



The Oshkosh Template

Building on our strengths

Tom Poberezny, President

In my column last month, I stated that EAA's diversity is its strength. It's a strength that we must continue to build upon to better serve the broad interests that have become the hallmark of EAA's membership.

In addition to our diverse aviation interests, we've also become an aging membership. The average age of an EAA member has increased significantly over the past decade. This trend must and will change. We must reach out to the current and next generations if we're going to remain healthy, both as an organization and as an aviation industry/community. Being relevant to a new generation requires change.

EAA serves three constituencies—craftsmen, pilots, and aviation enthusiasts. Craftsmen have been our core and will continue to be prominent in EAA's future. This includes builders, restorers, designers, and innovators. The pilot community is represented by the hundreds of thousands of people who are passionate about flying, regardless of the type of aircraft. These individuals look to EAA to protect their access to the sky, preserve aviation's affordability, increase their aviation knowledge, and provide an opportunity for them to network with other pilots. Enthusiasts dream of becoming a pilot, owning an airplane, or somehow becoming more actively involved in aviation. They look to EAA to keep their dream alive, making their goals a possibility.

We already have a template for the future structure of EAA...“Oshkosh.” EAA's annual convention is aviation's mecca where diverse interests come together for one week each year, serving the entire aviation community.

It provides value and the ability to participate for each attendee—pilots, enthusiasts, builders, and restorers. Each area of interest is represented with its own services and programs to meet specific needs and expectations. But attendees can also move from area to area...experiencing *all* that aviation has to offer!

Each month we survey members, asking for their evaluation of the content of *EAA Sport Aviation* as well as completing a pulse survey on overall member benefits and programs. This information has been invaluable

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in planning our future direction, as well as program development and implementation. The changes we will be making are in response to your stated needs and expectations.

For example, we will expand services and benefits to the pilots who are not builders or restorers but are a significant part of the EAA membership. We have an excellent resource in our affiliate, the National Association of Flight Instructors. It will become more active in providing valuable information that will benefit you.

EAA chapters are an important part of EAA's culture and struc-

ture...engaging craftsmen, pilots, and enthusiasts at the local level. The No. 1 priority for chapters is to grow their membership. Chapters look to EAA headquarters for help. We've conducted a number of chapter leadership conferences, discussing programs that will allow the chapters to reach out to a broader audience in terms of age and interest. Chapters are looking to embrace new ideas that take into consideration current lifestyles and demands on your time. Everyone is being pulled in many directions; we must make local participation more accessible.

Your monthly magazine will expand its coverage to meet the needs of all three of our constituencies. This will be accomplished, not only through the articles in *EAA Sport Aviation* but also through expanded use of electronic communications and the web. EAA members are a tremendous resource of information and knowledge. They are very willing to share their experiences. EAA needs to be the conduit through which members can communicate with each other.

Our expanded services and benefits will provide more pilot information, as well as safety and maintenance information. There will also be additional programs targeted to potential pilots, builders, and owners, sharing with them the various paths to the successful realization of their dreams. At the same time, we will not reduce service to the craftsmen community. We will continue to provide a high level of expertise and knowledge, while making adjustments that will grow and keep EAA vibrant and relevant. 