

RV-12 PROGRESS NOVEMBER, 2007

Don't snicker. We've made quite a lot of progress.

We know that prospective builders are anxiously awaiting more news about kit cost and availability. We wish we could give absolute answer to those questions. But just yet, we can't.

We can assure you that we are working on it, hard, every day. And, that when it's ready, it will be *really* ready. It will have to be. It's become apparent that we need to have at least the majority of the airplane ready for sale when we open the initial floodgate. This airframe will build so quickly that there just wouldn't be time for us to finish development work on a wing kit while early builders work on the empennage kit, for instance. That wing kit will need to be ready to go out the door a few weeks after the first empennage kit ships.

Another huge consumer of time and energy is the documentation. This will be similar to RV-10, with step-by-step instructions combined with CAD drawings. The "constructional package" will include the engine installation, all systems and the complete airframe. Developing it is a project almost equal to developing the airplane itself, but an airplane kit is useless without it. Spending the time necessary to produce the best documentation possible will save all of us time and frustration in the long haul.

Meanwhile, we are concluding an arrangement, similar to the one we have with Lycoming, to make new Rotax 912 engines available at the most reasonable prices possible. That price is not fixed yet, for several reasons – at least one of which is the state of the US dollar versus the euro.

Recent mileposts: We have now completed static testing of the new RV-12 wing. This is a more sophisticated process than many people understand...it isn't as simple as setting up a wing and piling sandbags on it until it breaks. There are several "conditions" or "events" that must be tested, and for each a special load diagram must be calculated and projected onto the wing. Then bags of lead shot are carefully placed onto specific locations until the requirements of the condition are satisfied. It takes a lot of time to prepare for each test (of course, if you don't take the time, there's no point in running the test!) so our engineering and prototype staff have been fully occupied. But we are now assured that our engineering was correct and the wing will meet the standards set for it.



Although we have no photos, the fuselage tailcone and engine mounts were undergoing similar tests this week. There are still more tests to come.

A second "flight article" RV-12, which we devoutly hope will be the definitive version, is under construction and some components are finished. However, there's no point in building the complete airplane until testing is complete.

As we build this "flight article", we are paying particular attention to the tools required. One of the goals set when the RV-12 program started was to use as simple, as inexpensive and as few tools as possible. Where the traditional driven-rivet airplane requires rivet guns, squeezers, dimple dies, etc, we are doing our best to assure that the RV-12 really CAN be built with simple hand tools. Even a pneumatic rivet puller isn't required, although after the first few hundred blind rivets, most builders will want one! At less than half the price of a traditional rivet gun, even that's a savings.

