

Issue

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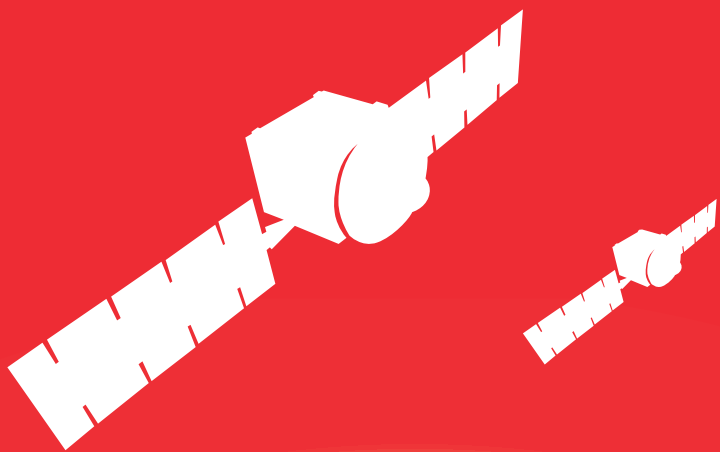
Thursday
24 October 2024

FLIGHT DAILY NEWS

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REIMAGINING INFLIGHT WI-FI



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shows next year.



BillyPix

on the trackers

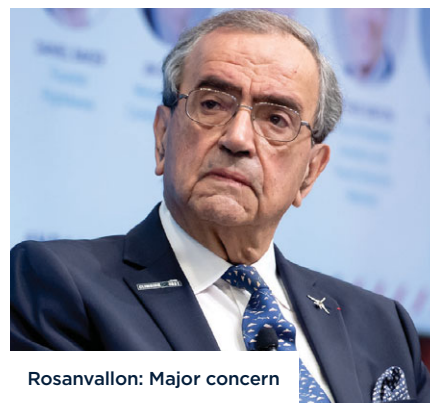
Privacy of celebrity jet users, say industry figures

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Rosanvallon: Major concern

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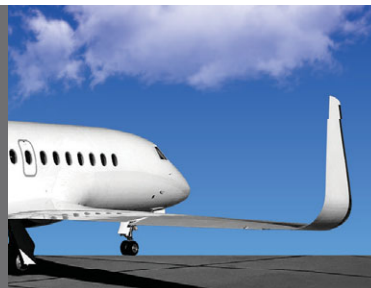
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UNIQUELY GOGO**

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Pink rocks

The Pink Jet – an Aero Vodochody L-39 Albatros military jet trainer piloted by Stephanie Goetz and designed to raise awareness of breast cancer – is making its NBAA BACE debut. Its appearance coincides with Breast Cancer Month. The Pink Jet – which is flown by an all-female crew – has a mission to “build support, inspire those in the fight against breast cancer, and provide a beacon of hope to young girls and women in aviation”, says Goetz, whose mother survived the disease. The aircraft will resume its tour of air shows next year.



Taking on the trackers

Tougher action needed to protect privacy of celebrity jet users, say industry figures

Jon Hemmerdinger

Aviation leaders have at least one thing in common with pop star Taylor Swift: they want to make it harder for private jets to be publicly tracked.

The issue was front and centre yesterday at the show, when leaders discussed privacy and security risks that arise from aircraft tracking, while suggesting means of keeping information private.

“There’s a shared sense of frustration out there that we are not gaining ground on this [problem] fast enough,” said Steve Saflin, vice-president of aviation and travel services at retail giant Walmart.

“Personally identifiable information should not be publicly availa-

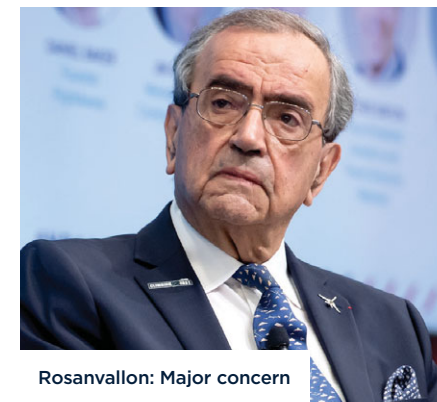
ble,” adds Daniel Baker, founder of FlightAware.

One day earlier, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Meta took down social media accounts that tracked public figures and celebrities. Earlier this year news broke that attorneys for Swift urged one social media user to stop tracking the pop star’s flights.

“There’s obviously a major concern... Some people are starting to use more charter [aircraft] because they are concerned,” says former Dassault Falcon Jet chief executive Jean Rosanvallon.

He notes Swift travels by Falcon 7X, adding: “She and her father are concerned about her security.”

Private-jet-setters have long sought to keep their movements private. But onboard ADS-B trans-



Rosanvallon: Major concern

mitters make doing so difficult. The systems broadcast aircraft identification and flight data. Anyone with a receiver can pick up the signals, which is spawning numerous websites providing free aircraft tracking.

While some means of protecting privacy exist, sleuths have still been able to track down celebrities.

“One of the primary goals of these groups is to track aircraft that don’t want to be tracked,” says Baker.

The panelists say technology exists that could, for instance, enable pilots to assign their aircraft “transparent” codes that cannot be tracked, perhaps as easily as by selecting a new code on flight planning applications.

Business leaders would also welcome more privacy, says Jim Cooling, manager partner of aviation law firm Cooling & Herbers. He notes that repeated flights to the same destination could, for instance, tip off observers about a business deal in the works, such as a merger or acquisition.

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Embraer happy with new normal

Amalfitano: No signs of slowdown

Kate Sarsfield

Embraer says its business jet backlog is at historic levels with "no signs of a slowdown" in the light and midsize sectors where it competes with the Phenom 100EV, Phenom 300E, Praetor 500 and Praetor 600. "We are coming off a peak in the pace of sales, but the market remains strong and

stable," says Michael Amalfitano, president and chief executive of Embraer Executive Jets. "The new normal [for sales] remains at a high level with the backlog for our products now stretching into the second quarter of 2027." Amalfitano attributes the healthy market to the high quality and value proposition of its light and midsize-category jets and also to "the hangover effect

from the Covid-19 pandemic" where travellers moved from commercial to business aviation for added safety, security and reliability and have not returned. "The pandemic opened up the market to a new generation of customers. Operators across the industry – fractional ownership companies, charter operators and corporate flight departments – are continuing to grow their

fleets," he says. Amalfitano points to an internal forecast conducted by Embraer which predicts a 1.5% growth in the light and midsize segments between 2025 and 2030. "Within these segments, however we are forecast to grow by 4%, taking market share from our competitors [including Cessna, Honda and Pilatus]," he says. Amalfitano calls North America "by far the strong-

est region" with Europe and Latin America – notably Brazil – also key markets. Embraer is scheduled to deliver between 125 and 135 aircraft this year, up from 115 in 2023 and 105 in 2022. "We expect to continue this growth for years to come although we are constrained by supply chain snags and a shortage of skilled labour across the business," says Amalfitano.



From bull to business jet

Aeristo Leather provides an eye-catching array of colorful leather material to interior designers that in turn create something "even more bespoke" for their business aviation customers, according to company president Alexander Schmidt (pictured). "Whether that's featuring some sort of design elements found elsewhere in the aircraft, like a carpet, the designers can really make something meaningful for their end customer," he says. Aeristo, which has attended the show for more than 30 years, sources its leather from South German bull hides, Schmidt says. Tanning is completed in France, but the company handles a range of "value-added" services – such as leather perforating, embossing and quilting – in-house at its facility outside of Dallas, making the end product "well travelled".

Best foot forward

It was 10 years ago that Bill Perrone, chief executive of leather specialist Perrone, found himself drinking beside a slipper-making executive at The Rail Yard bar in Gloversville, New York. At the time, Perrone's company was sitting on a stash of leftover leather scraps. Before leaving that night, he agreed to pay \$39,500 to turn those scraps into 1,960 pairs of slippers. Ever since, Perrone has been dishing out the casual kicks as promotional items to attendees at industry events like NBAA BACE. The Upstate New York company, part of business group Inperial, supplies leather and synthetic leather for use in aircraft cabins, including for seats, headliners and sidewalls. It also sells cabin inlays and decorative laminates. "The show has been really busy so far," Perrone pro-



gramme manager Rick Meier (pictured) says. The company intends expanding its portfolio. "Our idea is to continue to keep growing the brand... and to add other interior products," he adds. "We want to become a customisation house, where customers can get anything they need." Perrone was founded in the late 1800s by Bill Perrone's great-great grandfather, a tanner and glove maker. The company has supplied seat leather to Southwest Airlines and makes the bomber jackets the airline issues its pilots.

Airspace: the final frontier for AAM?

Jon Hemmerdinger

While advanced air mobility (AAM) manufacturers insist they are close to certifying their designs, uncertainty abounds about operating limitations and how the aircraft will be integrated into complex airspace.

Experts addressed those issues during a panel at NBAA BACE yesterday, a day after the Federal Aviation Administration finalised operating and pilot-training rules for "powered-lift" aircraft, a new category encompassing electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

Panellist Paul McDuffee with aerospace firm Cobec Consulting says the eVTOL industry's focus on aircraft design, testing and certification has overshadowed discussion



The panel discussed some of the remaining challenges facing the sector

about actual operating capabilities, leaving open questions about how the

novel designs can and will be flown.

