When Capt. Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger brought the airliner down in the Hudson River, he restored to the piloting profession an aura of cool skill and professionalism that had been sullied by decades of accidents blamed on pilot error. Indeed, within months of Sully’s splashdown, an accident that went unpunished for putting an airliner down in water without breaking apart in the process, can fully appreciate the enormity of what confronted Sully and his first officer, Jeffrey Skiles.

Was it the Airbus’s fly-by-wire flight control system that saved the day, as William Langewiesche asserts in his latest book? Perhaps it helped, but sorry, old friend, I firmly believe that many a lesser airline pilot would have made a hash of that emergency, FBW or no FBW. Along with Skiles, Sully deserves all the praise he has received for an unmitigated feat of superb judgment and airmanship. Fly-by-wire didn’t make the decision that first LGA and then TEB would be out of reach. FBW couldn’t scrutinize the cliffs of the Palisades or the towers and span of the George Washington suspension bridge or the densely populated region over which this predicament was unfolding. Two pairs of human eyes surveyed that grim array of options and Sully’s vision illuminated the decisions that saved the lives of 153 people in the back.

Satisfying the public’s yearning to meet the “Hudson Heroes,” Sully and Skiles became fixtures in the media and the image of the airline pilot enjoyed renewed luster. But it was at an NTSB hearing in June that 57-year-old Sullenberger tackled the more serious task of telling the harsh truths about his deteriorating profession in an era of longer working hours, lower pay and corporate disregard for the intangible qualification known as “experience.” No one in 2009 was more qualified to occupy that pulpit than Sullenberger. —N.M.

The recession takes its toll

By November 2008, it was obvious that despite the best efforts of the drivers and most ardent wishes of the passengers, the economic bus was headed over the cliff. And as weeks passed, it became apparent that with the bus still falling and no bottom in sight, the business aviation industry was facing a recession—one that quickly spread across the Atlantic to Europe, then to Russia, India and China, and most recently into the Middle East.

On-demand charter hours had begun to drop, even as early as the summer of 2008, and that drop continued into 2009, as did interest in fractional ownership.

A decision by the big three automobile manufacturer CEOs to fly to Washington, D.C., on their company jets in November to ask for bailout money from the federal government resulted in a public black eye as Congress and the media piled on. The fallout was predictable and flight departments began closing, companies canceled orders for new aircraft, and flight hours fell further.

Among the manufacturers, who were the last industry segment to feel the blow, healthy order backlogs began to wither in December as credit became scarce and customers canceled orders.

As the recession deepened, business aviation activity fell 10 percent, then 20 percent, and in some cases as much as 30 percent. Aircraft manufacturers began cutting production, followed by implementing layoffs and furloughs in unprecedented numbers.

Now, some 15 months into the recession, signs of a recovery remain elusive. But they are there, however slight.

Since September, the number of total flight hours has increased. The improvement has not lasted long enough to be called a trend, but it is encouraging nonetheless. And used aircraft brokers have watched as anxious buyers who are able to obtain credit, or who have sufficient liquidity, have begun slowly cherry-picking among the massive inventory of pre-owned business jets.

From Bombardier came news that more than 100 employees will avoid layoffs next year following a job-sharing agreement with the union. And Greenwich, Conn.-based private jet travel specialist Citation-Air has announced it will recall 16 of 85 pilots placed on furlough. But the bottom is still there, and it represents a great loss for the industry.

In a late November release, Forecast International predicted production of approximately 825 aircraft in 2009, 738 in 2010 and 716 in 2011. The General Aviation Manufacturers Association third-quarter numbers show business jet deliveries down 37.8 percent compared with the same period in 2008, and numbers from Berkshire Hathaway showed its NetJets subsidiary suffered a loss in revenues of 42 percent (about $1.5 billion) in the first nine months of 2009.

One thing with regard to the economic state of the industry is certain: it will remain a major story through this year and probably well into next.

—K.H.
Frax founder Santulli ejects from NetJets

Individually last year there was no taller topping in business aviation than that of NetJets founder and chairman Richard Santulli, who on August 4 announced his resignation from the fractional company he had been building since he acquired Executive Jet Aviation in 1984.

The kid from Brooklyn who had taken his first airplane ride at the age of 21 (en route to his honeymoon in Puerto Rico), and whose goal in life then was to make the lofty sum of $25,000 a year, eventually sold his company to Warren Buffett for $725 million in 1998—and kept his job running the show.

In the interim since his first airplane ride, Santulli had been a Brooklyn Poly-technic math professor and worked for Shell Oil, but he balked at relocating to Houston and quit the oil company to join investment bank Goldman Sachs as a quantitative analyst, writing computer programs for corporate acquisitions, leasing aircraft to airlines and arranging helicopter financing. He left Goldman because “I wanted to see if I could do it on my own” and built a successful helicopter leasing company called RTS Helicopters.

