

2022 Annual Report



Ongoing, ever-changing, and vital

The work of your association
has meaning for everyone

BY JULIE SUMMERS WALKER





**“If it was easy,
it would be done
by now.”**

That’s AOPA President Mark Baker’s stand on the current state of the development of a drop-in replacement unleaded fuel. Getting the lead out of aviation fuel is the number one priority of your association, which is hard at work on that initiative and so many others. Protecting your freedom to fly, and all the rights and privileges that go with this incredible industry we call general aviation, is what keeps the leaders and staff of AOPA up at night, walking the halls of Congress during the day, and flying throughout this great country spreading the word. As we look forward to marking our eighty-fifth anniversary in 2024, we recognize that the work of guaranteeing your freedom to fly is ongoing, ever-changing, and vital to a powerful and forward-looking United States.

Ongoing

Since the day the founders of AOPA first met and outlined the association’s mission in a country club on Wings Field in suburban Philadelphia, the goals of the association have remained consistent: protect and promote general aviation flying. “Those little airplanes” are symbolic of a nation that honors freedom. Recognizing that the lead in the fuel once powered the aircraft that helped win World War II, we also recognize that the environment has changed. Our dependency on lead in avgas has had its time and place; we join in the desire to care for the environment. But, as Baker has said, this will take time.

We are devoting time, workforce, and critical thinking to find a solution. AOPA is leading an industry effort with the establishment of EAGLE (Eliminate Aviation Gas Lead Emissions), an industry/FAA collaboration created in 2022 to help facilitate a safe and smart transition to an unleaded fuel solution for the GA fleet. Baker serves as co-chair for this initiative. These are AOPA’s thoughts on “getting the lead out”:

- A lead-free fleetwide solution no later than 2030 is a top priority for AOPA.
- AOPA is not defending lead, but we do want to ensure a safe and smart transition.
- Safe: Ensure 100LL remains available until a viable unleaded fuel is available to pilots.
- Smart: Commercialization (production, distribution, storage).
- AOPA established the AvGas Coalition in 2022 made up of more than 100 organizations to facilitate industry communications and understanding.
- A final EPA endangerment finding, expected this year, will kick off a process requiring the FAA to promulgate regulations, which will ultimately ban lead from aviation fuel.
- About 180 million gallons of avgas are burned each year in the United States. Cars burn that amount of fuel in less than four hours each day.
- Thirty percent of the GA fleet (high-compression engines that require 100-octane fuel) burns 70 percent of the avgas consumed each year

If you would like detailed information on the many initiatives AOPA is undertaking on this critical issue, we’ve dedicated a site for you.

► aopa.org/100UL

While the avgas issue compels us, the other threats and concerns for GA’s future are still ongoing. We advocate daily for you on hundreds of issues and work to ensure GA is well-represented in Congress, state legislatures, and local communities across the country. We have a dedicated advocacy team led by AOPA Senior Vice President Jim Coon with staff in Washington, D.C., as well as a team of seven regional managers across the country. Few organizations can say they provide the coverage and support of their members like AOPA can.



AOPA members helped celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Airport Support Network (ASN) throughout the country in 2022.

This spring, Mark Baker testified at the House Aviation Subcommittee hearing on “Securing the Future of GA” to discuss AOPA’s priorities for the upcoming FAA reauthorization bill. The current FAA reauthorization expires September 30, 2023. Baker focused his remarks on aviation workforce development, designated pilot examiner reform, GA hangar shortage and construction, and the need for transient ramp space at public-use airports.

Our “eyes and ears” at your local airport—the AOPA Airport Support Network volunteer program (ASN)—continues to grow. In 2022, the groundbreaking, grassroots initiative marked 25 years with celebrations across the country. We are proud to say we have more than 2,300 ASN volunteers.

Working in the states



- Passed the Alabama Airport Economic and Infrastructure Bill, which provides funding to support state improvement grants to Alabama’s 92 public-use airports.
- Helped pass a three-year extension of a sales and use tax exemption in Virginia on maintenance for aircraft over 2,400 pounds.
- Passed an Iowa aviation parts and labor tax exemption, saving our members 6 percent on maintenance repairs and overhauls.
- Successfully supported the Pennsylvania Airport Land Development Zone legislation, which expands tax incentives and improves revenue streams for on-airport businesses to all public-use airports.
- Saved the Midland, Texas Airpark (MDD), with the help of ASN volunteer Vicki Hurt, who led a group of more than 200 airport supporters.

