

February 2012

2013 AMAA
CONVENTION
January 28 and 29
Heritage Inn
Great Falls, MT

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"A superior pilot uses his superior judgment to avoid situations which require the use of his superior skills."

Frank Borman, Apollo 8

AMAA NEWSLETTER

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to begin by saying thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. Darrin Pluhar did a great job and will be a tough act to follow.

Here is an update on Operation Safe for 2012. It will be held in Lewistown April 10-12. Scott Bretthauer, who spoke during the convention last month and helped with the 2011 Operation Safe, will be returning to Montana to give us hands-on help as will the University of Idaho crew. We have reserved a block of rooms at the Super 8. Please call 406-538-2581 to reserve your room. We plan to have local school students visit and plan to show them the benefits of aerial application, production agriculture and the value of what we are trying to accomplish with pattern testing our aircraft. During the spray check, we will have a board meeting to discuss follow up of our convention, work on this year's budget, discuss current hot topics prevalent to our field, and begin planning the 2013 convention.

One current hot topic is that the Montana Airport Managers are trying to write up a contract for ag operators who work off the local airports. Colleen has emailed a version of this lease agreement in its draft form. I plan to attend a meeting scheduled for March 2nd in Bozeman during the MT Aviation Convention. Feedback from you prior to the meeting is appreciated.

I am very impressed (as I know you are) with the caliber of men and women serving in NAAA. As we learned from our meeting, NPDES applies to chemicals labeled for use over water. Common sense tells me that they will push for all chemical applied, whether over water or terrestrial. I can't stress enough the importance of joining NAAA. They are strong in fighting for us.

The organic thing is a total waste of good farmland as far as I'm concerned. Why grow 20 bushel wheat when you can grow 70 bushel wheat? All it's for is the wealthy. As our world population reaches 7 billion people, is it good stewardship to grow less per acre? Strong words, but we need to have people open their eyes.

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Darrin talked with Janet Kirkland regarding the new aerial applicator test the Department of Agriculture is implementing. She is tentatively planning a study session, with the test to immediately follow, during our 2013 convention. I'll keep you posted on this development.

I'll close now, but I just want to say thanks to everyone in our group, whether members or vendors. I've known most of you for 20 years or more and call you friends. Have a safe and prosperous year.

Mike Campbell, AMAA President

2012 Operation Safe Spray Clinic

The Operation Safe Spray Clinic dates have been changed since the last newsletter though the correct dates were given during the convention. The correct dates are **April 10-12th** in Lewistown, MT. Invoices will be mailed soon to those who have pre-registered for the fly-in. The cost for members is \$200.00; for non-members it is \$380.00. Scott Bretthauer will once again be on hand to help us analyze our spray patterns and to present findings from his research. We are grateful to him for sharing his expertise. Bobetta Newton is trying to arrange for some of the students at the Lewistown school to come to the airport for a tour and to learn more about the aerial application profession. Several of our vendors will be on hand to show their support—thank you! Hopefully the weather will be perfect (for once) and all who have signed up can take advantage of the 2012 Operation Safe Fly-In. See you in April!

USDA-APHIS and Grasshoppers

Joe Merenz did not get a chance to speak during the convention but he did leave information with Colleen regarding grasshopper hot spots for 2012. These all fall in central Montana. If you are interested in this material, please contact Colleen for copies. She also has the fingerprint cards, which need to be filed each year, in order to be awarded a government contract with the USDA-APHIS.

Spring Board Meeting

The AMAA Board of Directors spring board meeting will be held during the Operation Safe Spray Clinic in Lewistown. It will be on Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on the weather and the viability of running planes over the string. If you have items for the agenda, please contact Mike Campbell.

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NOTEWORTHY ITEMS

⇒ **MATE:** AMAA had a good presence at the MATE where our booth looked good and drew a fair amount of attention. We gave away a lot of information, almost all the toy airplanes and had a few organizations sign up for visits. Thank you to Russell Ferguson, Kelly Schindler and Bruce Downs for stopping by and helping man the booth for a few hours. I especially appreciated Paul and Pat Newby, who helped set up the booth. Paul brought his computer, projector and screen to use for showing the "One Hungry Planet" video. Thanks also to Dana Ness for helping set up and tear down the booth, as well as helping to give out information during the show. We got a lot of positive feedback and have a good thing going by attending this trade show, which I believe we should continue. Thanks, again, to everyone for all the help! **Darrin**

⇒ **Billboards:** The AMAA billboards continue to be successfully displayed across the state of Montana. For 2012, they will be placed in the Flathead Valley and near Butte.