Buying EJA, a company run by ex-military brass with a passion for record-keeping, gave Santulli access to a treasure trove of data for every flight the company had operated in the past 20 years and allowed him to devise the fractional concept—a model that has fueled a 20-year bonanza for the OEMs but in the context of the current economy is now under scrutiny as being flawed.

Speculation at the time of his departure from NetJets was that Warren Buffett was distressed by Santulli’s reluctance to bring costs in line with revenues by letting go the people who had built his company, and that the layoffs that followed the appointment of Berkshire Hathaway stalwart David Sokol to replace Santulli lent credence to this theory.

In March last year, in an interview with Plum TV’s Beyond the Boardroom, Santulli singled out his greatest achievement at NetJets as “inspiring the culture of the company.” He also recollected his mother’s advice that “God will not be outdone in generosity,” a credo that inspired Santulli to be the driving force behind the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, which enlisted radio personality Don Imus to shame the government into greatly boosting the funding that followed the appoint-ment.

Not long after Capt. Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger helped restore the good name of the piloting profession with his extraordinary water landing in the Hudson River, a pair of Northwest Airlines pilots did their part to remind the general public of its shortcomings with perhaps an equally extraordinary act of distraction while flying 144 passengers between San Diego and Minneapolis.

Although the October 21 incident remains under investigation and the two pilots have appealed the FAA’s revocation of their licenses to fly, the flight’s captain, Timothy Cheney of Gig Harbor, Wash., and first officer, Richard Cole of Salem, Ore., admitted to investigators that they became distracted while working on their laptop computers, causing them to fly past their destination air-port—Minneapolis-St. Paul International—by 150 miles. Not until a flight attendant contacted them on the intercom to ask about the flight’s status did they realize what they had done.

By then, the Airbus A320 had traveled to a point 37,000 feet over Wisconsin; only then did the pilots turn the airplane around and finally land safely in Minneapolis.

Transcripts and audio files released by the FAA in November indicated that an air traffic controller twice asked the pilots why they hadn’t answered radio calls for more than an hour. The pilots first simply blamed “cockpit distractions.” When asked to elaborate, one of the pilots responded that they were “dealing with some company issues.”

The pilots later said that they became involved in trying to determine how to use new software for submitting work schedule requests. Northwest employees have had to learn Delta Air Lines procedures instituted as a result of Delta’s takeover of Northwest last year. During the flight, Cole had been attempting to explain the software program to Cheney, they said.

Since the incident, the Senate intro-duced two separate bills to ban the use of laptops in cockpits. Although the proposals include exemptions that would allow electronic devices and computers used to operate the aircraft or to enhance safety, the Air Transport Association opposes such legislation and FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt has warned against overzealousness on the part of lawmakers.

Pilots and the airlines alike have raised concerns that such laws could stifle technological innovation and hinder safety.—G.P.

Alphabets and OEMs tackle negative portrayal of bizjets

The coordinated response by NBAA, GAMA and business jet manufacturers to critics who chose to make business aircraft a high-profile symbol of all that’s wrong on Wall Street ranks as one of the biggest stor-ies we covered in the last year—in part because of how successful the counter p.r. effort turned out to be.

The trouble all started with a report by ABC News correspondent Brian Ross the day after chief executives for Detroit’s embattled automakers flew to Washington, D.C., to ask for federal bailout money. The segment lasted less than four minutes, but by the time it was over the reputations of “luxurious private jets” and the CEOs who continued “lavish” lifestyles even as their companies failed lay in tatters as politicians and other news outlets latched onto one of the bigger side stories to emerge from the financial meltdown.

After the hearings on Nov. 18, 2008, Ross peppered the CEOs with questions about the companies’ airplanes. “Are you prepared to sacrifice your private jet, sir?” he asked of Ford’s Alan Mulally, who ducked out of the room without responding. “You’ve got your big jet parked here,” Ross said to GM CEO Rick Wagoner. “Could you not have flown commercial?” Wagoner muttered something about an earlier meeting before exiting.

The criticism didn’t stop with the automakers as the corporate jet fleets of other distressed firms came under intense media and political scrutiny.

In March last year NBAA and GAMA resurrected the “No Plane, No Gain” ad- vocacy program, launching a series of television and newspaper ads that made the case for business aviation in terms the pub-lic could understand. NBAA president Ed Bolen was a frequent guest on TV news programs, where he hammered home the message that business aircraft are good for business. Behind the scenes, Bolen and GAMA president Pete Bunce pressed the politicians to stop bashing the industry, pointing out that it generates $150 billion a year and supports more than a million U.S. jobs. Leaders for the trade groups and busi-ness jet makers even asked White House officials to tone down the rhetoric.

