

AMAA NEWSLETTER

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

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P r e s i d e n t ’ s M e s s a g e

Happy Spring Fellow Applicators

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President’s Message	1
Board of Directors	2
Items of Interest	3
NAAA Report	5
Legislative Update	8
Member Photos	9
2019 Sponsors	10
AMAA Membership List	11

After experiencing one of the coldest winters on record, it appears that spring may actually show up again as expected. I hope that everyone was able to spend a little time someplace warm and get a little winter battery recharge. I am definitely feeling the need to get some positive cash flow to help recuperate from all the fun that was had last winter.

I hope everyone enjoyed the winter applicators convention in Great Falls. Thanks to Colleen and others for all of their efforts. The aviation fuel tax bill that is going through the legislature is showing good support and is likely to pass. I think its amendments make it to be a very favorable bill that will help with airport infrastructure and only add one penny to our fuel cost. Be looking for the spray check to be coming this fall and try to make an effort to attend. The more that attend the less it will cost the association. And I will buy a beverage of choice to all that will show up.

As we all start getting our bodies acclimated to the early hours and long days, I hope everyone can start out with one or two easier jobs in order to get our mind, body, and reflexes in tune for a new season. Fly safe and may all your passes be long, flat, and obstacle free.

Greg

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Thank you to our past president, **Patrick Stromberg**, for taking the reins as our new NAAA representative. And to **Darrin Pluhar** for serving in that position for the past 6 years and currently serving as the NAAA Vice President and on the AMAA Board of Directors. The NAAA representative's job is not for the "weak of heart," requiring travel, speaking and writing skills, and a huge knowledge of the internal workings of our industry. Thank you to all those who serve in some capacity at the national level.

Each year during the NAAA convention, a name is drawn from those submitted by state associations for a chance to win a Greg Koontz acrobatic course. Congratulations to **Wacey Cathey!** Wacey will be taking the course in November 2019.



Congratulations to **Boyd Morgan** who was nominated by his peers, and was chosen by the NAAA awards committee to receive the William O. Marsh Safety Award. Boyd was presented the award during the NAAA convention in December.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ⇒ Fall Operation SAFE Clinic
October Dates TBD
- ⇒ NAAA Ag Aviation Expo
November 18-21, 2019
Orlando, FL
- ⇒ AMAA Convention and Trade
Show, January 19-21, 2020
Great Falls, MT



Dana Ness

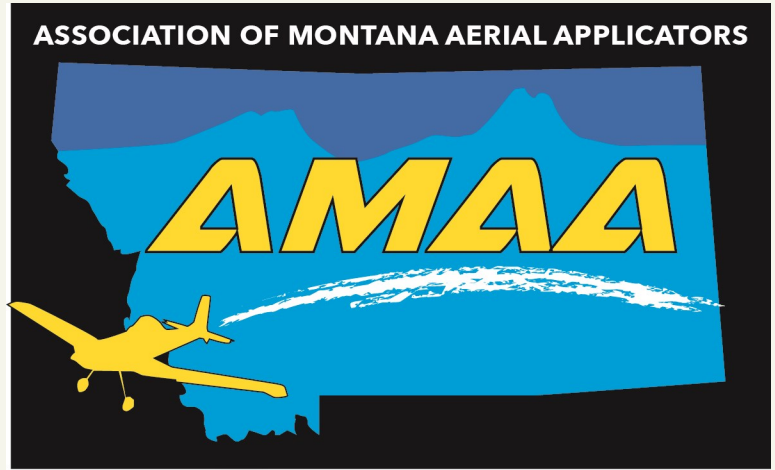
Liberty Place
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Our condolences to the family of **Garfield Jermunson** who passed away at his home in Great Falls, MT on March 13, 2019 at the age of 88. Garfield was a long-time AMAA member who had operated J&J Aerial Spraying in Brady, MT with Leonard Johnson. Gar flew his RV-8 off the Dutton airstrip until the age of 82.



Training resources for the new WPS requirements.

<http://pesticideresources.org/wps/temp/training/index.html>



AMAA Updated Logo

2019 AMAA MEMBERSHIP

- Operator Members—26
- Pilot Members—10
- Retired Members—3
- Allied Members—10
- Life Time Member—1

**Welcome to new members
David Crisp, Glen Carlson,
James Allbright and
Sam Hoffman**

Wilbur-Ellis Announces 2019 Program for Aerial Applicators

Wilbur-Ellis donated \$865 to the AMAA for our membership's use of Crosshair in 2018. The 2019 program remains the same except for one big difference. The AMAA will earn \$1.00 for every gallon of Crosshair and \$8.00 for every gallon of Guidance aerially applied by our membership. **In addition, if you grow your Guidance usage by 10% or more, all Guidance gallons will be paid at \$10/gallon.** These funds will be donated back to the association and given to us during the 2020 convention.

Thank you Wilbur-Ellis!

