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FLIGHT

EVENING NEWS

ISSUE 2

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BBJ lives the Dream with jumbo orders

Boeing Business Jets was this morning celebrating the first seven orders for VIP configured Boeing 787 Dreamliner and 747-8 jumbo jets.

Anonymous customers have ordered one 787-8, three 787-9s and three 747-8s, specifically designated for the VIP market.

"Boeing has a long legacy of providing jets to the VIP market," said Steven Hill, Boeing Business Jets' president. "And that reputation extends to the VIP market with the 787 and 747-8. We are thrilled with the continued success of the original Boeing Business Jets family and market interest in our widebody jets." Hill expects to sign orders for two further BBJ widebodies before the end of 2006 – one 747-8 and one 787-8.

Range

The VIP-configured 787-8 offers 2,400ft² (225m²) of cabin space and a range of 9,590nm (17,760 km), while the VIP-configured 787-9 offers 2,760ft² of cabin space and a range of 9,950nm. This capability allows owners of the 787 VIP jet to fly anywhere in the world non-stop while carrying up to 75 passengers.

The VIP version of the 747-8 provides a cabin with 4,786ft². It can carry 100 passengers and fly up to 9,260nm. The aircraft is the fastest large-cabin business jet, capable of cruising at Mach 0.86.

With the previously announced orders of 12 BBJs and the new widebody orders, Boeing Business Jets' sales team has won a total of 19 new orders within the last 11 months – business valued at \$2.25 billion at list prices.

■ How the interiors could look – Page 17



Palmer makes the cut at NBAA

Golfing legend Arnold Palmer – describing himself as "one of the smaller operators" of business aircraft at Orlando – took a swing at commercial airlines today at the show over their proposal to replace the Aviation Trust Fund with user fees.

The impact would be "devastating" to business aviation, said Palmer, citing the situation in Europe where aviation infrastructure is financed by airspace user fees.

"Why in the world would you want to change a structure that works so well?" he said before cutting the official opening ribbon, accompanied by NBAA chairman Ken Emerick.

Piper calls new tune with six-seater VLJ

Piper lifted the veil on its ambitions to step up into the burgeoning personal jet sector this morning when it revealed a six-passenger clean-sheet design very light jet (VLJ)

Piper president James Bass announced the PiperJet at his booth earlier today and said the aircraft "breaks the mould in offering an unparalleled blend of performance and luxury".

Maximum

PiperJet will feature the latest in integrated glass avionics, a luxurious interior and will be priced at \$2.199 million in 2006 dollars with a price escalator.

It will be certified to a maximum ceiling of 35,000ft (10,700m) for single pilot operation and will be RVSM certified.

The aircraft will have an option for a seventh seat or an enclosable lavatory, is anticipated to reach cruising speeds of 360kt (666km/h)



Unveiling the new VLJ: Piper president James Bass with John Becker, Piper's vice president of engineering.

and a range of 1,300nm (2,400km) with a full-fuel payload of 800lb (365kg).

The PiperJet is much bigger than the step-up jets from Diamond and Cirrus as Piper customers are already used to the space in the Piper Meridian. "Every measure

has been taken to make sure that the PiperJet answers what our customers told us they want and need in a jet, because at the end of the day it is not about being first to market, it's about getting it right in the first place."

Bass was tight-lipped

about its engine selection, saying only that it was "in discussion" with several suppliers, including Pratt & Whitney and GE Honda. He did not mention Williams, although he did say that an announcement was likely in the next few months.

ORLANDO DAY TWO



Stephan Hanvey (right) with Cirrus' Dale Klapmeier.

Satsair spends \$45m on 100 Cirrus SR22s

South Carolina air-taxi operator Satsair has acquired 50 Cirrus SR22 piston singles, with options on an additional 50 in a \$45 million deal. Cirrus owns 25% of the on-demand charter operator.

The company is also to expand into Florida. "We're excited about expanding our fleet and service area," says Stephan Hanvey, Satsair president and chief executive. "We can now provide point-to-point on-demand service to them at over 100 airports throughout the state."

The company will start operating in Florida on 1 November and has already taken delivery of its first aircraft. All 50 will be delivered by early 2007. The fleet will account for 300 new jobs throughout the region. Hanvey says Satsair is seeking \$25 million for further expansion and is unlikely to consider jets as "that is not this company's business model."