The result has been a slowly but steadily improving image of business jets as reporters who only a year ago might have followed the bizjet-bashing crowd today are writing editorials pointing out how companies can benefit from corporate aircraft. NBAA, GAMA and the manufacturers deserve a good deal of the credit for helping to sway public opinion by presenting their side of the story.—S.P.
**Europe’s ETS proves to be a flasco for operators**

Twelve months ago many of the business aircraft operators who had any intention of flying in European airspace were probably still blissfully unaware of the continent’s new emissions trading scheme (ETS), despite the fact that the European Commission had given at least a couple of years’ notice of its intention to extend the cap-and-trade system to aviation. Beginning this month (Jan. 1, 2010), ETS becomes a reality with the start of a benchmarking period for aircraft operators, and to which the 27 European States they would be required to report. Authorities in the UK, Sweden, Italy and Germany at least extended the deadline for a few more weeks. The other national agencies and the EC itself maintained a wall of silence and left operators baffled by the requirements and fretting over the possibility of being fined and, ultimately, having their aircraft seized for noncompliance.

Another major problem was that authorities in several EU member states appeared to have made no preparations whatsoever to handle the MRV registration process. So when operators tried to contact them they found, quite literally, that no one would answer the phone or correspond.

One of the shortcomings in the ETS registration process is the fact that the EC’s lists of aircraft and operators—supposedly drawn from Eurocontrol flight-planning data—are inaccurate and confusing. For example, many aircraft are shown as being registered to a nonexistent service provider, or to operators that have cancelled their flight plans on its behalf. The EC is preparing to issue revised lists of operators and aircraft next month. Operators hope this will clear up much of the confusion, but based on the performance of European officials during 2009 this remains doubtful at best. In the meantime, operators are quietly conceding that they don’t actually intend to follow through with the threat of fines for noncompliance, further undermining confidence in the ETS process.

—C.A.

The new Wayfarer Aviation hired 300 of the former 700 JetDirect employees. On September 30, Wayfarer Aviation announced that Bill Koch had been appointed CEO. Koch has an extensive background in the charter business, having begun his career at AMR Combs. He served as president and CEO of SevenStar Enterprises, then became president and CEO of Imaginaire Lovejoy in 2005. Koch was a former senior vice president at Nynex Corp., the former parent of American West Airlines and US Airways.

The Wayfarer name has a long history in aviation. Wayfarer Ketch Aviation was formed from the Rockefeller family flight department then sold to Tag Aviation in 1999. JetDirect came to own the Wayfarer name after buying the Tag assets. Under Koch’s leadership, Wayfarer is building a global presence in the charter/management industry. JetDirect’s attempt to build a national charter brand failed due to overly ambitious expansion plans that coincided with a nasty recession.Meanwhile, JetDirect survivor Sentient Jet, which brokers charter and sells jet cards, has bought a national brand and is prospering in what has been a challenging marketplace. —M.T.

**TSA revises LASP proposal**

While the business aviation community may have been hoping that the Transportation Security Administration’s controversial Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP) would go away, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano testified last month that the TSA plans to issue a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (SNPRM) “before the end of 2010.”

LASP, as originally proposed in October 2008, would require all operators of Part 91 aircraft with an mtow of more than 12,500 pounds to create a TSA-approved security program (see article page 12), put all flight crew through FBI criminal history background checks, compare all passengers against the TSAs watch lists and impose new restrictions on carriage of certain items in the cabin.

Napolitano told the Senate aviation subcommittee that the TSA will incorporate the input from GA stakeholders that it has sought through its rulemaking process for the SNPRM, including five public meetings, and hold “additional comment outreach sessions” with affected stakeholders to gain further input and feedback.

Late last summer, the agency re-engaged its aviation security advisory committee (ASAC), a part of the TSA that is charged with recommending improvements in security methods, equipment and procedures for civil aviation.

Government and industry officials received an update on the proposed LASP that was resinded earlier in the year after a storm of overwhelming negative comments, which some have estimated at nearly 7,400.

**New companies emerge from the collapse of JetDirect**

The fallout from the failure of JetDirect Aviation earlier this year reverberated throughout the aviation industry, magnifying challenges that many small aircraft owners and operators and the people who fly, maintain and support the aircraft that were, for a brief time, under the JetDirect umbrella.

JetDirect attempted to create a national charter company brand by acquiring nearly a dozen charter companies and rebranding them as JetDirect-branded operations. The collapse of JetDirect left hundreds of former employees owed money for unpaid salaries, benefits and expenses. Customers who provided services to JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices.

The assets of JetDirect were purchased by investors led by former JetDirect owner Jim Koch under an agreement where Koch would retain the JetDirect name and assets. Under Koch’s ownership, JetDirect was offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices.

JetDirect’s new owner also inherited a number of unresolved legal issues, including a lawsuit involving claims made by former employees owed money for unpaid salaries, benefits and expenses. Customers who provided services to JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were offered management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices. Management clients of JetDirect were also left with unpaid invoices.

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**Colgan Air crash ignites troubling questions for regionals**

When a Colgan Air Q400 crashed on a winter’s night in February, killing all 49 people on board and one on the ground, airplane icing was an early subject of speculation. Revising memories of Roselawn in 1994, when an American Airlines ATR fell abruptly from a wintry sky while preparing to land, the Q400 crashed into a house on an altitude of about 2,000 feet on a cold, damp night.