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators held its annual convention last month where we, as a board, were pleased with the turnout and I believe had a record number of vendors. Both days were filled with informative speakers and messages covering many important issues that should help attendees make their operations safer, more efficient and productive. For everyone that attended, thank you! A special "thank you" also goes out to all of the vendors who generously support our annual meeting in many ways such as having a booth as well as sponsoring breaks, door prizes, meals or hospitality hours. Their contributions are what make the whole event possible, so please express your appreciation towards them next time you have a chance. I, personally, want to thank Colleen for all the hard work and effort she puts in on behalf of the AMAA to make sure all the details are taken care of and everything comes off without a hitch; many of which go unnoticed because certain items such as nametags and programs are always available and looking very professional.

AMAA was honored to have Andrew Moore, Executive Director for the National Agricultural Aviation Association, as our guest. At the annual meeting, Andrew gave us an overview of the important issues and battles happening on Capitol Hill that could affect our industry in the future. As keynote speaker for the banquet, Andrew gave us a good picture of our industry chronologically on the basis of our past, present and future importance as an industry.

Our PAASS presenters this year were Leif Isaacson and Scott Bretthauer. Leif operates Desert Air Ag out of Terreton, Idaho and is also the NAAA Vice-President for 2012. Scott is an extension specialist with the University of Illinois who has done extensive research with aerial application technology. They both did an outstanding job of presenting a difficult subject on forming an emergency response plan that covers many different areas such as dealing with the tragedy of fatal accidents.

Scott Bretthauer also gave a presentation on some of the current research being done with spray pattern analysis concerning droplet size/spectrum in regards to improving the quality of coverage and effectiveness of various applications.

In addition, the FAA made a presentation concerning stall/spin awareness, operating specs for Part 137 and safety issues. Kevin Britten of AgriSmart presented Flight Plan Online designed specifically for aerial application operations which aids in the organization, management, and distribution of work orders safely. Doug Sylling of Gaelectric, which constructs and maintains MET towers, spoke about what they are doing to minimize the hazardous effects of their towers towards all low flying aircraft.

Christine Weaver of the Department of Environmental Quality gave an update on how Montana's version of the NPDES special permit will look and who it will affect. Linda Johns, with the Department of Ag spoke on the "Drift Watch Website" they are trying to build that will potentially have information listed on maps showing known alert areas such as organic and sensitive crops or bee hives. Janet Kirkland (MT Dept. of Ag) also talked about the process out licensing out-of-state pilots and reciprocity issues.

Sam Thompson of Tulsa Aircraft Engines led a discussion and answered questions concerning radial engine operation and maintenance, which always generates a lot of crowd participation.

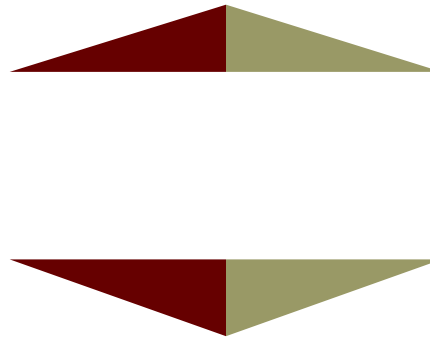
AMAA will host another Operation SAFE pattern check this Spring on April 10 – 12 in Lewistown and Scott Bretthauer will again serve as our analyst.

In closing, I'd just like to say that it has been a privilege to serve as president for the last two years. I felt all along that it was just my turn to drive our bus and took very serious the responsibility to keep the momentum going that has grown over the 20 years since AMAA came to be. I relied heavily on the rest of the board members, as well as Colleen, to give me directions in order to keep our path on the straight and narrow, so we could proceed further down the road towards our goal of always trying to improve the quality of information and representation that AMAA offers to our members. If you like what you see, encourage others to join AMAA and support our cause. If you have an idea or problem, contact a board member and express your opinions. But also, be willing to help out by serving on the board, as we always are looking for fresh faces and ideas.

Bottom line: Be proud of the fact that you are part of the AMAA which represents true Professional Aerial Applicators of Montana!

Fly Safe!

Darrin



NAAA REPORT FOR AMAA

By Dana Ness

The NAAA Spring board meeting was held February 10th, & 11th, in Washington D.C. This year's speaker for the Ag Av PAC Breakfast was U.S. Senator John Boozeman (R-AR), who talked about how important agriculture is not only to his home state of Arkansas, but also the U.S. Senator Boozeman knows how important Agricultural Aviation is with a large number of Applicators as his constituents. Senator Boozeman serves on the Senate committees on Agricultural, Nutrition, & Forestry, as well as Environmental, & Public Works. Senator Boozeman brings a common sense approach to the Senate; this is a quality that is somewhat lacking in the current political climate.

