

Chair Chat

St. Louis Section Chair – Katherine Fink

Welcome to the 2025-2026 year of AIAA St. Louis! Our section had some amazing accomplishments under the leadership of John Schaefer last year. In addition to winning the Outstanding Section Award and the Outstanding Activity Award, several of our committees were recognized for their achievements (see the full list [here](#)). I am excited to continue that momentum this year.



As a former student branch chair, I look forward to growing our relationship with our student branches, including the new student branch at SIUE. Many of our student branch leaders have reached out to our Council for help organizing their section events. If you are interested in helping mentor any of the student branches, please reach out to me!

In addition to our Education and College Outreach Activities we are looking for volunteers to help lead the following committees:

- **Career and Workforce Development:** The Career and Workforce Development Committee shall be responsible for planning and implementing programs and activities that can assist an engineer's career.
- **Community Development:** The Community Development Committee is committed to including people of all backgrounds and experiences across all levels of the St. Louis Section of AIAA. The Committee shall encourage that the Section's leadership speakers and panelists at events, and those being recognized for their contributions to aerospace, represent the communities we serve. The Committee will administer grants for events aligned with our goals and objectives. Additionally, the Committee will educate the Section/Council on how to enforce the anti-harassment policy at all AIAA activities and raise awareness of the critical role the underrepresented communities play in shaping the aerospace industry's future.
- **History:** The History Committee shall be responsible for collecting and disseminating items of historical significance to aerospace in the Region, for inclusion in Section activities and publications.

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- **Membership:** The Membership Committee shall be responsible for the recruitment and retention of Section members, and the involvement of members in Section programs and activities. General responsibilities of this committee include: Encouraging promotion through the grades of Institute membership, particularly the assembly of nominators, references, and reviewers for Associate Fellow and Fellow nominations.

We have an exciting program of events this fall – read on to learn more!

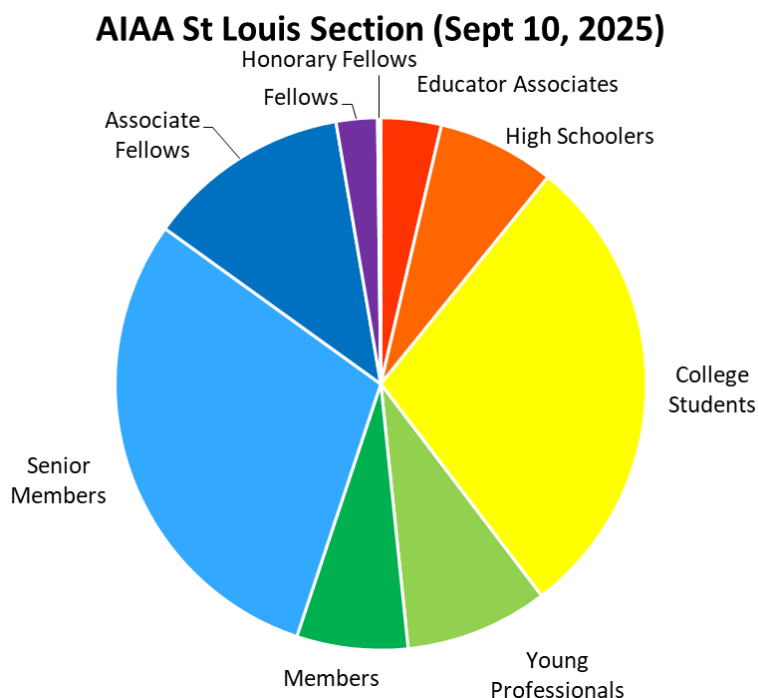
Katherine Fink
AIAA St. Louis Section
Chair

Membership Report

Membership Chair – Alex Friedman

The Section membership is currently at 517 members. The number of professional members has dropped by 12 while the number of student members has increased by 6 since the last membership report. The number of educator associates has also dropped to 19 from 32 in May. The distribution breaks down as shown in the table and pie chart below:

Professional	312
Young Professionals	45
Members	35
Senior Members	154
Associate Fellows	64
Fellows	13
Honorary Fellows	1
Students	186
High School	37
College	149
Educator Associates	19
Total	517



A Tribute to Larry Brase

Lawrence (Larry) “Haz” O. Brase Jr., age 69, died Monday, September 15, 2025 after a short but aggressive battle with cancer.

