



# Hangar News

Feb 2026

Newsletter of the First Weedwacker Aero Squadron  
AMA Charter #1651

## First Weedwacker Aero Squadron

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Sec: Mark Gray 619-993-6548

Treas: Richard Brown 619-887-7273

15198 Picturesque Point

El Cajon, CA 92021

### Field Marshals:

Vernon Gilmore, Ron Keith, Butch Weiser, Steve Shepersky, Dick Milhausen, Gary Rold, Richard Brown, Keith Miller

Fun Fly Chairman Keith Miller

Race Chairman Glen Merritt, David Roche

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\*AMA Introductory Pilot Program Instructors:

Scott Graupmann, Glenn Merritt, Jeff Coskey, Butch Weiser, Larry Bagalini and Keith Miller

**HANGAR NEWS** is printed for the members of the FIRST WEED WACKER AERO SQUADRON and its contents do not necessarily reflect the policies of the club. Editorial deadline is the 15th of each month.

Articles, news items and classified ads should be sent to [news.weedwackers@gmail.com](mailto:news.weedwackers@gmail.com).

Articles originally published in this newsletter may be reprinted and published by modelers and club newsletters. We ask that credit to the author and this newsletter be acknowledged in the reprint. We will do the same.

**CLUB FIELD:** Cactus Park (East), Ashwood St. (1/4-mile N-E of El Capitan High School) in Lakeside, CA. Please be sure the last flyer to leave locks the pin box and the gate.

## Headlines:

### Upcoming Events

None yet on the club calendar.

### Next Meeting:

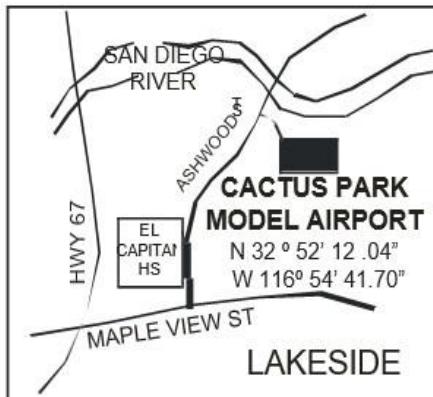
Saturday February 7th 2026 9:00 am at our Ron Smith Memorial Flying Field.

### **East Gate Access Plan - Walk-On Only During a 5-Day Rain Shut-Down**

Period: Club-wide email sent 1/24/2026 – details inside.

**2025 Annual Award Banquet Photo Gallery** – See inside for the smiles on the awardees. The full collection of photos can be found [at this link](#): (click on the link, or copy it and paste it into your web browser as all one line)

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18CxpAjBI9xFMXLuVxdn2Fv4i99QWwDLO?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18CxpAjBI9xFMXLuVxdn2Fv4i99QWwDLO?usp=drive_link)



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## Meeting Minutes 10 Jan 2026 (Banquet Summary)

The Annual Awards Banquet was called to order just after 4:00 PM at the VFW in Lakeside. Ron led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an opening prayer offered by our Secretary Mark Gray.

Club officers present were the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. A total of 75 club members and guests were present

The following people were recognized for their achievements and contributions to the club. Congratulations to them all!!

Who	Award
Richard Brown	Wingman Award Certificate
Jeff Coskey	Wingman Award Certificate
Vernon Gilmore	Wingman Award Certificate
Mark Gray	Wingman Award Certificate
Janie Brown	Cuisine Boss Certificate of Achievement
David Roche	Field Custodian Certificate of Achievement
Brian Knutson	Best BBQ Chef Certificate of Achievement
Phyllis Knutson	Best BBQ Hostess Certificate of Achievement
Mark Lukens	Problem Solver Certificate
Glen Merritt	Pylon Race Director Certificate
Pete Pease	Most Stitches Certificate
Kurtis Schuettenhelm	Most Crashes Certificate
Keith Miller	Mentor Certificate
Lester Moore	Best Save Certificate
Dick Milhausen	Field Marshall Certificate
Gary Rold	Field Marshall Certificate
Steve Shepersky	Field Marshall Certificate
Butch Weiser	Field Marshall Certificate
Lester Moore	Instructor of the Year Award
Richard Brown	12 <sup>th</sup> Man Award
Lester Moore	Weedwacker of the Year Award
Lester Moore	Jim Bailey Community Service Award
Jonah Hammond	Rookie of the Year Award
John Knowles	Most improved Pilot Award
Kenny Lawrence	Builder of the Year Award

### Banquet Awardees

Our Rookie of the Year Jonah Hammond called our raffle. The raffle prizes were superb and included a Sukoi donated by John Lorch and an A10 Warthog donated by another generous member (missed the name).

