



# Meet the NOMINEES

## 2009 AEA Member of the Year, AEA Associate Member of the Year

### AEA MEMBER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES:

- **JIM KARPOWITZ**  
*Skycom Avionics, Waukesha, Wis.*
- **RICH OCHS**  
*Spirit Avionics, Columbus, Ohio*
- **TOM RICHMOND**  
*Gulfstream Aerospace,  
Appleton, Wis.*
- **MANUEL RIZO**  
*RizoJet Avionics International,  
Hondo, Texas*
- **TOD WULFF**  
*Aerodynamics, Waterford, Mich.*

### AEA ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES:

- **ALTO AVIATION**
- **ASPEN AVIONICS**
- **FLIGHT DISPLAY SYSTEMS**
- **MATRIX AVIATION**
- **ROCKWELL COLLINS**
- **UNIVERSAL AVIONICS SYSTEMS CORP.**

Each year during the AEA International Convention, two prestigious awards are presented: the AEA Member of the Year, which honors an individual from an AEA regular member company; and the AEA Associate Member of the Year, which honors a company that is an AEA associate member.

The winners of the two awards will be announced during the AEA Annual Awards Luncheon, which begins at 11:15 a.m. Friday, April 3, in the Grapevine A Ballroom.

For the AEA Member of the Year Award, the nominating committee assembles a list of individuals who have gone above and beyond to promote the general aviation community and, in particular, are actively involved in the affairs of the AEA.

For the AEA Associate Member of the Year Award, the nominating committee assembles a list of associate member companies who are being recognized for their service and support to the general aviation electronics industry, as well as their active involvement in the affairs of the AEA.

Once the slate of nominees is assembled for both awards, the slate is sent to the full AEA membership for a vote — which means the winners of each award truly are being recognized by their peers for their service and participation.

### 2009 AEA Member of the Year Nominees

Each 2009 AEA Member of the Year nominee was asked to provide a first-hand account of his background and involvement with the AEA. Here are those accounts in the nominees' own words:

#### **JIM KARPOWITZ** *Skycom Avionics, Waukesha, Wis.*

“My avionics career began in a roundabout way. Beginning my senior year of high school, I worked for a biomedical company doing assembly and bench repair work.

“In 1984, I attended Milwaukee Area Technical College to study graphic arts. A couple of years later, I was photographing aircraft instrument panels for a school project and ended up being offered a job as a lineman at Timmerman Airport.

“As a lover of aviation and a poor college student in need of a job, I could hardly refuse. A year and a half later, Pete Halbauer, the owner of Skycom Avionics, also located at Timmerman Field, gave me the chance to become an avionics bench repair technician. The job encompassed two of my great loves — aviation and radio — so I couldn't pass up the opportunity.

“My first task was to replace a meter assembly in a Narco Nav-122, so I learned that this would not always be an easy gig.

“It was a great privilege to work



under Everett Kriese and his astonishing technical knowledge to learn the ropes of the avionics repair craft.

"It has been nearly 22 years since I signed on at Skycom and there certainly have been many changes along the way. Still, this job remains a good challenge and allows me to make a meaningful contribution to aviation safety. It also gives me the chance to think creatively and solve difficult problems.

"My wife of 15 years, Sue, and I have two children, Tony, 10, and Elizabeth, 8. I enjoy spending time with my family, amateur radio, photography/videography, composing and performing music, building and flying RC model helicopters, blogging, writing and staying in touch with friends online."

### **RICH OCHS**

*Spirit Avionics, Columbus, Ohio*



"I founded and presently manage Spirit Avionics Ltd., an FAA-certified avionics repair station located in Columbus, Ohio. After an extensive career in both the U.S. Navy and private avionics industries, I started Spirit Avionics as a one-man operation.

"Presently, Spirit Avionics employs 10 people and is thriving in the avionics service industry, with clients ranging from the U.S. military, NASA, NOAA and numerous corporate and private aircraft operators.

"With more than 25 years of experience, I have become a well-known representative and leader within the avionics community. I am dedicated to establishing avionics technicians' national certification and academic accreditation standards to enhance professional development. I am involved in industry and FAA initiatives to highlight and properly recognize avionics technicians for the unique and critical role they perform in the profession of aircraft maintenance/modifications.

