met him. Please see page 7 for additional information.

I hope your winter and spring are doing well with maintenance, planning and getting set up for the season. Have a good, safe, productive season!

Mike

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NOTEWORTHY ITEMS

- ⇒ The Inplace check from Wilbur-Ellis Company for 2012 totaled \$1483.00 These funds are used to offset the cost of the Operation SAFE Fly-In Clinic in April. Thank you, Wilbur-Ellis!
- ⇒ The Spring Board Meeting will be held the evening of Tuesday, April 16 during the Operation S.A.F.E. clinic.
- ⇒ NAAA is pleased to announce that BASF has renewed its commitment to offer financial incentives to NAAA members who participate in Operation S.A.F.E. Fly-In Clinics in 2013. This is a continuation of a program BASF initiated in 2010 in collaboration with NAAA to provide financial support for participating aerial applicators that can be used toward membership in NAAA or for new spray equipment. See the March 22 NAAA e-newsletter for additional information.
- ⇒ Continuing education units have been applied for the Operation S.A.F.E. Clinic with the Department of Ag. Please make sure to sign the attendance sheet when you are in Lewistown.



NAAA Spring Board Meeting Report

By Darrin Pluhar

The NAAA Spring Board Meetings were recently held February 15th-16th in Alexandria, VA. Prior to those meetings, on February 14th, I met up with President Dana Ness and Executive Director Andrew Moore, as well as Manager of Government and Public Relations Danna Kelemen, in Washington, DC.

We first met with Representative Sam Graves (R) from Missouri, staffer Jordan Austin and NAAA's lobbyist Mark Lemunyon. Congressman Graves serves on the Ag. Committee and Aviation Sub-committee under Transportation. Much of the discussions centered around NAAA's objection to proposed landing fees for all turbine aircraft, tower markings, fuel tax credits and maintaining depreciation schedules for Ag aircraft purchases. As a real asset to our organization and industry, Rep. Graves has requested NAAA's presence and input about these issues with the committees he serves.

Later, we met with staffers from Senator Baucus' office and Senator Pryor's (D - Arkansas) to relay NAAA concern about these same issues.

Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE) was the featured speaker at the AgAv PAC breakfast Friday morning. Rep. Smith serves on the House Ways and Means Committee and is known for being a staunch conservative, which works to his advantage as a member of the Congressional Rural Caucus, Modern Agriculture Caucus and General Aviation Caucus. Rep. Smith summarized the gridlock in DC and how it will be tough for Congress to accomplish much, conservatively speaking, over the next four years, but emphasized how important it is for the NAAA to fight for its voice to be heard and the affect it can have on these decisions. As an example, Rep. Smith stated that 80% of the funding in the Farm Bill goes to the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) for things such as food stamps, hot lunch programs, WIC, etc. while only 20% actually goes to Ag production programs. With budget cuts forthcoming, the battle is brewing because the majority of the proposed cuts are from the 20% piece of the pie!

The first committee I served on was Government Relations. This meeting covers a wide range of issues, but I will focus my summary on some of the main topics as follows:

NAAA is still working to get the "new" Congress to enact legislation to do away with the NPDES PGP's as part of a new Farm Bill. 2012 did not see much activity by the general public brought in the form of lawsuits based on perceived misapplications as defined under NPDES, but this was most likely due to nobody wanting to rock the boat during an election year. 2013 could be a different story, so NAAA urges everyone covered under the scope of these operating standards to use due diligence.

The Endangered Species Act affect on aerial application is still a major concern going forward. NAAA continues to monitor the potential negative affects to agriculture due to current lawsuits brought on by environmental groups against the EPA for not being more restrictive on applications when labeling crop protection products in the form of larger buffer areas and other application restrictions.

Concerning Pollinator Issues, there was much discussion on Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and how aerial application and farming in general is being put under the microscope as being one of the leading causes, even though science and data show that other issues such as mites, nutrition, weather and travel all have a far more proven effect on the bee hives. NAAA urges all applicators to exercise extreme caution when working around bees so as not to give these groups any more ammunition to use against our industry.

