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# **U.S. National Aerobatic Championships**

Salina Regional Airport (KSLN)

September 28 - October 3, 2025

## **Post Contest Report**

**Shad Coulson, Contest Director**

# Contest Overview

By almost any measure the 2025 Nationals was a resounding success and there is only one factor that made it so: the Key Volunteers! Building on the success from previous years as the Nationals CD, I knew from the outset that I would need to rely on and empower a select group of experienced volunteers to manage the details. Looking at the list of Key Volunteers, many of the names are very familiar to anyone who has been around the IAC for a few years. Most of these amazing volunteers return year after year and I am grateful for their commitment, experience, and the guidance given to me throughout the planning phase and execution of the contest. We truly cannot give enough credit and appreciation to our contest volunteers.

# Competitors

If we include the competitors who attended the Adv & Unl Glider Nationals held in AZ earlier in the year, the U.S. Nationals had a total attendance of 117 Pilots. Of which, 89 were powered and 28 were glider. If we exclude those competitors who attended the Adv & Unl Glider Nationals, the U.S. Nationals in KS had a total of 108 competitors, of which 89 were powered and 19 were glider. Attendance this year saw a near 20% increase over the 2024 U.S. Nationals.

Serving as the CD of the U.S. Nationals affords me the opportunity to inspire new ideas, provide fresh perspectives and to renew the interest and participation at the national contest. From the onset, I had a customer service mentality while conducting planning activities. I aimed to ensure that volunteers and participants felt valued and that they were receiving an event worthy of the time away from family, friends, personal and professions commitments, and the entry fee. In my short tenure with the IAC, I have noticed a great deal of time and effort is spent celebrating the achievements of the upper two categories of the sport. While I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the time, effort, and money spent by those folks to achieve their level of competency and competitiveness, my priority for the 2025 U.S. Nationals was to celebrate the club and camaraderie associated with being a member of the IAC. Special emphasis was also given to the lower three categories, which make up the largest body of our club membership and contest participation.

# Annual Participation Comparison

U.S. National Aerobatic Championship Participation															
POWER	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Primary		7	9	9	6	6	8	6	12		9	15	12	10	10
Sportsman	24	17	22	16	22	17	12	19	24		20	12	14	25	24
Intermediate	16	19	22	21	17	12	17	14	17		10	6	9	8	21
Advanced	24	16	18	19	26	21	25	15	20		20	24	19	18	11
Unlimited	15	17	20	12	9	13	11	12	7		13	11	9	11	14
Sub Total	79	76	91	77	80	69	73	66	80		72	68	63	72	80
GLIDER	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Primary													3	4	4
Sportsman	7	5		6	6	9	8	5	7		7	7	8	7	9
Intermediate	9	6	2	2	6	7	6	5	8		8	6	6	2	6
Advanced		5	5	3	2	2	3	2	2		5	9	12	5	8
Unlimited		3	3		3	2						5	3	2	1
Sub Total	16	19	10	11	17	20	17	12	17		20	27	32	20	28
Total	95	95	101	88	97	89	90	78	97		92	95	95	92	108
4-MIN FREE	5	5			4	8	9	5	2		6	5	5	6	9
Grand Total	100	100	101	88	101	97	99	83	99		98	100	100	98	117

## Safety & Mechanical Issues

Safety is the bedrock of all activities conducted by the IAC. To my knowledge, there were no significant safety concerns or events during the contest. However, we did have two safety related events occur that drove post contest rule change proposals.

- An advanced competitor was called off by the chief judge for safety concerns due to the competitors' altitude and the following figure. There was some confusion on how to restart this program and what penalty(s) applied.
- A 4-min free competitor intentionally turned off their engine during the final moments of their routine before successfully restarting and landing. This raised severe concern from several competitors and contest officials.

We did have one volunteer examined and treated for heat exhaustion by our onsite medical director, Dr. Ballard. No other medical attention or action was needed for the individual. There were no notable mechanical events that occurred during the contest. Any that did arise were quickly addressed/resolved by the contest technical committee and onsite A&P's.

