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DAY 1

OCTOBER 20, 2026

AINONLINE.COM



A Record Appearance. Gulfstream's experimental G400 prototype is at Aircraft Connection this week after setting a speed record en route to the show from Miami. The G400 is part of a busy flight-test program that recently expanded with the first fully outfitted copy. (See story on page 26.)

MARIANO ROSALES

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NBAA BLOOMS WITH BACE

By Kerry Lynch

NBAA is coming into the 2026 edition of BACE as president and CEO Ed Bolen is taking medical leave, but the reorganized leadership is enthusiastic about the strength of the team, as well as the early indicators of the convention taking place this week in Las Vegas.

In the weeks leading up to BACE, the show had more than 700 exhibitors—at least 100 of which were coming for the first time—as well as a growing static display that includes nearly all of the major manufacturers. In addition, the show has more than 100 educational sessions, discussions on hot topics, and other activities on stages on the show floor and in conference rooms.

Bolen, who has been a highly visible figure during the annual convention for the past few decades, is not in

attendance as he continues to undergo cancer treatment. Even so, Bolen's presence will remain visible as NBAA honors Bolen through the distribution of sunflower lapel pins in recognition of his upcoming enshrinement in the Kansas Aviation Hall of Fame in November. The sunflower is the state flower of Kansas.

In September, NBAA announced that Bolen was taking medical leave. As a result, the NBAA board named Dan Hubbard, who has been senior v-p of communications, as interim COO to manage daily operations.

This move came in tandem with the promotion of Heidi Williams to senior v-p of operations, after Doug Carr, who was senior v-p of safety, security, sustainability, and international affairs, retired in July. Earlier this year, NBAA also brought in Emily Deaton, formerly CEO

continues on page 62 >

AINalerts

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Citation CJ3 Gen2 sails in for NBAA-BACE debut

By Chad Trautvetter

Textron Aviation is highlighting the Cessna Citation CJ3 Gen2 at its NBAA-BACE static display this week at Las Vegas Henderson Executive Airport (KHND). The light twinjet, certified last October and capable of flying up to 2,040 nm, is making its debut at the annual business aviation show and will be joined on the ramp by a midsize Citation Ascend and Latitude, as well as a super-midsize Longitude.



The Citation CJ3 Gen2 is making its debut at the NBAA-BACE Aircraft Connection, joined by the Citation Ascend, Latitude, and Longitude.

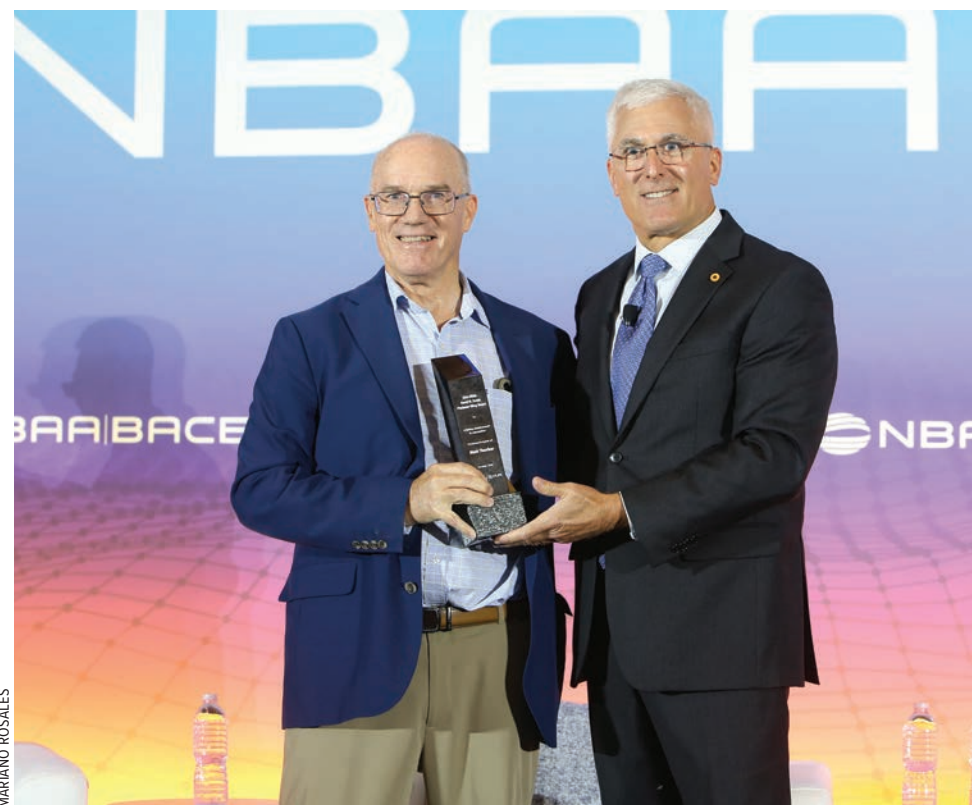
CHAD TRAUTVETTER

“At Textron Aviation, innovation starts with listening to our customers and finding new ways to improve every aspect of aircraft ownership, from the pilot experience in the cockpit to the support customers rely on throughout the life of the aircraft,” said company senior v-p of sales and marketing Lannie O’Bannon. “The CJ3 Gen2 reflects that commitment, with customer-driven enhancements that create value for pilots, passengers, and operators.”

NBAA-BACE attendees can visit the Textron Aviation booth in the Las Vegas Convention

Center West Hall to see interactive displays showcasing the Wichita-based aircraft manufacturer’s aftermarket capabilities, such as connectivity and interior upgrades.

Meanwhile, sister company TRU Simulation has an adjacent booth to showcase its Veris virtual reality flight training device, which is also debuting at the show. The Cessna Skyhawk-configured device pairs that immersive technology with a realistic cockpit environment, and the booth is hosting live demonstrations. ■



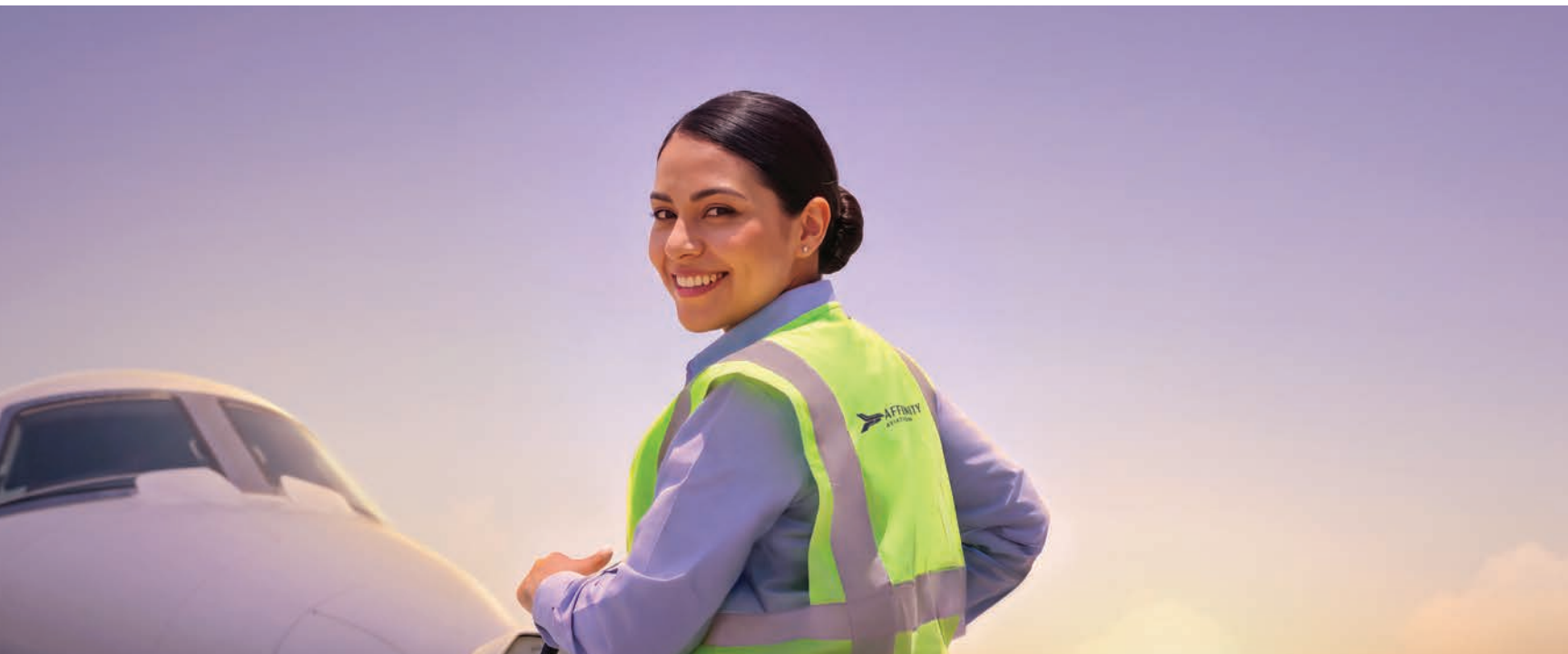
AIN’s Thurber gets wings

AIN editor-in-chief Matt Thurber (left) accepted the David W. Ewald Platinum Wing Award for lifetime achievement in aviation journalism from NBAA board chair John Witzig yesterday at NBAA-BACE. The award honors Thurber’s decades of covering nearly every facet of aviation, work informed by his experience as an ATP-rated pilot, instrument flight instructor, and A&P mechanic. Before joining **AIN**, he edited *Aviation Maintenance* and served as an associate editor at *Flying*. Thurber, a past NBAA Gold Wing Award recipient, retires October 30. In his acceptance remarks, he thanked the demo pilots he has flown with over the years and apologized “for all the ways I beat up their airplanes.” He then urged his team, in Québécois French, to fasten their tuques and not let go of the potato, and signed off with cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin’s liftoff cry: “Poyekhali!” (“Let’s go!”)

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SyberJet Aircraft's SJ34 and SJ36.

SyberJet SJ34: light but not a lightweight

By Matt Thurber

SyberJet Aircraft has elected to bring the SJ34, an upgraded version of the FAA-certified SJ30-2 light jet, to market with higher-powered Williams engines and SyberVision avionics. Plans call for service entry in 2029, and SyberJet is opening the SJ34 order book this week at NBAA-BACE 2026.

While it hasn't been determined whether the SJ34 will share the same fly-by-wire flight control system as the stretched SJ36, it will have a pair of more powerful Williams International engines totalling between 5,000 and 6,400 pounds of thrust, and an upgraded interior similar to the SJ36's. Fewer than ten SJ30-2s, powered by two 2,300-pound-thrust Williams FJ44-2A

engines, were manufactured following FAA certification in 2005.

The SJ34, a single-pilot jet, will carry seven occupants. Performance is about the same as the SJ30-2: Mach 0.83 Mmo, 2,500-nm range, 49,000 feet ceiling, and sea-level cabin at 41,000 feet. However, takeoff and climb numbers are expected to improve.

NBAA-BACE visitors can sample the SyberVision avionics, which SyberJet is designing in-house, at its static-display exhibit. The suite includes six touchscreen displays, SyberPilot AI-assisted flight control system, smarter taxi features, and SyberVision charts, with over-the-air update capability. The latter allows pilots to upload flight plans and control cabin temperature remotely, as well as enables remote diagnostics.

SyberJet is inviting potential buyers to join its Passage One program, which is limited to the first 250 customers. Benefits include a \$2 million discount on the SJ34's \$12 million list price, 1,000 hours or five-year coverage for the aircraft, 1,000 hours or five years of Williams International's TAP Blue engine program, fuel for 1,000 hours or five years (maximum 100,000 gallons), and two pilot type-rating training slots. ■

Bizav intel comes to members' fingertips in NBAA, RVA data team-up

NBAA and Rolland Vincent Associates (RVA) are partnering to deliver business aviation market intelligence to NBAA members. Quarterly updates, to begin at the RVA Summit in mid-February, will provide members with "a recurring pulse on business aviation, rather than a static snapshot of the market," according to NBAA.

The quarterly market intelligence reports will be based on RVA survey responses, including from NBAA members, and "NBAA's perspective on the industry and policy environment to deliver exclusive, unique, and actionable insights to association members at a time when the industry is rapidly evolving."

Market intelligence reports will be offered at various levels, starting with a free tier. More details on subscription fees will be released later.



NBAA and Rolland Vincent team up on data.

"NBAA is the standard when it comes to member associations," said RVA founder, co-owner, and president Rolland Vincent, "and we've proven over the years with over 30,000 conversations and surveys that we've done with owners and operators around the world that we know what we're doing...we're also trying to be the standard in what we do, which is market analytics, forecasting, and understanding what's going on inside the heads of our owners and operators."

Vincent previewed the information that will be included in the market intelligence package, highlighting the strong performance of business jet OEMs and their more than \$67 billion backlogs.

Sales through August are up 12% year over year, while inventory is down to 6.6% of the fleet, with availability tight in the super-midsize and large-cabin jet categories. A potential sign of weakness is availability of very light jets, at 16%. "That's a signal to watch," Vincent said. Another element that the market intelligence product will provide NBAA members is a measurement of the mood of the market.

"We're going to be rolling out the first product in this series early next year," said NBAA interim COO Dan Hubbard. "The survey is going out now...That's the first step, working on this subscription-based model." **M.T.**



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Universal shows off new Affinity

By Curt Epstein

Universal Aviation, formerly the business aircraft ground-support arm of Universal Weather and Aviation, rebranded as Affinity Aviation yesterday at NBAA-BACE 2026.

A year ago, World Fuel Services parent company World Kinect agreed to purchase Universal Weather and Aviation's trip-support division. Under the deal that closed late last year, World Kinect acquired one of the most trusted brands in business aviation, and with more than six decades of experience.

The Evans family, which also owns aviation catering provider Air Culinaire, retained the Universal Aviation chain of international FBOs and ground-handling offices.

"We looked at the three main businesses that we operated, each very successful, each with great brand recognition," said Greg Evans, managing principal of parent company Evans Home Office. "It simply came down to where are we going to focus? Where do we feel the greatest growth opportunities are?"

"It became apparent, really, that we needed to focus on the FBO business and the catering business, and that that's where our real opportunities for the future were. If we continued to hang on to trip support, we were going to have to spread a certain amount of that capital over to trip support, and we felt it was just probably in better hands with somebody else that we thought would be good custodians of it, make the investments in the trip-support space that Universal Trip Support needs and deserves."



The now-former Universal is launching a phased transition to the Affinity Aviation name and branding.

As part of the terms of the sale, the company was obligated to change the name of its FBO chain within three years to avoid confusion.

"[World] spent a lot of money to buy trip support, and if we decided at some point to start getting into the trip-support business again, they didn't want us to have the Universal name, so we agreed that we would sell the name," Evans told **AIN**.

At BACE this week, the company is debuting its new identity. "Affinity represents where we are taking this business next," explained Evans. "We are building on everything that has made this company successful, while pushing ourselves to keep getting better."

"That means continuing to raise the bar on safety and customer experience, investing in our people and operations, strengthening the locations we already serve, developing new capabilities and expanding general aviation infrastructure where our customers need it."

Among its FBOs, general aviation terminals (GATs), ground-handling offices, and supervisory agents, the company has more than 75 locations in more than 20 countries, with recent expansion in the Middle East and Latin America.

The company will begin a phased transition to the Affinity Aviation name immediately, with the first changes coming to its website, followed by facility signage and uniforms.

"Affinity came from the idea that exceptional ground support is personal. It starts with understanding the mission, knowing what matters to the customer and bringing the right people together to make everything work," said Sarah Evans, principal of Evans Family Office. "We wanted to create a brand that feels true to the company people already know, but also sets a clear expectation for where we are going."

To emphasize that theme, the company's new logo shows a private jet supported by a white-gloved hand. Its purple color is a mix of the former Universal's red and blue colors. ■

Bluetail's AI tool, Auto Research, delivers aircraft records in a flash

Bluetail is demonstrating Auto Research at NBAA-BACE 2026, an AI-based tool the company says shortens aircraft records research time to a fraction of what operators normally need for information gathering.

Auto Research access will include conformities, maintenance-tracking audits, pre-purchase inspections, and record gap analysis.

When searching for records like airworthiness directives, service bulletins, and component status, the results are automatically linked to the record and supporting documentation.

For conformity requirements, "Auto Research takes the conformity checklist and automatically finds the strongest supporting record for each requirement, dramatically

reducing the manual hunt through aircraft records," according to Bluetail.

Auto Research simplifies pre-purchase evaluations by researching information on key inspections, components, and other compliance items to help buyers determine whether an aircraft meets the advertised history and if there are any gaps or inconsistencies. **M.T.**



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SyberJet's SJ36 is a stretched and updated version of the SJ30-2 light jet.



SyberJet unveils SJ36 mockup, updates

By Matt Thurber

SyberJet Aircraft unveiled a full-scale mockup of the SJ36 light jet's cabin and cockpit last night during the SyberJet World event at the Las Vegas Henderson Executive Airport. The company also brought a trailer to NBAA-BACE 2026 with an avionics mockup for show attendees to experience the airplane's in-house-designed touchscreen suite.

The SJ36 is a redesigned and stretched upgrade of the SJ30-2, an FAA-certified light jet that was notable for its high-speed cruise of Mach 0.83, 2,500-nm range, 49,000-foot maximum altitude, and sea-level cabin altitude at 41,000 feet.

With only five SJ30-2s delivered by Sino Swearingen, the program then languished after it was acquired in 2011 by Metalcraft, one of the jet's airframe component suppliers. Metalcraft had been working on an update to the SJ30-2's avionics, to be called SyberVision, and renamed the jet as the SJ30i, but this variant never went into production.

The company was acquired by its current owners in 2024 and rebranded as SyberJet Aircraft. The following year, CEO Trevor Milton announced plans to stretch the jet's fuselage by 2 feet and design—in-house—a new version of SyberVision and a fly-by-wire flight control system.

Milton was founder, executive chairman, and CEO of electric and hydrogen fuel-cell truck developer Nikola but resigned from the company in 2020. Nikola entered bankruptcy in 2025.

With the longer fuselage and powered by Williams International FJ44-4A turbofans, the SJ36 is expected to have a Mach 0.88 Mmo and 3,000-nm range, with the same 49,000-foot maximum altitude and sea-level cabin at 41,000 feet as the SJ30-2. The target for the SJ36's first flight is as early as 2029, with FAA certification planned in 2032.

Milton told *AIN* he expects the costs of the program to be about \$1 billion, including \$250 million for design activities and \$750 million to set up a factory.

SyberJet decided to design the SyberVision avionics in-house because traditional avionics companies weren't interested in the program, according to Milton. Pilots will be able to connect to the avionics from their smartphones, including switching on a zero-emission auxiliary power unit that can cool or heat the aircraft parked inside a hangar.

The avionics feature six fully redundant large touchscreen displays, each of which can take over functions from the others. Pilots will be able to swap elements from one display to another with a swiping gesture.

A key design feature of the avionics will

be over-the-air software updates, according to the company, to speed up and improve the customer service experience. Much of the avionics and airframe systems design work is being done with bench-test simulators to test controls in the cockpit and for other systems.

The 2-foot stretch makes the cabin—which Milton admits is somewhat narrow compared to other light jets—more comfortable. According to Milton, SyberJet engineers were able to extract more passenger space inside the cabin by redesigning the environmental system, systems attachments, and lighting.

With one pilot, the SJ36 will be able to accommodate eight passengers. Cabin height is 4.3 feet and width is 4.71 feet. While the SJ36's designers aim to compete with midsize jets for performance, other manufacturers are targeting cabin space and comfort with different speed and range profiles.

