



BEARHAWK

— AIRCRAFT —

From Mark Goldberg

I am very pleased to announce the sale of AviPro Aircraft, Ltd (dba Bearhawk Aircraft) to Virgil Irwin and his company, Bearhawk Aircraft, Inc. It was about 23 years ago when we formed a company to manufacture kits for the four-place Bearhawk. After deciding the plane fit my needs and buying a set of plans for the Bearhawk, I realized that plans/scratch building a Bearhawk was beyond my ability. So the idea was born to manufacture a kit for the plane. The factory was set up in 2001, and the first kits were shipped in the summer of 2002. The very first kit produced at the factory turned into N303AP in December 2003. N303AP now has over 1300 hours and is still flying well.

After several years, the kit factory developed a kit for the two place tandem Bearhawk Patrol. The Bearhawk LSA was next a few years later. After being asked many times about a two seat side by side model – we developed the Companion. The last of the five designs of kits now being made is the six seat Bearhawk Five.

The success and longevity of the company is due to two factors. First, design engineer Bob Barrows has designed incredible flying airplanes that have unbelievable performance. Every one of the Bearhawks have great STOL ability but also possess unmatched cruise speeds for utility class planes. Second, the hard work of the kit factory to make quality kits while continually improving the kits and making them easier and faster to build. These efforts continue to this day.

After turning 70 years old twenty months ago, I began to think it was time to let someone younger take charge of the company. There were discussions with several individuals and companies. However, none seemed a really good fit to take over. My primary interest has been the future success of the company and the kit manufacturing factory. At Oshkosh 2023, Virgil and I began discussions about passing the torch to him. I became convinced of his abilities, honesty, and willingness to do the hard work to take the company to the next level. Virgil will be a great captain to drive the company going forward.

I am especially appreciative of all the new friends made during these 23 years. Both

customers all over the world who are now friends and vendors and others who became much more than just business associates. I learned a tremendous amount from working with design engineer Bob Barrows whose engineering talent is just off the scale.

My involvement with the company will continue as long as is needed to make the transition smooth and easy. Thank you to everyone in the Bearhawk community who has been a pleasure to know and work with.

- Mark Goldberg

From Virgil Irwin

I entered into the Bearhawk world as a customer. At the time, I was in search of a utility airplane that could serve overseas in a remote environment. I needed true off airport capability with great cross-country performance. I had searched high and low throughout many experimental aircraft companies, but nothing came close to the newly announced Bearhawk Five. I was thrilled when I called and spoke to Mark. I put down a deposit and was able to receive serial number one of the Bearhawk Five.

As I began to build the airplane, I was blown away by the amazing craftsmanship that went into the airplane and the potential that the entire Bearhawk line had. Bob Barrows, the original Bearhawk designer, has without a doubt designed a line of aircraft that have carved out their own section of the market. I remember thinking a couple of times while beginning my build "I wonder if Mark will be ready to retire soon" as I had dreams and aspirations of owning my own aircraft company. Fast forward to the end of my build, I remember thinking on a few late nights in the hangar "I really hope I like this airplane and the performance is what was promised, otherwise I just wasted a large amount of time and money." I can honestly look back and say there are very few things that compete with the thrill of flying an airplane you built yourself. As the Bearhawk started to teach me how it wanted to be flown, I was continually blown away by the performance and handling of the aircraft.

Mark called shortly after I began flying the airplane and asked if I would be interested in displaying it at Oshkosh 2023. I accepted the offer and in July headed to Oshkosh not knowing what was to come that week. While getting to know each other at Oshkosh, I shared my dreams of owning my own aircraft company one day with Mark, and that is when we started exploring what it would look like for me to purchase the company.

The first question I had for Mark was manufacturing, as I was not interested in a company that mistreated its employees or did not uphold the same standards I have for myself and my family. In August, Mark, my wife Mackenzie and myself went to Mexico to get to know the amazing managers and employees that make the Bearhawk line possible. I was blown away by the quality of construction, cleanliness of the factory, and overall work environment that has led to many employees working for Bearhawk for an entire career. Employees do not leave, they choose to stay and that speaks volumes to the company culture. Mark truly did what many have

failed to do. He created a manufacturing system that is able to reliably produce quality aircraft. You can have the most capable designs in the world, but if you can not reliably produce and deliver for your customers, you do not have a product. For over 20 years, Mark built the Bearhawk brand from the ground up, his hard work is evident.

After this first trip to Mexico, I knew that I was not only comfortable but highly impressed by the quality of the company, it was just a matter of “how do I make this company work?” After several months of negotiations, I was able to return to Mexico in December to celebrate the company Christmas party. It was truly humbling to see the culture and meet the families of the men who are the backbone of the company.

On February 2, 2024 my wife and I were able to sign the final documents and are proud to be the new owners of Bearhawk Aircraft. As we move forward with the company, we have standardized our kits across the board but these are the same great airplanes that have been available for years. We will be revising our kit manuals, developing new products, and overall expanding the offerings that Bearhawk has for our customers. Our new facility in Fairview, Oklahoma will be home to our demo planes, transition training, build assist center, warehousing and so much more. We look forward to welcoming you to our new facility and will be doing several events throughout the year. We know that we have big shoes to fill, but we are honored and extremely excited to advance the Bearhawk brand.

We want to reassure customers that all current orders will be honored and we will continue to provide you the same great airplanes. We look forward to serving the Bearhawk community and earning your trust and support.

- Virgil Irwin