Long before the NTSB published its final report on the accident (it has yet to be released), however, the focus of the investigation broadened beyond icing to include the pilots’ professionalism—or, as revealed by the cockpit voice recorder transcript, their lack of it.

The cockpits of regional airliners have long been a training ground for those pursuing an airline-pilot career, and the accident record over the past few years suggests that, despite the FAA’s announcements about “one level of safety” for the entire airline industry, a passenger is safer riding on a major airline.

Since August 2003, regional airlines have accounted for five of the last six fatal accidents involving Part 121 passenger-carrying operations in the U.S. This disparity has become a larger issue now that regional airlines operate more than half of the flights in the U.S. airline system.

In an unusual move involving an accident still under investigation, FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt, speaking at a hearing late last summer in Washington, encouraged all pilots to read the Colgan CVR transcript (www.ntsb.gov/Dockets/Aviation/DCAA09MA027/423395.pdf) and heed its message about the need for professionalism.

Ironically, the Colgan pilots’ cockpit chat included the copilot’s statements about the scariness of the unknowns of icing—the very hazard that is suspected of playing a role in their imminent crash. The faces all look сыилыя more expertise than this from a system their government had assured them offered “one level of safety.” As portrayed by the NTSB thus far, the captain’s handling of a stick-shaker warning further betrayed the trust of the passengers and sealed the fate of all aboard.

Revelations that the copilot felt under the weather and had commuted to her Q400’s right seat in Newark, N.J., from her parents’ home in the Pacific Northwest, where she lived because McDonald’s pays its workers more than regionals pay their first officers, did nothing to diminish the reputations of Colgan and the like and brought harsh criticism about the whole concept of “commuting pilots.”—N.M.

**Eclipse Aerospace rises from the ashes of Eclipse Aviation**

The prognosticators may claim that the very light jet era is over, but the investors who paid $40 million (half in cash up front) for the assets of bankrupt Eclipse Aviation think otherwise. The new Eclipse Aerospace, headquartered at Eclipse’s original Albuquerque (N.M.) International Airport facility, is busy refurbing, upgrading and selling used Eclipse EA-500s and providing parts and support for the fleet, which numbers about 260 of the diminutive twin-engine jets.

Mason Holland, a deposit-holder who lost hundreds of thousands of dollars when Eclipse went bankrupt early last year, partnered with Michael Press, an EA-500 owner and reseller of Eclipse positions and jets, to form Eclipse Aerospace and bid on the assets. Although Holland and Press won’t identify the investors who funded Eclipse Aerospace, Alfred Mann, an early backer of Eclipse Aviation founder Vern Raburn, is believed to be part of the investor team.

The many investors who helped fund Eclipse Aviation spent roughly $1.3 billion on the program before it went bankrupt. Hundreds of deposit-holders received no compensation for their orders, and many vendors were left unpaid for parts they manufactured and services they provided for Eclipse Aviation.

As part of the resurrection of the Eclipse brand, Eclipse Aerospace bought a maintenance provider in Chicago, and that is now the company’s primary service center. The Chicago facility is capable of supporting those early EA-500s that still had not been modified with the larger tip tanks and aerodynamic improvements as well as flight-into-known-icing and AvionNG 1.5 avionics upgrades. Eclipse Aerospace also re-opened the service center at Albuquerque. The company is planning to restart simulator training, too, and recently signed an agreement with Global Jet Services, the company that held the previous contract with Eclipse Aviation, to provide maintenance training.

Refurbished EA-500s are now available, and the Eclipse Aerospace Web site listed 10 in early December, ranging from S/N 5 through 214 and with various levels of equipment. Number 5 had 112 hours logged, and number 214 just 65 hours total time. The fleet available for resale will include 28 former DayJet EA-500s that eventually were repatriated to Eclipse Aerospace following DayJet’s own bankruptcy.

While VLJ air-taxi companies have yet to prove themselves in the market, the airplane itself remains a legitimate market segment, albeit not to the tune of the 2,500 or more orders that Raburn once claimed to have on Eclipse Aviation’s books.—M.T.
FAA acts quickly in wake of Hudson River midair

On August 8, a tour helicopter climbing from a Hudson River helicopter in Manhattan collided with a Piper PA-32 Lance piston single. In the ensuing crash, both aircraft were destroyed, and nine people were killed. The Piper hit the ground, and the Eurocopter AS 350B3 was destroyed. The incident directed a spotlight on the safety of helicopter operations in the airspace.

Further closer scrutiny was given to regulations in the tower operations at Teterboro Airport, where the Piper’s flight originated. Accident investigators discovered that the on-duty controller made a personal phone call while he was handling the flight and that the controller’s supervisor was absent from the tower at the time. FAA data showed that radar detected potential traffic conflicts in the Hudson River area and displayed them on the controller’s screen, but he did not alert the Piper’s pilot to these conflicts before handing off the airplane to Newark control. Twenty seconds before the crash, the radar system detected a conflict between the two aircraft and triggered aural alarms and warnings on the radar displays at both Teterboro and Newark. One second before the collision, the Teterboro controller ended his phone call.