"I've been concerned about... how do you effectively operationalise these vehicles?" he says,

citing battery limitations and uncertainty about the ability of eVTOL aircraft to operate in instrument-flight conditions. "There has not been...a lot of head-down work on getting these vehicles in a state where they can be routinely operated" in the national airspace, he says.

The FAA issued the 880-page powered-lift rule as a "special federal aviation regulation" (SFAR) - a unique method that gives the agency flexibility to tweak its oversight as regulators learn more about eVTOL operating limitations, says FAA associate administrator for aviation safety David Boulter.

Boulter notes that the FAA will define each eVTOL type's operating limitations during certification. "The challenge really is [that] there's not a single certified powered-lift aircraft in the world," Boulter says. "We don't even know the ultimate limitations of [the] aircraft because that happens during certification."

He calls the SFAR, which expires in 10 years, a "starting point" that sets "a safety floor".

"We have a path, and once we know what those limitations are, then we can relook at whether waivers are appropriate," says Boulter.

Coats of many colours

Sherwin-Williams Aerospace Coatings is displaying a string of new effects and finishes at the show. That includes its latest 850 Series Skyscapes product line, featuring "consistent, durable and colorful" mica, metallic and hybrid finishes, as well as its single-stage topcoat.

The company has also added four new aircraft types to the inventory of its aircraft colour visualizer - a web-based tool presenting aircraft color combinations easily in an interactive experience.

Other new developments include a new chrome-free epoxy primer and a sol-gel metal pretreatment solution designed specifically for the aerospace industry.

"We're excited to show off and present a variety of new topcoats, undercoats, prep materials and design services soon available to aviation industry professionals and the entire maintenance, repair and overhaul community," says Julie Voisin, Sherwin-Williams market segment manager aerospace.

Red all over

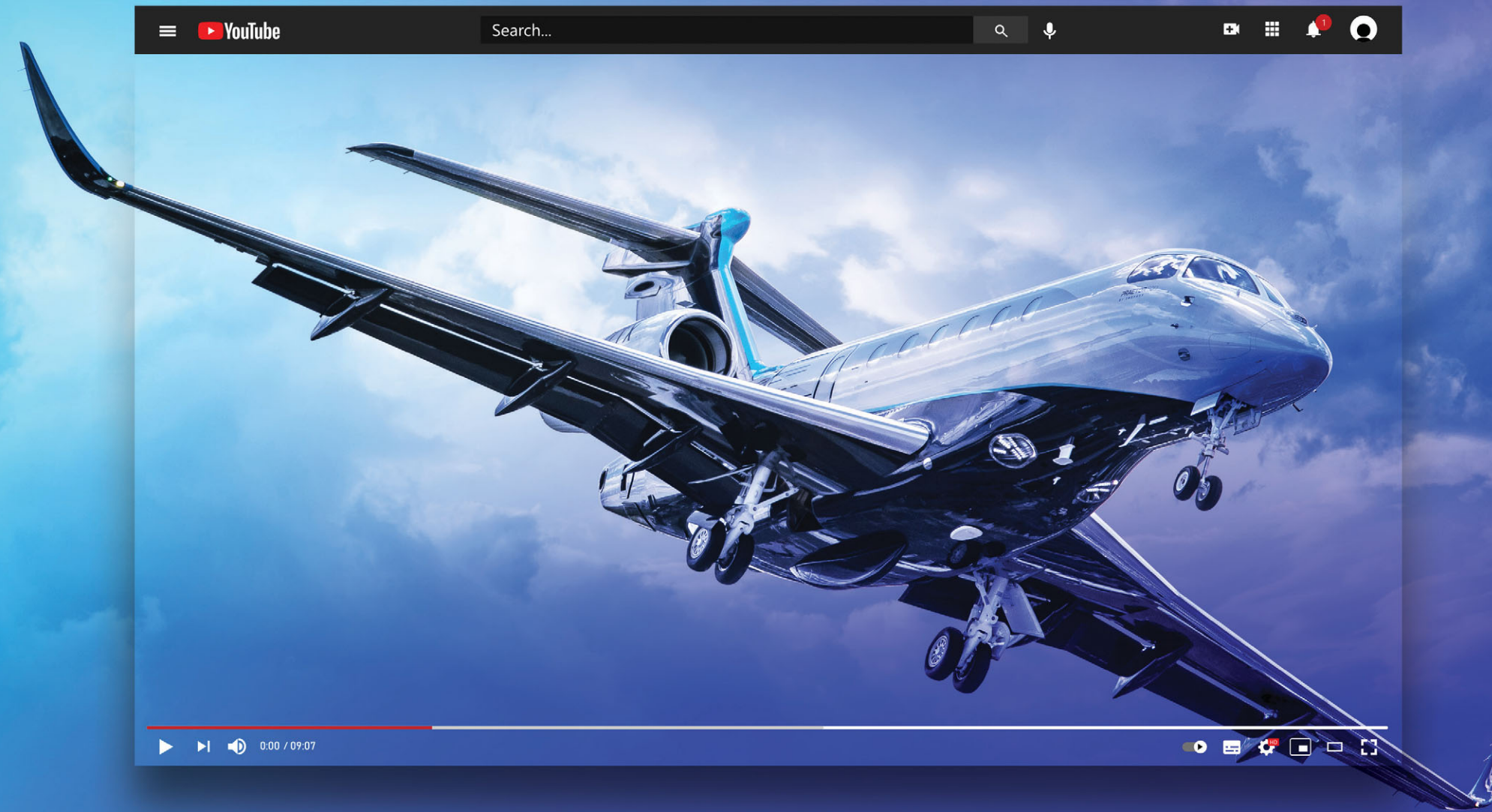
Meet the red flight-suited distribution team that has been bringing you *Flight Daily News* this week. FlightGlobal has been publishing its show daily at the world's biggest business aviation show for almost 20 years.



Drop in and win

Fuel specialist Phillips 66 Aviation has returned to the NBAA exhibition hall by giving visitors to its stand the chance to win - and play - big with a fresh twist on the classic Plinko game. Attendees who drop in to see the Phillips 66-branded FBOs showcased on its booth have the chance to win Apple watches

or the star prize of an Apple MacBook, as well t-shirts and packing cubes. Alongside the 'PlinGO' game - played here by Lisa Spence - the stand includes FBOs Business Jet, DuPage Flight Center, Fort Lauderdale Executive Jet Center, Gill Aviation, Texas Jet, Tri-City Aviation and Yelvington Jet Aviation.



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Our photographer was at Henderson Executive to capture the NBAA BACE aircraft display from a different angle



Joby takes centre stage

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The air taxi on display in the lobby

Howard Hardee

Joby Aviation's electric air taxi was positioned front-and-centre as Michael Whitaker, head of the Federal Aviation Administration, signed in Las Vegas a historic rule establishing a new class of "powered lift" aircraft.

The piloted, four-passenger air taxi – prominently displayed all week in the west lobby of the convention centre – served as the backdrop for a moment that Greg Bowles, Joby's head of government policy, called an "amazing culmination".

"The FAA administrator talked extensively about where this is going, and the announcement of the SFAR [special federal aviation rule] is like the final piece that was necessary to really bring this across the line and set the next era in place," he says.

Making its first appearance as an exhibitor at the show, Joby believes that its aircraft is well-positioned to serve the business aviation sector upon achieving FAA

certification – a hurdle the company is hoping to clear in 2025.

"We built a service and a company around the idea of really helping to open aviation to a huge amount of the population, and the business community really enjoys aviation extensively," Bowles says.

"It's a place to work on policy pieces and work to show a future to folks who use... airports and heliports around the country and help them understand this area that's evolving."

The aircraft's appearance at the show comes amid a broader public awareness campaign, with Joby's electric air taxi making recent appearances at the Farnborough air show and New York City's Grand Central Station.

Bowles says the public displays represent Joby's shifting focus from development and certification to becoming a "very broad operating company" that aims to become a familiar service-provider in the public's consciousness. "It's a really exciting final chapter before we get to operations."

A less risky business

Florida-based electric taxi start-up UrbanLink Air Mobility has signed to launch MBA Aviation's JumpseatSMS risk management software product in the advanced air mobility (AAM) sector.

JumpseatSMS is designed to streamline safety management system development and implementation for air operators under Part 135 and Part 91, in addition to corporate flight departments, flight schools and utility operators.

MBA president David Tokoph says: "UrbanLink's onboarding of JumpseatSMS in the early stages of their development helps to underscore their commitment to safety from day one, and we welcome them as a customer."

UrbanLink president Ray Sisson says: "It's critical to our operation. MBA has such a great storied history and have worked closely with us in our launch."

The Florida start-up earlier this month signed a tentative agreement for up to 20 Eviation Alice all-electric commuter aircraft, adding to a 20-strong commitment



Left to right: Zahara Oubre from JumpseatSMS, Ray Sisson of UrbanLink, and Anthony Chica of JumpseatSMS

for Lilium Jets. The company aims to launch operations by the summer of 2026.