For example, Honda Aircraft's Echelon cabin measures 5.21 feet high by 5.08 feet wide, and the jet can carry up to 11 occupants. NBAA IFR range with four passengers will be 2,625 nm; its ceiling will be 47,000 feet. Meanwhile, the Otto Aerospace Phantom 3500 is expected to fly 3,200 nm with four passengers and have a 51,000-foot ceiling. Its flat-floor cabin is 6.4 feet tall and 7.5 feet wide.

All three competing twinjets will be powered by Williams International FJ44 engines. SyberJet officials believe the SJ36's performance and passenger comfort—including lower fatigue thanks to the sea-level cabin at altitudes up to FL410—will set it apart from the competition. ■

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AAM pilot program making progress

By Hanneke Weitering

Electric and hybrid-electric aircraft have now flown in nearly a dozen states under the FAA's eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). Much of that flying has passed through airports that business aircraft use every day. Five of the program's nine aircraft manufacturers have flown under eIPP so far. One of them, Joby Aviation, is exhibiting this week at NBAA-BACE alongside Blade, the helicopter charter company it owns.

Established operators are participating, too. Air medical operator Metro Aviation has flown Beta Technologies' Alia on medical and disaster-response missions, and cargo airline Alpine Air Express has teamed with Beta on medical cargo flights in Utah. Helicopter operator Bristow is working with Elroy Air and Beta in Louisiana. Signature Aviation, also exhibiting at NBAA-BACE, is a partner in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey project.

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the FAA selected eight projects for eIPP in March, and they now span 28 states. Projects pair aircraft manufacturers and operators with state transportation departments or other local authorities. Those teams can commence operations before their aircraft are certified, and the FAA will use what they learn to write the rules for advanced air mobility (AAM).

Vermont-based Beta flew the first eIPP missions in July. Two of its all-electric Alia CX300 airplanes relayed a manufactured animal organ for United Therapeutics from Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport (KBCB) in Blacksburg, Virginia, to Baltimore Martin State Airport (KMTN). Beta holds a place in seven of the eight projects, more than any other OEM.

Metro has flown the Alia in Texas, testing disaster-response logistics with Washington County Emergency Medical Services in Brenham. In North Carolina, Beta and Metro flew routes linking Raleigh Executive Jetport (KTTA) with Pitt-Greenville Airport (KPGV) and Dare County Regional Airport (KMCI) on the Outer Banks. Beta also flew in Louisiana, where it works with Bristow and Metro on logistics for offshore energy production.



Beta's electric-powered Alia CX300 has participated in a large number of eIPP demonstrations.

Long Beach, California-based Ampaire, the program's only hybrid-electric powertrain manufacturer, began flying under uFLY, a five-state coalition led by the Utah Department of Transportation, on August 6. The company flew its EEL, a hybrid-electric Cessna 337 Skymaster testbed, from Salt Lake City to Cedar City.

Beta followed with five days of uFLY flights in early October, testing how the Alia could carry radiopharmaceuticals for Alpine Air. These radioactive drugs, used in cancer treatment, decay within hours and must reach patients quickly. Flight-tracking data shows the airplane shuttling between Salt Lake City International Airport (KSLC) and airports in Logan and Provo.

Manassas, Virginia-based Electra flew its EL2 hybrid-electric, ultra-short takeoff and landing technology demonstrator in August under the multistate collaborative led by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Its route linked Washington Manassas Airport (KHEF) with Philadelphia International Airport (KPHL), stopping at two New Jersey airfields and Northeast Philadelphia Airport (KPNE). It flew the EL2 to heliports and taxiways at Virginia airports, including Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport (KROA), to test procedures for its planned nine-passenger EL9.

In late August, California-based Elroy Air and Bristow flew the autonomous Chaparral cargo aircraft at Houma-Terrebonne Airport (KHUM) in Louisiana. Elroy Air said the sorties represented the first uncrewed flights under the eIPP.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) formally kicked off the Texas project on September 10 during an event at Perot Field Fort Worth Alliance Airport (KAFW), where Joby flew its piloted eVTOL air-taxi prototype. Beta also took part with an Alia CX300, and autonomy developer Merlin attended as an invited guest and flew its autonomous Cessna Grand Caravan.

Santa Cruz, California-based Joby last month sent its own autonomous Caravan, the J208, on a coast-to-coast tour with flights in North Carolina, Arizona, Oklahoma, Utah, and Oregon. A pilot on the ground commands the aircraft, with a safety pilot on board as a backup.

Archer Aviation holds places in three projects and says it will fly its four-passenger Midnight eVTOL under eIPP in Texas, Florida, and New York. The San Jose, California-based company has agreed to acquire Wisk Aero from Boeing. Mountain View, California-based Wisk has previously said it plans to fly its autonomous, pilotless Gen 6 eVTOL in Texas.

Pivotal, of Palo Alto, California, joined PennDOT's multistate collaborative in May. Its single-seat BlackFly flew to two 911 calls for Hyde County, North Carolina emergency medical services this summer.

Mountain View, California-based Reliable Robotics and the city of Albuquerque lead the only city-run project, which aims to bring remotely piloted cargo flights to New Mexico. Duffy toured Reliable's autonomous Caravan at Albuquerque International Sunport (KABQ) in June. ■

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The HondaJet Echelon promises midsize-jet range and comfort at light jet pricing and economics.

Honda Aircraft prepares for Echelon first flight

By Matt Thurber

Honda Aircraft recently completed the first wing structure for the HondaJet Echelon at its Greensboro, North Carolina headquarters. Previously scheduled for first flight in 2026 and type certification in 2028, the light jet is now planned to fly in 2028, with type certification and deliveries in 2031, after the company announced an adjusted timeline on September 15.

Construction of the first Echelon wing began in February 2025. Five major components for the first Echelon are in the manufacturing process, with 70% of the parts needed for first assembly now on hand. Honda Aircraft expects to assemble the first Echelon early next year and is now provisioning space for the jet's final assembly line.

The single-pilot HA-480 Echelon is designed to fill a niche for light jets with midsize-jet cabins capable of transcontinental trips, with a projected four-passenger range of 2,625 nm, 450-knot cruise speed, maximum altitude

of FL470, and seats for up to 11 occupants. Engines are Williams International FJ44-4C turbopfans, and avionics will be a Garmin suite.

Former Honda Aircraft president and CEO Michimasa Fujino introduced the aircraft as a conceptual design—the HondaJet 2600 Concept—at NBAA-BACE 2021. Formal commercialization of the program occurred in June 2023, announced by Fujino's successor, president and CEO Hideto Yamasaki.

According to Honda Aircraft, "The updated timeline reflects Tier 1-supplier-related schedule adjustments and ongoing development activities, ensuring the aircraft meets the highest standards of quality and performance."

"We have made significant progress on the design side," said Vinicius Souza, assistant program leader for the Echelon program. "So we are mostly on the industrialization side of the program at this point."

Unlike the HA-420, which began with a flying proof-of-concept prototype followed by more work to finalize the design, the Echelon program is following a more typical method of developing a new jet. That includes a

development production-representative flight-test aircraft and production versions under construction as the flight-test campaign progresses.

"It is a standard approach on developing a business jet," Souza said. "We have a better understanding of where we are right now, and that's why we are making this update. We do understand the complexities. Our plan takes all those complexities into consideration, and all the learnings, and...on what are the steps to get a product certified."

At Honda Aircraft's integrated test facility, a fully operational cockpit test environment supports "active integration campaigns," according to the company. A second cockpit test setup will be used "to evaluate key aircraft systems prior to the test aircraft taking flight."

The Echelon is designed to be certified as an amendment to the HA-420 HondaJet's type certificate and shares the same over-the-wing engine mount configuration. This engine placement expands the jet's high-speed capabilities and opens up space in the aft cabin. Other features include autothrottles, auto-brakes, a runway overrun awareness and alerting system, and Honda Aircraft's steering augmentation system.

"The HondaJet Echelon continues to take shape through the dedication and expertise of our associates and numerous OEM supplier partners," said Amod Kelkar, senior v-p, chief commercial officer, and Echelon program leader. "Completion of the first wing assembly represents an important achievement as we continue advancing testing, systems integration, and equipment qualification activity across the program. In spite of some schedule challenges, with steady progress towards the final assembly, we are committed to delivering an aircraft that will redefine light jet performance, efficiency, and capability."

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AMAC AEROSPACE

BACE sets stage for bizav pitches

By Kerry Lynch

MRO technology firm Alpha Wingman is bringing PitchAv, its own version of a “Shark Tank”-type competition, to NBAA-BACE tomorrow from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the Horizon Stage. PitchAv provides a forum for entrepreneurs to present business ideas before five judges, all of whom are accomplished business executives.

The evaluators are Stuart Illian, co-founder and chief aviation officer at Bluetail; Joe Hertzler, founder and former CEO of Avtrak and strategic business advisor with Thoroughbred Aviation; Brent Wiggins, AOG director of operations at Stevens Aerospace and Defense Systems; Ryan Waguespack, owner of General Aviation Consultants; and Ben Walton, founder of Summit Aviation.

These industry veterans “will put the business impresarios’ plans through the paces, test their viability, and determine which potential new venture is most likely to become the industry’s next breakthrough,” NBAA said.

Announced shortly before the end of the session, the winners will receive prizes that include professional mentorship, introductions to investor groups, and business services such as marketing, bookkeeping, legal, strategy, and graphic design.

This is the second event of this kind that Alpha Wingman founders Andy and Lindsay Nixon have staged. They held their first in tandem with—but not in conjunction with—BACE two years ago at a space provided by a Las Vegas entrepreneur network.

It was so well received that NBAA officials and other industry executives asked them to stage it again, but this time at NBAA-BACE 2026. “We were excited that this idea is taking off with NBAA and BACE this year,” said Lindsay Nixon, Alpha Wingman’s director of strategy.

The Nixons have experience with these types of pitch competitions, entering them as they were launching their business, which was originally called MRO Insider and links customers in need of AOG support with providers through an online platform.



Alpha Wingman’s PitchAv welcomes entrepreneurs to present business ideas to five judges.

The Nixons founded their company in 2016, and launched it at NBAA-BACE 2017. They developed a platform on which corporate operators could request quotes electronically and available MRO providers could respond. Since then, the business has expanded to assist major operators with their digital platforms.

“Having a business aviation-related technology company has shown us the need for innovation and technology to come to the forefront to create solutions for the industry,” Lindsay explained. “We’ve seen more and more come through in the past five to eight years, but there’s always room for more. And that just leads directly into the overlap with entrepreneurship and the Shark Tank-like competition.”

When they began entering competitions, Lindsay said, they found them to be a “fun and different way to learn about your business and really just pull you up to speed with how investors and well-seasoned business professionals look at your business. The feedback was excellent. We learned a lot each time we did it.”

They were challenged to look at various aspects of their business and their business plans. “We had to learn how to do financials,” said Andy, who is Alpha Wingman’s president, adding that they would receive insights where people would say, “This looks great, but have you thought about this?”

They received prizes such as design services, including for the website and collateral. Getting a company name known “is probably the hardest thing that a lot of people do,” Andy added. “All these companies that raise \$100 million or \$500 million, such as Wheels Up, get all the glory. But when you’re starting out from nothing, and you want to bootstrap the business like we have—we own all the equity, we haven’t taken outside investors—that’s when that mentorship comes into play.”

To accomplish those goals, many company founders will give away equity to the point that they no longer have ownership, he said, explaining that’s why assistance such as mentorship is so helpful. “We try to let entrepreneurs know that there are other ways to go about starting a business,” Andy said.

Lindsay added, however, that some level of investment will help a company grow, and that was included in the prize package this year.

Jo Damato, NBAA’s senior v-p of events and professional engagement, stressed how PitchAv is “a great fit” for the three-day convention. “NBAA-BACE is the place where innovative ideas and the people with that entrepreneurial spirit converge to help shape the future of business aviation,” she said. “We’re thrilled to give these fresh ideas a stage in front of the industry’s leaders and top decision-makers.” ■

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With more training space, Academy Aviation Maintenance Training is expanding its offerings.

AAMT previews mx training subscription

By Amy Wilder

Academy Aviation Maintenance Training (AAMT), part of Academy Aviation Group, has doubled the training space at its U.S. headquarters in Melbourne, Florida, and is showcasing its upgraded programs this week at NBAA-BACE 2026.

This includes a preview of the company's Training as a Subscription (TaaS), a commercial

model in development that would let operators and maintenance organizations budget recurring technical training around longer-term workforce and fleet needs rather than purchasing individual courses. The company said further TaaS details will follow as part of its 2026 rollout.

Show visitors can also learn more about the Melbourne facility expansion, new Cessna Citation courses, Embraer training, on-site delivery options, and upcoming curriculum

additions. AAMT is also launching a technical course giveaway aimed at young and early-career maintenance professionals, intended to give developing technicians access to aircraft-specific training and encourage more entrants into the maintenance career field.

Besides increased classroom capacity for technician throughput, concurrent fleet courses, and dedicated practical and avionics training aids, the Melbourne expansion supports the company's technical training for maintenance teams serving Part 91 and 135 operators and Part 145 repair stations.

AAMT's expanded technical courses include the Cessna Citation X/X+ and Longitude. These maintenance initial, line maintenance, and avionics initial programs are available in-center, online, or at customer locations. The company is also expanding its Embraer-focused training, including a course for the Phenom 300.

"Investing in our Melbourne facility is a direct response to what operators and MROs have been telling us: they need pragmatic, high-quality technical training that aligns with the reality of operational schedules," said AAMT general manager for the Americas Nick Gardner. "The industry is facing significant technician demand, and workforce readiness hinges on giving technicians comprehensive, type-specific knowledge without disrupting day-to-day operations."

NBAA to honor Udvar-Hazy with meritorious service award

NBAA is presenting its Meritorious Service to Aviation Award to aircraft leasing pioneer and philanthropist Steven Udvar-Hazy today at NBAA-BACE 2026. Udvar-Hazy is accepting the award—the association's highest—on the show's Horizon Stage this morning, where he will join 2019 recipient Ross Perot Jr. for an onstage discussion of the industry.

"Steven's influence across the entire aviation/aerospace landscape is profound," NBAA president and CEO Ed Bolen said ahead of the annual business aviation show. "His story is one of vision, perseverance, and extraordinary impact."



Steven Udvar-Hazy

Udvar-Hazy co-founded International Lease Finance Corp. (ILFC) in 1973, establishing a leasing model that gave airlines alternative routes to fleet acquisition. He departed ILFC in 2010 and later launched Air Lease Corp.

He was born in Budapest and left Hungary with his family for the U.S. in 1958 following Soviet reoccupation. Udvar-Hazy first flew in a Piper Cub at 15 and began formal training the next year at the Los Angeles-area field now known as Whiteman Airport, earning his first jet type rating in 1978.

He has since logged more than 11,000 flight hours, with some 9,000 of them as captain in multiengine jets, and has held an FAA airline transport pilot certificate for 37 years. His type ratings span the Gulfstream IV, V, and G650, which he uses for domestic and international missions, along with Learjet models and the Cessna Citation CE500 and CE680 families.

Udvar-Hazy also backed the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's companion facility near Washington Dulles International Airport that carries his name. Opened in December 2003, the facility displays space shuttle Discovery and NBAA's permanent business aviation exhibit, centered on Bob Hoover's Rockwell Shrike Commander. J.R.

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AMAC Academy launches MRO training

By Charles Alcock

AMAC Aerospace's new academy is preparing to receive its first cohort of aircraft maintenance students, with training beginning in January. The AMAC Academy at the group's headquarters at EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg (LFSB) will prepare students for EASA's Part 66 basic license for aircraft mechanical systems and turbine engines (B1) or avionics (B2).

The MRO group said its investment in training is important, given the industry's growing demand for skilled staff. Students will receive theoretical training and also have opportunities to gain hands-on experience in AMAC's Part 145-approved facility.



AMAC Aerospace is investing in its own academy to train a new generation of maintenance technicians.

As part of AMAC's focus on expanding its capabilities to support VVIP and business aircraft, the company has been preparing to support the Boeing Max 7 narrowbody, which was certified in August.

In addition to conducting heavy checks and maintenance on multiple Boeing 737 models, AMAC has extensive experience modifying the type. In September, it delivered an aircraft featuring a custom cabin with new seats, certified to 16G standards, and other new interior fittings.

AMAC also supports multiple widebody airliners in head-of-state and VVIP service, including the 777, 747, and 767 members of the Boeing Business Jets family. In late August, an Airbus ACJ350 arrived in Basel for an A check, where it was worked on alongside a BBJ777 having a C check and a BBJ747 in for a D check.

The company said aircraft owners are increasingly having Starlink satcom equipment fitted during maintenance downtime. AMAC is a Starlink-authorized installer.

In Istanbul, Turkey, AMAC's facility supports a variety of business aircraft, including Dassault Falcon. The Basel center has recently worked on multiple Gulfstream models, including the G450, G550, and G650, as well as Bombardier Challengers and Globals. The group's JCB Aero facility in France recently expanded its MRO capability to include Part 145 approval to work on Boeing 737s.

AMAC has also been involved in more pre-purchase inspections for prospective aircraft buyers. In addition, the group has aircraft-on-ground teams available to support operators facing technical trouble at remote locations. ■

Wyvern pushing safety as a hot topic during NBAA-BACE sessions

Aviation audit and risk management firm Wyvern is highlighting the National Safety Forum as part of an array of activities it has planned to keep safety conversations at the forefront this week at NBAA-BACE 2026. Wyvern COO Andy Day, the incoming chair of the NBAA Safety Committee, is helping guide the association's National Safety Forum activities threaded throughout the week.

The forum will host a series of sessions focused on topics such as safety management systems, managing risk, fatigue management, and fitness to fly. "We value the forum as a place where the community can share candid

perspectives, learn from one another's experience, and identify practical ways to raise the standard of safety across the industry," Wyvern said.

In one such session, Wyvern flight leader coach Todd Buczek is joining a panel to discuss returning an aircraft to service after maintenance work. This panel will delve into how flight departments know when an aircraft is ready to fly.

"Maintenance changes an aircraft's condition, and gaps between the people who did the work and the people who will fly it can turn small oversights into real risk," Wyvern

warned. "Todd will share how clear handoffs, disciplined communication, and shared accountability close those gaps, along with steps attendees can put into practice as soon as they return to their operations."

Beyond the National Safety Forum activities, Wyvern assistant v-p of operations Kris Stewart will demonstrate the company's improved quality and safety management system platform. This product is designed to help operators manage risk and quality with flight risk assessment tools, continuous analysis and surveillance system integration, and aviation safety action programs. **K.L.**



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GE Aerospace

Bose celebrates 40th ANR anniversary

By Matt Thurber

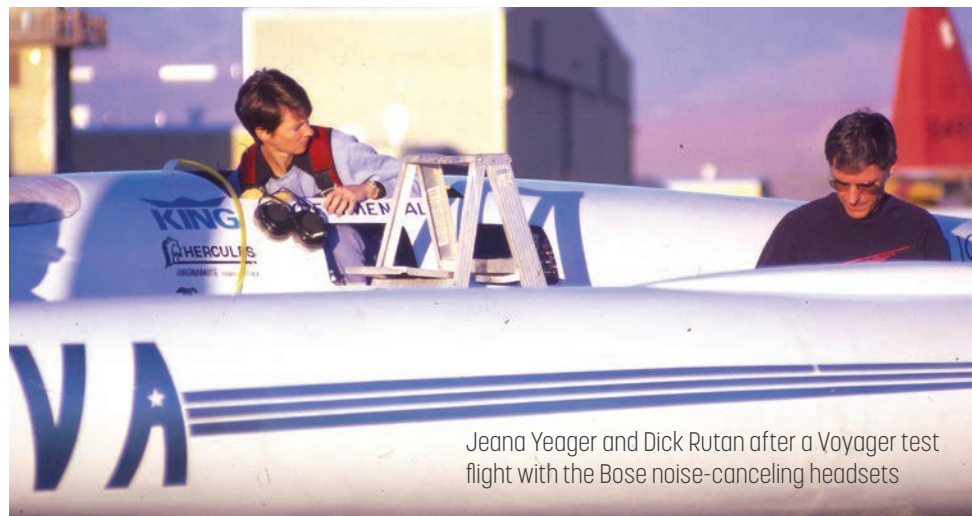
As Bose, manufacturer of aviation headsets and high-fidelity audio products, celebrates the 40th anniversary of the ANR headset, **AIN** caught up with retired distinguished engineer Dan Gauger to learn more about the company's history. NBAA visitors can see the latest headsets—the A30 and ProFlight 2—and other products at the Bose exhibit here at BACE.

