

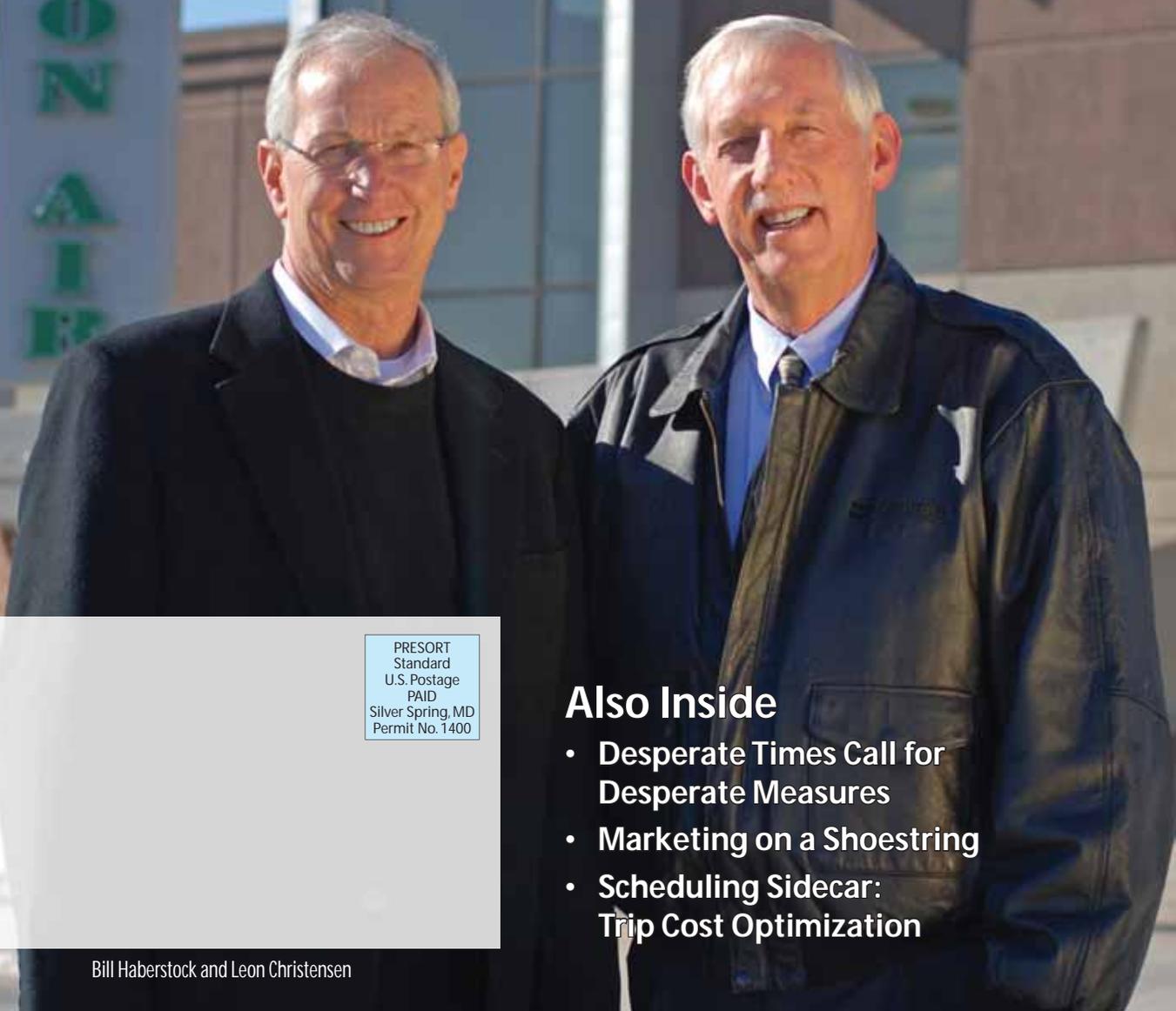
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James K. Coyne

Contributing Editors
Michael Ancell
Linda Pylant

Editor
Shannon Chambers

Art Direction/Design
Tim Wagner

Editorial Director
Alan Darrow

Advertising Sales
Cheryl Stratos
Victoria Geis

Advertising
For advertising information, call 703/212-4967
or e-mail cstratos@ias-online.net.

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Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures

By Steve Dennis

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The current period, laden with the vicissitudes of the world economic issues facing private and business aviation, qualifies as desperate times. The degree of desperation will be directly related to the ability to identify and effectively react to the market realities facing general aviation in the years ahead. Experience has shown that we can succeed, even in hard times, if we have a realistic and attainable plan and a commitment to see it through.

Marketing on a Shoestring

By David W. Almy

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In a recession, your first instinct may be to pull the covers up over your head and wait it out, but the smarter approach may be to do less, better. This article discusses why, along with a few ideas on how to pull it off.

Million Air Salt Lake City: A Western Star

By Paul Seidenman and David J. Spanovich

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In the turbulent world of general aviation, taking a modest, single-location FBO and growing it into a multi-location company stretching from the Pacific Northwest to Arizona in slightly more than ten years is no small accomplishment. But Bill Haberstock, president and CEO of Keystone Aviation LLC, whose flagship company is the Million Air Salt Lake City FBO, recognized an opportunity when he saw one.

Scheduling Sidecar: Trip Cost Optimization

By Colin Bane

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As charter operators, discount fuel vendors, and FBOs weather an economic downturn, a new software suite and online service promise fuel-cost savings, scheduling efficiency, and an additional marketing opportunity for FBOs.

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The Plan That Keeps Paying Good Experience Returns

The NATA Workers Compensation Insurance Plan - underwritten by USAIG - has now paid over \$66 million in Good Experience Returns since its inception in 1975. Moreover, this Plan has earned a Good Experience Return in 31 of its first 33 years!

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Government—Friend or Foe?

By James K. Coyne

President Obama's Inaugural Address declared that the question isn't whether government is too big or too small, but whether it works. I couldn't agree more. If he applies his energies and skills to the Herculean task of making our government work better, he will definitely get my vote in four years. At this point, however, there are myriad reasons to be somewhat skeptical.

This challenge is especially daunting when you look at government's role in aviation. NATA members were recently asked on our website if they thought government was friend or foe. Nearly 80 percent said "foe," and it's hard to argue with that assessment. Hardly a day goes by that I don't hear from our members that the FAA, TSA, EPA, IRS, or perhaps a local or state government bureaucracy has no idea of what they're doing. Usually, the complaint centers on an inability of getting decisions made in a timely way, preventing us from simply doing our job.

Foiled by Federal Bureaucrats

Over the past year, this problem has gotten much worse as federal bureaucrats have almost shut down some of our operations in the face of congressional confusion, uncertain leadership at the FAA, and chaos in the regions. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of our customers have been forced to wait weeks or months for some critical paperwork or approval from federal employees. In an era when you can get an answer to almost any conceivable question on Google in a matter of seconds, we find ourselves as shackled as Gulliver by an army of small-minded and officious bureaucrats, unable to get simple answers to straight-forward questions in weeks or months, if ever.

Part of the problem is ignorance. It is a fact that many of the government employees and officials with whom we interact just don't know what they should know. They fail in three important areas: knowledge of aviation products and services, familiarity with the regulations, and a basic understanding of what it takes to run a business—on time



and on budget. To make matters worse, many of them don't seem to care and get more satisfaction from flaunting their importance than getting the job done. And don't dare complain or criticize—the vengeance of a slighted inspector is awesome to behold.

Obama's highest priority, of course, is getting our economy moving again, but is that even possible if his army of aviation bureaucrats are told that "customer service" is immoral, that working with industry is a "conflict of interest," and that even considering the economic impact of a new regulation is wrong because "it puts profits ahead of safety?" This hostility toward the private sector may make politicians feel more righteous and may give those who want to enlarge the size and scope of government regulation more encouragement, but will it do anything to help our economy, other than give consultants and attorneys more income? This is not an idle rhetorical question. How government succeeds or fails at *its* job, more than anything else, will determine if *we* can continue doing *our* job!

The world is, after all, a competitive place, and Darwinian realities apply to business as much as to bugs, birds, and beasties. Companies overseas with more supportive governments, whether in China, Singapore, Brazil, Dubai, Morocco, Costa Rica, or wherever, are eager to exploit every comparative advantage they can find. If their governments perform better at regulating or, as we once did, promot-

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President's Message

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ing aviation businesses, then they give their domestic companies a tremendous advantage. Each of them must take safety seriously in today's safety-conscious world (China recently sentenced two businessmen to death for safety violations!), but they also know that hundreds of thousands of aviation jobs will be created in this century—and they will most likely go to where government is a friend, not a foe.

Even worse, imagine any other country in the world prohibiting the sale of one of its most successful and respected products (private jets) to companies that have traditionally been one of the most important markets for that product (automobile manufacturers). Does anyone else shoot themselves in the foot this way?

Change for Better or for Worse?

We are facing the worst economic environment in decades, and millions of hopeful Americans are praying that President Obama can lead us back to prosperity. If his solution produces, as some of his compatriots in Congress insist, more regulation, more power in the hands of whistleblowers, and less collaboration with industry, then there is little hope for aviation businesses in the Obama era. In that world, ironically, only the very richest will be able to afford private aviation, small businesses will be forced to close, and ordinary Americans will lose their jobs. It will not only be change. It will be catastrophe.

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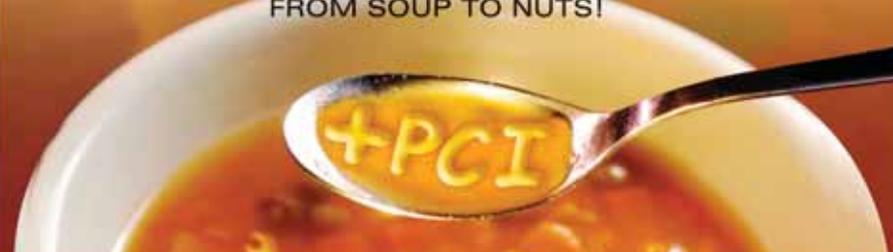
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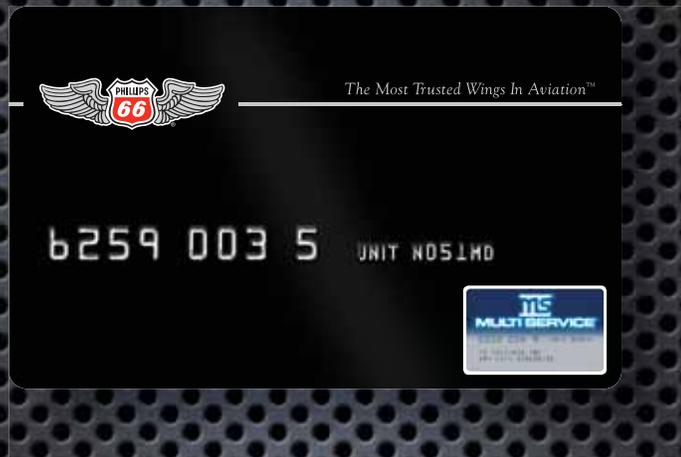
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It's Not Easy Bein' Green

By Eric R. Byer

Late in fall 2007, the NATA Board of Directors, based on the recommendation of NATA President James K. Coyne, approved the creation of the NATA Environmental Committee. The committee was created not only to address the growing environmental movement publicly and in the media, which continue to paint aviation as an environment liability with all those GA aircraft emissions (insert chuckle here), but also in recognition that a new Democratic administration could take office, enabling this movement further. Combine these circumstances with a Democratically controlled Congress, and you have the perfect storm where the environmental lobby could push an aggressive agenda to curb aircraft emissions and modify the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, to the detriment of the aviation industry. Well, this foresight was well-advised. As we kick off the new Obama administration, we are beginning to see a number of environmental issues rise to the top of a very busy policy agenda for Congress and the new administration in 2009. With a number of lingering issues remaining, new priorities have climbed the ladder, including:

- Completion of the Spill Prevention Control & Countermeasures Rule
- Phaseout of AvGas,
- New De-icing Fluid Standards,
- Efforts by Congress to mandate a Cap & Trade Program for aircraft operators, and
- Mounting pressures from Europe to have carbon emissions standards similar to the EU.