"It's really a function of getting the aircraft," Sisson explains, noting first deliveries of its aircraft are due

in 17 months. "The market would be there now, so right now we are working on a lot of background things, like SMS, vertiport development, vertiport financing, infrastructure, charging networks

and the like. "If we were just starting a normal airline, that stuff's all done," he says, but notes the work needs to be done because it is ahead of the curve on eVTOL operations.

Sheltair scholars

Aviation services company Sheltair and fuel supplier Avfuel have announced the six recipients of their 2024 Future Takes Flight scholarship.

The scheme provides a total of \$30,000 in educational funds, awarding six \$5,000 scholarships across three categories – learning to fly, aviation technicians, and continuing education.

The 2024 class is Aaron Borgens of Fort Collins, Colorado; Cynthia Encinas of Hurst, Texas; Alyssa McColly of Sanford, Florida; Juan Pablo Prada Londoño of Keller, Texas; McKell Tew of Ladson, South Carolina; and Erin Walling of New Carlisle, Ohio.

"We are thrilled to offer the scholarship again this year," says Lisa Holland, president and chief executive of Sheltair Aviation. "Supporting the future of business aviation is something we value deeply, and we are proud to provide education and professional development opportunities to help future aviation professionals fuel their dreams."

Gogo is third time lucky with Satcom Direct buy

Graham Dunn

While Gogo agreed to acquire fellow connectivity specialist Satcom Direct at the end of September, the company's interest in teaming up with the established player in the business aviation market long pre-dated that. Gogo has agreed a deal to buy Satcom Direct for \$375 million, together with five million Gogo shares and potentially up to another \$225 million. The companies aim to complete the deal before year-end.

Asked at a press briefing yesterday if the deal was a defensive move in response to the arrival in the aviation connectivity market of the SpaceX Starlink service, Gogo president Sergio Aguirre revealed the company has long been strategically interested in Satcom Direct.

"This is Gogo's third attempt at seriously considering some type of merger or acquisition of Satcom Direct, and prior

to this one, Starlink didn't exist," says Aguirre, noting the previous two times had not developed into formal processes.

"This has been something that the marketplace... they tell us if you guys got together, that would be the best solution for us customers. So this concept of bringing these two companies together is something that made sense, before Starlink came along," he says. "70% of business aviation still does not have a broadband solution. That's what we are going after."

Satcom Direct chief commercial officer Michael Skov Christensen adds: "There is a lot of consolidation in the industry, and it very much looks like they are reactions. But when you go through where these synergies are, you will see that this is not an acquisition to go into a defence for other entrants into the market. This is an acquisition to go full-out offensive for all our customers."

Executives from both sides point to the complementary nature of the tie-up. Gogo has developed its presence in



Aguirre (left) and Christensen at the show yesterday: Full out offensive for customers

the air-to-ground network in North America, while Satcom Direct follows a multi-orbit strategy with a global footprint. Both have been working on bringing a low earth orbit (LEO) satellite broadband service via the Eutelsat OneWeb network. Satcom Direct is privately-

owned and president Chris Moore says Gogo is a good fit for the firm. "Obviously it was a founder-based business, and it was very important to them that the customer-centric nature of SD would be maintained," he says. "It's very complementary.

There are a lot of opportunities for scale. I think both businesses really want to make sure they create the best thing for both sides and having that scale...we've got to do that, because our aim is to get 70% of the unconnected, connected."

Helping pilots app their game



Morrel: Not about making pilots competitive with each other

On display at the show is an app designed by GE Aerospace to help pilots familiarise themselves with new airspaces and runways before taking off - and compare their performances to other aviators who have flown the same routes. In that sense, FlightPulse somewhat resembles fitness trackers that allow athletes to compete against other runners and cyclists.

"This isn't necessarily to make pilots competitive with one another, but they see this information and might reconsider some of their piloting technique," says Jonathan Morrel, GE Aerospace's product manager. "Every now and then, you might have something to work and, over time, you can see if you're making changes to the way you're doing something."

FlightPulse is a flight-data platform that helps inform safety standards for the business aviation and commercial airline industries. It provides a rich data set with insights into routes, approaches and even how specific aircraft types have performed in airspaces around the world. About 25 airlines use the app, and GE Aerospace says it has more than 500 customers in the business aviation industry.

"It's built on top of a data-sharing platform that we have for business jet operators that enables them to benchmark themselves for industry-wide safety events at different airports," Morrel says.

GE Aerospace is seeking to extend the app's customer base to the advanced air mobility industry and is engaged in "early talks" with electric jet developer Lilium.

"They have seen the value of FlightPulse," he says, "and we're working with them... to help figure out how they want to make the best use of the data."



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Howard: We have invested heavily in the technology



Collins sitting comfortably in Medley

Graham Dunn

Collins Aerospace is heralding efficiency gains resulting from a \$2 million investment to expand and enhance its executive aircraft seating facility in Medley, Florida.

The investment will double the facility's upholstery production floor space and adds new machining equipment aimed at improving

production efficiencies, enhancing capabilities and reducing material waste.

"It was really done because of the amount of business we are seeing and growth in that part of the market, for high-end upholstery," explains Scott Howard, director of business development for executive aircraft seating for Collins Aerospace.

"We have invested heavily in the technology," he says. "Traditionally the upholstery

process is a very hands-on craftsman product. When a craftsman does one seat it looks spectacular, but when you start putting a couple of seats together you start seeing differences because it's a craftsman doing it. So we've automated a lot of things that can be industrialised, such as the foam manufacturing."

Another efficiency gain from the tooling enables it to test for leather defects when stretched. "It maximises the amount of material

we can use, the scrap rate is reduced - so we are taking out cost, time, labour. It has surpassed our expectations," says Howard.

This also plays into heightened sustainability requirements. "Just the fact we are able to reduce our scrap rate on the leather is one of the greatest stories we have on sustainability," he says.

Collins is demonstrating its executive seating products at the show, which include a divan featuring integra-

tions with Collins' products including its cabin management system, liferafts, lighting and space chiller.

"Being part of such a large organisation as Collins Aerospace gives us access to other technologies in the organisation," says Howard. "In years past we have come to the show with a divan and our upholstery and that's the only thing we would be able to talk about. Now we are able to integrate other technologies into it."

Certification nears for Continental Traveller

Italian manufacturer Tecnam is poised to secure US certification of the Continental GTSIO-520-S-powered P2012 Traveller within weeks and will deliver the first example of its flagship piston twin to a local customer soon after.

Speaking at the static where a standard Lycoming TE0540-CIA-powered model is on display, P2012 sales and business development manager for special mission platforms Francesco Sferra said the US launch aircraft has been built and is ready to deliver to the client.

He expects the Continental-powered variant of the 11-seat, high-wing P2012 to be a popular option in the USA, which he describes as "Tecnam's largest market by far" with a fleet of over 40 aircraft in service.

Many of those examples are in service with US commuter airliner Cape Air, but Sferra says sales are growing of the multi-mission variant which includes private owners, small commercial and special mission operators. "There are so many first-time buyers in the USA and the reach is so wide," he says.

Tecnam has identified a replacement opportunity in the USA for the Traveller from owners and operators of ageing piston twins including the



Sferra: Anticipates significant market for VIP version of the P2012

Piper Chieftan/Navajo and the Cessna 400 Series.

The Capua-headquartered company is also developing a VIP cabin for the P2012 to serve the corporate and charter markets. Sferra says this variant could be available by 2025 in Europe and 2026 in the USA, with the latter ex-

pected to be "a significant market for this model when it is launched," he says.

Tecnam is producing P2012s at a rate of 1.5 units a month with expected deliveries for 2024 set at 18. Shipments are set to rise to 24 next year, says Sferra.

Gogo's global dealer network developing STCs to cover virtually every business aircraft make and model



Momentum builds for Gogo's LEO satellite internet system



Gogo installed the first Gogo Galileo HDX on this Challenger 300 (center and top of aircraft)

The STCs in development will cover virtually every size business aircraft and unlock a total addressable market of more than 18,000 aircraft globally, many of which have never had access to broadband inflight Wi-Fi prior to Gogo Galileo. That's about to change thanks to the compact size and weight of the HDX antenna.

The STCs are supported by Gogo's vast dealer network in North America, Europe and South America, and will cover a wide range of airframes from super-light jets to ultra-long-range large-cabin aircraft, all to be completed in 2025.

The airframes include:

- Airbus Corporate Jet
- Bombardier Challenger 300 series
- Bombardier Challenger 600 series
- Bombardier Global Express series
- Embraer Legacy 450/500
- Embraer Legacy 600/650
- Embraer Phenom 100
- Embraer Phenom 300
- Embraer Praetor 500/600
- Gulfstream G-200
- Gulfstream G-280
- Gulfstream G-IV/G-IV-X/G-450
- Gulfstream G-V/G-550
- HondaJet
- King Air series
- Learjet 40/45/70/75
- Pilatus PC-12
- Pilatus PC-24
- Textron Citation Jet 525 series
- Textron Citation Latitude
- Textron Citation X/X+
- Textron Citation XL/XLS
- Beechcraft Hawker series



Germany-based Atlas Air Services AG is getting the first EASA STC on this Cessna Citation CJ+

Gogo anticipates the STC portfolio will continue to grow in the coming weeks, and the company is in discussions with all of the business aviation aircraft manufacturers for aftermarket STCs and service bulletins.

