

# The Triumph of Flight™

Bringing an Icon to Dayton, Ohio – The Birthplace of Aviation

Branding America's Only National Aviation Heritage Area  
Symbolizing the Achievement of FLIGHT!

October 2023  
Volume 15  
Issue 3

The 1905 Wright Flyer III will top this 270-foot monument with its 144-foot wingspan to symbolize humankind "slipping the surly bonds of earth"

© 2015 by Wright Image Group.

## Wright Factory Site Update

Some progress has been made in assessing the damage from the March 26 fire at the Wright Aircraft Company factory site. Only buildings #1 & #2 on the north end of the site were original to the Wright operation in 1910. Both sustained considerable damage, but the hope is that both can be restored to some extent, at least to preserve their distinctive front facades.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Wright Factory Site Update
- 2 First Flight?
- 3 Welcome Jim Woodford to Our Board
- 4 Daytonians Orville & Wilbur Wright did invent the airplane, correct?

Significant funding is in the pipeline to bring the site back to where it can serve as the location of a visitor center for the National Park Service (NPS). The City of Dayton has indicated a commitment of \$3.9 million from its American Rescue Plan funds. Additional pledges from the State of Ohio and community development block grants bring the total to about \$5.9 million. Another possible \$4 million was approved by the U.S. House Appropriations Committee with the support of Congressman Mike Turner, but further approval by the full house, the US Senate, and the President will be needed to make that a reality.

Accompanying this funding are statements from Dayton officials, Congressman Turner, Senator Sherrod Brown, and the National Aviation Heritage Area that the purchase of the site by NPS and its development should go forward. The City of Dayton has signed a development contract with Dillin and Associates who are expected to release a master plan for the site by the end of the year.

The only certainty now is that a final vision for the site will take time - time for the fire damage and restoration possibilities to be fully assessed, for the NPS to work through proceeding with its commitment to the site, for the development plan to be drafted and approved, and for further funding to make it all possible.

Where the Triumph of Flight will fit in these considerations is a question we are pursuing with all parties.



Prospective view of the Triumph of Flight at the Wright Factory site

## First Flight?

It could be said that the true first flight of the Wright brothers happened not at Kitty Hawk on December 17, 1903, but at Huffman Prairie in Ohio on October 5, 1905, 118 years ago this month. Why, because that first "flight" at Kitty Hawk took off from the top of a hill and aided by extraordinarily strong winds "flew" only 120 feet. After two more comparable "flights" the 1903 Flyer "flew" 852 feet, crashed, and never flew again. How would you like to book a flight on the 1903 Wright Flyer?

Fast forward almost two years later after many days of trial and error, which to the Wright brothers meant flying, crashing, and redesigning, and you have the 1905 Wright Flyer III. On its 47<sup>th</sup> flight on October 5, 1905, the Wright Flyer III with Wilbur at the helm flew in circles for 24.2 miles. The circling part was important, because that required steering, which was out of the question at Kitty Hawk. Equally important was the fact that Wilbur chose where to land, as opposed to the 1903 Flyer's choosing where to crash. That October 1905 flight at Huffman Prairie lasted 39 minutes and 23 seconds, longer than all of the 1903 and 1904 flights combined. The longest "flight" at Kitty Hawk lasted 59 seconds.



**The Wright Flyer III on October 4, 1905, the day before its historic flight above Huffman Prairie**

Knowing that they had conquered "controlled powered" flight, the Wright brothers disassembled the 1905 Wright Flyer III in November 1905 to keep its design a secret from potential competitors. By 1908 others had duplicated the achievements at Kitty Hawk, but no one had gone further. Many do not know that the Wright brothers returned to Kitty Hawk in May of 1908 to practice with their reassembled 1905 flyer for their upcoming public demonstrations of controlled flight. There a pilot error by Wilbur resulted in the crash of the 1905 Wright Flyer III, which was damaged beyond repair. Newer versions of that plane amazed crowds in Europe and the US in 1908, convincing the world that the Wright brothers had accomplished what most people thought would never be possible.

Everyone knows that the 1903 Wright Flyer is enshrined at the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum in Washington DC, but where is the 1905 Wright Flyer III, the world's first practical aircraft? Luckily, most of its parts survived and were collected and reassembled with the help of Orville Wright. In 1950 the 1905 Wright Flyer III was installed as the centerpiece of what is now the Wright Brothers National Museum at Carillon Park in Dayton, Ohio.

The wingspan of the 1905 Wright Flyer III was 40 feet and 4 inches. The planned wingspan of the replica of that first practical airplane to top the Triumph of Flight is 144 feet, half the length of a football field. The size of that replica is important to attracting attention to the monument to the conquest of controlled powered flight, but it's the design that made it all happen.

## Welcome Jim Woodford to Our Board

Jim Woodford caught our attention as the author of an article (see below) in the Dayton Daily News' Ideas & Voices section about Dayton's aviation heritage. The points in that article fit nicely with the mission of the Wright Image Group to bring recognition of Dayton's legacy by building the Triumph of Flight. We asked Jim to join our board, and he accepted.

Jim earned a Bachelor of Science from The Defiance College in 1974. After teaching and coaching for three years he earned a Masters Degree in Science from Wright State University in 1979. He subsequently worked for the Ohio Department of Health in the Vector Borne Disease Unit as an Entomologist. In 1991 Jim began an environmental oriented career that would span 25 years working with industrial environmental issues. This career included 13 years of environmental consulting. Jim co-founded Advantage Environmental Solutions, LLC, in 2005 and worked in the mold related business for five years. In 2012, Jim was nominated for and awarded an Alumni Achievement Award by The Defiance College. During this time period Jim also taught as a substitute teacher in Dayton area schools ultimately leading to teaching science classes at a two-year college.



