

AMAA NEWSLETTER

**“PROFESSIONAL AERIAL APPLICATORS PROVIDING CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES TO PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE ACROSS MONTANA”**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WACEY CATHEY

Here we are again chomping at the bit for another season to kick off. Hopefully the rest of you across the state have had a little more moisture than we have on the West of the divide. As we know timely moisture is always key for us, but at this point it looks like it could be a dry smoky summer.

The board decided to hold off on the Spray Check this fall, we will decide the location and dates during our upcoming meeting. Something you all know but I would like to reiterate; our industry continues to be pressured by regulators and those who are anti-pesticide. If legal matters arise during our busy season at work, it sure helps to have a documented pattern test of our aircraft with all your typical nozzle configurations and pressure settings used throughout the season. Not only does it show professionalism and helps you set out to do the best job possible in the field. It also could help disprove allegations of label violations or drift.

We had a decent turnout at the annual convention in Great Falls. It was encouraging to see the new faces looking to get started in the industry. If the anyone that attended the convention has any suggestions or comments about the event feel free to get in touch with me. Also we are looking to do some form of fundraising going forward and new ideas on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Hope you all enjoy a safe and prosperous 2024 Season!

*AMAA President,
Wacey Cathey*

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NAAA Update**By****Mike Campbell**

NAAA fall board meetings were held in Alexandria, VA February 15-17, 2024. Committee meetings were held on Friday and Saturday and were followed by the graduation of the most recent Leadership Training class. Somehow, I went from serving on three committees to being assigned to five this year.

Friday morning's general session began with Rod Snyder, senior agricultural advisor to EPA Administrator Michael Regan, informing us about how the EPA is working towards a balance with the Endangered Species Act and chemical use around susceptible areas. Montana has six endangered species. EPA is working to refine the "EPA Bulletin Live! Two" website. If you haven't checked this out, please do so. Chemicals are up for reregistration every 15 years. This cooperation will streamline the process. Steve Foster, of Canada, is working with the Precision Ag committee and has been contracted to update the code for the AGDISP model to be compatible with today's technology. The update will offer more realistic, site-specific risk assessments conducted in real time. The project is both expensive and time-consuming but will be well worth the efforts of NAAA. The Transportation Department will have a final ruling in October 2024 that could allow a non- CDL driver to haul up to 1,000 gallons of jet fuel. For selling ourselves, NAAA has an article in Farm Journal and several Ag social media sites. Please be careful about posting negative images or incidents on social media sites you visit. We are slightly ahead in membership numbers this year compared to this time in 2023. There was discussion on adding a drone category, but this easily falls under already established categories.

NAAA sent out a health insurance query to 2,000 people but has only received 200 replies thus far. No decisions have been made but discussion will continue as NAAA seeks to offer this as a great benefit of membership. If you've gone through the process of becoming C-PAASS certified, make sure your insurance broker knows as this designation provides benefits to your insurance rates.

Have you joined NAAA for 2024? As you read above, this organization works diligently on your behalf, whether or not you are a member. Are you letting others carry your business? Invest today!

SUPPORT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Colleen Campbell

Like Mike, I have also been assigned to additional committees this year. For 2024, I serve on the Athena, Convention and Support committees, and am chair of the Scholarship committee. I will address just two of these in this short article.

The Convention committee is tasked with planning the Support Meet and Greet activities for the national conventions. The dates for the 2024 Ag Aviation Expo in Fort Worth, TX are early this year, November 16-21, 2024, the week before Thanksgiving, which may make it easier for more to attend. The Meet and Greet activity takes place on Monday, November 18th. For those interested, the Flying in the Wire and Obstruction Environment Course will be held Saturday, November 16th. Several AMAA members have gone through this intensive 8-hour course and say it is well worth the time and money. Many folks are looking forward to the Expo in Texas. If you've never attended a national convention before, maybe 2024 is the year to do so! You can find additional information on the National Agricultural Aviation Association website.

The Scholarship committee consists of 7 support members from across the country. Our job is to develop the scholarship topic, vet the applications, score the applications based on a tried-and-true rubric, and then choose the winner(s) during the fall board meeting. Last year's committee developed the 2024 topic: "What are the biggest obstacles to the ag aviation industry in your area? Discuss how they could be overcome?" It was interesting to read the 2023 entries on a different subject and to see the varied responses. This year will be no different. What could the "biggest obstacles" be? Financial, environmental, geographical, equipment, competition? The scholarship is available on the NAAA website or by using this link: <https://www.agaviation.org/career/scholarships/support-scholarship-media-contest/>

Students applying for this \$3,000 scholarship must be sponsored by an NAAA member. Please feel free to disseminate this information to your local school, FFA chapter, or others.

From the February 29th NAAA Newsletter

Leadership Development, Policy Advocacy, Long Range Ag Aviation Industry Planning: All in a Week's Work at NAAA/NAAREF DC-Area Meetings Last Week

The NAAA Syngenta Leadership Training Program (LTP) and the boards and committees of the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) and the National Agricultural Aviation Research and Education Foundation (NAAREF) met in our national capital area region from February 13-17 to accomplish a multitude of benefits for the agricultural aviation industry. The meetings were led by 2024 NAAA President Ray Newcomb of New Hampshire and on the NAAREF side, President Perry Hofer from South Dakota. Leadership Training Program (LTP) and Policy Advocacy. This was the 28th LTP class. The Syngenta program has been providing training in communications, media training, policy advocacy and personality trait identification to up-and-coming agricultural aviation leaders since 1995, including 14 new graduates to the program who participated last week. These annual February meetings in the Washington, DC area enable board, staff and LTP participants to visit federal lawmakers' offices to advocate for national policies ensuring safe low-altitude aviation policies and pesticide and tax policies that are not unnecessarily burdensome to the industry. Dozens of these meetings were held last week.



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Upcoming Events

Ag Aviation Expo
November 16-21
2024

AMAA Convention
January 20-21
2025

AMAA Spring Board Meeting—March 26, 2024

AMAA Fall Board Meeting—October 2024

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.