"The exceptional response from our dealer network is a testament to the strong demand for Gogo Galileo in the industry," said Sergio Aguirre, president and chief operating officer for Gogo. "Finally, operators around the world now have access to true aviation-grade broadband connectivity regardless of the size of aircraft they operate or where they fly."

The HDX is a fuselage-mounted, electronically steered antenna (ESA), designed with a small form factor to fit on any size business aircraft.

But don't let its size fool you - this system will perform, delivering peak speeds up to 60 Mbps, and mean speeds very close to peak at 57 Mbps.

"Gogo Galileo HDX stands to revolutionize business aviation inflight connectivity by delivering a fast, low-latency Wi-Fi experience to aircraft of all sizes, especially small jets," said Aguirre. "I'm pleased to say we remain on track to deliver this game-changing technology late this year."

Gogo Galileo is backed by Eutelsat OneWeb's enterprise-grade Low-Earth-Orbit (LEO) network. Designed for mobility, the network will deliver low variability and consistent performance across all routes globally.

"The Eutelsat OneWeb LEO constellation is fully deployed, and we are finalizing the ground infrastructure to deliver seamless, low latency and high-performance broadband connectivity to business jets no matter where they fly," said Jason Sperry, head of business aviation for Eutelsat OneWeb.

Gogo Galileo is an easy upgrade to any AVANCE system (AVANCE L3, L5, LX5, SCS), requiring power in and ethernet out, for a simplified installation and minimal disruption to the aircraft. Gogo has been flight testing the system and network since early September making adjustments to ensure maximum performance once it launches commercially.

Gogo is accepting purchase orders for the HDX and is offering a special promotional rebate of \$25,000, available for a limited time, to current Gogo customers with a legacy air-to-ground system (ATG 1000, 2000, 4000, 5000) who upgrade to an AVANCE SCS with the HDX. ■

Inflight connectivity's next revolution has arrived



Reimagining inflight Wi-Fi

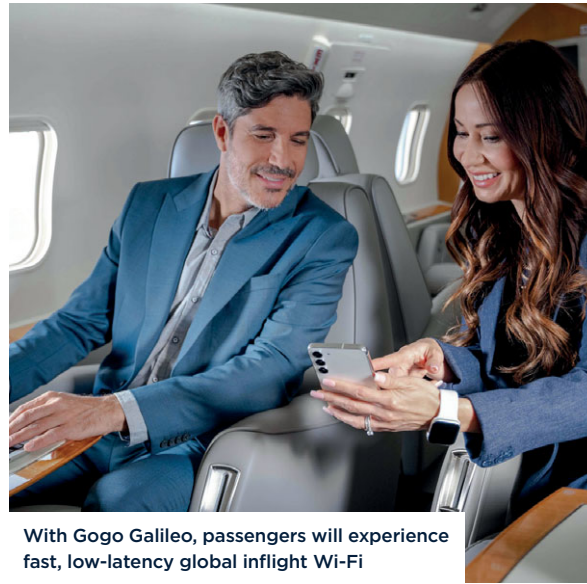
Technology moves fast and that's especially true with today's inflight Wi-Fi systems. New broadband Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite networks are ushering in a new era of inflight connectivity that will forever change the connectivity experience for business aviation operators on a global scale.

With new LEO networks in place, business aviation aircraft owners and passengers no longer have to worry about the availability, performance, cost or geographic coverage of the network. And LEO enables new antenna technology that is smaller, lighter, and more affordable to operate than ever before.

Gogo Galileo is the new LEO service from Gogo Business Aviation, and it will deliver fast, low-latency broadband Wi-Fi to aircraft of any size worldwide, something no other provider is offering today.

"With Gogo Galileo, we imagined a world where our system could fit on any size aircraft with four times the performance of any other previous systems that were operating in aviation, and at a quarter of the cost," said Sergio Aguirre, Gogo's president and COO. "Gogo Galileo HDX is the deliverable of reimagining what inflight Wi-Fi should and can be for all business aviation operators worldwide."

Gogo completed installation of the HDX antenna, its most compact antenna, on a Challenger 300 in August and has been flight testing the system



With Gogo Galileo, passengers will experience fast, low-latency global inflight Wi-Fi



Gogo Galileo will utilize the Eutelsat OneWeb LEO constellation

during the past several weeks.

"The system has been performing well during our recent flights and everything is progressing as we expected, which is great news for the industry, because operators are hungry for an aviation-grade LEO system," Aguirre added.

When choosing an inflight connectivity solution

and provider, Aguirre says there's more to consider than fast connectivity.

"When you're making the kind of investment to add inflight connectivity to your aircraft, you can't afford to make the wrong choice. You need to ask: Is the company committed to business aviation for the long term? Is there a foundation of trust and

reliability? And what kind of customer support will you get?" said Aguirre. "Gogo does one thing - inflight connectivity for business aviation, and we do it very well. Your inflight connectivity is our only concern."

A few aspects of Gogo's business are unique, helping it stand out from the rest of the LEO crowd:

- Built by business aviation, for business aviation: Gogo serves business aviation, which means Gogo understands the unique needs of business aviation and builds its systems to withstand the rigors of aircraft operation.
- World-class customer support: Gogo provides white-glove and dedicated customer support from a team of experts in business aviation connectivity who are available 24/7/365.
- AVANCE: If you already have a Gogo AVANCE system (SCS, L3 or L5) installed in your aircraft, the cost and downtime to upgrade to Gogo Galileo is significantly less compared with adding a non-Gogo system and starting from scratch. AVANCE also helps future-proof your investment because AVANCE was designed so you can easily add satellite with air to ground for redundancy and increased bandwidth, as well as any future networks and technological advancements.
- Gogo Vision: The industry's only inflight entertainment service offering hundreds of movies and TV programs, a premium 3D moving map, 30 leading magazines titles in digital format, and business news.
- Over-the-air software updates: Keep all Gogo AVANCE LRUs updated and with the latest technology, for one aircraft or an entire fleet, from anywhere in the world, with no down time required.
- Cybersecurity: Gogo prioritizes the security of its inflight connectivity services, implementing robust measures to safeguard data. With Gogo, security is built into every system. ■



Gogo Galileo tour launches nationwide

State-of-the-art mobile demo room coming to a city near you

Gogo Business Aviation is launching a nationwide Gogo Galileo tour here in Las Vegas at the static display AD_325, bringing an interactive Gogo Galileo experience to business aviation professionals that will be traveling across the United States from now through early March.

The state-of-the-art mobile demo room was designed to give customers and business aviation professionals from across the industry the ability to experience Gogo Galileo, the company's Low-Earth-Orbit (LEO) satellite broadband solution built for any size business aircraft flying globally.

"For anyone curious what reimagined inflight Wi-Fi feels like, we invite you to come experience Gogo Galileo firsthand at one of our tour destinations," said Sergio Aguirre, president and COO for Gogo. "We'll show you what inflight Wi-Fi as fast or faster than your home or office is like and why Gogo Galileo is the right choice for you."

At each of the 32 tour stops, participants can test Gogo's high-speed, low-latency inflight connectivity solution via both the HDX and FDX antenna configurations - the more compact HDX, built to fit any size business aircraft from super-light jets and turboprops to larger aircraft, and the larger FDX which delivers best-in-class performance for large-cabin jets.

Anyone attending will be given the opportunity to trial both configurations using their own devices to experience online activities such as video conferencing, live TV, streaming video, and more, just as they would if they were flying at 40,000 feet.

Following NBAA-BACE, the Gogo Galileo tour will be traveling across the country with stops scheduled at FBOs and regional airports.

For the list of tour cities and locations and to RSVP for an in-person demonstration visit gogoair.com/galileo-on-tour. ■



Gogo's staff of dedicated customer support professionals monitor every flight

Gogo to acquire Satcom Direct

Gogo and Satcom Direct (SD) recently announced entry into a definitive agreement under which Gogo will acquire Satcom Direct to create the only inflight connectivity provider able to satisfy the performance and cost needs of every segment of the global business aviation (BA) and military/government mobility markets. "This transaction accelerates our growth strategies of expanding our total addressable market to include the 14,000 business aircraft outside North America and to deliver solutions that meet the needs of every segment of the BA market," said Oakleigh Thorne, Gogo's chairman and CEO. "Together, Gogo and Satcom Direct will offer integrated GEO-LEO satellite solutions that will provide the highest performance of any satellite solution, along with world-class customer support."

Strategic Synergistic Benefits

Gogo is a leading provider of broadband connectivity services for the business aviation market with products and services on thousands of business aircraft of all sizes and mission types from turboprops to the largest global jets. Gogo operates an air-to-ground network in North America and is launching a fast new global satellite service, Gogo Galileo, that will utilize a

Low Earth Orbit (LEO) constellation. SD is the leading global BA geostationary (GEO) satellite inflight connectivity service provider with an extensive international sales and service footprint.

The move establishes a unique LEO-GEO-ATG product line for business aviation with unmatched offerings for all segments of the market. From air-to-ground (ATG) to meet connectivity needs in North America, to integrated multi-orbit LEO-GEO global solutions via the combination of Gogo Galileo and SD's Plane Simple GEO solutions.