In 1978, Amar Bose, founder of Bose Corporation and a former professor at his alma mater (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), was on a Swissair jet flying to Boston from Switzerland. “He was excited” to try out the new electrodynamic headphones that airlines were implementing, Gauger said. “He thought, ‘Oh, it’ll sound good. I’ll be able to enjoy music for the first time on a plane.’”

As it turned out, these headphones did nothing to block external noise, and airliners were much louder then. “So he was frustrated,” Gauger said. “He started thinking about the problem.”

Bose had already developed feedback control as a core technology, he explained. In considering the problem of outside noise, Amar Bose “imagined on his own the idea of using feedback control to regulate [and] control the sound pressure to be what you wanted to hear—the music or communication—and try to cancel a lot of the noise.”

Essentially, the way active noise canceling or noise reduction works is that a microphone inside the ear cup, near the ear canal, senses the noise or sound pressure going into the ear. Then it compares that noise to the audio that the user wants to hear—for example, a voice on the intercom or a call from ATC. “The



Jeana Yeager and Dick Rutan after a Voyager test flight with the Bose noise-canceling headsets

difference is the noise you don’t want to hear, and also maybe some distortion effects and things like that,” Gauger said. “We take that difference, we process it, we amplify it, we shape it in frequency, and play it back through a speaker to provide a correction.”

By the early 1980s, Gauger and his colleague Roman Sapiejewski had developed prototypes of an active noise reduction (ANR) headset for military contracts. After cancellation of those contracts, the pair looked at general aviation, which Gauger said “seemed like a good fit. We needed something to jump-start it.”

That something turned out to be the biggest story of the mid-1980s, the ambitious attempt by Jeana Yeager and Dick Rutan to fly around the world nonstop without refueling. Their aircraft was the ungainly yet quintessential Burt Rutan design, called the Voyager. Burt and Dick are brothers (Dick passed away in 2024).

A cover story about the Voyager flight in a magazine around June 1986 was what caught their attention. “Roman and I looked at each other and said we think we can help,” Gauger recalled. In August 1986, they paid a cold-call visit to the Voyager hangar at Mojave Airport (KMHV) in California’s Mojave Desert. What the Bose engineers showed the two pilots was the latest version, which not only focused on active noise cancelation but incorporated a more comfortable passive blocking fit.

However, these were still prototypes, and there were challenges. One was fixing RF interference from the radios, but the other was that Dick wouldn’t let Gauger send the headsets back to Bose headquarters to get properly built

by experienced electronics technicians. “Once they were working well enough...he wouldn’t let them out of his hands. He kept them under his desk when they weren’t flying, and so that’s what they took on the flight when they departed Edwards.”

Unfortunately, the headsets started producing a continuous static sound after two to three days, which turned out to be caused by humidity from the pilots perspiration inside the ear cups corroding Gauger’s bad solder joints.

“We proved that when we got our hands back on the headsets,” he said. “So the headsets did not actually perform as well as they should have during the flight. We had done a lot of work on the comfort of the headsets, and they still had good passive attenuation.”

Nevertheless, the successful Voyager flight—which took 9 days, 3 minutes, and 44 seconds and averaged about 116 mph—generated a lot of interest among pilots. Gauger said, “The subsequent attention we got created the impetus for the company to say, ‘Well, I guess we found a market here.’ The number of pilots who contacted us asking when they could buy what Dick and Jeana had used on the flight was a little overwhelming, so the company said, ‘I guess we have to do this.’”

At the 1989 EAA International Fly-In Convention, Bose sold out the nearly 200 headsets that the company had manufactured thus far.

Since then, Bose has continuously iterated the design of the original headset, with the latest generations being the A30 ear cup version and the ProFlight Series 2 with earbuds (for quieter cockpits). ■



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Saab planning potential production of GlobalEye 6500s in Canada

By Charlotte Bailey

Amid growing global demand for Saab's GlobalEye Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft—a missionized Bombardier Global 6500—the Swedish OEM is seeking ways to boost deliveries. While Saab maintains it is committed to delivering four GlobalEyes a year starting in 2030, it stressed that “production is not fixed,” with a likely Canadian production facility established to augment output.

In August, Saab CEO Micael Johansson said the company was already investing to increase GlobalEye production capacity. However, the “industry setup to create scale in Europe is maybe the most challenging thing we have now,” he suggested.

David Moden, senior sales director for GlobalEye, confirmed that—subject to a firm Canadian contract—Saab is “committed to build GlobalEye in Canada.” This, he affirmed, “would allow the production of up to a third of the global demand for GlobalEye [aircraft] over the next 15 years.”

Although no timeline has been suggested for the potential Canadian GlobalEye facility, “Those discussions are ongoing now, and once the contract is signed, there would be a discussion on how quickly we would be able to establish that production line,” Moden continued. Conversion of Bombardier-supplied

aircraft takes place at Saab's Linköping, Sweden headquarters.

Moden suggested that Saab's production approach is “based upon a scalable industry and a flexible architecture, which allows [it] to meet future market demand.” Although customers can opt for a tailored setup, a stan-

fleet, while NATO in July named GlobalEye as the intended successor to its aging Boeing E-3A Sentry. Also in July, an undisclosed Middle Eastern customer placed a firm order for two, followed by the Netherlands' letter of intent to acquire one. These join an existing order backlog for GlobalEyes from Sweden and France.

Bombardier is also searching for a Canadian location to perform various modifications to its portfolio of special-mission Global 6500s. During a second-quarter earnings call, CEO Éric Martel confirmed that Bombardier has a “strong desire” to replicate defense-specific conversion work currently undertaken at its Wichita facility.

Martel added Bombardier is also in “very active” discussions with Saab, explaining, “It makes a lot of sense...we know the plane more than anyone else to make structural modifications, provision, and potentially even installation



Based on a Bombardier Global 6500 business jet, Saab's GlobalEye early warning/surveillance platform features a “ski box” radar fairing atop the fuselage.

dard baseline configuration takes around 48 months from order placement to delivery. Despite the recent market entry of the larger Global 8000, Moden maintained that Saab remains committed to the Global 6500 platform “for the foreseeable future.”

Against a backdrop of escalating global tension, GlobalEye has seen notable successes this year. In May, Canada selected Saab as the preferred supplier for its upcoming AEW&C

of some of that equipment.”

Saab declined to confirm whether a sovereign Canadian GlobalEye line depends on a Canadian purchase of Gripen E fighters—which would see the nation review its acquisition of up to 72 Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighters in favor of a Swedish solution. Johansson said a “fully-fledged [GlobalEye production] hub in Canada” could be up and running within five years. ■



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G400 test program is gaining speed

By Kerry Lynch

Gulfstream Aerospace has completed the first flight of a fully outfitted G400 test aircraft, bringing the program for the 4,200-nm twin jet closer to certification, the company announced yesterday at NBAA-BACE. At the same time, the company is prepping to add a second G300 to that flight-test program.

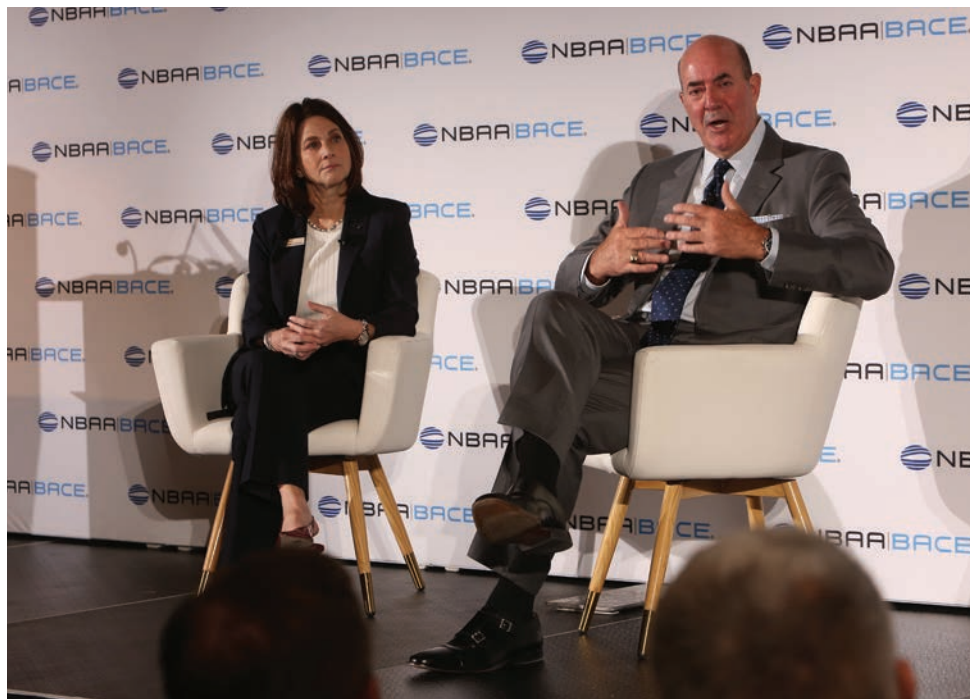
On Wednesday, the fully-outfitted G400 completed its first flight from Dallas Love Field (KDAL), staying aloft for 2 hours 46 minutes and reaching an altitude of 48,000 feet. Configured with an 11-passenger layout in two-and-a-half cabin zones, the aircraft will evaluate cabin systems at altitude, as well as functionality and in-flight comfort.

“We’re in the throes of flying that airplane now. It flew recently about 3.5 hours and about 48,000 feet...so we’ll continue to expand that envelope,” Gulfstream Aerospace president Mark Burns told reporters at the show.

He declined to provide a firm timeline for G400 certification but said the program “is going really well.” Additionally, he doesn’t see any issues that would upset certification.

“We don’t have a prediction of when. Unfortunately, I don’t make that call,” he explained. But Burns is encouraged the G400 will benefit from processes put in place after Gulfstream certified the G500, G600, G700, and G800 in the last seven years, even as the G700 “got mixed up in the middle of Covid” and things slowed down.

He also pointed to bumps in the process during that certification program. “I was probably the most vocal person on the planet during the G700 about my dissatisfaction,” he conceded.



Gulfstream senior v-p Jeannine Haas and president Mark Burns highlight growth in the product line.

Burns told the FAA at the time that the certification process needs to modernize, adding that it has since improved. The G800 went according to schedule, and Burns recently praised the process to Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. He believes this will benefit G400 certification.

As a testament to G400 program maturity, one of the flight-test aircraft set a new city-pair speed record while also using a sustainable aviation fuel blend while en route to NBAA-BACE, completing the flight from Miami to Las Vegas in 4 hours and 8 minutes at an average speed of Mach 0.89.

The G400 program will encompass four flight-test aircraft. Burns said Gulfstream is making “good progress” with flight tests, including completing flammable fluid drainage testing on one of the airplanes this week. Another is undergoing icing tests, he said, “so the airplanes are getting exercised quite significantly.”

Meanwhile, he noted, the 3,600-nm G300—the successor to the Israeli-built G280—is expected to be not far behind the G400 in certification. The initial G300 flew in December, and Burns said the second is prepping to take to the skies shortly. This will be one of three aircraft in the flight-test program, with production on the third aircraft underway.

As far as the continuation from the G280 program, Burns said the G300 will “accentuate the things that made that airplane successful, but we changed it to look more like a Gulfstream on the outside with the oval windows, new cabin, and interior.”

Flight testing of the super-midsize business jet is continuing to move forward with its program partner, Israel Aerospace Industries, he said.

The G400 is accompanied by the rest of Gulfstream’s in-production large-cabin jet fleet—the G500, G600, G700, and G800—at the NBAA-BACE Aircraft Connection (static display) at Henderson Executive Airport (KLAS). Also included are full-scale G300 and G400 cabin mockups.

“The aircraft continues to perform exceptionally well as we advance through the rigorous certification program,” said Burns. “Each milestone reinforces the performance, cabin comfort, and versatility customers will experience with this remarkable aircraft.”

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Bombardier



Gogo Galileo antenna on
Pilatus PC-24 business jet.

Gogo plots course for Galileo speed evolution

By Matt Thurber

Gogo has unveiled a roadmap for improving service for its Galileo low-Earth-orbit (LEO) satcom systems, which run on Eutelsat's OneWeb LEO satellite network. The roadmap targets five times faster download speeds and 10 times faster upload speeds for the compact HDX antenna by 2032, with interim performance upgrades every two years.

For aircraft owners and operators who select Gogo Galileo systems, the improvements will be simple upgrades that don't require a new supplemental type certificate, according to Gogo CEO Chris Moore. Wiring will remain the same, and the upgraded hardware will be form, fit, and function compatible. "The way [the antenna] fits on the fuselage is exactly the same," he said.

The Gogo Galileo roadmap speed projections start with today's compact HDX antenna at 60 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload, climbing to 100/20 in 2028, 200/50 in 2030, and 300/100 in 2032. For the larger FDX antenna, these speeds climb from 195/32 today to 600/90 in 2030 and 1,500/350 in 2032 (with no change in 2028).

To help customers manage connectivity budgets, Gogo offers guaranteed prices for three years. "The ongoing cost with us is substantially more cost-effective because [Starlink] just doubled their pricing on their customers with only 30 days' notification," Moore said.

HDX global service plans start at \$3,500 per month for 25 GB (and \$215 per GB overage) and go up to \$10,500 per month for unlimited service, with a three-year price lock. One-year locked prices are higher.

"We don't change prices on a whim," he said, "and we care about customers and customer satisfaction. With the roadmap, that's evident. We're trying to make it friendly to install and upgrade, and then we're not giving any big

price shocks. If you sign with us on October 13, that pricing is now guaranteed until October 13, 2029, which at that point, if you look at our roadmap, we would have taken the...HDX from 60 meg to 100 meg, and you'll be very close to getting 200 meg on the same product set."

Galileo customers will get not only faster speeds but also cost predictability, according to Moore. "This is huge for charter operators," he said.

Supporting the Gogo Galileo roadmap are continued improvements to the OneWeb network and the European Union's Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity, and Security by Satellite (IRIS²) constellation, which is expected to enter service in the early 2030s and will add capacity. IRIS² will combine LEO, medium-Earth-orbit, and very-low-Earth-orbit satellites in a multi-orbit network.

"What it means for business aviation is the satellites become more enhanced," he said. "This is a sustainable network. The money is behind it, and also the investment to improve it is there as well."

"Installing connectivity is a long-term investment in an aircraft's capability, productivity, and appeal," Moore said. "Connectivity technology is evolving more rapidly now than ever before, and our customers deserve to know their investment will serve them years from now." ■

Aloft opens innovation lab for aircraft

Aloft AeroArchitects has opened a custom systems integration lab to test aircraft technologies in a realistic environment. Located at the company's headquarters at Delaware Coastal Airport (KGED) in Georgetown, Delaware, the Aloft Innovation Lab will support the company's internal programs while enabling collaboration with industry partners.

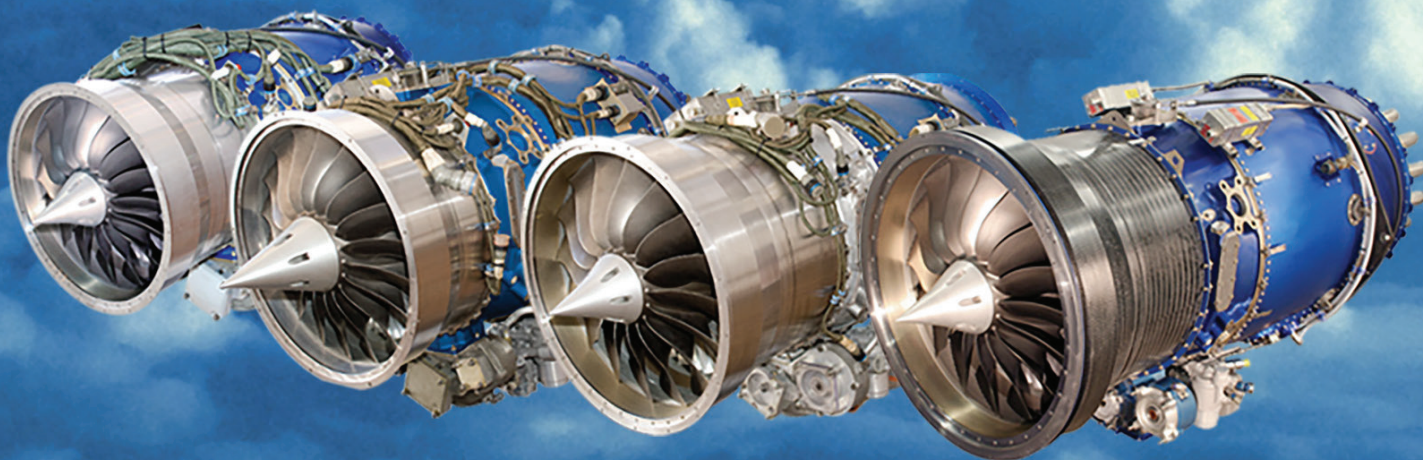
Engineers can integrate and test technologies using traditional aircraft architectures or a cabin systems framework Aloft calls "modular open-source architecture in-cabin" (Mosaic). The MRO and completions specialist will offer "lab-as-a-service," permitting customers to rent lab space, equipment, and tech-

nical resources in a controlled environment.

"We are challenging the aviation arena to keep up with modern technology by providing a space to collaborate and expedite new ideas," Aloft chief commercial officer Matt Hill said. "The innovation lab allows us and our partners to test these solutions in a realistic aircraft ecosystem, identify integration challenges early, and significantly accelerate the path to market."

Aloft AeroArchitects first unveiled the facility at the Red Cabin Business Jet and VIP Interior Innovation Summit, which it hosted last month in Dewey Beach, Delaware. The company celebrated its 50th anniversary at the event.

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The latest crystal ball from Honeywell foresees about 14,000 deliveries of business aircraft. This year's forecast for the first time includes personal jets and business turboprops like the Pilatus PC-12.

Blue skies ahead for bizav, says Honeywell

By: Curt Epstein

Honeywell Aerospace's 35th annual Global Business Aviation Outlook predicts deliveries of 9,950 business jets and 4,200 turboprops over the next decade. Released last evening, the forecast considers personal jets such as the Cirrus Vision Jet, as well as business turboprops, for the first time. The outlook examines fleet usage and operator purchase expectations.

"In the past, it was only deliveries and only business jets," Honeywell Aerospace strategic planning manager Kevin Schwab told **AIN**. "What we're trying to accomplish is to help the industry understand where we sort of stand today, where we think we're going into the future, so that everybody can sort of adequately plan and prepare, and sort of have some transparency around where we think the sector is going, and we thought that excluding some of the segments of the industry was doing a little bit of a disservice to that goal."

