

President's Message - A Successful AAHS Move Times Two!

2020 has been noteworthy on many levels, politically and economically, globally and personally, emotionally and physically both positive and negative. For AAHS 2020 will be noteworthy for a very positive reason; our downsize move to a smaller Orange County office, AND our simultaneous Headquarters move to Flabob Airport, Riverside, Calif., is essentially complete! We say 'essentially' as there are a host of to dos that will continue into next year to update the Flabob building to our needs, but the phones are in and the lights are on!

AAHS made TWO moves.

Back in 2015 the Board of Directors discussed the move out of Huntington Beach, Calif., to find a location with lower rent, and, with luck, in an aviation community that shared AAHS long-term goals. Several alternative sites within 60 miles of the current office were evaluated, with office space at historic Flabob Airport, Riverside being the final selected site, by the end of 2017.

Most of AAHS current local volunteers, however, still lived close to the Orange County location, and provide invaluable support to AAHS operations. The Board agreed that we could support our mission and our volunteers best in the next 3-5 years by keeping a smaller office in Orange County for operations, while building up our volunteer staff and archives at the Flabob Headquarters. Hence, our move plans had to include a simultaneous move to TWO locations!

Flabob Office Improvements

A historic converted WWII 'temporary' barracks building that previously housed the Flabob airport office was updated in 2019 for AAHS, supported by the generous donation of AAHS Member John Turgyan, with reinforced flooring to support the AAHS image archives, updated with new carpets, paint and lights. AAHS also purchased two 8'x20' shipping containers, with electrical hookups and insulation and had them installed behind the AAHS office, providing room for additional library books and archives.

A Downsized Orange County Location

While Flabob improvements were underway, a search commenced for reduced space in Orange County, which turned out to be surprisingly close – just six doors down in the same business center. 15446 Transistor Lane, Huntington Beach, Calif., is the new Orange County address of AAHS, a smaller space (1,100) square feet, that now houses bookkeeping and membership desks, part of the photo archives and some of the AAHS aviation book collection.

The mastermind behind the logistics of moving simultaneously to two locations is Bob Palazzola, our Library Manager. Bob created space plans, counted boxes, packed over 400 boxes himself and worked tirelessly alongside Syndy Resler, our on-site office manager, to determine what would go where. Bob and Syndy teamed up to coordinate all the logistics such as new internet and phone service, hiring movers and keeping other volunteers apprised of when they could enter the old (and new) locations safely.

When our move day came, everything went off smoothly, even with a reduced work crew, and COVID-19 safety restrictions in place. Syndy re-located important bookkeeping functions offsite, so we would not lose any operational downtime during the move, while Bob set up effective staging areas that allowed boxes and equipment to be moved to both locations all in one day.

Operations Going Forward

All of AAHS 3-view binder collections, the AAHS 35mm slide collections that have been scanned to the on-line image database (stored in fireproof safes), a large portion of the film and negative archives, and over 400 books of aviation books now reside at the Flabob office. Volunteers like Yesenia Villalobos, and a number of local college and high school students have been recruited to support some of the many projects available at Flabob, including slide identification, VHS tape cataloging, library cataloging and film media digitizing. AAHS members Robert Jordan and Howard Butcher have committed to support operations at Flabob, which will allow the Headquarters office to post regular operating hours 2-3 days per week.

The Orange County office will continue to process daily mail and member inquiries, as well as our image digitizing project. AAHS office hours in Orange County will continue to be Wednesdays, although, due to COVID-19, we have scheduled volunteers to assist in the office on different days, to reduce the number of individuals in the same space at any one time.

Official 'Grand Opening' date for AAHS at Flabob Airport

As noted earlier, there are still planned upgrades to the Flabob facility that are not yet started, that include an update to decking area and improved parking area. These we hope to complete before announcing a 'Grand Opening' of the AAHS Flabob office to the local area and the tenants of Flabob Airport. Currently we're planning for this grand opening event to occur on the second weekend of May 2021, to include a free BBQ, free sample Journals, tours through our archives, and similar activities. We'll post updates to our AAHS Facebook page and the AAHS website on Flabobo and AAHS Transistor Lane activities. See you there!

Jerri Bergen
AAHS President