For years the business aviation market in Latin America was distinguished by little more than wishful thinking as manufacturers watched signs of interest that translated only rarely into signed contracts. Between 1994 and 1999, they saw the business jet fleet for 15 countries drop from 954 to 769 airplanes. It was the low point, and if sales representatives were not perched on ledges of tall buildings, they were at least considering other employment. But that was the way things were, and things change.

Seven years later, the Latin American business-jet fleet is back up to 950-plus airplanes in 16 countries, and dealers have been heard to grumble that they could sell more airplanes if the airplanes were available.

Compared with the U.S. and Canada—where the business-jet fleet totals some 16,000 airplanes—Latin America is a relatively small market on the global map. For most aircraft manufacturers, it is the fourth largest market, behind North America, Europe and the Middle East.

Although relatively small, however, it is not insignificant, with an annual increase in the total fleet size since 1999 of nearly 30 business jets a year. And in 2004 and 2005, the fleet grew by 35 and 40 aircraft, respectively.

Bombardier is a major player in the Latin American market, at least in terms of numbers of aircraft. According to Favio Robello, the company’s v-p of Latin American sales, there are 307 Bombardier airplanes in service in the region, with the Learjet line making up the largest share. There are 101 in Mexico and 82 in Brazil.

“I’ve just completed six years with Bombardier,” said Robello, “and I can tell you that last year was the best year we’ve had in Latin America.”

Cessna holds a major market share in Latin America, with 362 Citations in service. There are also 236 Caravan turboprop singles in service in the region. The largest Citation fleet is in Brazil, where there are 135 in service. In 2004, Cessna delivered 14 Citations in Latin America; last year the company delivered 21. “And this year we’ve already delivered 11,” said a spokesman in July.

Jet Sales Are on the Upswing but Turboprops Rule

There are about 62 Gulfstreams—from G100s to G550s—in service in Latin America. “We now have five G550s flying in Latin America,” said a spokesman, who also noted that for the Savannah, Ga.-based OEM, the market has assumed an importance equal to that of the Middle East.

Raytheon Aircraft is heavily represented in Latin America, but primarily in the turboprop market. Of the 22,000 turboprops in the region, a little more than 1,100 are Raytheon airplanes—King Airs for the most part. But the company has had some success recently with its Premier IA light jet and sold two at the FIDAE 2006 international airshow in Chile earlier this year.

Ernesto Rois-Méndez is president of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Aeronáutica (Latin American Aeronautical Association). He is a careful observer of the Latin American market and is relatively blunt in his assessment of the region’s business aircraft market.

“What is amazing is that with instability and unrest so typical in Latin America, there is such growth in business aviation,” said Rois-Méndez. Elections inevitably have a negative effect on business aircraft sales as potential customers choose to wait and see how the political—and, by association, the economic—winds blow, he explained.

Two factors consistently inhibit the market for business aircraft in Latin America—political and economic instability, and they are inextricably linked. There are a number of recent examples.

In Mexico there was the July 2 presidential election in which Manuel Lopez Obrador lost in a hotly contested battle to Felipe Calderon.

In Venezuela last year, President Hugo Chavez, a self-avowed Marxist, claimed the U.S. was preparing for an invasion of his country, and more recently was preparing to sign an arms deal with
Russia valued at some $3 billion. The U.S. has banned military sales to Venezuela, and some observers believe a ban by Venezuela on U.S. civil imports could follow.

Brazil is preparing for presidential and congressional elections later this year, and the nation’s efforts to reach an agreement on natural gas prices with neighboring Bolivia collapsed in July. Brazil has in recent years become a major exporter of natural gas.

In Chile, a presidential runoff election in January this year saw Michelle Bachelet the winner, after which the Chilean congress saw fit to reduce the presidential term of office from six years to four. This year saw Michelle Bachelet the winner, more comfortable, and they are flying more frequent. “People are feeling more secure, more comfortable, and they are flying more frequent,” according to some aviation handling services. Baseops International said it has seen a “huge” decrease in flights from the U.S. to Venezuela in the past two years. The company also reported a slight decline in business aviation travel to Latin America in general over the past year, but an increase in the number of flights to Venezuela originating in Europe.

