Report on Hawker crash prompts questions about charter audits
by Matt Thurber

In the NTSB accident report on the Nov. 10, 2015, crash of a Hawker 700 operated by Execuflight, NTSB member Robert Sumwalt issued a statement that criticized aspects of the charter operator, the FAA and the charter industry.

“I believe the organization that chartered this aircraft expected to get a professionally managed aircraft,” Sumwalt wrote. “I suspect they expected to get a professionally flown aircraft. And I further believe they expected that when the regulator, the FAA, issued an Air Carrier Certificate to Execuflight…the FAA [would] provide adequate surveillance of Execuflight. Tragically, as this investigation found, those charter customers did not get what they expected or deserved in any of these respects. Their expectations were based on a house of cards that created an illusion of safety.”

The Hawker 700 crashed after stalling during a localizer approach to Runway 25 at Akron Fulton International Airport in Ohio, killing both pilots and all seven passengers. According to the NTSB, “The probable cause of this accident was the flight crew’s mismanagement of the approach and multiple deviations from company standard operating procedures, which placed the airplane in an unsafe situation and led to an unstabilized approach, a...

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Industry stands ready to fight proposal for independent ATC
by Bill Carey and Kerry Lynch

Business and general aviation groups are girding for a tougher battle over the future of U.S. air traffic control after the White House’s budget embraced the airline-backed proposal to separate the ATC organization from the FAA.

Details were sparse, but on March 16 the Trump Administration released its $1.15 trillion “America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again,” calling for Congress to shift the FAA’s responsibility for the ATC system “to an independent, non-governmental organization.” This language approximates what House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) proposed but failed to advance through reauthorization legislation in the last year of the Obama Administration.

The spinoff would render the system “more efficient and innovative while maintaining safety,” the Trump proposal asserts. “This would benefit the flying public and taxpayers overall.”

The budget blueprint contains a declaration of Trump Administration goals for transportation that previously was missing. At her Senate confirmation hearing on January 11, then Transportation Secretary-nominee Elaine Chao was noncommittal when asked for her opinion about ATC...
SPECIAL REPORT

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The predominant trend in the FBO industry remains consolidation, as the established chains grow ever larger and would-be chains join the fray. To the end user, though, all that really matters is exemplary service at a fair price. In this annual roundup of how well the FBOs are delivering that staple, AIN’s readers have spoken. Page 20

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The game-changing Legacy 500 — the first midsize jet with fly-by-wire controls — is the benchmark for the future in performance, passenger room and comfort. On the flight deck, the advanced Rockwell Collins Pro Line Fusion™ platform puts pilots in complete control in a cockpit environment that provides superior ergonomics. With seating for up to 12 passengers, the Legacy 500 delivers a smooth flight in a largest-in-class stand-up cabin with a flat floor, fully equipped galley, state-of-the-art inflight entertainment and elegant seating that converts into fully flat berths in a low cabin altitude. The main baggage compartment is the largest in class and complements generous inflight-accessible cabin stowage space. The clean-sheet-design Legacy 500 is also the fastest jet in its class, delivering a high-speed cruise of Mach 0.82 and excellent runway performance.

- Brad Knaack, Legacy 500 Pilot

Watch Brad's story and request more information at EmbraerExecutiveJets.com/Brad

The cockpit design in the Legacy 500 is clean, dark and quiet, which is very nice. Everything’s at 12 o’clock. The flight deck is efficient in layout, very easy for a pilot to get the airplane started and avionics loaded. As far as using the sidestick and flying the Legacy 500, it really is amazing. You can have the airplane go to a certain position and it’ll hold that position in flight. It’s really neat.

In most airplanes, you have the yoke in the middle; it can be very confining. We had a long trip, about five hours and 45 minutes, and I remember that trip, in the cockpit, I was able to cross my legs. I looked over at the other pilot and said ‘Boy, this is nice. When was the last time you were able to cross your legs in the cockpit?’ And you’re able to do that in the Legacy 500.

The passengers are really taken aback, especially on takeoff. And they’re shocked at how quickly we get to altitude and also how steep of a climb we’re doing. They’re really impressed by that. They’re like ‘Wow, that’s pretty amazing.’

