

AMAA NEWSLETTER

**“PROFESSIONAL AERIAL APPLICATORS PROVIDING CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES TO PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE ACROSS MONTANA”
WWW.MONTANAAERIALAPPLICATORS.ORG
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MONTANAAERIALAPPLICATORS**

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

WACEY CATHEY

I hope everyone had a safe and productive 2022 season. Maybe some of you still have a little fall work to get finished up? As for me I am officially cleaned up, drained and ready for a snowy winter to set in, lord knows we could use the moisture almost as much as we need common sense in this country.

From what little I have heard it sounds like there was a healthy grasshopper population across the state. Hopefully they kept everyone somewhat busy as the drought slowed the in crop herbicide applications.

As of now, there is little to report this fall as far as AMAA is concerned. After the election in November maybe we will have more to report on at the annual meeting.

I encourage everyone to attend the convention and annual meeting in January. Please contact our executive secretary Alyssa Stromberg when you are ready to pre-register for the convention, it is a great help to us on registration day, it also helps us budget and plan the meals over the two days.

I hope to see everyone in January. Fly Safe!

Man of few words... and AMAA President,

Wacey Cathey

Professional Aerial Applicators

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Membership and Convention Registration
ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA AERIAL APPLICATORS
Annual Convention and Trade Show
Heritage Inn – Great Falls, Montana
Sunday, January 22– Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Spouse Name, if attending (Please Print Names) _____

_____ YES, I would like a 2023 AMAA Operator Membership @ \$200.00
\$ _____

_____ YES, I would like a 2023 AMAA Pilot Membership @ \$ 95.00
\$ _____

_____ YES, I would like a 2023 AMAA Associate Membership @ \$ 75.00
\$ _____

_____ YES, I would like a 2023 AMAA Retired Membership @ \$ 25.00
\$ _____

_____ YES, I will be attending the convention. Registration fee @ \$275.00
\$ _____

_____ YES, I would like a Non-Member Convention Registration @ \$475.00
\$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$- _____

Please make checks payable to AMAA.

Convention Registrations must be received by January 8, 2023

Mail checks to:
AMAA 112 Marhya RD Reserve, MT 59258

Fall 2022 NAAA Update**By****Patrick Stromberg**

I hope that this letter finds all of you in good health and with bigger wallets after a successful season. I am sure that many of you enjoyed at least some grasshopper spraying, I know out here it was constant. I don't know of any farmers that didn't spray at least once if not two or three times for hoppers. As of right now, the chances are decent that it will be a similar situation next year.

The NAAA conducted its fall board meetings October 7-8th in Oklahoma City; I was unable to attend due to farming obligations, however there was a multitude of pressing issues that were addressed. First off, the NAAA CEO Andrew Moore discussed the state of the industry. Statistics from the USDA show that food price inflation is at its highest level in over 40 years. It increased by 9% in 2022 and is estimated to increase by another 3% in 2023. USDA 2022 net farm income is projected to be \$147.7 billion, up \$7.3 billion from 2021, but, when adjusted for inflation, down 0.6%. USDA projects total farm production expenses, which includes aerial application, to be \$437.3 billion in 2022—an increase of 17.8% compared to 2021. As we all know, expenses for everything from farm equipment, fertilizer, chemical, on down to the tires have increased exponentially over the last 12-24 months. The vast majority, 63% of operators flew either the same acres or up to significantly more than in 2021. 20% flew less or significantly less than in 2021 due in large part to drought conditions in the west and southeast. 49% of operators polled are optimistic about the 2023 season, however there are many world commodity factors that are constantly changing that could affect the outcome of the 2023 season.

As is always the case, the NAAA is constantly working on the political side of the industry. Currently, lawsuits from eco-activists have resulted in the Biden administration's EPA further restricting pesticide registrations.

I have touched on the drone subject several times in the past, but it is also an issue that continues to build momentum. A report came out by the FAA's aviation rulemaking committee

Professional Aerial Applicators

(ARC) this summer and its recommendations to allow drones to fly beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS). The ARC was over-occupied with drone interests from Google's drone subsidiary, Wing, and Amazon. Its recommendations were completely devoid of any consideration for low-altitude manned aviation safety. It would increase the weight limit for BVLOS drones to 1,320 pounds. It would not require ADS-B-equipped drones to give right-of-way to manned aircraft not equipped with ADS-B, and it would not require ADS-B technology or giving right-of-way requirements to drones flying in a "shielded area," which is defined as 100 feet vertically and laterally of obstacles that could include trees, wires, tracks, and towers. The NAAA testified against the perilous recommendations in an FAA hearing on the subject and has been in direct contact with the FAA administrator on this topic. The ARC recommendations are just that for the time being, but without the comments and advocacy of the NAAA and other industry related groups, the FAA in their infinite wisdom might just implement these dangerous and irresponsible rules.

With the passage of the 1.2 trillion infrastructure bill and \$700 billion climate change bill that passed within the past year, there are a multitude of new ag funding opportunities. There are provisions in the bill that will devote \$27 billion to ag programs to address climate change, such as a \$25-per-acre subsidy for farmers that cover-crop and \$1.5 billion for biofuel infrastructure made from ag commodities such as soybeans. Time will tell what the final programs will have in them, but it will almost certainly offer some options for aerial applicators to diversify their income by providing additional services.

NAAA and NAAREF have developed a professional certification program for the agricultural aviation industry called C-PAASS (Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward). An NAAA survey of the industry conducted earlier this year showed that 72% favor an industry certification program, and C-PAASS, a completely voluntary program, and will address the need to continue to lower the accident rate, address insurance costs, and unnecessarily stringent pesticide language for aerial applications. The program will be launched in 2023. In the first year, C-PAASS will require annual NAAA and state/regional agricultural aviation association membership, PAASS Program participation for the past three years and biennial Operation S.A.F.E participation. (continued on next page)

The focus on education is because participation in industry education programs is proven to work. PAASS has reduced accidents and drift incidents by 26% in 25 years with only a 47% attendance rate. Eighty-six percent of the accidents over the past five years have been from ag pilots either not attending or not annually attending PAASS. Future requirements of C-PAASS, starting in 2024, will include online coursework and testing on aviation safety, security and application efficacy/environmental professionalism topics on a biennial basis. This is an excellent example of the work the NAAA has and continues to do in an effort to make the industry a safer place and mitigate intervention by the FAA in response to high accident rates.

As usual, these are just a few of the things the NAAA is working on, and we need the support of the whole industry and all of the operators and pilots. The current political environment should be very concerning to all of you. Everybody is perfectly happy to sit back and assume all will be well and good, but I can't stress enough that there will come a time when it won't be. If you are not yet a NAAA member, strongly consider becoming one and know that not only does it pay for itself in several ways, you can rest a little easier knowing that all of the great people on the board are working tirelessly to ensure you wake up with a job tomorrow. Everybody enjoy your fall season and I hope to see you all in January at our convention.

"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)

Renew or Join Today!



Professional Aerial Applicators

AMAA 2022 MEMBERSHIP

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FLY SAFELY PLEASE

Upcoming Events

Ag Aviation Expo December 5-8 2022

AMAA Convention January 22-24 2023

Operation SAFE Fly-In—TBA 2023, Lewistown, MT

AMAA Spring Board Meeting—TBA 2023—Lewistown, MT

AMAA Fall Board Meeting—October 2023

One hundred years ago, on Aug. 3, 1921, an aerial crop dusting experiment spawned the birth of the agricultural aviation industry. Scroll down to watch (and share) the video on the industry's legacy after a century of agricultural aviation.

