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Staff Reports

Saturday, 05 September 2009 00:00

AUBURN — Wind-whipped passengers can get a rare view of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival and Kruse International's Auburn auction in an open-cockpit biplane this weekend.

Modern-day barnstormer Ted "Scooter" Davis, of Brodhead, Wis., will sell rides in his 1942 New Standard D25 open cockpit biplane through Sunday.

Rides, which will be about 15 minutes long, will take up to four passengers at a time over the Kruse International auction park and downtown Auburn. It also will allow people to experience the thrill of riding in the open air in a vintage aircraft.

The plane is being hosted by the EAA Vintage Aircraft Association Chapter 37. The club also is parking aircraft at the DeKalb County Airport this weekend.

VAA Chapter 37 member Fritz Martin rode in the plane Friday morning.

"It really gets you back to what flying really was," he said. "There's just nothing like it."

Martin, a pilot who was taking his fourth ride in an open-cockpit plane, said he loves the noise and smell of the engine and the feel of the wind whipping by. Although he has flown in numerous planes, he said he loves not being stuck inside a cockpit.

"This is totally different, being able to experience the outside," he said.

Only 77 New Standard biplanes were built between 1929 and 1942. The planes were designed for the Gaites Flying Circus, and many New Standard biplanes were used in air shows and to give rides to the public in the 1920s and 1930s. Davis' plane, however, was built in 1942 and

Images



A New Standard biplane waits for more passengers at the DeKalb County Airport Friday. Pilot Ted Davis is selling rides in the plane all weekend.



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purchased by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use as a cropduster to help control the gypsy moth population in Illinois.

Davis owns an aircraft restoring business and decided, with two partners, to purchase and restore the New Standard.

"I completed the restoration and get to go out and use it," he said.

The plane, one of only seven of its type still in the air, has been flying for about 15 months and has logged almost 500 hours since it was restored. Davis takes the plane on the American Barnstormers Flying Circus tour during the summer, as well as offering rides on his own.

Davis said he could envision himself moving further south and doing more with his biplane at some time.

"I can see it maybe taking over the restoration thing," he said. "It's just kind of a change of pace."

Davis said his favorite part of owning his New Standard biplane is interacting with all of the people who take rides.

"It's really a neat job. You get to meet so many people," he said. "And, being able to share my passion with other people. It's kind of a neat thing."

Davis will give rides through Sunday, weather permitting. Rides cost \$80 per person for two passengers, \$70 per person for three passengers and \$60 per person for four passengers.

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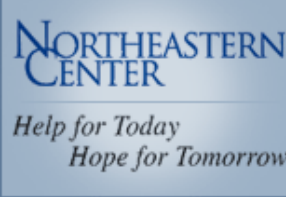
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