On the other hand, Universal Weather reports only “a slight decline” in the number of flights from the U.S. into Venezuela and an increase in the number of flights into Latin America in general. A spokesman noted that requests for continuing travel in Venezuela beyond international arrival point Simón Bolívar International airport, or to remain in Venezuela more than 72 hours, were requiring between five and seven days for approval. And he added that crews flying into Simón Bolívar were discovering that with the closure of the deteriorating four-lane main bridge connecting Caracas with the Caribbean coast and the airport added at least two hours to the ride into the city center.

Alberto Rosales, a trip support specialist with Universal Weather, said operations into Latin America, and in particular into Brazil, are becoming more frequent. “People are feeling more secure, more comfortable, and they are flying again,” said Rosales. “We’ve noticed this, and it’s one reason we opened the new office in São Paulo [at Guarulhos International Airport].”

Changing Regulations and Irregular Enforcement

Regulations remain an issue, not only differing from one country to another, but also in terms of how strictly they are administered from one airport to another within the same country.

In Brazil, said Rosales, crew visas remain an issue at some airports, even though the regulations do not require that pilot and copilot have one. On the other hand, officials seem to agree that a flight attendant is not a crewmember and therefore must have a visa. Bottom line, said Rosales, “Everybody should have a visa.”

At some airports in Bolivia, authorities require proof of the aircraft’s landing field performance after arrival. But at El Alto Internacional in La Paz, it is required before a landing permit is issued. In Santiago, customs officials no longer clear baggage for passengers through the Universal office but require that they go through customs in the arrivals terminal, which can add an hour or more to the arrival process. “But we did manage to work out an agreement for a private line at the terminal for general aviation arrivals, which has got it down to about 30 minutes,” said Rosales.

In Mexico, there is a recent and major change to requests for landing permits, said Lupe Jensen, a Universal Weather specialist on travel to Mexico. “Last year, civil aviation in Mexico had a Web site on which the user could fill out the landing

Embraer’s bizav no longer a one-trick pony

Two years ago Embraer had one product for the business aviation market, with the Legacy, an executive/VIP or corporate shuttle version of its ERJ 135 regional jet. But that is ancient history, said Embraer executive v-p of executive jets Luis Carlos Affonso.

In May last year the Brazilian airplane manufacturer announced the formation of its executive jets division headed by Affonso, and revealed a $235 million investment program to produce a very light jet (VLJ) and a light jet. By last fall it had announced the formal launch of the Phenom 100 VLJ and Phenom 300 light jet. And this past May, at the European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition in Geneva, Embraer unveiled the Lineage 1000, a $40.96 million (typically equipped), 19-passenger derivative of its E190 airliner, designed to fill a niche between the Boeing Business Jet and the Gulfstream G550.

In an interview with AIN last month, Affonso noted that the Phenoms and the Lineage 1000 are just the beginning. “Over the years, as part of our strategy for growth and diversification,” he said, “we plan to introduce new aircraft to complete the Embraer executive jets line.” This strategy, he added, is complemented by “a business plan devoted to customer support and service.” The company expects to expand its existing three factory service centers at Gavião Peixoto near São José dos Campos in Brazil, ODMA near Lisbon, Portugal and Nashville, Tenn. Embraer also expects to add to its list of 17 factory-approved service centers “in the near future.” The factory service and maintenance center at Alvorca, Portugal, opened in July at a renovated 16,600-sq-ft ODMA hangar. It includes backshops and customer reception rooms and will accommodate as many as two Legacy 600s, one Lineage 1000 or up to eight Phenoms.

This summer, as Embraer needed to provide more proof of its intent to become a major player in the business aviation market, the company revealed an executive jets backlog totaling $1.25 billion. That book includes a firm order from Gold Aviation Services in Fort Lauderdale for five Phenom 100s and options for an additional 10 Phenom 100s or Phenom 300s. They are to be managed, maintained and chartered by Gulf Aviation. Also on order from the Kipco Group United Aviation are one Phenom 100, one Phenom 300 and one Legacy 600. The holding company, with assets throughout the Middle East and North Africa, expects to take delivery of the Legacy 600 in October and the Phenom 100 and Phenom 300 in 2008 and 2010, respectively. Embraer cut metal for the Phenom 100 in June this year and deliveries are expected to begin in mid-2008. Deliveries of the Phenom 300 are expected to begin in late 2009.