In response to the accident, the FAA convened a special task group to recommend changes to operations in the airspace. The resulting regulations—which went into effect on November 19—state that pilots using the corridor must fly at no more than 140 knots, turn on anti-collision and position/vertical lights; announce their position on specified frequencies; carry current charts and be familiar with them; and report aircraft type, position, direction and altitude at charted mandatory reporting points while flying along the New Jersey shore southbound and along the Manhattan shore flying northbound. Transiting pilots must fly between 1,000 and 1,300 feet, while local traffic must remain below 1,000 feet.

“There were some growing pains there at the beginning because we switched the airspace and we switched the frequencies, but it’s working out quite well,” said Jeffrey Smith, chairman of the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council, which was a member of the FAA working group. “We always believed that it was a safe area of operation beforehand, and these enhancements just make it a little bit safer.”

Platinum Jet execs, employees indicted on conspiracy charges

When a Challenger 600 operated by Platinum Jet Management crashed on take-off from Teterboro Airport in February 2005, the accident attracted intense FAA scrutiny of the issue of operational control. In addition, it resulted in the indictment this year of seven executives and employees of the now-defunct charter operator and conviction of two of the group.

Indicted in February 2009 on charges of conspiracy and making false statements were Platinum Jet Management president Michael Brassington, 35; his brother and v-p Paul Brassington, 29; managing member Andrew Budhan, 42; director of maintenance Brien McKenzie, 42; director of charters Joseph Singh, 42; and pilot Francis Vieira, 59. A superseding indictment handed down on November 22 included Platinum Jet contract pilot John Kimberling. Kimberling and Carlos Salaverria were at the controls of the ill-fated twinjet, which failed to lift off, left the end of Runway 6, crossed Route 46, hitting cars along the way, and slammed into the side of a clothing warehouse, where it burst into flames. Five of the eight passengers, along with “cabin aide” Angelica Calad-Gomez, escaped with minor injuries, as did a warehouse employee.

The original indictment alleged “a conspiracy to defraud charter customers and brokers and to impede and obstruct the FAA.” He is scheduled for sentencing on February 2.

Singh pleaded guilty on July 7 to “a conspiracy to defraud charter customers and brokers and to impede and obstruct the FAA.” He is scheduled for sentencing on April 5.

Most recently, John Kimberling, as well as the Brassingtons, McKenzie and Vieira, were named in a 27-count superseding indictment adding charges to the original indictment. All five have been arraigned and pleaded not guilty.

According to U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman, Kimberling was charged with joining a conspiracy “to defraud charter flight customers, jet charter brokers and the FAA through interstate wire communications, and to defraud the United States by impeding and obstructing the FAA’s regulation of commercial aircraft in the United States.”

A trial date for the five has been set for January 20.

HANDOFFS

Scott Donnelly

Scott Donnelly took the helm as CEO of Textron on December 1, replacing retiring Lewis Campbell, who had been with Textron for 17 years. Of them as CEO, Donnelly moved to the COO spot at Textron in 2008 from GE Aviation, where he had been president and CEO, and was given the additional title of Textron president in late January. Donnelly flies a Cessna 206 but told AM last year he was eying a Caravan. —W.M.

Randy Babbitt

Former Airline Pilot Association president Randy Babbitt was confirmed for a term as FAA Administrator, taking the reins from acting FAA Administrator David Alexander. Babbitt hit the ground running, backing pilot certification modernization as a permanent Administrator. Babbitt is sworn in as FAA Administrator. Babbitt begins requiring background checks and security badges for pilots based at airports served by airlines.

Randy Babbitt is sworn in as FAA Administrator. Boeing requires pilots of all aircraft operating in or on behalf of the U.S. to transmit manifest information to Customs and Border Patrol at least 60 minutes before arrival or departure.

Richard Lucibella, the buyer and builder of an Epic Aircraft LT single-engine turboprop under the corporate name Blue Sky Avgroup, files a lawsuit against Epic Aircraft.

EASA suspends Eclipse Aviation’s European type certificate; Sikorsky announces agreement with India’s Tata Advanced Systems to build cabins for its S-92 in India.

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K.J.H.
Start-up frac Jet Republic f olds, leaving many questions

The sudden collapse in August of fractional ownership startup Jet Republic probably convinced anyone in Europe who still failed to accept that business aviation’s bubble had burst. For reasons best known to themselves, the company and its financial backers launched an audacious challenge to market leader NetJets—which itself was already struggling in tough trading conditions—in September 2008 just as the financial crisis was going truly global with the collapse of Lehman Brothers and other banks looking into the abyss. Going into the first and second quarters of this year, Europe’s executive charter operators experienced a debilitating dip in demand as companies and individuals renied in their spending.