These are just several examples of AOPA advocacy across the states.

► aopa.org/advocacy/state-advocacy

Ever-changing

As we all know, change is inevitable. In 2022 we saw the retirement of long-term Editor in Chief Tom Haines, began the restructuring of our web television show, placed continued emphasis on social media, and expanded our video offerings. We also have come to recognize that more people in this country need to be exposed to the joy of flying. While once we emphasized that everyone should become a pilot—and we still believe that’s true!—we also know that exposing more people to our joyful avocation can only serve to benefit everyone.

And so, to that end we once again pivoted to provide the best for our members by not only returning to in-person events but to look at events from a more global perspective. This allows us to do what we do best—our great fly-ins—with what our partners do best—airshows.

So, for 2023 we’ve partnered with established airshows and events throughout the country, offering our assistance in the form of advertising, sponsorship, event coverage and promotion, as well as the attendance of our members to their shows. The first event of our season was in February at the Buckeye, Arizona, Air Fair. The number of people attending—more than 30,000—attests to the reach we can have by expanding our sights to existing events. Not only did members get to watch an incredible airshow and take advantage of our exhibitors, seminars, and workshops, but they mingled with a nonflying populace, helping deliver the message of aviation through shared experience. We will see you at big shows like EAA AirVenture and intimate gatherings like the Triple Tree Fly-In in South Carolina, as well as many

events in between, in a year that promises fun and camaraderie for everyone.

Our products and services divisions and our pilot and member experience teams continue to provide member assistance in any way we can. From legal advice through our growing Pilot Protective Services (PPS) plans as well as expert medical advice to help you get your medical certificates—and keep them—we answer your questions, find solutions, and provide access to the programs, people, and protections you need to enjoy a flying life. Our legal and medical certification staff, legal services, and panel attorneys take on the struggles that all pilots deal with, from staying out of trouble with the FAA or purchasing a new aircraft to staying healthy so you will be in the left seat longer. We have a national network of more than 650 panel attorneys you can call for help.

AOPA Foundation Legacy Society

AOPA relies on philanthropic contributions to fund You Can Fly and the AOPA Air Safety Institute. Including the AOPA Foundation in your estate plans can be a simple way to make a significant impact and share your love of GA with future aviators. “My entire life experience has benefited from my connection to aviation,” said Barry Schiff, Legacy Society chairman. “Anyone who experiences general aviation knows that the discipline and perspective you have as a pilot enriches all areas of your life. And for that I am grateful and want to make sure that others have the same opportunities that I had. My legacy gift to the AOPA Foundation will help assure that happens.”

► foundation.aopa.org

A better way to train

AOPA introduced the AOPA Flight Training Advantage (AFTA) in 2022. AFTA is a game-changing, adaptive flight training system that replaces a traditional paper syllabus by automatically generating individualized lessons based on student performance. More than 1,600 flight schools and 1,100 instructors are currently utilizing this innovative program, with students logging more than 8,000 hours.

► aopa.org/afta

The victory of BasicMed

Championed by AOPA, BasicMed reflects the decades-long push for third class medical certification reform, keeping safe pilots flying and not bogged down in red tape. To date, 80,000 pilots have qualified to fly under BasicMed since its inception in 2017. The FAA recently determined that BasicMed is safe and found no discernible differences in safety when compared to a third class medical certificate. The AOPA Air Safety Institute also reports that the overall general aviation accident rate, based on NTSB data, including BasicMed pilots, is at its lowest level in decades, and continuing to drop every year since the 1990s. The general aviation community has never had a stronger focus on safety, and the U.S. airspace continues to be the safest in the world.

► aopa.org/basicmed



AOPA events at local airshows and AOPA-supported flying clubs like Flywyld in Virginia (left) are spreading the joy of aviation.

Vital

The great traditions of general aviation are as important today as they were 84 years ago when AOPA was founded. Our impressive, authoritative, and entertaining magazine *AOPA Pilot*, which serves our members through news, stories, visual celebrations—the gorgeous photography on our pages—and profiles of the people who make and serve GA, marked 65 years in March. The first issue and this issue have much in common—they are designed and delivered to serve you, the members. We have an emerging new staff led by AOPA Senior Vice President and Editor in Chief Kollin Stagnito, as well as our veteran authors (happy anniversary Barry Schiff; see p. 36), and have never wavered from our mission, stated by Max Karant, the first editor in chief: “The editorial policy of *The AOPA Pilot* will be to educate, entertain, and inform, and to do so objectively, forcefully, and fearlessly.”

