

More Affordable Airplanes, Duplicate Information, and . . .

. . . it's time to write your legislators

Don Zank's letter in Members' Forum (February 2007, page 45) wondering where "the cheaper way to get into aviation is" brought several responses. As I noted in my response to Don, we're hearing loud and clear that the currently available special light-sport aircraft (S-LSA) are more expensive than many people would like. We're also hearing that many readers would like more information in this magazine about sport pilot-eligible aircraft they can build.

I hope you've noticed the inclusion of articles like "Little Stearman'...Big Therapy" in the February issue and "The McCullibird" this month, as well as other articles highlighting more affordable kit aircraft. We are listening.

At the same time, part of the mission of this magazine is to report on new aircraft available in the LSA category. Thus, we will continue to highlight the new S-LSA. Some will cost more than we'd like, but the reality is that S-LSA production runs, albeit small, are generally sold out through 2007 into early 2008, so someone is finding the prices of these aircraft acceptable. Many of those buyers are private pilots and others who are attracted to the modern styling and equipment available with LSA...at what they consider a more reasonable price than a new Cessna 172. I guess it's all about perspective.

Other readers have asked why we repeat Tom Poberezny's Position Report and much of the Hotline content


from *EAA Sport Aviation*. We do that because not all readers of *Sport Pilot* receive *Sport Aviation*. Recall you may choose to receive one or both magazines as part of your membership (\$20 additional to receive both). Consequently, if we didn't print Tom's message or important EAA information in both publications, some members would not get that information. We don't think that's a good thing. An association's members need to know what their association is doing.

I'd call your attention to these words in Tom's remarks: "... general aviation fuel taxes could rise more than threefold."

We understand that annoys some folks who see the same information in more than one source, and we're brainstorming ideas to improve how we deliver that information. These are interesting times in the publishing world. While print magazines aren't going away anytime soon, if ever, the opportunity to obtain information from websites, e-mails, cell phones, podcasts, and other Internet-based mediums increases daily. How

do we integrate our printed magazines with Internet content? That's a subject we're discussing almost daily at EAA headquarters. We don't have any great answers just yet, but we are working toward being as efficient and effective as possible. The one constant in this world is change, and that's certainly true in the publishing world these days.

Speaking of changes, as highlighted in "User Fees: Two Views," on pages 8-9 of this issue, general aviation will face some significant changes if the Bush administration is successful in restructuring how the FAA is funded. Please review the comments from FAA Administrator Marion Blakey and EAA President Tom Poberezny on those pages. I'd call your attention to these words in Tom's remarks: "... general aviation fuel taxes could rise more than threefold." What will that mean in actual dollars and cents every time you go flying? Federal aviation fuel taxes are proposed to go from about 19 cents to 70 cents per gallon. Multiply that by how many gph your engine burns...on average 4-5 gph for many LSA... so that's another \$2.80 to \$3.20 added to your operating cost every hour. How does that reconcile with your budget?

Don't use avgas? Don't be naïve... the user fees/aviation fuel tax issue will still affect you. Educate yourself and then inform your congresspersons and senators of your opinion. Be proactive. Speak up or regret your apathy later when flying for fun really becomes too expensive. 

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