

May 1, 2008 - Clemson, SC

Even though I have not yet begun my travels, I guess that you could consider this the very beginning of my trip. I arrived at the [Just Aircraft](#) factory this week and watched as Troy Woodland, the company's creative principal, flew my plane off of its short downhill strip and over to the [Oconee County Regional Airport](#) in Clemson, SC. The thought was that it would be much easier to make various small mechanical adjustments and interpret the results from a 5,000 foot runway in the rolling countryside than from his 600 foot mountain side factory strip. Over the past few days we have been concentrating on getting the temperatures of the cylinder heads and the oil sump into an acceptable range. While the six cylinder, Australian [Jabiru](#) engine that I chose for the Highlander is a 122 hp horizontally opposed air cooled aircraft type, it has a reputation for overheating as compared to the more popular 100 hp [Rotax](#), which is fluid cooled. Our efforts now are in trying to mitigate that heating. It should be a challenging exercise for Troy.



Troy Woodland, adjusting my air box baffles



Landing on the Grass at Clemson Airport

Meanwhile, each modification gives me the opportunity to perform a follow-up test flight to discover its results. Over the course of each day I have been able to log about an hour's worth of air time. I have taken off from the paved runway, but have elected to land on the adjacent grass strip, since it is easier due to the lower friction coefficient of the more slippery grass. The landings have been acceptable but we have had to keep our eye out for a large groundhog that hangs out in that grass. He scampers off as we perform our approach and landing, but comes right back after we clear the runway.

[Clemson, SC](#) is a medium sized college town (Clemson University) with many restaurants, interesting shops, quaint boutiques and plenty of bike and walking trails. But since most of our engine R&D and my flight training days so far have gone to 7 PM or later, I haven't seen much of the town, other than for an occasional lunch. Perhaps I will have more time once we accomplish our goal of getting the temperatures down. Since I expect to stay in this area for another couple of weeks, I hope to find time for exploring the area with its foothills to the Smoky Mountains just to the west, along with its many lakes.



View of Clemson U., the downtown area and Lake Hartwell, from under my wing.