Larry was a long-time champion for AIAA, a distinguished engineer within the aerospace industry, a strong advocate for Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) opportunities, and a friend and mentor to many.

After graduating from St. Louis University (Parks College) with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering in 1977, he was hired as an engineer on the F/A-18 A/B program. Throughout his 47-year career at McDonnell Douglas / Boeing, he was instrumental in the development and execution of many different programs including F/A-18, F-15, KC-767 International Tanker, KC-46A, Space Launch System (SLS), HyFly, UCLASS/MQ-25, T-7A, and MQ-28, among others. He was widely recognized as an expert in structural dynamics and aeroelasticity, earning the esteemed title of Boeing Technical Fellow.



Larry became a member of AIAA in 1982, which quickly became one of his greatest passions. He held a large variety of positions throughout all levels of the AIAA organization over his 43 years of continuous membership, including:

- St. Louis Section Chair (2000-2001)
- Region V Director (2004-2010)
- Boeing/AIAA Corporate Member Focal
- AIAA National Honors & Awards Committee
- St. Louis Section Strategic Planning Officer (2019-2025)
- Numerous other committee participations across the St. Louis local section, Region V, and national organizations

Larry’s impact on AIAA extended beyond his direct contributions by continuously encouraging others to get involved, including several current members of the STL section leadership. For his contributions to the aerospace industry and AIAA, he was awarded the titles of AIAA Associate Fellow in 2003, Fellow in 2015, as well as a Special Service Citation and Sustained Service Award.

Outside of AIAA, Larry was a staunch supporter of the Academy of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineers through the Missouri University of Science & Technology. He was also an advocate for STEM education and supported the FIRST Robotics program. In his spare time, he loved music and was described as an encyclopedia of music, and loved Bruce Springsteen and saw him countless times, as well as the Beatles.

Family and friends whose lives Larry touched are invited to a celebration of life at the Wildey Theatre, 252 North Main Street, Edwardsville, IL 62025, on November 1st from 3 PM to 6 PM.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to **STEM4U2, coordinated by Jackie Blumer**, in honor of **Larry Brase**. Donations will support STEM education and outreach for students in our region, providing hands-on opportunities and inspiring the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators. This memorial will carry forward Larry's passion for learning and his dedication to helping young people discover their potential through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

AIAA STL Section wins National Awards

Advisor – John Schaefer

Every year, AIAA National awards local Sections based on their performance and value they provide to local membership and the Institute at large. For the 2024-2025 year, the AIAA St. Louis Section received awards in seven out of the eight categories, including first place for the Outstanding Section Award. The STL Section was also recognized for its Outstanding Activity, “STEM in Action: Engineering the Future at the Challenge Learning Center.” All awards come with Category II funding provided by AIAA National to the St. Louis Section, which will then be reinvested into 2025-2026 events and other local aerospace initiatives.



Former AIAA St. Louis Chairman (2024-2025) John Schaefer poses with STL Section awards and other local Section leaders at the Regional Leadership Conference in Las Vegas, NV

The Section earned first or second place in every award received. This is truly an exceptional recognition of all the hard work and volunteer time that the St. Louis Council puts into successful operation and activity planning within the St. Louis region. It is also a testament to the membership for their enthusiastic participation in local section activities as we continue to grow a culture of STEM and aerospace ambassadorship within our community. A complete list of the awards received is included below – Keep up the great work AIAA STL!

Stem Corner Updates

STEM Chair – Jackie Blumer, Co-chair – Dona Harvey, Assistant – Kelly Remijan & Luke Giunta

Inspiring Aerospace Education Across the Midwest: AIAA Summer 2025 Highlights



This summer was a season of impact for the AIAA St. Louis Section, with more than 1,800 students, educators, and community members engaged through events that highlighted aerospace, STEM, and aviation. Our members led professional development sessions for over 80 teachers, organized camps that reached more than 250 students directly, and supported large-scale outreach events that drew well over a thousand participants.