It also combines two respected business aviation-focused companies and with a global sales force and white-glove customer support teams to serve Gogo and SD customers worldwide.

"Satcom Direct is thrilled to be joining forces with Gogo, a company that shares our focus on delivering outstanding service and leading innovation," said Chris Moore, Satcom Direct's president. "Our businesses have highly complementary core competencies, and our combined financial strength and expertise unlocks opportunities to invest in new technology and deliver significant long-term value creation."

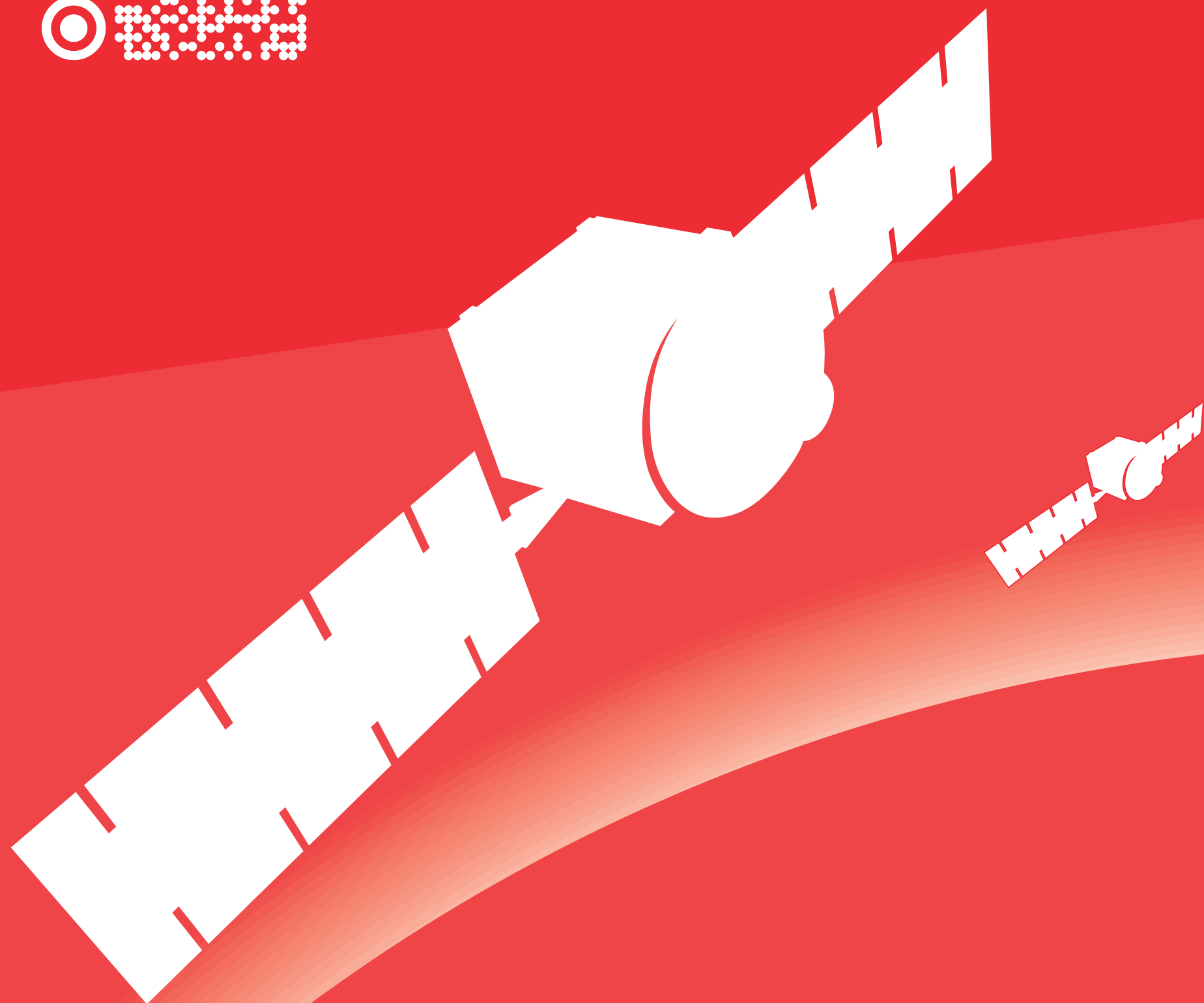
The acquisition is expected to close by the end of 2024.

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Heard: Passport has the best performance in its class



Passport to success

Murdo Morrison

With Bombardier confirming this week that it has started manufacturing major structural components for the Global 8000 ahead of service entry next year, its engine partner GE Aerospace is gearing up for the introduction of the slightly higher-thrust version of the ultra-long-range jet's Passport engine.

The Passport has powered the Global 7500 since

its first flight eight years ago, and its Global 8000 replacement as the Canadian manufacturer's flagship will continue to use the engine. However, a software adjustment in the field will be required to deliver the additional thrust for operators to convert their Global 7500s to the Global 8000 configuration.

The Global 7500 entered service in 2019 and the fleet is approaching 200 aircraft. Thanks to the Passport, the type has the "best fuel performance in its class and

well as the longest range and fastest speed", says Melvyn Heard, general manager for business aviation at GE Aerospace.

GE Aerospace expects to continue producing its other business aviation engine, the HF-120 for the Honda Aircraft HA-420, through its joint venture GE Honda Aero Engines, "well into the future" after the expected 2029 entry into service of the larger Echelon light jet, according to Heard.

"There is no anticipated end of production," he says.

"The partnership will stay in place for a long time, and we are discussing further opportunities."

Despite being largely based on the original HondaJet, the Echelon, which was revealed in 2021 and confirmed in 2023, will use Williams International FJ44-4Cs.

They had the advantage of being an off-the-shelf powerplant when Honda Aircraft was considering engine options for its new jet. "We didn't have an engine in that thrust class," admits Heard.



Laurent: Protecting interiors from the heat

Gauzy's glare essentials

Managing how much light enters an aircraft cockpit and cabin is a serious aspect of temperature control - and passenger and pilot comfort and safety.

"I would say the first feature is to protect against the heat, against the glare, against the sun," says Nicolas Laurent, executive vice-president of French firm Gauzy's aeronautics business unit, which is exhibiting at the show.

Gauzy has four divisions - aeronautics, architecture, automotive and rear-mirrors for advanced driving systems - and production facilities in France and Florida. It has been making aerospace products since 1983, starting with cockpit solar protection and later expanding to passenger cabins.

The company, which says it holds 95% market share in cockpit light control, has business aviation and commercial OEM customers, in addition to airlines. And it has its eyes on electric air taxis - aircraft featuring "a lot of surface area that is transparent," Laurent says.

"With this kind of flying machine that is working with battery electricity, it means you have to reduce your consumption - and one big trigger for consumption is everything around air conditioning," he adds. "Our solution is to protect the interior of the eVTOL [aircraft] from the heat."

FLIGHT DAILYNEWS

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In brief...

Changes at the top for WCA

Women In Corporate Aviation (WCA) founding member Elizabeth Clark is to become director emeritus after retiring as executive director for 31 years.

Universal Weather and Aviation executive Tracie Carwile will serve as the new chief executive and executive director of WCA, while Cassandra Shelby - a captain on Gulfstream G550 and G280 for Coca-Cola - becomes the association's chief financial officer and a director.

The executive changes were announced following the WCA annual meeting, held at NBAA BACE.

Execaire joins Avfuel

Execaire Aviation at Toronto Pearson - Canada's busiest airport - will join the Avfuel-branded FBO network from 1 November. Avfuel and Execaire formally signed the contract at the show yesterday.

The FBO offers pilot and passenger lounges as well as a heated hangar able to accommodate aircraft up to Airbus and Boeing narrow-bodies. "The partnership combines the strengths of two industry leaders and together we will deliver the highest standard of service in the Toronto market," says Michael Fedele, Execaire president.

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Safety first for Web Manuals

Murdo Morrison

Web Manuals has teamed up with the Air Charter Safety Foundation to "promote safety through digitisation" across business and general aviation.

The ACSF, founded in 2008, is a non-profit with around 350 mostly small-operator members and a mandate to promote the highest aviation standards. The partnership will see Malmo, Sweden-based Web Manuals provide ACSF with access to its document digitisation capabilities to distribute the organisation's audit standards, forms, and manuals to its members.

Web Manuals chief commercial officer Krister Genmark says the tie-up is a "great opportunity for us to work alongside a leading aviation group that supports the highest safety standards".

The move comes as Web Manuals - which offers a

cloud-based platform to store and access operational and regulatory manuals digitally - increases its presence in the US market, eight years after opening its first office here, in San Diego.

The company, which was founded in 2012, now has about 200 US customers out of a total of some 700 worldwide, most of them smaller operators.

"These are the ones that often have the hardest time adopting technology, so by giving them a tool like Web Manuals they are able to save time they would otherwise spend battling with dozens of Word documents," says Genmark. "It's about compliance as well as efficiency. If the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] knocks on the door, you know you are covered."

The company earlier this year added artificial intelligence functionality to its app after acquiring fellow Swedish start-up ManualAI.

"AI is a big part of what we are pushing at the show," says Genmark. "Everybody



Genmark: Everyone is intrigued as to what AI can do in business aviation

is intrigued as to what it can do."

