

# Lightning strikes light sport



By **BEN SCLAIR**

Arion Aircraft has entered the crowded Light Sport Aircraft market with an S-LSA dubbed the Lightning LS-1.

The LSA was awarded its S-LSA certification just last Wednesday, April 15.

The LS-1 is rooted in Arion's experimental Lightning, which got its start when Pete Krotje and Nick Ottenback decided to build an airplane around the Jabiru engine.

The pair pitched the idea to a few EAA member friends in 2004 who fronted the money to build some molds and tooling.

Arion has shipped more than 80 Lightning kits since 2006 and has an impressive 42 flying.

The LS-1 is a natural progression for the kit manufacturer to grow into the expanding marketplace that LSA affords, according to Krotje.

"However," he added, "we spent two years making the Lightning go fast, and

the last year making it go slow."

In order to slow the Lightning down to meet the LSA speed limit, Arion replaced its aerodynamic wheel pants, changed the airfoil, increased the propeller diameter and removed the landing gear fairing.

While the Lightning has been slowed, "it will still put the 'Sport' in Light Sport Aircraft," notes Krotje.

In addition to sporty, the aircraft is strong. The wing was initially designed to withstand 9 Gs. During testing, Arion took the wing to 11 Gs without damage.

First deliveries will be made in July. The company is looking to produce an E-LSA version as well, but needs to complete construction manuals.

Aside from the Australian-built Jabiru engine, the rest of the plane's components are made in the U.S.

Prices start at \$93,900 and will expand to \$120,000 fully loaded.

The LS-1 is in the LSA Mall and at Arion's exhibit, LD-5, across from the FAA Building.