



The AMA History Project Presents: History of the MODEL ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL KANSAS (MACK)



Since the early 1970s

Written and submitted by LK (02/1981); Reformatted by JS (04/2012)

Larry Kruse wrote the following article for the February 1981 issue of Model Aviation magazines.

Mack Field... Public Relations Pays

What may work in one community to obtain a flying site may not be the full answer in another, because conditions vary. A common denominator frequently seen is regular communication with local organizations, high public visibility (possibly with accent on youth), and perseverance. In short, this is Public Relations.

Cultivating the kind of image that creates public support is one of the most difficult and important tasks confronting any modeling organization. With site problems becoming more critical with each passing season, many clubs face a Darwinian challenge of survival, needing public support and empathy to fend off unsympathetic city councilmen and land developers, hungry to subdivide and conquer.

One club in no such jeopardy is the Model Association of Central Kansas (MACK), a multi-interest club spearheaded by an active and involved membership. By sheer dint of hard work and constant communication with community organizations, MACK members have secured a place for themselves in community affairs, and as an end result, they have permanently resolved their site problems.

When the club first began, almost a decade ago, two ideas were predominant: the club would be active, and the club would introduce youth to modeling. Both of these ideas have remained very much in focus throughout the club's growth process. With these two ideas as guiding lights, many promotional events were held in the first few years to acquaint segments of the public with modeling. Flight demonstrations, model clinics, Delta Dart programs for Boy Scouts, static displays, and many other projects were undertaken by club members – all with significant success and high media visibility. Over the years, these types of promotional activities have become an integral part of the club, and now they are even expected by the community.

From the first, the biggest obstacles MACK had to overcome were finding a permanent home and a flying site. While meetings gravitated from basements of homes, to garages, to college classrooms and rented commercial meeting rooms, the flying site problem was not so easily resolved. The club had flown from an abandoned airport, an abandoned Boy Scout camp, a cemetery addition, and just about any other location that would accommodate model aircraft.

Finally, the club's perseverance paid off, and they were able to secure a 99-year lease on 40 acres of pasture land located just west of the small community of Pawnee Rock, Kansas, a location central to the membership of MACK.

All of the work and improvements on the field have been done by club members. Through voluntary contributions, voluntary labor, and the faith and support of the landowner, the field has been brought to the optimum shape shown in the photos accompanying this article. [See February 1981 issue of *MA* for photographs.]

The message that MACK has for all of us who face flying site problems is obvious, but often overlooked by many organizations. Part of the function of every club must be to inform and attract the non-modeling public to a potentially rewarding hobby, even if just as a spectator. Through direct involvement of youth and their parents, the dissemination of information via media sources, any club willing to take the initiative and persevere can ensure their own continuity and success, as well as that of modeling in general.

Thanks to their own efforts, the modeling future for members of the Model Association of Central Kansas is indeed bright.

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