Over the 10-year forecast window, the company, which spun off from parent company Honeywell earlier this year, sees approximately 14,000 deliveries of business aircraft in total. The expected 9,950 jet shipments are up 4.4% from last year's outlook.

For this year, Honeywell foresees 1,280 new-production aircraft deliveries as OEMs continue to work through years-long backlogs, rising to more than 1,500 a year by 2035, at an estimated value of \$37 billion annually, with large cabin jets representing the largest share.

"We are seeing an increase in the forecasted number of aircraft," explained Schwab. "This is partially due to some of the growth that we have seen over the last couple of years, and some of the orders that have already come in, but also over the last year, we have a relatively strong economic outlook." He further noted the strong growth in the number of high-net-worth individuals, particularly in the U.S., as a factor driving the market.

As part of its annual outlook preparations, Honeywell Aerospace generates its buyer expectation survey, which it sends to hundreds of non-fractional business aircraft operators. This year, more than a quarter of the respondents—who represent more than 1,500 business aircraft worldwide—indicated that they have at least one new aircraft on firm order.

By 2035, Honeywell Aerospace expects the global fleet to number 18,000 turboprops, 15,000 light jets, 8,200 midsize jets, and 9,700 large cabin jets. With their intercontinental capability and reduced price and operating costs versus larger aircraft, midsize jets are anticipated to grow more than 40% during the forecast period, outpacing all other segments.

"What we see over the next 10 years is about 29% growth in the overall global fleet," Schwab told **AIN**. "This is more than there had been over the last 10 years, and this is driven by two factors that are working together. Number one, deliveries are higher now, and we're anticipating them to be higher over the next 10 years. Also, retirements are lower—they have been a little bit lower the last couple of years—and we're expecting them to be lower moving forward."

Schwab noted the decrease in aircraft retirements continues a trend seen in the industry post-pandemic, when many aircraft operators chose to make the repairs, inspections, and upgrades on older aircraft that wouldn't have been justifiable a few years earlier.

"Usually, you choose to retire an aircraft when it no longer makes economical sense to do so," said Schwab. "But if you have scarcity of assets, and an industry which has a relatively large willingness to pay to use it, the economic balance changed a bit."

"They were willing to pay for that extra shop visit, or get that extra upgrade to keep the aircraft flying longer because there was somebody willing to buy that airplane and there was somebody willing to still fly that airplane." He expects that dynamic to continue for at least the next five years.

With the expansion of the global fleet from 39,400 aircraft in 2025 to nearly 51,000 predicted by 2035, Schwab believes that rising tide will lift all boats, in terms of ancillary businesses such as FBOs and MROs. ■

C&L: out with CRTs, in with LCDs

By Curt Epstein



C&L Aviation Group is working on an STC to replace the aging DU-870 CRT unit in older Cessna Citation and Embraer jets.

A pending supplemental type certificate (STC) is set to update aging Honeywell displays on legacy Citation and Embraer models. Aircraft maintenance and parts provider C&L Aviation Group has partnered with ScioTeq to develop the STC for the DU-875 NG light display for the Cessna Citation Excel, Encore, Ultra, and Bravo, as well as the Embraer ERJ-135/145.

The STC allows operators to upgrade Honeywell DU-870 CRTs with drop-in replacements that offer reduced power consumption and significant weight savings, while maintaining

compatibility with the existing cockpit configuration. ScioTeq, the DU-875 OEM and official Honeywell partner for its Primus Elite display upgrade, has designed the DU-875 NG Light to provide the smallest size, weight, power, and cost.

The unit features a 7- by 5-inch LCD screen with 1024- by 768-pixel resolution, operates at just 34 Watts—versus the DU-870's 138 Watts), and weighs 15.4 pounds. It is convection-cooled and is available in both black and gray bezel variants.

According to C&L, the LCD units offer a substantially improved mean time between failures versus the legacy DU-870 displays in these aircraft, helping operators improve reliability, reduce maintenance requirements, and lower overall operating costs.

“Through this partnership with ScioTeq, C&L continues to deliver innovative and reliable solutions that support operators in avoiding obsolescence,” said C&L CEO Chris Kilgour.



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The Blackhawk Group has implemented mobile support services at its Broomfield, Colorado Avex Performance Center.

Blackhawk wins STCs for anti-ice, propeller

By Matt Thurber

The Blackhawk Group has received two supplemental type certificate approvals, one from the FAA for a Piper Meridian heated anti-ice system and another from EASA for a Hartzell five-blade composite propeller upgrade on King Air 350/360s. The company also launched a mobile support service at its Avex Performance Center in Broomfield, Colorado.

Blackhawk's heated anti-ice system gives the Meridian the same elevator-horn protection that Piper designed for the M600 and M700 turboprop singles. According to Blackhawk, this "prevents ice from bridging the gap between the elevator horn and the horizontal

stabilizer, providing smooth and unrestricted flight control movement in all conditions."

Now, European owners of King Air 350s and 360s with Blackhawk's XP67A Engine+ upgrade can also add the five-blade Hartzell carbon-fiber propeller. The powerplant upgrade replaces the original Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-60A with 1,200-shp PT6A-67A engines, which provide 24% more available shaft horsepower, according to Blackhawk. Combined, the XP67A engines and five-blade Hartzell propellers raise the King Air 350/360's cruise speed to 337 ktas, which is five knots faster than the engine upgrade alone. Time to climb to FL350 also drops to less than 18 minutes.

Weighing about 10 pounds less per side than the standard four-blade aluminum propellers, Hartzell's composite propellers have a smaller diameter and reduce cabin and exterior noise. These newer propellers have accumulated more than 50,000 flight-test hours and withstood lightning- and bird-strike tests.

"This EASA approval gives King Air 350/360 operators across Europe access to one of the most capable and popular performance packages we have ever developed," said Edwin Black, president of The Blackhawk Group's Proprietary Upgrades division. "The combination of the XP67A and Hartzell five-blade composite propeller delivers a significant improvement in aircraft performance."

Meanwhile, by adding mobile support at Broomfield, Blackhawk gives customers access to dedicated maintenance vehicles and teams to help with unscheduled maintenance and troubleshooting. Its teams are equipped to conduct borescope inspections, light engine maintenance, fault isolation, avionics support, landing gear services, system servicing, and select propeller changes.

"Our customers operate on their own schedules, and maintenance needs don't always arise conveniently near one of our facilities," said Blackhawk Group CEO Chad Cundiff. "This new mobile capability brings the experience and technical resources of our Performance Center network directly to the aircraft, wherever it is. It's one more example of building our support services around how our customers actually fly." ■

RVA Summit bringing packed agenda, honoring legacy of aviation

Rolland Vincent Associates' inaugural RVA Summit is picking up momentum as the event—scheduled for February 15 to 16 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.—lines up speakers, sponsors, and a growing number of attendees. The two-day event will precede GAMA's annual State of the Industry gathering.

Led by Rolland Vincent, RVA had staged a summit in tandem with former partner JetNet for the past 15 years. But with the end of that partnership this year, the 2027 event marks the first

time RVS hosts the summit under its purview.

With the summit leading into the annual GAMA event, several OEM chiefs will be speakers, along with leaders in the business aviation supply chain. They include Gulfstream president Mark Burns, Embraer Executive Jets president and CEO Michael Amalfitano, and Dassault Falcon Jet CEO Thierry Betbeze.

As in past years, Vincent will present the RVA insights and outlook on the state of the market and delivery forecast.

Held in the Grand Ballroom at the Mayflower, the summit will also mark the legacy of aviation. The Grand Ballroom was the site where the National Geographic Society awarded Charles Lindbergh the Hubbard Medal in 1927, the year he completed the first solo, nonstop transatlantic flight from New York to Paris. The summit, which comes a few months ahead of the 100th anniversary of that event, will also recognize the centennial of Textron Aviation's Cessna brand. **K.L.**

Liebherr showcases component innovations

By Charles Alcock

Liebherr-Aerospace is investing in technology to help shape next-generation aircraft, including ways to reduce the size and weight of components and increase electrification. The French manufacturer is exhibiting equipment such as a new air-conditioning pack, modular electromechanical actuators, and a nose landing gear this week at NBAA-BACE 2026.



Liebherr-Aerospace developed this air-conditioning pack for Dassault's Falcon 6X integrated air-management system.

For Dassault's Falcon 6X, Liebherr-Aerospace developed an integrated air-management system that cools the interior. The equipment combines bleed air and air-conditioning components with cabin pressurization, air distribution, ice protection, and supplemental cooling.

The Toulouse-based company has also produced a volatile organic compound and ozone converter to remove ozone and unwanted airborne contaminants from cabin air.

Earlier this year, the company confirmed plans to increase investment in developing

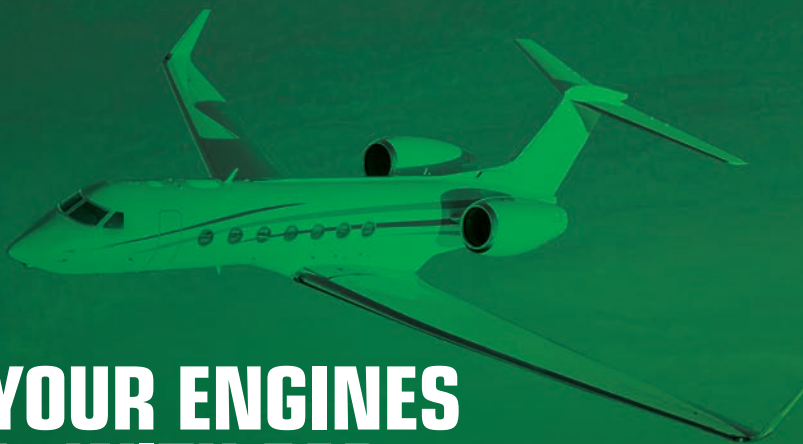
smaller-scale electromechanical actuators that could be used for eVTOL aircraft, as well as business jets and helicopters. Its strategy is to reduce hardware scale for installation in smaller spaces and combine an appropriate power-to-weight ratio with high reliability.

In the U.S. market, the European group supports customers through its Liebherr-Aerospace Saline subsidiary in Michigan. This operation provides repair services, technical support, and spares distribution and is supplemented by another company service facility near Montreal. ■



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NBAA senior v-p of product development and sales Emily Deaton (left) moderated a session with Flexjet president Steve Varsano (center) and Solairus Aviation founder and CEO Dan Drohan (right) during the newsmakers kickoff lunch.

aviation, while most head to the airlines. Rising pay has also kept experienced employees in place longer, he added, slowing advancement but leaving more mentors around. Solairus' Atlas program, now in its second cohort, gives mid-level managers and junior staff up to two years of executive coaching. "I think the next CEO of Solairus works at Solairus today," Drohan said.

Leaders lay out lofty future for biz aviation

By Hanneke Weitering

Business aviation's future depends less on how much its companies grow than on keeping their cultures intact, building a deeper talent pipeline, and telling the industry's story better, according to executives behind two of the year's biggest deals. Solairus Aviation founder and CEO Dan Drohan and Flexjet president Steve Varsano shared that outlook yesterday during the newsmakers kickoff lunch at NBAA-BACE.

Both are integrating recent acquisitions. Solairus, based in Petaluma, California, closed its purchase of Clay Lacy Aviation's aircraft management and charter business less than three weeks ago, growing its managed fleet from 360 aircraft to 496, Drohan said. In June, Flexjet acquired London-based The Jet Business, which Varsano founded, and named him president.

Solairus has long pitched itself as "big enough to matter but small enough to care," Drohan said. With the Clay Lacy deal, the challenge is staying small enough to care, he explained. The regulatory side of the integration, such as adding Clay Lacy's aircraft to Solairus' charter certificate, is going well, he added.

"When we look back 12 months from now and say, did this work or did it not work? It

will not be about whether we moved airplanes to op specs quickly," he said. "It's going to be about how our employees feel when they bump into each other at an FBO."

Varsano said demand for fractional shares at Cleveland-based Flexjet exceeds what manufacturers can deliver, so The Jet Business now finds preowned jets to sell to those customers until their new airplanes arrive. The Jet Business is known for its London showroom, and Varsano said the company plans to open a U.S. location. Asked by an audience member whether that would be in New York City, he replied, "Yes. Stand by."

He also said the industry has been too timid about promoting itself for fear of criticism over wealthy fliers and emissions. He said his own social media videos aim to educate viewers about business aviation without showing off. They began with a TikTok clip, filmed in his showroom, that drew 30 million views, and they have since drawn nearly 2 billion. Many young viewers have told him the videos led them to attend Embry-Riddle, become charter brokers, or learn to fly.

Drohan said the industry is "hard on young people" and has done a poor job of building pathways for pilots early in their careers and for those leaving the military. Among 16 pilots in a typical military squadron, he said, maybe one knows something about business

Textron's new bird flies the coop

The first production-representative Cessna Citation CJ4 Gen3 has rolled out of Textron Aviation's factory in Wichita, bringing the updated light jet closer to service entry, the company announced this morning.

Textron launched the Gen3 at NBAA-BACE 2024 as the latest version of its largest Citation CJ light jet family, adding touchscreen Garmin G3000 Prime avionics, redesigned winglets, and cabin refinements.

The first Gen3 prototype flew in 2024, followed in May 2025 by a second test aircraft (P1) focused on avionics and human factors. When Textron delivered its 500th CJ4 in August, the company said the two test jets had logged more than 880 hours.

According to Textron, the CJ4 Gen3 will be the first light jet on the market with Garmin Autoland. Expected performance specifications for the CJ4 Gen3 include a 2,165-nm range, a maximum cruise speed of 451 ktas, and a 6,930-pound useful load, with seating for up to 11 occupants.

"This rollout is a visible result of the care, precision, and teamwork that move an aircraft from design intent to a production-ready airplane," said Eric Cardinali, Textron Aviation's senior v-p of manufacturing operations. **H.W.**



First production CJ4 Gen3

Look Who's Talking at Bombardier

By Kerry Lynch

Actor and pilot John Travolta will detail his experiences from his 50 years of flying during a Pilot Talk that Bombardier is hosting at its NBAA-BACE static display today at 3 p.m. Travolta is rated in more than a dozen aircraft and has owned multiple business aircraft and VIP airliners, including Boeing, Bombardier, Eclipse, Dassault, and Gulfstream models.

Earlier this year, he obtained a second-in-command type rating on the Global Express to celebrate his 72nd birthday and previously secured ratings for Challengers and Lear-jets. A pilot since he was 22, Travolta became known for his airmanship following the 1992 emergency landing at Washington National Airport that he made after an electrical failure on his Gulfstream II had knocked out his instruments. He used a flashlight and



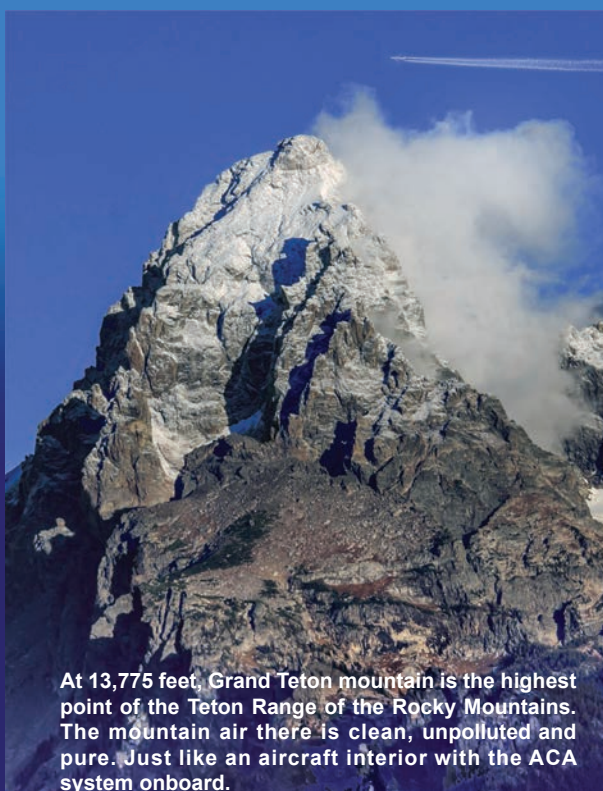
MARIANO ROSALES

Bombardier's static display will be staying alive with a guest appearance by pilot/actor John Travolta.

magnetic compass to make that landing.

Travolta's talk is among several activities, attractions, and events that Bombardier has planned this week at NBAA-BACE. The Montreal-headquartered manufacturer is featuring its flagship Global 8000, which was certified and entered service late last year, along with a Global 6500 and Challenger 3500

at the static display at Henderson Executive Airport. Bombardier's adjacent hospitality chalet houses a "L'Expérience" showcase that highlights the innovation, vision, and craftsmanship of its product line. During the week, Bombardier is emphasizing its product support, which led the AIN Product Support Survey for the third consecutive year. ■



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Atlantic Aviation's value proposition Ascends

By Curt Epstein

Following the soft rollout of Atlantic Aviation's new customer rebate program earlier this year, the FBO mega-chain is marking Atlantic Ascend's NBAA-BACE debut this week. With free enrollment, the program provides exclusive fuel savings and service fee rebates across its entire network. Atlantic said Ascend will complement and not replace Awards, its existing customer rewards program.

"Atlantic Awards and Atlantic Ascend serve two different audiences, but they share the same philosophy," said John Redcay, Atlantic's chief commercial and sustainability officer. "Atlantic Awards rewards individual pilots, while Ascend was built for the organizations behind the flying. Flight departments, charter operators, management companies, and aircraft owners now have a way to earn meaningful savings across their entire operation."

Ascend provides two main benefits. First, each subscriber will receive a weekly exclusive list of best-available, non-negotiated fuel pricing at all of Atlantic's more than 100 locations in North America, including Alaska and Hawaii, offering improved predictability on fuel costs.

The second part of Ascend's value proposition enables customers to unlock quarterly rebates of up to 15% on service fees such as aircraft parking; ground services (GPU, lavatory, water); hangarage; and security and facility fees. These automatic savings are calculated based on the times a customer chooses an Atlantic facility at airports where there is competition.

If they choose Atlantic 50% or more in a quarter at those locations, the rebate levels will escalate as the percentage increases and then be multiplied by the number of consecutive quarters (up to three) they maintain

that level. Those rebates apply to operator spend across the entire Atlantic network, not just at destinations where there is competition.

Following a beta test earlier this year at select locations, the company has expanded the program nationwide. To date, it reported that more than 500 customers, representing 2,300 aircraft, have already enrolled. Members ranged from single-aircraft operators to those with fleets exceeding 90 aircraft.

For example, it cited one charter operator that has increased its Atlantic market share from 55% to 82% since joining the program, visiting 75 unique locations in the process. It more than doubled its trip activity, and under the escalating Ascend rewards framework, increased its service fee savings earning rate to the 12% rebate level.

"What has been most encouraging is seeing customers move beyond enrollment and begin earning value from the program," Redcay told **AIN**. "Atlantic Ascend was designed to reward consistency by increasing the rebate amounts over time. We're seeing strong engagement from customers who are choosing Atlantic more often and realizing meaningful savings as a result."

101 Aviation STC tames the Li-ion aboard Gulfstream business jets

The FAA has approved 101 Aviation's supplemental type certificate (STC) for installation of the True Blue Power TB50 lithium-ion battery in Gulfstream IV, G450, GV, and G550 models. True Blue Power, 101 Aviation, and Aloft AeroArchitects partnered on developing the STC.

