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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EAA AIRVENTURE 2009 TO CELEBRATE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF PIETENPOL AIRCRAFT

Versatile pioneer homebuilt aircraft still popular low-cost alternative

EAA AVIATION CENTER, OSHKOSH, Wis. — (Jan. 28, 2009) — The pioneering aircraft concepts of Bernard Pietenpol, who created popular homebuilt aircraft designs prior to World War II that are still built today, will be recognized on their 80th anniversary during EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2009 this summer. The 57th annual edition of the EAA fly-in, known as “The World’s Greatest Aviation Celebration,” will be held July 27-August 2 at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh.

Builders and owners of Pietenpol aircraft will be gathering on the EAA AirVenture flight line to display these airplanes, which have remained popular because of their simplicity and fun-flying characteristics. While the complete schedule of activities will be announced as they are finalized, flying and ground activities are planned to recognize 80 years of Pietenpol aircraft.

“Generations of aircraft builders have followed Bernard Pietenpol’s tried-and-true designs,” said Tom Poberezny, EAA president and AirVenture chairmen. “These airplanes capture the spirit of aviation in a very uncomplicated fashion. We invite all Pietenpol owners, pilots and enthusiasts to join us at Oshkosh this year to celebrate Bernard’s innovation and legacy.”

Pietenpol, who passed away in 1984 at age 83, was a self-taught mechanic from southern Minnesota. In the late 1920s, he experimented with two-place aircraft that used Ford Model A engines, which were relatively inexpensive and available. His Pietenpol Air Camper designs became quite popular, as did his later Sky Scout design that used Ford Model T engines.

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Pietenpols are designed almost exclusively for recreational flying, with speeds well under 100 miles an hour and flying range of up to about 350 miles, on average. It is estimated that Pietenpol builders have used more than 30 different engine types over the past eight decades.

The airplane's primary attraction, however, may be its economy. Pietenpol designs can be built for as little as \$10,000 and, depending on the engine used, rarely cost more than \$25,000 to construct.

EAA honored Pietenpol's contributions to aviation on a permanent basis in 1980s, when the organization moved his hangar from Cherry Grove, Minn., to Oshkosh and placed it at EAA's Pioneer Airport, where it remains today. That hangar is home to Pietenpol's last self-built Air Camper (N7533U) as well as many of his workshop items and other memorabilia. Another Pietenpol Air Camper (N12937) from the 1930s is on display in the EAA AirVenture Museum.

EAA AIRVENTURE OSHKOSH is The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration and EAA's yearly membership convention. Additional EAA AirVenture information, including advance ticket purchase, is available online at www.airventure.org. EAA members receive lowest prices on admission rates. For more information on EAA and its programs, call 1-800-JOIN-EAA (1-800-564-6322) or visit www.eaa.org.