

The Express, Lock Haven, PA

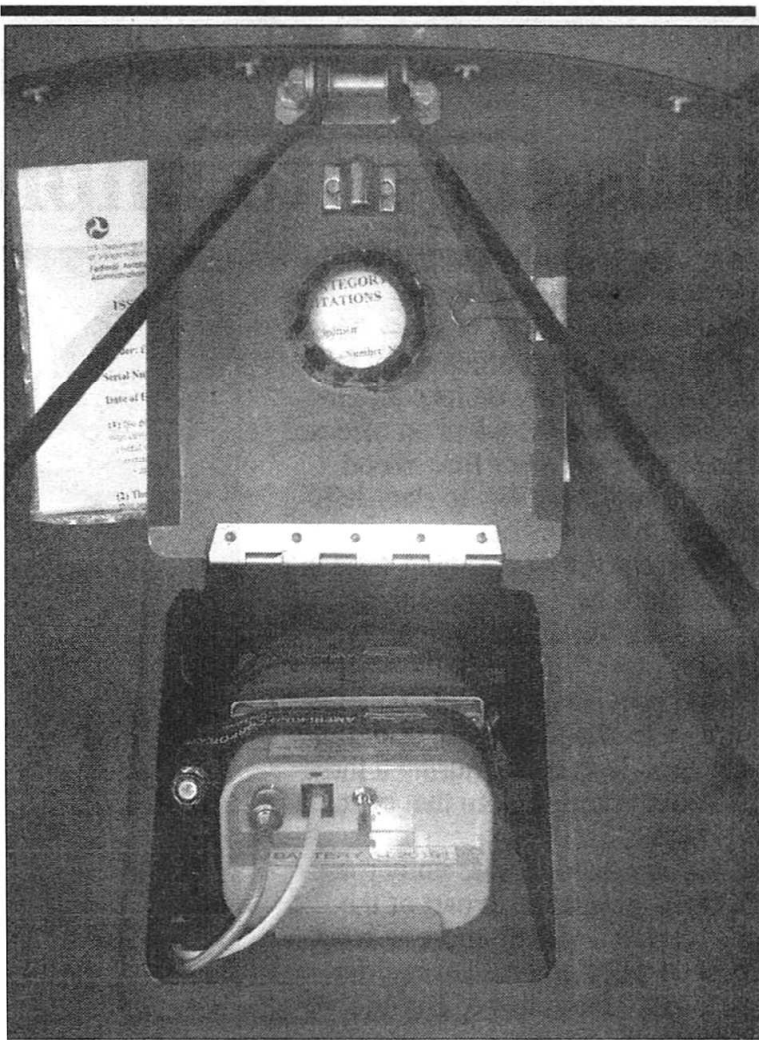


PHOTO PROVIDED

Tucked safely behind a trap-door in the baggage compartment of the SportStar trainer, AvSport's new, modern digital Emergency Locator Transmitter waits patiently for its opportunity to decrease search and rescue time, through the use of next-generation SARSATs.

Flight School adds new safety equipment

LOCK HAVEN - Motor vehicle collisions are practically an hourly event with most of us having experienced one or more. Thankfully aircraft accidents are an exceedingly rare, one-in-a-million occurrence.

Nevertheless, they are something pilots prepare for, through both training and emergency equipment.

With the safety of its students in mind, AvSport, the sport aviation school on Piper Memorial Airport, has recently added the latest safety enhancement to its training aircraft, in the form of a next-generation crash beacon. Formally called a digital Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), this device sends out an automated distress signal, in the unlikely event of an off-airport landing.

"The previous ELT installed in our aircraft," explains Prof. H. Paul Shuch, the school's chief flight instructor, "employed 1970s analog technology, effective but limited. The computer revolution has made possible a new generation of digital ELTs, which transmit an aircraft's exact position via Search and Rescue Satellites (SARSATs), significantly reducing response time should a mishap occur."

This new technology has not been mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration, Shuch emphasizes, "primarily because it would cost hundreds of millions of dollars to retrofit the entire US aviation fleet. So, I installed this unit voluntarily, refusing to place a price on the safety of my students and customers. Besides, satellite tracking technology is kind of cool, isn't it?"

Shuch has a long history of involvement with aviation safety, holding patents in collision avoidance technology, serving as volunteer FAA Safety Team Lead Representative for Lock Haven, having earned a Ph.D. in air transportation engineering with a research emphasis in general aviation safety, and having received prestigious safety awards from the FAA and the Experimental Aircraft Association.

AvSport was founded in January 2010 by Dr. Shuch, an Air Force veteran and retired aeronautical engineering professor who started flying in 1961, and has been a flight instructor for more than thirty years. "I chose to start my flight school at Lock Haven," he explains, "because of the city's proud aviation tradition, the area's scenic terrain, and the community's enthusiastic support of sport aviation."

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.