Professional development opportunities were a key focus this summer. Teachers in ROE #40 participated in multiple sessions, including Bringing Space to the Midwest, which offered hands-on STEM experiences, grant opportunities, and resource connections. Additional workshops, such as Tinkercad & Other Tech Tools and STEM Along the River, provided educators with new strategies to bring technology and engineering into their classrooms. Nationally, thirty-five teachers joined the Limitless Space Institute Teacher Institute for a week of astronaut-led discussions, industry tours at Axiom Space and Venus Aerospace, and curriculum development centered on deep space exploration. These professional development efforts ensured that educators returned to their classrooms equipped and inspired to pass on the excitement of aerospace to their students.



Summer camps also provided immersive, hands-on experiences for students across multiple regions. In Illinois, the SWIC Aviation Summer Sampler Camp brought 28 high school juniors and seniors into the world of aviation maintenance, avionics, machining, flight simulators, and drones, introducing them to career pathways in aerospace. In Texas, Camp BTX engaged nearly 200 participants over two weeks with space exploration activities, Starship site visits, and outreach through the Brownsville Children's Museum Gala. Locally, Field Day 2025 connected 25 youth with amateur radio activities and even a live ISS contact, while the Young Eagles program at Greenville Airport gave 47 students free flights and exposure to aviation and STEM role models. These experiences left students inspired and gave them tangible connections to aerospace careers.

Community outreach rounded out the summer with large-scale events that brought aerospace directly to the public. The Greenville Airport Fly-In engaged 175 participants with flight demonstrations and astronaut connections, while the St. Louis Science Center's Creative Day drew more than 1,200 people to explore circuits, LEDs, and engineering concepts through interactive exhibits. Smaller presentations, such as the DAR talk on the history of the space program and the Pico Balloon launch with amateur radio partners, reached both students and community members, adding unique perspectives to the summer's programming.

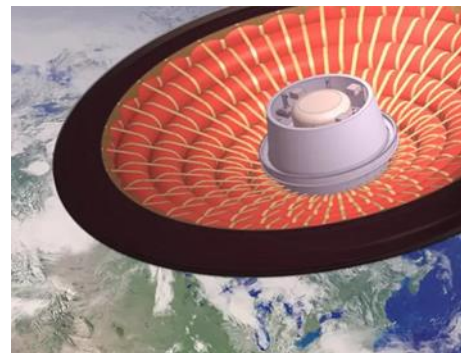
Together, these efforts showcased the strength of AIAA St. Louis members in reaching diverse audiences. By combining professional development for educators, immersive summer camps for students, and engaging community outreach, the section inspired thousands of future scientists, engineers, and explorers.

STEM Corner – Activity

Slowing Down in Space Activity

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

NASA faces the challenge of delivering heavy payloads to destinations with atmospheres, as current rigid aeroshells are limited by rocket size. A promising solution is an inflatable aeroshell that can be compactly stored during launch and expanded upon arrival, enabling missions to Mars, Venus, Titan, and even aiding Earth re-entry. Because Mars' thin atmosphere is too dense to ignore but too light to provide sufficient drag, a large deployable aeroshell with a flexible heat shield could act as a giant brake, slowing spacecraft higher in the atmosphere while reducing heat and stress. In this activity, participants design a drag device system to slow a weighted spacecraft, gaining insight into how atmospheric drag safely reduces velocity during entry or re-entry.

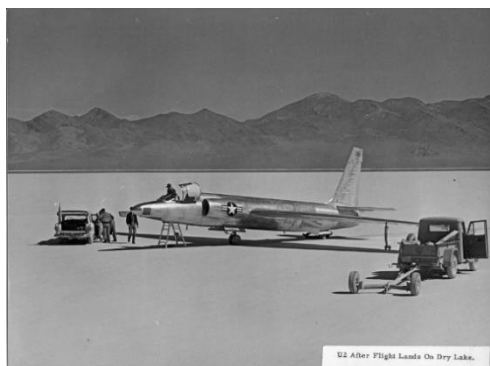


[Link to NASA's Full Lesson](#)

History in Aviation: August & September

Historian – Colin Thiele

1 August 1955 – The Lockheed U-2 has its first flight. The planned official first flight was scheduled for August 4, but during a high-speed taxi test on August 1, the plane became airborne.