Days before its sudden collapse into insolvency, Jet Republic’s high-profile CEO, Jonathan Breeze, was still issuing press releases proclaiming the recession to be exactly the right time to be getting into fractional ownership. While steadfastly refusing to disclose any sales figures, the company implied that it was doing a brisk trade selling shares in the 25 Bombardier Learjet 60XRs that it had on order (plus options for up to 85 more). All sorts of new bells and whistles were heralded for Jet Republic’s prospective clients, including the world’s most expensive coffee machine, which would mysteriously serve cups of java at rates less than Starbucks when on board their jets.

Block charter, lease and even whole-aircraft terms were made available and the company kept up the drum-beat that the first aircraft would be in service by the fall of 2009.

When the end did come, the official reason given before Breeze and his fellow directors exited the stage without further comment was that prospective customers had not been able to secure financing to buy aircraft shares. Not once had the need for financing ever been raised as a factor in Jet Republic transactions; indeed, the company had insisted that the credit crunch was a singularly advantageous environment in which to be selling fractions of aircraft, rather than whole new or used aircraft.

However, the company told employees that an investor had failed to honor a commitment to provide further investment that presumably would have paved the way for the first aircraft delivery. (See article on page 10.) It is unclear whether Jet Republic ever sold a single share before Bombardier annulled its contract on August 20...—C.A.

FAA OKs field approvals for Waas LPV upgrades

Universal Avionics spent much of the last year working with FAA officials trying to come up with a way to upgrade the customers’ flight management systems for Waas LPV upgrade capability under a basic field approval rather than having to submit to the cumbersome supplemental type certification process. The result of that effort was an agreement struck in September that clears a path for more than 1,000 business jet operators to take advantage of the new guidance.

Universal Avionics was the first FMS maker to obtain TSO C146b approval for Waas-capable flight management systems, but the FAA requirement that the Waas LPV upgrade be done under an STC that often involved the submittal of “issue papers” for each airplane meant few operators could take advantage of the lower Rnav approach minimums. At last count the FAA had created 1,884 Rnav procedures with Waas LPV (lateral precision with vertical guidance) minimums, which are similar to Category I ILS minimums but don’t require the installation of airport-specific ground equipment. The FAA is bringing the satnav capability to airports around the U.S. as part of a plan to begin phasing out many ILS installations and provide precision approach capability at thousands of airports that until now relied on VOR, NDB and basic Rnav approaches.

Upgrading for Waas LPV using the Form 337 field approval process will allow many operators to have the worksheet done on the shop for scheduled maintenance. To meet the eligibility requirements set down by the FAA, aircraft are required to be certified in the U.S. and the Universal FMS installation must already be approved for 3-D coupled “pseudo-ILS” procedures. The field approvals can be done only on an existing FMS installation, meaning operators cannot switch from another manufacturer’s FMS to a Universal FMS or add a second Universal FMS and do the basic field approval.

Steven Aviation in Greenville, S.C., was the first to complete the Waas LPV upgrade under the new rules, signing off on an FMS modification in a customer Learjet 31 on September 9. Universal has spent the last few months talking with dealers and customers about how they too can take advantage of the relaxed FAA guidance. Other FMS makers are watching the development closely, but so far none has struck a similar agreement with the FAA...—S.P.

HANDOFFS

DOT: MARY PETERS to RAY LAHOOD

Despite his role in the impeachment of President Clinton and support for Sen. John McCain in the election, former congressman Ray LaHood became the second Republican to sit in President Obama’s Cabinet when he was confirmed as Transportation Secretary in January. He succeeded Mary Peters, who served as DOT secretary from 2006 to 2009. LaHood retired from Congress in December at the end of his seventh term.

SIGNATURE: BRUCE VAN ALLEN to MICHAEL SCHEERINGA

Under new president Michael Scheeringa, who took over from Bruce Van Allen early this year, Signature Flight Support has changed its approach to the FBO market. With 102 FBOs worldwide (81 wholly owned), Signature was perceived as in- service in the way for the first aircraft delivery. (See article on page 10.) It is unclear whether Jet Republic ever sold a single share before Bombardier annulled its contract on August 20...—C.A.

Universal FMS

More than 1,000 Universal FMS units are eligible for LPV field approval.

FAA reinstates the air carrier operating certificate of Air Trek of Punta Gorda, Fla., after the charter operator fought the FAA’s suspension and subsequent emergency revocation of its Part 135 certificate for more than a year; fractional firm Jet Republic suspends operations in its Portuguese subsidiary and in conjunction bombarder aerospace cancels Jet Republic’s firm orders for 25 Learjet 60XRs worth $340 million.}

TImeline

July 15
Russ Meyer, former CEO of Cessna, is inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

July 20
Stratos begins taking deposits for single-engine Stratos 714 very light jet.

July 22
A six-week strike at Bell Helicopter’s transmission and rotor blade component plants in Fort Worth, Texas, ends after union members ratify a revised four-year contract.

