

APRIL | 2021

MID-CONTINENT

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Plane Crazy

by Josh Rittenberry



**HOLZWARTH
FLYING SERVICE**



There comes a time in the early careers of many Ag pilots when family and friends—solicited or not—offer up opinions like, “you must be crazy to do that!” Early into his career, Chuck Holzwarth was told no different. “My friends laughed at me. They said it was a dying business,” Chuck recalls.

Like many in the aerial application industry, Chuck was born into agriculture, growing up on a farm in southwest Illinois. After high school Chuck moved to Macomb and then hit the road driving a truck for a living. It was as a young newlywed that Chuck was first bitten by the flying bug after he had been gifted with flying lessons.

“I loved aviation. I grew up on a farm and it was a perfect fit.” Fortunately for our industry, Chuck’s instructor was a former ag pilot who encouraged him to transition into the spray business. Chuck then managed to cross paths with Mitchell Aerial Application’s owner/operator Dave Mitchell. First Chuck was tasked with washing Dave’s planes while getting his advanced pilot ratings before finally asking Dave, “what do I have to do for you to teach me the business?” Dave eagerly stepped into the role of mentor and imparted to Chuck his years of experience.



With knowledge in tow, Chuck had all the tools necessary to start his own operation in

Lincoln, Illinois in 1995 with a C model Snow. In those humble beginnings, Chuck fondly remembers a trip to Memphis in which he made a pit stop at Mid-Continent in Hayti, Missouri. Stopping in for a helmet, he met Sharon Watkins, who had his operation insured by the time he made it back to Illinois.

After getting established, it was only a few short years later in 1999 that the flying service grew with the acquisition of Al Baker's operation in Kilborne, Illinois. Another expansion in 2005 saw the flying service add Bob Davis' operation to the fold in Virden, Illinois. And in 2012, Chuck's business became a multi-state operation when he set up shop in Belle Plain, Iowa.



A large operation calls for a large fleet to meet the demands of today's agricultural needs. Chuck's inventory now includes an AT402, three AT602s, two AT802s, a Cessna, and a Robinson R44 used for seed corn pollination. But machinery alone cannot complete the work. Holzwarth Flying Service is comprised of around two dozen

employees, including pilots, office staff, and seasonal ground crew who keep the many moving parts of the business running smoothly from four locations. Among the pilots is Brandon Flexsenhar, who joined in 2004 and now has an important stake in the operation.

As many of us come to learn, even our most lucrative successes are often curbed by costly setbacks. In 2013, Chuck was involved in a devastating motorcycle accident. The accident was so serious that he was not expected to live. Despite his grave condition, Chuck defied expectations and survived, soldiering through numerous procedures in the following weeks. For a time he was confined to a wheelchair, then improved to a walker, then a leg brace, then crutches, and eventually a knee replacement. It took almost three years from the moment of the accident until his medical cleared him to fly again.



"I like to work and love what I do for a living. That was my motivation," Chuck says of his mindset during the recuperation process. It was through his gritty determination that Chuck can today claim a full recovery.

Holzwarth Flying Service's season lasts about five months out of the year. "But in that time there are three weeks in July in which we make 90 percent of our living, so we can't afford for machinery to go down or someone not to show up for work," Chuck says. Of the work in those

busy weeks, the operation primarily treats corn and beans up to 50 miles away from the operation's various bases.

In addition to spraying, Chuck is also a farmer and raises cattle on his farm in Sherman, Illinois. Now newly-engaged, he is actively involved in the NAAA and the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association. As time allows in the summer, Chuck also travels and competes in the Illinois Tractor Pulling Association circuit, courtesy of his 9500 pound Limited Pro Stock John Deere Tractor which he has dubbed, "Plane Crazy".

"I think ag aviation will keep getting bigger because we have to feed more people on less amount of acres because of changes like urban sprawl," Chuck says. "Ag aviation is a big part of accomplishing that, but I worry about a shortage of ag pilots in the industry right now and having enough pilots to make it work."



Despite any lack of new blood in the industry, Chuck continues to find a way to make it work on his turf. Thinking back to those friends who laughed at his new venture into aerial application, a so-called "dying business," Chuck Holzwarth can say with ease that his business has grown every single year since he got started. Which brings to mind one

question to those who thought he was crazy: who's laughing now?

Mid-Continent Named Aviat Distributor



Danny Helms, Mid-Continent salesman and Regional Sales Director for Aviat Aircraft, recently took delivery of a 2021 Aviat Husky A-1C from Aviat's Earl Polenz. Mid-Continent is now a proud distributor for the Aviat Aircraft.