19 August 1907 – Archie William League is born. While the date is not significant, Archie's story in aviation history in St. Louis is! The St. Louis Airport hired him as the first Air Traffic Controller in the United States in 1929; he used a checkered flag for 'GO' and a red flag for 'HOLD'



August 1928 – St. Louis voters approve a \$2 million bond for airport improvements. The improvements include buying the current airport property from Major Lambert and building paved runways, taxiways, apron areas, hangers, and support facilities.



4 September 1922 – Jimmy Doolittle becomes the first person to fly transcontinental in the US in under 24 hours – with just 1 refueling stop in his DH-4 aircraft.

18 September 1947 – The United States Air Force is officially formed as an independent service within the unified US Armed Forces.

September 2009 – St. Louis Lambert International Airport is officially 'de-hubbed' by The AMR Corporation, the parent company of American Airlines and American Eagle, as they reduce operations by 46 flights a day and discontinue service to 20 destinations.

22 September 2006 – The Official Retirement of the Grumman F-14 Tomcat occurs at NAS Oceana, Virginia. An interesting note is that the aircraft that taxied out to takeoff had a mechanical issue and so a backup F-14 was on standby with engines running and that “spare” was the aircraft that completed the takeoff and had the final F-14 Flight!



Making a Change?

Are you graduating and moving? Planning to retire soon? Making a career move? If you are leaving the St. Louis Section area, please update your AIAA profile, so you will continue to receive accurate AIAA correspondence. Go to "My AIAA" (<http://www.aiaa.org/myAIAA>) log in, go to "My Account" and select "Edit Contact Info."

AIAA St. Louis Section Council

Office	Officeholder	Telephone	Email
Chair	Katherine Fink	----	katherine.l.fink@boeing.com
Vice Chair	Alex Ambro	314-563-6264	thomas.a.ambro@boeing.com
Secretary	Stephen Provost	----	stephen.n.provost@boeing.com
Treasurer	Brian Est	----	umrminer89@gmail.com
Advisor	Paul Niewald	314-777-4257	paul.w.niewald@boeing.com
Advisor	Chris Heyrman	----	
Advisor	Brandon Wegge	----	bwegge@amicstl.org
Advisor	Steve Clark	----	stephen.f.clark3@boeing.com
Region V Rep.	John Schaefer	314-232-9331	john.a.schaefer3@boeing.com
Committee	Chair	Telephone	Email
Career Workforce Development	Pierre Van Der Schaft	----	pierre.r.vanderschaft@boeing.com
Communication	Mario Santos	314-451-6202	mario.j.santos@boeing.com

Education & College Outreach	Vacant	---	---
History	Colin Thiele	608-778-6438	colin.thiele@slu.edu
Honors & Awards	Hunter Pritzlaff	----	hunter.m.pritzlaff@boeing.com
K-12 STEM	Jackie Blumer	----	jblumer@bccu2.org
Membership	Alex Friedman	----	alexfriedman@gmail.com
Newsletter	Mario Santos	314-451-6202	mario.j.santos@boeing.com
Programs – Dinner Meetings	Geoff Behrens	314-232-3673	geoffrey.r.behrens@boeing.com
Programs – Tech Specialist	Vacant	---	---
Public Policy	Frank Youkhana	314-234-4811	frank.w.youkhana@boeing.com
Service Projects	Brad Sexton	314-232-7826	bradley.w.sexton@boeing.com
Strategic Planning	Vacant	----	
Young Professionals	Kyler Schaetzle	----	kyler.schaetzle@gmail.com

If you are interested in joining one of the committees, please contact the AIAA St. Louis Section Chair, Katherine Fink, or the committee chairperson.