July 26
Hawker Beechcraft launches King Air C90GTx, a turboprop twin with composite winglets.

July 27
American Eurocopter commemorates its 40th anniversary in the U.S.

July 28
Debbie Hersman takes over as NTSB chairman, replacing Mark Rosenker.

Aug. 1
Bell delivers first 429 to launch customer Air Methods.

Aug. 4
NetJets founder, chairman and CEO Richard Santulli resigns from the company; an ATR 72-212 operated by Thailand’s Bangkok Airways crashes into a diced ATC tower, killing aircraft’s captain and injuring the copilot and six passengers.

Aug. 6
A Piper PA-23R and Liberty Helicopters Eurocopter AS 350B2 collide over the Hudson River in New York City, killing nine.

Aug. 13
FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association reach tentative labor agreement.

Aug. 19
FAA reinstates the air carrier operating certificate of Air Trek of Punta Gorda, Fla., after the charter operator fought the FAA’s suspension and subsequent emergency revocation of its Part 135 certificate for more than a year; fractional firm Jet Republic suspends operations in its Portuguese subsidiary and in conjunction bombarder aerospace cancels Jet Republic’s firm orders for 25 Learjet 60XRs worth $340 million.

Aug. 21
Cessna aircraft delivers the first winglet-equipped Citation X, August Westland and FZL-Sudirak sign preliminary agreement for the sale of 87.6 percent of the Polish company’s shares. The deal will bring AgustaWestland’s ownership to 93.8 percent.

Sept. 1
Eclipse Aerospace reopens shuttered Albuquerque, N.M. facility; NTSB issues 19 recommendations for helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS).

Sept. 11
NetJets announces layoff of about 350 nonunion employees.

Sept. 12
Emiravi Aerospace, formerly Sino Swearingen aircraft, delivers its first SJ30.

Sept. 26
EASA certifies Bell 429.

Sept. 29
Gulfstream rolls out G650 in Savannah.

Oct. 5
Marc Parent succeeds Robert Brown as president and CEO of CAE; ATR unveils ATR 72-600 during a ceremony in Toulouse, France.

Oct. 9
CitationShares announces a reframing and a change in name to CitationAir by Cessna.

Aviation International News • January 2010 • www.ainonline.com
Amelia Earhart

On July 2, as she flew solo from St. Louis, she was last heard from 500 miles south of her final stop.

John Winant

John Winant, NBAA’s first president, died on January 13 at the age of 85. Elected to the association’s board of directors in 1957, he became its first full-time head in 1971. During his 15-year leadership, NBAA’s membership tripled to almost 3,000 companies, and its annual meeting and convention became one of the world’s largest aviation events. He was instrumental in drawing together business aviation associations from around the world to form the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC). –C.E.

Barbara Robinson

Barbara Robinson, 53, former vice president of Robinson Helicopters and wife of company founder and president Frank Robinson, died on August 13 after a long battle with breast cancer. She began working at Robinson Helicopter in 1978 and was instrumental in marketing the company’s R22 trainer and developing the company’s worldwide dealer network. Robinson remained active with the company until 1995. –A.Y.

Sam Williams

Dr. Sam Williams, founder and chair of engine manufacturer Williams International, died on June 22 at the age of 81. Best known in business aviation for his small turbofan engines, Williams envisioned a new category of small personal jets. His FJ44 engine spawned the development of aircraft such as Cessna’s CitationJet series and the Embraer Sдж. A recipient of many prestigious aviation awards, he was also an inductee into the National Aviation Hall of Fame. –C.E.

Charles “Charlie” Morris

Charles “Charlie” Morris, a former NBAA board member and long-time head of Mobil’s corporate flight department, died on June 17 in Norwalk, Conn. He was 90. Morris joined Mobil in 1961 as a DC-3 pilot and served as head of its flight department from 1957 to 1984. In addition to his 12-year stint on NBAA’s board of directors, he flew for several airlines, including Pan American World Airways, and was a distinguished World War II pilot. –J.C.

Durrell Unger “Sid” Howard

Business aviation pioneer Dee Howard died on February 11 in San Antonio. He was 84. Howard started his own company, Howard Aero, in 1947 and began converting Lockheed B-34/PV-1 Venturas into an executive transport known as the Howard 250. His Super Ventura mod became the Howard 350, and then he turned his attention to the Howard 500, a pressurized nearly scratch-built radial-engine twin that competed with Grumman’s Gulfstream turboprop twin. Howard was one of the key pioneers involved in the development of thrust reversers for the Learjet. –A.Y.

John Spoor Broome

Nicknamed the “Flying Rancher” for his frequent use of a Mitsubishi MU-2, John Spoor Broome was a former NBAA board member, pilot and philanthropist. Broome soloed at age 17 and served in World War II as a pilot instructor for the Army Air Force’s Air Transport Command. He commemorated his 50 years of flying with a solo roundtrip across the Atlantic. Broom died at his home in Ventura County, Calif., on April 10 at age 91. –J.C.

