



What's Happening at EAA?

A common question, a diverse answer

Tom Poberezny, President

During the many phone calls I receive, I'm invariably asked, "What's happening at EAA?" It's a natural question I've come to expect. But, it causes me to realize I take the daily activities at EAA for granted because it's a way of life for your staff and me. "What's happening" is important to share so you understand the depth and breadth of EAA's work.

Years ago, our annual calendar peaked around the event called "Oshkosh." Our activities were focused around that time of year when hundreds of thousands of people descended on Oshkosh. Your annual convention and fly-in has grown so that annual peak of activities still exists, but the activities during the other 51 weeks of the year have increased significantly, also.

When we moved the EAA headquarters and museum to Oshkosh in 1983, Oshkosh was the home of sport aviation for one week a year. Today, it is truly a 52-week-a-year, 24/7 home. Information is now disseminated from headquarters through our chapters, websites, and e-newsletters on a nearly "on demand" basis.

If you called me today and asked "What's happening," here's just a small sample of what I could say:

- EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2008 planning. There isn't a day that goes by that we don't work on some element of aviation's premier event. Because of its importance in the aviation community as well as to EAA members, AirVenture deserves the resources and focus we place upon it. The multitude of activities

is made possible through the efforts of volunteers and staff who spend thousands of hours planning.

I realize that in 2008 there are many events vying for your discretionary time and dollars, especially in an economy that is stretching all of us. We're working hard to ensure that if you put "Oshkosh" at the top of your list of things to do, you'll be happy you did so. If you follow the AirVenture website, www.AirVenture.org, you can see that this year's convention will live up to its reputation as the World's Greatest Aviation Celebration.

- We just concluded hosting the second in a series of chapter leadership conferences at headquarters. Some 70 chapter leaders have come to Oshkosh to meet with staff to exchange information that will enhance the value of chapters. These workshops are significant because chapters are the delivery system for most of our outstanding programs.

- Over the years EAA has assimilated and developed a range of councils, divisions, and affiliates in areas such as warbirds, vintage, aerobatics, homebuilding, ultralighting, and flight training. These "special interest communities" are the essence of EAA; they offer members and enthusiasts the opportunity to affiliate with others who share their specific passion for flight.

However, we have learned the current division/council structure is not delivering maximum value, plus we have not made it easy for EAA members to move from one community to another as interests grow or change. Addressing changes in this area is a top priority for

this year with headquarters staff and a special task force studying these issues.

- During any discussions about EAA's future, one message comes across loud and clear, "Don't change the culture or philosophy." That culture and spirit allows EAA members to make significant contributions to innovation and technological advancements as well as share the passion for flight on which personal relationships that last a lifetime are built.

We're working hard to ensure that if you put "Oshkosh" at the top of your list of things to do, you'll be happy you did so.

To preserve that culture, we are establishing a Founders Gallery in the EAA AirVenture Museum. Most organizations spend significant resources to rebuild their history. EAA is not in that position; our founder, Paul Poberezny, has preserved the artifacts, letters, and memorabilia that reflect the culture and standards upon which EAA was founded in 1953. These will be placed in the gallery for future generations so we never forget our roots as we continue to build aviation's future.

That's just a few of the activities that take place daily at EAA headquarters. The question "What's happening" generates many answers. 