At 44.3 pounds, the 50-amp-hour TB50 battery weighs 51.7 pounds less than a NiCad and 41.7 pounds less than a lead-acid battery. Maintenance of the TB50 is much simpler, with no scheduled checks during its average eight-year life, while NiCad and lead-acid batteries require deep cycling and regular capacity checks, according to True Blue Power. NiCad and lead-acid batteries also have a shorter lifespan.

The TB50 has a battery management system to monitor cell voltage, current, and tem-

perature. During cold-weather operations, a built-in heater warms the battery before engine start, eliminating the need to remove the battery in freezing temperatures.

STCs from 101 Aviation for main-ship True Blue Power batteries are also available for Bombardier Challengers and Globals, as well as Embraer models.

"Our objective is to deliver the simplest battery upgrade possible while providing Gulfstream IV, G450, GV, and G550 operators with a solution that eliminates maintenance, reduces weight, and offers a service life that far exceeds what they are accustomed to," said 101 Aviation president Mike McClain. "The first Gulfstream TB50 battery installation is scheduled for the end of this month, and the upgrade can be completed in as little as half



The True Blue Power lithium-ion battery has an average lifespan of eight years.

a day. This delivers significant advancements in reliability, performance, and life cycle cost with minimal downtime." **M.T.**

Fuelerlinx simplifies FBO pricing from A to Z

By Curt Epstein

Redesigned versions of pricing trackers FuelerLinx and FBOLinx, set to go live next month, are being demonstrated by parent company DegaTech Systems this week at NBAA-BACE, along with what it believes is the most comprehensive dataset of FBO facility fees.

The company pointed out that the cost of a fuel stop is no longer simply the cost of fuel. Considerations now include ramp fees and overnight parking and handling charges. Additionally, special event surcharges tacked on to major sporting, political, and trade events have proliferated in recent years. These can vary by airport, by FBO, and even by the week, making comparisons between facilities difficult.

“Operators used to compare fuel prices; now they have to compare the whole bill,” said DegaTech CEO Kevin Moller. “A posted price that looks like a bargain can disappear under a parking fee, and a special event surcharge can turn a routine stop into the most expensive leg of the trip.”

He added that his company has spent the past year making sure those fees are in the data before the decision is made, not on the receipt afterward.

As users consider the effectiveness of tankering, FuelerLinx’s improved interactive tech stop map weighs those fees along with the fuel price, so the number a scheduler sees is the number the department will actually pay before committing to an FBO.

The program analyzes a flight department’s usage to recommend the best fuel program to suit their needs, and its enhanced reporting feature provides users with a clear picture of their fuel spend, volume, and contract savings, as well as generating compliance reports.



A mobile application will compare FBO receipts at the moment of capture and upload them to the Fuelerlinx transaction module, where they are reconciled against invoices and the fees that were actually charged.

Its products benefit FBOs, as well as their customers. Part of the revamp is an updated margin template and customer manager to help service providers set fuel margins

and keep track of customer-specific pricing.

A new handling services and fees tool allows FBOs to advertise every service they offer, with pricing, and enables them to customize how and when it applies. On the backend, locations can track every customer order and the services tied to it, including what was completed and by whom, all from one place.

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Salaries in aviation roles more than doubled the national growth rate, according to AirComp Calculator.

Plane gains: U.S. bizav compensation soars

By Hanneke Weitering

Compensation for business aviation professionals in the U.S. rose 8% this year, according to an industry survey analysis by AirComp Calculator. This ahead of a 6% industry pay increase in 2025 and more than double the year-to-date 3.4% national rate tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Pay increases varied widely by role. Non-flying aviation managers saw the largest gain, jumping almost 20%, while senior flight attendants got 11% and maintenance assistants 10%. Chief pilots gained 9% and technicians 7%. Flying directors of aviation, the highest-paid group, got just 3.5% despite strong demand for their skills, AirComp Calculator founder Chris Broyhill told **AIN**.

The biggest surprise in the 2026 data came at the top of the market, Broyhill said. Gulfstream G700 and G800 pilots now earn about a 20% premium over pilots of other jets in the same class. Broyhill attributes that to demand and a type rating that costs about \$150,000.

In one industry survey, G700 captains averaged about \$395,000 in total cash compensation, with the 90th percentile reaching about \$495,000.

Flight departments paying at the 50th percentile risk losing staff unless they offer additional incentives, Broyhill said, and a

predictable schedule tops that list. He has seen people turn down raises of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to stay at companies where they knew they could reliably take time off.

Rotating crews or budgeting for contract pilots can give employees more reliable days off, he said. Workplace culture matters, too. "What you pay is a function of your culture," he said.

Dallas-based AirComp Calculator draws on three industry compensation surveys, among them NBAA's, and adjusts for local labor markets. Participation has slipped, Broyhill said, and one survey lost 63 participating organizations this year, which can make pay appear to fall when it hasn't.

When one survey shows pay for a position falling while another shows it rising, he uses the positive number for his data analysis. He also never estimates growth below the 3.4% national rate, which business aviation pay has beaten in each of the past five years, he said. Broyhill urges flight departments to take part in as many surveys as they can, calling it "almost like a civic duty."

"Not participating in a survey, you're not only doing yourself a disservice, but you're also doing the industry a disservice, because by not providing the data and not making the dataset more robust, you make it harder for everybody to pay well," he said.

On Thursday here in Las Vegas, he and Aviation Personnel International CEO Sheryl Barden will lead a "Beyond the Survey: Decoding Job Titles, Roles and Compensation Trends in Aviation" session from 11 a.m. to noon in room W219 at the Las Vegas Convention Center West Hall. ■

Elliott raffles pre-buy aircraft evaluation

Business aviation services provider Elliott Aviation is offering a chance to win a pre-purchase aircraft evaluation. Show attendees can register for the giveaway at the Elliott Aviation booth, where representatives are available to discuss the company's evaluation process and MRO offerings, including avionics upgrades, paint jobs, and interior refurbishments.

The Moline, Illinois-based company is using the convention to highlight its accelerated pre-purchase evaluation program, which it said gives aircraft buyers a comprehensive understanding of an aircraft's condition in as few as five days—a process that otherwise typically takes several weeks.

"Time matters during an aircraft acquisition,

but so does confidence," said Megan Welch, the v-p of sales, paint, interior, and maintenance at Elliott Aviation. "Our pre-purchase evaluation process helps buyers get the answers they need without sacrificing the thoroughness and attention to detail required to make a smart investment decision."

According to Elliott Aviation, the accelerated pre-purchase evaluation program aims to preserve deal momentum during aircraft transactions, where lengthy evaluation timelines can slow closings and introduce uncertainties among buyers. The company said the giveaway is intended to introduce more aircraft buyers, owners, and operators to its evaluation capability and how it helps to reduce risk during aircraft transactions. **H.W.**

ForeFlight ties safety management to flight planning

Jeppesen ForeFlight has incorporated safety management system (SMS) software into its flight-planning ecosystem to help small and midsize business aviation operators add an SMS to their operations. Demonstrations of ForeFlight SMS are available this week at the company's NBAA-BACE exhibit.

ForeFlight SMS features tools for hazard reporting, risk assessment, corrective and preventive action management, internal audits, and safety performance visibility, according to Jeppesen ForeFlight. Users can report hazards, incidents, near collisions, and accidents via the web, on the ForeFlight Mobile app, or with a QR code.

An ICAO-based risk matrix enables evaluation of baseline and residual risk, and operators can monitor risks in a single risk register and track hazards through to resolution. Operators can assign, track, and verify corrective and preventive actions, with scheduled checks to confirm their effectiveness.

ForeFlight SMS also enables internal auditing with customizable checklists and creates a dashboard for safety visibility into top hazards, open corrective actions, and overall safety status.

Included in the SMS subscription, ForeFlight's flight risk assessment tool (FRAT) shares data with the SMS, "allowing pre-flight risk assessment data to flow into the same safety ecosystem," according to the company.

"ForeFlight SMS was built to give small and midsize operators an easier way to manage safety without adding complexity," said Jeppesen ForeFlight chief product officer Tim Schuetze. "By connecting safety workflows with the operational data already captured in ForeFlight, operators can spend less time managing disconnected systems and more time managing risk."

M.T.

Collins rises above 5G

By Matt Thurber

Collins Aerospace is offering radio altimeter upgrades that meet the latest FAA requirements and are 5G interference-tolerant. These upgrades don't require replacing existing systems, according to the company.

Tens of thousands of aircraft will require radio altimeter upgrades, and Collins service centers will begin offering them in 2027. "Early scheduling will help operators avoid delays and ensure they meet upcoming deadlines," Collins Aerospace said.

The 5G interference problem can affect other aircraft systems because radio altimeters, which provide precise and reliable measures of aircraft height above terrain, are connected to automatic flight control systems, cockpit instrument displays, and warning systems.

"Business aviation operators are navigating important regulatory requirements that



Collins Aerospace is offering radio altimeter upgrades to mitigate 5G interference issues.

touch every aircraft flying in U.S. airspace," said Craig Bries, v-p and general manager of Collins Aerospace's Airborne Electronics. "By updating existing equipment, we're making compliance simple while delivering upgrades that enhance safety, strengthen connectivity, and support precise navigation in the years ahead."

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Bedford on BACE to talk FAA advances, updates

By Kerry Lynch

FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford is kicking off an extended “Meet the Regulators” session today at 3 p.m. at the Horizon Stage. The one-on-one conversation between NBAA senior v-p of government affairs Kristie Greco Johnson and Bedford will delve into top issues affecting business aviation.

“We look forward to a substantive conversation about progress with ATC modernization, advances in medical certification, the updated oxygen mask requirements, and

other issues that matter most to the business aviation community,” Greco Johnson said. The session also comes weeks after the FAA rescinded single-pilot exemptions for certain legacy Cessna Citations.

In addition to the discussion with Bedford, the session will include a panel of other key leaders at the FAA, EASA, and the U.S. DOT. The panel will delve further into major rules and regulatory changes across the agencies.

Joining Greco Johnson in moderating the panel will be NBAA senior v-p of operations Heidi Williams. Panelists include Ludovic



Bedford takes center stage on new rules.

Aron, EASA's U.S. representative; Dan Edwards, assistant secretary for aviation and international affairs at the DOT; Rebecca Guy, FAA deputy assistant administrator for the Airspace Modernization Office and chief technology officer; and Caitlin Locke, associate administrator for the FAA's Aviation Safety Organization. ■

NBAA-BACE Flight Deck launches business aviation expert sessions

Taking center stage at NBAA-BACE 2026, experts are gathering to discuss cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, transactions, and more. Expert discussions at the convention's Flight Deck stage run throughout the event, alongside educational sessions, professional development seminars, and NBAA's Military Connect program.

“The NBAA-BACE Flight Deck is where business aviation comes together to define the industry's future,” said NBAA interim COO Dan Hubbard. “This year's program reflects both the opportunities and challenges before our industry, while offering attendees practical guidance they can take back to their organizations.”

The first Flight Deck session today at 10:30 a.m. features speakers from Flight Pro International, Gogo, and Aviation Cyber and Vendor Risk Management (ACVRM), and tackles cyberthreats to business aviation, offering a nontechnical perspective on cybersecurity threats faced by Part 91 and Part 135 operators.

At noon, former NTSB member Michael Graham, CAE senior director Tim Schoenauer, and PepsiCo base chief pilot Matthew Sim-



Flight Deck Session topics range from careers to AAM infrastructure and cybersecurity.

monds will be discussing the industry's shift to standard operating procedures (SOPs). NBAA, FlightSafety, and CAE are leading an industrywide initiative to address SOP deficiencies.

Beginning at 1:30 p.m., experts from West Star Aviation, The VIP Seat Podcast, and Jets MRO discuss the ongoing MRO capacity cri-

sis as it relates to mergers, partnerships, and maintenance. The trio is delving into long-term outlooks of independent and large-brand MRO providers.

In light of the FCC's plans to auction portions of the upper C-band spectrum next year, Jens Henning of GAMA and Eddie Straub of Garmin International discuss the radio altimeter mandate at 2:45 p.m. Because the upper C-band sits immediately adjacent to frequencies used by radio altimeters, operators may need to equip their aircraft against signal interference. The speakers outline installation timelines and funding through the FCC clearinghouse.

Rounding out today's sessions at 3:30 p.m., a live recording of “AviationStart,” a Flying video podcast hosted by Jamail Larkins, highlights careers across business aviation, such as maintenance, scheduling, dispatch, safety, and operations, according to NBAA.

Tomorrow's sessions cover topics such as advanced air mobility infrastructure and aviation careers. The full lineup is available on NBAA-BACE's Flight Deck schedule. **J.K.**

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Beyond Aero has made some design changes to its BYA-1 hydrogen-electric business airplane, which will now be certified under Part 25 rules.

Beyond Aero signs LOIs for hydrogen bizplane

By Charles Alcock

Beyond Aero has signed letters of intent for around 200 examples of its BYA-1 hydrogen-electric business airplane. As of mid-October, the French start-up reported agreements with 43 different prospective operators, which—if firmed up—would lead to sales worth more than \$2 billion, implying a base price of around \$10 million per airplane.

The Toulouse, France-based company is working toward EASA CS-25 type certification and aims to start deliveries of the eight-seat model in the early 2030s. Earlier this year, it switched from CS-23 rules to allow for an increased mtow to 9.6 tonnes (21,164 pounds), mainly on the basis that this would give operators improved one-engine-inoperative performance.

In March, Beyond Aero completed the preliminary design review, confirming a switch from ducted-fan engines to a pair of tail-mounted pusher propfans. According to chief engineer Luiz Oliveira, the switch in the fuel-cell-based engine architecture was due to the realization that the ducted-fan approach would take longer and be more costly to certify, although the company believes the technology could be deployed on future aircraft.

Beyond Aero co-founder and CEO Eloa Guillotin predicted that the emissions-free aircraft could attract younger clients deterred from private aviation on environmental grounds. However, the company is also pressing the case for reduced operating costs and believes the BYA-1 will be at least as economical to operate as turboprops such as the Pilatus PC-12 and Beechcraft King Airs.

Working with Airports

Earlier last month, Beyond Aero announced a partnership with airports in southern France that will help to develop gaseous hydrogen refueling facilities at locations they see as likely early adopters of the technology. Nice Côte d'Azur (LFMN), Cannes Mandelieu (LFMD), and Golfe de Saint-Tropez (LFTZ) airports are considering plans for a fixed dispenser in a dedicated parking area for hydrogen aircraft and a mobile refueling vehicle.

"We chose [to enter] this market because we see a strong need [to reduce carbon emissions] and we know that business aviation is willing to pay to finance innovation, as it has done in the past with advances such as winglets," Guillotin told AIN. In her view, the sector is facing pressure not only in terms of

environmental charges, such as the controversial solidarity tax in France, but also from rising jet fuel costs as seen since the start of the Iran war.

Beyond Aero believes that around half of its sales will go to aircraft charter and management fleets, with the rest being split between high-net-worth individuals and corporate flight departments. In Europe, Guillotin said business aviation hubs—including London, Paris, and Geneva—will be ideal for the BYA-1's six-passenger range of 800 nm and cruise speed of 300 knots.

According to Guillotin, the question of who pays for the required hydrogen refueling infrastructure will vary by location, depending on the business model of each airport. Aboard the aircraft, hydrogen will be stored in tanks fitted in each wingtip.

Beyond Aero, which is a first-time exhibitor at NBAA-BACE, already has infrastructure partnerships in place with Aéroports de Paris and business aviation services group Luxaviation. The UK Civil Aviation Authority recently selected the company to participate in a "hydrogen sandbox" test initiative with London City Airport (EGLC) and the University of East London.

Beyond Aero's 80-strong team of engineers is now working toward the critical design review and first flight of a full-scale prototype. The company, which is not publishing projected timelines for each of these milestones, plans to conduct further funding rounds to bring the BYA-1 to market. ■

AIN's Annual 2027 FBO Survey

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Survey closes on December 6, 2026

Aircraft operators and other FBO users can rate airport service providers they frequent worldwide in five categories—line service, passenger amenities, pilot amenities, facilities, and CSRs—as well as give a shout out to facility staffers who went above and beyond in providing great service.

The results will be announced at AIN's 3rd Annual FBO Awards Dinner & Gala on February 24, 2027, and will appear in the March 2027 issue of **Aviation International News**.

FBO Survey respondents will be entered to **win a \$250 gift card.**

For more information on AIN's FBO Awards Dinner & Gala visit AINFBOAwards.com

To access the survey and record your votes, visit: FBOSurvey.com



AIN EIC Matt Thurber retiring with legacy of journalism excellence

By Charles Alcock

Matt Thurber, editor-in-chief of **AIN** Media Group for the past nine years, is retiring at the end of this month. NBAA-BACE this week is his swan song as a member of the **AIN** news team, having attended and covered the annual business aviation industry gathering across four decades. Tomorrow, **AIN** will mark the impending retirement with a reception—open to all—at its booth (1925, West Hall) from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Matt's career as a widely respected aviation journalist stretches to the early 1990s, including three spells with the **AIN** team. Along the

way, he has served as editor of *Aviation Maintenance* magazine and as an associate editor at *Flying* magazine. According to his estimate, Matt has attended around 35 NBAA Convention/BACE shows since 1985.

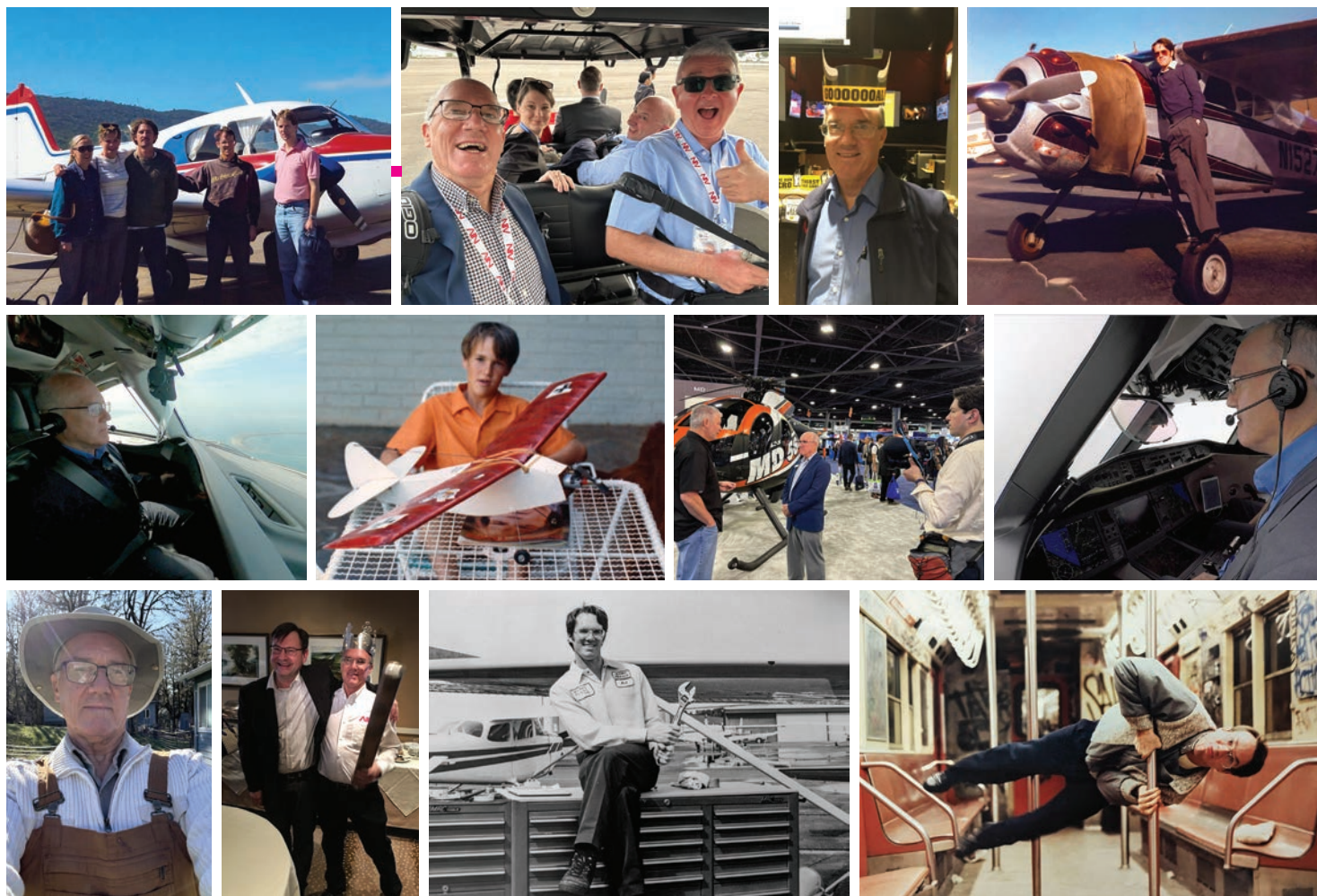
At **AIN**, Matt has been an exceptionally prolific journalist, contributing widely to all of the group's publications and online platforms. In addition to the day-to-day business aviation news beat, his work includes in-depth coverage of aircraft, avionics, maintenance, training, safety, operations, and rotorcraft.

