Chapter 736 Newsletter for August 2014

Fly-In 2014

This year's event has come and gone. The weather cooperated and a successful day was enjoyed by all.

We managed to fly 102 kids as part of the Young Eagles first flight program, the most we've ever done in a day. Luckily none were scared away by our float in the parade.

Thanks to all the pilots and helpers for their assistance. Without them we couldn't have succeed.

Avgas replacement: It's not just about octane

After testing more than 3,000 formulas over a 10-year period, Shell Aviation submitted its candidate fuel to the FAA for consideration as a fleet-wide, unleaded avgas replacement in July. Company officials at EAA AirVenture were optimistic about the Piston Aviation Fuels Initiative's plan to have a replacement in place by 2018 but acknowledged that there are many challenges to overcome in the next four years.

What the FAA, fuel industry, and aviation industry are trying to do—certify an unleaded fuel that will work in all piston engines in the general aviation fleet and come as close to the specifications as leaded avgas as possible to minimize operational limitations—has never been done before.

The FAA is currently reviewing nine candidate fuels submitted from five groups: Afton Chemical Company; Avgas LLC; Shell; Swift Fuels; and a consortium made up of BP, TOTAL, and Hjelmco. The FAA will be judging the fuel properties of each candidate against 21 specifications that are key to ensuring a fuel is safe for aircraft engines.

Of critical importance is taking what has been learned from 90-plus years of experience flying with avgas, and making sure the new fuel is as close to the historical norm as possible. And it's more difficult than just removing the lead.

Many pilots are concerned about what the replacement fuel will cost. While it is impossible to estimate a final cost because of the multiple factors that make up the cost of a fuel—the components in the formula, distribution infrastructure, taxes and fees, etc.— a replacement is unlikely to be cheaper … at least not significantly cheaper. From a component standpoint, what is going into the unleaded fuel costs about the same as the components that go into leaded avgas. However, the component cost is a "small portion" of the overall cost of the fuel.

The new fuel also could enjoy a larger market than leaded avgas. That would be good news for the light sport aircraft industry. LSA engines don't like the lead in avgas, but they also shouldn't run on gasoline from the pump that has ethanol in it. A lead-free, ethanol-free aviation fuel would be beneficial to that market.

Beyond ensuring the right fuel is put into the aircraft and checking it for contamination, many pilots don't give the fuel running through their aircraft's engine a second thought, yet it is the one provision in an aircraft that is not duplicated and does not have a failsafe.

The reliability and safety leaded avgas has offered aviation over the years is worth celebrating and that's the bar the fuel companies are aiming to meet with the fuel replacement.

Pilot's Bill Of Rights V2 In The Works

The first Pilot's Bill of Rights, signed into law in 2012, is in need of an update, Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., said this week, so he's working on new legislation to expand pilot protections. "The goal of Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 is to continue to address unfair practices and regulations towards the aviation industry," Inhofe said. The proposal would expand the third-class medical exemption to most general aviation pilots and curb searches of GA aircraft by agents of Customs and Border Patrol. "We can once again thank Senator Inhofe for bringing key general aviation issues before Congress," said AOPA President Mark Baker. "This new version of the very popular Pilot's Bill of Rights comes at a time when the GA industry is actively engaged in actions aimed at protecting pilots' civil liberties and freedom to fly."

EAA also welcomed the effort. "This legislation would further enhance the pilot and general aviation reforms in the first Pilot's Bill of Rights," said Jack Pelton, EAA

chairman of the board. "We are pleased to have worked with Sen. Inhofe and his staff to identify several key issues that are addressed within this bill, which would ease burdens on average Americans who participate in flying." Inhofe will host a briefing on the proposed legislation during EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 2, at Forum Pavilion 1 on the AirVenture grounds. Details about Inhofe's proposals, and a request for input and comments from the aviation community, can be found at a dedicated website he launched this week. Among other provisions, Inhofe's proposal would allow local airport officials, instead of federal workers, to manage the use of private hangars at airports, and would promote changes in certification rules to make it easier to install new safety-enhancing equipment on older aircraft.

Transportation chief pivots to FAA funding

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx pushed lawmakers to begin working on renewing the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) funding, which is expiring next year, even as he continues to express unhappiness with a temporary highway spending package that was approved last month.

The $63 billion funding bill that was approved for the FAA by Congress in 2012 is scheduled to expire in September 2015.

Foxx said after a visit to the agency's William J. Hughes Technical Center in New Jersey that it was important to avoid a protracted fight over aviation funding like the arguments that marked the recently completely highway bill debate to avoid delays in the FAA's development of its NextGen airplane navigation system.

The FAA has been planning for years to discard the World War II-era radar technology that has been used to manage airplane traffic for generations in favor of a satellite-based system.

The agency says the new system will ease congestion in the airspace around busy U.S. airports by streamlining the arrivals and departures of flights. They also argue that navigating flights more efficiently will have environmental benefits because airplanes will use less gas and produce less smog during landings and takeoffs.

The FAA's original plans called for the NextGen system to be installed by 2014 at the busiest airports in the U.S., and nationwide by 2020.

The NextGen system is expected to cost about $40 billion in total to complete.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at Pittsfield Municipal Airport (2B7), at Curtis Air on **Monday, Aug 18 at 6:30 pm**.