



Autodesk Names Wipaire as Inventor of the Month for August 2008

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Autodesk Inventor Helps Manufacturer Design Airplane Floats That Help Keep Wildfires Under Control

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Aug. 20 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Autodesk (Nasdaq: ADSK), a world leader in design innovation technologies, announced that Wipaire, Inc. (Wipaire) has been named as the Autodesk Inventor of the Month for August 2008. Wipaire, a leading manufacturer of aircraft floats and pontoons, used Autodesk Inventor software to design the water-scooping pontoons of the FIRE BOSS, a fire-suppression plane that provides a versatile tool in the fight against wildfires,

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO0>)

The Inventor of the Month program recognizes the most innovative design and engineering advancements made by the extensive community using Autodesk Inventor software -- the foundation of the Autodesk solution for Digital Prototyping. A digital prototype is a realistic 3D digital simulation of the entire end product, used to virtually optimize and validate a product before it is built to reduce the necessity of constructing physical prototypes.

Like a traditional air tanker plane, the FIRE BOSS is able to carry retardant from a tanker base to the fire. What sets it apart, however, is that it can remain on-site, scooping water from nearby lakes and rivers, until other tankers return with more retardant.

Although this type of fire-suppression aircraft has been around for decades, Wipaire improved on several aspects of the underlying technology. Most notably, Wipaire created a unique hull design and scooping system that more effectively scoops up water and pushes it up into the hopper of the airplane for storage. This design innovation reduces the amount of time it takes the hopper to fill with water -- an important trait when time is of the essence.

Digital Prototyping Speeds Development

Autodesk Inventor 3D modeling software played a key role in making FIRE BOSS floats a reality. Inventor software's sheet metal functionality and finite element analysis (FEA) analysis capabilities helped Wipaire to visualize, simulate and analyze its scooping system before anything was built, generating a working prototype in just two months.

"We completed all our designs in Inventor," said Chuck Wiplinger, chief engineer at Wipaire. "As a result, when we laser-cut parts, we knew that they would all fit when we put them together because we'd already analyzed the motion of the assembly. Autodesk Productstream further increased our productivity by serving as the pipeline between different workgroups in our Digital Prototyping workflow, allowing us to easily manage our design data, and readily handle engineering change orders and version control."

Autodesk Inventor Helps Wipaire Meet Demand

This combination of Digital Prototyping technologies has enabled Wipaire to shave an average of 200 hours off its production time for a FIRE BOSS -- allowing the company to increase how quickly its gets the product into the hands of the firefighting teams that need it. The FIRE BOSS currently has more than twenty units in operation with various agencies in the European Union and North America.

"Digital Prototyping has helped Wipaire meet the demand for innovative new firefighting tools by evolving its product in less time and with less costs," said Robert "Buzz" Kross, senior vice president of Autodesk Manufacturing Solutions. "Their innovation is responsible for enhancing public safety and helping to protect natural environments across the globe. It is a pleasure to name Wipaire as our Inventor of the Month for August."

About the Autodesk Inventor of the Month Program

Each month, Autodesk selects an Inventor of the Month from the more than 800,000 users of Autodesk Inventor software, the foundation for Digital Prototyping. Winners are chosen for engineering excellence and groundbreaking innovation. For more information about Autodesk Inventor of the Month, contact us at IOM@autodesk.com.

About Wipaire, Inc.

Founded in 1960, Wipaire, Inc. is the world's leading manufacturer of aircraft floats. Over the years, Wipaire has developed a full line of aircraft floats for all sizes of aircraft while expanding into other areas of aircraft services, including maintenance and repair, aircraft interior installation, and paint and refinishing. For additional information about Wipaire, visit <http://www.wipaire.com>.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art Digital Prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are built. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit <http://www.autodesk.com>.

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Contact: Stacy Doyle 503.707.3861 Alyson Howard 312.297.7430

Email: stacy.doyle@autodesk.com alyson.howard@edelman.com

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CONTACT: Stacy Doyle of Autodesk, +1-503-707-3861, stacy.doyle@autodesk.com; or Alyson Howard, +1-312-297-7430, alyson.howard@edelman.com, for Autodesk

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