These are just a few of the big issues, and I have been parochial in selecting those issues that are front and center in terms of impact on our members. The good news is that industry has proactively gotten a head start on addressing these issues.

A number of companies in general aviation and the Part 121 world have already announced programs to curb aircraft emissions to address the public outcry that all aviation does is pour toxic vapors into the atmosphere. In September 2007, NetJets was one of the first to announce a program to address its aircraft fleet's impact on the environment. More recently, FedEx announced a plan to reduce its fleet's carbon footprint by 2020.

In addition to NATA creating its Environmental

Committee, the General Aviation Manufacturers Association has created an environment committee that is looking at many of the international issues associated with aviation environmental matters and their domestic impact.

Since the NATA Environmental Committee held its first meeting in January 2008 in Savannah, Ga., committee members have worked aggressively to put together an agenda to provide members with the tools to address these mounting environmental concerns we all read about.

First, the committee created a public relations campaign to combat the rhetoric that leads some to believe that aviation is painting the sky with harmful gas emissions when that simply is not the case. This campaign includes a regularly updated fact sheet complete with industry data to dispel the myths that currently exist, along with a PowerPoint presentation that members can use when addressing audiences of any kind. The campaign also provides for a generic opinion editorial that members can use to write to their local newspapers when egregious environmental accusations are cast against the aviation community. Finally, the campaign includes a set of talking points that anyone can use should the opportunity for members to address the media arise.

Second, the committee continues to make every attempt to ensure that members are in compliance with the regulations already on the books. Toward this endeavor, the association has created an Environmental Checklist that examines the wide array of EPA regulations with which NATA members who have ground operations should be in compliance. To prepare our members for the SPCC rules coming into effect later this year and the complex maze of current regulations, the association is also offering a half-day NATA Environmental Compliance Seminar at least three times this year.



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Inside Washington

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Third, the committee has created its Clear Skies program that allows aviation businesses to capitalize on becoming more energy efficient while minimizing their company's impact on the environment. A series of Best Management Practices has been developed as part of Clear Skies, and the committee recently launched an energy usage survey where members can track their energy consumption and then take the appropriate steps to reduce their impact on the environment.

Recently, the buzzwords of importance to our industry have been "user fees" and "security." It is important that we continue defending this industry's interests on both these important issues. But we must remember the significance, both publicly and financially, of how this new environmental movement could impact America's aviation businesses. It just goes to show that ol' Kermit the Frog was correct, "It's not easy bein' green."

To learn more about the NATA Environmental Committee's activities, including the topics highlighted above, visit www.nata.aero and click on "NATA," then "Committees," and then "Environmental."



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Six Attributes for Your SMS

By Russ Lawton

Developing the documentation for your Safety Management System (SMS) requires considerable sweat equity to ensure it meets the SMS standard in FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 120-92 and that the documentation accurately reflects your company's way of doing business. Your SMS documentation must provide enough detail so every employee understands how safety is managed in your company and what is expected of them.

How much detail should your documentation include? There are six specific areas, or attributes, that form the basis for the expectations of your SMS program. These attributes, which are derived from the FAA's Air Transportation Oversight System (ATOS), should also be applied to your company's manuals and other documents. Let's start by defining the six attributes, and then we'll briefly discuss their role in your SMS program documentation.

- **Responsibility**—Who is accountable for management of the process (planning, organizing, directing, controlling) and its ultimate accomplishment?
- **Authority**—Who can direct, control, or change the process, and who can make key decisions, such as risk acceptance? This attribute also includes the concept of empowerment.
- **Procedures**—As specified ways to carry out an activity or a process, procedures translate the “what” in goals and objectives into “how” in practical activities.
- **Controls**—These are elements of the system that include hardware, software, special procedures or procedural steps, and supervisory practices designed to keep processes on track.
- **Interfaces**—Examples include items such as lines of authority between departments, lines of communication between employees, consistency of procedures, and clear delineation of responsibility between organizations, work units, and employees.

- **Process Measures**—These are means of providing feedback to responsible parties that required actions are taking place, required outputs are being produced, and expected outcomes are being achieved.

Next we discuss how each attribute fits into your SMS program.

Responsibility and Authority

Management and individual employee accountability, responsibility, and authority are fundamental to safety management. These concepts must be integrated into your SMS program. The SMS standard in AC120-92 establishes expectations for top management, other company managers, and all employees of the organization.

The SMS standard requires a person of responsibility to oversee SMS development, implementation, and operation. The following is an example of an accountability statement for a senior executive: “The president/CEO, as the accountable executive, has the authority and responsibility to ensure the development, implementation, and operation of a viable safety management program.”

Note that the president does not bear the principal responsibility for safety management. The managers of the line operational functions (e.g., top, middle, and frontline managers) are the ones who actually manage the operations in which risk is incurred. As a result, these managers are the “owners” of the SMS.

The documentation must specify those people or levels of management that can make safety risk acceptance decisions.

Procedures

Procedures are instructions that provide a clear understanding of how to perform a process or task. A well-written procedure should include the four “Ws” (who, what, when, where) plus “H” (how). The

following procedure for updating a manual incorporates the four Ws plus H:

- Each person that has been issued a manual (who) shall complete the following steps whenever a revision (what) to that manual is issued:
- Remove existing pages listed on the revision notice (how and where).
- Insert new pages listed on the revision notice (how and where).
- Log the revision on the Record of Revision Page, reflecting the revision number and effective date (how and where).
- Sign and return the revision acknowledgement form to the director of operations (how and where).
- The revision should be made as soon as practical after receipt, but in no case later than the effective date (when)."

Controls

Organizational process controls usually consist of special procedures and supervisory and management practices and processes. For example, an FBO might require a line service supervisor to be present whenever an aircraft above a certain size is moved, or it might have procedures that designate specific tug operators who have been trained and certified to conduct the towing.

In another example, a charter operator uses a risk assessment tool before each flight. When the risk exceeds a predetermined value, either the chief pilot or the director of operations must review and either accept or mitigate the risk before the flight is released. This example illustrates a process that specifies those people or levels of management that can make safety risk acceptance decisions and specifies a threshold for when this must be accomplished.

Practices such as continuous monitoring, internal audits, internal evaluations, and management reviews (which are all parts of the safety assurance process) are also considered forms of control.

Interfaces

This can be as simple as providing each employee with an organizational diagram that depicts the company reporting structure. It should include the safety manager and safety committee shown as independent functions that report directly to top management.

Process Measures

"What gets measured gets done" is the favorite expression of a long-time colleague of mine in system safety. If you don't track events and activities, how will you know how well things are working? You have financial measures of success in your company, and similar measures should apply to safety. It's not good enough to say, "We must be safe because we haven't had an accident lately."

An active safety committee and reporting program will help get feedback from employees as to how they view safety throughout the company. Internal and external audits also provide valuable feedback.

While we haven't been able to go into great detail in each area, you can see how incorporating each attribute into your documentation will make it sound like a working document that people actually use and not a bunch of policy statements that look impressive but can't be put into practice. ■

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Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures

By Steve Dennis (With Michael Dennis, Marie Palicia, and Mark Chambers)

"Desperate times call for desperate measures." It is difficult to find an original attribution to this time-tested saying. According to the Oxford dictionary of quotations, Guy Fawkes conceived the plot to displace Protestant rule in England in 1605 by blowing up the Houses of Parliament. Aviation service managers are being no less creative in the present downturn, based on the most current work by Aviation Resource Group International (ARGI).

The global recession and desperate times we are now experiencing can best be put in perspective by first examining the level of employment as we begin 2009. The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 7.2 percent in December, the highest level in 15 years. Total non-farm payroll employment fell by 524,000 during the month of December, bringing total job losses in 2008 to 2.6 million, and by 1.9 million over the past four months.

We in private and business aviation have some daunting challenges. As we have proven in previous recessions, aviation professionals are individually and collectively very resourceful and have both the desire and ability to successfully maneuver their way through the vicissitudes of the slowing world economy and uncertain times ahead. It means reevaluating the budget and, in some cases, tightening the proverbial "corporate belt." Most importantly, it means thinking strategically and

acting decisively in ways that optimize the trade-off between spending, reallocation, and deferment of expenditures during this down cycle.

The good news is that during these times those who are most prepared can capitalize on the uncertainty by not only weathering the economic storm, but by also improving and better managing their businesses.

To gain more insight into the sustaining measures America's top aviation service organizations are taking to address the recent downturn in business aviation, ARGI conducted in-depth interviews with industry leaders.

CEOs Cutting Back and Hunkering Down

Changing economic conditions require a change in thinking. Just as you reevaluate your expenses from the previous year in planning for a new fiscal year, you need to reevaluate your current operating budget during a recession.

Bruce Van Allen, group marketing director for BBA Aviation, said, "BBA has seen a slowdown in flight activity across our distribution network including Signature Flight Support and Aircraft Service Int'l. Group. This has resulted in lower-than-expected fuel volumes for both organizations. We are watching our cash and variable expenses closely."

Greg Arnold, president and CEO of TAC Energy/

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Desperate Times

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TAC Air in Texarkana, Tex., said, “We saw some of the signs about 10 or 12 months ago and started making some adjustments in how our company is structured, both from the cost standpoint as well as the way our balance sheet is structured. We are doing our best to take advantage of the downturn and some of the buy opportunities it offers. We are preparing ourselves for a little bit of negative growth.”

In regard to his company’s recent earnings, Arnold said, “From an earnings standpoint we’re not that far off, but we’ve taken significant measures in getting our costs in line with our volume of business.”

Continuing to fund these strategic investments during an economic downturn is the most important step. With a recession operations plan in place, your company can survive, even thrive within this turbulent economy.

