

Mark Baker Named President and CEO of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Mark R. Baker, a longtime general aviation (GA) pilot, has been named president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation association. Baker is only the fifth AOPA president since the association's founding nearly 75 years ago.

"We are pleased to announce that Mark Baker has been selected as the next president and chief executive officer of AOPA," said Bill Trimble, chairman of the AOPA Board of Trustees. "He has all the tools this job demands. Mark brings 35 years of involvement in the GA community as a pilot and decades of experience in leadership positions in the home improvement industry, such as Scotts Miracle-Gro Company and The Home Depot. He has an extraordinary understanding of the importance of serving our membership and advancing their needs. He is well-suited to build on the foundation established by his predecessors and move AOPA forward."

A native Minnesotan, Baker, 55, became a pilot in his twenties and has logged more than 7,500 hours of flight time. The pilot community and his close flying friends are the reason he can be found at an airport or a seaplane base nearly every weekend. An aircraft owner, Baker enjoys flying everything from light seaplanes to turbines to helicopters, but his favorite airplane continues to be his Piper Super Cub. Baker and his wife, Vickie, have four children and six grandchildren. Not only did he encourage his father to learn to fly, but two of his sons-in-law have their pilot's certificates and his own son will become a pilot soon as well.

"Being selected as only the fifth leader of AOPA is a tremendous honor," said Baker, an AOPA member since 1987. "Many of my happiest moments have been spent flying and sharing my passion for aviation with others. I am committed to the priorities of the membership and will ensure that AOPA's focus remains on carrying out our mission of protecting the freedom to fly.

"I am very much looking forward to getting out and meeting and listening to the members, and then using the feedback to focus valuable resources where they will most benefit GA pilots and increase the value of membership. I believe this approach can also be useful in increasing member participation in AOPA and driving increased GA flight activity."

Trimble thanked outgoing president Craig Fuller for his efforts. "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank Craig Fuller for his five years in the left seat at AOPA. He served as a formidable advocate on behalf of the general aviation community, helped to forge partnerships with other aviation associations and provided important guidance at a challenging moment in our history. We wish him well as he moves on to the next stage of his distinguished career," said Trimble, who has led AOPA's Board since 2005.

The AOPA Board of Trustees' search committee began looking for AOPA's new leader earlier this year, after Fuller informed the Board of his intent to move on to other opportunities. The Board retained the national search firm of Heidrick & Struggles to help identify final candidates from among the association's nearly 400,000 members, and Baker emerged as an outstanding candidate for the position.

Through the years, Baker worked his way up through the home improvement business and brings a sharp focus on customer service that will translate well to a membership association. Most recently, he served as CEO of Orchard Supply Hardware Stores Corporation, a leading retailer of home improvement and garden products. Baker also served in senior executive roles at Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, Gander Mountain Company and The Home Depot. Earlier in his career, he also worked for HomeBase, Scotty's Home Improvement Centers and Knox Hardware and Lumber. He is an alumnus of the University of Minnesota.

Baker enjoys flying Young Eagles; youths aged 8-17 who are interested in aviation and are given the opportunity to fly in GA aircraft, and has donated time and resources in the past to other Experimental Aircraft Association initiatives. He also has served on several corporate boards and has been involved in leadership roles with nonprofit organizations including City of Hope, a leading biomedical research, treatment and education institution in Duarte, California, which he has supported since the 1980s.

With this appointment, Baker also will become chairman of AOPA's Political Action Committee, chief executive officer of the AOPA Foundation and publisher of AOPA Pilot, the world's largest and most influential aviation publication.

Baker is to take office on September 6, 2013, following formal appointment by the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting of Members in Frederick, Maryland.

AOPA Jordan becomes 72nd IAOPA Affiliate

The Board of the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations has approved full membership for AOPA Jordan, making the organization the 72nd affiliate member. AOPA Jordan is headquartered at the Royal Aero Sports Club of Jordan, and headed by Ammar Yousef, their Chief Pilot. General aviation flying in Jordan is somewhat limited with many restrictions hampering its growth. The goal of AOPA Jordan is to work with the Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) and other entities to ease the restrictions and open up more airspace to a larger population of general aviation and sport pilots. I encourage all affiliates to extend a warm welcome to our newest affiliate member.

