

AMAA NEWSLETTER

**“PROFESSIONAL AERIAL APPLICATORS PROVIDING CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES TO PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE ACROSS MONTANA”**
WWW.MONTANAAERIALAPPLICATORS.ORG
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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

WACEY CATHEY

Hello fellow applicators,

I hope winter is treating you all well. We have had small batches of moisture west of the divide but will need some good rain this spring to make a decent year.

I am very optimistic about the 2022 season for multiple reasons: Crop prices seem to be up across the board. Inputs are also up, unfortunately, but that gives more incentive to protect a decent crop. Second, cattle prices are also on the rise and producers may have a little money to spend on protecting and maximizing the forage that they have available. The drought is still on everyone’s mind, hopefully that trend doesn’t continue. If it does, I suppose the grasshopper infestation will expand. To top off my optimism I listened to a long-term weather report that explained the weather pattern is acting a lot like the weather pattern of 2011. Maybe a fungus run? Doubtful, but who knows.

I’d like to encourage you to attend the Operation Safe Spray Check; it is a benefit to all if we can keep our patterns in check. It was nice to see everyone at the annual convention in Great Falls in January. Attendance was down slightly for multiple reasons; next year we hope to get better participation.

I hope you all have a safe and productive 2022 season.

Sincerely,

Wacey Cathey

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The AMAA board hired me to serve as Executive Secretary (aka Executive Director) during the January 26, 2005 board meeting. Statistically, I have planned and implemented 17 annual conventions; driven or flown thousands of miles to attend spring, fall and winter board meetings; organized many Operation S.A.F.E. clinics; attended meetings during NAAA conventions; was honored to attend the Leadership Training Program; received the AMAA's Eagle Club Award; and have met pilots, spouses, vendors and sponsors, many of who have become lifetime friends. However, change is inevitable; it is also healthy, inspiring and powerful. It is time for me to step down and to allow other things to take precedence in my life. I am not leaving the industry; aviation is still our livelihood, and I will see each of you in the future. The AMAA board has hired Alyssa Stromberg as the new Executive Secretary. I will officially hand over the title to her during the spring board meeting but this year will be a transitional one and I will remain in an advisory capacity, as needed. Thank you to the board members I have served with and each of you reading this. You have added to my life-dimension, spice, sometimes a little stress, but most of all a way to serve those in the agricultural aviation industry. Thank you!

With that being said, please meet Alyssa Stromberg.....

Alyssa is married to Pat Stromberg, former AMAA President and currently our NAAA representative. Alyssa was born and raised in Coeur D'Alene, ID, moving to northeast Montana in 2003. She has two boys; the youngest will be graduating in May 2022 and attending Montana State. She and Pat will become empty nesters and she's torn between gathering more animals or traveling to tropical places. Currently they have 3 dogs, 2 cats and 9 runner ducks. She and Pat enjoy camping and are only 7 miles from a lake/camp area. She describes it as a win/win because she gets to camp and Pat doesn't miss good spray days since he's so close to their home and the airport. Alyssa currently serves on the local school board, sports co-op board and county fair board. She works at the Medicine Lake Refuge but is also a licensed addiction counselor. She looks forward to getting to know each of the AMAA members and working more closely in the aerial application industry.

Upcoming Events

Operation SAFE Fly-In—April 4-6, 2022—Lewistown, MT

AMAA Spring Board Meeting—April 4, 2022—Lewistown, MT

AMAA Fall Board Meeting—TBD

2022 NAAA Convention—December 5-8, 2022—Knoxville, TN

2023 AMAA Convention—January 22-24, 2023—Heritage Inn, Great Falls, MT

Spring 2022 NAAA Update**By****Patrick Stromberg**

Happy spring to everyone, hopefully you all made it through the winter refreshed and ready for another season, although it still feels a lot like winter in our part of the state. I just returned from the spring NAAA board meetings in Forth Worth, TX and as always there is much going on with the organization. Crop prices continue to be up and most parts of the country are expecting a busy season assuming mother nature plays along.

As usual the UAV issue continues to be at the front of the NAAA's priority list. Obviously, it is in all of our best interests to find a safe way to coexist in the low altitude airspace that we share. There is a proposal to allow UAV's up to 1320lbs to be exempt from giving right of way to manned aircraft if the manned aircraft is not equipped with ADSB. We do not expect that this will come to be the law, in part because the FAA has said that they do not want UAV's to use ADSB as a collision avoidance tool because of fears that it would overwhelm the ATC system. But none the less, there is a massive amount of venture capital out there driving the development of UAV's and the NAAA is working tirelessly to maintain the safety of the aerial applicators. The FAA seems to be quarterbacking some of these efforts allowing exemptions for part 137 operations using UAV's and requiring little or no airworthiness standards for the drones themselves. Unfortunately I believe it will take a significant accident involving human life to get the FAA to develop the same stringent standards for airworthiness that are required for certified aircraft.