A recession calls for a reevaluation of operation strategies and innovative implementations to stretch a company’s dollars. How should a company spend and save its operating budget in the currently turbulent economy?

CEOs of American fixed base operations are living proof that recession concerns in the United States are impacting their companies’ budgets, spending, and hiring.

“We are paying close attention to our variable overhead and flexing our workforce where possible and necessary in response to the slowdown in flight activity,” Van Allen said. “I believe aggressive capital control, strict cash management, and variable overhead control should be the first solutions, prior to consideration of labor or service reductions.”

Hindsight is always perfect in retrospect, but foresight, especially with the current market trend, has proven to be invaluable and can make or break a business. If business owners can spot the signs of a downturn well before it happens, they can make the necessary adjustments.

“We saw some of the signs beginning as early as last April,” said Jerry Holland, CEO of Holland Builders/Sheltair Aviation in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. “We started making significant cuts in payroll. We hated to do it because we have good, hardworking people. However, one of the reasons we saw business down by only 2 percent as opposed to 10 per-

cent is because of the decision we made to really look at the company and see where cuts needed to be made. We were able to eliminate unnecessary overhead and cut considerable cost out of the budget. Other companies may be facing a decrease of up to 15 percent on average.”

But smart managers are not simply cutting back. Most understand that this remains a highly competitive market and are taking steps to stay close to the customer. “We don’t plan to increase our marketing/advertising budget,” Holland said. “Instead, we are relying more on our website, maintaining relationships with our clientele, and word-of-mouth praise.”

Arnold of TAC Air said, “We have not increased our marketing and advertising; we have not cut it either. A lot of thought has gone into how we budgeted for the year. Now we are doing some things differently; we are putting our dollars in different places than we have traditionally, but our overall budget has not decreased.”

BBA’s Van Allen said, “We determined that an effective and aggressive group wide focus on marketing and cross selling within the BBA Aviation companies is a wise and valid use of time, talent, and resources. Our plan is not to wait for the market to return, but rather to challenge our organization to create value opportunities.”

Private Aviation—Luxury or Tool?

During the ’70s and ’80s, private aviation was seen as a luxury. As we entered the ’90s, due to the frequency and quality of commercial airline service, the use of private aviation became more of a tool for businesses, and executives who had the capacity to use general aviation did and still do. For many traveling executives, the airlines just are not an efficient way to travel. Business aviation properly utilized *is* a valuable tool. It does prove to be cost effective—after all, how valuable is a person’s time?

Something not talked about often enough in the private aviation sector is the American public’s perception of corporate flying. Recently, the need for a bailout by the government strongly focused attention on the auto manufacturers’ ownership and use of corporate aircraft. Under pressure by negative press and lawmakers, GM shut down its flight department. Ford Motor Company is selling its aircraft as well. Will other corporate entities follow suit?

“Public perception of private aviation is key,” Arnold said. “As an industry, we need to be beating the drum that corporate aircraft are a tool, not a luxury. It would be good for the industry if this

message can be communicated.”

Agility—a Vital Factor for Success

It's no surprise that the ability to respond swiftly to market conditions is by far the most important factor in riding out the crisis. The recession in the United States and slowdowns elsewhere in the world are forcing many businesses in most sectors of the economy to take immediate actions, adjust tactics, and rethink long-term strategic plans.

We need look no further to support the assertion that “agility is king” than the dwindling of access to short-term credit that has recently forced CEOs to adjust cash and liquidity strategies virtually by the hour.

FBOs would be wise to design and implement trouble-shooting detection processes that help them detect early warning signs of issues that may impact budget structure and business performance.

Phil Botana, president and CEO of Tampa Jet Center, said, “With gas prices so high, I believe it contributed to the economic slowdown. As gas prices fell we had increases in our volume. Gas prices are definitely a driver of demand.”

Botana continued, “FBOs have to be cautious and need to understand their cost structure. It's important to keep costs down to stay competitive. Pilots are shopping, so you can't raise the price of fuel to make up for the loss of revenue.”

Outlook for the Aviation Economy

How long will the downturn last? “That's the trillion dollar question!” Arnold said. “Everyone that I have talked to in the industry is optimistic that we will experience some recovery starting the second or third quarter of this year. Much of the economic turnaround truly depends on how Wall Street is going to recover in spite of this mortgage crisis. Is the next domino going to be automotive finance or commercial real estate?”

Against the backdrop of today's upheavals in the global markets, now is the time for all companies to improve their agility as they continue on their journey to world-class performance. The actions (by the interviewees) are planned to conserve cash, reduce costs, and strengthen competitiveness.

We can't stop the recession, but we can operate more effectively. Doing this means taking a comprehensive view of organizational expenses and prioritizing. Understanding which investments help increase productivity and better serve your customers is the first step.

Sheltair's Holland said, “It is evident that the in-

dustry as a whole is down dramatically, but that is to be expected. The only positive result of the economic downturn is the fact that the price of oil has come down considerably from this same time last year. Unfortunately, I'm afraid 2009 may be worse than 2008. However, I think the market should rebound within the next two years.”

“During these times,” Holland continued, “we just need to stay focused and continue to provide good, safe service and maintain our facilities with a personalized touch in order to stand apart from our competitors while keeping our cost in line.”

Van Allen said, “I believe that following this economic downturn the real estate value of our FBOs will return to growth. I have optimism that the business and general aviation market will weather this current economic storm and come out the other side poised for continuous robust growth through the next decade.”

The economic crisis is an opportunity for aviation business leaders to be or become counter-cycle investors, those who expand during the down cycle instead of contracting. Sheltair, for example, is moving forward with expansion plans at Savannah (SAV) and Long Island's Farmingdale Republic Airport (FRG), and TAC Air has just announced a new location at St. Louis's Spirit Airport (SUS).

Continuing to fund these strategic investments during an economic downturn is the most important step. With a recession operations plan in place, your company can survive, even thrive within this turbulent economy.

The current period, laden with the vicissitudes of the world economic issues facing private and business aviation, qualifies as “desperate times.” The degree of desperation will be directly related to the ability to identify and effectively react to the “market realities” facing general aviation in the years ahead.

Experience has shown that we can succeed, even in hard times, if we have a realistic and attainable plan and a commitment to see it through.

At the end of the day, success is a financial equation that rewards those managers who understand and exercise the fundamentals of their aviation enterprise, conserve their capital, and make the essential sacrifices to secure the long-term viability of their business.

In the larger scheme of business and the cycles that are endemic to the “New World Economy,” desperate times may truly be opportunities in disguise. ■

Steve Dennis is chairman of Aviation Resource Group International.



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Marketing on a Shoestring

In a recession, your first instinct may be to pull the covers up over your head and wait it out, but the smarter approach may be to do less, better. Here's why, along with a few ideas on how to pull it off.

By David W. Almy

The old-timers will tell you that whenever there's an economic downturn ("these things go in cycles, don't you know") business as usual goes out the window. It's often replaced with self-doubt, reevaluations, budget cuts, and sometimes even recriminations and layoffs. Sprinkle those with a healthy dose of stress, and you've got a toxic business cocktail that nobody likes.

It doesn't always have to be that way. Improving efficiency and productivity can be a healthy exercise, and how individual companies respond to an economic downturn can say a lot about the quality of their management.

More importantly, decisions in hard times can drive how quickly a company recovers when the broader economy does improve, provided it has products and services the market needs or wants and that they are marketed, sold, and delivered effectively.

Perhaps because the return on investment isn't easy to quantify, marketing can be the first area to

find itself in management's gun sights. But what some see as the counterintuitive strategy of keeping the marketing fires burning brightly in a downturn—or even throwing more fuel on your marketing fire—has long had support. For instance (and perhaps not surprisingly), an American Association of Advertising Agencies review entitled "Advertising in a Recession" compiled a number of other studies documenting a strong correlation between sustained marketing spending and increased market share. Several years ago, a PIMS (Profit Impact of Marketing Strategy) study looked at 183 companies to compare advertising during recessions against market shares and profit gains during recovery, revealing that those that spent in a recession did better during the recovery than those that did not. This is not entirely news, having been conventional wisdom among the "Mad Men" of the marketing/advertising field since at least the 1960s.

Studies illustrate how building brand success is like building a retirement fund. The best way to

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do that is through a sustained effort. Returns on marketing investments take time to realize, and they're cumulative. Conversely, cuts in marketing investments during a recession have a cumulatively negative impact on the long-term value of a brand. Those that simply cut back dig themselves into a deeper hole.

The lesson is this: When the going gets tough, the tough increase their marketing. But if significant increases in marketing budgets aren't in the cards during a recession, marketing-on-a-shoestring becomes a practical requirement. Where should you start?

Here's a checklist, compiled from interviews with NATA members and other sources, of no-cost or low-cost marketing strategies to sharpen your company's performance during the recession and recovery, whenever it arrives.

1. Use the downturn as an opportunity and catalyst to sharpen your marketing strategy.

Where are you headed? Is there a better time than now to reevaluate your market environment redefine exactly whom it is you are trying to reach and which new markets for your company are yet undiscovered or unexplored? Do you need new promotional methods to reach them?

Most experts advise concentrating your market messaging on core values and consistency during a recession. Innovations can be developed, but marketing should amplify your company's traditional strengths, not change them. This position may be conservative, but it also may be prudent given the environment and help you weather the economic storm better than most.

Knowing your markets is only the beginning because marketing is *everything* you do to attract and keep your target audience coming back for more. Because there are so many external variables and internal strategies and tactics when it comes to marketing, knowing which method will be the most effective and cost-effective for your particular situation is sometimes difficult. There are no silver bullets. The best approach is to use a mixture of strategies to elicit the best return on investment.

2. Refocus on your customer's needs first, your solutions second.

Aviation advertising usually concentrates on the features of the seller's products or services instead of the customer's problem. Create a more effective message by focusing on the problem your customer

has that you can solve. The customer will identify more with his/her situation when you talk about them rather than yourself. Differentiating between product features and user benefits is sometimes difficult, but just trying will get you halfway down the field.

3. Reinforce positive employee behavior.

Have you incentivized every employee who comes into contact with your customers to support your company's marketing goals? One of the biggest advantages available to any business is the ability to develop and nurture customer relationships. Universally, customers like service, and it's almost impossible for companies who don't genuinely offer it to compete with those who really excel at it.

There are a lot of stories like this one, but I recently went grocery shopping at a large chain store in Maryland and could not for the life of me find one particular item. I spied a checkout line that was empty, so I asked the cashier where I might find the item. Not only did she answer me correctly, but she offered to leave her station and take me to the aisle to help find the item. Impressive. You want to clone that attitude.

In the meantime, to retain the customers you have, start by focusing on the top 25 percent of your customer base and communicate with them on a regular basis. Maintain a personal level of contact so they know you value their business and sincerely care about their needs. Other options include expanding your customer database to include details of individual customer preferences and interests and recording those after every employee contact with them. Acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries, successes, and life events by sending handwritten notes and offering preferential "best customer" value-added services.

