



Challenger Enjoys a Birthday

Quad City's prolific design turns 25, aims for bigger things.

BY BRYAN QUICKMIRE

Editor's Note: This story arrived from Canadian Quad City distributor Bryan Quickmire, who attended the event.

Last fall, some 250 enthusiasts gathered at Erie Airpark, in Illinois, to celebrate a major milestone: The 25th anniversary of the Quad City Challenger line of aircraft. A quarter century of continuous operation with the same ownership and management is quite an achievement in the aviation universe and especially in the world of kit aircraft. Quad City has manufactured more than 3500 Challengers to date.

A flock of 56 Challengers was arrayed in neat rows along the flight line. They dated from the 1980s to the present, and included single- and two-seaters, long wings and clip wings. All of the popular engines were represented as well as



On final to Erie Airpark last fall, to the Challenger's 25th birthday party. Fans of lightweight, wind-in-your-armpits flying will find this an enticing image. All told, 56 Challengers met for the reunion party.

every conceivable factory and aftermarket goodie. The color schemes showed amazing creativity—no two Challengers were alike.

In addition to a large collection of Midwest fliers, five Challengers on amphibious floats arrived after a 1000-mile formation flight from Canada, and a trio of Challengers arrived from the opposite direction after a flight of similar distance from the Deep South.

The Special Challenger

Quad City, having burst through the 25-year mark, is looking forward, the company says. A new Challenger II Light Sport Special employs a host of updates to become a competitive Experimental/Amateur-Built entry to the field. Starting at \$17,305, the Special has revised aerodynamics, new landing gear and the option of Rotax 503, 583 or HKS 700E power.

According to the company, the newest single-seat Challenger was "designed to meet both the spirit and the letter of FAR Part 103 for true ultralights." It comes in under the 254-pound maximum empty weight limit; its maximum pilot weight with two hours of fuel onboard is 250 pounds.

The Challenger 103 is powered by the Hirth F-33 dual-ignition engine. Standard equipment includes pre-sewn sailcloth wings as well as basic instruments plus flaperons with adjustable pitch trim.

The company says the quickbuild kit can be assembled in fewer than 100 hours by a first-timer. It is available as a complete package including engine or split into airframe and powerplant sections. Kit prices range from \$9215 to \$12,965 less engine.

—Marc Cook



A Challenger sets down on the grass, passenger's arm on the sill...just as it was meant to be. A new, improved LSA-legal Challenger is being produced today.

Karen Oltman, manager at Quad City, was the emcee for the awards ceremony, and presentations were made by Dave Goulet, company president. Patrick Vinet from Montreal, Canada, earned the Farthest Flown—International award for his 1150-mile voyage. The honor for

Farthest Flown—Domestic was accorded to Danny Tyre for his 950-mile journey from southern Georgia.

For Best Showplane, the People's Choice was N547DE, an artfully decorated Challenger II-503 on wheels flown in from Oklahoma by owner Daniel Person and dealer George Hurt. The President's Choice was C-IROC, an elegant Challenger II-582 on Puddle-jumper amphibious floats flown in from Georgian Bay, Canada, by Bryan Quickmire and built by Gord Allan and Bob Pearson.

The event was hosted by Jim and Sue Robinson, owners of Erie Airpark, whose Midwestern hospitality made every attendee feel like a long lost member of the family. The perfect weather, campfire cookouts, live music and camaraderie made this an especially memorable happening for the Challenger community.

A Bit of History

The first-single seat Challenger ultralight was introduced in 1983, and the two-seat Challenger ultralight trainer was introduced a year later. A surprising number of those elderly Challengers are still flying today. Over the years there have been countless improvements in durability, performance, comfort and appearance. The huge increase in capabilities means that now the vast majority of Challengers carry N numbers instead of being operated under Part 103. Today's new generation of Challengers carries forward the mantle of sleek and sexy. ✈



Amphib Challengers combine the best aspects of a light, inexpensive aircraft with all the water fun you can handle.