"I am involved in aviation professional outreach initiatives. My passion is to highlight for youth the positive potential of aviation careers. Presently, I serve as a member of the NCATT Certification & Accreditation Standards Committee, Avionics Installation

& Integration Knowledge Standards Committee, and Avionics Navigation & Communication Systems Knowledge Standards Committee. I also serve on the NBAA Aircraft Maintenance Managers Committee and Advanced Training & Education Subcommittee.

"I am a member of the AEA board of directors and the Program & Member Services Committee, and I serve as the director of development for the Youth Aviation Adventure. I sit on the FAA committee for AMT Outreach. I serve as a member on the Bendix/King, Rockwell Collins and Universal Avionics Systems Corps dealer advisory boards."

### **TOM RICHMOND**

*Gulfstream Aerospace Corp., Appleton, Wis.*



"As a young boy, I had an interest in electronics. As a child, you could find me in my room with wire, batteries and hardware building a radio or a simple circuit. As a teenager, I began developing my mechanic abilities by working with my dad at his trucking business performing maintenance on the trucks or rebuilding engines.

"After graduating from high school, I moved to Beloit, Wis., to be near my then girlfriend, now wife, Sandy. I took a job as a machinist at Beloit Iron Works.

"Two years later, after working full time and attending school, I graduated from Blackhawk Technical College. Sandy and I moved to Appleton, Wis., in June 1977, where I began working for Dutch Arver at KC Aviation as an install technician.

"Seven years later, I became the avionics shop lead and helped develop a shuttle service for Kimberly Clark, which later became Midwest Express Airlines. In 1998, KC Aviation was sold to Gulfstream Aerospace and the company began completing its G-IV aircraft.

"After 32 years, I am now a technical specialist working with the sales team to provide research and technical expertise.

"I attended my first AEA Convention in 1989, and was elected to the board of directors shortly thereafter. In 2001, I was elected secretary for the AEA board of directors. During my involvement with AEA, I co-chaired a Part 65

rewrite subcommittee and made trips to Washington for the 'Hit the Hill Campaign.'

"My wife, Sandy, and I have two grown children and are proud grandparents of three grandkids. In my spare time, I am a Cub Scout den leader and pack treasurer for my grandson's pack. I'm involved in several committees for our church, including audio video system updates and building maintenance. I enjoy remodeling, video production, camping and spending time with my grandchildren."

### **MANUEL RIZO**

*RizoJet Avionics International, Hondo, Texas*



"My love for avionics began when I was working on a farm and watched the agricultural airplanes fly over the field, as well as watching the military aircraft flying low and fast on their routes.

"In 1990, after graduating from high school, I enrolled in the flight-training program at Southwest Texas Junior College in Uvalde, Texas, and worked fueling aircraft on the weekends at the local FBO. In 1993, I became president of the Aviation Club and received my two-year degree in applied science, with a commercial pilot's license with instrument rating.

"That year, my wife and I moved to Dallas, Texas, and I got a job with MCI Telecommunications. Later, I returned to school at Texas Aerotech. During my training, the school closed and I transferred to International Aviation and Travel Academy in Arlington, Texas, to finish my A&P training. In 1996, after graduating with my A&P, I received a job at SouthStar Aircraft Interiors as an A&P mechanic. I was soon promoted to an inspector position.

"A short time later, I had an opportunity to work at Columbia Avionics, where I earned the experience needed to become an avionics manager during my seven years of employment with the company.

"In early 2004, I opened my own avionics business, RizoJet Avionics International. RizoJet Avionics holds dealerships for Garmin, Avidyne, Aircell, PS Engineering, L-3 Communications, DAC International, Sandel Avionics and

many others. My future plans include offering aircraft sales and acquisition on a full-time basis, and I'm currently working on business plans for building a new 15,000-square-foot hangar with offices to provide and complement the existing business in Hondo, Texas, with a one-stop-shop for avionics, paint, interior and maintenance.

"My wife, Julissa, and I have three children, Aaron, Alan and Ariel."

#### **TOD WULFF**

##### ***Aerodynamics, Waterford, Mich.***

"My avionics background and experience began in the U.S. Marine Corps more than 23 years ago.

"In more than six years of service, I worked as a weapons systems specialist on the Grumman A-6E Intruder attack aircraft prior to and during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.



"During my military tenure, I successfully executed the duties of an avionics technician, quality assurance inspector, work-center supervisor and worked toward receiving a secondary MOS as a military policeman.

"I have held many fulfilling and challenging positions in the civilian avionics industry. These positions include avionics installation technician, systems integration engineer, senior project manager, director of sales/marketing and special programs, and director of avionics.

