



Bison Re-Creates History, the 'Wright' Way

Bison Gear and Engineering, a key partner in the Wright Redux Association, is making history, literally. The Wright Redux Association, a Glen Ellyn-based group, has assumed the goal of constructing an exact, functional replica of Orville and Wilbur Wright's Wright Flyer from 1903. They plan to fly the replica on the front lawn of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, September, 2003 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Wright's maiden flight December 17, 1903. Volunteering its St. Charles facilities and gear motor expertise, Bison's contribution to the Wright Redux project has been the gearing, ignition system and magneto vital to the engine's functioning.

Once enlisted to build the aircraft's engine, Packer Engineering's Steve Meyers immediately sought Bison's assistance. Bison's four decades of gear motor expertise and aviation background made it a natural choice for the project. Bison President Ron Bullock, a Wright State University graduate, developed a love for aviation from his father. "Norm, my dad, was really involved in Aeroproducts: designing propellers and actuators. It was his work that inspired my love for aviation at a young age." Ron himself has experience designing servos and other equipment for the Lear jet.

The replica aircraft, dubbed The Spirit of Glen Ellyn, is scheduled to fly on December 17, 2003 and has been 3 years in the making. Mark Miller of Glen Ellyn Woodworking began building the frame in 1999 and invited Packer and Bison onto the team in June 2002. Although all groups involved are experts in their fields, it was difficult to procure parts and materials to the specifications used by the Wrights in 1903. Steve Meyers explains, "Today we have better materials, so it's difficult to produce what they were using at that time." Despite vague sketches and records by the Wright brothers, Bison's "gearing solution proved to be correct and the 'Spirit of Glen Ellyn' performed remarkably well," boasted Ted Craft, the Wright Redux Co-President.

The Wright Redux Association finds itself in the company of 3 other groups undertaking an exact replica of the Wright Flyer: The Smithsonian Institute (owner of the Wrights' original sketches), The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) with \$10 million in funding from Ford Motor Company. Despite the formidable reputations of these groups and their substantial funding, Bison and the Wright Redux Association were the first group to get its craft airborne in a test flight on April 28, 2003. "I think it speaks well of both the talent and determination of our group," says Bullock. "I have never doubted our ability and this situation simply exemplifies what we can do."

While certainly excited about the success of the Wright Redux project, Bison is no stranger to making history. After pioneering the basis for modern gear motor technology, they have consistently produced cutting edge products for the past 42 years. Bison manufactures a wide range of motors, gearmotors, and reducers from 1/55 HP up to 3 HP, including AC and DC, parallel shaft and right angle models, in both North American and international configurations. In 2060 will Bison's dedication to engineering development result in a centennial project to re-create Bison's first gear motor? Only time will tell.