



MEDIA RELEASE
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National Model Aviation Museum places rare 1914 Bing Autoplan compressed-air powered model airplane on display

Muncie, IN—The National Model Aviation Museum, located at the International Aeromodeling Center in Muncie, IN, is thrilled to announce that the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA) has completed the restoration of the Bing Autoplan. This exceptional aircraft is now on display at the museum, and is now the oldest original model airplane in its collection.

During the early years of aeromodeling, most airplanes were powered with rubber-powered motors, but some builders used compressed-air models when they wanted to have a “real” reciprocating engine to power the airplane. Although the compressed-air models attracted attention throughout the model airplane community, they were expensive, fragile, and did not perform well.

The National Model Aviation Museum has always wanted to acquire and display a compressed-air model, but because the aircraft are delicate, they seldom survive intact. Thanks to the generous donation by Dick Moyer, however, the museum can now display an original model.

The Bing Autoplan on display was manufactured in Germany circa 1914 by the Bing Toy Company—the largest toy business in the world in the early 20th century. Although the company was primarily known for producing toy trains and ships, it began manufacturing a variety of model airplanes including rubber-powered, pull-string, and compressed-air models. The Great Depression caused a decline in sales and the company was forced to close for good in 1933.

The ICA put in many hours of hard work to restore the compressed-air model airplane. The restoration included cleaning the metal framework, the compressed-air tank, and the wheels. To match the original airplane, linen was stitched to the wings and tail. To keep the aircraft as authentic as possible, the tank was not repainted and the existing dents and scratches were not removed. Unfortunately, the original guy wires were too damaged to use so new wires had to be made.

A museum volunteer is working on full-scale drawings of the model airplane that will soon be available through AMA Plans Service, www.modelaircraft.org/plans/plans.aspx.

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About AMA

The Academy of Model Aeronautics, founded in 1936, continues to be devoted to national airspace safety. It serves as the nation’s collective voice for approximately 175,000 modelers in 2,400 clubs in the United States and Puerto Rico. Headquartered in Muncie, Indiana, AMA is a membership organization representing those who fly model aircraft for recreation and educational purposes.