

# AMAA NEWSLETTER

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

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## President’s Message

### AMAA COVID-19 UPDATE

We are closely monitoring developments surrounding COVID-19, ya ya ya ok. I know you are my valued partner, you are steadfast in your mission, and you are committed to my safety. But when I get my inbox flooded by emails from companies informing me of their Coronavirus plans, I **don’t** get a warm feeling of relief that they are responsible companies—often I feel they are idiots. I have never been to your office, and I probably never will. If, out of an “abundance of caution,” you want to send your employees home to “squeeze the Charmin,” fine, you might as well give me the number to the refinery. I’ll order the jet fuel myself, because I know that refinery workers have learned long ago to wear gloves and not pick their nose. In the meantime, I’m going to use some “abundance of caution” the next time I’m spraying a field at sunrise and there is a double 3-phase power line on the east side.

What is with the run on toilet paper? If I’m at the store and they announce that I will have to stay inside for a month, I’m loading that cart full of Budweiser. (A Budweiser label is the same size as a sheet of TP...just saying.) I also don’t need a public service announcement telling me what I can and can’t flush down the toilet. I know that the shop towel that I just finished cleaning my spray plane tail wheel with should **not** be used for toilet paper. Boy howdy, I’m not going to make that mistake again.

Social Distancing: now there’s a new term for the yearbook. It’s not a big change for some of the younger generations; they have been practicing social distancing since the invention of the cell phone. I’m going to practice some social distancing between myself and all those cell phone towers this summer.

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## 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Greg Smith**  
**President**  
Skyline Aviation  
410 Skyline Drive  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
406.350.0251  
[gsmith@skylineav.com](mailto:gsmith@skylineav.com)

**Wacey Cathey**  
**Vice President**  
Black Gulch Aviation  
33627 Marion Lane  
Polson, MT 59860  
406.671.3646  
[catheyflyin@gmail.com](mailto:catheyflyin@gmail.com)

**Bruce Downs**  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Downs Farm INC  
PO Box 131  
Lindsay MT 59339  
406.584.7462  
[sunny@midrivers.com](mailto:sunny@midrivers.com)

**Darrin Pluhar**  
**NAAA Vice President**  
Plu's Flying Service INC  
PO Box 133  
Ekalaka MT 59324  
406.853.0039  
[pluflyinc@mcn.net](mailto:pluflyinc@mcn.net)

**Dave Bright**  
Taylor Aviation, INC  
PO Box 10006  
Kalispell MT 59904  
406.250.8953  
[brightat602@gmail.com](mailto:brightat602@gmail.com)

**Patrick Stromberg**  
**NAAA Representative and Past President**  
Clear Skies Aviation, INC  
112 Marhya RD  
Reserve MT 59258  
701.330.0292  
[patrickstromberg@hotmail.com](mailto:patrickstromberg@hotmail.com)

**Mike Campbell**  
Campbell Aviation INC  
1891 23<sup>rd</sup> LN NE  
Dutton MT 59433  
406.463.2268  
[eccampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:eccampbell@yahoo.com)

**James Baguely**  
**Allied Representative**  
Corteva AgriSciences  
PO Box 1157  
Kalispell, MT 59903

**Colleen Campbell**  
**Executive Director**  
1891 23<sup>rd</sup> Lane NE  
Dutton MT 59433  
406.463.2268  
[eccampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:eccampbell@yahoo.com)



2013 NAAA President

**Dana Ness**  
Liberty Place  
PO Box 446  
Whitehall, MT 59759

### President's Message Continued:

I'm just hopeful my customers won't practice social distancing with me when they need their crops sprayed. I have also started carrying a tent in the back of my plane, just in case the governor sends out a "shelter in place" decree.

As of this writing the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Relief Package has passed the Senate and is headed to the House. Have our elected officials completely lost their minds? It's sad to think that they will spend in one week an amount that will not be paid back in my life time. Do some people need help? Yes. However there is more pork in this bill than a ham sandwich. If some Americans don't even have the resources to get by without income for one month, then this may be an indication that folks are living beyond their means. Maybe we need a wake up call, not a bail out. If there is someone that can't afford a bailout, it is the U.S. Government.