LEGACY 500: LEAPS AND BOUNDS BETTER THAN OTHERS

- Brad Knaack, Legacy 500 Pilot

Watch Brad’s story and request more information at EmbraerExecutiveJets.com/Brad
FAA SEEKS GROWTH IN NEXT DECADE
The number of turbine business aircraft and helicopters is anticipated to rise in the U.S. by 14,700, or at an average growth rate of 1.9 percent annually, according to the FAA’s latest 20-year forecast. The ranks of business jets alone are expected to expand by 2.3 percent each year. The forecast also calls for a 2.4 percent annual jump in turbine aircraft hours, with business jets expected to lead this growth, rising by an average of 3 percent per annum over the next 20 years.

NBAAs SAFETY LIST IDs TOP CHALLENGES
NBAAs latest annual list of safety focus areas highlights loss of control in flight (LOC-I); runway excursions; single-pilot accident rate; procedural non-compliance; ground-handling collisions; distractions; scenario- and risk-based training; and airspace complexities. The NBAA Safety Committee used a data-driven review to identify these topics as primary risk-mitigation targets for all business aircraft operators. NBAA will collaborate with regulatory agencies, members and other industry stakeholders to develop tools and best practices that address these challenges.

BIZAV NOT AFFECTED BY ELECTRONICS BAN
The TSA’s ban on electronic devices larger than a smartphone in the passenger cabin on flights from 10 Middle East and Northern Africa airports to the U.S., which took effect on March 25, does not affect private or charter flights on business aircraft, according to Flight Service Bureau. NBAA concurred, but as a precaution the association’s International Operations Committee has asked FBOs located at affected airports to advise if it appears that the new requirement is having any effect on business aviation.

FAA ADDRESSES CONSISTENCY WORRIES
The FAA has gone live with its Regulatory Consistency Communication Board, modeled on a key initiative designed to address long-standing complaints from industry about an inconsistent approach to oversight. The board will be the central authority on clarifying questions about regulatory interpretations from the various regions and district offices. The change was prompted by years of industry complaints that inconsistent interpretation of regulations was creating unfair competitive situations, unpredictability in business operations and spurting “FSDO shopping.”

EBBA NAMES GAMBA SUCCESSOR
The European Business Aviation Association (EBBA) is bringing in veteran communications and marketing executive Brandon Mitchener to run the association. Mitchener, who succeeds Fabio Gamba, steps into his new role as CEO of EBBA on April 3.

Gamba departed the association on March 16 after serving at the helm for about five and a half years. Mitchener has had a 25-year career as a journalist and public affairs professional in Europe. Most recently, he was head of corporate communications for Monsanto in Europe and the Middle East.

Richard Westbrook Emery Passes Away
Richard Westbrook Emery, a member of the Emery family of aviation pioneers who co-founded K-C Aviation with his brother William (Ralph) Emery, passed away on March 4 from complications associated with Alzheimer’s. He was 79.

Emery, the eldest of four brothers, was born in Dallas in 1938 and lived there his entire life, while also maintaining a residence in Sun Valley. After attending the University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University, he joined the family business, Executive Aircraft Services, which completed and serviced corporate aircraft. When the company was sold to Southwest Airmotive, he became president of the business. He later joined Kimberly-Clark, where he founded K-C Aviation. He served as president and CEO of that business for 20 years, helping it grow into a $200 million operation that serviced Hawkers, ChallengerDs and Gulfstreams. Gulfstream ultimately acquired the business.

Emery remained active in the industry, serving on the NBAA Advisory Council board, as well as the board of directors of Duncan Aviation, the Nord- Dan Group and the Frontiers of Flight Museum.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Gay; sons Richard and Marshall; daughter Courtney Loving; four grandchildren; and brother Joe. His brothers Ralph and Robert Emery, both of whom were actively involved in aviation, passed away in recent years. They are predeceased by their parents L.V. and Lourene Emery.

Richard Emery

FAA on runway lights: info for pilots, not ATC
by Sean Broderick

Runway status light (RWSL) systems rolling out at large U.S. airports are meeting expectations as an added safety layer, but the FAA is stepping up educational efforts to address confusion and operator misuse. The FAA is confident that anyone who knows what these lights are on, but they are not giving me these instructions anyway.” He clarified, “It’s not that the tower controller knows better. It’s the exact opposite.”

