2020 ANNUAL REPORT

ACADEMY OF MODEL AERONAUTICS
JANUARY 2021
Executive Summary

Challenges can either tear a community apart or bring it together. For AMA, the challenges of 2020 drew our community closer together.

If one word could describe AMA and the events of this year, it would be “community.” Our community rallied together as never before when faced with a deeply flawed Remote ID rule. The AMA community was quick to help our fellow members who were negatively impacted by COVID-19 through donations and volunteerism. And our community learned how to slow the spread of COVID-19 and still engage with each other through new digital outlets and safely at outdoors events.

Although it seems the world and nation are forming a great divide, it’s comforting to know our hobby offers a refuge and united community of belonging. Thank you for being a part of our growing and exciting community as we showcase our efforts from 2020 in this annual report.
The AMA Community Grows Month By Month

AMA exceeded our 2020 membership goals by 1.65%.

Expanding Our Community

AMA and the National Association of Rocketry (NAR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU highlights the importance of our partnership and to continue a basis for collaboration. AMA and NAR will also be exploring the initiative to create a bundled and/or new-member discount to help create awareness for both entities.

AMA and the Air Force JROTC signed an MOU in late 2020 which highlights the importance of mentors, curriculum, and the use of model aircraft within the United States military as a catalyst for aviation and/or military careers.

Your Passion. Your Hobby. One Community.

For nearly a century, our hobby has expanded into dozens of disciplines, sports, and special interests. Regardless of what our members fly, one thing remains: We are all unified as one community, passionate about the hobby of aeromodeling.

Through a collaborative effort by AMA Executive Council and AMA staff, “Your Passion. Your Hobby. One Community” was introduced as AMA’s new tagline. Please visit modelaircraft.org/community to learn more about the tagline, watch a video, and download art.
Encouraging a Community to Build

Builders are an important part of our community. AMA dedicated an entire month to celebrating building. In October, AMA hosted a series of build webinars and tutorials, dedicated Model Aviation to building, gave discounts and free build plans, built and launched a new plans portal for members with 20,000+ searchable plans, and showcased build projects on social media. Learn more at modelaircraft.org/ibuildAMA.

Our Community Reacts to COVID-19

The pandemic certainly created a disruption for everyone as it impacted our daily lives and routines. AMA was quick to react to slow the spread of COVID-19 and help our members in need. Although many of AMA’s staff worked remotely, staff remained steadfast to not miss a beat and continue to answer calls, fulfill member services, and process requests.

AMA also introduced more livestreams to connect and support our members. AMA launched a new member service, the AMA Career Center, to help members find new employment related to the hobby. AMA amended many of its policies to assist contest directors, grant recipients, and clubs across the country. Most notably, the AMA Foundation and AMA partnered to launch the Separate But Together campaign to support members struggling financially because of COVID-19. More than $20,000 was raised and matched by the AMA Foundation to provide membership assistance to those with the greatest need.
Engaging Members

New terms became part of our daily lives and routines with shelter in place, remote work, Zoom, and social distancing. Within this new way of living we discovered opportunities and new ways to engage with our members. AMA conducted more livestreams than ever before including new programs like Model Aviation LIVE.

Communicating Within Our Community

17,700,251 Emails
Throughout the course of the year, members received nearly 18 million emails with information about the hobby and association.

35,257 Downloads
48 episodes with 1,911 minutes of hobby content were produced for the AMA Podcast. Episodes were downloaded 35,257 times this year.

1,929,553 Video Views
Members and hobbyists viewed AMA’s online videos nearly 2 million times in 2020.

1,306,032 Issues
Over a million issues of Model Aviation and Park Pilot, full of reviews, event coverage, and industry news, were received by members.

80% Increase in Viewership
AMA Air not only celebrated it’s 100th episode, this year the show went from a studio preproduced show to a livestream, fostering more member engagement.

Winner of Two Association Media & Publishing Excel Awards
AMA Podcast: 2020 Bronze Award for Membership Podcast
Model Aviation: 2020 Silver Award for Redesign
Enjoy the Hobby Safely
Members were able to slow the spread of COVID-19 and still enjoy the hobby to include at AMA’s International Aeromodeling Center (IAC) for Nats and the National Fun Fly.

Membership Meeting
Every year AMA hosts a membership meeting. During the AMA National Fun Fly, members were invited to attend AMA’s 2020 membership meeting, which was held virtually for the first time.

National Fun Fly
In addition to Nats, AMA safely hosted its first annual National Fun Fly. This three-day event included multiple flightlines safely spread across the IAC and a virtual membership meeting. The 2021 National Fun Fly is scheduled for July 30 to August 1. Learn more at modelaircraft.org/funfly.
Adovcating for Our Community

Below are a few highlights of AMA’s government relations and public affairs work in 2020. The following page discusses in more detail AMA’s efforts with Remote ID.

