

# Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...*



## WAHF and La Crosse County Historical Society Present “The First Thing I Knew, I Was Flying”

OSHKOSH, WI. June 26, 2009 – The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame (WAHF) has planned a series of 2009 events celebrating Wisconsin’s Centennial of Flight, including history presentations and a traveling exhibit of a quarter-scale replica of the first airplane that flew in Wisconsin. That first Wisconsin powered flight happened when Arthur Pratt Warner flew a Curtiss aircraft from a farmer’s field in Beloit, Wisconsin, on November 4, 1909.

To celebrate this historic event, Michael Goc and Tom Thomas will present, “The First Thing I Knew, I Was Flying.” Sponsored by the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame and the La Crosse County Historical Society, this lively presentation tells how Warner brought Wisconsin into the age of aviation, and includes stories about early La Crosse-area aviation history. The presentation takes place on Wednesday evening, August 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the La Crosse County Historical Society’s Swarthout Museum, 9th and Main Streets, La Crosse.

The public is invited and there is no charge for August 5 evening presentation, but tickets are required.

The exhibit and quarter-scale replica of Warner’s 1909 Curtiss biplane, built by members of the Experimental Aircraft Association’s Chapter 60 in Beloit/Janesville, will be on display at the Swarthout Museum through August 31.

“I know that folks will thoroughly enjoy Michael Goc’s presentation—especially the stories about early La Crosse aviation such as flying the mail and passengers out of Salzer Field in the 1920s and 1930s,” said Frederick Beseler, a member of the La Crosse County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.

Beseler added, “It’s a wonderful display and program and we’re very proud to bring it to La Crosse. The Warner flight is significant when you consider that after the Wright brothers flew in 1903, they didn’t publicly fly again in the U.S. for a few years. And when Mr. Warner flew his plane there were only a few dozen pilots in the entire country. But already aviation technology had advanced significantly. Just 18 years later Charles Lindbergh flew solo, nonstop across the Atlantic. And only 60 years after Warner’s flight American astronauts landed on the moon—an aerospace milestone being commemorated this summer.”

### “The First Thing I Knew, I Was Flying”

Presentation by Michael Goc and Tom Thomas, Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame  
Wednesday, August 5, 2009, 6:30 p.m.  
La Crosse County Historical Society Swarthout Museum  
9<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets  
La Crosse, WI

To learn more about WAHF, visit [www.aviationhalloffamewisconsin.com](http://www.aviationhalloffamewisconsin.com) or call Michael Goc at 608-339-7191.

For more information and tickets for the August 5 presentation,  
call the La Crosse County Historical Society at 608-782-1980.

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**For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:**

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