Matt is also an experienced pilot, holding an ATP certificate as well as airplane and helicopter commercial pilot certificates. He is

an instrument flight instructor and has type ratings in the Gulfstream G550 and Cessna Citation 500 series. Additionally, Matt holds an A&P mechanic certificate.

These qualifications have opened doors for him to file expert pilot reports on multiple aircraft types—a task he has always relished. He has also been a frequent contributor to **AIN** Media Group's **Business Jet Traveler** publication for private aviation users. He has won the NBAA Gold Wing Award for Journalism and multiple Aerospace Media Awards.

Matt's aviation pedigree dates to 1975, when he started flying. He subsequently





trained and worked as an A&P mechanic and as an instructor at a flight school in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in the early 1980s. He later earned a bachelor's degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

"Matt is a true legend of aviation journalism, and his contributions as *AIN*'s editor-in-chief have been foundational to its ongoing reputation for high-quality, independent coverage of the industry," said *AIN* Media Group chairman emeritus Wilson Leach.

"He has always preserved the editorial principles established by our founding editor Jim Holahan—prioritizing insight, discernment, and background knowledge to serve our readers with objective news coverage clearly presented. We will most miss his insightful advice and commentary, camaraderie, and wry sense of humor."

In retirement, Matt intends to spend more time with his wife, Esther, and their two children, as well as work on three aircraft projects near his home in Vancouver, Washington. He

also plans to keep flying whatever aircraft he can get his hands on.

"Covering the aviation industry, and especially the vibrant business aviation community, has been the highlight of my career," Matt commented. "I so appreciate the many kindnesses that everyone has shown me over the years, helping me learn and understand more than I ever thought possible about safety, flying various types of aircraft, and maintaining the highest levels of quality, both in writing and aviating." ■



The Classic Lear Jet Foundation has determined that the original wing from Lear 23-003 is too corroded to return to flight status, so it will turn its attention to a contemporary replacement.

Lear Jet restoration group marks progress

By Curt Epstein

Classic Lear Jet Foundation (CLJF), the group working to restore Lear 23-003—the first production Learjet—is making progress toward its goal of returning the vintage aircraft to flight. This week, it is at NBAA-BACE for the first time with its own booth to highlight the effort taking place in the former Learjet delivery center at the Bombardier campus in Wichita.

“The restoration continues to be driven by dedicated volunteer labor and the generous support of our donors,” said foundation president Bill Kinkaid, adding that in the two years since the project began, it has surpassed 4,000 hours of volunteer labor. “During that time, we have made significant progress in wiring, inspections, and structural repairs, while numerous components have been sent off-site to donors and specialist partners for rebuilding and restoration.”

Work over the past year has focused on the dismantling and non-destructive testing of the vintage twinjet. To date, the forward half of

the aircraft has been X-rayed. Once the baggage floor is removed and additional structure is exposed, X-raying will continue through the aft section.

One major recent decision involved the twinjet’s wing. When the aircraft was first inspected in Florida in 2022 ahead of its acquisition by CLJF, corrosion was identified on the lower wing skin. When the detailed evaluation of the wing began in Wichita in late 2024, it was determined that the corrosion was beyond allowable structural limits, making a major repair or replacement of the skin necessary.

In preparation for possibly re-skinning the wing, the group asked Bombardier to preserve the main wing jig, but further investigation proved that sourcing the appropriate-specification aluminum would have required a dedicated production run, resulting in an amount far in excess of what would be required.

The group had wanted to retain as much of the original aircraft as possible in the restoration, but faced with those economic realities, it then made the difficult decision to pivot

to a replacement. Six wings of the same vintage were evaluated before the one from sibling 23-028 at BAS’ salvage yard in Bates City, Missouri, was acquired. While that assembly has minimal external and internal corrosion, Kinkaid said there are some differences in systems configuration, and the wing does not include the leading edges, so additional work will be required to bring it into the desired configuration.

Late last month, the aircraft’s horizontal stabilizer was returned from X-ray testing at nearby Paragon NDT, where it was thoroughly examined for structural cracks and corrosion. The unit will next be sent to DAS Aviation for necessary repairs, including the installation of two new spars.

CLJF will not predict a completion date for the project, as it continues to focus on the near-term work. “Looking ahead to 2027, we are actively recruiting additional volunteers and expanding our work schedule,” Kinkaid told *AIN*. “This increased capacity will allow us to continue building momentum and advancing the restoration toward completion.”

Today at 1:30 p.m., the foundation will have a special guest at its NBAA booth: legendary Learjet pilot and private aviation pioneer Clay Lacy. Lacy, who founded California-based Clay Lacy Aviation, was one of the major donors who enabled CLJF to acquire 23-003 in August 2023. ■

MedAire adds investment in GoCrisis

By Amy Wilder

Aviation medical and security assistance provider MedAire has made a strategic investment in GoCrisis, which will use MedAire's information technology, finance, and back-office infrastructure. MedAire said the move takes the companies' four-year aviation partnership toward closer business integration, but both will keep their identities, organizational capabilities, and existing roles. Aviation clients will continue working with their established teams.

"The closer relationship is intended to let clients retain the decisions that belong to them while MedAire carries more of the operational burden of bringing the right support around their people," MedAire CEO Bill Dolny said.

MedAire says the companies' teams can plan together ahead of an incident. When one

occurs, they can coordinate medical and security guidance, family assistance, and recovery.

MedAire, an International SOS company, supports aviation clients around the clock. It launched its MedLink ground-based telemedicine service for in-flight emergencies in 1985 and says it has managed more than one million medical and security cases for aviation operators worldwide. GoCrisis, founded in 2014, specializes in crisis management and emergency response for organizations, with services that include crisis advisory, humanitarian support, and media management. GoCrisis' work for clients outside aviation will not change.

"After years of working side by side, our organizations know where our responsibilities meet during an aviation incident," Dolny said.

"Supporting someone who has lived through an accident is complex," GoCrisis founder

and CEO Elmarie Marais said. "It requires careful coordination among emergency services, authorities, insurers, and NGOs to create a seamless network of support. Care for injured survivors can be long-term and may involve life-changing injuries."

MedAire says the combined crisis-response network for aviation clients comprises more than 100 crisis experts and 2,000 GoResponders. Partners in more than 90 countries give those clients access to more than 100,000 emergency response specialists. Backing it are 29 assistance centers, 25 security centers, and more than 91,000 vetted providers.

MedAire introduced Contingency360, developed with GoCrisis for flight departments and operators, at the NBAA convention in October 2025. The program includes emergency response planning, real-time aircraft tracking, and family assistance. ■



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The hybrid-electric JP1 has logged more than 200 hours of remote-controlled test flights in France with a dummy in the pilot's seat. Equipped with two seats, the JP1 also features a whole-airframe ballistic parachute in case of a power failure emergency situation.

DTA pitches two-seat hybrid eVTOL

By Hanneke Weitering

DTA Aircraft is showcasing its JP1 two-seat hybrid-electric multicopter this week at NBAA-BACE 2026 with a pitch to business jet owners: fly yourself from home to the airport where your jet is based, skipping the traffic. The French maker of gyroplanes and ultralight trikes says some business jet owners have already placed pre-orders, and it is using the NBAA show to find more buyers, as well as U.S. dealers, flight schools, and maintenance partners. DTA plans to assemble aircraft in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Based in Montélimar, France, DTA Aircraft, a subsidiary of French company Vichar, has built aircraft since 1990 and claims that more than 595 of its machines fly in at least 33 countries. Its new U.S. arm, DTA Americas—based at Jet Aviation's facility at Scottsdale Airport (KSDL)—opened U.S. pre-orders for the JP1 at \$385,000 during EAA AirVenture in July.

Eight electric motors on four carbon-fiber booms lift the JP1, which has a tandem cockpit and a whole-airframe ballistic parachute. A single-rotor rotary engine that burns jet fuel or SAF drives a generator to recharge four battery packs in flight.

DTA claims the JP1 will have two hours of endurance, allowing it to fly 156 nm with two people on board or 235 nm solo at a cruise speed of 90 mph. The 1,146-pound mtow aircraft is expected to be able to keep flying after losing up to four propellers. An autopilot handles stabilization while the pilot sets the flight path.

The JP1 has logged more than 200 hours of flight testing in France, all uncrewed and remote-controlled, with a 160-pound dummy in the pilot's seat, DTA Americas co-founder and CEO Théo Parant told *AIN*. With no regulatory category for such an aircraft in France, DTA registered the JP1 there as a heavy drone. "We did find a loophole in the French regulation so that we could fly it," he said. "It's just that the French regulation wouldn't allow us to put someone in the aircraft."

That test aircraft is now in Scottsdale, where it remains on the ground while DTA seeks an FAA experimental airworthiness certificate for research and development so it can resume flight testing, this time with a pilot on board.

DTA positions the JP1 as an alternative to a two-seat helicopter in the same price range. It said owners can fold the aircraft's width from 10 feet to 8 feet to tow it on a road trailer and can taxi it into a garage on motorized rear wheels with the propellers stopped.

Former crop-dusting pilot Jean-Michel Dizier founded the company as Delta Trikes Aviation in 1990 after building a weight-shift trike for his own use. DTA built its business on ultralight trikes such as the Voyageur and Evolution and later added the J-RO, a two-seat gyroplane with a carbon-fiber fuselage and removable gull-wing doors.

In 2016, Dizier sold DTA to Chinese owners, who moved its gyroplane molds and technology to China, Parant said. A former DTA gyroplane owner bought the company in 2022 and recovered its intellectual property.

According to Parant, the new owner wanted a safer, easier-to-fly aircraft for his weekly Tuesday lunch with his mother, about 30 minutes away by air. He funded the JP1's development himself for several years, until the FAA's Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification rule opened a potential path to the U.S. market. Parant, now a shareholder alongside him, joined the company at that point.

Last month, DTA announced a partnership with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University that will give students capstone projects on the JP1's aerodynamics, airframe structure, and hybrid-electric propulsion. According to the company, this work will support its U.S. manufacturing plans. ■

AIN Product Support Survey: OEMs

By Curt Epstein

In years past, the top business jet OEM in AIN's annual product support survey tended to lead its nearest competitor by just a few hundredths of a point, but Bombardier decisively took the top spot this year with a nearly one-third-point lead, averaging an overall 8.37 score. The Montreal-headquartered business jet manufacturer also dominated in six of the 10 categories rated by AIN readers in the survey—cost-per-hour programs, parts availability, cost of parts, AOG response, warranty fulfillment, and technical reps—and placed second in all but one (authorized service centers) of the others.

Dassault, whose Falcon line improved on its score year over year, ended up in second place among business jet manufacturers in this year's survey, leapfrogging rivals Gulfstream and Embraer with an overall score of 8.08. Savannah-based Gulfstream, which tallied an average score of 8.05 in this year's survey, led in the overall aircraft reliability category with a 9.01, and its factory-owned service centers topped that category as well (8.18).

Textron Aviation moved up to the fourth spot among the top five business jet makers this year, advancing past Embraer.



With a limited sample size of responses, Pilatus earned high marks for aircraft reliability and parts availability, the latter a source of contention for most OEMs.

In the rotorcraft segment, only Leonardo tallied enough responses to meet the AIN threshold in this year's survey. Similar to Pilatus, however, both Airbus Helicopters and Bell barely missed that threshold, and AIN this year opted to highlight those scores with a note of lower sample size.

As for the overall issues faced by the airframers, supply-chain choke points are still being felt—repercussions from the global pandemic a half-decade ago. Jean Kayanakis, Dassault's

senior v-p of worldwide Falcon customer service and service center network, noted that there are still a few vendor challenges. "For example, for spare engines and for landing gear overhaul times," he told AIN.

As a result, aircraft manufacturers are taking steps to insulate themselves from any further disruptions. "Gulfstream brought a great deal of third-party supplier work in-house years ago, including wing and empennage production, to take control of key elements within our supply chain and further ensure oversight of safety and quality measures," said Lor Izzard, the Savannah-based company's senior v-p of customer support.

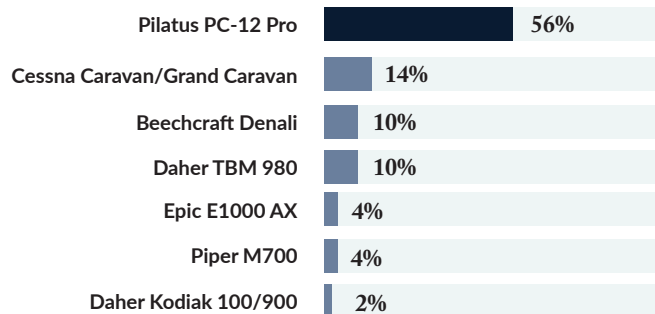
Combined Overall Average Ratings of Newer and Older Aircraft	Overall Average 2026	Factory Owned Service Centers	Authorized Service Centers	Cost per Hour Programs	Parts Availability	Cost of Parts	AOG Response	Warranty Fulfillment	Technical Manuals	Technical Reps	Overall Aircraft Reliability
Business Jets											
Bombardier (Learjet, Challenger, Global)	8.37	8.11	8.48	7.76	7.93	7.08	8.68	8.63	8.79	9.21	8.86
Dassault (Falcon)	8.08	8.09	8.62	7.73	7.23	6.37	8.32	8.29	8.59	8.82	8.72
Gulfstream (Mid- and Large-Cabin)	8.05	8.18	8.23	7.30	7.54	5.96	8.22	8.33	8.73	8.79	9.01
Textron Aviation (Citation, Beechcraft, Hawker)	7.84	7.30	8.48	7.57	7.21	6.77	7.39	8.40	8.43	8.46	8.66
Embraer (Phenom, Legacy, Praetor)	7.75	8.00	8.81	7.24	6.29	6.32	7.28	7.75	8.86	8.49	8.48
Turboprops											
Textron Aviation (King Air)	7.02	7.31	8.06	6.67	6.57	5.87	6.61	6.00	7.06	7.06	8.28
Pilatus (PC-12)*	8.71	8.92	9.17	7.83	8.24	7.00	8.85	9.75	8.93	9.17	9.42
Turboprops (out-of-production)											
Mitsubishi (MU-2)	8.81	9.39	8.63	9.00	8.67	6.97	9.24	8.63	9.00	9.41	9.39
Rotorcraft											
Leonardo	7.90	8.31	8.23	8.14	6.48	6.44	7.05	8.21	7.91	9.36	8.85
Bell*	8.21	8.50	8.80	8.17	7.33	6.19	7.75	8.38	9.42	9.36	9.13
Airbus Helicopters*	7.15	6.75	8.40	6.63	6.73	5.21	6.71	7.45	7.43	8.36	7.75

Readers' Choice Survey

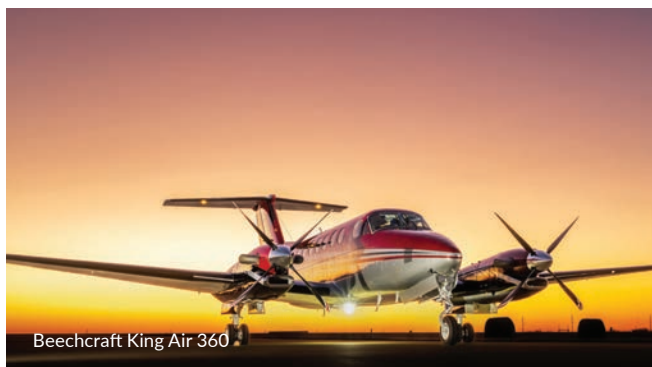
One of the key questions in the BJT 2026 Readers' Choice survey is what kind of aircraft readers would choose to fulfill their business and pleasure travel needs. The responses highlighted some interesting trends.

IF YOU COULD REGULARLY FLY ON ANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE IN EACH CATEGORY?

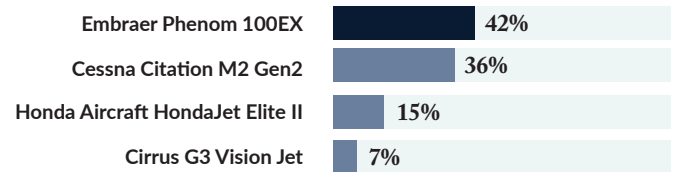
SINGLE-ENGINE TURBOPROPS



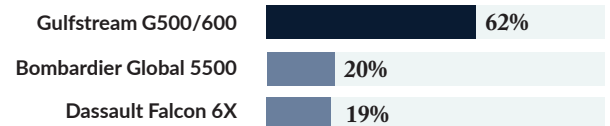
TWIN TURBOPROPS



VERY LIGHT JETS (VLJs)



LARGE-CABIN JETS



Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.



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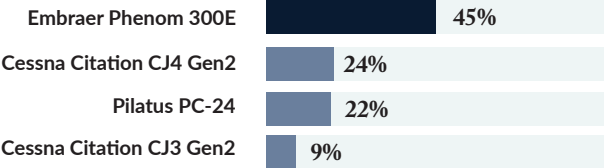
– CALS SPONSOR



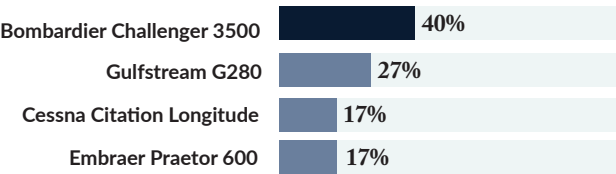
Readers' Choice Survey

IF YOU COULD REGULARLY FLY ON ANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE IN EACH CATEGORY?

SMALL-CABIN/LIGHT JETS

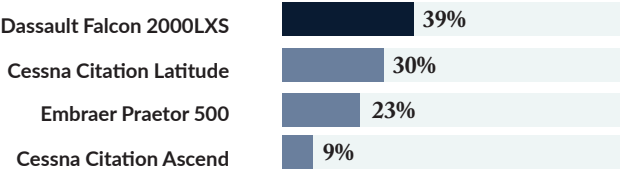


SUPER-MIDSIZE-CABIN JETS

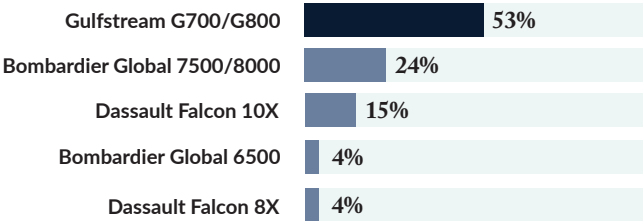


Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.