Because of the previous topics, Drift Reduction Technology (DRT) is becoming a real focus of the industry that not only includes Ag operators and pilots, but application equipment and product manufacturers also. As part of this effort, Driftwatch was developed by Purdue University in an effort to form a database of crop information

(NAAA Update Continued):

in order for growers and applicators to be able to communicate better about the location of sensitive areas. Currently, plans are underway to improve this system by creating an independent organization not affiliated with Purdue directly to develop a more accurate, user friendly system. The committee put together some specific points to make the new system better that included:

- * Creating a more positive image by appropriately naming it Fieldwatch
- * Ensure accurate, current and validated information
- * Transparent and representative governance
- * Long term sustainability and operational effectiveness
- * Promote and develop stewardship at the field level
- * Must encompass significant geographic scope
- * Should be voluntary and support collaboration with state and federal regulators
- * Not create or increase liability for any and all stakeholders

The committee discussed NAAA's role in ensuring the federal fuel tax exemption and bonus depreciation stay in place while opposing the landing fees that are being proposed (\$100 for turbine aircraft).

Low-level obstacles becoming more of a problem was discussed at length. These include MET towers, RTK towers (used on farm machinery for precision accuracy auto steering), tethered flying wind turbines and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). Many state associations have been successful in getting laws passed to make these obstacles more visible, with more states following suit and pushing for state legislation in dealing with these problems.

The second committee I served on was Constitution and Bylaws. The NAAA has hired legal council to go over these documents to make sure they comply with a new District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act that recently went into effect. Much of our discussions were about the lawyer's suggested changes to clean up any redundant and conflicting working between our Constitution and the Bylaws.

My third committee assignment was to Safety and Federal Aviation Regulations. Dr. Don Arendt, Manager of the FAA's Safety Management System (SMS) Program Office gave us a review on this program. SMS was implemented to encourage companies to develop a safety manual that listed proper procedures for dealing with various foreseen problems that may arise. Initially, many people were intimidated and scared off by just the SMS name, so Dr. Arendt indicated that they will just refer to it as Safety Management. Concerns have also been raised about companies that do come up with a procedure being held liable if a situation arises because they didn't adhere to their procedures exactly. The consensus from the committee was to proceed cautiously and spend more time developing a sound system.

The group also discussed the latest progress that is being made in various states concerning tower markings and lighting. With the current administration's focus and excessive subsidies towards alternative energy, the number of MET and wind towers keep increasing. The FAA did construct an advisory circular (AC) on recommended practices for lighting and marking towers less than 200 feet tall but, unfortunately, this AC hasn't been put in print yet for distribution. Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) are also growing in popularity, due largely in part to Congress endorsing their use thru the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 that required the FAA to provide for the safe integration of civil UAS's into the national airspace system as soon as practical, but no later than September 2015. As of now, it is a violation of the FAR's to fly UAS's for commercial purposes, but the writing is on the wall that could be changing soon. Due to the serious consequence for the safety of our industry, NAAA continues to keep a close eye on both of these issues.

(NAAA Update Continued):

It was also brought to the committee's attention that a few operators have been violated by the FAA in the last year for not having a copy of the aircraft's flight manual on board. Discussion ensued about where it is written that every aircraft needs a flight manual on board: operators can usually refer to the Type Data Certificate or the aircraft flight manual itself for written proof that the manual is required to be on board, but this is not the case for all aircraft. Representatives from Air Tractor and Thrush were looking into options for making their aircraft manuals available to owners in an e-format.

We also reviewed the accidents for 2012 which numbered 63 (2nd lowest ever) with 4 fatalities (lowest ever). Unfortunately, as of this writing, in 2013 there have already been 7 accidents with 3 fatalities, so needless to say our industry hasn't gotten off to a good start.