"My involvement with the AEA began when I accepted a position with a Part 145 dedicated avionics repair station at Oakland County International Airport in Pontiac, Mich., in July 1992. Since then, my affiliation as an active AEA member has allowed me to effectively network with many entities in our industry, including airframe OEMs, avionics OEMs, FAA offices, other AEA member companies and the AEA staff, leading to a large number of successful programs and life-long friendships.

"I reside with my wife, Dawn, in Milford, Mich. Together, we are raising two children, Kelli, 23, and Alex, 12. My hobbies include electronics, embedded systems programming, unmanned aerial systems and various sports.

"I am currently employed by Aerodynamics Inc. in Waterford, Mich., as its director of avionics."

#### **AEA Associate Member of the Year Nominees:**

The following AEA member companies are nominees for the 2009 Associate Member of the Year award:



Founded in 1997, by Don Hamilton and Steve Scarlata, Alto Aviation designs and manufactures premium cabin audio systems for corporate aviation fixed- and rotary-wing assets as well as Part 135 and 121 operators. A complete line of products, including audio amplifiers, entertainment loudspeakers, subwoofers, page/chime speakers and nVelop cabin-wide surround sound, are available to provide custom audio system solutions for any aircraft cabin.

In 1992, Hamilton and Scarlata, at the time engineers with Bose Corp., designed the Bose cabin entertainment system, which was the first branded, high-end audio system custom designed specifically for an aircraft cabin at the request of Gulfstream Aerospace Corp.

In 1997, Alto Aviation entered into an agreement with Bose Corp., taking responsibility for all technical issues of existing Bose aviation cabin audio products, as well as the design of new components and systems for aircraft. Alto Aviation also handled all manufacturing and testing of assemblies, shipping, customer interface and technical support of the Bose Aircraft Entertainment Systems group. Alto Aviation has a comprehensive quality system and has attained approved vendor status from Gulfstream.

According to its founders, Alto Aviation offers the smallest and lightest speakers and subwoofers as well as the smallest and lightest audio amplifiers, all of which are DO-160 tested.

Alto Aviation has made a considerable investment in the development of new high-performance components and provides a superior level of service. Its years of experience in premium audio system development, as well as flexibility and attention to detail, put it in the position to provide completion centers, business aircraft owners and manufacturers with high-quality audio systems and service expertise.



Aspen Avionics, based in Albuquerque, N.M., was founded by aviation enthusiasts in 2004, and has since grown into a major avionics company.

Aspen specializes in bringing advanced technology and capability from the commercial and business aviation markets into general aviation cockpits — and budgets.

Aspen's flagship product line is the Evolution flight display system, an innovative glass cockpit system for certified general aviation aircraft. The Evolution system enables aircraft owners to upgrade their primary flight instrument six-pack to glass cockpit technology all at once or in stages. Easy and inexpensive software upgrades add new features and capabilities, while future-proofing the system, protecting owners' investments and driving recurring business to its dealers.

Among Aspen Avionics' Evolution flight display systems are the EFD1000 Pilot PFD, which is certified; the EFD1000 Pro PF, which is certified; the EFD1000 ATP PFD; the EFD1000 MFD; and the EFD500 MFD.

Since its early days, Aspen has worked closely with dealers and their customers, individually and in focus groups, to improve its products and programs.

According to Aspen, the AEA and its members have been great partners in Aspen's rapid growth, and the AEA's regional meetings are great forums to work with dealers and showcase Aspen's products. During the 2007 AEA International Convention & Trade Show, Aspen Avionics launched its new corporate brand and gave members exclusive sneak peeks of its upcoming EFD1000.

More recently, Aspen was the premier partner with the AEA in developing and deploying its online dealer training program, greatly improving installation quality and reducing installation time and troubleshooting.



In 1999, David Gray founded Flight Display Systems. Gray is an instrument-rated pilot and served in the military as

a navigator as well as an aircraft maintenance officer. Gray's love of aviation and the opportunity he saw for high-quality, low-priced entertainment equipment in business aircraft prompted him to start the company.

After two years of research and development, Flight Display Systems launched its low-cost moving map. The company now offers more than 50 different PMA-authorized products, including LCD monitors, DVD players and other audio/video cabin entertainment products.

In addition, Flight Display Systems has developed innovative product solutions being utilized in military and special-operations applications for front-line deployment around the world.