Designed to meet an NTSB recommendation to provide pilots with direct, real-time warnings that runways are in use, RWSLs are slated to be installed at 17 large-hub airports by next year. Red lights positioned at runway ends and entrances, RWSLs light up when aircraft or vehicles are detected on the runways. The fully automated system relies on surveillance data from several sources, among them Airport Surface Detection Equipment X, to track surface movement.

RWSLs are meant to be a last line of surface-movement defense in the rare instances that ATC clearances create conflicts, or an aircraft or surface vehicle does not follow the ATC instructions. The system is designed to minimize additional controller workload, so its status, which changes constantly as aircraft enter and exit runways, is not indicated in the tower. Because RWSLs are installed to be visible from flight decks—embedded in the airport surface, angled up slightly—most lights cannot be seen by controllers.

Unsure? Stop and Check
The system has prevented several incidents, Fee said, including two saves that required high-speed aborts. In one case, a ground support worker drove onto an active runway, triggering the system as an aircraft was early in its takeoff roll.

“The majority of events that we see are complete saves,” Fee said.

But other incidents have caused concern, such as one last July at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport (LAS). A mainline-carrier narrowbody and a business jet were lined up for takeoff on intersecting runways. As a result of a miscommunication between controllers, both aircraft were cleared for takeoff almost simultaneously.

The airliner rolled first, and the RWSLs on the business jet’s runway illuminated. The business jet began its takeoff, however, and both flight crews executed an ATC-coordinated emergency procedure in which one aircraft climbed rapidly and the other stayed low to create needed separation at the intersection.

Communication between the business jet crew and ATC immediately after the incident made it clear that the pilots saw the warning lights. But they assumed the controller knew the lights were on when he issued the takeoff clearance. “[LAS] is not the only event we’ve had like this,” Fee said, noting that the agency stepped up its outreach after the incident. “It’s not a perfect system, but the data we’re getting shows it’s an effective one.”

“What should pilots do when RWSLs contradict the tower’s instruction?” “The best action is to stop and question ATC,” Fee said.

Richard Emery

CHALLENGER ACCIDENT SPURS CAUTIONS FOR A380 SEPARATION
What has been classified as an accident involving a Bombardier Challenger 604 has prompted international flight-planning organization Flight Service Bureau to issue a caution about the need for lateral separation when smaller aircraft fly near an Airbus A380.

On January 7, a Challenger 604 (registered as D-AMSC) operated by MHS Aviation was flying over the Arabian Sea at FL340 en route to Abu Dhabi when the crew lost control, resulting in “significant loss of altitude, abnormal flight attitudes and accelerations beyond the certified flight envelope,” Bombardier confirmed. After losing control, the crew shut down one engine because of a “high inter-turbine temperature,” but the other engine continued to function. The aircraft is believed to have lost as much as 10,000 feet, according to Flight Service Bureau, which cited reports that the business jet had encountered wake turbulence that caused it to roll several times. The crew eventually regained control, rallied the engine and diverted to Muscat, Oman. Some of the nine people aboard were seriously injured during the event, and the aircraft is believed to have been written off because of damage to remaining engines, Flight Service Bureau added.

Bombardier confirmed that the crew reported that before the event “an incoming large transport-category aircraft passed them with 1,000 feet clearance above, and 1,000 feet offset to the left.” That aircraft is believed to have been an A380.

The Challenger 604 suffered significant damage in the wake-turbulence event.

The event has been classified as an accident, and the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation is leading the inquiry. “There is now growing concern amongst aircrew about the effects of the A380’s wake turbulence,” the flight planner said, issuing an operational bulletin to its clients stressing the importance of following standard lateral offset procedures when a small aircraft is flying near the A380 at high altitudes. Flight Service Bureau expects the EASA and both flight crews executed an ATC-coordinated emergency procedure in which one aircraft climbed rapidly and the other stayed low to create needed separation at the intersection.

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**Dassault: Expect Recovery Next Year**

Dassault Aviation said last month that it does not envision a meaningful recovery in the business aviation market until next year. Last year the company logged net orders for 21 Falcons, taking account of 12 Falcon 5Xs cancelled by customers who walked away from the program, which has been delayed by technical issues with the twinjet’s Safran Silvercrest engines. Dassault delivered 49 Falcons last year, down from 55 in 2015. The company expects to deliver 45 Falcons this year. “There’s huge pressure to lower prices because of the weakness of the pre-owned market and as a consequence on the new aircraft market,” said Dassault Aviation CEO Eric Trappier. “So we don’t see any positive signs in the market this year, and the recovery should be achieved next year.”