Affonso disagrees with those who do not see a ready market in Latin America for the Phenom 100 and other VLJs. He maintains that there is an aging fleet of light jets that current operators will need to replace in the near term and that there are thousands of owner-operators of turbo-prop aircraft and heavy piston twins. “We have also had inquiries from various charter companies. We expect to deliver a product that will create a customer loyalty that will keep them in the Embraer fold as they move up,” he said.

While the Lineage is designed for that niche market between large business jets such as the Global Express and still larger ACJ and BBJ, Affonso said he expects it will appeal to current owners and operators of aircraft in those categories. Those moving “up” from a Gulfstream or Global Express will get a much larger cabin with little or no loss in performance, while those moving “down” will get an airplane that costs about $15 million less than a BBJ.

“We believe we can deliver a finished, typically equipped Lineage 1000 for $41 million,” Affonso said that with two auxiliary fuel tanks in the belly, the projected range is 4,200 nm with eight passengers. Additional baggage storage at the aft end of the cabin is accessible in flight.

The company expects to deliver two Lineage 1000s in late 2008 and three or four in 2009. In the meantime, the Legacy 600 is the only Embraer executive/VIP airplane in production, but Affonso notes sales are “encouraging.” In 2004, 13 Legacy 600s were delivered and last year that number jumped to 20. This year, he said, the company expects to deliver 25, followed by 30 next year.

At this point, cabinetry for the Legacy 600 is produced by Nordam and Duncan Aviation in the U.S. and shipped to São José dos Campos for installation in a separate interior completion center. The long-term strategy, according to Affonso, is to move that completion activity to Gavião Peixoto, where it will be expanded to handle cabin completion work on the Phenom 100 and 300 and the Lineage 1000.

Affonso said the company has not yet decided whether to outsource for the Phenom 100 and Phenom 300 cabin components as it has for the Legacy, or to bring the work in-house at Gavião Peixoto. As for the company’s overall long-range expectations, Affonso said the original business plan was to deliver 1,000 airplanes over the next 10 years, about a 30-percent market share worldwide. “Now it appears,” he said, “we will exceed our forecast.”

—K.J.H.
Helicopters carry the day in Latin America

There is “lots of demand” for civil helicopters in Latin America, according to Danny Maldonado, v-p of Latin American sales for Bell Helicopter. He cited several reasons for the booming demand: new businesses moving into Latin America; a more stable political climate and improving economy in many countries; expanding offshore oil and gas business; and replacement of an aging fleet. Those selling their older helicopters are generally replacing them with new, he added, and demand for used helicopters remains healthy.

Lionel Sinai, manager of marketing and communications for Eurocopter Mexico, generally agrees, at least as far his area of responsibility—Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela—is concerned. Most of the demand for civil helicopters in Latin America comes from private, corporate and the offshore oil and gas industry.

In the larger cities, where traffic backs up for miles and rampant crime prompts security concerns, helicopter transport is no longer considered a luxury but a necessity for business executives and wealthy individuals. This is particularly true in São Paulo, Brazil’s economic heart and a place where a 20-mile trip from Congonhas International to the city center can take two hours. “It’s the best city in the world for helicopters,” said Kurt Robinson, v-p of product support at Robinson Helicopter.

While exact numbers are not available, best estimates are that the helicopter fleet in São Paulo numbers nearly 1,000. With demand for its product growing in the region, Eurocopter established subsidiary Helibras in São Paulo. The company has its own AS 350 assembly line. Helibras also operates a training center and maintains an engineering modifications department.

