

Overcoming Disabilities, Pilot Impresses His Peers



Randy Green stands by the Cessna 421 he had been training on. He is training to become a corporate pilot. He new he had to tell his prospective boss that he was born without hands or feet. He didn't want to waste the man's time. "How do you fly?" he was asked. "The same as everybody else does, only better." Green replied.

He got the job. Green was hired as a corporate pilot by Stuart B. Millner and Associates of Union, Mo. He's been training in the company's Cessna 421, an eight-seat, complex airplane that puts a heavy workload on pilots. Green flies using a few thick rubber bands around his wrist and the yoke. He uses his prosthetic legs and feet on the pedals and brakes.

Over the years he's learned to acquire a feel for braking systems while wearing his prosthetic legs.

One of his instructors, Dave Dewhirst, said Green "has an amazing ability to prioritize what needs to be done first, then immediately turn around and do something else."

Green, 42, has earned ratings for private, instrument, commercial single and commercial multi-engine flight instructor, instrument flight instructor and multi-engine flight instructor.

He's also passed the written test for the airline transport pilot rating, the pinnacle of pilot ratings.

He has earned medical approvals after proving to FAA inspectors that he can operate planes. Green said it was always his dream to fly. His father was a pilot in Pueblo, Colo. He offered Green lessons to see where it led when Green was about 19, and Green was instantly hooked.

FAA inspectors encouraged him about flying all along the way. Convincing business owners he could fly has been more of a challenge, Green said.

Some turned him down, and although he has no proof he was rejected because of his disabilities, it was always in the back of his mind. "It would be in the back of anybody's mind," Green said.

Green is thinking of becoming a motivational speaker. Success through determination is something he knows. Green hunts, fishes, shoots trap and skeet, and used to be a top-rated pool player.

"I don't let anything stop me," he said. "If my mind can conceive it, it's going to get achieved."