Everyone, please take a step back and let's be careful out there!

I sat in as a guest on the Convention Committee Meeting, where it was approved to hold the 2016 NAAA Convention in Long Beach, CA, which promises to provide a good setting to celebrate NAAA's 50th Anniversary. This year, we will be in Reno, followed by Louisville, KY in 2014 and back in Savannah, GA in 2015.

Lastly, I also sat in on the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting where the FY 2013-2014 budget was approved. For the first time in several years, the budget shows a surplus, due to a generous contribution by Pratt and Whitney-Canada, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the PT-6 in 2013. To commemorate this occasion, they have agreed to donate another turbine engine to the NAAA for the Live Auction held annually at the convention.

This is just a summary of what I was able to take part in at the NAAA Spring Board Meetings. For more information on these subjects, or the committees that I was not able to attend, please visit the NAAA website for a recap.

After being exposed to all the proceedings going on inside the NAAA, I can't tell you how appreciative each and every operator and pilot (DUES PAYING MEMBER OR NOT) should be for all that they do for our industry, behind the scenes, on a daily basis. Every person involved, from our executive director down to the individual board members, make it their top priority to fight for our aerial application industry and way of life.

To those operators/pilots that are loyal members of the AMAA and NAAA, congratulations and thank you for supporting a good cause. It's money well spent and goes a long way towards making your voice heard on the state and national level. If you are not a member, I would invite you to join and take full advantage of the representation the AMAA and NAAA can do for you and encourage you to support both organizations that continuously fight for your livelihood and longevity. Considering it only costs operators \$680 and pilots \$285 to join both organizations, I challenge you to find a better return on your investment for what little it costs you per acre over an entire season.

On the performance of each, rests the fate of all!

Wishing all of you a safe and productive season.

Darrin

Greetings from the Capitol,

As of this week, March 22nd, the Legislative process is past mid point (day 62 of 90). Several events of note include a 100 to 0 vote on HB2, which is the authority for State spending for the next two years. In past sessions, the floor session takes at least several days, with amendments trying to change specific spending within the budget bill. Confirmation of department directors (Governor Steve Bullock's picks) in the Senate have been moving without much partisanship. We are awaiting the movement of LC2144, a bill by Senator Elsie Arntzen, to confirm the new appointments (5) on the Board of Aeronautics. AMAA has a member on the board, and at this time requires confirmation. At the beginning of the session, MABA and AMAA communicated with the Montana Bankers Association to find out if they were pursuing a change in the fertilizer and pesticide lien law (Title 71-3-9). After sponsoring a bill for three of the last five sessions, they opted not to push a bill this session. AMAA's signature bill this session is HB546, by Roy Hollandsworth. This bill sets aeronautic safety standards for meteorological evaluation towers (MET) which are more than 50 feet tall , to include certain reporting requirements and a transition period for towers currently in place. The notable standards include paint of aviation orange and white bands that are sized as 1/7th the height of the tower, two marker balls evenly spaced on the outside guy wires, and yellow sleeves at the lower end of the guy wire. The paperwork to the Department of Aeronautics shall, minimally, include the tower's height, location, and separately, the owner's name. Other bills AMAA has been watching include:

HB472 by Representative Jerry Bennett (R – Libby), which provides for a business property tax exemption for the first 250,000.00 dollars of owned equipment. Several bills are competing, so I expect a somewhat lower exemption value.

HB548 by Representative Dan Zolnikov (R – Billings), which attempts to adjust speed limits relative to "one ton trucks" and below – however, during testimony comments included a reference to a less understood portion of commercial drivers law which "alludes" to a fact that anytime a commercial operation is on the road - if the trailer is over 10,000 lbs. - the driver is to have a commercial drivers license.

SB150 by Senator Robyn Driscoll (D – Billings), proposes to limit the usage of UAVs to those WITHOUT an "antipersonnel" device – something which can cause bodily harm. This bill is up for a hearing in House Judiciary , after having passed the Senate.