NAAA Update Spring 2019

By

Patrick Stromberg

First off, I would like to wish everybody a happy spring and I hope that all of you are well rested and prepared for the 2019 spray season. It seemed like an unusually long and cold winter up my part of the woods and I for one am glad to be able to go outside without dressing like an Eskimo. In February the NAAA had its spring board meeting and being it was my first meeting as the NAAA rep for AMAA, it was a lot to take in. The NAAA is working on so many things behind the scenes, some of which you have probably read about in the online articles and the magazine, and some that you may not be aware of as of yet. I will get to one of those subjects here shortly. But I would like to emphasize that the NAAA is working very hard for the interests of the operators and pilots in the industry, and no single organization does more for our industry than they do. The more I am exposed to the work they are doing, the more I don't know with any certainty how our industry would survive without them. While aerial application is essential to the ag industry, the landscape and perceptions are changing about not only aerial application, but pesticides in general and how they are incorporated into today's farming. We need organizations like the NAAA to help educate the people, the government agencies that oversee us, and the legislators that ultimately make the laws and regulations that those agencies govern by. So if you aren't already an NAAA member, I strongly urge you to become one. Any organization only has as much power as it has members and in our case, every single one helps.

In February, Darrin Pluhar and myself went up to Capitol Hill in Washington and were able to meet with both Senator Steve Daines and Representative Greg Gianforte. We found both congressmen to be quite receptive of the issues we brought to them, and they both seemed to have a very real understanding of the importance of our industry and the safety of its members. One of the big things we emphasized was the tower markings issue. One partial solution that we brought to their attention was that with the expansion of 5G service and the USDA providing grants for rural broadband service, that there be language included in the grants to require tower markings for towers below 200ft as currently they are only required to be marked OR logged into a database. The other issue we discussed with them was the NPDES pesticide general permit regulations implemented under the Obama administration. While the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act that would have ended NPDES pesticide general permit regulation did not make it into the farm bill, we urged the congressmen to work to end these permit requirements for pesticides already approved under FIFRA, which could be

done through an infrastructure bill as both infrastructure and NPDES reform move through the Senate Environmental and Public Works committee.

During the NAAA's political action committee breakfast, senator Cindy Hyde Smith who serves on the Senate AG committee and the Senate Appropriations committee (Ag Appropriations) was the speaker, and she voiced her continued support of the Aerial Application Technology Research Unit. She really was fun to listen to and she fully understands the need for aerial application and its importance to agriculture. Later in the general meeting Rick Keigwin, the EPA Director of the office of Pesticide Programs spoke on FIFRA and the re-registration process that pesticides go through every 15 years. This year there are lots of high profile active ingredients that are commonly applied aerially going through re-registration and the NAAA is working closely with the EPA to ensure those products continue to have an aerial label.

During the Government Relations committee meeting, members of the FAA were present to discuss the tower marking data base, and it is now updated daily instead of every 56 days. Of course the discussion revolved around tower markings and the FAA brought up the point that although there have been complications requiring the markings, as individuals we can go to our local planning and zoning office and advocate for tower markings at the county and state level. Also, as part of the new regs on the towers that do have to be marked, they will now require infrared emitters as red lights on the towers can wash out in night vision goggles. So, for the operators that wear night vision goggles, that will be a bonus. There is a new proposed Water of the U.S. definition to provide more clarity as to which waters qualify for the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. This would provide a much clearer definition of what exactly is considered a water of the U.S. If it survives the supreme court review, it will be a drastic improvement over the current definition.

In the membership committee, the rule requirement to be a member of the state aerial applicators organization to be a member of the NAAA was tabled, basically leaving the current requirement to be a state member as it is. Also there had been some discussion on basing membership dues on hopper size, or total gallon capacity of an operator's fleet instead of number of aircraft, but that was voted down and it will remain based on number of aircraft.

There was discussion on the Safety and Federal Regs Committee of using virtual reality goggles to show flight simulations of Ag Aircraft in flight and the obstacles and towers with and without markings as a way to show people outside of our specific industry the challenges we face and to emphasize the need to make tower markings mandatory. The rest of the discussion primarily focused on the topic I mentioned earlier that you may or may not have heard much about, and the reason for that is that it's

a pretty new thing that the NAAA is working on.

A special committee has been formed to address possible changes to the Knowledge and Skills portion of Part 137, or basically the requirements to obtain and maintain your part 137 certificate. The reason for this is that NTSB published a Special Investigative report on Ag Aviation. The report addresses our safety record as 137 operators. While our accident rate has gone down significantly since the introduction of the PAASS program, it seems to have reached a plateau and is higher than other certificate holders such as 135, 121 and others. So in response, the FAA has said that if we don't improve our safety record, they will be forced to impose additional regulations on 137 operators i.e. DUTY and REST requirements similar to 135 and 121 operators. As an industry, that would obviously have a negative impact on our seasonal and weather dependent schedules. So in an effort to avoid such burdensome regulations, the NAAA, through NAAREF, is going to work with the FAA and the NTSB and develop new standards for the knowledge and skills test of 137. There will be basically 4 parts to the process

- Comply with the NTSB letter to modernize the Knowledge and Skill Test
- Help the FAA to update and administer the KST
- Create content for RECURRENT knowledge and skills training
- Change the culture of the industry by having this content be used by the ENTIRE part 137 industry

So what this means for us, is that there will be different requirements to obtain a 137 certificate and there would be recurrent training required of all 137 operators and pilots in the form of a biannual oral exam. NAAREF would develop a program to train the FAA on these new requirements and administering the recurrent training. Once all of that is done, NAAREF would develop an alternate means of compliance to conform to the biannual requirement for an oral exam, such a plan would likely use the PAASS program or online videos or training as that alternate means of completing the oral exam. The new program could also be presented to insurance companies as a possible incentive for discounts on premiums. The NAAA and NAAREF believe that this is a proactive and sensible initiative to keep the FAA from implementing new regulations that could hinder our businesses. Every other type of professional pilot must have some form of recurrent training except for part 137. In the end, the goal is to improve the safety culture of the 137 operators and pilots.