Ron brought the cakes, one of which was appropriately decorated in a theme appropriate for our most recent “rain delay” issue with the County.

The bar was open and well attended with over \$235 in sales. And everyone behaved! (Thanks Richard!!)

Models were presented by Ken Lawrence, Steve Shepersky and Keith Miller. The voted winners were:

Best Sport Model – **Ken Lawrence**

Best Scale Model, Best ARF, and Peoples’ Choice all awarded to **Steve Shepersky**

The photos are all available for download from Google Drive [at this link](#).

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18CxpAjBI9xFMXMLuVxdn2Fv4i99QWwDLO?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18CxpAjBI9xFMXMLuVxdn2Fv4i99QWwDLO?usp=drive_link).

The event concluded around 6:20 pm with the entire attending crowd participating in tear-down which took maybe 7.34 minutes.

## Jan 2026 President's Message

January 2026 President's Message

Happy New Year everyone!

The 10 January Banquet was a success! Everyone seemed to enjoy the event. Numerous members were recognized for their participation, skills, and assistance. A big thank you to everyone that helped set up and clean up.

The biggest obstacle of the year continues to be the County.

The latest directive is to **lock the entrance gate at all times upon entering and leaving**. This applies to all parks under the jurisdiction of the County. Please remember, we are guest/tenants and they control the field. When you leave the field to retrieve a plane by any of the four gates, ensure gate is locked. Please abide by their guidelines.

I have some good news regarding field usage after rain. I spoke with the owner of the property, Bob (formerly leased by Jake), and obtained permission to park your vehicle on his property east of the runaway. You can then walk through the east gate to the pits. **DO NOT DRIVE YOUR VEHICLE ON THE FIELD PROPERTY OR RUNWAY.** The field will continue to be closed for **five days after the last day of rain for vehicles**. I will attach the County lock and remove the Weedwacker lock so there will be no accidental opening to the field.

*[Following conclusion of the 5-day rain delay,]* I will open the field the night before so we can drive our vehicles

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through the west gate. An email will be sent when it is safe to drive onto the field again - **FIVE DAYS AFTER THE LAST DAY OF RAIN OR ANY MOISTURE THAT FALLS OUT OF THE SKY.** Let me reiterate. The County is adamant about not allowing anyone to drive their cars or trucks onto the field for five days after it rains. This is a privilege so do not abuse it – pick up litter and keep the area clean. Double check that the east gate and Bob's entrance gate is closed and secured with chain upon departure.

The next meeting will be on Saturday, 7 February 2026 at 0900.

Please take the time to read your emails. The emails provide updates regarding access to the field and any other pertinent information that you need.

As always, if you have any questions or anything to report, feel free to call me.

Just a reminder to wear your badge at the field.

Ron  
(619) 988-7667

## Headline News

**East Gate Access Plan - Walk-On Only During a 5-Day Rain Shut-Down Period**  
(issued via email 1/24/2026)

Effective: Sunday, January 25th, 2026

Note: This plan is in only in effect during periods when the main West gate vehicle access is under the 5-day rain restriction. The website has been updated with the current status. In addition, please follow these guidelines:

1. Access through Bob's gate/Nursery for parking. The gate has a loop to hold it closed; the first person in should open it, and the last person out must close and loop the gate.

2. Please plan your entry and exit to avoid impeding Polo traffic.

3. Park in the gravel area along the north side fence. Do not park beyond the cones, as there are many obstacles in the tall grass.

4. Access is walk-on only (during a 5 day rain restriction).

5. The Eastern gate must remain closed except when entering or exiting the field. It must never be left standing

open.

6. Reminder that the club-controlled Eastern gate must be closed at all times, and locked when the last member leaves.

7. Please shorten your flight approaches to avoid hitting a parked vehicle. The pilot is fully responsible for any damage caused should a collision with a parked vehicle occur.

Thank you Ron Keith for working out this option with neighbor Bob! Feel free to call Ron with any questions.