Your magazine is complemented by two additional versions of print and digital periodicals: *AOPA Pilot Turbine Edition*, which serves readers who spend more of their flying time in the flight levels, and *Flight Training* magazine, which honors the promise that a good pilot is always learning. In addition, our messaging comes to you daily in the form of updates to our website; weekly and biweekly in our newsletters including *AOPA ePilot*; and our video and podcast series where our writers tell the tales of GA’s personalities and perspectives. Our social media presence is growing and we hope you enjoy the glimpse into everyday aviation life we strive to provide.

It is vital to stay in constant communication with you and grow our population. We devoted an entire division to this initiative—the AOPA You Can Fly program, funded by the AOPA Foundation. Led by AOPA Senior Vice President Elizabeth Tennyson and through hard work and innovation, our high school aviation STEM curriculum now engages more than 16,300 students in more than 400 high schools across 43 states (a 24 percent increase in the number of participating schools and a 35 percent increase in

the number of students using the curriculum); we've returned nearly 12,000 rusty pilots to the air; there are now more than 220 active AOPA-supported flying clubs across the country; and we've awarded millions of dollars in scholarships as well as identified the top schools and CFIs in the country (according to students and participants) for the tenth year in our Flight Training Experience Awards. Six flight schools and six CFIs were selected as the 2023 regional winners and 32 flight schools and 65 instructors earned distinguished awards. One flight school (In the Pattern Flight School with locations in Texas) and one flight instructor (the University of Dubuque's Senior CFI Bryan Gutraj) were recognized as the

nation's best at Redbird Migration, a flight training conference at the EAA Education Center in Oshkosh.

Last, but certainly not least, is the most vital work we do for aviation safety. Also supported by the AOPA Foundation is the AOPA Air Safety Institute, which is almost like the responsible big brother in our family. ASI is a microcosm of AOPA itself; it has the same leadership and staff structure as AOPA, with member response, communications, education, and research departments dedicated to the num-

ber one responsibility of this association: safety. Through its dedicated analysis, research, and work, ASI examines the causes of accidents and responsibly works to find cures. It's an innovative group, led by a former U.S. Air Force Thunderbird pilot, AOPA Senior Vice President Richard McSpadden, who provides analysis through columns and videos and who led one of our more innovative programs in 2022—the study of upset recovery through spin training and awareness using a donated Extra 300L, which was auctioned at Sun 'n Fun this year after providing many months of training, experiences, and information. ■

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► aopa.org

"We finished 2022 with optimism and grace learned from two years of unprecedented change in this country. We look forward with that same mindset. Onward and upward. There are blue skies ahead."

—Mark Baker

Did you know?



\$498,000

The AOPA Foundation received a \$498,000 grant from the FAA to build on its You Can Fly High School curriculum in March 2023.

1 of 23

AOPA is among 23 organizations and schools that divided among them \$10 million in FAA grants awarded to educate the next generation of aviation professionals. The FAA awards these grants through its congressionally funded Aviation Workforce Development Grants, which help students prepare to become pilots, aerospace engineers, or drone operators and support the related professional development of teachers.



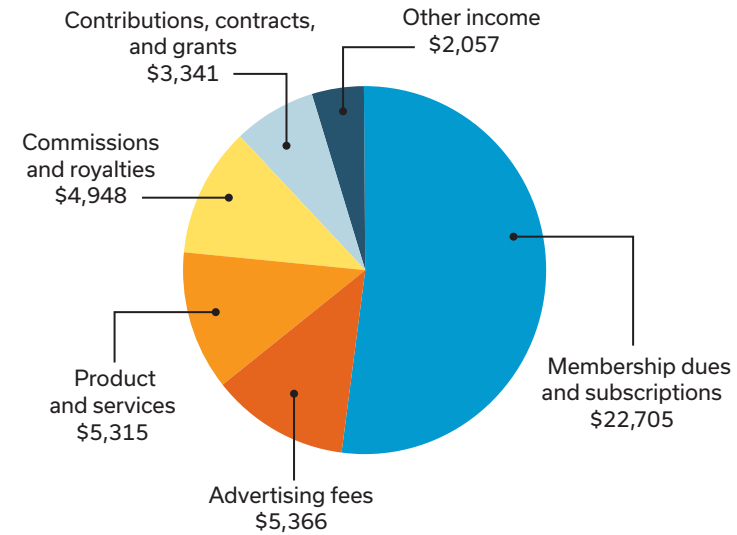
70%

70 percent of recent high school graduates who used the You Can Fly curriculum report they are actively pursuing an aviation career.