Sydney “Sid” Baker

Sydney “Sid” Baker, former head of Eastman Kodak’s flight department and a business aviation veteran for nearly 30 years, died on February 27. He was 63. Baker also worked for Bell Helicopter, IBM’s flight department and served as vice chairman of the Flight Safety Foundation’s corporate advisory committee. A former Marine Corps pilot, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star for his service in Vietnam. –J.C.

Amb. Edward Stimpson

Ed Stimpson, 75, the first and long-time head of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), died on November 25 at his home in Boise, Idaho. Following a career at the FAA, Stimpson led GAMA for a quarter century and was one of the driving forces behind the General Aviation Revitalization Act of 1994. He was then nominated by President Clinton to be the nation’s ambassador to ICAC, and later served as chairman of the Flight Safety Foundation. (See page on article page 36.) –C.E.

Honeywell

Honeywell releases biomet scan that predicts a sharp contraction in business jet deliveries through 2010 but a gradual return in demand starting in 2011. –C.E.

John Winant

Pilots of Northwest Flight 118 from San Diego to Minneapolis overshoot Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport by 150 miles, blaming the distraction on using their personal laptops and discussing new scheduling procedures. –C.E.

Sydney “Sid” Baker

Online charter broker Virgin Charter ceases active operations due to insufficient sales. Greenville, S.C.-based Jet 2000 and aircraft from SATSair unexpectedly shut downs operations “due to circumstances.” –A.Y.

John Winant

FAA vetoes Burbank noise curfew. –A.Y.

John Winant

Bernard Maddoff’s charter company, BLM Air Charter, files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, with Embraer Aircraft Customer Service and Rolls-Royce holding the largest unscreened claims. –A.Y.

Sydney “Sid” Baker

Cessna rolls out first production Citation CJ4. –A.Y.

John Winant

FAA publishes safety enhancement plans to modify the airspace over the Hudson River in response to the August 8 midair; the FAA’s computerized system for loading flight plans fails, causing widespread traffic delays and some airline flight cancellations. –A.Y.

John Winant

A settlement is reached in one of a number of lawsuits stemming from the September 2008 crash of a Learjet 60 in which Adam “Du AM” Goldstein was injured. –A.Y.

John Winant

GAMA and International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) team on business aircraft emissions plan. –A.Y.

John Winant

Gulfstream G550 makes first flight. –A.Y.

John Winant

JeBedil delays launch of its air-taxi network, saying it needs to raise fresh capital to support the new operation using Embraer Phenom 100s. –A.Y.

John Winant

FAA issues a final rule that prohibits Part 91, 135 and 121 operators from taking off with “polished frost.” –A.Y.

Sydney “Sid” Baker

Scott Donnelly succeeds Lewis Campbell as Textron CEO; Piper Aircraft president John Becker announces his resignation. –A.Y.

John Spoor Broome

Embraer Phenom 300 receives Brazilian certification. John Kirsten, the captain of the charted Challenger 600 that crashed on takeoff from Teterboro Airport on February 2005, is arrested as part of a 27-count superseding indictment. The new charges cite him for perjury and conspiracy, among other charges. –A.Y.

Henry “Hank” Beard Jr.

Dep. 4

EC 175 makes first flight. –A.Y.

Henry “Hank” Beard Jr.

Gulfstream G250 makes first flight. –A.Y.

Henry “Hank” Beard Jr.

Boeing 787 Dreamliner makes first flight. –A.Y.

Handoffs

Michael Chertoff

Janet Napolitano

Two-term Arizona governor Janet Napolitano became the third secretary of Homeland Security last January 21, replacing Michael Chertoff as head of the massive agency. With more than 200,000 employees, including the Transportation Security Administration, the DHS is the third largest of the Cabinet departments. Chertoff, who has known Napolitano since both were prosecutors, suggested that her biggest challenge would be confronting “deeply embedded special interests” from industry, labor and elsewhere. –P.E.

Honeywell

Rob Gillette

Tim Mahoney

In September, Tim Mahoney succeeded Rob Gillette as president and CEO of Honeywell’s aerospace division. Gillette served 13 years with the company, and was named head of its aerospace business in 2005. He resigned to become CEO of noise technology firm First Solar. Mahoney, who joined Honeywell in 1997 was most recently the aerospace division’s chief technology officer. Before that, he served as president of Honeywell’s air transport and regional unit. –C.E.

Honeywell

Embraer

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DHS: Michael Chertoff

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Henry “Hank” Beard Jr.

Former Lear Jet chief test pilot Henry “Hank” Beard Jr. died February 2 at the age of 84. Beard was a World War II aviator, flying fighters and transports for the U.S. Army Air Force. After a stint at Chance Vought, Beard joined Lear Jet, where he made the first flights of the Lear 23, 24 and 25. He also made first flights on the Lear Fan and OMAC aircraft. –A.Y.