



# Illinois Valley Beacon

June 2007

Chapter 563 Chartered in 1976

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## May 31

### This Thursday night at 6:00PM

**Senator Ray La Hood** will come to the **EAA Hangar** at Mt. Hawley Airport to meet with local owners, pilots, and anyone else interested in keeping the best air traffic control system in the world, funded and operating the way it is.

You should be aware by now of the FAA proposal to raise taxes on fuel and apply user fees to all the other contacts we have with them, including everything from license/ medical applications to aircraft registration.

The Senator can only be with us from 6:00 to 7:00 so come early and make every minute count. His staff has requested that questions be written and submitted to them before the meeting.

The Chapter expects a large turn out and has rented 100 chairs to accommodate the large crowd. We encourage members to come early and volunteer to direct people to the hangar and park cars. EAA has notified all the members in the 616 area and Greater Peoria Airport has notified all tenants and airport personnel.

**The first breakfast** will be held on the **First Saturday, June 2nd**, in the EAA Hangar from 8:00 to 10:00.

**The regular meeting** will be the **Second Thursday, June 14th**, at the EAA Hangar at 7:00 pm. Our presenters will be a flight nurse and pilot from the OSF helicopter service. This will include a tour of the airship.

**The second breakfast** will be held on the **Third Saturday, June 16th**, at the Chapter Hangar from 8:00 to 10:00 am.

**Directors meeting** The meeting will be held on the **Third Thursday, June 21st**, at the Chapter Hangar at 7:00P. All members are welcome to attend.

## MEETING MINUTES – 08 Mar 2007

President Steve Bonfoey called the meeting to order at 7 pm in the chapter hangar. Minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed in the Beacon. There was no financial report.

Steve reminded us that the Prairie Air Show's "WingOff" will be tomorrow evening, and the Air Show preview (free) will be Friday evening July 20, on the riverfront. Volunteers are still needed to meet our chapter's commitment to Prairie Air Show: planes & pilots for Young Eagles rides, and a big variety of ground support tasks. The yellow volunteer sheets should be filled out to indicate how you would like to help.

Steve noted that Representative Ray LaHood will be speaking to us on May 31 on User Fees for General Aviation. We have him only from six to seven pm, and are hoping for a big turnout. Please bring a couple of folding chairs.

Program Chair Chris Tate introduced our evening speaker, Brad Beuning. Brad is embarking on an ambitious project he calls "Flight 40:31", which has the goal of heightening self-respect and confidence among disadvantaged, at-risk high schoolers by guiding them through a program leading to their private pilot's license. These boys and girls will need to meet ongoing requirements of need, school, service, etc. to stay in the program. This Christian-oriented program will begin when sufficient donations are on hand to fund one kid, but the plan is to expand to ten "young Americans" per year. Brad hopes that tax-deductible donations from individuals, businesses and churches, without government money, will support this endeavor. Mentor pilots are also welcome. Learn more at the website: [www.flight40-31.org](http://www.flight40-31.org).

Respectfully Submitted, Bill Engel, Secretary

## BOARD MINUTES – 17 May, 2007

President Steve Bonfoey called the meeting to order at 7 pm in the chapter hangar. Present were directors Bonfoey, Caudill, Engel, Pilon and Tate. A guest was Sam Sisk. Minutes of the March meeting were approved as printed. (The April meeting was cancelled.) Finances for April were approved as distributed.

In the absence of the chairman, there was no Membership report.

Program Chair Tate stated that an OSF flight nurse and pilot will present the June program. July is still open.

Under Special Events, the May 5 Benefit Breakfast raised \$266 for Wildlife Prairie Park. The Board voted to round that up to \$300. Other Special Events will be a repeat picnic at Sisk International, and hopefully another performance challenge.

Our participation in Prairie Air Show was discussed, with more volunteer help needed in many categories.

The secretary was authorized to buy a chapter banner for \$80 +s&h .

### NEW BUSINESS

Representative Ray LaHood will be speaking to us on Thursday May 31, and the preparations have been going well under the able hands of Steve Bonfoey and Chris Tate. Volunteers are being sought to deal with an anticipated crowd. 100 folding chairs will be rented, a PA system will be procured by J Pilon, a parking plan will be drawn by the secretary, and some directional signs made. The Congressman will be available only from 6 to 7 pm due to a tight schedule, and lots of folks are being invited, so we want everything to run as smoothly as possible.

A request from former member Brian Briggerman to temporarily hangar his Zenith was approved for a month's rent and payment of dues.

The hour being late, we adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Bill Engel, Secretary

## Senate committee narrowly keeps user fees

But AOPA says fight has just begun

User fees. AOPA members hate them. And there was no doubt about that in the minds of any member of the Senate Commerce Committee when it came time to vote on an amendment that would have stripped the \$25-per-flight air traffic control user fee—disguised as a "surcharge"—from the Senate's FAA funding bill. Despite the extraordinary outpouring of phone calls from AOPA members, the Senate Commerce Committee voted 12 to 11 on May 16 to impose user fees for ATC services. This committee is the first of nearly a dozen political bodies that will weigh in on the FAA financing issue. "As disappointing as this one vote is, I still consider it a win for the long term," said AOPA President Phil Boyer. "In Washington, it's not always about the result but about how you play the game, and in this case pilots disrupted the airlines' attempt to smoothly have user fees pass." Boyer noted that three days ago, no one would have believed that there was the slightest chance in knocking user fees out of the package." But with the help of AOPA members, we nearly turned it around in two and half days," said Boyer. "That sends a message to the rest of Congress, showing that there is strong support for our no-user-fee position." We're extremely grateful to Senators Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and John E. Sununu (R-N.H.) for sponsoring this amendment and to the senators who supported them," said Boyer. Even Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), who cast the tie-breaking vote to keep user fees in the bill, did so with hesitation. Referring to the effect of user fees on aircraft flying in Alaska, he said he thought there was "a bit of unfairness" in the bill, but he wanted to send it to the Senate floor." That gives us the opportunity to build on the momentum started against user fees," said Boyer. Boyer had high praise for the response by AOPA members." I can't begin to thank our members enough," he said. "Just one day before this critical vote, I asked you to call your senator. And thousands of you did. We know that the phone lines in nearly every office were jammed. "That show of solidarity from the general aviation community did make an impression upon the senators and their staffs," Boyer continued. "While we're disappointed that general aviation lost this first round, we still have many more opportunities to eliminate user fees before the FAA funding bill goes to the president." Sens. Nelson, Sununu, and Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) fought valiantly for GA. Nelson made it clear that the current FAA funding system would be able to generate more than enough money to modernize the ATC system. Noting that the Rockefeller-Lott FAA funding bill would give the airlines a tax break by eliminating its 4.3-cent fuel tax and replacing it with a \$25-per-flight user fee on all turbine-powered aircraft flying in controlled airspace, Nelson asked, "Who do you want to pay? You have to make a choice; do you want it from the user fee or a continuation of the existing fuel tax on commercial aviation?" Nelson said that Florida, like Alaska, depended upon GA, and that his entire state was covered by controlled airspace. Every turboprop flying point to point in Florida would pay the \$25-per-flight fee. And he wondered if the fee was the airlines' attempt to snuff small competitors such as DayJet, which provides on-demand, point-to-point air transportation. Sen. Sununu said, "We don't need a new user fee. That's a new system, a new system for collection, a new system for invoicing, a new regulatory burden on general aviation." Sen. Dorgan said the Rockefeller-Lott bill was good overall, "But I don't support the choice of user fee ... I think a fuel tax is a far better approach." And fuel taxes will be under consideration in the Senate Finance Committee.

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