Enstrom, the Menominee, Mich. manufacturer, has been in business for 47 years and began delivering piston single helicopters in Latin America in the mid-1980s. While the company has some 40 piston helicopters operating in Latin America, it’s the company’s only turbine helicopter that is expected to make a real impact on this market. The 480B is a five-passenger turbine single capable of 115 knots. According to marketing and sales program manager Mike Roer, “It’s about the equivalent of Bell’s 206B3. But at $810,000 typically equipped, it’s about $200,000 cheaper.”

Enstrom recently added Bringer to its dealership network and delivered a 480B to the São Paulo company. A number of 480Bs are in service in Mexico, “where it’s an ideal machine for hot-and-high flying.” Enstrom expects to deliver two 480Bs to customers in Costa Rica before year-end.

Mexico City has many of the same transportation problems as São Paulo and an active and growing helicopter fleet, though not yet the size of that in São Paulo. According to Sinai, the official line is that there are 400 helicopters in service in Mexico City. But in a city 7,570 feet above sea level, the requirement is for helicopters with exceptional hot-and-high performance.

Sinai described Mexico City as a “free-flight” area for helicopters in which more and more new buildings are going up with helipads. “There are already 75 helipads, and the sky is filled with helicopters. They’re like aerial cowboys.” Meanwhile, he said, in the wake of two recent crashes— involving a Bell 407 and an Agusta 109—the government is expected to issue flight restrictions in the near future.

Sinai said Bell has the major market share in Mexico, but he noted that Eurocopter’s AS 350B3 is becoming the helicopter of choice for first responders—police, emergency medical service and traffic patrol, as well as search-and-rescue. “In the past three years,” said Sinai, “the B3 has won 90 percent of all tenders in those categories.”

Both companies see a major growth area in offshore support of the oil and gas industries, Bell with its 15-passenger 412 and Eurocopter with its AS 350 and EC 145. AgustaWestland last month signed a five-year distribution agreement with Aerolíneas Ejecutivas of Mexico. The deal includes an initial contract for five helicopters, including two A109 Powers, and options for 37 more over the next five years.

“As of right now,” said Maldonado, “there are few regulations that would affect helicopter sales in Latin America,” although he admitted, “there has been some noise about noise.”

In general, though, it’s a good market, but focused on a few countries, Brazil and Mexico, and more recently Guatemala. But, said Maldonado, “things change.”

--K.J.H.
The $2.35 million twinjet is expected to enter service in mid-2008 and Latin American, particularly Brazilian, customers are likely to be receptive.

“I think there is definitely a market for the very light jet in Latin America,” said Rois-Méndez. “Those who can afford one will love it.”

He added, however, “As the backbone of an air-taxi service, the VLJ might be a tough sell, as most Latin American countries have only three or four major cities to support such a service.”

Manufacturers Pleased with Sales Growth

“We’ve increased our sales this year,” said Bombardier’s Robello, adding that the success reflects the efforts of a new sales director in Brazil and a sales director in Dallas who spends most of his time in Mexico, as well as those of a pre-owned aircraft sales director in Florida.

But, he added, simply selling airplanes does not ensure long-term success, and Bombardier is planning a new parts depot in São Paulo that will allow delivery of parts for any Bombardier aircraft to any major city in Latin America in about 12 hours.

Bombardier has a field service representative in Brazil, one in Argentina and two in Mexico, and OceanAir in São Paulo had its validation as a company-authorized service facility renewed this summer.

While the market in Latin America is primarily for small and medium business jets, Bombardier expects to see a growing market for larger aircraft with legs to match a global economy that more and more Latin American businesses are entering. “The Global is a victim of price at this point,” said Robello, “but we’re selling more Challengers and as the Latin American economy moves more and more into the export arena, we’re seeing interest in Globals as well as Challengers.

“Long-term investments by Latin American individuals and companies spell stability, and these individuals and companies are looking at outside markets more than ever.”

HeliSolutions sets up shop in upscale mall

On any given day at the ultra-exclusive Daslu shopping center in São Paulo, Brazil, the parking lot is filled with Mercedes-Benzes, Jaguars and BMWs. It is beyond upscale and, for some, redlines pretentious.

Here, customers are not only from among the elite Paulistas, so are many of the sales staff, known as “duslasutes.” To “work” here is a status symbol of sorts.