## Weather & Schedule Changes

The weather for the unofficial and official practice days was excellent, though some wind was present at times. No issues with ceilings or precipitation were noted. I monitored the weather closely leading up to the contested and noted a potential for wind impacts later in the week. An alternate schedule was planned but was not needed. The 2025 Nationals schedule was executed flawlessly by the volunteers and competitors. On two of the two of the six contest days, we flew from nearly sunrise to sunset, executing nearly 100 contest flights each of those two days. Other than two periods of increased wind, no other weather issues were noted and conditions throughout the week were excellent, with nice temperatures, blue skies and light winds. The only notable issue following the rain preceding the contest setup and execution, was some mud and standing water on the E & W judging positions, which dried out quickly over the coming days.

Despite the early challenges, we were able to complete three programs for all categories and the 4-min free. Once again, the updated flight program schedule for Advanced and Unlimited within P&P 509 proved beneficial and afforded me the flexibility to successfully complete the contest within the allotted amount of time.

## Contest Organization & Staff

Immediately upon being confirmed by the BOD as the CD, I began filling vacancies in the Key Volunteer Group (KVG). Nearly all the KVG whom I worked with during the 2023 & 2024 Nationals returned to their respective positions. I am grateful for their continued dedication and service to the IAC. A short summation of the KVG follows:

**Registrar** – Mary Beth Rudd did an excellent job once again in this role. The registrar is one of the first people competitors and volunteers interact with and her upbeat personality makes her the perfect person to welcome folks to the contest. She did a masterful job preparing the clipboards and she plans to return in 2026.

**Communications** – Monique Hartmann returned once again as the communications director. A contest of this size and complexity requires a dedicated person to ensure all facets of the contest, as well as individual categories, are communicated as timely as possible. She does this masterfully and I'm grateful for her continued support and dedication. She plans to return in 2026.

**Volunteer Coordinator** – Alice Johnson returned to this position once again. She does a wonderful job of balancing the various volunteer duties people are filling while also ensuring their ability to rest and prepare for their own competition programs is not jeopardized. As outlined in the weather portion of this report, there

were some early weather concerns to the schedule, which she welcomed with a smile and immediately sprang into action preparing to reorganize the various volunteer duties in support of the changes. She was also instrumental in the planning process as she helped deconflict judging assignments with the flight schedule. She plans to return in 2026.

**Overlord** – John Smutny and Jeff Baker did an excellent job coordinating aircraft between the various holds and aerobatic box, which proved incredibly beneficial to the chief judges. The efficiency and expediency of the contest can be credited largely to these two gentlemen. Prior CDs laid the framework for this position and I highly recommend we continue to utilize an “Overlord” at future events. Both plan to attend and support the 2026 contest.

**Starter** – Dale Byrkit and Doug Vada returned once again as the contest starters. They are true professionals in this role and do an excellent job of getting the contest pilots prepared and safely in the air in a timely manner. Both plan to attend and support the 2026 contest...as long as they both come!

**Scorer** – Teri Branstitre and Bob “Bwana” Buckley headed the scoring efforts. JaSper was once again the official scoring program for the 2025 U.S. Nationals. Teri did a flawless job transcribing scores into JaSper in an efficient and timely manner. Beginning in 2021, the U.S. Nationals began scanning and sending the score sheets to the scorer via a Samsung tablet. This exponentially reduced the delay in getting scoresheets to the scorer as well as the time between the flight and preliminary scores for competitors. In 2025, we transitioned to a direct scan to email feature, which further reduced the delay from flight to input and provided near real time feedback on a competitor’s flight. In many cases, competitors had scoresheets before they were able to climb out of their aircraft. Bwana has done an incredible job expanding the capabilities of JaSper and shares my customer service-oriented mindset. Both plan to support in 2026.

**Transportation & Logistics** – Jim Branstitre, in coordination Dale Weinhold of EAA 1172, spearheaded the coordination of drivers for the contest. We were fortunate once again to receive support from the local EAA Chapter. He also setup the mandatory driver training for personnel operating a vehicle within the movement area. On top of overseeing the transportation activities, Jim spearheaded the setup, transition, and teardown of the judging positions throughout the contest. He was directly responsible for ensuring personnel on the judging line had shade, chairs, drinks, snacks, all relevant judging items, and assisted Forrest Fox each time he relocated his videography equipment. I appreciate the time and effort of all contest volunteers, but I wish I had three Jim’s. He was one of the first people to the airport and one of the last to leave each day. Jim plans to attend in 2026.

