

Wright Flyer Iii Named Landmark

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Engineering society honors Carillon Park resident

What many people consider the world's most important aviation artifact - the 1905 Wright Flyer III - received a fresh round of accolades Thursday with its designation as a historic **mechanical engineering** landmark.

ASME International, the **American Society of Mechanical Engineers**, unveiled a plaque honoring the machine in an afternoon ceremony at Carillon Park, where the flyer is on display.

The Wright Flyer III was the third powered airplane Wilbur and Orville Wright built and the one they considered the first practical flying machine.

'This is **engineering** influencing the entire world, right here before us,' ASME President Susan H. Skemp told a crowd ringing the flyer.

Skemp, a private pilot and an aerospace **engineer** from Hartford, Conn., said after the ceremony that the 1905 flyer fulfilled a dream of flight humans have had since ancient times.

The wood-and-fabric airplane, two great wings mounted on a skeletal frame, reposes in a sunken gallery inside the John W. Berry Sr. Wright Brothers Aviation Center. It was the first airplane the Wright brothers were able to fly for lengths of time measured in minutes rather than seconds.

ASME has bestowed landmark status on more than 200 **engineering** artifacts, including a 1921 wind tunnel at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and five other Ohio treasures. Many more are rejected, said R. Michael Hunt, ASME history and heritage chairman, but, he added, 'There was little question about the 1905 Wright Flyer III, the first fully controllable and practical aircraft.'

ASME made a special point of granting landmark status to the flyer this year because 2003 is the centennial anniversary of the Wright brothers' first powered flights at Kitty Hawk, N.C., on Dec. 17, 1903.

While the first Kitty Hawk flight is famous because it was first, the 1905 Flyer III was a breakthrough machine because it was practical.

'Its ability to make repeated and sustained flights distinguishes it from other aircraft,' said Larry Blake, superintendent of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. The Wright Flyer III is one of the four geographically separate elements that make up the park.

Carillon Park preserves Dayton-area transportation history and the flyer is its crown jewel. Mary Mathews, the park's executive director, said the legacy of the Wright brothers, including an original flyer, sets Dayton apart from other communities.

'We have a story that no one else has,' she said.

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On the Web

* Carillon Park: www.carillonpark.org

* ASME International: www.asme.org



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