Educational UAS Protections
AMA worked with Congress to shape a law that allows model aviation in the classroom to continue under a recognized community-based organization such as AMA. Additionally, a provision prohibiting federal agencies from using foreign-made UAS and UAS equipment was removed from the act.

Drone Safety Awareness Week
AMA hosted several events to promote the safe operations of UAS within the national airspace. These events were attended by several members, industry professionals, and hobbyists alike.

Leading Federal Committees and SubGroups
AMA served it’s fourth year as a voting member of the FAA Drone Advisory Committee (DAC) and led two subgroups on creating a safety culture and low-altitude operations with Remote ID.

Advocating for Altitude
Throughout the year, AMA helped clubs receive letters of agreement (LOAs) through Safety Risk Management panels that permitted flying operations at altitudes higher than what were allowed on the FAA UAS Facility Map, with some clubs receiving authorization for flying operations up to 2,000 ft in controlled airspace.

Meetings with the White House
AMA met with the National Economic Council, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and Office of Management and Budget on various UAS related issues. These agencies are all within the White House and under Presidential authority.

Although this annual report highlights many of AMA’s government affairs efforts, you can find a more details at www.modelaircraft.org/gov where you can read blogs, listen to podcasts, watch videos, and download the AMA Government Affairs 2020 report.
Remote ID

AMA’s biggest advocacy challenge in 2020 was Remote ID. Work that began in 2016 culminated in 2020 when Remote ID’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was released on December 26, 2019. AMA immediately identified numerous flaws with the proposed rule and began advocating for the hobby. Major concerns AMA addressed were per aircraft registration, retrofitting older UAS to comply with Remote ID, internet connectivity issues, and a rule that eventually phases out flying site protections.

An aggressive campaign to mobilize hobbyists to comment on the proposed rule resulted in a new FAA record for public feedback. Nearly 55,000 comments were submitted to the FAA with concerns and solutions for Remote ID. Thank you to all of our members who participated in this very important step to shape the final rule!

AMA championed for the hobby on FAA’s Unmanned Aircraft Safety Team and FAA Drone Advisory Team. AMA engaged the Department of Transportation including to Secretary Chao. AMA conducted countless congressional meetings gaining support from many offices. AMA joined forces with other leading UAS companies to petition essential changes to Remote ID. And AMA met with the national security entities and the White House advocating for the hobby.

The fruits of these efforts were realized on December 28, 2020, when the final rule was released. The Final Rule on Remote ID provided the recreational community with a sensible approach to remotely identifying aircraft while satisfying the safety and security of the national airspace.

Remote ID Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will hobbyists need to comply with Remote ID requirements?
A: Although you might notice new Remote ID products on the shelves and FAA-Recognized Identification Areas (FRIA) be established, operators are not required to comply until September 1, 2023. During this time, AMA will continue to shape the implementation of the rule for the hobby.

Q: What is an FRIA?
A: An FRIA is where persons can operate visual-line-of-sight UAS without Remote ID. The FAA will look to community-based organizations, such as AMA, to establish these locations.

Q: Who can apply for a flying site to be an FRIA?
A: Those eligible to request establishment of FRIs include educational institutions and community-based organizations recognized by the Administrator.

Q: I mostly fly at my AMA chartered club’s flying site. How does this rule impact me?
A: Special events, such as air shows or other temporary events, will have a path to receive authorization from the Administrator to deviate from the Remote ID operating rules.

Q: How do I apply for my club’s flying site to be an FRIA?
A: Clubs will be able to apply for their flying site(s) to be recognized by the FAA through AMA. When the flying site is included in the list of FRIs, members can fly there without needing to meet any additional Remote ID requirements.

Q: How will Remote ID apply at events not at an FRIA?
A: The process to apply for FRIA status will not begin until August 26, 2022. Once the details for the application process are released, we will inform our members of next steps.

Q: I mostly fly scratch-built or plan-built models. How will this impact me?
A: Those flying outside of an established flying site can meet the Remote ID requirements by flying a standard Remote ID-equipped aircraft or an aircraft equipped with a broadcast module.

Q: I don’t fly at an AMA chartered club’s flying site. How does this rule impact me?
A: Recreational and educational operators can “home build” without meeting manufacturer certification standards, allowing these types of aircraft to be operated at an FRIA or under the broadcast model option.