One of my top priorities for 2025 was improving efficiency. To ensure the movement of judging line personnel was expedient and efficient, I coordinated with the tower manager ahead of the contest to outline procedures to allow us to cross RWY 17/35 as needed. To make these crossings safe and minimally invasive on the tower/ground ops, we agreed to operate within the movement area as a convoy, requiring only one radio transmission from a lead vehicle staffed with a qualified driver/radio operator. In most cases, I served as the lead vehicle, which allowed me to assist the VC, Jim and the chief judges in any capacity needed. There were no issues with the vehicle crossings, and I anticipate we will be allowed to follow the same procedures in 2026.

**Jury Chair** – Barrett Hines served as the jury chair for the contest. Given the sole purpose of the jury is to ensure the contest is safe and run in accordance with the IAC rulebook and P&P’s, it made sense to once again recruit the IAC Rules Chair to head the contest jury. Barrett did an excellent job of recruiting a jury of mixed skills, competition levels and regions to represent the entire IAC membership. There were only a limited number of protests (3 total) during the contest. A summation of those will be provided to you in Barrett’s report. He has volunteered to chair the jury in 2026.

The jury was also tasked, per the P&P’s, with overseeing the figure selection process for the Free Unknown programs. This task was primarily overseen by Mike Lents, Aaron McCartan, and Barrett Hines. The Free

Unknown programs will be discussed later in this report, but it is worth noting that overseeing the administration of the Free Unknown program creates a significant burden for the jury and a conflict of interest relative to their duties, which should be primarily focused on ensuring the contest is run safely and according to the rules. We must continually work to strike an appropriate balance of priorities and workload for our volunteers. I plan to work with Barrett in the forthcoming planning cycle to address this workload and find sustainable solutions for the Jury.

## Facilities

For the third year, the U.S. Nationals was headquartered in hangar 509. This hangar, though slightly smaller than those previously utilized, has other added benefits to include kitchens, offices, and more bathroom facilities. Following some feedback I gave the Salina Airport Authority (SAA) after the 2023 contest; a significant amount of time and money has been put into enhancing the facility and improving the competitor/volunteer experience. Hangar 509 proved to be of adequate size for this year's contest, and we were able to safely store most of the participating aircraft within the facility. As in years past, aircraft were parked within the hangar by category, which has been proven to minimize effort and reduce risk to aircraft.

New this year was the access to hangar 600, located directly north of hangar 509. Gliders and tow planes were hangered in this facility along with the airplanes flying in the intermediate category. The SAA has agreed to provide 20,000 sq/ft of space in hangar 600, or equivalent facility, for future use by the gliders, tow planes and as contest overflow. I am currently working with the SAA to establish a long-term (10 year) contract.

The opening briefing was conducted in the main hangar and proved to be a more adequate area given the number of competitors and volunteers on site. Individual flight briefings were conducted on the second floor of H509, which houses two large airconditioned rooms. These rooms are narrow but very long and adequate for individual flight briefings.

Salina continues to prove itself as a premier venue for the U.S. Nationals. The airport administration is supportive of the IAC and willing to invest in the facilities to improve the quality of our event. Before departing, I met with the airport authority, to discuss some additional facility improvements within Hangar 509 and in regards to the aerobatic box and judging areas. They expressed a willingness to survey and support a more enhanced aerobatic box (CIVA markings) with permanent box position markers to reduce the time and effort of getting the aerobatic box in place. Past CD reports also indicated the airport was willing to pour the aerobatic box markers in concrete, which may be advantageous if we sign a long-term contract.

