

AUGUST | 2023

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A Big Way of Life

by Josh Rittenberry



Beyond the rolling hills and terrain that cover much of the Show-Me State come the fertile flatlands of Southeast Missouri. More akin to its neighbor Arkansas to the south than anywhere else in Missouri, aerial applicators in this area have thrived for generations, their fortunes and setbacks rising and falling with the ebbs and flows of the mighty Mississippi River. But now a new generation has emerged to work the land from above.

Russ Wescoat began his journey like most operators; farming and agriculture were a staple in his family's background.

"My family has always farmed, so I've been involved in agriculture ever since I can remember," Russ recalls.

But instead of staying focused on the ground, Russ looked to the sky for inspiration. As he observed the ag pilots crisscross above him, they weren't as out of reach as they appeared. Luckily for Russ, there was an ag operation in close proximity.



“My interest in aviation really began watching Danny Hall and Mike Hall, who operated Kewanee Ag Service.”

Once the flying bug had bitten him, Russ completed ag school at Flying Tigers Aviation School in Rayville, Louisiana. Several years into his career, he connected with Chris Scrogin, who operated Rice Flying Service in Corning, Arkansas. There, Russ flourished under Scrogin's guidance.

“Chris was a great mentor and always encouraged me to set my goals high and wanted me to achieve the goal of owning my own business.”

That dream became a reality in 2022 when Russ established his namesake operation, Wescoat Flying Service.

“There was an opportunity to start my own operation in my hometown, and I decided it was time to take a chance.”

Today the operation serves much of Southeast Missouri and surrounding areas, treating rice, corn, wheat, and soybeans with its trusty AT802.

As with most businesses, it cannot succeed on work alone. It also takes constant support from the home front.



“I am truly blessed to have a wonderful family who understands the passion I have for my career. I have been married to my wife, Natalie, for 19 years, and we have two wonderful children, daughter Lauren, 17 and son Lane, 9.”

With a “do right and be honest” motto, Wescoat Flying Service is succeeding in an industry filled with challenges and changes. It's owed, in part, to the fact that Russ views what he does, not so much as a job, but a mission.

“Agriculture is a big way of life in America, and ag aviation is just as important. I am blessed to be able to enjoy my career, and I look forward to serving the aerial application

industry for many more years to come.”



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Insurable Interest

by Josh Rittenberry

Relief is finally in sight for aviation insurance clients based in Missouri. New interpretations of old state guidelines were essentially aimed to treat aviation insurance the same as auto or



homeowners. Those of you who are familiar with aviation insurance know that's impossible. The interpretations became so stringent that several insurance companies closed up shop in the state, non-renewing or declining to quote any Missouri-based aircraft owners. This has been especially difficult on Ag operators, who have a limited number of markets as compared to general aviation. But general aviation insureds have also faced complications, with fewer or no options for hard-to-place risks.

With the passage of SB101, it is expected that guidelines and interpretations will return to normal, thereby allowing insurance companies to return to writing business in the state.

In politics, changes tend to move at a glacial pace, however, this issue picked up particular steam in the last year with the assistance of groups such as the Missouri Pilots Association and AOPA. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease", as the old saying goes.

In the meantime, the bill is on the governor's desk awaiting his signature, and once signed, the changes will go into effect August 28.



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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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**1938 BOEING STEARMAN
A75 N1
N54284**

6,080.7 A/F TT, 520.4 TSMOH, 450 HP, Garmin SL-40 Com, PS Engineering PM-1200, Oilomatic Preoiler, Airwold Remote Oil Filter Smoker, Speed Ring, 46 Gal Fuel, Redline Brakes, Garmin GDL 82 ADSB-Out

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**1974 CESSNA 150
N3011V**

5,470 A/F TT, 2,100 SMOH, Continental 0200A, Cessna MX300 Nav/Com, Narco AT-50 Transponder w/Encoder, Two-Place Intercom, Spin On Oil Filter, Brackett Air Filter, Auto Gas STC, Nice Pain

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**1966 PIPER PAWNEE
N4484Y**

3,513 A/F TT, 780 TSMOH, 235 HP, Bantam GPS, Intelliflow, SMMker, Spreader, Completely Recovered, Replaced All Cables, Pulleys, Shocks and Windows, Repaired All Metal Parts. Very Clean Western Airplane.

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**2013 THRUSH S2R-H80
N3046N**

3,600 A/F TT, 800 HP, Load Hawg, VGs, Bottom Fuel/Dual Load, Intelliflow with Smart Pump, Leading Edge Lights, Stainless Steel Booms, Hopper Rinse, Bantam, Smoker, Spreader with Kicker Plate, CPs, MVP 50T Glass Panel

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**1978 PIPER PAWNEE
BRAVE
N3787E**

4,559 A/F TT, Lycoming TIO-540, 1851.0 TT Engine, 446 Hrs on New Carbine, Cylinders Top OH, Spreader, Boom & Nozzles, 86 Gal Fuel, Satlock GPS, 3656 Hrs Left on Wing Spars

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**1981 CESSNA A185F
N61955**

7,300 A/F TT, 770 SFRM, Continental IO520, 285 HP, Audio Panel w/ 3 Light Markers, Garmin 430 WAAS, Garmin 255 Com, Garmin GTX 345 w/ ADSM In and Out, Glide Slope, Stormscope, S-TEC-50 Auto Pilot with Altitude Hold, Rosen Sun Visors, VG Kit, Horton STOL Kit, Float Kit, Cessna Turbo Vents for Cabin Cooling, Backup Altimeter, Backup Artificial Horizon

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**1996 AIR TRACTOR
AT-402B
N60998**

7,166 A/F TT, 10253 Engine TT, 680 HP, Load Hawg, Heat & A/C, Comm Radio Hand Held, 1034 Hrs Left Before Wing Spar Due, Light Star SatLoc, Bottom Load Fuel, Boom w/ CP03 Nozzles

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OUR MISSION: TO KEEP YOU FLYING

Since 1949, Mid-Continent Aircraft has been the leader in Agricultural Aviation by providing a variety of services that exceed our customers' expectations. We are committed to the advancement of general and agricultural aviation technology.

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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.

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