The company has also signed a deal with FTS International to provide initial pilot training, starting this month.

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Groom does things from scratch

Alan Peaford

Raytheon Aircraft's president global service and support, Randy Groom, has a scratch on his highly polished glass table.

The minor damage was caused by a Beechcraft customer who had been asked by Groom to give his opinion on the company's aftermarket services. The customer threw down a spare part from a Bonanza landing gear and chal-

lenged Groom to justify the \$6,000 cost for the part.

"I couldn't," Groom says. "There had been a system glitch on the pricing and that part is now \$228. It was a sobering lesson for us and encouraged us to look at our parts pricing policy."

That work is ongoing, but Groom comes to NBAA with a new catalogue featuring 900 parts that demonstrates price reduction and increased value to Raytheon customers.

The offer includes not only proprietary parts but also competitively priced rotables and general aftermarket parts for Beechcraft products.

"We can leverage our buying power and get even better prices for our customers. We will lose some margin initially, but will see volume improvements. The suppliers would rather see us offering a single shop for spares and we believe our customers will too."

Groom has been in the job for less than a year and has challenged the traditional Raytheon aftermarket operation. He invited customers in and has begun shaping a new approach.

"We have a dedicated engineering team addressing customer issues," he says. "The key aim is to reduce operating costs. The parts pricing is one thing, we also want to make it convenient to do business with us."

With more than 300,000 parts

specific for Raytheon products, Groom will have his work cut out, but he is undaunted.

Groom is also pushing reaction to aircraft-on-ground events with a 30min target to have the part out of the Dallas or Liege (Belgium) logistics centers and on its way. "We have yanked parts off the production line to get an aircraft back in the air," Groom says. "We are also looking at offering modifications. If you look at the King Air fleet there are lot of opportunities."



Piaggio's jetting into the future

For the first time, twin-prop executive aircraft manufacturer Piaggio has made a firm commitment to produce a mid-size business jet.

Standing next to a model of the proposed twinjet in Ferrari livery, chief executive Jose Di Mase said that the company had been thinking about a jet derivative of its Avanti II for a number of years. "We will make an official announcement of the product next year, but what I can say is that it will be bigger, faster and have a longer range than the Avanti II," he said.

Di Mase added that all necessary finance was in place and the identity and involvement of the program partners will be revealed at the time of the announcement in early 2007.

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HEADLINES

Embraer shoots Brazilian goals

Embraer (stand 5559 and static) is using NBAA to prove to the market just how serious it is about business jets.

The Brazilian manufacturer has invested \$40 million in new customer service offerings and declared that it intends to be a leading player in the support and services market within three years. It aims to establish a worldwide network of 45 service centers by the middle of 2008.

To back this assertion up, its marketing literature at the show is dedicated to its support offerings rather than its products. Luis Carlos Affonso, executive vice-president executive aviation, says: "We have more than 37 years of customer support and want to develop a reputation for reputable maintenance services."

It has invested in three

new Embraer-owned centers – Bradley Hartford, Connecticut; Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Williams Gateway, Arizona.

These centres will only service Embraer business aircraft. The company has also revamped 11 of its authorized service centers throughout the country and will create seven centers throughout the USA devoted to the Phenom family. In Europe it will create a new factory owned facility at Le Bourget in France; revamp its OGMA centre in Portugal and plans five authorised service centers in the region.

Other plans include establishing a contact center both online and as a call centre. The manufacturer has also improved its aftercare programme, Embraer Executive Care and created an Executive Care package for the Phenom family.



Embraer's Luis Carlos Affonso.

Honeywell APU is ready for Gulfstreams

Honeywell's latest upgraded auxiliary power unit has just gained Federal Aviation Administration certification and is now available for fitting on the Gulfstream GIV, GIV-SP, G300 and G400, the US engine company said on Sunday.

The 36-150[G] APU is an upgrade to the 36-100[G]. Gulfstream performed the certification testing and is now managing the upgrade program.

"We have achieved all the improvement goals set for us by operators and – thanks to the unique ported shroud design and improved hot section – also reduced ramp noise, providing significant customer benefits," said Carl Esposito, Honeywell's vice-president Gulfstream segment.