## Communication & Planning

Communication and planning activities for a contest of this size are best conducted via email. This provides a steady paper trail as well as continuity for future contest directors. I worked with the IAC to establish a dedicated email address ([nationalsdirector@iac.org](mailto:nationalsdirector@iac.org)) for the 2023 Nationals. This email address was used again in 2024 and 2025, which allowed me to build a folder structure and file system for the email strings to be saved in, as they pertain to the various contest planning activities and elements. This will be a significant benefit to future CD's, though I plan to return for 2026 and possibly a few years beyond before handing over the reins. In addition to email, I conducted a monthly KVG meeting via Zoom, which I tried to keep to a maximum of 30-60 minutes. The intent was to more easily assign planning tasks and to obtain updates on previously assigned tasks or ongoing planning activities. This also provided a level of continuity across the KVG and allowed volunteers to weigh in on items that we may not have previously anticipated would impact a particular volunteer area.

The primary communication with the membership and potential competitors was two-fold. First, contest bulletins were produced, two in total, and released periodically leading up to the contest. Second was the utilization of the IAC website, specifically the Nationals portions of the site. The site was updated to reflect pertinent information and intended to be the primary communication channel with competitors. Additionally,

the website was used to aid preregistrations and payments for the contest. The website migration in 2023 discarded several useful features and created numerous hardships with registration, payment, communication and ultimately detracted from the professionalism and efficiency of the U.S. Nationals. Great strides were made to resolve some of these issues in 2025, but several remain, and these items MUST be addressed ahead of 2026 contest.

## **Aircraft Holds**

To improve the safety and efficiency of the contest, John Smutny and I coordinated with the tower manager to adjust the departure procedures to the hold locations. In 2023, we moved the two power holds to the E side of the aerobatic box. The glider holds remained on the W side of the aerobatic box, though closer to the box than in previous years. In all cases, the holds were above the KSLN Class D and the primary concern of the tower was ensuring the holds would not conflict with published instrument missed procedures, which they did not. The support of the tower manager and the controllers in allowing us to reorganize the holds made a significant impact on the contest efficiency and safety. Their support and professionalism throughout the contest cannot go without notice or appreciation.

## **Boundary Judges**

Boundary judges and the associated infringement penalties were waived by the contest director, per P&P 503. No notable issues were observed nor were any major frustrations/objections discussed because of this decision. This proved to be of significant benefit given the size of the contest. I doubt we would have successfully completed the required flights on the two days where we flew nearly 100 contest flights, considering the logistics and time needed to transport and establish personnel to the corner locations. Additionally, several of the categories lasted nearly four hours, which is a lengthy amount of time to be on a corner marker alone and displaced from the rest of the contest officials and participants.

## **Free Unknowns**

We need to examine the cost vs benefit of the Free Unknown programs at the U.S. Nationals. These programs are only utilized in the Advanced and Unlimited categories and are popular with many of the pilots. They also demand a high volume of time and effort from our volunteers, though this time and effort serves a very small portion of the competition body. If we wish to continue utilizing the Free Unknown programs, greater effort should be given to organizing a dedicated group of personnel, separate from the contest jury, to oversee the execution of these programs.

The 2025 U.S. Aerobatic Nationals was conducted in accordance with the 2025 IAC Rulebook, P&P's 501-506, and the FAI Sporting Code.

P&P 503, which governs the U.S. Nationals, gives the contest director the discretion to schedule either a Known or a Free Known program in addition to a Free Unknown I and Free Unknown II program for the Advanced and Unlimited Categories. Furthermore, the P&P allows the Contest Director to schedule a traditional IAC Unknown in place of Free Unknown I. See below for the program format for the Advanced and Unlimited categories at the 2025 U.S. Nationals

### **ADVANCED**

IAC Known

IAC Unknown

Free Unknown II

## **UNLIMITED**

Free Known

Free Unknown I

Free Unknown II

This program format was reviewed and approved by the IAC Board of Directors. The Free Known program, as outlined by P&P 503, was conducted according to the FAI Sporting Code. All Free Unknown programs were conducted and composed as outlined in P&P 503.

