In 1910, the Wright brothers built America’s first airplane factory in Dayton, Ohio. Its workers were the first in America hired and trained to manufacture airplanes. Their first product—the Wright Model B—marked the birth of America’s aviation industry.

For a generation, Wright “B” Flyer Inc. has celebrated that heritage and inspired future aviation professionals by flying and displaying a modern lookalike of the Model B. Now, we’re preparing to build a new one to ensure our mission continues for the next generation.

The timing is perfect. Efforts to restore the Wright Company factory buildings have presented a truly historic opportunity: building a new Wright “B” Flyer in the original factory.

It’s an experience you can share.
Building a new ‘B’ in the original Wright factory

Wilbur and Orville formed the Wright Company in 1909. The two buildings they erected in 1910 and 1911 turned out approximately 120 airplanes by the time Orville sold the company in 1915. The “B” was its first and most popular model.

The plant changed hands several times. General Motors used it to create the Inland Division and make auto parts. The plant grew to more than 20 buildings on 54 acres. It stayed active until Delphi shut it down in 2008. In 2009, Congress added the factory site to the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park.

Since then, the nonprofit National Aviation Heritage Alliance (NAHA) has led a public-private campaign to clear the site of all but the historic Wright buildings and a row of attached structures built in matching style. Now, this historic site is poised for restoration and redevelopment.

Wright “B” Flyer Inc. is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit based on Dayton-Wright Brothers Airport. It flies the “Brown Bird,” a one-of-a-kind lookalike of a 1911 Wright Model B airplane.

For more than 30 years, the Brown Bird has inspired thousands with flybys from Dayton to Germany and given Honorary Aviators—including the late Neil Armstrong—the wind-in-your-face sensation of pioneer flight.

• In Dayton, the Brown Bird has made flybys at nearly every Dayton Air Show since the early 1980s and regularly overflies major outdoor events.

• At the end of the Cold War, it traveled to West Germany in a U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy for display and flybys in Berlin.

• It helped America celebrate the Centennial of Powered Flight with a flyby of the Statue of Liberty and a Rose Bowl flyover.
In recent years, the rise of invitations to display and fly our airplane at international venues has made it clear we need a new airplane that’s easier for our volunteers to ship to distant locations and operate with a small support crew.

The new airplane project took off in 2014 when an individual with a passion for aviation heritage donated $100,000 and offered to match another $50,000. Our goal is $300,000, including in-kind donations.

This project isn’t simply about building another airplane. We want it to spark interest in aviation history, rekindle enthusiasm for flying and inspire future pilots and aerospace professionals.

We’re working with NAHA to build the project in the original Wright factory. And we’re working with the Experimental Aircraft Association and its chapters to give homebuilders a chance to join in by building parts, either at their own locations or in the factory. Individuals and groups will be welcome to tour the project and follow our progress on the Internet.

Here’s how you can join us.
This project is possible because of the support we receive from sponsors and donors. People who value America’s aviation heritage. People like you. We would welcome either cash or in-kind donations. For example, we need an engine. Propellers. Avionics. Tools. Materials. Machining and engineering services. Thanks to a significant challenge grant, your gift can double its impact.

For corporate sponsors, this is a chance to associate your brand with *the* flying ambassador of aviation heritage. For individuals, we can offer ways to give your name visibility or memorialize a loved one. If you’re considering a major gift, we’d be happy to discuss the unique ways we could honor it—possibly with a piece of real Wright brothers history. Please, call us now. It’s the right time.