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ICON A5 Achieves Historic Safety Milestone

ICON A5 successfully completes spin-resistance testing to FAA Part 23 standard

LOS ANGELES (February 16, 2012)—ICON Aircraft announced that its A5 amphibious Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) has successfully completed a demanding regimen of spin-resistance test flights. This milestone will make the A5 the first production aircraft in history to be designed to and completely comply with the Federal Aviation Administration's full-envelope Part 23 spin-resistance standards developed from NASA's work on the topic. Spin resistance is a major safety-enhancing feature for light aircraft and can significantly reduce the number of loss-of-control accidents resulting from stall/spin scenarios. Seventy percent of all General Aviation accidents are attributed to "Pilot Related Factors," making them the most significant cause of fatal accidents according to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Air Safety Institute's 2010 Nall Report. The report also found that as much as 41% of these pilot-related fatal accidents are due to stall/spin loss-of-control scenarios.

The FAA requires that Light Sport Aircraft must be either "spin recoverable" or "spin resistant." While virtually all light aircraft in production today are "spin recoverable," ICON chose to design the A5 to the more difficult to achieve but safer standard of "spin resistant." Additionally, ICON chose to complete these tests to the rigorous FAA Part 23 standard for certified aircraft. Globally recognized spin-test pilot Len Fox flew the test flights, which included over 360 test cases with a wide range of control positions, power settings, and centers of gravity.

"The ultimate goal of spin resistance is to provide an aircraft that is stable and controllable in roll and yaw when held in a stall, even with adverse control inputs," said ICON Aircraft VP of Engineering Matthew Gionta. "We're excited to announce that after many months of exhaustive design and flight testing, the A5 has achieved this standard." ICON's spin-resistant design is based on work done at NASA during the 1970s and 1980s. Using results from those studies as a base, ICON engineers created a cuffed wing design that employs multiple proprietary airfoils across the span of the wing. Additionally, these specialized airfoils used for spin resistance were not suited to the no-flap wing design ICON had previously planned to use on the A5, so ICON engineers chose to reintroduce wing flaps to preserve takeoff performance on the water.

"Other production aircraft have attempted to achieve spin resistance to the Part 23 standard, but no conventional production aircraft without canards has ever completely succeeded due to the sheer complexity of this problem," Gionta added. "Although there are other aircraft that have incorporated some spin-resistance characteristics, such as the Ercoupe, Jetcruzer, Cirrus SR20/22, and Cessna Corvalis, the A5 will be unique for being the only production aircraft in history to be designed to and completely comply with the full-envelope Part 23 spin-resistance standard."

"I'm incredibly proud of our engineering and fabrication team," said ICON Aircraft CEO Kirk Hawkins. "While creating a full-envelope spin-resistant airplane was extraordinarily difficult and took longer than we expected, it was absolutely the right thing to do for safety and is a game-changing innovation. Delivering an aircraft that provides excellent control throughout the stall while being resistant to entering a spin dramatically raises the bar for light aircraft safety by decreasing the likelihood of

inadvertent stall/spin loss of control by the pilot. This is especially important at low altitude where the majority of sport flying will occur. This is just another example of ICON going above and beyond the call of duty to deliver not only the world's coolest sport plane, but also one of the world's safest."

Hawkins added that, "The FAA played a significant role in facilitating this achievement by permitting the visionary new Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) category and Sport Pilot License (SPL). The freedoms provided to manufacturers by these new standards allow more innovation with less onerous, expensive, or unnecessary regulations. LSA and SPL are shining examples of how well-designed regulations can stimulate a market to innovate new products and solutions, both of which are essential to ensuring a healthy future for General Aviation."

At present, ICON is working aggressively on production preparations, including design for manufacturing, component and material selection, and production-facility preparation.

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These photos depict the A5 configured for spin testing with requisite instrumentation and safety equipment, including tufts and the boom-mounted spin parachute at the rear of the aircraft, which was installed specifically for the spin-resistance testing and will not appear on production aircraft.





ABOUT ICON AIRCRAFT:

ICON Aircraft is a consumer sport plane manufacturer founded in response to the new sport flying category created by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2004. ICON's first plane is the A5, an amphibious sport aircraft that fuses outstanding aeronautical engineering with world-class product design. It has won some of the world's most prestigious design awards and has inspired a global following. The company has received more than 600 order deposits and is scheduled to start production of the A5 at the end of 2012. ICON Aircraft's facilities are in Southern California, a hotbed for automotive design and aerospace engineering.

ABOUT FAA LIGHT SPORT AIRCRAFT & SPORT PILOT CLASSIFICATIONS:

In 2004, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) created a new classification of easy-to-fly and affordable two-person airplanes called Light Sport Aircraft. These airplanes enable a new classification of Sport Pilots to fly in lower altitude, uncongested airspace, during the daytime, and in good weather. The Sport Pilot License focuses on the fundamentals of flying and requires a minimum of 20 hours of in-flight training, undercutting the time and cost of a traditional Private Pilot License by about 50%. The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) has described the new rules as "the biggest change in aviation in 50 years."

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