

AOPA

AOPA embarks on quest to fix flight training

By Ian J. Twombly

The future of general aviation depends on a steady flow of new pilots. But with 70 to 80 percent of student pilots dropping out of training before they earn a certificate, it's clear that attrition is a major contributing factor to the serious decline in the pilot population.

That's why AOPA is leading an effort to stop the major outflow of students from the flight training pipeline. Earlier this year the association commissioned an ambitious research project aimed at figuring out why so many student pilots don't complete training. Although many in the industry feel like they may know the reasons, no one has ever conducted a systematic qualitative and quantitative study to validate assumptions. The research covered four main audiences to ensure a well-rounded perspective of the flight training process—student pilots (current and lapsed), pilots, flight instructors, and flight school managers.

"Once the research is complete, it's up to us as an industry to come up with concrete solutions to the problem," said AOPA President Craig Fuller.

To that end, AOPA has invited a group of industry stakeholder to come together the day before [AOPA Aviation Summit](#) in Long Beach, Calif., on Nov. 10. Hosted by [Flight Training](#) magazine, the AOPA Flight Training Summit will provide the opportunity to discuss specific issues and formulate initial solutions to address the massive attrition rate.

"There is no quick fix and we must work together to create a new training paradigm that will allow more student pilots to fulfill their aviation dreams," Fuller said.

AOPA will be sharing the results of the research and the association's plans for addressing the issues during the first keynote at AOPA Aviation Summit on Nov. 11 in Long Beach. For those who can't make it in person, the keynote will be broadcast on [AOPA Live®](#) at 9 a.m. Pacific.

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October 6, 2010