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The Evening Star

Tuesday

June 5, 2007

# Aircraft auction doesn't fly

No planes sold in rainy weather

By Jenny Kobiela

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AUBURN — Bids just couldn't get off the ground at Kruse International's Auburn Aircraft Auction.

None of the planes in the auction sold Sunday afternoon. A few people bid, but not high enough for the owners to part with their aircraft.



Carl Walchshouser looks on as people inspect his Convair-Vultee L13 aircraft following the Auburn Aircraft Auction Sunday. The plane failed to sell. (Photo by Jenny Kobiela)

Carl Walchshouser flew his L13 reconnaissance aircraft, manufactured by Convair-Vultee, to Auburn from his home in Dallas-Fort Worth for the auction.

A self-described "airplane nut all my life," Walchshouser became interested in aircraft at first because his father flew with the German Luftwaffe during World War I.

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However, Walchshauser, an aeronautical engineer, has decided that, at this stage in his life, now is the right time to let go of his plane.

"Right now, I need to sell," he said.

He had hoped to sell the aircraft for around \$60,000. The highest bid came in at only \$40,000.

He thought the auction was "way oversold. There were supposed to be 20 aircraft here, and there were only five," he said.

Now Walchshauser plans to advertise the plane for sale in Trade-A-Plane, a popular magazine and Web site where aircraft owners can buy, sell and trade aircraft.

Still, he was frustrated with his aircraft auction experience.

"It took a lot of time and money and it didn't work out at all," he said.

Kruse International sales manager Dave Nelson blamed Mother Nature for the underwhelming auction. He said he had received calls from potential buyers all week, but the forecast of rain and thunderstorms may have kept some of them away.

"We got rained out, basically," he said.

The auction started approximately a half-hour early, at 1 p.m., to try to beat the showers, but rain began pelting auction-goers only a few minutes into the bidding as thunder rumbled in the distance.

Airport manager Russ Couchman said a fly-in pancake breakfast Sunday morning suffered similar problems.

Only five airplanes landed at the DeKalb County airport Sunday morning for the breakfast, and all of them left before the auction.

Couchman attended both the breakfast and the auction, although he and the Board of Aviation Commissioners were only minimally involved in the event.

Kruse International signed a license agreement with the DeKalb County Airport and the event was almost exclusively organized by Kruse International, the Hoosier Air Museum, Vintage Aircraft Chapter 37, and Victory Aviation.

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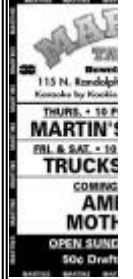
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