



Serving the Aerial Application Industry Since 1958

Convention Summary

This year's convention was an all around success. If you attended, thank you!

Our total registrations remained steady at 112 operators and spouses, with 61 allied personnel representing 31 allied companies. This steadfast attendance by both members and allied makes us one of the top attended aerial agriculture conventions in the Midwest!

We had good response on the fundraiser this year, most of which were positive, although some felt that the raffle didn't hold as much entertainment value as the auction. However, the financial results were excellent: the raffle brought in just under \$9,000, making this our best fundraiser in recent memory.

The Grand Prairie Hotel in Hutchinson suited our needs very well and was a beautiful facility. The KAAA did well financially at this hotel, too, so we will meet there again next year.

Mark your calendars for October 17-19, 2007.

Board Report

The KAAA Board of Directors met on December 8, 2006, to wrap up the current year and pass the baton from current President Doug Chanay to Robert Grace.

The two newly elected directors, John Holzmeister and Jeff Chanay, joined the incumbent Vice President Tim Tyree, and directors Robert Middleton and Craig Stratton.

The Board discussed the KDA's reopening of the pesticide law (see State Legislative Report article below). They also gave approval for the newly formed Fire Suppression Committee, headed by Dusty Dowd, to meet and formulate specific information concerning training, equipment and other issues related to this firefighting.



Brenda Gross has rewritten and improved the KAAA Scholarship form, which has

Check It Out!

been sent to all members. We hope that you will take it to your local high school counselor. The Board voted to double the scholarship amount to \$1,000, which will make it more attractive. Young people are vitally important to the future of our industry. You can download the scholarship form from our website whenever you need it.

Tony Martinez, our NAAA representative, reported that the NAAA convention in Florida had an excellent attendance, and was held in a luxurious, newly opened hotel at a bargain price. Tony noted that the NAAA's recent legislative victories concerning fuel tax rebates will pay your NAAA dues several times over each and every year. If you aren't a member, you should be: www.agaviation.org has all the information that you need. Next year's NAAA convention will be held in Reno, Nevada.

Kathy Diehl reports that KAAA membership is down slightly, presumably because a few members have not renewed yet. We need each and every one you, both financially and so that when we talk to legislators, we can cite a very high level of participation in our organization. It really does matter. A membership form is available for download on the website. Please do it today!

The KSN public relations television ads were discussed, along with ideas on how to update them. Ideas included firefighting footage, mosquito control, and children's education may be included this year. We thank the Allied members who support this program wholeheartedly, with thousands of dollars each year. Contact Rick Vrbas if you'd like to contribute.

For updates on board meetings and other issues, including the KDA law, please check the website, www.ksagaviation.org. The website is constantly updated, so check it out when you have a question or need information. All of the new *AirCurrents* newsletters will be available there, too.

UAP Air Force Meeting Date

The next KAAA Board meeting will start at 8 AM, Thursday, Feb. 8, 2007, at the *UAP Air Force Meeting* in Garden City, Kansas. All KAAA members are invited.

Thanks to *UAP* for hosting this fine event for aerial applicators!

State Legislative Report

Ingalls farmer Melvin Neufeld has been elected Speaker of the House and will take office when the Legislature convenes on January 8, 2007. The new House leadership is very supportive of agriculture, so look for changes in committee leadership and appointments to be announced soon by Speaker-elect Neufeld. Following the November elections, the House now has 78 Republicans and 41 Democrats, including the 24 new members.

The Pesticide Law Revision is a major issue for the KAAA. The Kansas Department of Agriculture is planning to revise all the state pesticide laws over the next year, in order to develop legislation for consideration by the Legislature during the 2008 Session.

Working groups, including representatives of agricultural organizations such as KAAA, are expected to be involved in developing the proposed legislation. Randy Hardy and Chris Wilson represented KAAA at the first meeting of this group.

Some of the issues identified by KDA and EPA for consideration include: product registrations; time and place of applications; crop consultant regulation; electronic registration and reporting; civil penalty authority, and many others. One of the key issues the Department is interested in is the problem of sensitive crops and how to protect them. For a list of all the issues, visit the KAAA website: www.ksagaviation.org.

The Special Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources met for the last time in November. Their report to the 2007 Legislature is not complete yet. However, on the subject of liability for upgrade of private dams, there is a lot of concern about current regulations of the Division of Water Resources which classify dams as high hazard and would require private dam owners to upgrade those dams. DWR is seeking

to increase funding for flood inundation mapping, and there was a lot of discussion on that topic and what classifications of dams to map. But there has been no resolution on the heart of the issue, which is increasing the liability and requirements for private dam owners when there may really be no significant increase in hazard from the dam.

The Committee heard reports from the State Conservation Commission regarding the proposed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which would provide funding for purchase of water rights and from SCC and DWR on proposed projects for the use of funds resulting from the Kansas v. Colorado lawsuit. The targeted area for CREP is Southwest Kansas. This is the affected area from the loss of water that should have flowed from Colorado, and that area will also benefit from the monies paid by Colorado for loss of water.

The state has received \$35.7 million from Colorado. Of that, \$9.684 million will be used in the affected area. \$193,036 was refunded to ditch irrigation companies for projects required by the Chief Engineer. This was for measurement flumes and data collecting equipment. During the summer of 2005, GMD 3 funded a study to identify potential projects for consideration that may help increase the efficiency of the system. The Water Office is proposing a supplemental appropriation this year to reimburse GMD3 for the study in the amount of \$29,448. Feasibility studies are underway for other potential projects

During the upcoming Legislative Session, KAAA lobbyists will post updates about legislation affecting our industry at the KAAA website, www.ksagaviation.org. To access the members' only portion of the site—where confidential legislative reports will be posted—use the login: *aviator* and password: *fly*.

-Chris Wilson