



*The Leader In Recreational Aviation*

## Chapter 736 Newsletter for October 2011

### **FAA Approves Use of “Very Low Lead” Fuel**

In a Special Airworthiness Bulletin issued last week, the FAA has approved a new fuel—100VLL (very low lead)—for use on aircraft currently operating on 100LL. The approval was the result of collaboration with industry partners on the ASTM International task force that evaluated data supporting the incorporation of grade 100VLL into specification D910. The new fuel is identical to 100LL in all aspects, except that the maximum lead content is reduced by about 19 percent. The FAA determined that 100 VLL meets all of the performance requirements of grades 80, 91, 100, and 100LL and will perform identically in existing aircraft and engines. The fuel also has the same minimum octane rating and provides the same level of anti-knock performance as 100LL and 100 avgas grades. Since the ASTM D910 standard specifies blue coloration for both grade 100VLL avgas and grade 100LL avgas, these fuels will appear identical.

### **EAA & AOPA Work to Expand Drivers’ License Medical**

Imagine keeping your four-seat airplane but not dealing with the high cost and stress of renewing your third-class medical. AOPA and the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) on Sept. 24 unveiled plans that, if successful, could greatly expand the number of pilots who could use the driver's license medical standard currently available only to sport pilots.

On the final day of AOPA Aviation Summit, AOPA President Craig Fuller and EAA President Rod Hightower said the two groups are working together to finalize a request to create an exemption allowing pilots flying recreationally to use the driver's license medical standard. In order to ensure and even enhance safety, pilots would be required to complete a comprehensive course on aeromedical factors and self-certification.

“We have more than five years' experience now with the sport pilot certificate and the driver's license medical standard,” said Hightower. “In that time, we have not had a single medical incapacitation accident. The standard works.”

“Furthermore, our petition would enhance safety by requiring initial and recurrent training about health awareness and medical self-certification for any pilot choosing to use the driver's license standard,” added Fuller. “And it will provide data that can be used to continually refine and evaluate the effectiveness of the standard.”

AOPA and EAA plan to file their request for exemption after the first of the year. Under the proposed exemption, pilots holding recreational, private, commercial, or airline transport pilot certificates who only fly recreationally could choose to use the same driver's license medical self-certification standard currently available to sport pilots.

In addition to holding a driver's license as proof of adequate health, a pilot also would be required to participate in a recurring online education program that would reinforce and expand a pilot's understanding of aeromedical factors and self-certification requirements. AOPA and EAA believe such an education program, developed by the Air Safety Institute in consultation with AOPA's Board of Aeromedical Advisors and EAA's Aeromedical Advisory Council, would provide an equivalent level of safety as a third class medical.

As envisioned, the exemption would be limited by aircraft size and type of operations—for example, a single-engine aircraft, with 180 horsepower or less, four seats or fewer, and fixed gear and operations limited to day VFR, with one passenger. That would greatly expand the number of aircraft a pilot might fly while operating under a driver's license medical standard.

AOPA and EAA estimate that the exemption could save pilots who currently fly with medical certificates nearly \$250 million over 10 years, and save the federal government more than \$11 million over the same period.

The associations believe the exemption they plan to request is the next logical step in the journey begun when the FAA permitted sport pilots to use the driver's license medical standard. Further, the associations believe the exemption will maintain or enhance aviation safety by improving knowledge and awareness of aeromedical factors through recurrent education for all pilots utilizing the exemption, and by encouraging pilots to continue flying aircraft with which they are already familiar.

## **Chapter News**

Ed Roy has received his airworthiness certificate from the FAA. He is now able to do his Phase 1 with the Davis DA-2B.

Congrats, Ed.



### **No traction for user fees in Senate**

The Obama administration's proposal for a \$100 user fee on most general aviation flights has proven a tough sell in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) offered alternatives for funding hiring incentives and economic development, and Sen. Mark Begich (D-Alaska) took the floor to call to defend business aviation against "demonizing," and to remind colleagues of the importance of GA to his state's communities.

Reid, on Oct. 6, put forth a tax-relief and jobs bill that contains the same incentives for creating jobs as President Barack Obama's original proposal. But it replaces funding mechanisms with a basic surtax of 5.6 percent on income in excess of \$1 million, starting in 2013. The completely-paid-for measure was seen reducing the deficit by about \$6 billion.

Begich, in floor remarks, criticized the administration for "demonizing" legitimate business travel in its efforts to "change the way businesses can treat the depreciation of general aviation aircraft." Doing so, he said, would create "a disincentive to buy American-made aircraft, and further depress an industry that has felt the impacts of the recession."

GA keeps isolated Alaska communities connected and "is not a luxury," he said, noting that Alaska has six times more pilots and 16 times more aircraft per capita than the rest of the nation.

The \$100 user fee proposal is "not a wise or cost effective way to administer a tax," he said.

"General Aviation users pay their fair share for our aviation system through the per-gallon tax on fuel and avgas at the pump," he said. Begich added that when the GA industry agreed to a modest increase in the fuel tax as part of an FAA reauthorization bill that passed the Senate earlier in the year, it showed a commitment by GA to paying its fair share for aviation infrastructure and program support.

### **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 18 at 7:30. We are now returning to our winter schedule of holding meetings at the Weathervane Restaurant in Waterville. So, if you plan to have dinner at the Weathervane, please arrive around 6:00 pm so that the meeting can start at its regular time after everyone has eaten.