Web Manuals is also offering demonstrations on its stand this week of its new PDF Reader, which incorporates, says the company, zoom technology that maintains high-resolution image quality at close-up.

"Ensuring straightforward navigation and accessibility

has been key to this launch," says Richard Sandstrom, chief technology officer. "Elevating our PDF function will allow users to access a broader range of documentation, streamline their workflow, and experience new levels of efficiency."

The PDF Reader is being launched in an update this quarter.

In brief...

Flexjet fixed on Farnborough

Flexjet is to establish a private terminal at the UK's Farnborough airport, its first in Europe. Due to open in early 2026, the facility will be separate from the private airport's main terminal and will be dedicated to Flexjet passengers. The company says the move represents its biggest infrastructure development outside the USA, where it operates private terminals at Teterboro, New Jersey and Van Nuys, California.

IA launches IAS 5

Innovative Advantage (IA) has launched IAS 5, the fifth generation of its audio, video and data distribution system (AVDS). It comes with "advanced functionality and additional layers of robustness", says the company. It adds that IAS 5 is "immediately available" for installation on aircraft through the aftermarket. "IAS 5 is the next leap forward in our life's work: making it easier for installers to provide passengers with the absolute best cabin experience," says IA president Greg Corneli. IA is demonstrating IAS 5 on its stand, 1032.

Fifteen love for Flightways

Flightways Columbus, an Avfuel-branded FBO at Georgia's Columbus airport has marked its 15th anniversary with an event for customers and the local community. The facility promotes itself on the fact that it is the only FBO at the only towered airport in the region.

The site is due to open in 2026



Duncan gets flexible with paint

Duncan Aviation is at the show giving an update on its plans for a \$25 million paint facility at its Lincoln, Nebraska maintenance, repair and overhaul site, work on which will begin in December, and is due to complete by January 2026.

The 3,020sq m (32,500sq ft) greenfield hangar will adjoin the existing painting centre, which was built in 2012. The project will also include expansion of the ramp.

Interior enhancements include air showers to contain contaminants and a system to recirculate up to 80% of the heat in any curing process. Walls and ceiling will be stark white, allowing for better colour quality control during painting, says the company.

The Lincoln site paints around 105 aircraft a year, while the company as a whole paints 250, including at its other facilities at Battle Creek, Michigan, and Provo, Utah.

"The driving factor for the hangar build is flexibility, not capacity," says Doug Bohac, Duncan Aviation's paint manager. "We won't be painting more aircraft in Lincoln. However, we will be able to offer clients better flexibility, especially those who want detailed, more intricate paint schemes that require more than one paint slot to complete."

He says the new hangar will be able to support aircraft as large as the Gulfstream G650, Dassault Falcon 10X, and Bombardier Global 7500, and will have more flexibility to support drop-in and unscheduled work such as touch-ups and registration number changes.

Once the facility is open, Duncan Aviation will repurpose two paint bays that were built in 1990 for other uses. Meanwhile, the hangar added in 2012 will "continue to serve customers for many years to come".

Avionics specialist prepares to debut its third generation suite on the new CJ4 Gen3 business jet



Lind: Company built on vertical integration

Garmin moving into its Prime

Howard Hardee

Leaning on the institutional knowledge that comes with installing more than 30,000 flight decks across various aircraft types over the past 20 years, Garmin's latest avionics suite – the G3000 Prime – is the Kansas firm's most advanced yet.

The first aircraft set to integrate the third-generation, all-touch-screen avionics system is Textron Aviation's recently announced Cessna Citation CJ4 Gen3. The first of those light business jets is expected to be delivered to launch customer Ryan Samples in 2026.

Dan Lind, Garmin's senior director of aviation sales and marketing, explained to reporters during a pre-show briefing at Garmin's Kansas City headquarters how the company's storied relationship with Textron Aviation facilitated development of the G3000 Prime suite – which he says draws on the best elements of its G1000 and G3000 avionics systems.

"There's a lot of folks here that have worked with Textron Aviation for a long time to be where we're at today," Lind says. "We're very, very proud to partner with Textron Aviation and present our next-generation flight deck, G3000 Prime."

All of Garmin's aviation products are manufactured in Olathe, Kansas and Salem, Oregon.

"Garmin is built on vertical inte-

gration," Lind says. "It's very, very important to us – we can control our own destiny, whether it's a product or controlling development costs."

The wide-reaching electronics company's aerospace journey started more than 20 years ago with the G1000 avionics system, introduced on the Cessna Citation Mustang in 2003 with subsequent integration on the Beechcraft Bonanza, SkyCruiser, and Grand Caravan platforms, Lind says.

Garmin announced the G3000 avionics suite in 2009 and brought it to market about three years later on the M2 and CJ3 platforms. Its latest cockpit technology builds on the venerable systems that came before.

"One of the things we really want to focus on is just continuing to make it pilot-friendly, adding useful automations and making it easy to use," Lind says. "We really focus on everything we do well within the G1000, G3000 and even some of our other products; take the best and bring it in."

The G3000 Prime is oriented toward the Part 23 turbine, defence and advanced air mobility markets. Lind told FlightGlobal that Garmin, which has existing relationships with several electric air taxi companies, expects some to upgrade to G3000 Prime in the coming months.

G3000 Prime is designed to reduce pilot workload and streamline cockpit procedures with an intuitive, state-of-the-art interface that both pilot and co-pilot can interact

with simultaneously. Maps, charts, weather and traffic applications can be accessed with one touch, while features such as taxiway routing and an "emergency return" function also ease the burden on flight deck crews.

The system features Garmin's Autoland system, which will come as a standard feature in Textron Aviation's new series of Gen3 light business jets.

"For example, the more information we can tell our system, the more it will help out the pilot," he continues. "So, we can [tell the aircraft] how much runway we need in order to take off; it's going to tell us whether I can take off on this specific runway based on the performance of my aircraft. And we can do the same thing from a landing perspective, as well."

Lind says that while Garmin will continue adding more capabilities to

G3000 Prime is designed to reduce pilot workload and streamline cockpit procedures



G3000 Prime, it is a "mature product" that has been TSO (technical standard order) certificated.

"Hardware and software [are] complete," he says.

The suite features 14-inch primary touch-screen displays with edge-to-edge, fingerprint-resistant glass, as well as a pair of smaller 7-inch secondary display units (SDUs).

The SDUs can, in some configurations, serve as an "integrated standby flight instrument display, removing the need for a dedicated standby flight instrument in the panel", Garmin says.

"From a performance standpoint, you've got about twice the CPU power, four times the memory, and higher refresh rates," Lind says. "It's much, much smoother, and it just reacts very well as you go to, say, pinch-to-zoom or pan across a map."

Garmin's "multi-touch technology" allows users to brace their hands against the display; the system will recognise "desired inputs with the other fingertips", Lind says.

The secondary displays are not equipped with buttons or knobs, which are located instead on a Garmin control unit to interact with common functions.

"The best way to describe this is highly flexible and responsive, [and] it's really fast," he says. "While it's all new, it's all familiar – it still feels like Garmin. Anyone who interacts with the system would be able to catch on very easily." ▶

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Two decades after the segment emerged with so much promise, could the VLJ that started it all be set for a comeback, and does Cirrus's success prove there is still a market for the smallest business jets?



The original Eclipse Aviation shipped around 250 jets, including to air taxi start-up DayJet

Not yet Eclipsed?

Murdo Morrison

Would-be disruptors determined to broaden access to private aviation with a new category of more affordable and greener aircraft they are sure will sell in the thousands - and with orders aplenty from early adopters. It might sum up the anticipation today around advanced air mobility (AAM) but, rewind two decades, and it also describes the nascent very-light jet (VLJ) market.

Spearheaded by Vern Raburn's Eclipse Aviation, the segment embraced other new names such as Adam Aircraft, as well as established players Cessna, Cirrus, Diamond, and Piper. They believed their clean-sheet VLJs could fill the gap between high-performance piston types and existing light jets and grow the market by attracting air taxi start-ups and others new to aviation.

It never lived up to the promise, though there were successes. Cessna, which had been making light jets since the 1960s, delivered almost 500 Mustangs from 2006 to 2017, when parent Textron Aviation ended production as demand tilted to the larger M2. Honda Aircraft's HondaJet and Embraer's Phenom 100 have also been described as

VLJs, although, based on cabin size and range, they are perhaps more accurately light jets.

There were plenty of 'never-quite-made-its'. The 2008 financial crisis saw the demise of Adam Aircraft, along with its A700 design. Two other new ventures, VisionAire with the Vantage, whose original design dates from the 1990s, and Stratos Aircraft which makes the 716X, have flown prototype VLJs - Stratos is currently amid a flight test campaign - but have yet to reach certification or production.

Two of the most respected general aviation manufacturers, Austria's Diamond and US-based Piper, made it as far as formally launching single-engine VLJs, prototypes of which they exhibited at shows in the late 2000s and early 2010s. But the D-Jet and the PiperJet Altaire were axed early in the certification effort because of lack of demand and funding.

