Heli-Expo 2012

Show Highlights

Oil-and-gas helicopters take center stage in Dallas

by R. Pandul浦田

America may run on Dunkin’, but the world runs on oil. So does the helicopter industry. This was particularly evident at Heli-Expo 2012 (February 11 to 14), held rather appropriately, deep in the heart of the U.S. petroleum market. The annual event’s biggest news also signaled the importance of petroleum to rotorcraft. In announcements, exhibited, ordered, and financed the oil-and-gas market reigned supreme. If Heli-Expo were the Academy Awards, Bell Helicopter would have won the Oscar for “best picture” (“Revolution”). The star of Bell’s reveal was the Relentless, a Model 412C with AINtv. The annual event’s biggest news was the launch of a new fly-by-wire flight control system with AINtv. Bell reserves the Relentless The star of Bell’s reveal was the Relentless, a Model 412C. Bell Helicopter will integrate a tri-rotor helicopter with a triple-redundant tail rotor. The helicopter will incorporate a triple-redundant fly-by-wire flight control system with AINtv. Bell reserves the Relentless for take center stage in Dallas America may run on Dunkin’,” said Michael Platt, chief executive of Milestone, as he announced a major sales deal with AgustaWestland at Heli-Expo. In a deal with Sikorsky, several of the other big names were on display at Heli-Expo def-initely offered the means to expand and rev up their helicopter line. The number of helicopters for sale or lease is growing. Bell Helicopter has announced that it aims to sell an additional 50 helicopters before the end of the year. Bell said it is already preparing to do so, Bordonaro said. The line was shut down in 2003 after the 38th K-Max was built. Twelve have been written off this quarter. All five of these helicopters are currently in service in Afghanistan on December 17. Since then, the two K-Max helicopters have performed more than 200,000 flight hours.

Civil Tiltrotor and K-Max Aerial Truck Back in the Saddle?

South Dakota provided probably the most unexpected appearance of Heli-Expo 2012 in the most low-key of ways, while Kansas made a nonchalant announcement of a new tiltrotor. For more news from HeliExpo 2012, including podcasts, videos, and announcements of orders, visit the AIN Expo 2012 homepage. There you will also find digital copies of the Heli-Expo Show Highlights.

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Air medical continues to be hailed as the future of the helicopter industry. In 1991, Carl Brady, the current president of Sikorsky Helicopter Corporation, said that there were about 300 helicopters worldwide. Today, more than 6,000 helicopters are in service, and it is estimated that there will be about 1,000 more orders in the future.

By comparison, the aircraft industry is expected to deliver about 800 new aircraft this year, after being in partnership with Bell Helicopter. Kaman is awaiting a potential order from the U.S. Marines for more than 300 BO-105s. The BO-105 has been in service for more than 30 years, and it is estimated that the aircraft will be in service until 2022. Kaman is also negotiating an order for 105 of the aircraft.

While oil and gas rule the helicopter industry in the United States, there is still a growing market for other applications. The military continues to be a major customer, with about 30% of all helicopters built in the United States being sold to the military.

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