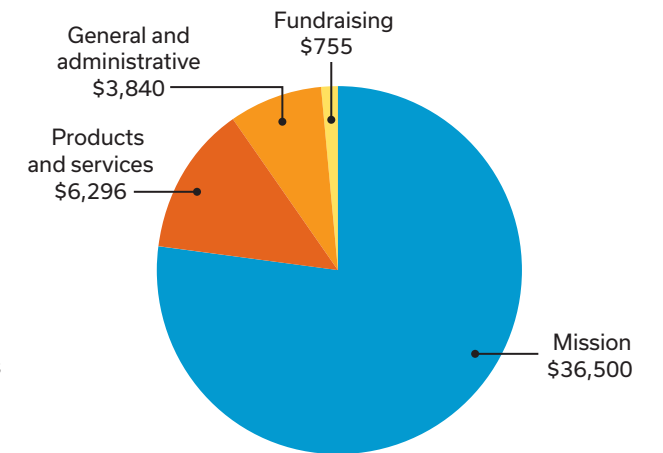
► aopafoundation.org

AOPA CONSOLIDATED FINANCIALS Amounts in thousands (unaudited)

2022 OPERATING REVENUE
(Total operating revenue \$43,732)



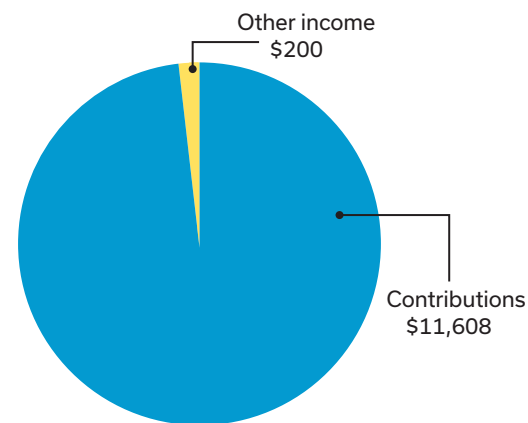
2022 OPERATING EXPENSES
(Total operating expenses \$47,391)



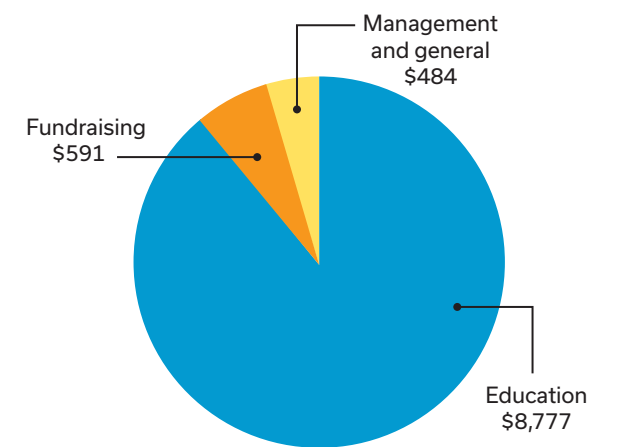
The bulk of AOPA's revenue in 2022 came from membership dues, advertising, and products and services. AOPA's mission constitutes the bulk of expenses and includes advocacy, media, and member-focused programs such as the AOPA Air Safety Institute. Not shown here is nonoperating investment loss.

THE AOPA FOUNDATION INC. Amounts in thousands (unaudited)

2022 OPERATING REVENUE
(Total operating revenue \$11,808)



2022 OPERATING EXPENSES, INCLUDING GRANTS
(Total operating expenses \$9,852)



Education constitutes the bulk of expenses to support the You Can Fly programs, the AOPA Air Safety Institute, and the Airport Support Network. The You Can Fly programs focus on developing flying clubs, supporting AOPA Ambassadors, flight training, Rusty Pilots initiative, and the high school curriculum. The AOPA Air Safety Institute offers online safety programs including videos, podcasts, webinars, publications, courses, and quizzes. The Airport Support Network promotes, protects, and defends America's community airports. Not shown here is nonoperating investment loss.