Certain areas are off limits to men. On these floors and in these shops, open only to women, an errant male visitor is quickly met and firmly escorted out. In places where women stroll in casually about clad in little or nothing as they browse among displays of Prada and Dolce & Gabbana, men are not welcome.

But they are welcome elsewhere in Daslu. There are menswear shops, a Ferrari dealership, a yacht sales office, and now, a place to purchase a helicopter—at least a share in one.

And why not? In a city where rush-hour traffic is a 24-hours-a-day phenomenon and security is a necessity, the helicopter has become almost as common as the Mercedes-Benz or Jaguar. In fact, São Paulo boasts the largest fleet of civil helicopters in the world, and they fit from rooftop heliport to rooftop helipad like draglines on mating day. The civil helicopter fleet in São Paulo numbers, by most estimates, more than 1,000, and there are more than 200 active helipads scattered around the city.

HeliSolutions, a São Paulo-based helicopter fractional ownership operator, is one of the most recent arrivals at Daslu. “We benefit a lot from word of mouth,” said Rodrigo Andrade Sá, president of HeliSolutions, “so being in Daslu helps the company to become more visible.”

Each helicopter has 10 owners who fly an average of six to seven hours a month. The lion’s share of the company’s clients—about 70 percent—are businesses; the remainder are individual owners.

Since it was founded in 1999, HeliSolutions has grown quickly and the fleet now totals 11 aircraft—three Robinson R44 Ravens, three Eurocopter EC 120 Colibris and five AS 350B3 Squirrels. This year the company saw 30-percent growth and, according to Andrade, expects similar growth next year.

HeliSolutions has on order a new Colibri and a new Squirrel, both of which are scheduled for delivery next May. “We would like to have the helicopters sooner, but delivery dates are tight,” he said.

Andrade sees the fleet composition as unlikely to change. “The Robinson makes sense for urban operations and is inexpensive to operate,” he explained. “Likewise, because Eurocopter has an assembly plant in Brazil through Helibras, (obtaining) parts and maintenance for the Colibris and Squirrels is more efficient.”

The Case for the Helicopter

In recent years, business at HeliSolutions has gotten a boost from a number of sources, one of which is the weakened U.S. dollar. “The cost to buy a share in a helicopter has declined by almost 30 percent in local currency.”

Another factor is the difficulty in getting around São Paulo by car, despite government attempts to limit traffic in the city. In total, traffic jams during the peak rush hours often approach 100 miles, and chronic gridlock makes travel by car unpredictable at best. By comparison, Los Angeles traffic congestion looks like a Sunday-morning drive to church.

Another factor is a growing concern about safety. Despite a decline in the number of car-jackings and kidnappings in recent years, executives and wealthy individuals still consider the money well spent. “The fact is, the sky is much safer than the ground,” said Andrade.

HeliSolutions has since its inception in 1999, when Andrade and his partner opened the company, run into many obstacles. “It’s a highly technical system divided into zones with airspace corridors linking various cities and business districts.”

Andrade contends that in coming years helicopters will increasingly become essential business tools to complement fixed-wing business aviation.

He believes that if commercial aviation continues to grow at current rates, business aviation will eventually be removed from Congonhas International Airport, relegating it to outlying airports such as Jundiaí, Vargacopos and Guarulhos. This will almost certainly result in an expansion of helicopter operations between the outlying airports, Congonhas International and various city heliports.

With continued economic growth throughout Brazil, HeliSolutions has begun expanding beyond São Paulo. The company already bases three helicopters in Rio de Janeiro, and Andrade believes that demand in the city of Campinas will soon require HeliSolutions to base helicopters there as well. And Ribeirão Preto, the sugar and ethanol capital of Brazil, has seen its helicopter fleet grow to become the third largest in the nation, said Andrade. HeliSolutions is also eyeing other Brazilian markets, including Salvador in the northeastern state of Bahia, which has developed into a major center of tourism and is a center for a number of key industries, including oil and petrochemicals.

All these factors, assuming continued political and economic stability, suggest to Andrade that HeliSolutions will see significant growth in coming years. The role of the helicopter has expanded significantly since the first, a Bell 47D, was introduced into the country in 1948. And according to Andrade, the best is yet to come.