In 2008, Flight Display Systems was recognized as the No. 1 customer service and support company for cabin entertainment by the *Aviation International News* annual reader's poll.

Flight Display Systems maintains a small business perspective and prides itself on outstanding customer service. The company policy is a 24-hour turn-time on all in-shop repairs. Another unique aspect of the company is its in-stock inventory. Recently, the company has grown by adding more employees to its talented team; purchasing a third engineering/production facility; becoming an FAA-authorized repair station; and realizing continuously increasing sales.

Innovation and a can-do attitude have helped the company continue to launch solutions for retrofit aircraft applications. It is this constant focus on the retrofit niche and outstanding customer support that fuels the company growth.



Matrix Aviation began business in April 1983, and became an AEA member shortly thereafter.

In November 1987, it was acquired by Banner Aerospace and remains a member of the Banner group of companies today.

As it has been from its beginning, Matrix Aviation focuses on the avionics and instrumentation needs of its business aviation customers throughout the world. The company supplies quality avionics, instrumentation, TCAS and radar. Its extensive inventory and level of service is well known to corporate flight depart-

ments, maintenance providers, service providers and regional airlines worldwide.

The company employs 15 people with an average tenure of nearly 14 years each at its main headquarters in Wichita, Kan., as well as its sales office in the United Kingdom.

Matrix offers AOG services 24/7, 365 days a year to support its customers. As an added convenience for its international customers, Matrix has a sales office in the U.K., enabling it to give immediate, on-call service to any customer anywhere in the world at any time of the day or night.

Matrix Aviation supports the AEA by exhibiting at its regional meetings and annual convention and trade show. It also sponsors giveaway items for attendees at every AEA convention.



For more than 75 years, Rockwell Collins has been a pioneer in the development and deployment of innovative communications and aviation electronic solutions for both commercial and government applications.

Throughout its history, Rockwell Collins has delivered state-of-the-art avionics for business aircraft to enhance pilot situational awareness, safety and efficiency.

Rockwell Collins' success in the business aviation marketplace has been fueled by trust-based relationships with its customers and dealers around the world.

According to Rockwell Collins, the AEA has played an important role for the company since its membership in 1964. At the time Rockwell Collins became a member, the foundation of its successful Pro Line avionics family was just being built. During the next four decades, as Rockwell Collins' relationships with its dealers, customers and the AEA grew, so did its capabilities in the business aviation marketplace.

In the mid 1990s, Rockwell Collins introduced the Pro Line 4 system, which was the company's first experience with system integration featuring digital technology. The new system significantly reduced size, weight and power requirements with fewer LRUs and less wiring and increased reliability.

Also in the 1990s, Rockwell Collins added the Pro Line 21 to its line. The Pro Line blended in the use of large-area liq-

uid crystal displays. By 2010, more than 4,000 business aircraft are expected to be equipped with Rockwell Collins Pro Line 21 avionics.

In November 2007, the company introduced its newest addition to the Pro Line family: Pro Line Fusion incorporates next-generation technologies such as synthetic and enhanced vision and more. Since its introduction.



For more than 27 years, Universal Avionics Systems Corp. has led the industry with innovative avionics systems used on a large number of aircraft types from helicopters and business turbine aircraft to large commercial airliners.

Universal Avionics' journey began with founder Hubert Naimer's vision of a "master navigation system," which he concluded should be capable of accepting inputs from a variety of navigation and air-data sensors, as well as have the ability to integrate new data sources in the future. This innovative concept led to the development of the world's first flight management system.

Introduced to the market as the UNS-1 in the fall of 1982, this FMS represented a quantum leap in airborne navigation. Today, Universal Avionics has approximately 18,500 UNS-1 systems installed in more than 9,500 aircraft in more than 150 different aircraft types. Most recently, Universal Avionics became the first in the industry to complete FAR Part 25 certification for its WAAS/SBAS family of FMS with LPV approach capability.

Universal Avionics' product offering has since expanded to include flat-panel instrument displays, cockpit voice recorders, navigation position sensors, Vision-1 synthetic vision system, terrain awareness and warning system, electronic flight bags and cockpit/ground communications data-link systems.

The company boasts a 166,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility in Tucson, Ariz., for manufacturing, product support and marketing. Research and development facilities are located in the high-tech corridor of Redmond, Wash., and in Duluth, Ga.

Universal Avionics has been an active member of the AEA since it first began marketing its products. □