

Onex Serial Number 0056 took to the air on a cool, crisp Saturday December 22, 2012 just 13 months after arriving at the Con-way dock in Waco. Now known as N491NX., this was a 50/50 partnership of Phil Davis and Derek Hodges both of Temple, Texas.

Both Phil and Derek were pilots and had a love of aviation. Phil is a Dentist in Temple and Derek drives for UPS. Derek began working on an RV-7 in 2005. Phil had become interested in building an RV and had consulted Derek about his project. About that same time Phil had began construction on his 1800 square foot dream shop known as the Man Cave with intent of having a comfortable work area for future projects such as airplane building. The two of them decided to share tools and equipment as well as working together to have a build partner on the RV's when all of a sudden the Onex was introduced.

The mutual thought was almost instant: "Hey, let's go halves on this thing and get in the air so we can have something to fly while working on the long term projects!" With both having experience with flush solid rivets, this thing should be like cheating! Pulled blind rivets, pre-punched skins, pre-made laser cut parts!! The folding wings and gas sipping motor would make for a fun little fighter that is very affordable to fly around and keep in the corner of a mutual friend's hangar.

They decided to go with all options to expedite the build and maximize Sonex offered discounts. Premade Spars, Laser cut parts, formed parts and machined parts.

When the pallet arrived in Waco, they got up early on a workday morning and made the 30 minute trip to the Con-way Terminal. It was easily loaded into the back of Derek's truck and strapped in snugly for the trip to it's new home south on I-35. All boxes and crates were in perfect condition and packed with unbelievable care and efficiency for shipping. Soon after that, began the task of unpacking, inspecting and inventory. Missing a few items that had been back ordered but nothing that was supposed to be there!

As the construction began, it was pretty straight forward but it wasn't long before a few things became apparent. First, this was definitely going to be a great learning experience. Working together nearly every weekend it was also discovered that having a build partner incredibly magnified the results. 1+1 was more like 3 in terms of the speed and quality of building due to the other set of hands. It was also more confidence inspiring due to a second set of eyes and ideas. As the project went along, there was a need for some Sonex type aircraft building experience which just happened to be less than a mile away. Neighbor and Scratch Sonex Builder David Clay who was right around the corner! He was an invaluable resource! He knew the plans and he knew the tricks to assist in building the best plane possible. Phil and Derek credit David for the help and consulting that made for the successful completion of the project. One of the best parts of this

hobby is meeting some of the best people in the world. Making new friendships around the corner and around the world!

Phil and Derek had also met Mike Singleton and Robert Barber at the Annual Great Southern Sonex Gathering in Bryan, Texas in 2011. They also proved to be great advisors, technical counselors as well as friends. Brad Moffat, A&P of Waco helped the team with Aerovee engine build assistance- Another wonderful learning experience for Derek and Phil. John Jacobsen, A&P and RV builder of Taylor also was there to lend a hand and guidance as well. Many others were also there along the way for help and support. Thanks to all the friends and members of EAA 59 in McGregor, TX.

The day finally came for N491NX to take to the air. Mike Singleton was asked to be First Flight Test Pilot because of his extensive experience in flying Sonex aircraft. A handful of friends and family were there for the big day. Robert Barber and John Jacobsen flew their airplanes as chase planes carrying Derek and Phil for an up close view of their baby.

Derek says, “Words just cannot describe the sense of pride in your heart to see a creation that you built with your own two hands leaving the runway behind and taking to the sky!” It was a very proud moment and will never be forgotten.

Now that the Onex is ready for test flying phase for the next 40 flight hours, Phil and Derek look forward to many more flight and build adventures to come.