He added: "These design enhancements deliver the highest power-to-weight ratio currently available in the segment, while lowering the total cost of ownership." Gulfstream has developed and released Aircraft Service Change (ASC) 465 to install the new APU.

Less stress

The high-efficiency compressor in the 36-150[G] provides increased airflow to the aircraft at a reduced exhaust gas temperature (EGT). Reduced EGT results in less stress, longer life and higher reliability. Additionally, increased airflow enables faster main engine starts, reducing the time that the main engine is exposed to high temperatures. The 36-150[G] upgrade is offered in a variety of packages for all operators.

Those enrolled in Honeywell's maintenance service plan (MSP) are automatically eligible for the upgrade at their next hot section inspection (HSI) or after they have accumulated at least 1,000h since their last HSI. Additionally, operators not currently enrolled in MSP for the 36-100[G] may enroll after they upgrade without any enrollment charge. In both cases, the MSP rate is significantly reduced when compared to that of the 36-100[G], resulting overall in reduced cost of ownership.

“IMAGINE

Glenn Couture
Maintenance Control and Logistics
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Atlantic signs bank deal

Bank of America and business aircraft management company Atlantic Aviation Flight Services announced the establishment of a cross referral program earlier today. Under the new program, clients that have signed on with Atlantic Aviation will receive enhanced finance terms from Bank America. In addition, the companies say that sustainable charter revenue will be available to clients that select Atlantic Aviation to manage their jets.

Hallion enters Hall of Fame

Acclaimed aerospace historian and author Dr Richard Hallion was presented with the National Aviation Hall of Fame's (NAHF) prestigious fourth annual Combs Gates award at the show today. Famed test pilot Bob Hoover, a 1988 NAHF winner, presented Hallion with a \$20,000 check for his research into US aeronautics since the First World War. Hallion says: "I'm delighted and humbled by receiving it." The writer will use the \$20,000 to fund research and plans to write a further two volumes looking at aviation up to the present day.

The NAHF is a Congressionally chartered non-profit organization, honouring air and space pioneers. The Combs award was set up by the late aviation pioneer and author Harry Combs and renamed last month to reflect the support of its new benefactor, The Charles C and June S Gates Family Fund.

Grob studies Ranger future

Grob's new owner Niall Olver is looking closely at the future for the seven-passenger turboprop, the G-160 Ranger. The program was halted when the German company focused its attentions on the certification of its utility light jet – the Grob SPn. Insiders say that a decision on the Ranger is expected before the end of the year. If Olver agrees the funding to restart the turboprop program it will be virtually back to the drawing board, with plans for a new fuselage, a new engine and a speed of 300kt (555km/h).



Honda Aircraft president and CEO, Michimasa Fujino, at today's launch.

Unveiled HondaJet set for 2010 delivery

Honda (stand 5495) today unveiled the HondaJet to the business aviation community with the announcement that the HondaJet is now for sale, with updated specifications and a sales and service network plan.

In a standard configuration the price is set at \$3.65 million. Production and first delivery in the USA is scheduled for 2010. "We expect both type and production certification in three to four years," said Michimasa Fujino,

president and chief executive of Honda. The HondaJet will be powered by two GE-Honda HF120 turboprops each with 1,880lb thrust (8kN), be capable of 1,180nm (2,180km) IFR range with one pilot and three passengers. It will also feature a 57ft³ (1.6m³) aft baggage compartment that is complemented by a 9ft³ nose hold, a full private lavatory. The flightdeck will feature a customized version of Garmin's G1000 glass-cockpit integrated package.

The aircraft will be offered with two interior configurations with seating for seven (two crew plus five passengers) as the standard option and an air-taxi configuration that will seat two pilots and six passengers in forward facing seats.

HondaJet will be sold through five US regional sales groups in the east, south-east, Midwest, south-west and north-west – the dealer network has been developed in collaboration with Piper Aircraft.

All new interior for A700

All-composite airframe manufacturer Adam Aircraft (stand 2636) was wowing NBAA visitors this morning with an all-new luxury interior for its A700.

Aircraft 1, which is parked in the convention center hall, is according to Rick Adam, chairman and chief executive, fitted with "best in class" materials, and has recently had a special privacy door included into the design for its lavatory.