—E.J.

The HeliSolutions fleet now includes five Eurocopter AS 350B3 Squirrels and a sixth is to be delivered next May, along with a fourth EC 120 Colibri.

Total Combined Business Jet Fleets of 15 Latin American Countries, 1993-2005

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<th>Year</th>
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With 362 in service, Cessna has the largest business-jet fleet in Latin America. A spokesman said the company strategy is relatively simple, and the same as it is in the rest of the world—“focus on complete support through their dealer and maintenance network.”

As for future growth, said a spokesman, “We see very strong, growing economies throughout the region and great opportunities for our whole line of aircraft.”

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Continued from page 32

The TAM facility at Jundiaí Airport near São Paulo is an authorized Citation service center. At 85 strong, the Citation fleet in Mexico is substantial, and supported by Centro de Serviço Avemex in Toluca.

Gulfstream, traditionally limited in sales numbers by the price and mission of its large long-range and ultra-long-range aircraft, found a ready market in Latin America when it introduced the smaller and less expensive G100 and G200 in 2001. As a result, the Gulfstream fleet in Latin America has doubled in the last four years, said a spokesman, “and we see no reason for that trend not to continue [now that] we have aircraft more suited to the region. Latin America is an important market for us.”

But like competitor Bombardier, Gulfstream is seeing greater demand for heavy-iron

**TAM Has Big Plans for Little Jets**

Brazilian charter operator Taxi Aereo Marila (TAM) believes the future of business aviation in Brazil includes very light jets (VLJs), and lots of them.

According to TAM president Rui Aquino, the São Paulo-based company has encountered a strong demand for new aircraft, particularly light jets.

TAM has 24 order positions for the five-passenger Cessna Mustang, which is scheduled to be certified during this year’s fourth quarter. The Brazilian company expects to deliver seven Mustangs next year and believes that sales will be even stronger after the arrival of the first aircraft. “Our main concern is delivery times,” said Aquino.

“There are few aircraft available for delivery in 2007.”

“This is a great aircraft for Brazil; it can fly 1,000 miles and cover all the key areas of the country.” He added that VLJs are likely to be the greatest impetus for growth in the business aviation market in Brazil in coming years. “Flying is the quickest and most efficient way to cover ground in Brazil, and more business people are coming to realize the importance of having their own aircraft,” he explained.

In general terms, TAM has an optimistic view of business aviation in Brazil, expecting to sell 15 helicopters, seven Cessna Caravans and 10 business jets this year.

He also noted that the company plans to expand its maintenance and service facility at Jundiaí Airport. “We were hoping to see strong growth in single-engine aircraft maintenance, but demand for jet [maintenance] has been higher than expected.” — E.J.
long- and ultra-long-range aircraft. Not long ago there were a handful of GV’s in Latin America. “Now, in less than three years, we’ve sold as many G550s as there were GV’s in the fleet in 2003.” And, he added, the total fleet in Latin America has doubled in the last four years.

Gulfstream is also focusing on support of its Latin American fleet. While service and support is available at its West Palm Beach, Fla.; Dallas; and Long Beach, Calif. factory service centers, there are authorized line service providers in Caracas, Venezuela; and Santiago, Chile; as well as an authorized warranty center in São Paulo. The West Palm Beach facility is a three-hour flight from most major cities in Central America, Mexico and the north coast of South America.

A spokesman at Raytheon Aircraft, which supports some 22,000 turbine airplanes in Latin America, said sales for the Beechcraft and Hawker jets have been strong, “and we expect that to continue.

“Compared with Europe and the Middle East, Latin America as a market isn’t growing as fast, but Brazil is strong.”

Despite all the political, economic and regulatory growth inhibitors, very light jets, larger business jets and turboprops represent a healthy market in Latin America, and manufacturers and vendors are optimistic about the future.

—K.J.H.
Brazil's largest business aviation services company, Líder Aviação, continues to spread its wings into new areas and anticipates a revenue increase of 40 percent this year.