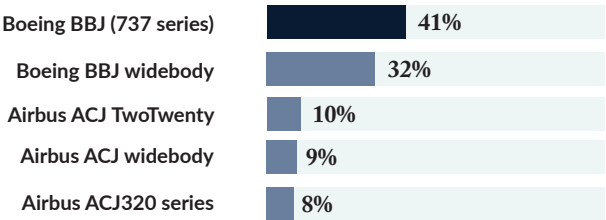
MIDSIZE-CABIN JETS



ULTRA-LONG-RANGE/HEAVY JETS



BIZLINERS



AIN 2026 FBO Survey

Report by Curt Epstein,
charts and data by Cam Macpherson

With business aviation activity expanding globally last year by 4.5% over 2024, that spelled good news for the FBO businesses servicing those aircraft. According to data from industry analyst WingX Advance, the nearly 3.9 million private jet departures represented a quarter million more flights year over year. Most of the FBOs **AIN** spoke with for this year's FBO Survey saw strong growth in 2025, with several reporting it as the busiest in their history.

WingX noted that the active business jet fleet increased by 2% worldwide last year, and according to industry experts, that trend is expected to continue. "New business aircraft deliveries are projected to pick up with fractional demand leading the way," said Ron Jackson, co-principal of Aviation Business Strategy Group.

He noted that data specialist Argus International forecasts a nearly 2% increase in flight hours for 2026, adding that slow and modest growth is "good news for the FBO owner and operator."

A recent study from business market researcher Insight Partners predicts the global FBO operator market will nearly double in value by 2031, to nearly \$41.5 billion annually over the next five years.

Given those prognostications, it is little wonder that the FBO arena remains a seller's market, one in which private equity and investment funds are playing an ever increasing role.

"One of our key perspectives is that, over the past two to three years, for those deals in the \$10 to \$25 million range, we have seen a shift in the buyer base where the percentage of interested 'industry' buyers now seems to be much less than the percentage of those who are funded by private equity



[PE] groups," explained FBO industry veteran and consultant Carl Muhs. "While many industry buyers are still out there and are active, the number of independent PE buyer groups that are actively pursuing FBO sales has increased substantially."

The industry's two mega chains, Signature Aviation and Atlantic Aviation, are both owned by private equity funds. They face stiff competition for new locations from smaller rising chains and new entrants.

Another dynamic is airport sponsors expect considerable investments along with new lease

awards, and FBO operators, in return, want much longer terms. "Clearly, over the past five years, the buyers' expectation of the acceptable term of the lease...has increased significantly," Muhs told **AIN**.

Against this backdrop, for the 45th consecutive year, **AIN** once again asked readers to rate the facilities and services at the FBOs they frequent. For a service provider to reach the highest ranks in the survey, it is not enough to excel in one or even two areas; they must demonstrate consistent quality across all five categories that make up the final score. ■

TOP 5% FBOS IN THE U.S.

FBO	AIRPORT	OVERALL AVERAGE
PENTASTAR AVIATION	OAKLAND COUNTY INTERNATIONAL	4.83
MODERN AVIATION (FORMERLY AMERICAN AERO)	FORT WORTH MEACHAM INTERNATIONAL	4.82
SHELTAIR	TAMPA INTERNATIONAL	4.77
HENRIKSEN JET CENTER	AUSTIN EXECUTIVE	4.76
JET AVIATION	PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL	4.75
SHELTAIR	FORT LAUDERDALE/HOLLYWOOD INTERNATIONAL	4.75
BANYAN AIR SERVICE	FORT LAUDERDALE EXECUTIVE	4.74
HENRIKSEN JET CENTER	HOUSTON EXECUTIVE	4.74
SHELTAIR	ORLANDO EXECUTIVE	4.73
ASTIN AVIATION	EASTERWOOD FIELD	4.72
BASE OPERATIONS AT PAGE FIELD	PAGE FIELD	4.72
DESERT JET CENTER	JACQUELINE COCHRAN REGIONAL	4.71
FARGO JET CENTER	HECTOR INTERNATIONAL	4.71
GALAXY FBO	CONROE-NORTH HOUSTON REGIONAL AIRPORT	4.71
MILLION AIR	WESTCHESTER COUNTY	4.71
SHELTAIR	DAYTONA BEACH INTERNATIONAL	4.71

AIN Product Support Survey: Avionics

By Curt Epstein and AIN Staff

Part two of AIN’s annual product support survey covers internal aircraft systems including flight deck avionics, cabin management systems (CMS)/in-flight entertainment (IFE) systems, and airborne connectivity hardware.

Some of the OEMs, such as Honeywell Aerospace, Collins Aerospace, and Garmin, have offerings in multiple arenas, while others, including Lufthansa Technik and Gogo, focus solely on one segment. Gulfstream is included in the survey due to its in-house-developed CMS solutions.

In the flight deck avionics segment, while Garmin’s overall score (8.71) slipped slightly from last year’s results (8.83), it was still good enough for the Olathe, Kansas-based company to maintain its long hold on the top spot of the segment and earn the highest position in the majority of the survey categories.

Among the manufacturers of CMS/IFE, Lufthansa Technik and its Nice system landed on top this year with an overall score of 7.88, a slight improvement over last year’s 7.73, enabling it to surpass last year’s best-in-category, Gulfstream (7.78).



Lastly, in the airborne connectivity category, which now includes Starlink, Collins Aerospace this year unseated Garmin at the top slot with its overall score this year (8.63) up a quarter point from 2025’s survey results (8.38).

The aircraft electronics segment continues to face some headwinds, according to the company executives AIN spoke with for this report.

“The most significant issue facing the avionics industry today is the availability of skilled labor,” said Lee Moore, director of avionics product support at Garmin. “As experienced technicians and avionics managers retire, the industry must replace that vital

expertise with a sufficiently trained and qualified workforce. Addressing this gap remains critical to sustaining growth and maintaining high levels of safety, service, and support for the global aviation industry.”

While he agreed with that assessment, Brian Barta, Collins Aerospace’s v-p and general manager for aftermarket avionics, added that another significant concern for the industry is “keeping pace with rising avionics complexity while continuing to deliver fast, reliable, and efficient support for operators. As fleets modernize at varying rates, customers are managing a wider mix of platforms, systems, and support requirements.”

Category & Overall Average Ratings for Avionics Systems	Overall Average 2026	Cost per Hour Programs	Parts Availability	Cost of Parts	AOG Response	Warranty Fulfillment	Technical Manuals	Technical Reps	Overall Avionics Reliability
Flight Deck Avionics									
Garmin	8.71	8.67	8.89	7.73	8.73	8.77	8.42	8.71	9.25
Collins Aerospace	8.40	8.19	8.22	7.35	8.32	8.78	8.53	8.66	8.91
Honeywell	7.48	7.24	7.29	6.14	7.36	8.23	8.11	7.28	8.30
Cabin Management Systems									
Lufthansa Technik -nice	7.88	7.68	7.99	7.11	7.73	8.45	7.77	8.21	7.92
Collins Aerospace -Venue	7.79	7.00	7.55	7.07	7.64	7.82	8.15	8.30	8.22
Gulfstream CMS	7.78	7.31	7.63	6.68	8.13	8.23	7.83	8.67	7.71
Honeywell Aerospace -Ovation*	7.70	7.81	6.57	7.05	7.89	8.27	8.11	8.14	7.96
Airborne Connectivity									
Collins Aerospace	8.63	8.44	8.67	7.86	8.64	9.13	8.71	9.01	8.60
Garmin	8.58	8.65	8.53	7.69	8.38	8.50	8.75	8.88	8.88
Starlink	8.40	7.87	8.32	7.99	8.27	8.43	8.33	8.17	9.34
Gogo (Includes Satcom Direct)	8.14	7.15	8.37	7.15	8.48	8.50	8.16	9.01	8.05
Honeywell	7.92	7.43	8.02	7.06	8.05	7.95	8.27	8.12	8.14
Viasat	7.67	7.27	8.16	8.25	8.16	7.47	7.35	8.51	6.85

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AIN Product Support Survey: Engines

By Curt Epstein

Part 3 of AIN’s annual Product Support Survey asked readers to rate engine reliability and the support they receive from the manufacturers.

In this year’s results, Rolls-Royce rose to the top of the turbofan manufacturers with a score of 8.54, while GE Aerospace, which had held that spot for the past few years, moved to third place (8.39). Splitting that narrow gap was Williams International, which drew a rating of 8.41, while Pratt & Whitney (7.91) and Honeywell Aerospace (7.90) filled out the remainder of the roster—not too far off the top scores.

Among those that garnered enough ratings to meet the reportable threshold, the top three ranked jet engines in this year’s survey were Rolls-Royce’s BR700 series (8.61), followed by GE’s Passport (8.54) and CF34 (8.40).

In the turboprop segment, Honeywell’s TPE331 earned the overall highest score (8.71) among all engine models in this year’s survey, leapfrogging Pratt & Whitney’s PT6A (8.23).

“Service remains a major driver of platform lifecycle success,” said Malcolm Fleming, Honeywell v-p of global technical operations. “Operators strongly consider high-quality



OEM support when evaluating engine performance and long-term ownership cost.”

One of the perpetual gripes among AIN’s annual survey respondents is the cost of parts, and that held true this year, with the category once again seeing the lowest high score among all 10 of the survey categories. “We have also observed rising costs, driven primarily by suppliers increasing prices in response to broader global economic pressures,” said Lindsey Gillen, v-p of sales and marketing for business aviation services at Rolls-Royce. “Additionally, there is a notable shift from fully global supply

chains towards more local or regional sourcing, particularly within the Western hemisphere.”

Yet manufacturers face several hurdles when it comes to optimizing their performance. “The industry continues to operate in an environment of strong demand while navigating supply-chain constraints, workforce availability, and the need to expand maintenance capacity,” said Anthony Rossi, Pratt & Whitney Canada’s v-p of customer service. “Although conditions have improved, operators continue to expect faster turnaround times, greater flexibility, and higher levels of support.”

Category & Overall Average Ratings for Aircraft Engines	Overall Average 2026	Factory Owned Service Centers	Authorized Service Centers	Cost per Hour Programs	Parts Availability	Cost of Parts	AOG Response	Warranty Fulfillment	Technical Manuals	Technical Reps	Overall Engine Reliability
Turbofan Engines											
Rolls-Royce	8.54	8.83	8.58	7.77	8.70	7.41	8.63	8.93	8.16	8.84	9.32
Williams International	8.41	8.95	9.40	7.33	8.52	7.37	8.31	8.55	8.28	8.12	9.27
GE Aerospace	8.39	8.70	8.06	7.51	8.25	7.00	8.43	8.62	8.72	8.80	9.36
Pratt & Whitney	7.91	7.95	9.08	7.42	7.27	6.34	7.71	8.13	8.63	8.40	8.43
Honeywell Aerospace	7.90	8.18	8.50	7.39	7.26	6.75	7.83	8.11	7.88	7.77	8.95
Turboprop Engines											
Pratt & Whitney	8.23	8.58	8.66	7.58	7.95	6.35	7.68	8.78	8.33	8.85	9.48
Turboprop Engines (for out-of-production turboprop aircraft)											
Honeywell Aerospace	8.71	9.27	9.05	8.78	8.80	6.29	9.20	7.78	9.00	9.12	9.56
Turboshaft Engines											
Pratt & Whitney	8.31	8.80	7.50	7.64	8.12	6.84	7.77	8.52	8.78	8.81	9.42



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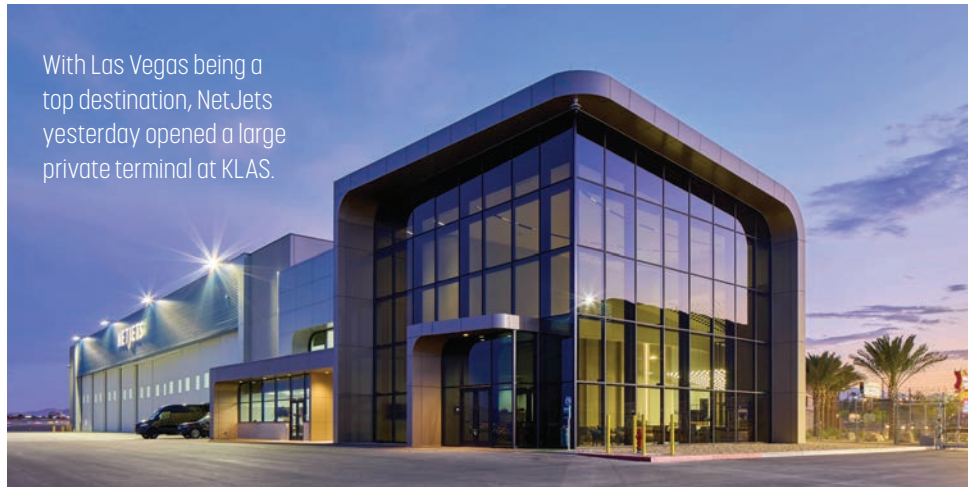


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FBO SURVEY
RESULTS

With Las Vegas being a top destination, NetJets yesterday opened a large private terminal at KLAS.



Light switch: ALI's LEDs plug right into fluorescent fixtures

Aircraft Lighting International (ALI) of Long Island, New York, brings two FAA-approved cabin lighting products to NBAA-BACE this year: a color-changing LED system and an LED tube that replaces fluorescents without rewiring the airplane.

Both hold parts manufacturer approval, the FAA's authorization for a company other than the original maker to produce replacement parts. ALI showed the first—a three-wire system using red, green, blue, and white (RGBW) LEDs—at last year's NBAA-BACE while approval was pending.

It has since passed RTCA DO-160 testing, the standard for environmental testing of airborne equipment, and is now installed on aircraft ranging from Pilatus PC-12s and Beechcraft King Airs to Bombardier Globals and Boeing Business Jets. It works with most cabin management systems and the ALI smartphone app.

The second product replaces bi-pin T5 fluorescent tubes in legacy 28-volt DC systems. Installation is simple: unplug the old tube and put the LED lamp in its place. Notably, the two types can mix in one cabin. ALI is developing self-ballasted versions, which need no separate power-regulating component, as well as RGBW versions.

ALI sales director Shervin Rezaie said about 90% of customers who ask for RGB now buy it versus almost none five to 10 years ago. "Fluorescent tubes are on their way out, especially in Europe," he said. "Now operators can go to LED without changing anything on the airplane but the lamps." **H.W.**

NetJets gambles on Vegas private facility

By Curt Epstein

NetJets Aviation leveraged NBAA-BACE's Las Vegas venue to unveil its latest private facility yesterday at nearby Harry Reid International Airport (KLAS).

The city represents a top destination for NetJets share owners. Since 2022, its flight activity to Las Vegas has risen by nearly 45%, with 8,000 flights through the end of 2025. That has continued into this year, with demand up nearly 30% year over year.

Developed in partnership with Signature Aviation, the complex is the first new-build project developed jointly between the two companies, bringing together Signature's operational FBO expertise with NetJets' understanding of share owner expectations.

The KLAS facility—expected to begin operations next Monday—features a 17,069-sq-ft terminal for the exclusive use of NetJets customers, with a large double-height waiting area and glass walls providing a panoramic view of the ramp and runway. Amenities include a refreshment bar, private lounge, six-seat conference room/dining room, and dedicated family room.

On-site NetJets service representatives will provide day-of-travel customer support and hospitality, while a direct-air operations

area gate allows fractional aircraft owners rampside vehicle access.

Built on the Signature leasehold, the complex features two hangars, one reserved solely for NetJets fleet maintenance operations, and the other operated by sister company Executive Jet Management. Signature will provide the aircraft ground handling for the facility.

The Las Vegas location will also serve as a service and maintenance hub for NetJets, operating 24/7/365, enabling it to perform proactive maintenance on its jet fleet, as well as detailing and provisioning, to help reduce operational downtime. At the media tour and ribbon cutting yesterday, the company said it normally has six to eight aircraft undergoing maintenance at KLAS at any given time.

"We invest where our owners want to be, and we build experiences worthy of how they travel. Las Vegas' position as a global destination for premier sporting events, world-class entertainment, and luxury hospitality drives significant surges in owner travel throughout the year," said NetJets president Patrick Gallagher. "NetJets owners increasingly seek effortless access to these experiences, and the new facility ensures they receive the personalized, anticipatory service that defines travel with NetJets." ■

Smoke training gets real with Klatt display

By Matt Thurber

Klatt Works has installed its Smoke Assured Vision Enhanced Display (SAVED), a head-up display built into an oxygen mask, in some Gulfstream simulators at pilot training centers, giving crews a chance to practice landing with a cockpit full of smoke. The company also announced that FedEx has agreed to become the launch fleet customer for the SAVED system for its Boeing 767s.

SAVED masks are now FAA supplemental type certificate (STC) approved in the Boeing 777F and 767, as well as the Gulfstream G550. B757 and G650 STCs are underway, followed by additional Gulfstreams and other business jet models. Installations are available from Klatt Works dealers such as Altus Aerospace, Duncan Aviation, Gulfstream, and West Star Aviation.

The move to add SAVED to simulators follows an NTSB recommendation that the FAA develop standardized, realistic smoke-in-the-cockpit simulator training after an incident on Dec. 20, 2023, when a bird was ingested by the left engine of a Southwest Airlines B737. Within five seconds, the cockpit filled with smoke.

According to Klatt Works, which interviewed the pilots, “[They] described relying primarily on the cockpit-mounted head-up display, leaning forward in their seats with

their emergency oxygen masks on to see it, with vision extremely limited throughout the flight deck.”

Typical training scenarios don’t include actual loss of visibility inside the cockpit, although some training centers have the ability to add artificial smoke. According to the NTSB report on the Southwest incident, smoke training often involves the instructor just announcing that the cockpit is filling with smoke.

“In practice, artificial smoke is used only occasionally,” Klatt Works explained. “Building and fire code restrictions limit where it can be released, the simulator’s fire alarm must be bypassed, and operators are concerned about long-term damage to simulator equipment from repeated exposure.

“Even when artificial smoke is used, pilots report that they can still make out their instruments and controls through it. Real dense smoke is very different. In the 2010 UPS Flight 6 accident, the crew of a Boeing 747 freighter reported they could not see their instruments through the smoke. Training that leaves the instruments visible does not prepare a crew for that.”

The company highlighted FAA Advisory Circular 120-80B, which notes, “A fire that reaches the overhead area may become uncontrollable in as few as eight to 10 minutes, and



The in-O2-mask HUD helps crew see in smoke.

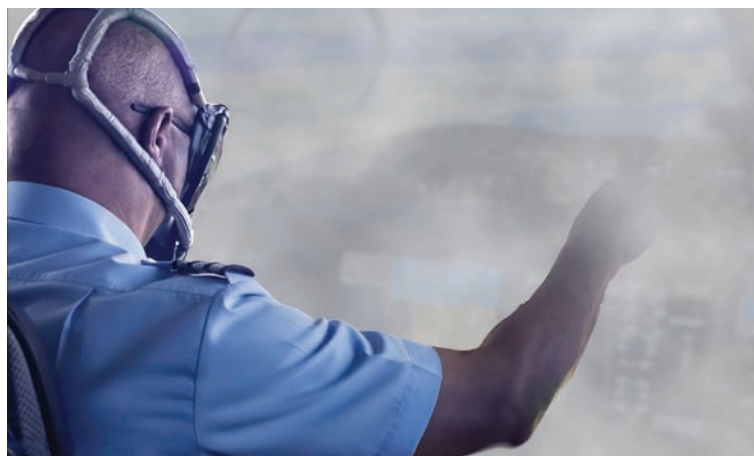
an uncontained fire can destroy an aircraft in as few as 20 minutes. A flight crew may have only 15 to 20 minutes to get the aircraft on the ground.”

