

FAA pilot examiner gains new privileges

LOCK HAVEN – Prof. H. Paul Shuch, the local Designated Pilot Examiner, has just been granted additional privileges by the Federal Aviation Administration. His FAA Designation now authorizes him to examine and certify prospective Sport Pilot Flight Instructors.

“The FAA Sport Pilot rating, introduced in 2004, is probably the best kept secret in aviation,” explains Shuch. “It allows one to become a pilot in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private Pilot rating. It serves as both an ideal portal of entry for aspiring aviators, and a perfect stepping-stone to higher ratings. Unfortunately, it has not yet caught on the extent many of us had hoped.”

Shuch attributes this underwhelming response to a shortage of flight instructors qualified to train Sport Pilots, as well as the dearth of flight schools interested in expanding their course offerings. Over a decade ago, he established AvSport of Lock Haven on the Piper Memorial Airport as one of the country’s leading Sport Pilot flight schools, specifically to fill this gap. But, he notes, “it’s hard to attract new flight instructors when there is also a shortage of FAA Pilot Examiners authorized to test and certify them.” So, over a year ago, he applied to the FAA for the privilege of examining new Sport Pilot Flight Instructors.

The gears of government normally grind slowly, notes Shuch, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought them to an abrupt halt, significantly delaying what should have been a simple administrative process. “I already had a qualified instructor applicant in queue. He waited for several months for me to be authorized to give him a checkride,” Shuch reports. “That individual finally gave up in despair, and traveled all the way to Florida to be tested for his instructor rating. Now, he’s back in Central PA, and actually training one of my flight school’s students.”

Sport Pilots fly solely for pleasure, in fair weather, during daylight hours, in simple, lowperformance Light Sport aircraft. 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. Anyone interested in learning more about sport flying is invited to browse the school’s extensive website at <http://AvSport.org>, where a wealth of free training materials awaits.