



**PIPER MEMORIAL AIRPORT  
353 PROCTOR STREET  
LOCK HAVEN PA 17745**

Business News Release:

## **Lock Haven Flight School Reorganizes as LLC**

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**Lock Haven, PA, 1 January 2014** – Prof. H. Paul Shuch, Chief Flight Instructor at AvSport of Lock Haven, has announced that the Sport Aviation business he established four years ago on the Piper Memorial Airport has just been reorganized as a Limited Liability Company (LLC). Shuch explains that the move, intended to protect himself and his family in litigious times, was motivated by the legal fallout of an aviation accident in Oregon last September.

In that case, still under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board, a pilot personally known to Shuch was flying to California in a Light Sport aircraft somewhat similar to the one AvSport uses for pilot training. Suspecting he was low on fuel, that pilot opted to make a precautionary landing at a private airport. Checking his fuel tanks, he found his fuel level to be indeed below FAA minimum requirements for continued flight. Nevertheless, rather than hauling a five gallon can from a nearby gas station, the pilot opted to fly on to an airport just a few miles away, to take on additional fuel.

His aircraft ended up running out of fuel on that flight, and the pilot attempted an emergency landing in a field just short of the runway. “I *thought* I had enough fuel to make it,” he later reported. Thankfully, the pilot was not injured, though his aircraft sustained substantial damage.

But the story neither begins nor ends here. Over the preceding year, in his capacity as volunteer FAA Safety Team Lead Representative for Lock Haven, Shuch had counseled this particular pilot several times about possible unsafe actions and decisions he had witnessed. So, it turns out, had two other Certified Flight Instructors. The pilot had disregarded their words of caution.

After the accident, the pilot, who happens to be an attorney, filed a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the manufacturer of his aircraft, as well as its importer, US distributor, the dealer who sold it to him, the mechanic who maintained it, and the flight instructors who had trained him. That lawsuit, according to Shuch, is completely without merit. Nevertheless, it will cost each of the defendants tens to hundreds of thousand dollars in legal defense fees.

“The only people who benefit from such a situation are the attorneys,” states Shuch. “No matter how much insurance you carry, someone can always sue you for more than that amount. And, the facts in a case may have little bearing on the decision of a jury.”

Shuch reasoned that, as a Sole Proprietorship, AvSport could well have been the target of just such a frivolous lawsuit, and his personal property and retirement income could have been placed in jeopardy. Registering his flight school as an LLC, he realized, would provide at least a modicum of protection.

Now, should someone choose to sue the company, all he or she can hope to gain is ownership of a flight school. “Frankly,” Shuch adds immodestly, “without someone like me at the helm, AvSport has very limited commercial value.”

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