Another important topic I have mentioned before is that the Biden administration has decided to do the third re-write of the Waters of the US rule, basically reverting back to the draft that the Obama administration developed. This is not an applicator or agriculture friendly deal, it more or less means that almost any body of water whether directly, indirectly, or even not at all connected to navigable waters would be included under the rule which causes a number of headaches for aerial applicators and growers including NPDES permits to apply pesticides.

The NAAA continues to make comments to the EPA on the recertification of different active ingredients as they come up for review, and in addition to that the NAAA has started working more closely with the manufacturers themselves to educate them on aerial application and how to best ensure the retention of the aerial labels on those active ingredients.

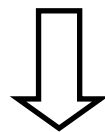
The FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association) had a petition to the DOT to allow the transport of up to 1000 gallons of JET A without the requirement of a hazmat enforcement that is still being reviewed. The NAAA is exploring the possibility of developing a training program for drivers and operators that NAAA members could take and presenting that course to the

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DOT as a means to apply for the exemption. This of course is assuming that the exemption doesn't pass on its own.

One more issue that could possibly have an impact on operators in our state is encroachment on private airstrips. With the 5G towers popping up and the increased popularity of wind turbines there are guys around the country that have had obstructions pop up that hinder or completely eliminate the use of the airstrip. A possible way to avoid this is to register your airstrip with the FAA, sooner rather than later if it hasn't already been done. Your local zoning authority may also be able to impose restrictions on potential obstructions.

In an effort to cut this down I have left out an abundance of information about what the NAAA is working on, but I've said it before and I will continue to advocate for it, NAAA membership is some of the cheapest insurance you can buy to ensure that we are allowed to continue in an industry that is constantly under fire from uniformed regulators, environmental groups, and the media. With our current political environment and the changing views of society, our job is not going to get any easier. With less than 45% of operators and pilots currently being members, we need higher numbers. Believe me it makes a difference. I would very much like to hear from non-members on why they choose not to join. As an organization, we are trying to educate ourselves on why the numbers are low compared to other industry groups and we always have an open ear and mind on new ways to make it more attractive to new members. So please, feel free to call, email, snail mail, use a carrier pigeon or whatever means of communication you're comfortable with and give me some insight if you're not a member. Thanks and best wishes to all of you this spring.



“I don't understand why we don't have 95% membership participation. At the end of the day, there is one organization that keeps us safe and keeps us in operation.”

-2022 NAAA President Jim Perrin, commenting that anyone
“doing this for a living should be involved with NAAA”
(as quoted in Agricultural Aviation, Winter 2022, No. 1 Issue)

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FLY SAFELY PLEASE

Wilbur-Ellis provided a \$212.50 incentive check for our members' 2021 use of Crosshair and Guidance. These funds are used to offset costs associated with our Operation SAFE Clinics. I was unable to determine if this program will be available in 2022. Thank you, Wilbur-Ellis, for your continued and gracious support of our association!



2022 OPERATION SAFE
FLY-IN
APRIL 4 –6
LEWISTOWN, MT

“Operation S.A.F.E. (Self-regulating Application & Flight Efficiency) was developed in 1981 and was designed to clearly demonstrate that ag aviation recognizes its responsibility to minimize the potential for adverse health and environmental effects of agricultural chemical application.”

The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators will host an Operation SAFE clinic April 4-6, 2022 at the Lewistown, MT airport. Exact days and times are weather-dependent. If the weather is good, we'll fly! You'll want to check NOAA ahead of time, and possibly call Greg Smith, who operates from the Lewistown airport, for updates. If we can't fly on the 4th, we'll fly on the 5th, etc.

The analyst will either be Alan Corr or his son, Carson Corr, both certified analyst living in Minden, NE. The cost per aircraft is \$200. To keep the cost low, we have several sponsors including:

- ⇒ Bayer Crop Science
- ⇒ BASF
- ⇒ Corteva AgriSciences
- ⇒ Helena Agri Enterprises
- ⇒ Inero AgPilotX
- ⇒ Neal Aircraft
- ⇒ Wilbur-Ellis Company
- ⇒ Syngenta Crop Protection

Thank You!

Greg Smith has sweetened the deal by offering 10 gallons of free avgas or jet fuel for each plane that runs through the test. He is also hosting a free steak dinner on Monday night and all are invited! Local hotels include Super 8 (closest to the airport, 406-538-2581), The Calvert (406-535-5411) and Yogo Inn (406-535-8721).

According to the NAAA website, “The Operation S.A.F.E. clinic gives the operator and pilot the opportunity to test his equipment with a trained analyst to help interpret the information and to recommend changes to improve performance. A follow-up test is immediately available, so the operator can be certain improvement does exist.”

Be prepared for the upcoming spray season - attend this exceptional fly-in to make sure your equipment, new or old, is ready to fly!