4. Do less, better.

There is an old *New Yorker* cartoon of a man kneeling beside his bed in prayer who says, "Lord, I don't ask much, but what I do receive please make of exceedingly high quality."

While there are endless ways to market your products and services, the ways you do adopt should be "of exceedingly high quality." Quality can easily trump quantity. It's nice to have both, but in frugal times, design decisions are very important and can be a value bargain. Great design can improve your brand image. (Hint: good design typically costs the same to buy as bad design.)

As one example, take a look at your business

card. Though small in size, business cards loom large as promotional tools, so make impressive design choices because they will be the one marketing tool everyone uses at every turn.

Content, too, is of course critical. Another case in point: A great letter or email can be immensely powerful and remarkably cost-effective. Of course, writing an “immensely powerful” letter can be a challenge if you don’t have the talent in-house to generate it. The written word allows you to explain in detail what you are offering; it doesn’t stutter or stammer. It can be revised infinitely before delivery, and it requires nothing more than some time and effort. It can then be sent via email, snail mail, or fax.

Whatever your product or service, a good sales message can prove to be one of the best marketing tools available and the least expensive. Remember, no one delivery method can guarantee your success, which means you may have to try a few different strategies to find the one that works best for your particular business.

5. Cull your lists/reduce your distribution.

Again, do less, better. Along these lines, it’s common lore that client and prospect databases are out of date the instant you turn off your computer. They’re also crude and inefficient tools unless they are kept up to date by reasonable means and segmented by their value to your company. This can be tedious work, typically accomplished only by hand-to-hand combat (multiple calls, hand-entered data), but the costs of poor-quality lists that do not reach high-value customers or prospects can be exorbitant, undermining your marketing efficiency. Don’t assume that a mailing going to the wrong people is accomplishing much; it may be just a marketing placebo. Long term, that can cost you plenty.

Using higher quality appeals to a smaller, more important audience is a better use of scarce resources in a down economy.

6. Make real news and attract the media.

Real news, in this case, should be positive for your company. Even if it is positive, it will not qualify as news if it is trivial to the markets you serve.

But let’s assume that you have a good story to tell. If you or someone on your staff has good writing skills, all it takes is a little bit of your time, energy, and a bit of research. If not, hire a good writer who doesn’t charge too much and let him or her help you create a great press release. Check with local

chapters of the International Association of Business Communicators, Public Relations Society of America, or journalism schools for freelance talent. They can provide you with expertise, creativity, and contacts needed to make a PR connection.

One key component of press releases is realistic expectations regarding their coverage. What may be a big deal to you may be a non-issue to the media. For instance, that your company has hired a new CFO may have very little news value outside your HQ. To some degree, however, a new CFO may just be “evidence of life,” reminding your customers that your company is still very much in business and

Most experts advise concentrating your market messaging on core values and consistency during a recession. Innovations can be developed, but marketing should amplify your company’s traditional strengths, not change them. This position may be conservative, but it also may be prudent given the environment and help you weather the economic storm better than most.

moving in a positive direction. That’s worth something, particularly in a recession.

To get the word out, three press release distribution sites of interest are PRWeb.com, gebbie.com, and PRNewswire.com. All offer low/no-cost distribution of press releases, and gebbie.com (at least) even does so via separate categories for magazines, newspapers, television, and radio, all arranged for different services and products.

Of course you can always blanket the aviation trade press directly. Aviation reporters usually are hungry for something to write about. *Business & Commercial Aviation*, *Aviation International News*, *FLYING*, *Professional Pilot*, *AOPA Pilot*, in print and online, and Avweb.com and Speednews.com online-only, are the market leaders.

7. Update your website’s look and content.

Nothing says “dysfunctional company” better than a website that hasn’t changed in a year. The changes

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don't have to be dramatic or expensive, but websites should send a message that the company is alive, well, and moving forward. While we're on the subject, confirm that internet search engines suggest your site early in the listings for searches where you would expect your company to be "the answer," either through capitalizing on your site's search engine-accessible content or paid ads (through, for instance, Google, which is making multiple fortunes driving web traffic).

Whatever your product or service, a good sales message can prove to be one of the best marketing tools available and the least expensive. Remember, no one delivery method can guarantee your success, which means you may have to try a few different strategies to find the one that works best for your particular business.

8. (Still) use direct mail.

There's been a headlong rush to electronic means of communication. It's fast and cheap, which is undeniably good. But these same advantages also have created a flood of electronic noise, which is training clients and prospects to ignore it. This is why a reinforcing balance between electronic and print marketing communications is important to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

9. Network effectively.

Networking is perhaps the most commonly used marketing tactic in business, but it is often poorly executed. Some people attend a networking function and try to meet as many people as they can. The pros know that the most effective way to network is to cultivate relationships. It is not a quick sell, and it is not usually outside of your primary target audience. The pros collect more cards than they hand out, listen more than talk, and ask open-ended questions. Only then do they present their succinct "what I do" speech. They follow up by getting involved in an organization's culture and

keep coming back. They give contacts information that can help them, mail an article they may find of interest, or reference new technology they can use. Most importantly, do things without directly expecting an instant return on the investment. Long term, the payoff can be substantial and involve more than just commerce.

10. Incentivize referrals.

Instead of assuming that a satisfied customer will refer someone to you, ask them directly to do so, perhaps by survey, with a reward for completion. Tell your customers who your ideal customer is and directly ask for their help in finding them. The key here is a proactive approach rather than a passive one.

11. Supply information.

To get your company's name in front of clients and prospects, it's common practice to supply them with information branded as your own. This can take the form of self-help articles, market trend data, business intelligence, or any number of other useful pots of ideas to help your clients become more successful. This often under-utilized marketing strategy is an excellent way to be recognized as an industry leader and keep your company's name "out there." When it is co-published both in print and online, it also can live on almost indefinitely in cyberspace. If properly credited, it also can help drive website traffic referrals, either from other sites or from search engines like Google.

12. Publish a newsletter.

This is another potentially powerful marketing strategy to keep your name in front of your customers and prospects, and it doesn't have to be expensive. Tell them what's going on at your company: progress made, new products and services offered, locations opened, personnel added. Provide key insight into business challenges and offer solutions to them. Help your customers and prospects solve problems. Some newsletters are nothing more than advertising so be sure to provide valuable information. Although it is less expensive to send a newsletter electronically, you can also publish on paper to a more valuable list. Newsletters don't have to be long; one-pagers can be the easiest read (and so most likely to be read) as well as cost the least to produce.

13. Use compelling pictures.

People don't like to read (it requires work on their

part) but they will look at pictures, and they will read photo captions. Pictures are easy to digest. It may seem obvious, but the use of images can make an uninteresting story attractive and communicate it more effectively than can words alone. Take care to select images that are broadly interesting. A party snapshot of four people nobody knows will get little attention outside of their immediate family.

14. Call cold.

Few like cold calling, but it can be an efficient way to uncover qualified prospects quickly. Does anyone on your staff have any downtime? Could they be tasked with a few calls on a regular basis to qualify and expand your prospect list? It'll require some training to get the script right, as well as some indigenous common sense, but spare (and otherwise unproductive) employee time lost is expensive.

15. Promise them something.

You can give information to interested prospects. Or you can offer a new satisfaction guarantee. Changing suppliers can be risky; a guarantee can eliminate this concern. Or you can offer a discount on specific products or services at sale prices. You don't need to give away the store. Instead, you can incentivize customers and prospects to use your company instead of the other guy or to return to your website on a regular basis. Or get prospects to supply contact information to receive free information that will help them succeed.

16. Leverage public relations.

If your company or its employees are contributing to any charitable cause, publicize that contribution. It's hard to beat positive public relations as a marketing tool. It's nearly free, believable, helps establish your identity, and is memorable. An interesting story told enthusiastically can get you a lot of attention. Also remember that an ad disguised as a story will never work. And once you receive positive press coverage, make it work for you as long as possible. Post it to your company's website, mail press clips to your customers, and put copies in your reception area.

17. Plug budget leaks to lower marketing costs.

Most businesses have a leak in their budget somewhere. Discover your leak, and use the dollars you save to fund other, more effective marketing tools. Some ideas? Push for better rates on marketing expenditures, such as printing (consider consolidat-

ing all printing with the vendor that offers the best quality/cost), postage (reexamine postage rates for varying classes and the maximum sizes and weights allowed for each), as well as lower advertising rates, use of remnant space, and volume discounts.

On the service side, force bidding by marketing vendors, and track savings and sales results so that you can communicate those successes internally.

18. Set a schedule.

Little happens without a real deadline. Set a schedule for when every strategy or tactic is expected to be active or completed. This is one of the best ways to measure progress or lack thereof.

19. Read More

This certainly is not a definitive list. There's an infinite amount of information on marketing tactics online and hundreds of books in print. Continue pushing and remember, you do not need a big budget to be successful, but you will need a big portion of creativity. 

Tips from an Expert

There are several ways to keep costs down while keeping your name out there. One is to take advantage of free advertising and listings for industry-specific buyers guides. Another is through press releases.

Also, make sure your website has your contact information on every page, if possible—make it easy for people to contact you quickly. If you can enhance the content on your website by adding more product-specific text and keywords, you increase your chances of having search engines find you when people do searches on those keywords.

If you're running print advertising, several magazines now offer an online presence to complement their print advertising. This increases the value of your advertising dollar.

Finally I think in times like these it's important to keep customer service a priority in your business because when people receive good customer service they will do your advertising for you!

*Robin Mason
Vice President Sales and Marketing
Velcon Filters Inc.*

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Million Air Salt Lake City: A Western Star



By Paul Seidenman and David J. Spanovich

Photos by Richard G. Winwood

In the turbulent world of general aviation, taking a modest, single-location FBO and growing it into a multi-location company stretching from the Pacific Northwest to Arizona in slightly more than ten years is no small accomplishment. But Bill Haberstock, president and CEO of Keystone Aviation LLC, whose flagship company is the Million Air Salt Lake City FBO, recognized an opportunity when he saw one.

In 1995, while a partner in Salt Lake City-based Business Aviation Management, an aircraft management firm that focused exclusively on turbine-powered equipment, Haberstock heard that the owner of the local Million Air franchise wanted out.

"I saw some untapped potential for growing an even larger general aviation company at Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC)," Haberstock said. "At the time, it had been nearly 15 years since the airport had a full-service general aviation business. What did exist was a lot of small companies that offered different services."

Those companies included three FBOs that did little more than pump fuel, two aircraft brokers, one aircraft distributor, and one or two charter operators. "I wanted to establish a company that put everything within one organization, and over the past 13 years, that is exactly what we've done," he said. "We have accomplished this mostly because we have been able to attract highly experienced people with great strength across numerous disci-

plines and almost no turnover."

To make this happen, Haberstock and Leon Christensen, who was managing the old Hudson General FBO at SLC, joined forces to establish Keystone Aviation. The company was formed for the sole purpose of buying the existing Million Air FBO at SLC.

