



PHOTO PROVIDED

**Steven Katz receives his sport pilot license from FAA-designated pilot examiner Art Tarola at AvSport of Lock Haven.**

## Local surgeon 'cuts umbilical cord' with the ground

LOCK HAVEN - A year and a half after taking his first flying lesson, Dr. Steven Katz of Lock Haven has freed himself from the scrutiny of his flight instructor.

Katz, a general surgeon at Jersey Shore Hospital, completed his FAA practical test recently and became a fully licensed sport pilot. The 63-year-old physician is now free to fly off with a passenger in search of the "Hundred Dollar Hamburger."

Katz's professional responsibilities led him to postpone his dream of flight. A shortage of local surgeons forced him to suspend his studies after four months of training. It was a full year before he was able to resume his efforts to conquer the sky.

"That one-year hiatus significantly impeded Steve's progress," said Prof. H. Paul Shuch, chief flight instructor at AvSport of Lock Haven, the flight school he founded at Piper Memorial Airport at the beginning of 2010. "Because flying skills erode quickly if not practiced frequently, Steve basically had to start over again in August."

He essentially completed the full sport pilot curriculum in less than three months, according to Shuch.

Before tackling his FAA flight test, Katz flew a practice check-ride with John Spencer, AvSport's adjunct flight instructor.

"I quizzed Steve on the entire sport pilot curriculum," Spencer said, "except for aeromedical factors, a topic in which his knowledge is hardly subject to question. His performance in all areas of operation left no doubt that he is fully qualified to act safely as pilot in command."

The sport pilot license is the newest portal of entry into the world of aviation, allowing prospective pilots to become licensed in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional private pilot license. Sport pilots fly for fun and are restricted to flying simple low-performance aircraft that comply with the Light Sport rule. They are allowed to carry a single passenger, flying in uncongested airspace, during daylight hours and only in good weather conditions.