So this is my plan and advice to my fellow aerial applicators: get your planes tuned up, as the spray check is still a go. The NAAA has worked to get aerial applicators added to the essential service list, so there is nothing stopping us. Use some common sense, as there seems to be a shortage of it, and provide a first-rate kick-ass service to the suffering Ag community that needs us now more than ever. May your passes all be long and hazard free.

Fly Safe, Greg

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

- ⇒ NAAA Ag Aviation Expo  
December 7-10, 2021  
Savannah, GA
- ⇒ AMAA Convention and  
Trade Show, January 24-  
26, 2021 Great Falls, MT
- ⇒ Montana Aeronautics  
Conference  
February 25-27, 2021



The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators is ecstatic to announce that Ekalaka operator, **Darrin Pluhar**, will serve the industry as NAAA's 2020 President. Darrin, a longtime AMAA operator member and board member, was NAAA's treasurer in 2016 and is the current vice-president. Darrin is the second Montana operator to attain this position; Dana Ness was NAAA President in 2013. Thank you, Darrin, for being an advocate for the aerial application industry. We wish you a very successful year!



Patrick Stromberg was the winner of the custom engine cover from Aircraft Covers, INC. We raised \$195 by raffling off this custom cover. Thank you to Javier Uranga, General Manager of Aircraft Covers located in Morgan Hill, CA, for the generous donation and to each of you for purchasing tickets!

Many of you do not realize the costs to the Association to implement the annual conference. To provide the widely acclaimed PAASS and ATHENA programs; pay rental fees for rooms, tables, chairs and audio-visual equipment; provide delicious snacks and meals; and print necessary documents, the 2020 AMAA convention and trade show cost \$12,482.04.

### 2020 AMAA MEMBERSHIP

- Operator Members—23
- Pilot Members—8
- Retired Members—5
- Allied Members—10
- Associate Members—8
- Life Time Member—1

### Wilbur-Ellis Announces 2020 Program for Aerial Applicators

Wilbur-Ellis donated \$125 to the AMAA for our member's use of Crosshair and Guidance in 2019. During the 2020 agricultural year, Wilbur-Ellis will donate \$1.00 for every gallon of Crosshair and InPlace and \$8.00 for every gallon of Guidance aerially applied by our membership. These funds will be donated back to the association and given to us during the 2020 convention.

**Thank you Wilbur-Ellis!**

## Spring 2020 NAAA Update

By

Patrick Stromberg

I hope that spring is finding everybody well rested and ready for the upcoming season. In February the NAAA had their usual spring board meetings in Alexandria, VA. Here are a few of the things that NAAA is currently working on.

The meetings started out with the NAAA AgAv PAC breakfast, which is the NAAA's political action committee, where our own Montana Senator Steve Daines was the speaker. Senator Daines spoke of his goal of working with NAAA and in congress to improve tower marking legislation, UAV safety and tracking and ID, as well as NPDES-PGP exemptions. He also spoke of the recent trade agreements that have been made with China, Japan, Canada and Mexico that will account for nearly \$2 Trillion in trade for the U.S. Senator Daines emphasized that the senate has approved the appointment of 51 new circuit court judges over the last 3 years that will greatly increase the balance of conservative to liberal judges in the system.

Following the AgAv PAC breakfast, in the general meeting, the first speaker was Ed Messina, EPA's Deputy Director of the Office of Pesticide Programs. Ed addressed some of the concerns the NAAA has had with UAV's making pesticide applications and the letter that the NAAA had sent to the EPA administrator concerning the fact that UAV's are not currently tested the same as aircraft for environmental impact or efficacy. Messina said that there is not currently a model available for adequate testing of the UAV's with multiple rotors but that the EPA sees them as a potential option for applications that would replace backpack sprayers, use in steep terrain, forestry or wetland areas. Some of the comments from the membership to Messina addressed the fact UAV's are not certified aircraft, therefore should they be allowed to dispense economic poisons. In somewhat of a turnaround from their original stance on the matter, the EPA is starting to recognize the importance of proper testing of UAV's.