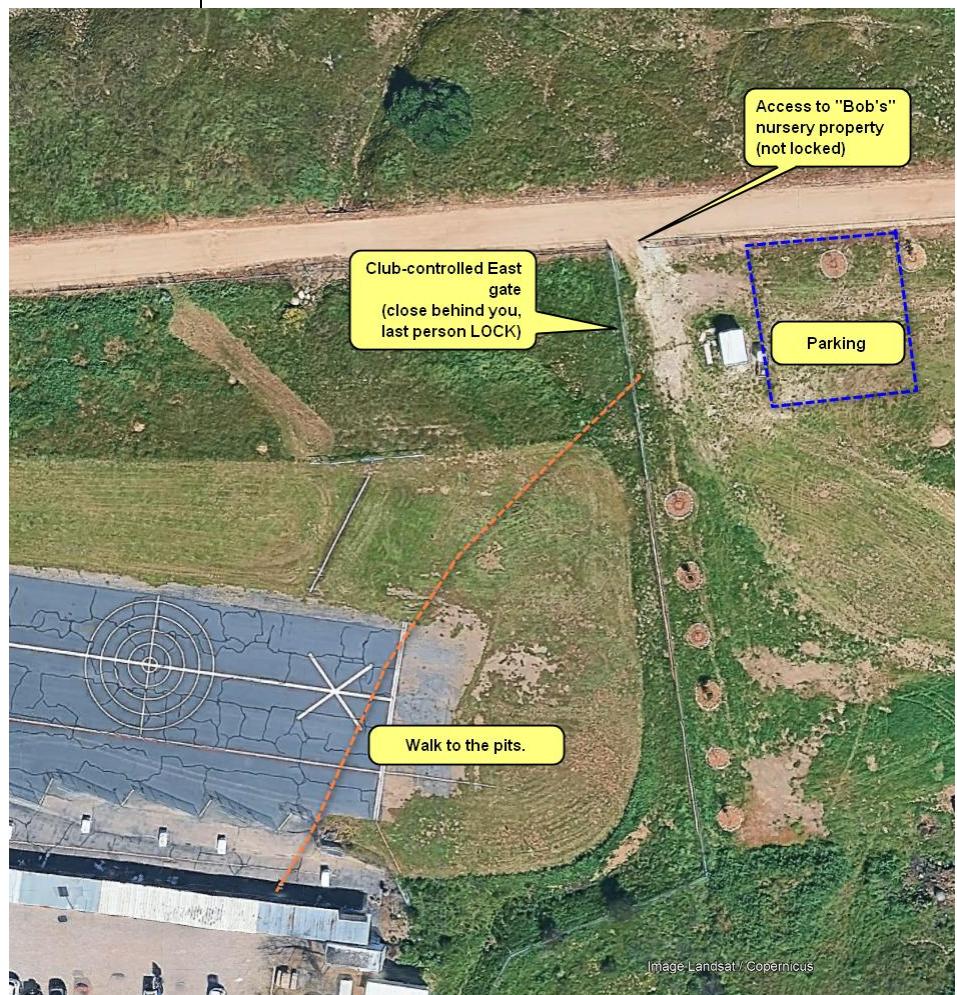


Image Landsat / Copernicus

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## Member's Input

### An open letter call to action for the membership January 28, 2026

Dear Weedwackers,

Our Club and privilege to fly at Cactus Park is under attack. It is clear through their aggressive actions that County employees in charge of Cactus Park are not acting in good faith to abide by our signed lease. We have a signed 5-year lease with 4 years to go. Recent irrational, undocumented demands and conditions placed on the Weedwackers right to use our flying field are not sustainable and potentially illegal harassment under our lease.

The Weedwackers have been consummate custodians of Cactus Park for 37 years.

It is highly insulting to have these public servants trying to cover their ass at our expense. The next Club meeting will arguably be the most important monthly business meeting we have ever had. It's time to build a plan to fight this. I personally have way too much sweat equity in this organization to allow it to fail without a massive and colorful fight. At the next Club meeting on February 7th., I will make the following motions directing the Board to action on behalf of the membership. Come support our effort to save Cactus Park, we need your vote. All the following and more should be on the table so we can effectively make our case for continued unhampered operation of Cactus Park;

1. Contact the AMA for assistance. They have staff trained in flying site retention.
2. Put up a camera at Cactus Park showing the condition of the field as it relates to the foolish rain event mandate, so we have evidence to build a legal case if necessary.
3. Continue to play nice for the moment and ask the County for another flying site since they are effectively restricting club members from our public property.
4. Membership must be polled to see if there is a willing and capable legal advocate for the club. We can hopefully find a referral to an attorney that would agree to represent the club in front of a Judge to make our case for continued use of Cactus Park as per our signed lease. We need to be ready if the membership decides to pursue this Nuclear option. Motion to be made allowing the Board to use up to \$2500 as a retainer if necessary, for an attorney to review the lease and give the Club legal standing guidance.
5. Be prepared to stop playing nice and use the Nuclear option. Commission the draft of a letter to the County

overlords demanding a meeting to discuss their harassment of a tenant with a valid lease and insisting they rationally define the exact idiocy of their recent obstructionist mandates and petty threats to close our access to the park without any written notices or documentation. While mentioning they can start putting together a legal case for their actions because the club will insist this case of harassment be heard in front of a Judge if they don't rationally discuss and compromise with Club representatives on these unacceptable mandates. I volunteer to help draft this letter.

