

First two robins of spring leave flight school's nest

COMMUNITY

APR 22, 2017

f SHARE

TWEET



Designated Pilot Examiner John Smith, left, quizzes Rajendra Dave on flight planning and airspace restrictions during his FAA Sport Pilot Practical Examination, after training at AvSport of Lock Haven on the Piper Memorial Airport.



After completing a successful checkride in Selinsgrove, David Mauck, right, receives his coveted Sport Pilot ticket from examiner John Smith.

LOCK HAVEN — With the return of flyable weather just two weeks after the equinox, not one but two flight students at the

Piper Memorial Airport today completed their FAA practical tests with FAA Designated Pilot Examiner John Smith, briefly becoming the world's newest two licensed pilots.

Rajendra Dave, a hotel operator in Lamar, and David Mauck, a retired campus police officer from Mill Hall, both braved the uncertainty of winter weather to complete their flight training at AvSport of Lock Haven, the area's premiere sport flying facility, and have earned their Sport Pilot certificates after many months of effort.

It was an unusually long haul for David Mauck. More than a year ago, the day after retiring from Pennsylvania College of Technology, the former campus policeman began his flight training at Lock Haven's sport aviation flight school. His efforts were hampered by erratic weather on nearly all of his scheduled flying days. Then, after completing his training last November, Mauck had to wait five months to schedule his flight test, due to a severe shortage of FAA designated pilot examiners.

"David came close to giving up more than once," notes Prof. H. Paul Shuch, AvSport's founder and chief flight instructor, *"but am glad he persevered, to become the fine pilot he is."*

Rajendra Dave's progress was delayed for other reasons. A native of India (though a longtime Central PA resident), he had to be vetted by the Transportation Security Administration before being allowed to begin flight training. *"This process can take several months,"* notes Prof. Shuch, *"even though AvSport is a TSA-approved foreign student flight training facility. Inevitably, restrictions designed to keep us safe can have impact far beyond that intended. Nevertheless, Raj patiently jumped through all the hoops, a credit to his dedication and commitment."*

Both graduates will continue to enjoy recreational aviation at Lock Haven, as renter pilots of the very aircraft in which they trained. They may even continue their studies, to gain additional skills and earn further pilot privileges.

The Sport Pilot license, in which AvSport specializes, 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 solely for pleasure, in fair weather, during daylight hours, in simple, low-performance 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.