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## CRAIG FULLER, AOPA PRESIDENT AND CEO, RESIGNS

On February 28, 2013, Craig L. Fuller, president and CEO of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), notified AOPA's board of trustees that he intends to step down from his position and from the board. Fuller, 62, became AOPA's fourth president on January 1, 2009, succeeding Phil Boyer. As he approaches the fulfillment of a five-year commitment to the organization, Fuller said he is looking forward to taking on new challenges and opportunities.



AOPA Chairman of the Board William C. Trimble III said "During his more than four years as president of AOPA, Craig served nobly and professionally ... He built bridges with the other aviation associations, improved member communications and generated promising ideas for tomorrow." Trimble said that they have begun a search for Fuller's replacement. Fuller plans to stay, though, until a new head is found and explained that the timing of the announcement was intended to make the transition as seamless as possible.

(Information adapted from multiple sources including eHotline 02/28/13, AvwebFLASH 02/28/13, Flying Magazine 02/28/13, and AOPA ePilot 03/01/13)

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## SEQUESTRATION WILL AFFECT AIRSHOWS

Several sources indicate that the sequestration, which takes effect March 1, 2013, will affect airshows. According to the [CBS news](#), the Defense Department says it is prepared to put a halt to all "non-essential" military flying on April 1, including performances this year by the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds. The upcoming airshows at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona (March 16-17), Langley Air Force Base in Virginia (May 3-5) and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina (May 18-19) all have been canceled due to the threat of sequestration cuts, the Air Force said. Contingency planning by the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Army and Marine Corps calls for a complete end to all non-essential flying — including airshow performances — when sequestration cuts are implemented. Officials said on Feb. 12 that the Navy has plans to cancel 30 Blue Angels shows this year if sequestration cuts are allowed to take effect, March 1. The Defense Department says the Blue Angels, Thunderbirds and tactical demonstration teams will continue to prepare for the 2013 airshow season through March 31, but if no resolution comes by then, all flight preparation will cease and the teams will stop flying on April 1. About \$85 billion in federal spending would be cut this year, \$46 billion of which comes from defense. "In order to do what this country needs to do, we can no longer afford to do the things we like to do," [Rep. Jeff Miller \(R\)](#) told [Floridatoday.com](#). Miller represents Florida's 1st district and includes an image of the Blue Angels on his congressional web page. He is also a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee.



(Information adapted from multiple sources including AvwebFLASH 02/18/13, Flying eNews 02/28/13, CBS News 02/28/03, the *New York Times* 02/28/13)

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## CROP DUSTERS, WATCH OUT FOR BATS!

It is doubtful that Pierre Smith has ever encountered bats while flying his Air Tractor when crop spraying in the area. But Josh Liddle was on final for Ingham Airport in north Queensland, Australia, when his aircraft went through a colony of bats. The sun had already set when one went through the windshield and hit Liddle in the face. "I felt a big smack on my face," he said. After landing he was immediately treated for the his injuries. Of course there was an additional concern because bats can carry rabies. Liddle was covered with gore from the small mammal, which he said "exploded" in the cockpit. "My wife rang the doctor and I had to go in to get needles -- six in the face, my chest, one in my arm, and two in my bum [rear end]."



## CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE ON YOUR INSURANCE POLICY

On February 2nd Jonathan Fielding, his wife, child, mother-in-law and the pilot, a family friend, suffered only minor scrapes and a bit of whiplash when the friend's plane made a rough off-airport landing in Utah. Fielding, who happened to



have his video camera running during the incident, has defended the pilot's choice of a field covered in two feet of snow instead of a straight stretch of interstate highway. The video, which records what inevitably happens when the long main gear legs of a Cessna 175 dig into that much snow, had attracted more than 500,000 YouTube views and been featured on dozens of news channels. On the video, Fielding said the Interstate, which can be clearly seen at various points in the video, was too busy and had too many power lines across it to risk a landing after suspected carburetor icing caused the engine to lose power. "Had he tried I'm confident that a collision would've occurred and this story could easily have ended in a fatality," Fielding wrote. "The pilot made

the best landing given the circumstances." The nose gear sheared off and the plane flipped, coming to rest less than 100 feet from the point of impact.

This would just be another off-field landing with a happy ending except for the fact that the pilot had neglected to renew the aircraft insurance and it had expired at midnight the day before. "The insurance company will not honor any kind of grace period and will do nothing for him, so now he's lost a \$40,000 plane in a matter of 13 hours," Fielding wrote. "He is still happy and cheerful despite his loss." See the video here [Plane Crash](#).

(Information adapted from multiple sources including AvwebFLASH 02/18/13, KTLA-5 02/17/13, CBS News 02/04/13)

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## EVEN HOBBY DRONES COULD BE MADE ILLEGAL IN TEXAS

Under a new law proposed in the Texas legislature, sponsored by a lawmaker from the Dallas suburbs, piloting a "toy" drone over neighbors' yards would be illegal. Texas House Bill 912 – and similar laws under debate right now in Oregon and elsewhere – are driving a growing debate about how to use and control unmanned air systems, from an AR Drone to a quadcopter. The Federal Aviation Administration is in the process of drafting new rules governing unmanned aircraft in civilian airspace, including military-style aircraft. But in the meantime, plenty of cheap, easy-to-use aircraft are already popular among hobbyists and, increasingly, activists and law enforcement.

Texas state Rep. Lance Gooden, a Republican, is the sponsor of the latest bill, which would make it a misdemeanor to take photos with an unmanned aircraft. It's unique because it criminalizes taking any data – photos, sound, temperature, even



This drone costs only \$300 and takes photos which can be transmitted back to the controller.

odor – of private property using an unmanned aircraft without the permission of the property owner. Law enforcement officers could only use drones while executing a search warrant or if they had probable cause to believe someone is committing a felony, and firefighters can only use drones for fighting fire or to rescue a person whose life is "in imminent danger." Texas' border-patrolling Predator drones would be exempt within 25 miles of the Mexican border. There are additional penalties for possession, display or distribution of data captured by an illegally flown drone. Gooden said the goal is to protect Texans' privacy. "We're not trying to get rid of drones; drones can be used for great purposes. We're not trying to interfere with hobbyists' use of drones. But you have a right to privacy on your property," Gooden said in an interview.

In recent months, they've led to new legislative action in California, Florida, Missouri, North Dakota, Oregon and Virginia. Note that Georgia and South Carolina do not seem to be introducing any legislation. If citizens want something to be done this year they should contact their state senators and/or representatives now while their state legislative bodies are in session. (Information adapted from multiple sources including AvwebFLASH 02/18/13, U.S. News & World Report 01/31/13, popsci.com 02/2013)