This is your Club, you people as members decide what happens at the next Club meeting. This is your job if you care at all. Not the Boards job, they can only do what the membership directs them to do through a vote of the general membership.

Currently the enemy could force us off the property before we even have a plan. So, if you have a better idea, the February meeting is the place to deliver it. The club has modest assets and I say we use every dime if that's what it takes to put these ignorant, obstructionist County employees back at their desks and out of our park. Please note, the County has no idea what this Club's financial assets are. Just the threat of bringing our case to a Judge may be enough to bring these folks to the table so we can rationally and honorably discuss our concerns with compromise as a goal. Without a field, there is no flying club.

To those of you who claim this effort is in vain and that we "have no chance of victory over the County", I suggest you make your opinion known at the meeting and have an alternative positive step forward to save the Club. Or, when the Club is dissolved next year because we lost our flying site without a fight, you can get your sweet check for your share of our remaining treasury, should be about a hundred bucks.

Respectfully,  
First Weedwacker Aerosquadron member at large, H. Glen Merritt

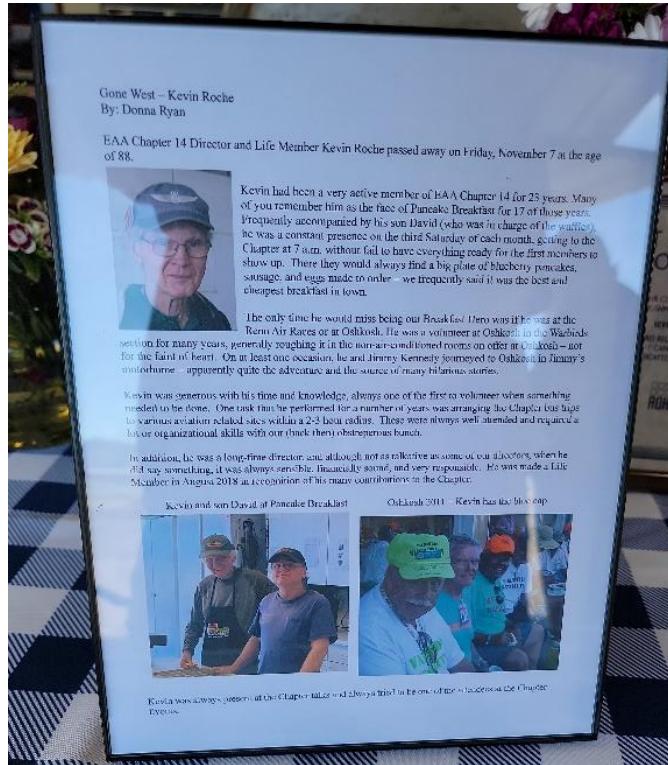
41 years of active continuous Weedwacker membership  
generations of Weedwacker family members  
8 term Weedwacker President  
12 term Weedwacker Board member  
25-year professional career in the RC hobby industry  
2 terms as elected Board member of the Retail Hobby Trade Association

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## Editor's Corner

Keith Miller

**Celebration of Life – Kevin Roche:** On January 17<sup>th</sup>, many of the Weedwackers attended the Celebration of Life for Kevin Roche, David's father. It was a well-attended event during which many of his peers of the EAA Chapter 14 and the Weedwackers. It was a truly heartwarming



remembrance of Kevin's friends and family, recalling the events of his life in and around aviation including his favorites – the Reno Air Races; Oshkosh and many other flying events. Lyle spoke eloquently of Kevin's camaraderie at our Weedwackers field.



**Lithophanes by Kevin Pothier:** AI says “The art of 3D printing photos with a light source primarily involves creating lithophanes, which are 3D reliefs of images that reveal detail only when backlit, transforming digital pictures into tangible, glowing art by varying print thickness to control light transmission.”

At first glance, Kevin's 3D prints look like gloppy layers of plastic in which some guy holding an airplane is barely recognizable. But hold it up against the light, and a very clear image of our Steve Shepensky appears!



