



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

For Immediate Release:

## **Air Conditioning Expert Takes to the Air**

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**Lock Haven, PA, 30 August 2014** – For John Prasko, it was a challenging transition. Three years ago, he began training for his pilot's license in a 1946 Aeronca Champ, a steel tube and fabric antique airplane with tandem seating, a 65 horsepower engine, mechanical heel brakes, a tailwheel, crude instrumentation, and no electrical system -- in other words, an aircraft very similar to the ubiquitous Piper Cub famously built in Lock Haven between 1937 and 1947. This summer Prasko, a heating and air conditioning contractor from Hastings PA, decided to try his hand at flying a more modern machine. And that's when his work really began.

Since late May, Prasko has been receiving flight instruction at AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport aviation school on the Piper Memorial Airport, in an Evektor SportStar, a modern trainer built in the Czech Republic by what Chief Flight Instructor H. Paul Shuch calls "meticulous Eastern European craftsmen." Transitioning to an all-aluminum, low-wing design with a 100 HP engine, advanced electronics systems, hydraulic toe brakes, a steerable nose wheel, and side-by-side seating required Prasko to unlearn many of his Champ driving skills. "It's ironic," notes Prof. Shuch, "since my very first flight lesson was also in a 1946 Champ, more than a half-century ago. I was pleased to help John negotiate the same learning curve I had to climb those many decades back. His excellent solo flight performance in the SportStar suggests he will have no difficulty earning his pilot's license over the next few months."

AvSport was founded in January 2010 by Dr. Shuch, an Air Force veteran and retired aeronautical engineering professor who started flying in 1961, and has been a flight instructor for more than thirty years. "I chose to start my flight school at Lock Haven," he explains, "because of the city's proud aviation tradition, the area's scenic terrain, and the community's enthusiastic support of sport aviation."

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.

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTO: <http://www.avsport.org/photos/solo/Prasko.jpg>

CAPTION: AvSport Chief Flight Instructor H. Paul Shuch (left) trims John Prasko's shirt-tail after a successful solo flight. This tradition, dating to the Golden Age of aviation, recalls a time when student pilots frequently had to patch the rips in their fabric aircraft with pieces of their own garments.