**Europe Saw Bizav Growth in February**

February business aviation departures in Europe, at 53,529, were 0.9 percent higher year-over-year, according to WingX Advance. For the past 12 months, business jet activity has climbed by 2 percent. In February it logged a gain of 4 percent year-over-year, while turboprop and piston usage was down by the same percentage. Operating hours by all business jet segments except heavies saw an uptick in February. VLJ and ultra-long-range hours were up by 10 percent.

**Group Files Motion To Halt SMO Closure**

Arguing that the FAA “disregarded well established statutory and regulatory prerequisites to the release of an airport sponsor from federal obligations,” NBAA and five other aviation stakeholders filed a motion earlier last month requesting a stay in actions to limit the utility of Santa Monica (California) Municipal Airport. The filing seeks an injunction preventing the city from further actions, among them reducing the length of the runway to 3,500 feet from 4,973 feet; and a stay against the FAA from allowing the city to close the airport at the end of 2028. On January 28 the agency announced it had agreed with the city to close the airport in 2028, and to enable the city to reduce the runway length with as little as 30 days’ notice, effectively shutting down most jet operations there.

**Textron Aviation flies third test Longitude**

The third Cessna Citation Longitude joined the flight-test fleet last month, making a one-hour, 40-minute maiden flight from Beech Field, where the super-midsize business jet will be manufactured.

According to FlightAware, the twinjet—registered as N702GL—reached 13,600 feet and 256 knots during the flight. Test pilots Corey Eckhart and UJ Pesonen, along with flight-test engineer Mike Bradfield, successfully tested various systems, according to Textron Aviation. The aircraft will be used for avionics and systems development, as well as collecting flight-simulator data.

Aircraft three joins the test program less than six months after the first Longitude flew.

At press time, the first two flight-test aircraft had logged 250 hours on 125 flights. Textron expects certification of the Citation Longitude by year-end.

The company has started assembly line flow in the east campus Plant IV manufacturing facility at Beech Field, with the first four production Longitudes now on the line. —C.T.
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**NEWS BRIEFS** Compiled by Chad Trautvetter

**Argus: U.S. Bizav Flying Up in February**
Business aircraft flight activity in North America rose 1.3 percent year-over-year in February, according to Argus International. Gains in charter and fractional flying during the month offset a 1.2-percent decline in the Part 91 segment. Charter activity enjoyed a 3.7-percent upturn, while fractionalists were up 5 percent. Large-cabin jets continue to dominate activity by aircraft category, rising 3.9 percent year-over-year. This was followed by a 3-percent climb in midsize jet flying, while light jets and turboprops declined by 0.5 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively. The Argus data provides “flight-number-specific aircraft arrival and departure information on all IFR flights in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean.”

**Embraer Predicts 100+ Bizjet Deliveries**
Embraer is projecting its business jet deliveries this year will remain largely on par with, if not down slightly from, last year’s results, falling somewhere between 105 and 125. The company delivered 117 business jets last year, down from 120 in 2015. But the mix last year weighed more heavily toward larger jets, boosting revenue by $12 million, to $1.73 billion. This year the company expects to deliver 70 to 80 light jets, while large business jets will come in between 35 and 45. Revenue this year is expected to remain between $1.6 billion and $1.75 billion, the company said.

**AEA: Avionics Sales Dampered Last Year**
Business and general aviation avionics sales fell 6.4 percent last year, to $2.26 billion, according to the latest Avionics Market Report from the Aircraft Electronics Association (AEA). Sales were down from the $2.42 billion reported in 2015 and $2.53 billion in 2014. However, fourth-quarter sales reached $597 million, up almost $50 million from the third quarter. Overall, sales last year were nearly evenly divided, with retrofits accounting for 49.4 percent of the market, or $1.18 billion, and forward-fit applications making up 50.6 percent at $1.14 billion. Geographically, 66.3 percent of the sales were in the U.S. and Canada.