The only example of the new breed of entry-level jets that has proved an undisputed winner has been the Cirrus SF50 Vision Jet, which like the original Eclipse 500 is a recipient of the prestigious Collier Trophy. Powered by a single Williams International FJ33, the type marked its 500th delivery in 2023 after seven years of production and remains the sole single-engine business jet in production.

As for Eclipse, it has not quite gone away. After Eclipse Aviation's demise, the Albuquerque firm that was the brainchild of one-time Silicon Valley executive Raburn was born again in 2009 as Eclipse Aerospace, later merging into One Aviation. In 2018 it went bankrupt again before being rescued in 2020 by the AML investment firm of British businessman Christopher Harborne.

Last year, many were surprised when General Aviation Manufacturers Association figures showed two Eclipse 550 deliveries in the first quarter, the first acknowledged shipments since 2017. While this appears to be a one-off - most likely handovers of examples built before the 2018 bankruptcy - Eclipse has been dropping hints about building the twinjet again.

Eclipse executives attended EBACE in May - in response to enquiries from FlightGlobal - executive vice-president Jeffrey Rochelle says: "We are not doing media or press releases at the present time", he describes himself in his LinkedIn profile as "building the next generation of low-cost, low-carbon jet mobility".

The Eclipse 500 still has its fans. Around 250 examples of the Pratt & Whitney Canada PW610F-powered twinjets were produced between 2006 and 2008, followed by around

35 of its Eclipse 550 successor from 2014 to 2017. Almost all remain in service, most of them in the hands of a loyal band of owner pilots.

There are, however, some fleet operators, including Channel Jet, based in the British Crown Dependency of Guernsey. Founded in 2017 by David Hayman, who previously ran Eclipse sales for Europe, the company currently manages three Eclipse 500s on behalf of Channel Islands-based owners and offers them for charter on a Guernsey air operator's certificate.

Channel Jet describes its ethos as "shattering the illusion that all private jet travel is for the uber-wealthy", stressing its service is an "affordable" jet air taxi service for as few as two passengers. Customers tend to be Channel Island residents or property owners travelling to other islands or "near Europe" for business, or to Mediterranean resorts for leisure. "We do a lot of flying into Biggin Hill. London is a strong market," says chief operating officer Nigel Moll.

The service has been a success in terms of introducing new customers to charter, says Moll. Because of that - and the lack of availability of out-of-production Eclipse jets - the company is now looking to broaden into larger aircraft. "Once people come into the market, they start



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Stratos has been flight-testing the single-engine 716X

Wanting something bigger, so we are looking at diversifying the fleet," he says.

Other companies are benefiting from Eclipse's enduring popularity with owner pilots, which has always been the brand's core market. They include brokerage Aerocor, based near Las Vegas. The company specialises in VLJs and light jets, facilitating 35 sales last year, including 23 Eclipses, more than seven in 10 of all those that changed hands. "We dominate the space in a way no other broker has been able to," says co-founder Gavin Woodman.

Aerocor identified the Eclipse market as "under-served" when it was established in 2017, largely because the aircraft was out of production and receiving limited factory support, but also because the fleet of fewer than 300 in-service aircraft meant it was "not going to attract big competitors", says Woodman. "We saw an opportunity to fill a blank."

He says Aerocor "helps clients with every aspect of the

transaction", including sourcing pilots, and arranging parking and insurance. It recently launched a management arm and manages two aircraft on behalf of owners. It also offers Eclipse training, reporting a 20% increase in volumes during 2023 thanks partly to "new and younger pilots stepping into the Eclipse space".

So, what of other VLJ projects in development? Redmond, Oregon-based Stratos Aircraft remains committed to bringing the Stratos 716X to market, although it is "not disclosing" a timescale, nor yet taking formal orders, says chief executive Carsden Sundin. Stratos has flown around 300h on the Pratt & Whitney Canada JT15D-5-powered jet, after notching up about 500h on an earlier, similar, but slightly smaller proof-of-concept prototype, the 714.

"We anticipate that in about a year from now we will be able to disclose a lot more," says Sundin, who maintains that the success of the Cirrus Vision Jet proves there is an appetite for single-engine jets. "It's unquestionable that there is

a market there," he says. However, Stratos says it is pitching the four-passenger 716X, in terms of size and performance, more against twin-engine types such as the Phenom 100 and HondaJet.

Despite the uncertainty over its certification timetable, Stratos continues to exhibit the 716X - launched in 2018 and which flew for the first time in July 2020 - with its most recent appearance at July's AirVenture in Oshkosh. The aircraft features a Garmin G3X flightdeck and its cabin is 1.2m (4ft) wide and 1.45m high. The certificated version could see the JT15D-5 replaced with a more modern PW535E engine, also from P&WC.

Less is known about VisionAire's prospects. The Hickory, North Carolina-based outfit was formed in 2010 to resurrect the Vantage, a 1,500nm (2,800km)-range aircraft designed by Burt Rutan in the 1980s. Larger than the 716X, but also powered by a single engine, the Williams International FJ44-3AP, the jet has still not flown, although an earlier proof-of-concept prototype

notched up more than 500h before the original company's demise in 2003.

Diamond's D-Jet, which first flew in 2006, is another single-engine design that has not officially been abandoned. In its heyday, before the 2008 financial crash, Diamond notched up dozens of significant orders and established a production facility at its subsidiary in London, Ontario. However, after years of uncertainty, the programme was suspended in 2013 following a failure to secure a Canadian government loan.

In 2018, the airframer's chief executive Frank Zhang, installed by the company's new Chinese owner Wangeng, noted that "it would be great to add a jet to our line-up at some point, and with the D-Jet the opportunity is there".

However, with Diamond's focus very much on developing electric and hybrid-electric variants for the training market, the chances of the Williams International FJ33-4A-powered type earning a reprieve look slim. ▶



The D-Jet programme ran out of cash in 2013



Piper cancelled its single-engine VLJ, the Altair



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Business aviation manufacturers including Bombardier and Gulfstream are partnering with specialist contractors to target special mission variants of their long-range, large-cabin jets at a specific segment in the defence market

Ryan Finnerty

Drawn by reliability, affordability and flight performance, military operators are increasingly turning to business jets to fill niche roles within their aviation fleets including intelligence collection and electronic warfare.

The trend includes services in both the USA and Europe, with business aviation manufacturers including both Bombardier and Gulfstream already benefiting.

The US Army is in the midst of what one service official recently called the most significant transformation of aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capability in the army's history - with business jets at its core.

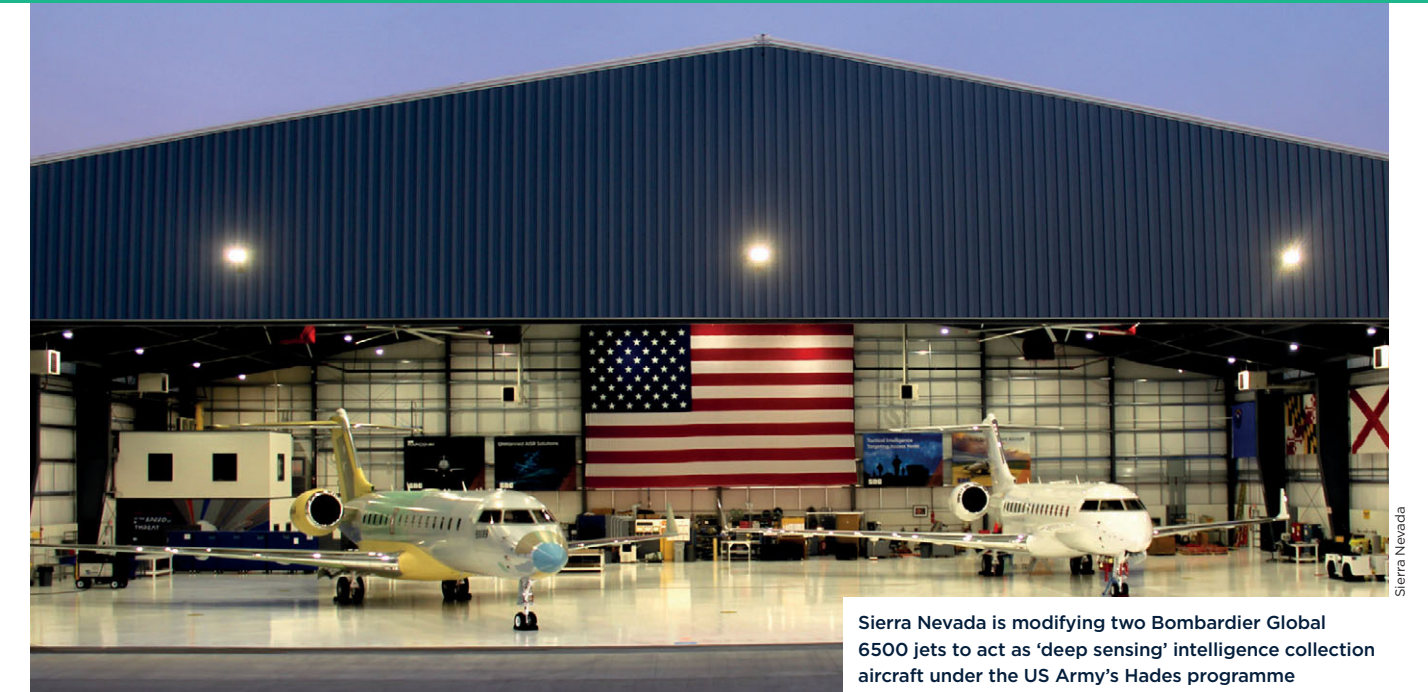
Under a slew of Greek mythology-themed programmes, the army is phasing out its ageing fleet of ISR turboprops, which include derivatives of the Beechcraft King Air 350 and De Havilland Canada Dash 7 and Dash 8.