It is worth considering the administrative implications of the free unknown programs on the contest staff. The free-unknown sequence development process has many meetings and deadlines that must be deconflicted with the flying schedule and other contest events. It takes a considerable amount of time to schedule figure selections in accordance with P&P's and deconflict the contest schedule, to execute the figure selection process, check figure legality, publish figures, check sequence legality, publish sequences, conduct sequence selection, update JaSper in accordance with sequence selection, and to produce judging clipboards.

## **Video**

The IAC has a long-standing relationship with Forrest Fox, who has provided video services for the U.S. Nationals. Per the P&P's, videos are mandatory for the category conducting team selection flights and are to be used in support of protests and upon request by the chief judge or line judge for that category. These video services have been expanded in recent years to cover all categories, and the IAC began livestreaming the flights, which has been well received by competitors and the broader aerobatic community.

I would recommend we continue to invest in the quality of the livestream. Forrest applied considerable effort to improve the stream with graphics for each competitor, order of flight during breaks, and commentators throughout. There were minimal technical issues associated with the expanded capabilities of the live feed and the majority the streaming activity went seamlessly. Expanding the live feed viewership provides interesting opportunities to attract larger sponsorships to the event as well as interest in competition aerobatics, which may help drive an increase in IAC membership.

## **Box Layout & Clean-Up**

Due to considerable rain ahead of our arrival, the Airfield Ops personnel at Salina were unable to mow the areas needed to place the box markers. I was able to purchase supplies at Lowes to knock down the soybeans and spent the entirety of Wednesday, Sept 24<sup>th</sup>, placing the box markers. The marker locations were calculated and provided specific GPS coordinates to place the markers. I will be working with the airport authority to professionally survey the marker locations ahead of next year's contest. Additionally, if a 10-year contract is signed, we may consider using the funds donated to the Nationals following Rob's passing to place permanent concrete markers.

We must also acknowledge and show appreciation to Larry Pankratz, a local IAC member and supporter of the U.S. Nationals in recent years. Larry has long standing ties within Salina, the SAA and KSU.

Gary Debaun again served as the box master during the four contest practice days and was assisted by Jeff Granger, who is also deserving of recognition for his support as box master. These gentlemen managed to move aircraft safely and efficiently to and from the aerobatic box through the practice roster.

## **Social Events & Hospitality**

Other than selecting the venues, I was not heavily involved in planning the various social events and relied heavily on Sara Arnold. Per the P&P's, the IAC Headquarters is responsible for administration of all special events and activities peripheral to the administration of the contest itself (P&P 501.3.2). Sara did an excellent job of organizing numerous social events, all of which were included in the contest entry fee or free to volunteers. These events included a Sunday social at Big Nose Kate's, Sunday pancake breakfast, a hangar fiesta, dinner/drinks at Blue Skies Brewery, and the final awards banquet at the Hilton Garden Inn. Sara and I discussed early on the objective of bringing the "community" back to the contest and these social events were a key element of that effort. Going forward, we will examine ways to rearrange social events to provide additional free evenings in Salina to allow folks to socialize more casually and in smaller settings, without jeopardizing the "community" element of the contest.

Sara also provided me with scripts for the medals and awards dinners, which proved useful while conducting duties as the MC. I don't mind public speaking, but future CD's may wish to appoint someone else as MC for those events. The goal should be to keep them light, succinct, and of the appropriate stature for the U.S. Championship.

## **Trophies & Awards**

In 2024, I elected to elevate the clinkies and trophies presented to competitors at the U.S. Nationals. While I appreciate the long tradition of the clinkies present to competitors, it was time for a refreshed and updated medal to be produced. A medal that captured the essence of the event and was inclusive of the entire membership. The new clinkies were well received and are a product that can be produced in perpetuity going forward. Adequate clinkies were produced in 2024 to last through the next five National contests and this stock was used to support the 2025 contest.

In conjunction with that effort, I worked with my graphics/trophy designer to develop a trophy that is also representative of our organization and the aircraft within a given category. As of several years ago, Oshkosh trophy was no longer able to procure the time-honored trumpet trophy that had long been presented to category winners. Since then, the U.S. Nationals had used several trophy styles/products, none of which captured the essence of the contest or proved adequate for an event of this stature. The final design is a modern, functional, and transportable trophy for those who fly to and from nationals in their competition aircraft. The new trophies were well received and can be produced in perpetuity for the IAC.