"Leon brought expertise in FBO operations, which we combined with my experience in aircraft management, charter operations, and sales," Haberstock said. "With financial backing from one of my customers at Business Aviation Management, we began to build a team of believers in offering superior customer service at Salt Lake City."

At the time, Million Air Salt Lake City had a modest terminal and a 17,000-square-foot hangar. "They had a few tenant aircraft and about 30 employees including one or two mechanics, although they weren't really in the maintenance business," Haberstock said. "Their primary business was fuel sales, for which they were in last place at SLC."

Haberstock called Million Air Salt Lake City "the launch pad for all of Keystone Aviation's other endeavors." They include Million Air Provo—now the sole FBO at nearby Provo Municipal Airport (PVU)—and a network of other companies involved with aircraft and parts sales and distributorships, as well as charter, management, brokerage, and maintenance services. The clientele ranges from opera-

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Million Air Salt Lake City

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tors of single-engine pistons to large business jets.

Million Air Salt Lake City is also in the airline ground handling business, which Haberstock called "anything under the wing." That includes into-plane fueling, baggage and cargo handling, push-back, ground service equipment, and some line maintenance.

"Some of our customer airlines have asked us to handle their retail cargo, which allows their customers to drop off the package at our facility," Haberstock said. "Then we do all the paperwork, screening, and put the package onboard the airplane. Inbound, we unload the packages from the airplane and move them to our facility for customer pick-up."

Million Air SLC provides retail cargo services for five airlines and line work for nine. One airline has also contracted out both baggage and cargo handling to the company.

With ten deicing trucks at SLC, Million Air Salt Lake City provides deicing for seven airlines, making it the second largest deicing provider at the airport. The dominant deicing operation is carried out by Delta Air Lines in combination with its regional affiliate, SkyWest. SLC continues to be a major hub for the Atlanta, Ga.,-based international carrier.

The FBO also provides on-site security screening for sports teams and other groups using chartered commercial aircraft, as required by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). "The result is that the passengers can be screened by our TSA approved staff rather than at the airport terminal, and we get the fuel business," Haberstock said.

But while the company has an established reputa-



tion for handling scheduled and charter commercial passenger and cargo airliners, Million Air SLC's primary customer base continues to be the general aviation operator.

"We have tried to be a company that will help introduce new people to general aviation, and at the same time, support those already involved," Haberstock said. "If we feel that we can make money with a particular service or capability and at the same

time provide a better product for the customer, that's what we will do. We have been very proactive, which breeds activity."

For example, he pointed out that the company's maintenance capabilities were expanded immediately upon taking over the FBO in 1995. "This was seen as a natural, complimentary component to fuel sales as well as aircraft management, charter, sales and brokerage services," he said.

Million Air Salt Lake City operates a Class IV, FAR 145 maintenance facility with a total of 46,000 square feet of hangar space devoted to aircraft repair and modification services. Me-





ties was the expansion of the FBO itself. In 1997, two new 22,000-square-foot hangars were constructed. "The whole idea was to build up transient traffic to increase fuel sales—and to do that, we felt we needed to have indoor aircraft storage because of Salt Lake City's severe winters," Haberstock said.

The company provides 14 hangars totaling 280,000 feet of space. This gives Million Air SLC the capability to accommodate anything in size from a single-engine piston aircraft to a Gulfstream 550.

An ambitious program of renovations and additions to the main FBO facility, starting with the lobby, was initiated in 2001. "That year we totally remodeled the lobby, and then in 2006 we added 8,000 square feet of customer facilities, which included a state-of-the-art pilot lounge, an additional conference room, a quiet room for resting, and larger kitchen facilities," Haberstock said. "We also expanded the lobby with the addition of a vending area and a gift and pilot shop."

Those enhancements have helped Million Air SLC maintain its position as the dominant FBO at the airport, with Salt Lake Jet Center its only competitor.

In 2001, Keystone Aviation made another major business move, responding to a request for proposal (RFP) from the City of Provo (some 40 miles south of SLC) to construct a building and operate it as an FBO at Provo Municipal Airport (PVU).

"We felt that the airport had potential and that we could take the full service business model developed at SLC and apply it to Provo," Haberstock said. "Provo is Utah's second largest economic center;

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chanics account for 31 of the 265 employees at SLC. Of the mechanics, six are dedicated to servicing ground service equipment for the FBO and other on-airport customers.

Now the largest retail maintenance operation at SLC, Million Air has developed an expertise in turbine-powered aircraft services and repairs and actively promotes its location, facility, and expertise to the jet and turboprop manufacturers. The facility does most of the maintenance in-house on the twelve aircraft currently in its managed/charter fleet, including all Citation inspections. Some major airframe and powerplant inspections are subcontracted if it is determined that an outside shop can complete those inspections in a more timely manner.

Outsourcing is also done for major painting and interior modifications as well as avionics service and upgrades. Avionics services are handled by long-time tenant and King's Avionics.

While most of the company's maintenance focus is on turbine-powered aircraft, Million Air SLC is an authorized service center for all major piston aircraft manufacturers.

In conjunction with the development of the facility's maintenance capabili-





From left, FBO Manager Michael McCarty, VP Flight Operations Kenny Hepner, CFO Kimberly Page, President/CEO William Haberstock, and Executive VP Leon Christensen

Million Air Salt Lake City

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and it looked like something that would complement what we had been doing at SLC.”

When Keystone Aviation won the RFP, the airport already had two FBOs on the field, Alpine Aviation and Advantage Aviation. While they ultimately bought both companies, the decision was made to build a new FBO from the ramp up. Since Million Air Provo opened in 2001, the old Alpine Aviation building was demolished, and Advantage Aviation’s hangar was incorporated into the new operation. In August 2008, a new 15,000-square-foot hangar was opened at PVU for based and transient aircraft. With the new facility, Million Air Provo has three hangars encompassing 28,000 square feet.

The hangar facilities include maintenance, which is carried out under Million Air Salt Lake City’s FAR 145 certificate and employs three mechanics. The Provo location has a staff of 35.

Million Air PVU also does airliner handling. While the airport has no scheduled air carrier service, runway improvements are making it a popular destination for concert groups and college sports teams traveling by chartered aircraft. Equipped with an ILS approach and control tower, the facility is used as an alternate airport for SLC during adverse weather.

Both Million Air Provo and Salt Lake City are “Preferred FBOs” for three major fractional plans: NetJets, CitationShares, and Avantair.

Because Haberstock held a FAR 135 certificate when the group purchased Million Air Salt Lake City, growing the company’s management and charter business has always been an important part of the business plan. The managed fleet, which is also on the charter certificate, includes a Gulfstream G-550, G-200, and two G-150 models; a Chal-

lenger 604; a Hawker 800XP and 800 model; a Learjet 60 and 35A; a Citation Excel and Ultra; and a Pilatus PC-12. The charter operation has provided lift not only for individuals and corporations, but for all the major fractional ownership companies and jet card plans. Million Air SLC is one of the first FAR Part 135 operators to implement a safety management system, based on NATA’s Safety Management System for charter programs.

The expansion of the Million Air FBO operations led to a growing family of aircraft dealer and parts distribution businesses through parent company Keystone Aviation. To date, the largest of those is IntermountainAir, the exclusive Piper dealer and parts distributor for eight western states: Arizona, Alaska, Nevada, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming. Headquartered at Million Air SLC, it is also an authorized Piper maintenance provider.

Northwest Aircraft, a DBA of IntermountainAir, based at Aurora State Airport near Portland, Oreg., is an exclusive dealer and authorized service center (staffed with three mechanics) for Piper and the Socata TBM turboprop family for the five Pacific Northwest States: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Arizona Piper, an IntermountainAir subsidiary located in Scottsdale, handles Piper sales in Arizona.

Keystone Aviation recently established Honda Jet Northwest as the dealership for Honda Aircraft Company products for ten western states: Nevada, Colorado, Utah, Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Wyoming. Construction of a new 21,600-square-foot HondaJet

Continued on page 34



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Million Air Salt Lake City

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Northwest sales and service center at SLC is slated to begin this spring, with the grand opening slated to coincide with deliveries of the first production HondaJets in the summer of 2010. The company expects that the new facility, which will have 16,200 square feet of maintenance space and 5,400 square feet of sales facilities, will create some 50 to 72 jobs. "This is something we are very excited about," Haberstock said.

But even with the promise of the new HondaJet dealership, the realities of today's business environment have not left Keystone Aviation's family of companies untouched. The total staff of the combined businesses peaked last year at 360 but stood at 284 at the end of 2008, as the economy forced it to downsize staff, mainly by not filling positions vacated through normal attrition.

Some of the downsizing is attributed to the impact of escalating prices on fuel sales and general business conditions. Specifically, sales of Jet A and low-lead 100 avgas, which Million Air sells at both SLC and PVU under the Chevron brand, were off about 7 percent in 2008 from 2007. Still, the company, which has its own fuel farm at both airports, is projecting that 2008 fuel sales levels can at least be maintained and even slightly increased.

"As we go into the new year, some adjustments will have to be made, but at the same time we are looking at adding additional revenue producing sources, especially in commercial activities such as dealerships and brokerage," Haberstock said. "And there are no plans to cut back on the highest quality or scope of services

we provide because they continue to equate to customer value. We want to keep everything at a quality level but priced to give the customers the kind of value they want."

Haberstock sees bright spots in management, sales, and charter. "Despite the way the market is now, historically, aircraft tend to have long-term value retention," Haberstock said. "People will still buy airplanes and need management services. And with prices having come down, people will perceive a deal."

In that regard, Haberstock said that corporate downsizing could help the charter side of the business.

"Fewer people in corporate management means more work, including travel, for fewer people," he said. "When this happens, charter and ownership become an affordable necessity for a lot of companies. The main competition for general aviation is still the airlines, which doesn't satisfy the needs of people who tend to charter or fly their own aircraft. For 2009, I think the charter business will remain at about the 2008 level. Yes, there will be an increase in capacity as some aircraft owners look to subsidize their costs, but there will also be some increase in the demand, especially given lower fuel prices. That's why we are expecting to put more aircraft on our charter certificate this year."

Thinking longer term, Haberstock said that there may be an even more critical issue than the current economy. "The important thing to ask is, 'Can we as an industry introduce people to general aviation in a simple and economically justifiable manner?' Really, that's the challenge right now. I think we can." 