**Europe’s SET-IMC Rules Now in Effect**
Europe’s new rules permitting night and IMC commercial passenger operations in single-engine turboprops and jets went into effect on March 21. However, individual state approvals must be given before SET-IMC operations can begin, and specific minimum operational, training and maintenance and equipment requirements must also be met. A turbine single cannot even be considered for commercial operations until it has been shown that an “acceptable level of turbine engine reliability” is being achieved in service by the world fleet for that particular airframe-engine combination. Airplanes intended to be operated as an SES, however, can be used for SET-IMC operations and can be equipped with an emergency electrical system and two separate generating systems, among other requirements. To operate a single-turbine airplane under IFR, the pilot must have at least 700 hours of airplane flight time, including 400 hours as PIC or 800 hours as SIC, with at least 100 hours under IFR.

**VistaJet Reaches 100,000-flight Mark**
VistaJet announced last month that it has completed its 100,000th flight, 13 years after Thomas Flohr founded the charter and membership-based service. The company has connected 250,000 passengers to 1,600 airports in 187 countries, it said. The milestone was reached as the company continues to add to its all-Bombardier fleet. VistaJet took delivery of 15 new business jets last year, which the company said equated to 26-percent fleet growth. The fleet now numbers 71 aircraft.

The second Global 7000 flight-test vehicle (FTV2) flew for the first time early last month. Bombardier said that the Global 7000, for which development work was delayed by two years, remains on track to meet its revised entry-into-service target in next year’s second half. The first flight-test vehicle (FTV1) made its maiden flight in November.

FTV2, which Bombardier has dubbed “The Power-house,” is being used to test propulsion, electrical and mechanical systems. Taking off at 10:50 a.m., the aircraft flew for 4 hours and 28 minutes on March 4, and then took to the air again the following day, according to FlightAware.

Last month Bombardier was working on securing a permit to ferry the aircraft to its flight-test center in Wichita. At the controls for the first flight, which reached 43,000 feet, were captain Jeff Karnes, copilot J.R. Marcolesio and flight-test engineer Ben Povall. François Caza, Bombardier’s product development vice president and chief engineer, noted that “data from FTV2 will supplement the successful results we have already obtained from the test rigs, including the integrated systems test and certification rig, and from the extensive flight-testing of FTV1 to date. We are on track with our test program and are pleased with the progression and performance of our flight-test vehicles to date. The dedication and collaboration our teams have shown were critical in reaching this significant milestone.”

The Global 7000 will carry eight passengers, 7,400 nm at Mach 0.85, allowing nonstops from London to Singapore and from Dubai to New York. High-speed cruise is Mach 0.925.

—C.A.

**Signature challenges FBO decision at SNA**

**Signature Flight Support filed a Part 16 complaint last month with the FAA disputing the legality of the decision by the Orange County (California) Board of Supervisors to grant another FBO the leasehold.**

Signature held for two decades. Signature is asking the FAA to reverse the decision and return the leasehold to ACI Jet, a local FBO and charter provider.

Before the board vote, dozens of interested parties, from tenants to employees, spoke on behalf of Signature, questioning why the board would make such a change without consulting the tenants and endorsing Signature’s service and community outreach. ACI Jet is a charter operator, and other such firms at the airport expressed fear that ACI Jet would be able to set the fuel prices that other charter operators pay.

Kathryn Thomson, a former Transportation Inspector General who is an attorney with Morris & Foerster and representing Signature, accused the board of “jeopardizing. ‘There’s been no discrimination,’ he said. ‘You welcomed new entrants.’

A number of other people attended the February 28 board meeting to speak on behalf of ACI Jet or to address pricing issues, indicating a need for more fair pricing. William Borgsmiller, founder and CEO of ACI Jet, said his company’s “history of fair pricing speaks for itself.”

**Process Questioned**
Signature had tried to ward off the vote with an earlier less formal Part 13 complaint and a protest sent to the county. The board acknowledged the likelihood of facing a formal Part 16 complaint, but supervisor Shawn Nelson, who was an advocate for the switch in FBOs, noted that no matter how the board voted, there would be a complaint filed. “Somebody’s got to win and somebody’s got to lose,” he said.

After the board proceeded with the vote—an affirmation of a determination made in January—the FBO chain delivered a 28-page Part 16 filing to the FAA, laying out a detailed legal case, and implying that political corruption was at the root of the board’s decision.