After Messina's talk, NAAA's Andrew Moore spoke on several points and re-emphasized the positive impacts of the recent trade agreements. One thing of note is that China only grows about 15% of their own soybeans for consumption. The NAAA made comments on over 70 active ingredient re-registrations currently being done by the EPA to help make sure they maintain an aerial label. One other neat thing that is likely to happen is that the AT-402 that was painted as Dusty Crophopper will be featured in the Smithsonian Museum. In 2019, there were 59 accident under part 137, 6 of which were fatal. While that number is still higher than we would like, it puts part 137 operations below the fatal accident rate of general aviation with a .89/100000hr mortality rate whereas GA is at 1.02/100000hrs.

In at least a couple of the committee meetings, there were more talks surrounding the UAV's and how there currently is a data deficit on drift mitigation and efficacy of those vehicles. As I mentioned earlier the NAAA had sent a letter to the EPA Administrator emphasizing the concerns the organization has about testing and labeling for UAV's. The current thinking is that any chemical that is labeled for backpack or handheld sprayers is a good candidate for a UAV in that it would be small quantities and limit the exposure to the applicant. The NAAA is working with the FAA through a group called MOSAIC (Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification) on certification standards for UAV's. The FAA recognizes that there needs to be some certification standards for these vehicles that are increasing in size and numbers using the national airspace system. At some point in the future, there is the possibility of raising the weight limit of UAV's certified under MOSAIC to 15,000-20,000 lbs. The FAA is also looking at changing the verbiage of 91.113 in reference to the requirement to visually scan for traffic to include something that can apply to drones as well. The FAA is looking at pilot certification for UAS operators and aligning it with the need for safe operations in the national airspace system. NAAA has emphasized that pilots of manned aircraft are immersed in a culture of safety from the day they start training because their lives are on the line, and that same culture needs to be imposed on operators of UAV's that are not physically in the vehicle.

The FAA has released some proposed UAS tracking and ID rules that will apply to all UAS's .55 lbs. or greater in weight. There are two levels of this tracking and ID requirement. Standard, which would apply to UAV's operated out of line of sight and, Limited, which would require the UAV to remain within a 400 ft radius of the operator. Both methods of ID and tracking have some form of a requirement for either the UAV or the control station to broadcast via the internet an ID tag as well as location data. Under the standard ID category the location of the actual drone is transmitted, and under limited the control station location is transmitted. These rules also include an exemption for hobbyist UAV's or RC airplanes, however they must be flown in FAA recognized identification areas that are applied for only by community based organizations such as chapters of the Academy of Model Aeronautics and approved by the FAA. The only other exemptions would include: UAS of the United States Government, those specifically exempted by FAA administrator for the purpose of aeronautical research, or to show compliance with regulations and those UAS under .55 lbs. The NAAA largely agrees with these proposed rules, however they believe all UAS should transmit location and not just the control station, and that only UAS of the United States Military or those used for national security should be exempt. However those used by other government agencies such as the Department of the Interior should meet compliance just like everybody else. In addition, NAAA believes all non-exempt UAS should have ADSB-In capability to avoid traffic, along with a requirement for all UAS to undergo the FAA certification process especially as it pertains to sense and avoid technologies, and that UAS should have ID marked on the exterior of the craft.

Some other main points of interest include:

There is a notice of proposed rulemaking on the marking standards of towers that are not logged in the FAA database.

The FMCSA exemptions for jet fuel transport and hours of service for drivers are currently being held up by the TSA for safety and national security review but NAAA is working to maintain those exemptions.

The FAA is working on changing FAR 8900 and the part 137 Letter of Authorization for aircraft so that it will make it easier to use other aircraft under your 137 certificate without the required aircraft inspection. This will assist operators in using other aircraft temporarily as needed to meet the requirements of the season.

The NAAA is possibly going to start working with a group called DCLRA, a lobbying firm, to have a better line of communication with chemical registrants and assist with aerial labeling.

I had hoped to keep this a little shorter, but as always there is a lot going on at the NAAA, and I only touched on a handful of it. If you are not a member of NAAA, let me throw a couple stats out there for you. The NAAA actually spends about \$1425/member on all the work that is being done to advance and maintain our industry. So your dues obviously only cover about a 1/3 of that. The rest comes from convention income and investments. On average the typical NAAA membership costs the pilot member about .007 cents/acre sprayed and the operator members .016 cents/acre or roughly \$1.52/day. That is about the cheapest insurance you're likely to find to help ensure our industry can thrive. I wish everybody a happy and productive season and hope to see many of you at the upcoming spray check.