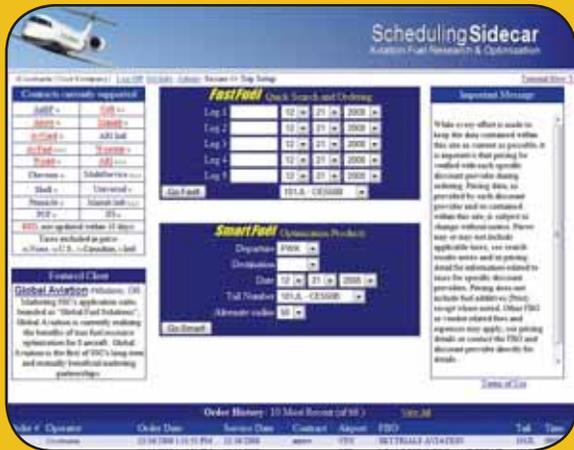




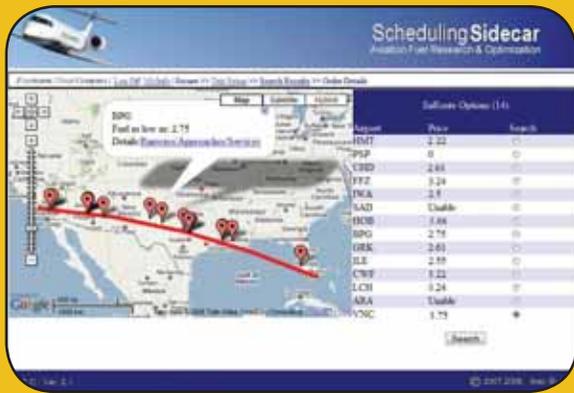
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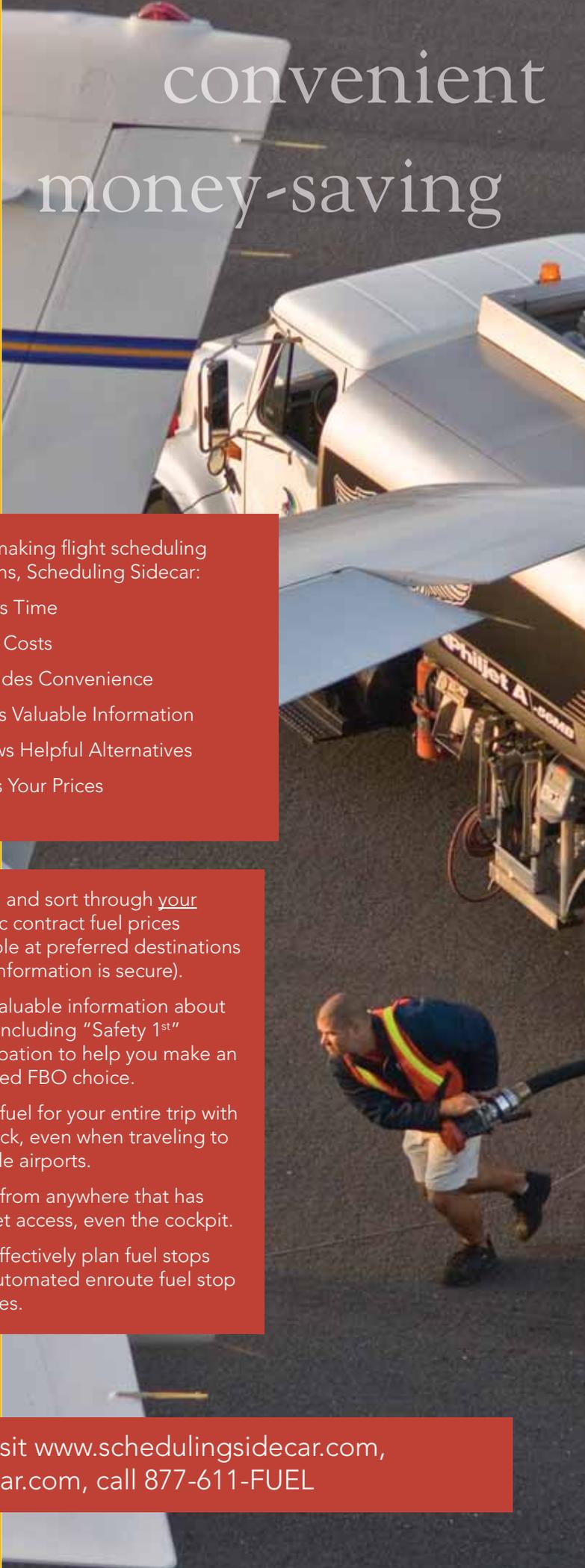
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Scheduling Sidecar: Trip Cost Optimization

As charter operators, discount fuel vendors, and FBOs weather an economic downturn, a new software suite and online service promise fuel-cost savings, scheduling efficiency, and an additional marketing opportunity for FBOs.

By Colin Bane

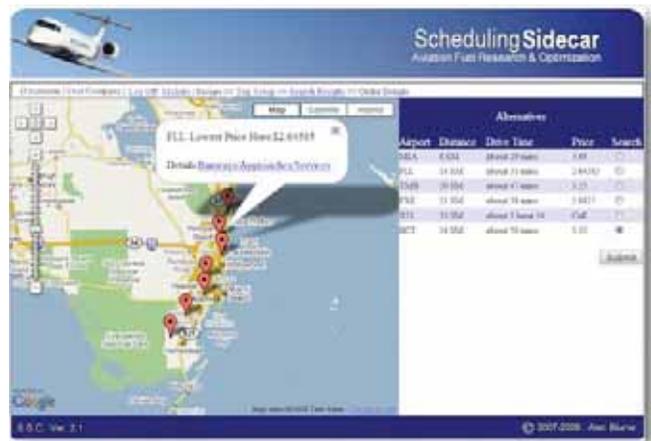
The recession and current economic landscape have companies across the aviation industry striving to increase efficiency and tighten budgets like never before. Effective trip planning and optimizing the cost/value equation for every operational element are key starting points for this financial belt tightening, and a new fuel research and optimization program that complements flight planning software could provide an opportunity for both operators and FBOs.

The Scheduling Sidecar "Trip Cost Optimization" software suite was developed by Alec Blume and Andy Priester of Priester Aviation specifically to meet the efficiency needs of charter and Part 91 operators and to help fuel service providers, contract vendors, and FBOs better serve their customers.

"Several years ago when gas prices started going up like crazy and we realized how much time our schedulers were spending to research the best fueling options for our multi-leg trips, we saw a need to automate the research process," Priester said. "We started tinkering with the idea and ended up with a comprehensive suite of software designed from an operator's perspective to save staffing time and costs and to put good information at the schedulers' fingertips."

Scheduling Sidecar enables operators to search and sort through contract fuel prices available at preferred destinations using their own data and best negotiated prices. The software suite is effectively a dynamic database built using each operator's unique data and its best negotiated fuel prices in combination with a database of up-to-date FBO information. But it goes a step further, allowing for single-click fuel ordering for an entire trip directly from the web interface.

Users upload their aircraft types, tail numbers, and contract data using a secure web interface and can then use the customizable software to map and



find the best fuel stops on long legs, schedule the most time and cost-efficient fuel stops for multi-leg trips, and even order fuel for an entire trip from the cockpit or anywhere with internet access.

"To be profitable as operators we have to be efficient, we have to seek out ways to do more with much less overhead," Priester said. "We've already realized tremendous savings internally as we've been developing and testing Scheduling Sidecar here at Priester Aviation, and there has been absolutely remarkable feedback from every scheduler who's had a look at it."

The program's *FastFuel* component allows for one-click ordering of fuel for an entire trip, even when making multiple fueling stops, while *SmartFuel* helps an operator explore fueling options at nearby alternate destination airports that offer the best value and service.

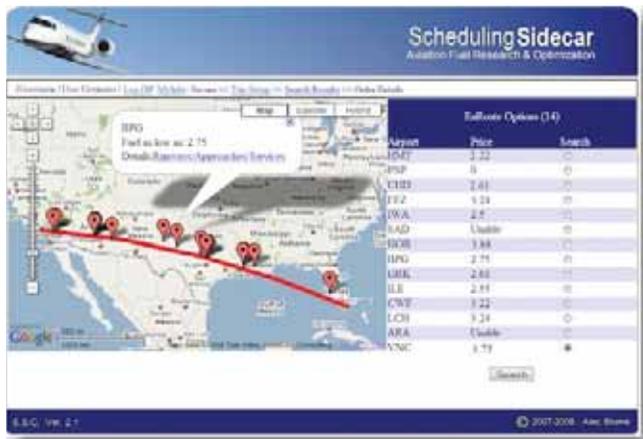
As a scheduler inputs trip information, Scheduling Sidecar instantly sorts prices and other parameters at preferred destinations, shows available alternatives, and provides valuable information about each FBO to help schedulers make informed decisions.

The process saves time, provides convenience, and cuts costs. A rapid search utility allows for quick identification of the best negotiated fuel price

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Scheduling Sidecar

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at preferred destinations and also queries alternate airport suggestions. The software tracks savings and can produce reports to illustrate cost-effectiveness per trip and over any given span of time.

The Scheduling Sidecar software is not a discount fuel program and its website notes that it “does not buy, mark up, or sell fuel, nor does it contract directly with fuel vendors or guarantee fuel price or availability. SSC does not favor any particular contract fuel vendor, direct fuel supplier, or FBO.”

Rather, Scheduling Sidecar’s set of subscription-based programs “allow aircraft operators to quickly maintain, update, organize, sort, and optimize their own unique database of contracted fuel pricing data from as many fuel vendors as they like.”

As critical as fuel pricing is, the second part of the equation is even more important to Priester, and to charter and Part 91 operators across the country. Once an operator has uploaded data and set the basic parameters for the program, a research and scheduling process that previously could have taken hours for a long-distance or multi-leg trip can now be completed in just minutes. The software enables schedulers and operators to order fuel for an entire trip in a single click, even when traveling to multiple airports, dramatically decreasing the amount of staff time devoted to the fuel research and procurement process.

Global Aviation in Hillsboro, Oreg., is among the first early adopters and the first of the program’s long-term marketing partners. Global is using Scheduling Sidecar to aid in fuel resource optimization for its charter department’s eight aircraft and to power its new Global Fuel Solutions volume purchasing program.

“The beauty of Scheduling Sidecar is that you don’t have to leave the program to order fuel—it’s all on one screen,” said Michael Walker of Global Aviation. “It cuts our time down so much. I would

say we’re probably spending $1/16^{\text{th}}$ the time on fuel research, flight scheduling, and fuel purchasing that we were before we had this application. This has been such a critical thing for us. It’s a really simplified and streamlined way to research your fuel on any itinerary using your own database files and your own pricing agreements with the discount fuel vendors.”

The Scheduling Sidecar web interface allows users to work with as many as five legs at a time for scheduling multi-leg itineraries and supports contracts with most of the major discount fuel vendors, including Air BP, Arrow, ARI, AvCard, AvFuel, Chevron, Colt, J.F.I., Mariah, MultiService, P.C.F., Pinnacle, Shell, Universal, Western, and World.

Walker and his colleagues at Global Aviation have found the Scheduling Sidecar software so useful that they ended up collaborating with Priester and Scheduling Sidecar developer Alec Blume to power the new volume-purchasing program they offer. Walker and Ken Joyce of Global Aviation announced the company’s new Global Fuel Solutions program at the National Business Aviation Association annual meeting in October 2008. They used Scheduling Sidecar software as the basis of their program, collaborating with Priester and Blume to customize the software and develop a marketing partnership, and now offer their customers a full-service option for fuel research, scheduling, ordering, and streamlining accounting processes.