Among several other issues, Signature’s complaint focuses on the county’s request for qualifications (RFQ) process, which consisted of a complex matrix of criteria and qualifications. Of six applicants for the leasehold, Signature finished first in the ratings, with the other FBO on the field, Atlantic Aviation, finishing second. ACI Jet finished fifth. Despite an independent five-member advisory board and the five-member John Wayne Airport Commission unanimously deciding in favor of Signature and Atlantic, the county board nevertheless granted the leasehold to ACI Jet, according to the filing. The county further gave Signature 30 days to vacate the premises.

Signature is asking the FAA to intervene with a cease-and-desist order against the county to stop the eviction process and then re-evaluate the granting of the leasehold. The company claims the decision was based on what Signature characterizes as undue influence on the part of an individual who, Signature said, tried to encourage the board to allow him control of the leasehold.

**SECOND GLOBAL 7000 PROTOTYPE JOINS FLIGHT-TEST PROGRAM**

The second Bombardier Global 7000 flight-test vehicle (FTV2) landed in Toronto after a March 3 first flight lasting four-and-a-half hours.

**SECOND GLOBAL 7000 PROTOTYPE JOINS FLIGHT-TEST PROGRAM**

The second Bombardier Global 7000 flight-test vehicle (FTV2) flew for the first time early last month. Bombardier said that the Global 7000, for which development work was delayed by two years, remains on track to meet its revised entry-into-service target in next year’s second half. The first flight-test vehicle (FTV1) made its maiden flight in November.

FTV2, which Bombardier has dubbed “The Power-house,” is being used to test propulsion, electrical and mechanical systems. Taking off at 10:50 a.m., the aircraft flew for 4 hours and 28 minutes on March 4, and then took to the air again the following day, according to FlightAware.

Last month Bombardier was working on securing a permit to ferry the aircraft to its flight-test center in Wichita. At the controls for the first flight, which reached 43,000 feet, were captain Jeff Karnes, copilot J.R. Marcolesio and flight-test engineer Ben Povall. François Caza, Bombardier’s product development vice president and chief engineer, noted that “data from FTV2 will supplement the successful results we have already obtained from the test rigs, including the integrated systems test and certification rig, and from the extensive flight-testing of FTV1 to date. We are on track with our test program and are pleased with the progression and performance of our flight-test vehicles to date. The dedication and collaboration our teams have shown were critical in reaching this significant milestone.”

The Global 7000 will carry eight passengers, 7,400 nm at Mach 0.85, allowing nonstops from London to Singapore and from Dubai to New York. High-speed cruise is Mach 0.925.

—C.A.
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HondaJet Headed to ABACE
Honda Aircraft is bringing the HondaJet to the Asian Business Aviation Conference & Exhibition (ABACE) this month in Shanghai, marking the first static display of the aircraft in China. “We have received strong interest from prospects in Asia, and showcasing the HondaJet at China’s premier business aviation event enables us to further strengthen interest in the Chinese and Asian markets,” said Honda Aircraft president and CEO Michimasa Fujino.

World Fuel Opens Toluca Office
Miami-based World Fuel Services (WFS) has opened an office in Toluca, Mexico, to bolster support for operators in Latin America. The new office fields a sales and aircraft operations team with experience serving aircraft operators, airports and FBOs with a contract-fuel program. This office joins the WFS network of Latin American offices in Mexico City and Cancún, Mexico; San José, Costa Rica; Bogotá, Colombia; Viña del Mar, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and São Paulo, Brazil.

Flexjet’s UK Arm Adds Nextant 400XTis
Flexjet Ltd., the UK sister company of U.S.-based Flexjet, received the first aircraft—a Nextant 400XTi—for its dedicated fleet on March 1. It is expected to have three of the remanufactured light jets by the end of last month and about 10 dedicated aircraft, including at least one larger business jet, within a year. The dedicated fleet will be made available to U.S.-based Flexjet owners who need point-to-point private jet travel within the region or to the Middle East or Africa. The aircraft are being operated out of Birmingham Airport-based Flexjet’s UK CAA air operator certificate (AOC), which Flexjet Ltd. acquired in August.

AOPA Seeks Relief for Lantana Airport
AOPA is asking the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish a security protocol for Palm Beach County Park Airport (aka Lantana Airport) in Florida to facilitate operations when President Trump visits his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach. AOPA president Mark Baker wrote to DHS Secretary John Kelly, urging the adoption of screening and gateway procedures that would enable the airport to remain open during presidential visits. The association is underscoring the economic hardship caused by the visits. The airport generates community-wide revenue of $27 million a year.