Teaching life sciences at Chatfield College in both Brown County & Over the Rhine in Cincinnati resulted in Jim being chosen as the Science Department Chair. In 2016 Jim became the recipient of the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities Outstanding Teacher Award at Chatfield College. Except for the occasional substitute teaching assignment through The Southwest Ohio Council of Governments Warren County Educational Service Center, Jim is now retired. It was upon retirement that Jim was made aware of his 20 plus years of coaching track, both Junior High and High School. Jim also coached basketball and football at various times during his coaching career.

Jim has been active in the Dayton area jazz scene for over 20 years. In 2010 this interest resulted in him being interviewed for and accepting a radio show host position for the Dayton Public Schools radio station WDPS [89.5 FM and broadcast on the internet at [wdpsfm.com](http://wdpsfm.com)]. His show broadcasts from Noon – 1:00 on Wednesdays. Jim is also on the Dayton Jazz Advocate Board of Directors, an organization that promotes jazz in and around the Dayton area [[daytonjazzadvocate.org](http://daytonjazzadvocate.org)]. In addition to his love of jazz, Jim enjoys his grandchildren at every opportunity. Jim and his wife also volunteer for the Warren County Food Pantry headquartered in Franklin, Ohio.

**Dayton Daily News** June 14, 2023

### Daytonians Orville and Wilbur Wright did invent the airplane, correct?

**IDEAS & VOICES** By Jim Woodford

Have you ever been in the Dayton home of The Wright Brothers? If so, you had to go to Greenfield Village in Michigan. Celebrating 125 years of Dayton history, the Dayton Daily News recently listed April 16, 1937, as when Dayton gave away the home of The Wright Brothers.



Reading this flashed me back to when my wife and I took our twin daughters to Disney World, and we sat in on a presentation about flight, and we all learned that a pair of brothers from North Carolina invented the airplane.

Wait, say what? The Wright Brothers were from Dayton!

Yes, North Carolina was where they experimented and finally conquered flight, but that was because the state had strong sustained winds and was secluded enough to not draw curious crowds. This also reminded me of when we took one of our granddaughters to go ziplining in North Carolina. It was here that I learned the young men providing oversight were in a local air science program. We started talking about the Wright Brothers, and they were totally dumbfounded to discover that they were from Dayton. In fact, the comment was, “I always wondered why the Ohio license plates said ‘birthplace of aviation.’”


I was glad to bring the students up to speed, but this was just one program of how many across the country that didn’t have the story right? I have never understood why Ohio does not have a regular effort to get that word out to the entire country.

Some readers may even remember the US Congress tiff over whether or not Ohio or North Carolina was first in flight around the 100th anniversary of first man-powered flight at Kitty Hawk.

Given all the misinformation floating around these days, it seems a good time to begin a national program to tout Dayton natives, Wilbur and Orville Wright, as the inventors of flight. We have the first man to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong, and Mercury 7 Astronaut John Glenn to be proud of, so let’s get on board with the Wright Brothers!

Ohio spends \$7 million annually to promote Ohio tourism within Ohio and surrounding states. The DeWine administration wants to bump that amount to \$50 million over two years to not only get people to visit Ohio, but maybe even move here. Seems like it might be pretty straightforward to add the Wright Brothers to that national marketing initiative. Add to this the Governor DeWine makeover program for highway rest areas and there is even greater opportunity. The planned displays highlight attractions “up the road” and can readily include the Wright Brothers.

So contact your elected representatives or Governor DeWine’s office and get them on board promoting a national, ongoing Wright Brothers educational program. This is something every single Ohioan can support — we can all act together. Even the current Ohio legislature would have to get on board with such an effort. Maybe it would be a new start for Ohio legislators to actually listen to what Ohio voters want!

<p><b><u>WIG Board of Directors</u></b></p> <p><b>Executive Director – Curt Nelson</b>  <b>Director of Development – Bill Koop</b>  <b>Dir Design &amp; Engineering – Steve Brown</b>  <b>Dir Public Information – Byron Kentner</b>  <b>Secretary – Sandy Anderson</b>  <b>Treasurer – Jacqie Nawroth</b>  <b>Jim Butler</b>  <b>Linda Kahn</b>  <b>Tom Kleptz</b>  <b>Amanda Wright Lane</b>  <b>Walter Rice</b>  <b>Paul Selm</b>  <b>Jim Woodford</b></p>	<p><i>To make a donation or get information explaining the different sponsorship and recognition levels, write to us at:</i></p> <p><b>Triumph of Flight®</b>          PO Box 264          Englewood, OH 45322</p> <p><i>or visit our website,</i>  <a href="http://www.triumphofflight.org">www.triumphofflight.org</a></p>	 <p>Member          National Aviation Heritage Alliance</p>
<p><b><u>Annual Membership Dues*</u></b></p> <p><b>1 year - \$20</b>  <b>2 years - \$35</b>  <b>3 years - \$50</b></p> <p><small>*Applicable to Individuals, Families or Businesses</small></p>	<p><b>Make checks payable to:</b>  <b>Aviation Heritage Foundation, Inc.</b></p> <p>With the following comment on the “For” line:  <b>“Restricted for WIG”</b></p> <p><b>and mail to:</b>  <b>Triumph of Flight®</b>  <b>PO Box 264, Englewood, OH 45322</b></p>	<p><b>Newsletter Published by:</b></p> <p><b>Wright Image Group, Inc.</b>          PO Box 264          Englewood, OH 45322</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.triumphofflight.org">www.triumphofflight.org</a>  <i>(Past newsletters are posted)</i></p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:bkentner@triumphofflight.org">bkentner@triumphofflight.org</a></p>