Q: I often fly scratch-built or plan-built models. How will this impact me?
A: No. These requirements in the earlier proposed rule were removed in the final rule along with the need to connect to the internet.
AMA’s Education Reaches New Communities

AMA in the News
AMA’s education efforts were featured across the country; broadcasting on 43 occasions in different markets. Over 300,000 viewers were introduced to model aviation. These quick projects can be found by visiting amaflightschool.org/quickprojects.

Congress Passes a Law to Support Our Education Programming
AMA helped shape a US Congressional law that allows for the continual use of model aviation in the classroom through a community-based organization like AMA.

$50,000 in Scholarships Were Awarded
In coordination with the AMA Foundation, AMA awarded students with $50,000 in scholarships.

AMA BETA Introduced
Throughout the course of 2020, work was poured into ensuring the highest quality and flight characteristics were upheld in this first production run. Both the AMA ALPHA and AMA BETA will continue production and each include the 20:1 winder, along with detailed build instructions. Educational materials that utilize both airframes are available at amaflightschool.org/arconicsteam.

600-Plus Virtual Campers
AMA offered creative outlets to families across the nation amid the pandemic including our first virtual AMA Jr. Camp. Over the course of a few short months, projects were developed, designed, produced, sourced, ordered, and packaged into both downloadable and purchasable flight packs. Our inaugural AMA Jr. Camp featured instructional videos, informative interviews, and two to three livestreams per day. We reached more than 600 youth in the live, weeklong event. These resources are available on-demand for individuals, clubs, or classrooms. Learn more at amaflightschool.org/campama.
Celebrating Our Community - Club of the Month

In August, AMA launched a new service to celebrate our clubs while inspiring others, the Club of the Month campaign. Each month, AMA highlights one of our 2,400 clubs. During the month, we invite the club to participate in a podcast, showcase the club’s achievements in social media, and promote the club in other outlets. Learn more at modelaircraft.org/clubs.

The Club of the Month program debuted in August with the Suburban Aeroclub of Chicago. The club was recognized for their STE(A)M programming for youth, as well as their dedication to the Intro Pilot Program.

In September, the Casa Grande RC Flyers Club was recognized for their tireless efforts in bringing new faces to the hobby; through its community events and constant press coverage.

In October, we recognized the Greater St. Louis Modeling Association for its educational programming with local schools, youth groups, and churches, as well as its unique structure of disciplines under its umbrella.

In November, the Torrey Pines Gulls were recognized during their 50th anniversary year for their leadership in the soaring community and for their role in both the development of FAI F3K and the International Hand Launch Glider Festival.

We ended the year celebrating the Southern Tier Aero Radio Society (STARS) in December. STARS was recognized for their success and longevity in the hobby, as well as their role in developing the giant scale movement.
Goal: Increase the Museum’s Digital Presence

Perserving Our Community

Strategic Long-Range Planning
While COVID-19 mandates forced AMA’s National Model Aviation Museum to close its doors to the public, staff leveraged the time to review and develop a five-year strategic plan focused on youth, expansion, partnerships, and expanding our virtual experience.

AMA’s National Model Aviation Museum
2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Museum Virtual Tour and Digital Collections
Throughout the year we encouraged members to visit the National Model Aviation Museum virtually. Members can now walk through the museum and interact with hundreds of artifacts on exhibit from their computer or mobile device. In addition we added more than 2,300 more artifacts to the Museum’s Digital Collections this year at modelaircraft.org/museum.
Sustaining Community Programs

The AMA Foundation continues to grow and provide more funding for AMA programs each year. Thanks to the following members* who made a contribution to the AMA Foundation.

*note: this list represents every donor who gave in 2020 and their current donor recognition level (bronze, silver, etc) based on their cumulative gifts.

The Heritage and Legacy Society Members are lifetime membership, so those lists represent any donor who has reached those levels regardless of whether they gave in 2020 or not.

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Made possible by Arconic Foundation grant:
• 7 teacher training workshops funded by Arconic Foundation
• 71 teachers were provided with AMA aviation-focused education curriculum and materials, which were shared with more than 800 students across the US
• 7 UAS4STEM teams provided with free program registration

620 students participated in the inaugural AMA Jr. Camp

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Learn more at modelaircraft.org/foundation.
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Budget In Review

Despite the challenges, losses of revenue, and unexpected expenses due to COVID-19 AMA ended 2020 with a balanced budget.

Revenue
Many of AMA’s non-dues revenues were negatively impacted by COVID-19, yet through donations and membership growth, AMA was able to generate enough revenue to maintain a balanced budget.

Expenses
Due to a drop in non-dues revenue, AMA trimmed back expenses to keep the budget balanced. Some reduction in expenses were directly related to COVID-19 such as less travel expenses.