

John is flying version three of the OpenPPG X4. It was the only one offered fully assembled. He admits he might not have built one himself. You need to be comfortable working with electronics. Batteries for the 48-volt system cost about \$220, and they are used in pairs. John's complete system was about \$4,650 ready to fly (less paraglider) and weighed 49 pounds. The latest kit, version four, was offered for preorder at \$3,199 (less harness and batteries). The demand for the kit has outstripped the rate it can be built and shipped. If you want one, you have to get on a waiting list. The OpenPPG website includes an organized community function that enables builders to share building tips and ideas for upgrades. There is a lot of enthusiasm and excitement about building and flying the X4.

John describes himself as an EAA kid who grew up in Wisconsin. He has been flying fixed-wing ultralights and powered parachutes (PPC) since the '80s and bought a Harmening High Flyer PPC around 1989. He watched the development of the powered paraglider and in 1997 got his first PPG. The attraction was portability and because it looked like a fun way to fly. In his 20 years of PPG flying around the United States and elsewhere, he has flown in incredible places and seen things not possible in a fixed-wing ultralight. He compared the pilot view of an enclosed airplane to that of a Kolb or Breezy and then said, "What if your knees are the only thing in your forward view?"

**WHEN YOU PUNCH IT, YOU GO STRAIGHT FORWARD!**

John used the word punch several times when talking about his X4 PPG. Electric motors spin up much faster than reciprocating engines. The little lightweight props also spin up with little resistance. The result is near-instantaneous thrust as soon as the throttle is advanced. It may take an experienced gas engine pilot a few minutes to get used to it. And there is no shortage of thrust. The maximum rated thrust of the four motors is 165 pounds, and the actual measured thrust was 130 pounds. It had the feel of a 28-hp gasoline engine to John. You go straight forward because there are no torque effects.

John strolls around the Fun Fly Zone selling sport aviation.



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