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(NAAA Report Continued from page 5)

The committee meetings started after the General Session where Dr. John Thorne with Crowell & Moring gave an update on the NPDES Pesticide General Permit. Dr. Thorne made one very important comment on how the NAAA has been far out front of all the other agricultural organizations on the NPDES permit issue, and that the Association is to be commended on its hard work for softening the blow of these permits. This was a natural lead in to my first committee of Governmental Relations, where it was discussed about the great amount of information that the NAAA has prepared and presents on its website. There are many issues that are always being dealt with on the governmental relations front such as User Fee exemptions, METs Advisory Circular, and Airborne Wind Energy Systems.

The second committee that I serve on is Constitution & Bylaws, which is always checking to make sure that the association's Constitution is current and serving the membership accurately.

The third committee that I serve on, and have the pleasure of serving as chair, is Membership Committee. The committee reviewed the BASF scholarship process, and will review the applications at the Fall NAAA Board meeting. At the request of the Long Range Planning Committee, the Membership committee talked about and approved a membership dues increase for all categories, which comes in response to a change in the composition on the industry, mainly consolidation that has reduced the number of operators in the industry. The increase on dues will take place on July 1, 2012, so don't wait until later in the year to renew your NAAA membership!

The last committee that I serve on is the Budget & Finance committee, which met and reviewed the new budget prepared for the coming fiscal year. The committee also reviewed the purchase of the new NAAA office building in Alexandria, Virginia, and how this new office space will help provide for further growth as necessary in the future.

It is not too early to start thinking about the NAAA Convention, which will be held December 3rd – 6th in Savanna Georgia; it is sure once again to be a popular destination.

As Membership Committee Chairman I would like to once again thank all of you that are currently members of the NAAA and AMAA, **and ask those who are not members to Please Join!!! In this very inhospitable political environment it is only people involved in our industry and Association that are fighting to keep us up and flying. The time for sitting on the sidelines, waiting to help is over. We need all the help that we can muster. YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS YOUR VOICE!!!**

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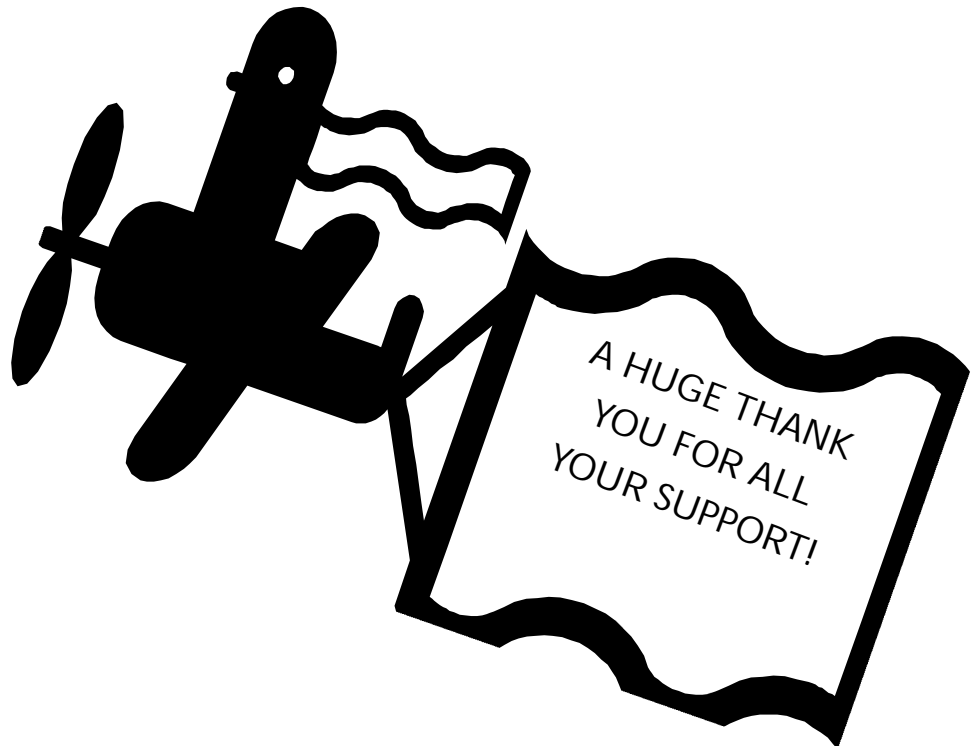
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