Two Citations OK’d for Steep Approach
The Cessna Citation Sovereign+ and Latitude have received steep-approach approval from both the FAA and EASA. With the certification to track approach angles of up to 6.65 degrees, these midsize jets can now operate into destinations such as London City Airport and Switzerland’s Lugano Airport. However, crew need separate approvals from authorities at these airports to conduct steep approaches there.

FAA Warns about Transponder Tests
Incidents of improper ground-testing of transponder and ADS-B out equipment have resulted in false position information, such as simulated altitude, being transmitted from the test aircraft and received by aircraft in flight. According to the FAA, in at least one case, an ADS-B out system ground test created a false airborne target that generated a Tcas resolution advisory (RA) to an airline on approach. The FAA is thus advising repair stations and maintenance personnel performing transponder and ADS-B systems testing to evaluate the adequacy of their methods and adhere to proper test procedures, such as antenna shielding, to prevent propagation of test signals that could affect ATC operations or airborne aircraft.

2017 bizjet deliveries still in ‘normal range’

by Kerry Lynch

While business jet shipments last year reached the lowest point in more than a decade, General Aviation Manufacturers Association chairman and Piper Aircraft president and CEO Simon Caldecott believes that the volume is in the “normal range.” During its annual industry review on February 22, GAMA provided a market overview, detailing a 3.9-percent drop in overall shipments and a 7.9-percent slide in business jet deliveries. (See AIN, March, page 10.)

Caldecott, whose resume includes executive positions for the former Hawker Beechcraft, had noted that the 661 business jets delivered were the fewest since 2004 and associated billings were down 16.1 percent. But he notes that when data from 2007 to 2009 (a period of rapid growth for the industry) is excluded, deliveries have remained between 600 and 800. He conceded that 2016 was on the low end of that range, but said, “I believe the volume is the norm.” But he did not rule out future surges. “We will see some years of significant growth,” he added.

The decline in business jet deliveries was not uniform among categories, he added, noting that light jets shipped improved, while those for midsize and large jets declined. Pointing to the drop in billings, he noted that even a small shift in large-cabin business jet deliveries can have a notable effect on billings. Even so, he added, the billings are still twice those reported in 2003.

By geographic region, North America remained the largest market for business jets, accounting for 62 percent of the deliveries. “In fact, this is the largest market share we’ve seen in a long time,” Caldecott said.

The latest numbers from GAMA show piston aircraft deliveries also sliding, by 4.9 percent, but billings for those aircraft jumped 9 percent. Caldecott pointed to higher-value aircraft being sold, and said, “Last year was not totally bad news.” He added that with the pilot shortage coming into focus, the training market continues to strengthen, particularly in North America, which accounted for nearly 70 percent of all piston deliveries. “Piper has seen a lot of flight schools re-equipping,” he said. Caldecott was encouraged by the 3.4-percent uptick in turboprop deliveries, reiterating that this comes with the addition of new products and improvements in the agricultural market.

“The 2016 year-end results were disappointing overall, although we did see some blue sky in the turboprop sector,” added GAMA president and CEO Pete Bunce. “As we look toward 2017 and beyond, we are optimistic about the future and encouraged by the number of companies investing in innovative research and development programs and planning to bring new products to market.”

New to the report this year was China-based Avic, which reported deliveries of four light general aviation aircraft.

Legislative Agenda
Other industry executives outlined their concerns for the industry. Caldecott reiterated the importance of the FAA’s Part 23 rewrite, explaining how it will provide a boost for new aircraft and aircraft in service by getting products to market sooner.

Caldecott said he anticipates that the EASA will finish work shortly on the counterpart CS-23. While the FAA rule doesn’t take effect until August, he anticipates that the first products certified under the new process will begin to reach market by year-end or early next year.

Phil Straub, managing director of aviation and vice president of Garmin, added that the rewrite effort has already spurred a more collaborative, risk-based approach, with the FAA and other agencies bringing key safety technologies to market to replace aging equipment. This is particularly important, he said, as more systems in the arena of automation are introduced.

Aaron Hillemann, president of Duncan Aviation, updated progress on ADS-B installation, reporting that 30,000 aircraft have completed the upgrades; an estimated 100,000 to 160,000 will need to be equipped. Repair station time (Continues on page 57)