“This has been a great year in terms of aircraft sales, charter services and offshore operations,” said Líder director Junia Hermont. Belo Horizonte-based Líder attributes its rapid expansion to the growth of offshore gas and oil operations in Brazil. Earlier this year, the company received $41 million in financing from the U.S. Export-Import Bank to acquire six Sikorsky S-76C++s, which will bring the company’s offshore operations fleet to 16 aircraft.

Líder is the largest offshore helicopter charter operator in Brazil, and its acquisition of the six Sikorsky S-76C++s is part of a strategy to solidify that position, said Líder CEO Eduardo de Pereira Vaz.

Líder recently signed an agreement with Brazilian airport management company Infranero to expand its operations in Vitória, the capital of Espírito Santo. With the contract, Líder will have its own hangar, which can be used for offshore operations and executive aviation services. “With the recent oil discoveries in the region, demand for services in Vitória has been growing fast, and Líder wanted to be able to offer a broad range of services to its clients,” said Hermont.

Líder anticipates annual demand for its executive charter services to increase by 15 percent this year, in part due to travel requirements of those involved in the presidential and congressional elections. While the company has no short-term plans to expand its fleet of 15 charter aircraft, Hermont said Líder has been pleased with an increase in the number of hours flown per aircraft.

Líder has also expanded into aircraft management services, a move Hermont said has posted positive returns. “Businessmen don’t have the time to manage all the details of their aircraft and prefer to outsource these services,” she noted. With the addition of management services, Líder has seen overall demand for aviation services increase substantially.

Hermont said the company will also be expanding its relationship with Eurocopter later this year, which could further add to service-related revenues.

As for aircraft sales, Hermont said numbers have been strong this year to date, with sales of seven airplanes and one helicopter, and that Líder will surpass last year’s sales levels of 12 aircraft. “Sales are usually stronger in the second half of the year,” she said. And she added that there is a changing attitude among Brazilian business people with respect to aircraft ownership. “We’re seeing a lot of interest from companies that have never owned airplanes and [we] believe the industry is going to continue to expand.”

If there is a single factor inhibiting sales, it is lengthy backlogs. “Clients would like to receive their aircraft sooner, but with increased sales worldwide, it’s unlikely this will improve anytime soon,” concluded Hermont. –E.J.

### Líder will buy six Sikorsky S-76C++ helicopters, like the above ship on display at HAI earlier this year.

### OceanAir Gains Turboprop Market Share

OceanAir Táxi Aéreo has grown, is still growing and expects better things to come.

OceanAir was launched by Grupo Maritime oil’s controlling shareholder, German Efrenovich, in 1998 to meet the needs of oil executives moving in and out of Brazil. In 2003 OceanAir became the exclusive representative of Bombardier in Brazil and two years later was representing Swiss airplane manufacturer Pilatus. This year, the São Paulo-based company became the exclusive dealer for helicopter manufacturer AgustaWestland.

OceanAir has sold seven AgustaWestland AW139s and one Fokker 70 to date, with plans to acquire six Sikorsky S-76C++s. The company plans to expand to the offshore market, with the latest round of orders for 12 Sikorsky S-76C++s.

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Líder has also expanded into aircraft management services, a move Hermont said has posted positive returns. “Businessmen don’t have the time to manage all the details of their aircraft and prefer to outsource these services,” she noted. With the addition of management services, Líder has seen overall demand for aviation services increase substantially.

Hermont said the company will also be expanding its relationship with Eurocopter later this year, which could further add to service-related revenues.

As for aircraft sales, Hermont said numbers have been strong this year to date, with sales of seven airplanes and one helicopter, and that Líder will surpass last year’s sales levels of 12 aircraft. “Sales are usually stronger in the second half of the year,” she said. And she added that there is a changing attitude among Brazilian business people with respect to aircraft ownership. “We’re seeing a lot of interest from companies that have never owned airplanes and [we] believe the industry is going to continue to expand.”

If there is a single factor inhibiting sales, it is lengthy backlogs. “Clients would like to receive their aircraft sooner, but with increased sales worldwide, it’s unlikely this will improve anytime soon,” concluded Hermont. –E.J.