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## Photos of the Month



*Trent Alford with his Nieuport maidened in January. Yep, a couple of pounds of lead on that firewall. Flew great!!*

## Awards Banquet Gallery



Weedwacker of the Year, Lester Moore

## Awards Banquet Gallery



Jim Bailey Community Service Award, Lester Moore

# Awards Banquet Gallery

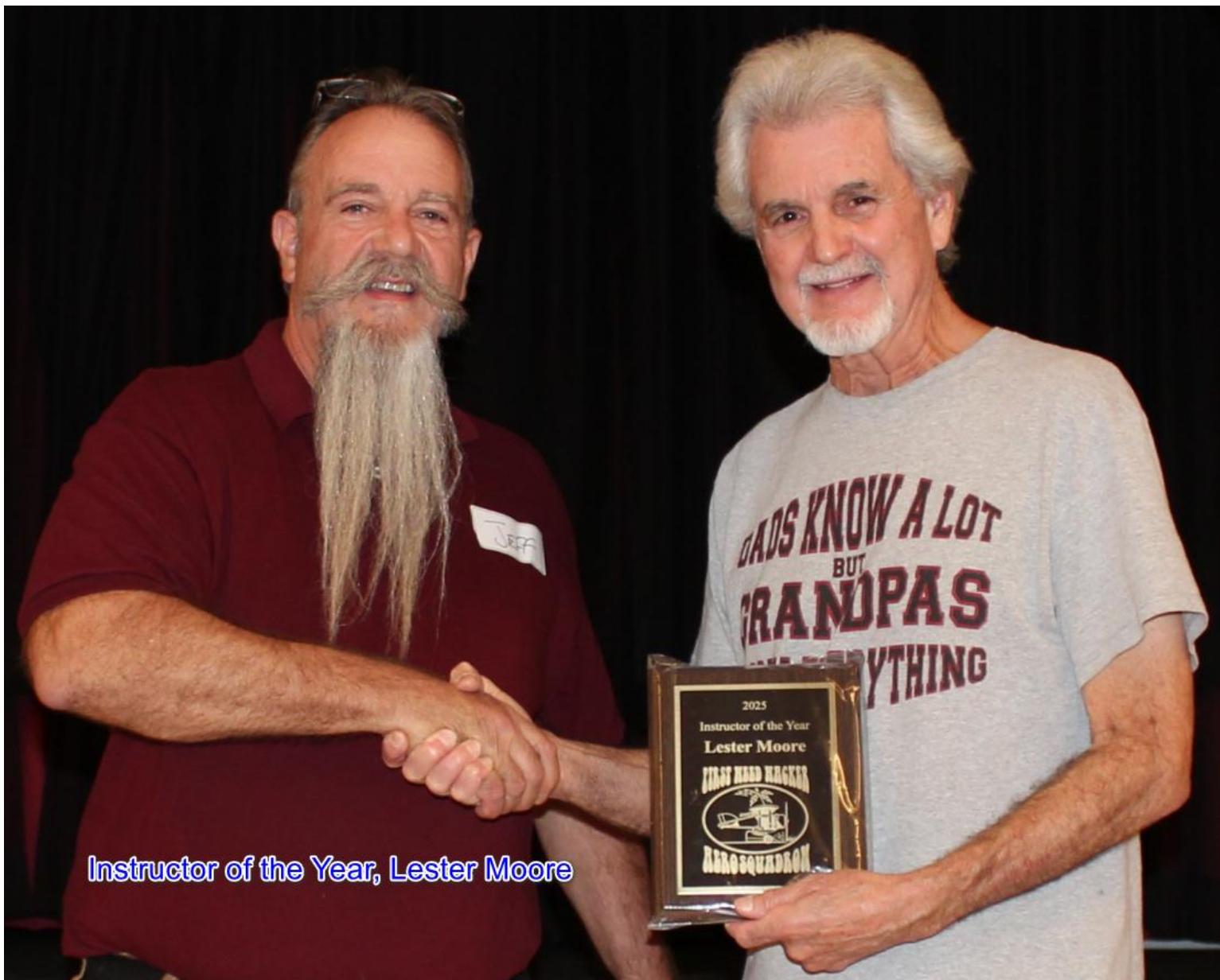
Lifetime Memebership, Bruce Allen



# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery



Instructor of the Year, Lester Moore

# Awards Banquet Gallery

12th Man Award, Richard Brown



# Awards Banquet Gallery



2025 Wingman Awards  
Mark Gray, Jeff Coskey, Richard Brown

# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery

Field Custodian, David Roche



# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery



Presidential Administrator, Mona Horten

# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery

Best Save, Lester Moore



# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery

Wingman Award, Frank Gagliardi



# Awards Banquet Gallery



# Awards Banquet Gallery

