

E-Fest 2011

THE MID-WINTER FESTIVAL CONTINUES TO GET BETTER AND BETTER.

by Dennis McFarlane

E-Fest, hosted by Great Planes Distributors Inc. and sponsored by a number of manufacturers and distributors, has become one of the premier indoor electric radio control aviation festivals. Held each year at the University of Illinois Armory Building, E-Fest has become one of the “must attend” events of the winter flying season.



AMA Programs Coordinator Erin Dobbs was busy all weekend signing up new members to the academy.

Currently, electric airplanes and helicopters are dominating the radio control market. The manufacturers have responded by making a variety of offerings available to your customers. Just about every imaginable product is now available. For this reason the organizers of E-Fest broke the open-flying sessions into “blocks” of time. As an example, slo-flyers and trainers were allowed one block of time, while aerobatic airplanes and ducted fans each had their own blocks of time. This way, pilots were always in the air with models of a similar size and speed.

While offerings by manufacturers were prominently featured at E-Fest, modeling is oftentimes about experimentation and electric power has opened the door to a whole new



It takes people like Hobbico's Senior Service and Support Manager Art Pesch, one of the most jovial individuals in the industry, to keep an event like E-Fest running smoothly.



ParkZone continues to unveil new and innovative products, such as this twin engine WW II Mosquito presented by Jack Adams.

generation of budding aerodynamic engineers. There were a couple of examples of Guillow's rubber-powered sheet balsa airplanes, which had been converted to R/C using tiny motors for propulsion and miniature magnetic actuators for the control surfaces. There was also what looked like a delta wing military fighter from the late 1950's. The builder of this aircraft used sheet Depron for the airframe and two tail rotor motors from a micro helicopter converted into ducted fans. These are only a couple of examples of the many different experimental designs seen at this year's E-Fest.

Seminars have become part of every major event, and the organizers of E-Fest did not disappoint in this regard, either. There were a number of well-attended educational



Spektrum's Chris Huhn explained how crowded the 2.4GHz frequency band has become, and why a user of DSM2 should upgrade to the DSMX operating system.

and informational seminars covering a variety of topics from stick-and-tissue construction to pending rule changes in radio control aviation.

The dates of E-Fest vary each year based on the availability of the university armory. The university does not post its schedule until the fall semester, and the organizers of E-Fest are unable to secure a date until that time. Even though dealers have to keep a flexible winter schedule, this is an event worth attending as the information that can be garnered will certainly be of value to the inventory and operation of your store.

Horizon Hobby's Mike McConville summed the event up perfectly: “Isn't it an exciting and wonderful time to be part of radio control?” **HM**



Gaui Representative Andy Panonillo gets some practice time in on his scale Hughes 500. The model utilizes a multi-blade main rotor head similar in design to the full-scale helicopter.



AMA President Dave Mathewson presented an extremely informative seminar on impending federal regulations that are certain to have an impact of the future of model aviation.



As shown in this flying demonstration by Horizon Hobby's Seth Arnold, the new Blade mCP is fully aerobatic and certain to be popular with an experienced radio control helicopter pilot.



The Saturday afternoon mass launch of Make-N-Take airplanes is always fun to watch. This year more than 500 airplanes were handed out by Hobbico and assembled by excited children.

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12115 Paine Street
Poway, CA 92064
858-748-6948
www.hitecrd.com