## **Donors & Sponsorships**

Corporate sponsorship exceeded expectations for the 2025 contest. This was due in large part to the gradual monetization of the live stream over the last few years. This year, we successfully secured sponsorships from MX, Extra, Aura Aero, Gamebird, and American Champion for each contest category. We branded the category livestream with their logo and provided the usual branding on the t-shirt, website, magazine, contest banner, and program. These sponsorships, coupled with additional corporate sponsorships for specific events and deferral of other contest expenses, made this year's fundraising efforts a resounding success.

I recommend we continue to refine our fundraising and sponsorship process. It would benefit the IAC greatly to identify or even hire a dedicated fundraiser. Someone with the skillset and connections to attract potential sponsors more readily to the event. We must also examine opportunities to provide more return on investment for our sponsors.

A thorough review of the contest budget and overhaul of revenue streams is one of my top priorities for 2026.



Personal donations from our membership to the IAC in support of nationals remained at similar levels to years past. We cannot thank these folks enough, many of whom also come to participate and volunteer at the event. It is difficult not to love and admire this special and small community of pilots.

## Finances

The contest finances were conducted in accordance with the approved budget and in many cases came in under budget or exceeded estimated revenue amounts. The 2025 nationals exceeded its target revenue by \$38,594 (40.5%). The contest also exceeded its target expenses by \$1,481 (1.6%). In total, the 2025 U.S. Nationals was net positive \$37,113, which included the \$14,612 donation made on behalf of Rob Holland through the ICAS memorial foundation. Excluding that sum, nationals was net positive \$22,501. A summary of the contest revenue and expenses is below.

					<b>Official 2026 U.S. Nationals Budget</b>	
<b>Net Total</b>		\$ -	\$ 37,113	\$ 37,113	0.0%	\$ -
<b>Revenue</b>						
<b>Total Revenue</b>		\$ 95,253	\$ 133,847	\$ 38,594	40.5%	\$ 112,250
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Account String</b>	<b>2025 Budget Amount</b>	<b>2025 Actual Amount</b>	<b>2025 Act vs Bdgt (\$)</b>	<b>2025 Act vs Bdgt (%)</b>	
Registrations	4302-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 40,000	\$ 61,700	\$ 21,700	54.3%	\$ 50,000
Sponsorships, Donations, & On-site Donations	4856-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 41,000	\$ 54,947	\$ 13,947	34.0%	\$ 48,000
Sales-Clothing	4030-1000-60-0000-0211-53	\$ 253	\$ -	\$ (253)	(100.0%)	
Sales-Other Merchandise	4090-1000-60-0000-0211-53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	
Sales-Nationals Merchandise	4092-1000-60-0000-0211-53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	
Contest Auction	4412-1000-50-0000-2005-53	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,550	\$ 3,550	29.6%	\$ 12,000
Guest Income (Catering)	4920-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,650	\$ (350)	(17.5%)	\$ 2,250
<b>Expenses</b>						
<b>Total Expenses</b>		\$ 95,253	\$ 96,734	\$ 1,481	1.6%	\$ 112,250
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Account String</b>	<b>2025 Budget Amount</b>	<b>2025 Actual Amount</b>	<b>2025 Act vs Bdgt (\$)</b>	<b>2025 Act vs Bdgt (%)</b>	
Contest Saction Fees (Nat'l Team Fee)	4929-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		Waived
Awards Expense	5268-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 14,000	\$ 18,439	\$ (4,439)	31.7%	\$ 19,000
Bank Service Charge	5191-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 1,100	\$ -	\$ 1,100	(100.0%)	\$ 1,000
Catering Expense	5371-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 15,000	\$ 16,494	\$ (1,494)	10.0%	\$ 17,000
COS-Clothing (Other Merchandise / Nationals Logo'd)	5090-1000-60-0000-0211-53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
COS-Clothing (Merchandise / Nationals Logo'd)	5092-1000-60-0000-0211-53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
Credit-Card Discounts	5194-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 703	\$ -	\$ 703	(100.0%)	\$ -
Postage Expense - Nationals	5161-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 200	\$ 520	\$ (320)	159.9%	\$ 750
Employee Travel	5282-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,312	\$ (312)	15.6%	\$ 3,000
Non-Employee Travel	5280-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 11,500	\$ 11,640	\$ (140)	1.2%	\$ 12,000
Office Supplies & Expenses	5196-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,306	\$ 3,694	(73.9%)	\$ 5,000
Production Videos	5370-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 12,000	\$ 13,250	\$ (1,250)	10.4%	\$ 17,000
Public Relations	5266-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 12,000	\$ 11,015	\$ 985	(8.2%)	\$ 15,000
Rental Equipment	5193-1000-67-0000-0000-53	\$ 21,750	\$ 21,758	\$ (8)	0.0%	\$ 22,500