HB588 by Representative Bill Harris (R – Winnett), codifies, in statute, some rules by Fish and Game about flying to spot game and requiring an overnight stop before actually hunting the area previously scouted. This bill language was already in law and it separates references to boats and aircraft.

The second half of the session will be dominated by HB2 and the balancing of the budget, as is required by our constitution. Of course, we will still monitor any bills of interest to AMAA.

John Semple, Lobbyist

STANFORD AIRPORT BIGGERSTAFF FIELD

By John Semple

The addition of "Biggerstaff Field" to the name of the airport at Stanford Montana has progressed rather smoothly since a resolution passed on February 5, 2013, during a county commission meeting at Stanford in Judith Basin County. I have word that Montana Aeronautics has finished the name posting process, which includes notifying the FAA. Their "5010 process" assures the name change will be printed (noted) in aviation reference materials.

The dedication is planned for April 20, 2013 at the Stanford airport to honor Mike Biggerstaff, long-time aerial applicator and Stanford airport manager. The dedication will start at 11:00 am on Saturday, with a picnic style lunch to follow. There will also be time during the dedication for a sharing of thoughts or stories about Mike. The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators has been providing guidance for the dedication. For more information or to volunteer to help setup, please call Colleen Campbell at 406-781-6461, Mike Campbell at 406-788-5229, Don Newton at 406-366-8150, or John Semple at 406-431-1377.

2013 CONVENTION PHOTOS



Connie Biggerstaff was awarded the first Mike Biggerstaff Eagle Award during the January convention.

Janet Kirkland was honored for her service to AMAA and her recent retirement from the Department of Agriculture.

Mike Campbell welcomes guest speaker Scott Bretthauer.



LEADERSHP TRAINING PROGRAM

The second part of the 2012-13 Leadership Training Program took place in Alexandria, VA during NAAA's Spring Board Meeting and proved to be just as informative and beneficial as the first part last October. Syngenta continues to offer and financially sponsor its "Leadership at its Best" training seminars to aerial applicators and others involved in the industry across the country and I encourage you to take advantage of this excellent program!

Our two-day session began with a seminar entitled "NAAA and the D.C. Landscape" presented by a D.C. Lobbyist who specializes in the field of agriculture. He reviewed the federal government structure, the "Why" of lobbying and strategies for successful lobbying. I doubt I'll have the opportunity to lobby in high-powered Washington, D.C. but these tactics will surely help me in Helena, MT.

The second session of day 1 focused on Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter. I've come to find out that most of the AMAA's members are not social media-friendly however, there are various associations and aerial application businesses across the country who optimize these outlets in their favor. I would be willing to utilize this avenue to engage, educate and empower our industry if there is enough interest amongst our membership.

The second day of the LTP focused solely on "Telling Your 'Story' Through News Media." Steve Powell, president of Solum Consulting, explained the definition of story as it pertains to ag aviation and then we worked on defining our story, identifying public concerns, and therefore developing the message we want to relay. Our job is obviously to get our message through to the media despite its efforts to railroad us into a negative story. After all, it is the media's job to come up with its own story and the more sensational, the better. By not answering the reporter's questions directly we can bridge the interview to our perspective and a more truthful view of the aerial application industry.

Please consider applying for the Leadership Training Program in the future. This industry needs leaders—we need you!

"LEADERSHIP AT ITS BEST"



NAAA President Dana Ness, LTP Graduate Colleen Campbell, Mike Campbell, Syngenta's Rex Martin

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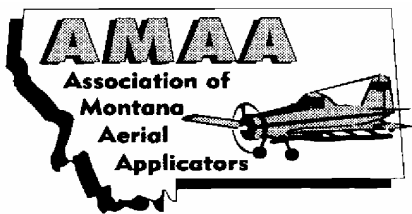
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