



PHOTO PROVIDED

Back in the hangar at Lock Haven, adjunct flight instructor John Spencer congratulates Art Hattel, left, on completing his Sport Pilot license in this fully restored 1946 Ercoupe, after two years of flight instruction at AvSport of Lock Haven on the Piper Memorial Airport.

## PSU professor earns pilot's license

LOCK HAVEN — Two years, two months, one day, start to finish.

That's how long it took Art Hattel to complete his pilot's license at AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport flying school on Lock Haven's Piper Memorial Airport.

Hattel, 59, a Penn State research professor of veterinary science, definitely took longer than most to earn his wings.

But, there were extenuating circumstances.

Two years ago, when Hattel began pursuing a Sport Pilot license with Prof. H. Paul Shuch, founder and chief flight instructor of Lock Haven's flying school, the two were flying in Shuch's new Evektor SportStar, a Czech light training aircraft. Soon after, Hattel became enamored with the antique Ercoupe, and went on a quest to acquire one of the quirky classics.

His search led him to Florida, to check out a 1946 'Coupe listed for sale online. After completing a pre-purchase inspection, and a thorough test flight conducted by Shuch, Hattel purchased the Ercoupe on the spot, arranged for it to be delivered to Lock Haven, and resumed lessons, this time in a plane of his own.

Over the next two years, while attempting to complete his flight training, Hattel learned that the joys of aircraft ownership (especially in the case of antique aircraft) include frequent trips to the maintenance shop. His new acquisition was treated to an extensive airframe restoration, followed by a complete engine overhaul, as well as a brand new propeller.

"Art found out," notes Shuch, "one advantage of learning to fly in your own airplane: the process takes only twice as long, and costs just ten

times as much."

On Sept. 14., Hattel's investment (both monetary and temporal) finally paid off, when he completed his Sport Pilot practical examination in Selinsgrove, with FAA designated pilot examiner John Smith of York. He flew his antique Ercoupe back to Lock Haven, exhausted but elated, as the world's newest licensed pilot.

The Sport Pilot license, in which AvSport specializes, is the newest portal of entry into the world of aviation, allowing prospective pilots to become licensed in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private Pilot license. Piper Memorial Airport is the ancestral home to the legendary Piper Cub, arguably the world's first sport plane. Modern Light Sport aircraft allow pilots to recapture the bygone fly-for-fun Cub era, with increased reliability and improved safety.