“The Scheduling Sidecar software itself is not a volume purchasing program and does not contract directly with fuel vendors, but we’ve used the platform it provides in order to offer our clients a comprehensive service,” Walker said.

In addition to its charter and maintenance services, Global Aviation operates a full-service FBO at the Hillsboro airport, and Walker said that what he likes best about Scheduling Sidecar is that it is good for business for all parties.

“It’s a win-win situation for everybody involved because it promotes the discount fuel programs and sends them more customers, and it drives up volume, which then allows us to negotiate better prices for our clients,” he said. “The software makes it all very easy to track and helps wrap up the accounting process into a much tidier bundle.”

Scheduling Sidecar aids in the accounting process by simplifying the fuel ordering process and generating authorization and fuel purchase confirmation emails. Walker recommends opting to have the program automatically send a copy of all authorization and confirmation emails directly to the accounting department.



“Now, more than ever, people are looking for return on investment,” Walker said. “With Scheduling Sidecar, and also with our Global Fuel Solutions program, if you’d rather go the full-service route, the return is going to be pretty immediate. You’re going to see fuel cost savings and be able to make smarter trip-planning decisions, and that alone is going

to more than justify the expense of it. But you’re also going to save a lot of time and manpower, and you’re going to end up with a really clean billing process. This has gone over huge for our customers and with our discount fuel program vendors. It’s just better for business all around. The folks at Priester Aviation and Scheduling Sidecar, Inc. have really covered the full spectrum and come up with a great product and service.”

The Scheduling Sidecar software was officially unveiled in January at the National Business Aviation Association’s Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference in Long Beach, Calif. Subscription-based access to the software suite is priced on a per-aircraft monthly subscription rate ranging from \$100 for a TurboProp/VLJ to \$250 for a Large Cabin/Long Range jet.

To get started, operators can view a demo and more information, then register online at www.schedulingsidecar.com.

For FBO advertising opportunities on the Scheduling Sidecar online interface, contact FBO@schedulingsidecar.com.

How This Benefits FBOs

In addition to streamlining fuel price data for operators, Scheduling Sidecar contains comprehensive information about FBOs, including NATA Safety 1st participation, ramp fees, tankering options, and other services and amenities to help operators make informed FBO choices. FBO operators can advertise and display operator-specific pricing data, and FBO-related content on Scheduling Sidecar is provided and entered by the subscribing FBO, allowing complete control over what is presented to users.

“Most people shop based on commodity price alone because it had previously been too much trouble to research all those other variables and come up with a trip solution,” Priester said. “Sidecar shows important differentiators and presents that data right next to the price of gas. It’s important because as an operator or aircraft owner you may be willing to pay a premium for gas if some of those other variables are there in terms of safety, service, and other amenities. It’s been harder to have that information in one place before.”

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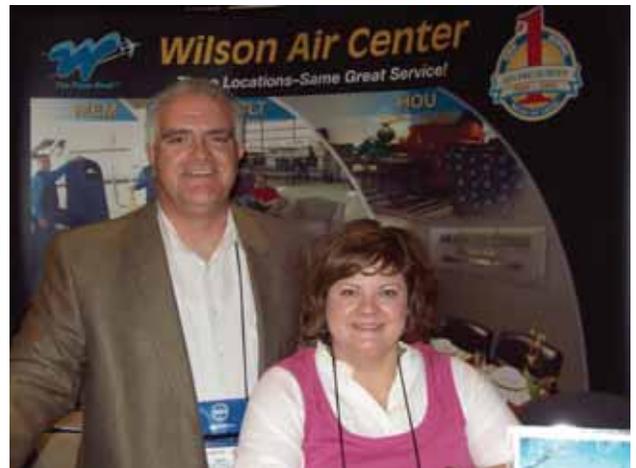
PLST Online— Members Express Their Opinions

NATA's Safety 1st staff attended the 20th Annual Schedulers and Dispatchers Conference in Long Beach, Calif., during January. All Safety 1st companies who actively train, test, and certify line service personnel received a 2009 plaque during the show for their dedication to safety.



Jim Sparks (Million Air Tucson) and Russ Lawton (NATA) at S&D in Long Beach, Calif.

During visits with members, several line managers and other company personnel shared their enthusiasm and opinions about training with the new PLST Online. Jim Sparks, general manager of Million Air Tucson, said the company sets up a dedicated computer for the line staff to take advantage of training during convenient times. He said a specific computer made all the difference for those training because it provided a pleasant and consistent learning atmosphere. He said three of their more experienced line service personnel (with five, six, and nine years on the job), trained using the program first. Even with their years of experience, each remarked they had not only learned a lot but also thoroughly enjoyed the interactivity of the on-line training. "Whenever we had any questions and called about the online program, NATA's customer support was always available and happy to help," Sparks said.



Dave Tresaloni and Megan Hodges (Wilson Air Center) at S&D in Long Beach, Calif.

Dave Tresaloni, assistant general manager of Wilson Air Center Charlotte, said, "PLST Online is a great program to reeducate and to initially train all our line techs. Even with 31 years experience on the ramp, I was amazed at what I had forgotten and really pleased with what I learned. I thought I'd breeze on through the training, but I found it challenging, thorough, and a great review. I think it is a good idea to give the line staff a timeline to do the training. It gives them structure and an achievable goal."



PLST Online, Module 4, on towing

Reggie S. Nichols, line service manager with Texas Jet, who ordered PLST Online for all the company's line service specialists said, "The PLST Online that NATA has created is an unmatched training platform that makes the old training videos obsolete. The information is so extensive and thorough and delivered in such a way that a person with no aviation background could step on a ramp and be a safe and productive line service tech once they have completed the online training."

Chris Reed, line service manager with Northern Air who uses the PLST Online for all line service specialists said, "Overall I like the system very much. Monitoring and tracking the training is much easier with this system, and it is much more conducive to having staff train when they have available time since they can do so from any computer with internet access."

More than 1,200 students took advantage of the PLST Online in 2008. And 2009 promises to be another very active online training year for Safety 1st participating companies with the recent enrollment of all Landmark Aviation and Atlantic Aviation bases.

When asked why Atlantic made the investment in PLST Online, Todd Smith, director risk management said, "Atlantic highly values a quality trained employee and is excited to move to the new online program, which is user friendly, very efficient, and accessible to our employees. The program allows you to easily manage your training, provides detailed references, and the web-based module has proven to motivate our employees throughout the training experience. We highly recommend the NATA PLST program."

Tim Lewis, director of training with Landmark, said, "Well trained, professional staff is a key to success and safety, so Landmark is very serious about having a quality training program. The Safety 1st PLST program has been the number-one program available for training line service technicians and is really the standard in our industry. Many of us can remember the very first time watching the tapes, taking the tests, and working on the practicals with our trainers. Many of our own careers were founded on the PLST program, so it's no surprise that the program is the core of our training programs today. For Landmark, we're excited about working with NATA in training new and tenured line service techs with the Safety 1st PLST program. The new online system is easy to learn, easy to use, and will enhance our ability to manage our locations as we train and re-certify. PLST is a vital part of Land-

mark's training program as we honor our commitment to having extremely well-educated, career-minded staff on our ramps."

Be sure your line service personnel have the most up-to-date training available by learning more about PLST Online at www.nata.aero/plst.

PLST Online participating companies as of mid-January 2009:

Above View
Air 10 Jet Center
Air 51, LLC
Airline Transport Professionals (ATP)
Alliance Aviation Services
American General Enterprise Svc (AIG)
Arcadia Aviation
Atlantic Aviation Services
Augusta Regional Airport
AvBase San Jose, LLC
Avitat - Boca Raton
Banyan Air Service
Bergstrom Aircraft Inc.
Bismarck Aero Center
Black Canyon Jet Center
Bohlke International Airways
Bridgeford Flying Services
Business Jet Center - Dallas
Central Flying Service
Channel Islands Aviation
Chantilly Air, Inc
Chipola Aviation Inc.
Choo-Choo Aero
City of Killeen
Clay Lacy - Seattle
Clay Lacy - Van Nuys
Collier County Airport Authority
Concord Regional Airport
Corporate Eagle Management Services
Crowley
CSG Aviation Services
Cutter Aviation - Colorado Springs
Cutter Aviation - Dallas
Cutter Aviation - Deer Valley
Cutter Aviation - McKinney

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Safety 1st News

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Darlington Co. Jetport Comm.
Davis Flight Support
DB Aviation
Dolphin Aviation
Don Davis Aviation
Downeast Air
Elliott Aviation - Des Moines
Elliott Aviation - Moline
Elliott Aviation - Omaha
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First Flight - Avoca
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Flightcraft Inc. - Portland
Flightline Group Inc
Flightstar Corporation
Galvin Flying Service - Seattle
Gemini Flight Support
General Dynamics - WPB
Glacier Jet Center
Golden Isles Aviation
Harris Corporation
Harrison Aviation - Arlington
Heritage Flight
Hop-A-Jet Worldwide Jet Charter
Houma Jet Center
Jackson Hole Aviation LLC
Jackson Jet Center
JetDirect Aviation - Dallas
JM Family Enterprises
Key Air Treasure Coast
Key Air Twin Cities
Keystone Aviation Services Inc.
KRS Express Inc
Landmark Aviation
Lane Aviation
Leading Edge Aviation - Spencer
Longtail Aviation International
Loyds Aviation
Lux Air - Glendale
Lux Air - Goodyear
Lux Air - Yuma
Maguire Aviation - Van Nuys
Marathon Jet Center
Martha's Vineyard Airport
Maxair
McCall Aviation
McClellan Jet Services
Meridian - Teterboro
Miami Executive Aviation
Mid Island Air Service Inc./ NYJet
MidAmerica Jet Inc - Owensboro
Midcoast /Jet Aviation - Cahokia
Midcoast Regional Airport
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Million Air - Houston
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Million Air - Tucson/ Premier Av.
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Niagara Falls Aviation
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Prospect Aviation Corporation
Redding Jet Center
Reeder Flying Service
Rider Jet Center
Robinson Aviation Inc - East
Haven
San Luis Jet Center
Scottsdale Aircenter
Servisair & Shell Fuel Svcs - St Paul
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Barry Kennett
1 Public Square, Room 210
Darlington, SC 29532
(843) 393-9928
Fax: (843) 393-9927
- **Digital Aerial Solutions, LLC**
Michael Wasielewski
8409 Laurel Fair Cir., Ste. 100
Tampa, FL 33610-7396
(813) 628-0788
Fax: (813) 628-0777
www.digitalaerial.com
- **Dynamic Aviation**
Michael Stottzfus
PO Box 7
Bridgewater, VA 22812-0007
(540) 828-6070
Fax: (540) 828-4031
www.dynamicaviation.com
- **Emerald Coast Aviation**
Jonathan Dunn
1931 US Highway 90 W
Defuniak Springs, FL 32433-1475
(850) 892-2000
Fax: (850) 892-2498
www.emeraldcoastaviation.com
- **Griffin Aviation Holdings, LLC**
John Jury
4502 Claire Chennault St.
Addison, TX 75001-5321
(972) 735-8247
Fax: (972) 735-8037
myelitejet.com
- **High Tech Aircraft Corp**
Greg Mahanna
120 Aviation Ave.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(603) 334-6427
- **Mercury Air Group, Inc.**
Joseph Czyzyk
5456 McConnell Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90066-2056
(310) 827-2737
Fax: (310) 827-6897
mercuryair.com
- **North American Pride Aviation**
Nathan Jones
6028 Cessna Dr.
Rockford, IL 61109-4230
(815) 969-7740
Fax: (815) 969-7844

