

SSA Region 10 Report
September 2015

I did a semi-mass e-mail to all clubs, chapters, and business members on the "Where to fly" page for Region 10. There were a total of 31 contacts. I had 2 bounce back as undeliverable, and received comments back from a total of 5 clubs. Not surprising to me that I got no reply back from the larger clubs, and only one of the replies was from someone I do not already know. From what I got back and have gathered by talking with a few folks around the region, here is what 2015 looks like to me.

The general trend seems to have been poor weather and less flying in the first half of this year. Most smaller clubs struggle due to lack of towpilots or launch operators, and limited number of instructors. As such, it can be challenging to get the club to be able to grow, as training can be long and drawn out, especially for youth who are more inclined to expect "instant gratification" and being able to go from start to solo in very little time.

Kansas

Sunflower Gliderport continues to be the home of both the Wichita and Kansas Soaring Associations. Membership is down a bit this year, and the number of active instructors and towpilots also seems to be down. Slots on the duty roster go unfilled until the day, when people step up to work instead of flying. We have had several days lost due to believing weather forecasts. KSA and WSA have supported several CAP Events, as well as two Summer Camps at the Kansas Cosmosphere and Discovery Center in Hutchinson.

The operation at the Wichita Gliderport continues and will be host to a Vintage Sailplane Association Rally Sept 24-27.

The Kansas City Eagle, based out of Gardner, near Kansas City, continues with typical small club struggles. They are few in numbers but strong in spirit and continue to try and grow.

Missouri

The Midwest Soaring Association flying from Richter Field is also doing the best they can with what they have. They did not get to fly at all in April and May of this year due to poor weather. They are getting members via the SSA Website, and appreciate all that it brings to them. Tow rates and glider fees are very low for them now, as maintenance costs have been down, and there have been no repair costs incurred by accidents or hangar rash.

Oklahoma

Have not heard much from the Tulsa Skyhawks or the Oklahoma Soaring Association. There was plans for an OLC Camp held by the Oklahoma Soaring Association at Hinton, but I did not see any flights posted from there over the proposed weekend. As said earlier, this has been a very difficult year for soaring conditions. I did receive one response from a member of the Tulsa Skyhawks and his concern was over SSA Presence at Oshkosh. Apparently, he missed seeing the SSA Tent/Exhibit that Geoff describes in the Region 7 Report. He also specifically mentioned "KidVenture". Has someone had a display there previously?

Texas

I heard rumor that the state of Texas, or the local county, has decided that even though Soaring Club of Houston is a 501c3 organization, that should not be exempting them from state or local taxes and that this was likely going to have some financial impact on the club. I have not heard the outcome of this, but something for all to be aware of. I do know that in Kansas, a 501c3 still has to pay tax on its property, but it is at a reduced rate from what it would be if the property was owned simply by a social organization or a business.

SCOH hosted another successful contest in early August. Thank you, SCOH!

I had a brief visit to Greater Houston Soaring Association and Fault Line Flyers in February. GHSA had been able to do very little flying over the winter, and it was quite some time before they really got going. Things have been equally slow starting at FLF, but I believe activity is picking up.

Further west to Marfa, Burt has reported increasing activity. This is likely due to his generous offer of free Designee Services for Check Rides, and also some people getting back into soaring and coming out there to fly with him "like we use to back in the good old days".

I have not had contact with anyone from Nebraska, Arkansas, or Louisiana. I will try to get in touch with them, as I know we are still short a couple of State Governors.

Cloudstreet was shown on September 9th on KPTS out of Wichita. We initially discussed having a big "Watch Party" at some sports bar, to help it be seen. I suggested the possibility of each pilot or two go to a different place, and get it on as many TVs as possible in public so that not just soaring pilots are watching it, but it is out in public and not just over public airwaves. I also suggested trying to get it showing on TVs in electronics stores, etc. I learned a couple of lessons. 1. WalMart apparently has one DVD player feeding all their TVs that are on, so you won't likely be able to get it showing there. Unless you supply them with a DVD. It would have had to have been able to trump Star Wars to a WalMart employee. 2. Best Buy (at least in Wichita) gets a satellite feed for their TVs, and does not get the local PBS station for showing on their display TVs. Otherwise, they would have been happy to have it playing in their store. 3. Sports bars are not very accommodating to special requests. Your mileage may vary, but I was offered a TV off in a part where nobody else was sitting (the place was maybe 15% of its potential occupancy), I asked for a different one in a place where people were actually sitting and might look up to see it. After sitting for 5 minutes after being told that they would put one of those two TVs on my requested channel, I walked out as the person who told me she would do it was sitting and keeping an eye on her two occupied tables. 4. Even if you get the show on in a public place, unless people went there specifically to watch something while they eat, they won't likely look up from the phones, even when walking to or from the salad bar, or on their way out after eating.

KSA did buy a 15 second advertisement at the start and end of the show. Cost to us was \$200. Will try and get a copy of what we had for distribution. It was voice over, the club logo, our website, and rotated 4 pictures through as background, zooming in on each one, then ending with the 4 as a collage in the background. We have also gotten approval for a public showing in an IMAX theater in December.

Steve Leonard
Region 10 Director