When training with the SAVED mask, Klatt Works recommends its own standard of touching down on the ground within eight minutes of smoke onset, “with the crew managing its own energy and airspeed to minimize time of flight. A time-based target gives instructors a clear measure of performance and gives crews a realistic sense of how little margin an onboard fire allows.”

Klatt Works is working with training providers to help improve their smoke-in-cockpit training curriculum, using smoke lenses that fit over the SAVED mask to simulate cockpit smoke without using artificial smoke. The lenses come in light, medium, and dense smoke configurations, with the medium and dense filters blocking pilots’ view of instruments, requiring use of the SAVED system to regain visual reference.

With the SAVED mask on, pilots can declare an emergency, communicate with ATC, and receive vectors, then manipulate the throttles, flaps, and landing gear by touch and land using the head-up display symbology, even with the cockpit filled with smoke.

“The NTSB has described the gap clearly,” said Klatt Works CEO Nathan Klatt. “Crews are told the cockpit is filling with smoke, but they are not trained in what that actually looks like. SAVED lets a pilot see the head-up display in the densest smoke, and training with it at leading pilot training centers lets crews experience that before they ever need it.” ■



When faced with a cockpit smoke emergency, pilots can see critical flight information on the Klatt Works Smoke Assured Vision Enhanced Display, which puts a head-up display inside the oxygen mask.

AIN Membership opens the bizav data vault

By Kerry Lynch

AIN Media Group is taking the next step in its evolution with the rollout of a membership program that ties together AIN's journalism, proprietary data resources, and other information.

Under the membership program, subscribers will have access to **AINonline** news that is older than a week, Aviation International News magazine archives, the **AIN** FBO Survey annual reports, and searchable global business aviation airworthiness directive (AD) and accident and incident databases.

In addition, the program will have a searchable Business Aircraft Directory powered by AIN Media Group's AircraftPost and include AIN's Compliance Countdown compilation of relevant rules, regulations, and other mandates on the horizon.

"Navigating the complexities of today's business aviation landscape requires more than just high-level headlines," said AIN Media Group president Ruben Kempeneer. "AIN Membership brings together original, independent reporting with comprehensive, actionable databases. It is designed specifically to help operators and flight departments mitigate risk, understand shifting global regulations, and stay informed with news and information they can trust."

Announced this week during NBAA-BACE, the program is priced at \$299 per year for an individual membership, \$696 for up to three users, or \$1,080 for up to five users. Individual memberships cannot be shared. Enterprise packages are available for larger teams. For early registrants, AIN Media Group is offering a 20% discount on individual memberships (using code AINNOV) through November 30.

Once the membership program launches, most **AINonline** content will move behind the membership paywall after a week. The current issue of the **AIN** monthly magazine will remain available, but past issues will be accessible only to members. Digital FBO Survey data will also be available only to members.

These changes will not affect the daily **AINalerts** newsletters—they will remain available to subscribers for free. Nor will they affect the weekly **FutureFlight** and **Business Jet Traveler Waypoints** newsletters. Readers can still subscribe to the **AIN** monthly magazine and access most posted articles for seven days.

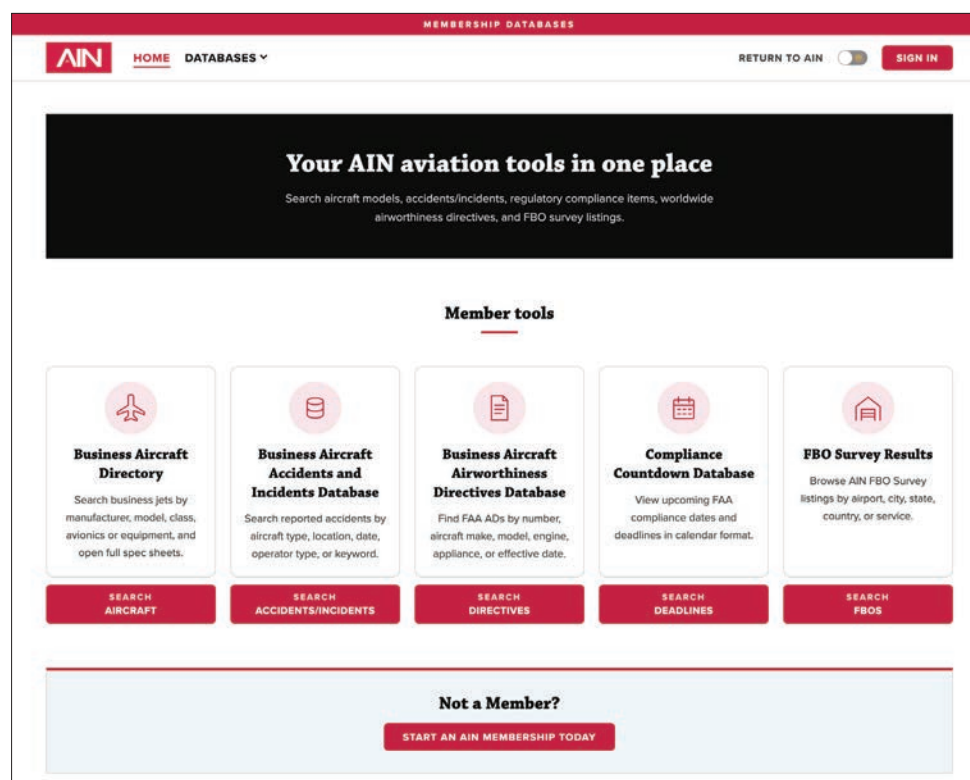
As part of the program, **AIN** is opening access to its global AD and accident and incident databases that have long been used only internally. The AD database provides insight into rules governing business jets, turboprops, and rotorcraft, along with associated engines, avionics, and other key components.

The database is searchable by aircraft make, model, engine, appliance, or effective date and provides compliance deadlines, publication dates, and rule synopses. Users can search for all ADs of a given model since 2018.

Also focused on business aircraft, the accident and incident database is searchable by aircraft make/model, location, date, operator type, and/or keywords. Operator types include eight categories, ranging from training and government/public to charter, fractional, and corporate.

For instance, a user could search for King Air accidents in Brazil or ferry accidents in the U.S. and get a listing that includes registration, aircraft, type of accident or incident, operation, phase of operation, fatalities, and damage information. It serves as a central repository for aircraft OEMs, aircraft owner and pilot groups, fractional operators, and other aviation organizations that want to delve into accident data going back to 2018.

The aircraft directory also offers a centralized, searchable resource on business jets, with a full spec sheet including pricing, production numbers, detailed equipment, cabin dimensions and standard seating layout, maintenance intervals, and more. Users can search by manufacturer, model, class, avionics, or equipment. For example, a user can search for a Cessna Citation light jet or find out what business jets are equipped with head-up displays. ■



The AIN Membership opens centralized access to proprietary data tools, **AIN** journalism, and more.



The annual fundraiser helps Corporate Angel Network arrange bizav transport for cancer patients.

CAN trips increase as Fund an Angel nears

By Kerry Lynch

With cancer patient demand climbing this year for Corporate Angel Network's coordination of free flights on business jets to and from treatment centers, the nonprofit is looking forward to its Fund an Angel fundraiser this week at NBAA-BACE 2026.

Fund an Angel is also a way for CAN to thank supporters, flight lift partners, and corporate sponsors, and to raise awareness for its mission, said Courtney Easton, v-p of strategy, programs, and outreach. The event is scheduled from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. tomorrow at the Waterbleau Terrace at the Fontainebleau Las Vegas.

Bringing together nearly 500 business aviation professionals each year during NBAA-BACE, the gathering raises about half the organization's operating costs, or around \$500,000. A key part of the fundraiser is the annual auction, which had 64 items when it opened online for bidding this year, up from 50 last year. Bidding will be ongoing through the event, and the auction features everything from watches and vacations to a piece of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Vega 5B and a David Copperfield experience.

During the evening, CAN will also honor

8-year-old Hank Anthenien with the Jenna Vial Fearless Fighter Award. Anthenien was diagnosed in 2023 with a rare form of neuroblastoma (Stage 4) that was pressing on his optic nerve and has undergone surgery to restore light perception to his left eye. After undergoing various treatments, including a multiyear trial vaccine, he is now attending school without having to take medication.

Created in 2025, the award recognizes a cancer patient "whose journey reflects exceptional courage, resilience, and the profound impact of community support during cancer treatment."

Originally called the Fearless Fighter Award, the award was renamed this year in honor of its first recipient, Jenna Vial. She organized and founded the Stronger Together with Jenna Fund, which provided hope, support, and essential resources to individuals and families affected by cancer. She also created a Glow Walk/Run fundraiser to further CAN's cause, raising \$20,000, and was the first CAN patient to undertake such an effort.

Vial's health declined, and she died two weeks before the 2025 Fund an Angel, though CAN was able to send her the award in advance. Her parents will attend this year's event as their daughter is

Duncan orders 40 Galileo HDX satcoms

Gogo received its largest single order this year from an MRO provider when Duncan Aviation prepaid for 40 Galileo half-duplex (HDX) satcom systems.

HDX runs on Eutelsat's OneWeb low-Earth-orbit satellite network and provides speeds of up to 60 Mbps download and 11 Mbps upload. Roughly half the size of Gogo's full-duplex antenna, the HDX electronically steered antenna can fit on light jets and turboprops, though some customers opt to install it on large-cabin jets.

With a three-year price lock, HDX service plans range from \$3,500 per month for 25 gigabytes (plus \$215 per gigabyte of overage) to \$10,500 per month for unlimited data. One-year locked prices are higher.

"As expectations around inflight connectivity rise, we anticipate growing demand for Gogo Galileo HDX and are ready to support it," said Duncan Aviation modifications sales manager Nate Klenke. "Having equipment on hand gives us greater flexibility to plan installations around our customers' schedules. We have confidence in the technology and in Gogo's ability to support our team and customers over the long term."

M.T.

further recognized with the award's renaming.

The fundraiser comes as CAN is on pace to arrange 2,300 trips for cancer patients traveling to and from treatment centers this year, up significantly from 1,700 last year. Last year the nonprofit surpassed its 70,000th trip, and "we'll be just over 72,000 here shortly," Easton said.

She credited the organization's growing ambassador program, established last year, for helping to raise awareness of its service, as well as efforts of its board and other supporters who have reached out to the medical community, corporate flight departments, and patients.

As demand increases, however, so does the need for corporations willing to donate time on their aircraft. Easton said this need is concentrated in the Northwest, but help is needed throughout the country.

► continued from page 1 of JetAviva, as senior v-p of product development and sales.

The senior leadership team also includes Jo Damato, senior v-p of events and professional engagement; Kristie Greco Johnson, senior v-p of government affairs, public policy, and advocacy; Andrew Broom, chief revenue officer; and Marc Freeman, CFO.

The board turned to Hubbard after former FAA Deputy Administrator Chris Rocheleau returned to NBAA as COO but left less than two months later to lead Airports Council International-North America.

"We are wishing Ed a full recovery as he takes the time he needs to focus on his health," said association chairman John Witzig, announcing the interim post for Hubbard. "Dan has a strong strategic view of NBAA's mission and all its initiatives. As NBAA's interim COO, he will oversee day-to-day operations during Ed's absence, including at NBAA-BACE, with support from a leadership team with decades of experience."

A 22-year veteran of NBAA, Hubbard was named senior v-p of communications in 2008. He has also been deeply involved with NBAA's external affairs, partnerships, and advocacy initiatives in the U.S. and globally, including BACE conventions on four continents.

Hubbard noted the association is positioned to continue operating seamlessly. "I'm honored that the board has given me this assignment. That having been said, I never could've conceived that it would happen in this moment or under these circumstances. Nevertheless, the one thing I know for sure is that Ed Bolen wants for me and for the NBAA team to continue the work. It is of paramount importance to him," Hubbard told *AIN*.

Hubbard noted that NBAA has served the industry for nearly eight decades—in fact, the organization will reach its 80th anniversary next year. "We have every intention of being more valuable in the next eight decades...with the changes that have been made in bringing the expertise of the people who know and understand the industry."

He noted that Deaton is bringing a CEO approach to NBAA, having that experience at JetAviva. This includes being "laser focused on what our clients want," Hubbard said. "She has a mindset of being able to understand all that business aviation is today, and also how the

needs of people and companies in the industry are continuing to evolve." This is important as the marketplace and operational landscape become more complex, he added.

On the operational side, Williams has had a "front-row seat" to the complexities of the various segments operating in the National Airspace System as she has worked the air traffic services desk for 10 years. With that comes an understanding of operations, including international flights, safety, and maintenance.



NBAA interim COO Dan Hubbard

Each of those areas is changing, Hubbard continued. "The way people think about safety is changing as the technology is changing. The way people think about international operations is changing dramatically." Business aviation is increasingly a global industry.

Hubbard added that this is playing into BACE, which is a cornerstone for the association and widely considered the hallmark convention for the business aviation community. "As we count down the days toward NBAA-BACE, this is shaping up to be just an outstanding success. And it's a reminder to me of the value of having real strength on a team from all corners."

Damato, who is steering the convention, agreed. "This is a machine with so many moving parts. The teamwork that I get to be a part of at NBAA and with our vendor partners, and our close contractors to problem solve and get excited about getting creative has been the best part of 2026," she said.

Speaking with *AIN* a few weeks ahead of the event, Damato noted that longtime exhibitors have continued to approach the association about finding more space. Exhibitors on the static display also continued to ask to bring additional aircraft.

Key to NBAA is that it continues to evolve in an environment where many conventions have struggled. This has resulted in changes in recent years with a "test and learn" approach. One of the changes is moving the major keynote to the show floor in the West Hall rather than starting in the North Hall and asking attendees to then take the walkway bridge to the convention floor.

This year, NBAA is debuting a Horizon Stage that not only will be the site of the opening general session but will host a mix of content throughout the first two days of the show, including the Alpha Wingman Shark Tank-type contest, PitchAv, to provide an "intentional use of space on our floor for people to get excited about what is coming next."

Another major session at the Horizon Stage will be an extended "Meet the Regulators" session that will include an interview with FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford, followed by other top regulators. This provides NBAA the opportunity to delve into issues like single-pilot exemptions on Citation jets and oxygen mask rules.

NBAA is bringing back its Flight Deck, which will be its "marquee" spot for educational content, she said. The Creator Studio, Powered by Signature Aviation, returns to the atrium with programming, interviews, panels, and meet-and-greets. Collegiate Connect and Career Zone also return.

Gulfstream is bringing back its operator forum, which was expected to draw nearly 300 attendees. In tandem, NBAA has expanded its educational content and worked with the FAA to let maintenance professionals earn credit toward inspection authorization renewal at the Gulfstream forum or through NBAA sessions.

"What I want attendees to walk away with [from BACE] is that this was not a broad brush. This was that NBAA sees me as an individual and they helped me craft a unique experience for me and my needs, the content I need to find, the conversations I need to be in, the exhibitors I need to connect with, some of the credit I need to gather, and the networking. It felt like they built this for me," Damato said. ■

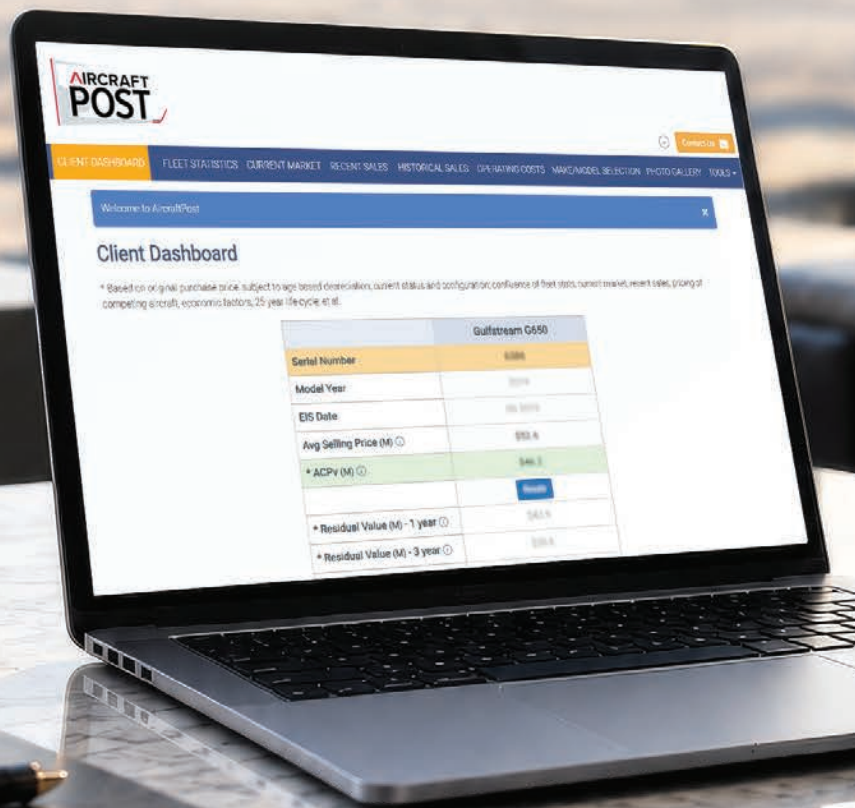


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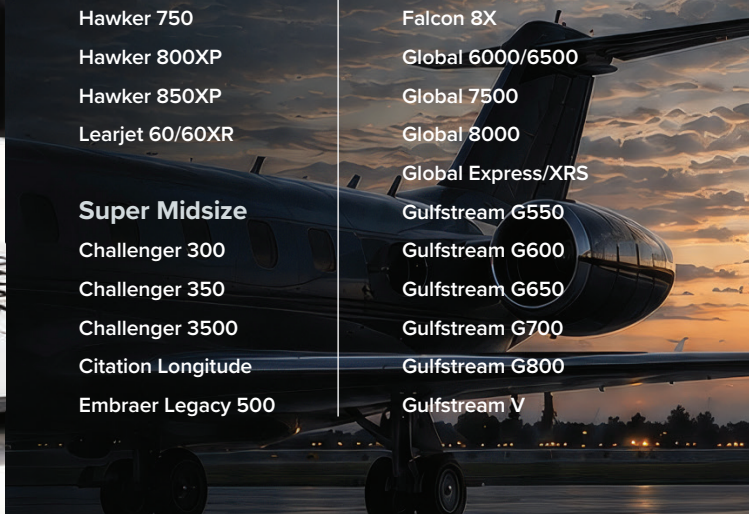
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Falcon 6X
Falcon 7X
Falcon 900B/C
Falcon 900EX
Falcon 900EXy/LX
Global 5000/5500
Gulfstream G350
Gulfstream G450
Gulfstream G500
Gulfstream IV
Gulfstream IV-SP

Ultra Long Range

Falcon 8X
Global 6000/6500
Global 7500
Global 8000
Global Express/XRS
Gulfstream G550
Gulfstream G600
Gulfstream G650
Gulfstream G700
Gulfstream G800
Gulfstream V



AIRCRAFT MARKET INTELLIGENCE BASED ON

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