- **Oke'e Aviation Services LLC**
Thomas Anusewicz
PO Box 30163
Honolulu, HI 96820-0163
(808) 479-4047
- **Precision Aviation Group**
Scott James
495 Lake Mirror Rd., Ste. 800-G
Atlanta, GA 30349-6058
(404) 768-9090
Fax: (404) 768-9006
www.precisionavionics.com
- **Private Flight Group, LLC**
Robert Iverson
43 Rankin Ave.
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920-1414
(908) 221-1140
Fax: (908) 221-1141
www.privateflightgroup.com
- **Regent Air, Inc.**
Michael Berry
10356 Truckee Airport Rd.
Terminal 1
Truckee, CA 96161-3364
(530) 582-1102
Fax: (530) 582-0103
regentair.com
- **Rich Air**
Richard Schermerhorn
443 Queensbury Ave., Ste. 101
Queensbury, NY 12804-7632
(518) 798-3091
Fax: (518) 798-3152
- **San Antonio Aviation, Inc.**
Randy Bean
8411 Mission Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78214-3116
(210) 922-1203
Fax: (210) 922-1380
- **Shearwater Air II**
Elizabeth Borges
300 Skypark Dr.
Monterey, CA 93940-5354
(831) 655-9990
Fax: (831) 655-9991
www.shearwaterair.com
- **Skill Aviation**
Skip Goss
2346 W Beach Rd.
Waukegan, IL 60087-1541
(847) 599-9955
Fax: (847) 599-9966
www.skillaviation.com
- **Sky's the Limit**
Sandy Staszak
PO Box 112
Casey, IL 62420
(217) 932-2078

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Avcard Now

Accepted at Signature

Signature Flight Support and Avcard have implemented a contract fuel discount program at Signature FBOs in the U.S. The program started with Signature FBOs in Boston (Logan and Hanscom Field), Teterboro, White Plains, Washington Dulles, and Miami. The remainder of the Signature network was expected to join the Avcard program shortly thereafter, with the exception of the Signature San Francisco and Washington, D.C., locations.

"In this time of increasing volatility and increased pressure on operating costs, this contract fuel program will assure that our joint clients get competitive prices at many of this nation's largest airports," Avcard president and CEO Linda Kropp said.

Universal Weather and Aviation Updates UVflightplanner.com

Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc. announced recently that it released a redesigned and enhanced version of its online flight planning software UVflightplanner.com, providing users more functionality and services without ever having to leave the application.

"We listened to our clients and responded to their needs by adding benefits and functionality to UVflightplanner.com," said Randy Stephens, senior director, specialty products. "We've incorporated the workflow process of our clients into the design so that the site works the way they work. You can now accomplish multiple tasks without having to go to another application."

Stephens said the new interface is intuitive and will save time by eliminating unnecessary clicks and the need to have multiple applications running simultaneously.

The redesigned site also offers more options for selecting flight plans as it gives clients the choice to pick from a stored route or generate a new route.

Million Air Lands in Arizona

Officials with Million Air celebrated the grand opening of the company's first executive airplane terminal in Arizona. Million Air Tucson is located in the Campbell/Valencia General Aviation Aeroplex at the Tucson Interna-

tional Airport.

"As our first terminal in Arizona, Million Air Tucson offers an option for travelers to and from the region who prefer to avoid the congestion of commercial air travel, as well as an ideal refueling location for cross-country trips," said Roger Woolsey, president and chief executive officer of Million Air.

Million Air Tucson offers more than 54,000 square feet of combined terminal, office, and hangar space, including 20,000 square feet of Class A office space for lease. This two-story facility will feature amenities such as a premier security/surveillance system with electronic access, state-of-the-art theater room, spacious conference and break rooms, and covered parking.

Executive AirShare Adds Oklahoma City to Service Base

Executive AirShare Corp. has added Oklahoma City as a sixth market to its service base in the central United States. The Kansas City-based regional fractional aircraft ownership company said that it will base a Beechcraft King Air C90B at Atlantic Aviation at Wiley Post Airport in Bethany, Okla., to serve the businesses seeking the use of business aircraft in the Oklahoma City area.

Executive AirShare also serves shareowners in Kansas City, Wichita, Tulsa, Dallas, and Fort Worth, Tex.

Twin Cities Air Service Gets Longer Ramp

Twin Cities Air Service has announced that its base airport plans to expand the runway from its current 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet. The FBO reports looking forward to the increased capacity the runway extension will offer the airport at large. The FBO is part of the growing network of Avfuel-branded FBOs, which reflects a drive to increase visibility and encourage pilots to visit more often and upload larger amounts of fuel.

"Avfuel Corporation and Twin Cities Air Service have similar commitments to quality service and safety," said Marci Ammerman, director of marketing for Avfuel Corporation. "We are proud to have Twin Cities Air Service as part of our nationwide family of dealers. The planned extension of the air-

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NATA Member News

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port's ramp will be a boon to this high-quality FBO."

Twin Cities Air Service is a full-service fixed-base operator and Part 135 air carrier licensed to operate in the United States, Canada, Caribbean, Bermuda, and Central America. With a new parallel taxiway and a new ramp area for parking, Twin Cities Air Service caters to aircraft of almost any size.

"As the only full-service FBO on the field, we offer friendly service in a classic FBO environment," said Dale Stewart, general manager to Twin Cities Air Service.

Sabre Flight Explorer Releases Professional Version 9.0

Sabre Airline Solutions in February announced the release of Sabre Flight Explorer Professional Edition 9.0, which features system enhancements that will help airlines determine the most efficient route around weather events and airspace constraints to help pre-empt delays and maximize fuel savings.

Sabre Flight Explorer Professional Edition 9.0 features a powerful and versatile graphical route editing tool, enhanced route analyzer, drawing object functionality that includes "avoidance" regions, and a new fuel on-board range ring feature that recognizes a static reserve fuel amount.

The new graphical editing tool, part of Sabre Flight Explorer's Aircraft Situation Display (ASD) system, enables flight dispatchers to graphically manipulate a route, or series of routes, to quickly determine the best possible route. Additionally, this feature supports Rubber Banding, which recognizes any Fix/NAVAID/Airport on-screen within the current view.

Sabre Flight Explorer Professional is an accurate, reliable, and widely used ASD. The system goes beyond flight tracking by incorporating multiple data feeds, dynamic weather overlays, situational alerts and forecast weather, and air traffic management tools. 

Your Member News Here

NATA wants to promote your company in the new Member News section of the Aviation Business Journal. You can submit your company's news to schambers@nata.aero or call (703) 845-9000 for more information.

New Members

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- **The Cleveland Jet Center, LLC**
Robert Ward
26380 Curtiss Wright Pkwy.
Richmond Heights, OH 44143-4407
(216) 261-8800
Fax: (216) 261-8855
www.clevelandjetcenter.com
- **The Flight Department**
Brian Waldron
72 North St., Ste. 102A
Danbury, CT 06810-5653
(203) 790-1700
Fax: (203) 702-5600
TheFlightDepartment.com
- **Victoria Regional Airport**
Larry Blackwell
609 Foster Field Dr., Ste. F
Victoria, TX 77904-3650
(361) 578-2704
Fax: (361) 576-0948
www.flyvictoriatx.com
- **Wells Aircraft Inc.**
Don Rogers
800 Airport Rd.
Hutchinson, KS 67501-1953
(620) 663-1546
Fax: (620) 663-9548
www.wellsac.com
- **West Metro Aviation**
Sheryl Reid
1313 County Road 134
Buffalo, MN 55313-9200
(763) 682-1516
Fax: (763) 682-1552
westmetroaviation.com

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For almost as long as there have been aircraft, Chevron Global Aviation has been in the business of keeping them airborne. With over 90 years of aviation experience, we've played a key role in developing products and technological advancements, always with an eye toward safety. Back in 1936, Chevron and Texaco formed Caltex to serve our customers in Asia. The merger of Chevron and Texaco in 2001 created Chevron Global Aviation and our family of brands. We invite you to be a part of aviation history as well. To learn more, visit www.chevronglobalaviation.com



Global Aviation



Fueling the aviation business since aviation became a business.



1922
Texaco begins marketing aviation gasoline, later named Texaco Aviation Gasoline.



1929
Demonstrating the superior quality of Texaco aviation products, Frank Hawks pilots the Texaco No. 5 in his speed record setting transcontinental flight from Los Angeles to New York.



1948
To increase safety, Chevron reinstates its 1926 program to aid pilots everywhere with the painting of town names on the rooftops of company buildings.



2001
Chevron Global Aviation forms after the Chevron and Texaco merger of 2001, bringing over 180 years of collective innovation and experience.



2008
Texaco fuel suppliers remain a key part of a reliable system that continues to deliver high-quality fuel to over 750 United States airports.



2007
Chevron becomes the sponsor of North America's famous solo aerobatic pilot, Captain Julie Clark.



1958
Texaco launches AVJET and AVJET A-1 jet fuels.



1939
Available at over 2,168 supply points and airports nationwide, Texaco becomes the fuel of choice for the aviation business with more airline mileage flown than any other brand.



1927
Using Chevron aviation products, Charles Lindbergh makes his historic trans-Atlantic flight from New York to Paris.



1918
Chevron becomes the first company on the U.S. West Coast to sell special aviation fuel with the introduction of Red Crown Aviation Gasoline.



You can't just talk about it...

Everybody talks about safety, but that's not enough. Air BP training seminars are where the concept of implementing the best practices in fuel handling and quality control becomes reality. Safety is a major focus of what Air BP does every day and we want to help make all FBOs safer – Air BP or whatever brand of fuel you sell. At \$595 per person (FREE for Air BP branded FBOs) you get a lot of value for a pretty small investment in safety and efficiency.

2009 Air BP Fuel Handling & Quality Control Seminar Dates & Locations:

Sacramento, CA	March 24-25
Portland, OR	April 21-22
Prescott, AZ	May 5-6
Teterboro, NJ	May 19-20
Omaha, NE	June 9-10
Columbus, OH	August 4-5
Dallas, TX	October 6-7

For more information visit <http://training.epic-aviation.com> or call (800) 752-9220 ext. 259.



Resources that Produce Results