



## Wings Across America brings cross-country RC event to Joplin

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Wings Across America has landed in Joplin.

The two-year event involves one radio-controlled plane, more than 370 pilots and 48 states.

'Chain' of pilots

The brainchild of Virginian Frank Geisler, the goal of Wings Across America is to fly the same balsa-wood RC plane with a 38-inch wingspan in each state in the continental United States. Each pilot who flies the plane then meets the next pilot and physically hands it off, creating a "chain" of pilots.

Today at the Joplin RC Club's Summer Fly-in, Webb City resident Tom Long will be one of the pilots representing Missouri.

"Probably, what I'll do is make a few laps around ... our flying field. (The pilots) try not to fly it a lot ... just (because of) the chance of damaging it," Long said.

Long became involved with the event when he heard about it on Wattflyers, an online forum for electric RC aircraft. The Wings Across America event has been coordinated online, and Geisler tracks the progression of the plane on [www.waa-08.org](http://www.waa-08.org).

Seven more Missouri pilots fly the plane before it moves to Kansas.

RC planes have been flown all across the country before, but never quite like this, Long said.

"It has never been done where each pilot physically delivered it to the next one. This actually has every member in contact ... which is great, because we all get to meet a lot more people," Long said.

He will be the 144th pilot to fly the plane.

Early takeoff

Long said that he would most likely fly the WAA plane early today, perhaps around 10 a.m.

"It's going to depend on the weather," he said.

The Summer Fly-in is an all-day, Academy of Model Aeronautics-sanctioned event. That means AMA members from all over the country can come and fly their RC aircraft.

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