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Air Currents

Fighting Fire With Flyers

The WASP (Wildfire Aerial Suppression Program) began on February 21, 2004, when 25 pilots and 23 rural fire members met with the Kansas Department of Forestry. Actual aerial water drops were demonstrated, and initial communications protocols discussed. With no funding, the project lingered until spring, 2006, when extensive fires in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas relit interest in the program.

Dusty Dowd, chairman, and committee members Doug Chanay, Bill Garrison, Pat Donovan, Tony Martinez, Dave Faust, and Jeff Chanay met and coined the WASP name. They also sent informational mailings to all 105 Kansas counties. Some KAAA members established beneficial relationships with their local fire departments and provided valuable assistance.

Despite these localized successes, the Kansas Forestry Service was not responding well to the committee's efforts. In a series of two recent meetings, using the highly successful, 32 year-old Nebraska state program as a model, the WASP committee hammered out an agreement with the Kansas Forestry Service.

Further meetings this fall will finalize many details, including training and certification of pilots, certification of aircraft, state funding of standardized pay schedules for cooperating aircraft, and continued notification of rural fire departments and Local Emergency Management Program Coordinators.

Much work remains to be done, but a lot of progress has been made. Dusty



Check It Out!

Dowd hopes that his committee's efforts will be repaid many times over when ag aircraft become a familiar ally in fire fighting

in Kansas communities, and positive press for ag aviation is a benefit to all ag operators.

Fuel Tax Increase

The FAA is proposing to raise fuel taxes on 100LL avgas and Jet A dramatically—by nearly 50 cents per gallon!

This means that an ag airplane burning 40 gallons per hour will suffer a \$20 per hour increase in operating costs. Worse, the money funds the ATC system, a system which most ag aircraft use rarely. Please contact your federal legislators and comment on this tax increase. You might want to check out www.aopa.org for a full discussion of the issue and how best to respond.

SBA Loans Available

Tim Tyree, KAAA Vice President, reports that SBA loans are available in certain qualifying counties in Kansas and surrounding states. These loans are 4% fixed rate, 30 year loans with a \$1.5 million limit. You can read a short summary of the program on www.ksagaviation.org. Click on *Downloads*, then select the file.

One business who offers help with these loans is Eddie Adams, 888-762-3208, www.sbadisaster.com. The KAAA does not endorse Mr. Adams, but he was a presenter at the Oklahoma convention on this issue.

Older Pilots

Researchers for the American Academy of Neurology found that older pilots performed better over time than younger pilots, "These findings show the advantageous effect of prior experience and

Television Ads

Your mailing from KSN Television should have arrived. This PR program receives significant funding from the Allied Industry (thanks!) and gives us all a chance to present our industry in a positive light on television. Doug Chanay and the PR committee hopes that you will respond quickly.

specialized expertise on older adults' skilled cognitive performances," said researcher Joy Taylor.

The study also found pilots with advanced FAA pilot ratings and certifications showed less performance decline over time, regardless of age. Researchers suggest that pilots with advanced ratings may develop "crystallized intelligence," similar to the way skills are developed by musicians or chess experts, who are able to maintain high performance standards as they age.

Legislative Update

Chris Wilson, KAAA lobbyist, has been busy in Topeka. The hot issue now is CREP: the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. To read a current update of how this law might affect your business, go to www.ksagaviation.org, and click on *Legislation*, and then *Members Only*. Use **aviator** as the user name and **fly** as the password.

News From Down South

Tim Tyree also reports that 2,4-D is now a Restricted Use product in some counties in Oklahoma and in Arkansas. The restrictions are apparently in reaction to damage to cotton. Further, the Arkansas State Plant Board uses radar guns to measure the speed of aerial applicators as they fly across the field. If a speed greater than 135 mph is recorded, the applicator must prove certification to apply at that speed.

In addition, all Arkansas applicators using 2,4-D must have their equipment inspected and certified, and all applications must be made with a GPS logging unit and the logs saved. Finally, a \$100 permit is required and a \$1 per acre tax imposed.

If you have cotton in your area, be very careful when working near it.

EPA SPCC Rules

A recent fax to NAAA members concerns EPA compliance with SPCC rules. SPCC requires reporting for those businesses which store more than 1,350 gallons of fuel, oil, etc., which could "reasonably be expected to discharge into navigable water." The definition of "navigable water" is ridiculously broad, but several significant exemptions exist. First, no fuel or oil contained in containers less than 55 gallons is included in the 1,350 gallon calculation.

Next, underground storage is exempted as long as your total underground storage does not exceed 42,000 gallons. Read more on this complex subject on the KAAA website: www.ksagaviation.org, then click on *Downloads* and select the file.

Fuel Tax Rebates

The NAAA reported that applications for certain IRS fuel excise tax rebates had to be filed by March 19, 2007. This deadline applied to Jet A used in aerial applications between January 1 and October 1, 2005. The rule is complicated: check out the NAAA's website at www.agaviation.org for details. If you aren't an NAAA member, you should join: the fuel tax savings alone will likely pay your membership dues several times over, and all the other NAAA benefits will be free.

NAAA Leadership Training

The KAAA has selected Jeff Chanay for the NAAA's fine *Leadership Training Program*. Jeff has been active with the KAAA, doing great work on the WASP firefighting and the television ads, as well as other projects. The KAAA Board thinks that Jeff will make a wonderful candidate.

