

August 20, 2010 - Breakfast at the Game Lodge Resort

Pilots never need much of an excuse to go flying. This past Friday I asked my boss at the Custer County Airport if he wanted to accompany me on the short 15 minute flight over to the Custer State Park airport (located 15 miles to our East). Brian Madetzke had retired from the State Park as its assistant director a year and a half ago to take on the position as Airport Director for the County. He is also a pilot and built an experimental helicopter a few years back that he eventually sold to someone in the Philippines. He now owns a light sport aircraft, similar to but a bit smaller than mine, called the Avid Flyer. He is currently waiting for a tail wheel endorsement to his private pilot's license so that he can get his neat little plane into the air.

Brian was quick to take me up on my offer and a few minutes later we were climbing through 7,000 feet, in order to clear the hills just to the East of our airport. En route to the State Park field we overflew a herd of Buffalo grazing on a hillside. In just a month from now as many as 500 of these bison will be rounded up and sold at auction for breeding or feedstock. I am only hopeful that I will still be here to see that once in a lifetime event. We also overflew the Park's Game Lodge, one of the older resort hotels located within the park's boundary. This is where we planned to have breakfast. While it is a 2 1/2 mile walk from the unmanned air strip, Brian knew who to call for a courtesy vehicle pick-up. Less than 10 minutes after he placed the phone call we were seated in their main dining room ready to chow down to their bountiful breakfast buffet.

After our meal we wandered the grounds for sightseeing and had the opportunity to take a few photos. The Game Lodge served as the summer white house for President Calvin Coolidge in 1927 and was visited by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953. While rooms in the adjacent motel units can be had for \$150/night, if you want to stay in the main lodge itself, rooms there range between \$250 and \$300 per night. By comparison my motor home site right there at the airport is costing me "zero". But it is a nice place to visit, the decorations and ambiance is extraordinary and the food is delicious. Another example of a typical "\$100.00 hamburger" flight coming to fruition.



On final to the airstrip we overflew a buffalo herd



An aerial view of the State Game Lodge Resort



The Custer State Park Game Lodge Resort Hotel



My Boss, Brian Madetzke and me at Breakfast



In front of the Game Lodge stone entrance stairs