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Experimental Aircraft Business Wins Wisconsin SBA 2007 Small Business Person of the Year Honorable Mention Award

Oshkosh: John T. Monnett, Jr., Betty R. Monnett and Jeremy T. Monnett of Sonex Aircraft in Oshkosh have won Wisconsin's SBA Small Business Honorable Mention Person of the Year Award for 2007.

Sonex Aircraft is an experimental aircraft business that sells plans and component kits for its line of 2-place Sport Aircraft. These aircraft kits provide detailed instructions and many pre-made parts to maximize the value to the kit builder. They also offer a line of experimental aircraft engines and accessories under the AeroConversions brand name.

Sonex has been in existence since 1998 with their first aircraft plans being sold at EAA Airventure in August of 1998. Since 2001, a complete Sonex Aircraft Kit has been marketed and sold and they entered the aircraft engine business with an aircraft carburetor and the founding of a second company called AeroConversions, Inc. The year 2002 brought the introduction of a complete Volkswagen engine conversion kit that uses proven racing VW engine core components along with machined conversion parts to turn it into an aircraft engine. And in 2003, Sonex added two new aircraft designs that include a Xenos Motorglider whose construction costs are a fraction of any comparable performing motorglider and a new Waix Sportplane. Sonex's sister company, AeroConversions, Inc. has developed a lower-cost VW engine conversion package that has also provided superior value to the customer. All of Sonex and AeroConversion products provide exceptional value and are looked at as an affordable gateway to aviation to a huge segment of the general public.

Sonex started with one employee and has grown to a staff of seven full-time and four part-time employees. This employee base understates their economic impact as numerous jobs have been created at their Wisconsin based suppliers due to their growth. Sonex Aircraft's marketing and design teams are continuously analyzing and pursuing new markets. They have expanded their sales and are now flying or under construction in 23 countries on every continent.

Sonex Aircraft believes strongly in participating in their community. Charitable contributions have been made to a number of local charities. Sonex has also donated their facilities, tools, trailers, and vehicles to various Oshkosh community groups. Owners and employees are encouraged to donate their time to community service groups.

The winner of this award is determined by several factors that include, but are not limited to, the business's staying power, growth in number of employees, increase in sales and/or unit volume, innovativeness of product or service, response to adversity, and contributions to aid community-oriented projects. As reflected above, Sonex Aircraft meets these criteria.

The Monnett family has worked extremely hard to stay a leader in the aviation industry. Those familiar with the industry would agree that the Monnett name stands for "simplicity, affordability, and performance." They have found success in a very difficult and competitive industry through the innovation and dedication of themselves as well as a wide range of subcontractors and staff. SBA is proud to honor Sonex Aircraft with this award.

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