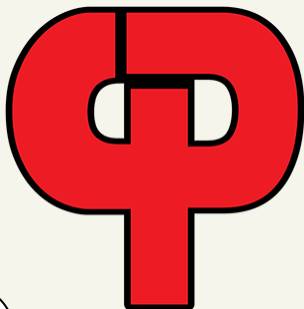
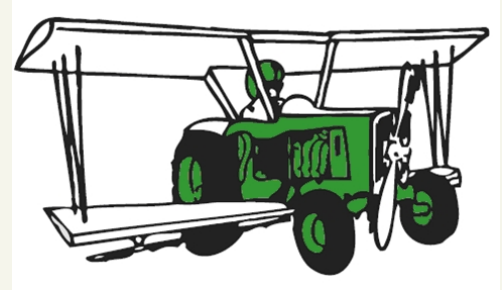
Patrick Stromberg

AMAA's NAAA Representative



Andrew Heppe and Mike and Colleen Campbell manned the booth at the Montana Aeronautics Conference February 27 -29 in Great Falls. Several students showed interest in the agricultural aviation business as did others who are thinking of career changes within the aviation industry. We gave away spinners, pens, bookmarks and candy as well as information about the aerial application business. Our booth was well-positioned between a flight simulator and the ESGR booth which offered virtual reality parachute jumps out of a C-130!

Due to COVID-19, the State FFA Convention, at which we were scheduled to host a booth, was cancelled.





AMAA MEMBERSHIP

MEMBER	EMAIL	PHONE
Doug Bouma	dandkag@3rivers.net	406-590-1266
James Briden	jbriden@itstriangle.com	406-759-5431
Dave Bright	brightat602@gmail.com	406-250-8953
Mike Campbell	eccampbell@yahoo.com	406-788-5229
Glen Carlson	carlsonfarms@hotmail.com	406-765-7655
Wacey Cathey	catheyflyin@gmail.com	406-671-3646
Bruce Downs	sunny@midrivers.com	406-584-7462
Justin Ferguson	yas@itstriangle.net	406-932-4389
Russell Ferguson	russferguson@hotmail.com	406-222-6504
Cody Folkvord	headwatersfs@gmail.com	406-439-4179
Bill Galt	bill@galtranch.com	406-547-2107
Bill Harris	harrisbill50@gmail.com	406-485-3672
Dave Harris	djharris@midrivers.com	406-485-3672
John Hebbleman	jhfly455d@hotmail.com	406-357-4233
Andrew Heppe	a_heppe@hotmail.com	406-546-2471
Sam Hoffman	hoffmanaviation7@gmail.com	406-580-0916
Kendall Johnson	weeds@nemont.net	406-653-1740
Mike Ley	ley.classic@gmail.com	406-788-3022
Roger Lincoln	rmbalinc@ttc-cmc.net	406-355-4943
Bill Lohse		406-734-5292
Matt Lutz	lutzmatt@rocketmail.com	406-350-0498
John Machart	kcgm@nemont.net	406-783-7772
Mark Mamuzich	minutemanaerial@yahoo.com	406-728-9363
Boyd Morgan	bmorgan_mt@yahoo.com	406-388-4497
Don Newton	newton.av@gmail.com	406-538-7892
Darrin Pluhar	pluflyinc@mcn.net	406-232-6853
Monte Reder	mlreder18@gmail.com	406-232-6048
Kelly Schindler	k_schindler@yahoo.com	406-679-0688
Jim Schwartz	bigskyjames1@gmail.com	406-399-6899
John Semple	john@jhsincorporated.com	406-443-7487
Nathan Simonson	blackmountainaviation@gmail.com	406-431-5882
Greg Smith	gsmith@skylineav.com	406-350-0251
Scott Snider	sesaviation@hotmail.com	406-249-0285
Patrick Stromberg	patrickstromberg@hotmail.com	701-330-0292
Andy Taylor	taylorav@mtintouch.net	406-622-5682
Guy Terrill	hubcap@bresnan.net	406-683-5084
Isaac Zimmerman	IRZ1080P@gmail.com	701-471-4253