



Aircraft Projects

By Kristan Giggey, Head of Maintenance

There is never a dull moment at AWA. Often, we must be prepared to take on any role as needed. Still, we spend the majority of our time maintaining our aircraft. The shop has several projects running concurrently. Right now, we are completing an annual inspection on a Cessna 172 for “Wings For Humanity”, AWA’s flight school. Its fuel selector valve was leaking, and another had to be purchased. After the 172 is returned to service, we will turn our attention to a Piper Cherokee 180. It requires the installation of a new alternator and battery, making it flyable enough to ferry it to our main hangar in Wilson for further maintenance and inspections. It has been a back-burner project for a long time, but it will soon be ready for an annual inspection and then put to work. Its future has yet to be decided, but it would certainly make a good trainer for the “Wings For Humanity” flight school.

Two other “back-burner” projects are the restorations of some Cessna 150s. These are among the smallest of general aviation aircraft and have classically been used for pilot training. Many older airline pilots have logged a few hours in a 150. Both require extensive work; we are starting with one that needs a rebuilt engine, as its airframe is in good condition. The other aircraft in this pair was probably home to wild animals and insects, as it was abandoned in a field.

Wilson’s AWA facility also has a Cessna 206. It is larger than the 172 with a greater payload capacity. It is capable of carrying 900 lbs of supplies, making it essential for emergency relief operations. This particular 206 is getting a new fuel pump installed before its annual inspection, which will make it compliant for flight. AWA used a 206 to provide

much-needed relief to the people in Western NC after Hurricane Helene. When this particular 206 is completed, it too will serve to provide relief to those in need.

Currently, there are two of us working regularly in the hangar. We are both pilots/mechanics. Soon, there will be new faces in the shop. AWA has partnered with a local community organization to provide work experience for disadvantaged young people. We will have 1 or 2 volunteers at a time coming in to help with cleaning, organizing, and maintenance. They will start with some aircraft detailing, as many of our planes are not hangered but kept outside, exposed to the elements. Their new work experience will provide them with knowledge of aircraft systems, mechanics, and general aviation, as well as the opportunity to build a strong work history for a new career.

As pilots ourselves, we are fortunate to occasionally participate in Angel Wings flights. Recently, we flew to Kentucky to transport patients for hospice care. We transported them to Pennsylvania. These flights are a real blessing for those in need, and as pilots, we are grateful to be able to serve. There will be more flights to help those who are sick or in need, and of course, it cannot happen without our gracious donors.

AWA is a charity and relies on donors to share God’s love and compassion. Aviation, generally speaking, is an expensive endeavor; however, it is a very effective way to get the message of Christ out to the world in a very real way. We can reach people that cannot be reached by roads or even the media, since they are so remote. We need your help to keep these airplanes flying. A new alternator and battery for the Cherokee 180 costs approximately \$3,850.00.

The cost of a rebuilt engine for a Cessna 150 ranges from \$18,000 to \$24,000.

Just a day before writing this newsletter, a missionary pilot was stranded in a very remote part of Northern Canada. The left main brake caliper broke off the wheel assembly, and the wheel became stuck. Fortunately, he had already landed the aircraft, a Cessna 206, or the aircraft could have gone off the runway. AWA aircraft fly into rough, difficult-to-access places, and they endure harsh treatment. Repairing this aircraft may cost \$2,300 with labor. These planes do God's work in areas that no one else can reach. Please help if you can.



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