AOPA US/France Work together to Provide Student the Trip of a Lifetime

Twenty-year-old Jennifer Guetterman has returned to the US from a trip to France after participating as the only American among 75 racers in the Tour Aérien Des Jeunes Pilotes, which ran July 15 through 28.

The event was created to motivate the next generation of pilots and promote general aviation to the public, and Guetterman's trip was funded by AOPA US, AOPA France, the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations, and the Fédération Française Aéronautique.

Guetterman said she is always looking for opportunities to improve her flying skills and experience new countries, which is why she wanted to enter the race. "I thought this would be a great opportunity, and it was awesome to learn how to fly in another country," she said.

To prepare for the race, Guetterman studied French pilot and flying regulations, brushed up on her French, and used a handbook from Sporty's to read up on the Diamond DA40 she used in the race. She also went up for a two-hour flight with a local flight instructor.

Guetterman compared the Tour Aérien Des Jeunes Pilotes to the Tour de France, where racers race individually, but also work as a team. She was on the blue team, named after their blue flight suits.

"We were like celebrities. Everywhere we landed, the media were there, along with kids excited to see the airplanes. They loved us," said Guetterman. "France doesn't have very many pilots, since it's so expensive to learn how to fly, so seeing us was exciting for them."

As an American and a female pilot, Guetterman said many people wanted to speak with her, but were reluctant because they didn't speak much English. "So wherever I went, I was introduced and I always spoke French."

Guetterman cited several highlights from her trip, including landing on a grass strip. "I also was the only member of my team to fly an Antonov An-2. I got the royal treatment in France," she said.

The biggest takeaway from the race, said Guetterman, was learning that aviation is the same all over the world. "I expected to see differences, but pilots are pilots no matter where you go," she said. "It was something we all had in common when there was nothing else to talk about."

Guetterman had done 10 hours of instrument rating training before going to France. She now plans on finishing that in December, and then beginning training for her commercial certificate.

Athens Flying Week

Athens Flying Week is coming up again! AOPA Greece is once again assisting Podimatas AudioVisual S.A, in organising the biggest aviation event in the Athens area. Podimatas is the main audio visual company in Greece, owned by an AOPA member. This is the second annual Athens Flying Week. Last year it managed to attract 20,000 visitors, and this time targets are set much higher. For the first time this year military aircraft from Greece and abroad will participate in the air show. The organisers welcome this inclusion of military aircraft in an otherwise general aviation air show, which helps with publicity, attracts bigger crowds and shows confidence in the professional way the air show is organised. All pilots are welcome at a fly-in at Tatoi airfield during Athens Flying Week, which runs from September 23rd to 29th. A comprehensive list of all the activities of Athens Flying Week can be found on the website www.athensflyingweek.com. There you will also find the registration form for the fly-in and information about the event, accommodations, excursions and much more. For further information, please contact Ms. Marina Zompanaki at marina@aopa.gr.

Air Safety Institute releases new Pilot Safety Announcement (PSA) - Experience V•A•C•A•T•I•O•N—ASI's "ghastly" rhyme for the unwary flier

Taking a cue from televised public service announcements, the Air Safety Institute has published various Pilot Safety Announcements meant to raise awareness of common accident causes.

ASI's "Vacation" PSA recognizes that easier vacation and holiday travel is one of the major benefits of general aviation. We get to do something we enjoy, accomplish a "mission," *and* avoid that eight-hour drive to the beach. All too often, though, things go horribly wrong—as attested by the grim headlines that follow nearly every holiday weekend.

The Air Safety Institute's latest PSA is a darkly humorous reminder of the various ills that can befall careless or unwary vacation fliers. View the video <<http://www.aopa.org/AOPA-Live.aspx?watch={BF55B03D-2CAB-4F8D-AB94-F1F5BD2ABB51}&#ooid=duN2x1ZDoTzkaUydqqIGMn3pobFvhi6D>>, and make sure that your name isn't next on the list...

Pass on This Newsletter to Your Members

Nothing can keep existing members, and attract new members like reminding them of the great work that IAOPA affiliates are doing on national, regional, and international levels to keep them flying. Great work is being done in all parts of the globe to advance the interests of general aviation and the best way to share the message is to make sure that this newsletter gets to as many members and non-members alike. So I encourage you to publish this on your website, send on via email to your members, and do what you can to help spread the word.