



## Looking Forward

*Tom Poberezny, President*

It is human nature to look forward, anticipating an event or something in our future. This year, more than ever, I'm looking forward to EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2009. Last year, many thought it would be a "down" year for Oshkosh because of high fuel prices and the initial impact of a deteriorating economy. But the results were just the opposite! We had outstanding attendance, several new product introductions, and great sales results for our industry partners and exhibitors. The importance of your convention within the aviation world was reinforced.

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This year we face a different set of circumstances. We are in the midst of a tumultuous global economy. On the other hand, fuel prices are significantly lower. Many have asked me about attendance for "Oshkosh 2009." I'm optimistic about this year's event from two perspectives. One, as chairman of the convention for more than 30 years, I have developed personal insights regarding attendance and industry participation. Second, we've established an extensive set of measurable indicators, which are monitored closely, relating to members and guest interest and attendance, as well as exhibitor response. They provide a set of metrics that are valuable as we plan and present what has become the world's greatest aviation event. To date, those metrics

are presenting a positive picture for Oshkosh 2009.

Oshkosh spans a wide range of the general aviation community. During difficult times, such as now, the event becomes even more important as it recharges our emotional batteries and offers a much needed jump-start for the industry in terms of showcasing innovations, introducing new products, sales, and maintaining and building customer relationships.

The success of this year's convention is contingent not only upon the "lineup" of activities, but more importantly, on past participation

and experiences. Because of the deep relationship members have with AirVenture Oshkosh, it has become an important part of everyone's aviation calendar. Again this year we have outstanding programs, aviation personalities and lecturers, as well as extensive forums and workshops. Please visit [www.AirVenture.org](http://www.AirVenture.org) frequently for up-to-date information. This will be an event worth attending. Don't miss being there...you won't regret it!

Speaking of looking forward, I want to talk briefly about the long-term future of your organization. EAA and its future is something that I think about every day. It's both my passion and vocation. As president, I am responsible for providing the leadership and direction that will

ensure that EAA will remain strong and relevant, not only today, but for decades to come. Our members, volunteers, partners, and staff deserve nothing less.

EAA founder Paul Poberezny recently relinquished his title as chairman of the board. His impact as founder will continue. The board of directors has appointed me as chairman, assuming the dual role of chairman and president. I will continue with my current duties as president, plus expand my efforts to enhance our financial resources, primarily through increasing our endowment. I will also focus on setting the future agenda, with the board, for EAA and its membership. EAA must also assume an even bigger role within the aviation community as we address its future growth and vitality. EAA's impact has never been more important as we face a broad set of issues from the economy to the public perception of general aviation. Our efforts will require ever greater resources.

To maintain EAA's stability, culture, and continuity of leadership, I've instituted a succession initiative for a new president. When the selection is concluded, it will allow me to work to ensure that we have the long-term resources needed to continue serving you. I want to assure you that our most important assets—EAA's culture and strong sense of community—will continue.

EAA and its members have made a significant impact on aviation. As a result, we are facing growing expectations. We must be ready to meet and exceed those expectations. 