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Barnstormer coming for Labor Day weekend

By Jenny Kobiela-Mondor jennyk@kpcnews.net
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AUBURN — History buffs will be able to relive a bygone era in aviation over Labor Day weekend.

A modern-day barnstormer will offer rides in his fully restored 1942 New Standard D25 biplane at Auburn Sept. 4-6.

The EAA Vintage Aircraft Association Chapter 37, based at the DeKalb County Airport, is hosting the biplane and its pilots.

Ted "Scooter" Davis, based in Brodhead, Wis., purchased the plane about three years ago and finished restoring it in June 2008. Since then, he and his partner, Chris "Diavolo" Price, have given more than 3,000 rides in the plane, both on the American Flying Circus Barnstormers tour and on their own.

Davis and Price mostly take the plane around Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa, although they have traveled to New York State and Oklahoma this summer.

"We enjoy barnstorming with it," he said. Barnstorming was a popular form of entertainment in the 1920s and 1930s, when pilots would fly into small towns, perform air shows and give rides to the public.

The plane was designed in 1928 for the Gaits Flying Circus, and 77 New Standard D25 biplanes were built between 1929 and 1942. Only seven of the planes are still flying.

"It's just a really unique airplane," Davis said.

The biplane that will visit Auburn was used as a cropduster to control the gypsy moth population in Illinois, Davis said.

Images



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED A fully restored 1942 New Standard D-25 biplane will be offering rides in Auburn Sept. 4-6.



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The plane was designed to hold more people than previous biplanes — four people plus the pilot — so barnstormers could make more money giving rides.

“With this aircraft coming out with the new design, it obviously was a revenue enhancement,” Davis said.

Davis and Price will be giving rides in the plane throughout the weekend. Rides will be about 15 minutes long, and passengers will be able to see the Kruse International collector car auction from the air.

Davis said the rides should be very smooth, because the plane has a long wingspan and is more stable than many modern airplanes.

“If you shut your eyes, you wouldn’t even know you’re flying,” he said.

Davis said they hope to recreate a 1920s atmosphere, with the pilots wearing 1920s-era clothing.

VAA Chapter 37 president Tim Fox said he is very excited to host the pilots and the plane.

“Flying around with the wind in your face is more than cool,” he said.

Davis said he plans to be at the airport around noon on Friday, Sept. 4, and will give rides through Sunday, Sept. 6, 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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