To supplement the contest revenue, I sought out numerous in-kind donations to be auctioned off at the contest. Some of the auction items included a Lightspeed Headset, Hooker Harness, Lift Helmet, Champion spark plugs and other goods and services. As is tradition, the various IAC championship and contest banners were auctioned off as well as a signed contest poster, which amounted to \$4k-\$6k in revenue. The 2025 Auction earned more than \$15k. We once again brought in professional auctioneers, which adds a humorous and fun touch to the event. We will likely hold a similar event next year and have already begun seeking donations.

Jordan Ashley (IAC treasurer) will provide the BOD with a thorough analysis of the 2025 contest finances as well as my requests and recommendations for the 2026 U.S. Nationals budget.

I would request the BOD consider removing the burden of the National contest serving as a profit center for the IAC. If additional revenue is needed to sustain the IAC's yearly operating expenses, I would recommend increasing membership dues or sanctioning fees. The U.S. Nationals should not be incumbered by the burden of profit. All donations, sponsorships, and entry funds earned by the contest should be utilized in support of the

U.S. Nationals. Contest leadership should ensure the contest is never executed with a loss and any remaining funds should be placed in an account used to support future IAC Nationals.

## **Salina Airport & Tower**

I would be ashamed if I did not take a moment to thank the Salina Tower Manager, tower controllers, Salina Airport Authority, Salina Airport Operations, and the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) personnel. These folks are consummate professionals and served the IAC community well throughout the contest planning and execution. Continuing to forge strong working relationships with these entities will pay dividends for our organization and contest well into the future. They will be an integral part of the success of any future contest held at KSLN.

## **Recommendations**

Planning for the 2026 Nationals has already begun. Meetings were held with the Salina Airport Authority, Hilton, and Chamber of Commerce. I am looking forward to serving as contest director for the 2026 U.S. Nationals and have a few miscellaneous recommendations for 2026 and future events.

Additional contest equipment is needed to supply a third judging line, specifically tents and chairs. At a minimum 3-4 tents should be purchased. Chairs can be quickly gathered and relocated to a third judging position. The prevailing winds in Salina are North and South, but a third judging station should be prepared in the event an East or West official wind is more appropriate. Chief judges need not be concerned with contest equipment, scheduling or logistics when faced with official wind direction decisions.

Upon completion of the 2025 contest, it was apparent that minor updates to P&P 503 are needed. The suggested updates have been captured and will be presented to IAC president, Jim Bourk, for incorporation into the P&P and presentation/approval by the BOD no later than the Spring BOD meeting.

The 2026 contest schedule will begin mid-morning on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> in anticipation of increased participation, as we have seen year over year. This will still leave adequate reserve time in the schedule, accounting for potential weather impacts/delays.

Lastly, the BOD should consider moving the contest to dates earlier in Sept, specifically in conjunction with Memorial Day weekend. This will have two positive impacts on the contest. First, conducting the contest nearly a month earlier may provide more favorable weather, subject to analysis of long-term weather patterns in Salina or wherever future contests are held. Second, it may alleviate some of the burden associated with time away from professional commitments, given most folks already have an extended holiday weekend, ultimately increasing participation.

I am honored and humbled by the confidence entrusted to me by the IAC BOD and the members of this community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the contest director.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shad Coulson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shad Coulson  
Contest Director