These are being replaced by the Bombardier Global 6500, 14 of which are being modified with sophisticated, long-range intelligence collection equipment by Sierra Nevada Corporation under a \$1 billion programme known as Hades.

Sierra Nevada's vice-president of programmes Josh Walsh says the company's Hades proposal was "based upon rapid configurability so the aircraft is swiftly adaptable to specific recon missions based on tactical and operational needs".

A related programme called Athena will see a smaller number of contractor-owned and -operated Global 6500s perform ISR missions for the army until the Hades jets are ready for duty.

Other examples are in active



Sierra Nevada is modifying two Bombardier Global 6500 jets to act as 'deep sensing' intelligence collection aircraft under the US Army's Hades programme

Eyes in the sky

service with the army, including the Bombardier Challenger 650-based Artemis aircraft operated by defence contractor Leidos on behalf of the US Army.

Bombardier is leaning into the military's growing interest in its products, with chief executive Eric Martel touting the airframer's "know-how" in defence aviation.

"The defence sector is a key pillar of Bombardier's future as our ultra-reliable and high-performing platforms are best suited to house and operate complex mission equipment," Martel says.

Elsewhere, the US Air Force

(USAF) is phasing out its fleet of Lockheed Martin C-130-based electronic warfare aircraft in favour of a business jet alternative.

The L3Harris EA-37B Compass Call is a heavily modified Gulfstream G550, fitted with a powerful suite of BAE Systems electronics capable of disrupting enemy communications, radars, navigation systems and air defence networks.

Deliveries of the new jets are ongoing, with a planned fleet of 10 Compass Call aircraft.

Italy also appears keen on the type, with Rome having received a critical export approval for the EA-37B's sensitive electronics package earlier this month. That acquisition is believed to cover equipment for two Compass Calls, with the aircraft eventually joining Rome's existing fleet of militarised business jets.

The Italian air force already operates two G550s in an airborne early warning role, the first of which entered service in 2016. However, not all defence-focused business jet offerings have fared as well.

Bombardier unsuccessfully attempted to secure a contract in its home country of Canada in 2023, with a late breaking bid to provide the Royal Canadian Air Force's new maritime patrol aircraft, based on the Global 6500. The push ultimately failed, with Ottawa selecting of the 737-based Boeing P-8A Poseidon.

The headquarters of the NATO military alliance also opted for a commercial derivative - the Boeing E-7 Wedgetail - for its initial

airborne early warning and control modernisation initiative, passing over offerings from Saab and L3Harris.

Despite those losses, business jets continue to hold appeal for Western military operators, offering an alternative to costly new aircraft development. They also offer superior range, speed and operational ceiling compared to legacy turboprops, in a smaller package than a commercial airliner.

"We can select a variety of airframes depending on what that capability set needs to be," says Jason Lambert, president of ISR at L3Harris, which describes itself as the world-leader in business jet "missionisation".

Lambert says that not only is cost of acquisition lower on a business jet, but they are also cheaper to operate and maintain. He notes the US Army's new L3Harris-Bombardier Ares jet is currently operating in the Indo-Pacific with a 99% availability rate.

Proof of the capability improvements can be seen in the fleet size of the new business jet-based platforms.

The USAF plans to field 10 EA-37Bs, compared to 14 of the older EC-130H/J turboprop.

The US Army's planned fleet of 14 Global 6500 Hades jets is a dramatic reduction from the 70-odd King Air-based MC/RC-12 ISR aircraft. With governments around the world looking to expand their arsenals on a budget, business jet solutions are likely to remain an attractive military option for years to come. ■

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The US military is increasingly turning to business jets, such as the Gulfstream G550-based EA-37B electronic warfare aircraft, as an affordable solution for specialty missions

The static display at Henderson Executive Airport features an array of aircraft, new and used. Each day we pick two that are sure to turn heads

Winged wonders



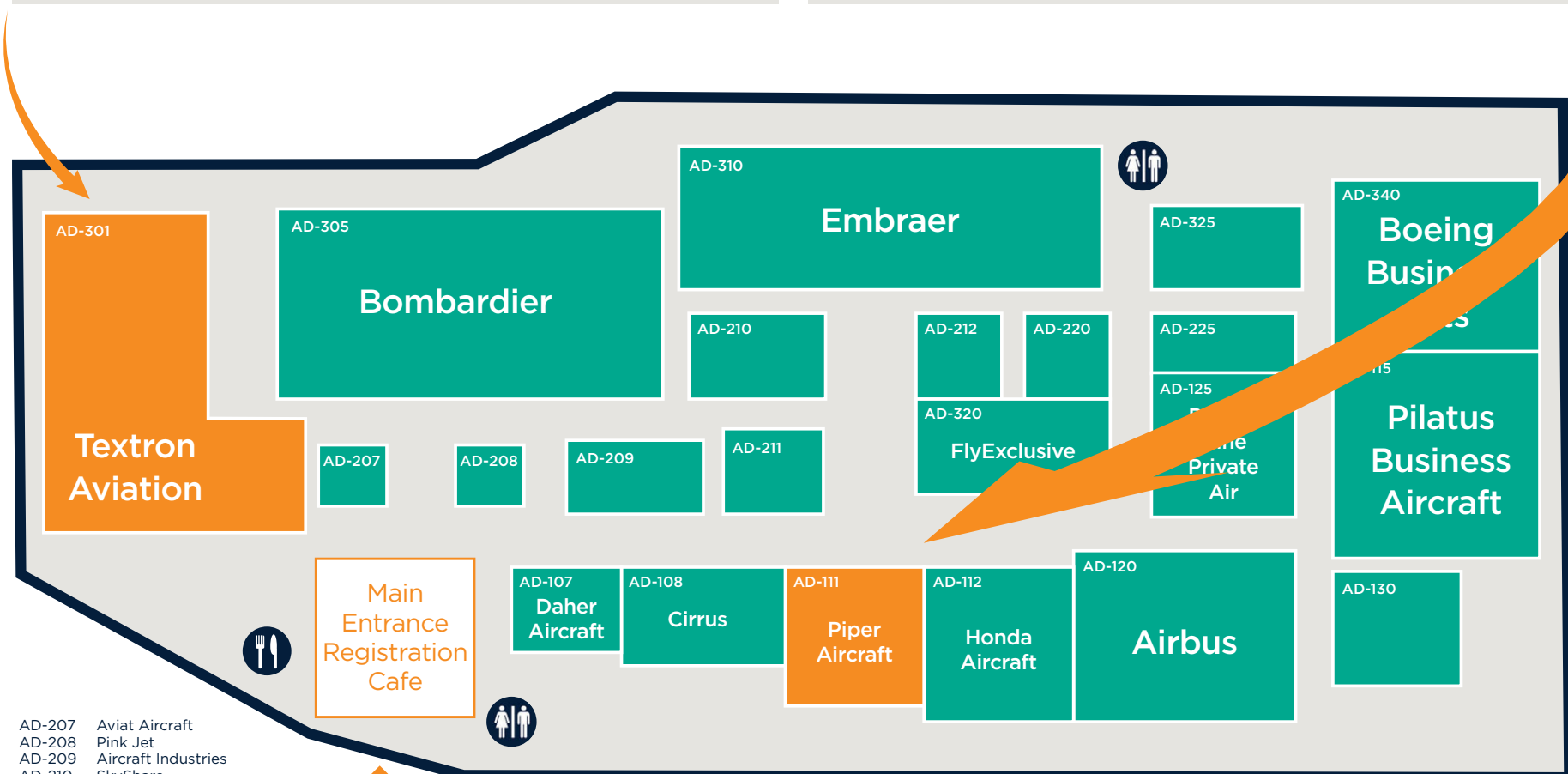
Textron Aviation Citation Longitude

Textron Aviation's Honeywell HTF7700L-powered, super-midsize flagship takes pride of place on an exhibit from the Wichita-based manufacturer that has new fewer than three other production aircraft – the Latitude, the CJ4 Gen2, and the M2 Gen2 – and two mock-ups: the Ascend and CJ3 Gen2.



Piper Aircraft M700 Fury

Certificated in the USA in March, and now with a green light from the Canadian authorities that includes flight into known icing (FIKI) approval, the M700 Fury is the fastest ever single-engine Piper, and the largest of three M-Class types from the Vero Beach, Florida-based airframer, the others being the M350, also on display, and the M500.



- AD-207 Aviat Aircraft
- AD-208 Pink Jet
- AD-209 Aircraft Industries
- AD-210 SkyShare
- AD-211 Tecnam
- AD-212 Acquire Jets
- AD-225 McLaren Las Vegas
- AD-325 Gogo Business Aviation

Note: Details correct at the time of going to press



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*–Jeff McClean, Vice President
Global Flight Operations, Procter & Gamble*

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