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Mid-Continent Insurance Division recently received a visit from Preston French of White & Associates to update us on the progress of our recent life and health applications. We are proud to partner with the outstanding team at White & Associates to provide our clients with superior life and health insurance coverages. (Pictured L-R: Josh Rittenberry, Sharon Watkins, Heather Riggs, Lisa Curtis, Preston French)



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Covington Aircraft Reps Visit Mid-Continent

Eric Rojek and Robert Craymer from Covington Aircraft Engines paid a visit to our facility to update us on their latest offerings and services. (Pictured L-R: Chris Cobb, Eric Rojek, Robert Craymer, Dennie Stokes)

AIRCRAFT INVENTORY



1998 Air Tractor AT-802A N5094H

12,152.6 A/F TT, 1230 HP, 2000 SPOH, Reabe Digital Hopper, Quantity & Spray Boom Pressure, E-TEC Inc Fast Start System, Comm Radio, Hemisphere G4 GPS, RT Side Boom Shut Off, Smoker, Hydraulic Gate, Air Conditioner, Wipaire Vortex Generators, Wingman Wing Due at 15,823.2, Gear Due at 12,798.2, Eyebolt Stabilizer Due at 14,798.2, 4479.7 Hobbs

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2013 THRUSH S2R-T34 N3043V

3,398 A/F TT, Engine 3,398 SNEW, Concord Batter, CP Nozzles, AM-SAFE Seat Belts, GPS, Bird Lights, Stainless Steel Spray Valve

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2012 THRUSH S2R-T34 N986MM

Very Clean and Well-Maintained! Cascade, MVT-50 Glass Panel, Load Hawg, Bantam GPS, Intelliflow, Leading Edge Lights, Vortex Generators, Smoker, Bottom Load Fuel

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**1996 AYRES-41, S2R-T34
N2243J**

8352.0 A/F TT
850 HP, Satloc M-3 w/ Intelliflow,
Lane Electric Fan Brake,
Smoker, Cool Seat, Air
Conditioner/Heat, Hopper Rinse
Tank, Bottom Load Fuel,
Stainless Steel Boom

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**2010 Dream Tundra,
N523MM**

90.0 A/F TT, Aerosport IO375
210 HP, PMA-8000B Switching
Panel with 4 Place Intercom and
Three Light Markers, Garmin SL-
40 Com, Garmin 430 GPS,
Garmin GTX-330 Transponder,
Garmin 496 GPS (Panel
Mounted),
Digiflight II Autopilot w/ Altitude
Hold, PFD/MFD

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**1997 Ayres, S2R-G10
N773CC**

6500.0 A/F TT, 400.0 SPOH,
Cool Start System, Hatfield
Single Point Fueling, ATS-VGs,
Ag-Tips-Marburger, Kawak
Hydraulic System, Satloc, G4,
Load Hawg

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Chet Williams
April 2



John Kazyak
April 7



Brad Taylor
April 9



Lisa Curtis
April 13



Michael O'Neill
April 17



Randy Stokes
April 18



Heather Riggs
April 19

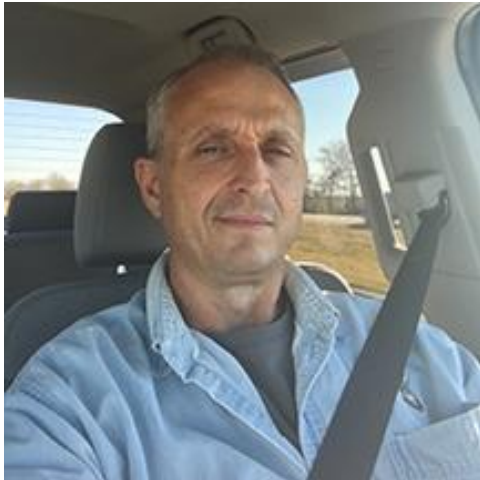


Chris Cobb
April 23



Shannon Guidry
April 27

Congratulations!



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Congratulations to Heather Riggs for 20 years of service at Mid-Continent Aircraft Corporation.



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As we move into each day, we will continue to grow with your business and provide the tools you need to be a success.

Mid-Continent Aircraft Corp. is located in Hayti, Missouri, 80 miles north of Memphis, Tennessee. Although Hayti is not the geographical center of our nation, Mid-Continent is the center for all ag aviation needs. With excellent daily truck freight lines, air freight, Federal Express, and UPS delivery capability, MID-CONTINENT has and will continue to cover the world.