

# Banner Pull

There are pilots who pull banners behind their planes for profit and some do it as a hobby. Rarely will you find a pilot who will pull a water safety banner behind an aircraft free-of-charge, but it has happened.

Keep on the lookout, just in case “your pilot” lands in your lap. The person could be a boater or angler on “your” lake, a doctor, lawyer or police chief. When you are around the local airport, keep an eye open. The small airports are the best place to start your search. “Your pilot” might be looking for someone to ask the magic question. Normally, the pilot will be financially stable and will not desire any payment. The pilot is looking for a community service type project, and maybe no one has requested his or her services. Let this individual know, up front, you will not be paying for this service.

Before asking the pilot to pull your banner, answer these questions: 1) when do I want the banner pulled, 2) what should the banner say, 3) where should it appear, and 4) what color should it be? Be prepared, just in case the pilot says “yes” to your banner pull proposal.

First, when should the banner be pulled? Normally, the most crowded, and three worst weekends for boating fatalities will be the best weekends; Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. Fly over when the banner will be seen by the most people.

Second, what should the banner say? The water safety message should be ultra short and to the point. A few suggestions are: “Wear a Life Jacket”, “Learn to Swim Well”, “Know Your Limits”, “Boat Sober”, or “Buckle Up: Seat Belts & Life Jackets Save Lives”

“Your Safety Our Concern” is a wonderful slogan, but it does not tell the recreator to do anything. For that reason, you might not want to use it on your banner.

Third, where should the banner be pulled? The lake area is the location. Other adjacent areas to be flown might be over nearby parking lots, put-in ramps and swimming areas. Don’t forget other nearby lakes. Before flying over other lakes, make sure to check with the lake manager, first.

Fourth, what color should it be? Red on a white background is good. Red is the Corps color and it shows up really well with the blue sky as a background. If you can add a second color, blue might be perfect. Our Nation’s “red, white and blue” colors are sure winners.

Before asking the pilot to fly your banner, check on who will paint it, how long will it take to produce, and for how much. You might be required to pay for the banner. The cost probably will range from \$300 to \$600, depending on the banner’s canvas, amount of letters, and number of colors. Check on how long it will take the graphic company to paint the banner before asking the pilot to fly it. Do not date the banner, so you can use it again.

If you do not have the funds to pay for the banner, check on other local organizations who might want to help, such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla, local Red Cross chapter, chamber of commerce, or lake development association. Civic, service or fraternal organizations are always searching for community projects to help fund. Ask. The worst they can say is “no”, then go to someone else. Rotary Clubs are one of the best at providing donations for such worthwhile causes.

Furthermore, “your” pilot might be a member of one of the aforementioned groups. Now you are ready to “pop the question.” When the “yes” is given, you will probably need to get the banner to the plane and maybe assist the pilot. Remember to take a camera for publicity. Nearly everyone loves to see their photograph in the local newspaper.

After the successful pull, do not forget to say, “Thank you” and shortly thereafter maybe give the partners and pilot involved something from the US Army Corps of Engineers, such as a Letter of Appreciation, Certificate of Achievement, etc.

See, there is a possibility of obtaining a banner pull, at no cost, too. It might require only your time.

Good luck in finding your Red Baron.