

Pilot ventures off to Oshkosh

Celebration 'world's greatest' in aircraft

By ALLISON GATLIN
Valley Press Staff Writer

Fliers the world over are winging it this week to Oshkosh, Wis., the center of the aviation universe for the next seven days as the Experimental Aircraft Association's annual gathering returns.

Dubbed "The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration," AirVenture 2009 will provide a week's worth of aircraft of every shape, size and vintage, along with lectures, classes, films and plenty of aviation camaraderie.

Each year, a number of local aviators make the cross-country trek to Wittman Regional Airport, some in aircraft of their own construction.

Although he has attended AirVenture four times since 2000, this year marks the first time Rosamond pilot Russ Erb will arrive in his own homebuilt Bearhawk.

"The first time was to see what Oshkosh is all about," he said. "Now it's much more about seeing friends you've made over the years."

Erb, an aircraft performance master instructor at the Air Force Test Pilot School, bought the plans to the four-seat Bearhawk in 1996 and painstakingly constructed the airplane from scratch over the next 12 years. His first flight in "Three Sigma" was June 7, 2008 — also his 22nd wedding anniversary.

Since then, an engine rebuild meant the airplane only flew twice last year and logged most of its flight time since May. The flight to Oshkosh will be the longest yet, and will add a few more landings to the ones at Rosamond Skypark and Fox Field to the log book.

Erb will team up with fellow EAA Chapter 1000 member Gary Aldrich, flying his Cessna 180, for the trek.

Throughout the years of construction on his Bearhawk, Erb has made many friends of fellow Bearhawk builders in online forums. AirVenture is an opportunity to catch up in person.

When arriving this time in his own airplane, Erb said he is looking forward to finally being able to show it off to those friends.

See OSHKOSH on A4



Contribut



WINGING IT

Rosamond pilot Russ Erb, above, will arrive this week in his own homebuilt Bearhawk to "The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration," AirVenture 2009. WhiteKnight, left, the carrier aircraft designed and built by Scaled Composites for the Virgin Galactic spaceline, will have its first showing for the general public. Scaled Composites

AV Fair officials drop in on Orange count

NEW GADGETS

At the Orange County Fair on Wednesday afternoon, Tony Fiori, media and marketing manager for Ray Cammack Shows, the new carnival provider



By RICH BREAU
Valley Press Senior Feature Writer

LANCASTER — Antelope Valley Fair officials, fair sponsors, community organization and media representatives and youths from the Antelope Valley Boys & Girls Club boarded two charter buses Wednesday for a field trip to the Orange County Fair.

While all enjoyed their few hours at the fair, they were there to find out more about Ray Cammack

During officials learn County Fair weeks, moving up the AV Fair weekend.

To avoid food vendors voted to eight days, carnival fair, and state fair