With that I will wrap this up, but the theme here is that the NAAA is constantly working proactively to keep our industry alive and functioning without undue oversight or regulation from our governing agencies and communities. I hope that everyone has an exceptional and safe year. Keep the shiny side up and we'll see you all in January.

AMAA 2019 Legislative review, end of session, 4/25/2019

HB661, by Geraldine Custer(R), increase in aviation fuel tax and related items. The notable parts of this bill are as follows: a 1 cent per gallon increase (total 5 cents), no rebate program for the airlines - after July 1, 2019, sunset of the pavement preservation program, a 50% increase in aircraft registration, and a 0 % share for the general fund (has been 90%general/10% Aeronautics). Registration money and .5 cents of the gas tax will be used for Aeronautics operating. The airports grant program will receive 4.5 cents of the gas tax. **AMAA supported the bill.**

HB63, by Ray Shaw(R), requested by the Department of Agriculture, sought to change how financial responsibility for commercial applicators is applied. This bill was actually nothing more than a repealer for HB126, from the 2017 session. The previous bill would have done away with any notion of financial responsibility. AMAA and Ag organizations asked the House Ag committee, last session, to wait two years, to work towards a consensus about updating financial responsibility rules. HB63 is a result of those consensus meetings. A rules hearing has been held (4/16/2019) to vet the general public, as well as applicators, to determine the appropriate levels of insurance or other means of financial responsibility. This bill was signed by the governor on 2/19/2019. **AMAA supported the bill.**

HB2, by Nancy Ballance(R), The bill appropriates money for two years, for the State of Montana. This bill includes operating for Dept. of Ag. **AMAA watched** this part of the bill and spoke with several Section C subcommittee members.

HB81, by Willis Curdy(D), changing how Department of Aeronautics receives money for operating. The 2 cent rebate to the airlines would go away, and the percentage of aircraft registrations to Aeronautics would change to 70 %, from 10 % and the general fund would switch from receiving 70 %, to only 10% of the aircraft registration dollars. Once HB661 was on its way out of committee, the House Transportation committee "tabled" HB81. It had a hearing way back the latter part of January. **AMAA watched this bill.**

HB221, by Fred Anderson(R), mainly allows for private applicators to recertify, using online courses. **AMAA watched this bill.**

HJ40, by Ray Shaw(R), provides for an interim study of cloud seeding. **AMAA provided information to several committee members.**

SJ13, by Mike Cuffe(R), asks that a letter of support for the USMCA trade pact among Canada, Mexico, and Canada, be sent by the Legislature. **Several Ag groups supported the bill, as AMAA did, also.**

HJ33, by Andrea Olsen(D), sought to study agriculture and its identified problems, which the government could solve. This was spoken by the sponsor of the bill. Glyphosate was spoken of as an example with which the interim committee could research. The Ag Coalition, consisting of several ag associations, opposed the bill. AMAA spoke with several House Ag committee members, to make sure the committee's sentiment was to table the bill. Which did happen. **AMAA opposed the bill.**

Respectfully submitted,

John Semple,
AMAA lobbyist

Nathan Simonson, Patrick Stromberg and Greg Smith man the booth during the FFA convention.



A great photo submitted by AMAA President, Greg Smith

Thanks to Robert and Sharon Sneberger and Mable and Roger Lincoln for manning the AMAA booth during the February Aeronautics Conference.



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BASF—Chris Berg 406-210-4460

BAYER CROP SCIENCE—Kerry Yates 406-788-4215

CITY SERVICE VALCON—Eddie Anderson 406-261-8929

CONSOLIDATED TURBINE SPECIALISTS—Rick Delorme 778-809-2914

CORTEVA AGROSCIENCES—Seth Keas 785-737-6234, Alison Anderson 662-416-8280,
Trent Brusseau 208-318-8877

COVINGTON AIRCRAFT—Tom Welch 918-756-8320

CROSS PETROLEUM SERVICE—Greg Cross/Larry Taylor/ Craig Stebbins 800-580-3298

DIAMOND DOORS—Marv Haubrich 639-541-0099

DYACON WEATHER STATIONS—Eugene Bodrero 435-753-1002

DYNAV SYSTEMS, INC—Reg Moen 604-313-0745

GARRCO PRODUCTS INC—John Garr 517-256-4646

HELENA CHEMICAL COMPANY—Brooks Hammel 406-628-8768, Paul Olson 406-262-3737

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