"Any air taxi that doesn't have a lavatory will cause problems for passengers," he says. "And the fact that we can provide total privacy is a real bonus. Our parts quality is on a par with anyone we need to compete against. We've improved the quality of the seats and added carbonfiber accents on the door styling. This mirrors what the motor industry is doing with interiors and should prove popular with customers."



Left to right: Mauricio Botelho, Steven Santo from Avantair, Barry Gordon from Ardent Acquisitions Corporation and Luis Carlos Affonso

Phenom gets AvantAir seal of approval

Embraer has received a firm order for 20 Phenom 100 executive jets. The announcement earlier today is worth \$57 million, with US fractional aircraft operator AvantAir scheduled to take delivery of its first aircraft in June 2009.

"The Phenom is a perfect addition to our fleet," said Steve Santo, AvantAir chief executive. "It gives us an advantage in the marketplace by allowing us to offer our existing and potential owners the very best in the very light jet category in both fuel efficiency and cabin comfort."

"We believe we've already picked the best aircraft in its category with the Piaggio Avanti, and with the Phenom we've also hit it out of the park."

Mauricio Botelho, Embraer chief executive, says that while the order is not its biggest, it helps the OEM surpass 300 aircraft orders and is a strategically advantageous customer, accessing the lucrative US market. "We look forward to building a strong and mutually rewarding relationship," he says.

Airbus finds the right formula

Boutsen Aviation of Monaco and Austria's JetAlliance today announced firm orders for Airbus's range of corporate jets.

The order from Boutsen is for two corporate jetliners (ACJ), while Austrian-based VIP charter operator JetAlliance is to acquire two more A318 Elites, adding to its previously placed order for one aircraft. It also has an Airbus ACJ on order. The deals take this year's orders for the Airbus ACJ family to 19 with total sales to date standing at around 80.

Boutsen's ACJs will feature VIP interiors, based on the prestige cabin concept, which comprises a large sitting/dining room, private office, bedroom and en-suite bathroom. They will be powered by CFM International's CFM56-5B7/P engines.

"To win in Formula 1 auto racing you need to have the best car and be the best driver – while to win in business aviation you need to have the best aircraft and the best team to manage it. This is why we chose the Airbus ACJ," says Thierry Boutsen, three times Formula 1 grand prix winner and president of Boutsen Aviation.

Austrian company JetAlliance



Grand prix winner Thierry Boutsen, right (president of Boutsen Aviation) shakes hands with Richard Gaona, VP executive and private aviation for Airbus.

is one of the world's leading business jet enterprises, with a fleet of 41 aircraft and the company has chosen the standardized 14-seat Elite+ cabin for its A318 Elites.

The company has yet to announce a choice of engines.

• Airbus has named Gore Design Completion of San Antonio, Texas, an approved completion center for Airbus corporate jetliners. Gore is Airbus's second US-based outfitter and one of several worldwide.

The approval of Gore Design Completion as an Airbus-approved outfitting center follows a thorough review of the company's capabilities, including industrial, financial, design and certification aspects.

Airbus's network of approved completion centers includes Associated Air Center of Dallas, Texas; Jet Aviation of Basle; Switzerland; Lufthansa Technik of Hamburg, Germany; and Gore Design Completion of San Antonio, Texas.

Little Rock prepares for 7X
Dassault (stand 250 North Hall) will deliver its first Falcon 7X business jet to its completions center in Little Rock next month, the first of four scheduled to arrive at the facility before the end of 2006. The company expects several 7Xs will be among the 70 aircraft it expects to deliver during 2007. Dassault says completions time on the 7X will be lower than for other Falcon jets, especially for cabinets and upholstery, thanks to the use of product life cycle management software in the production process.

Go-ahead for Piaggio simulator
Piaggio says FlightSafety International's new P180 Avanti full-flight simulator has received Level D qualification from the Federal Aviation Administration. The advanced technology simulator will provide professional training to Piaggio aircraft operators at FlightSafety's West Palm Beach, Florida Learning Center. In addition, FlightSafety, the official factory-authorized training organization for Piaggio Aero, will manufacture an Avanti II flight simulator.

Nagoya and beyond
New Hampshire-based Infinity Aviation Group has joined forces with Japanese business aviation specialist, Nakanihon Air Service, of Nagoya, to introduce pre-owned mid-sized corporate jets into the Japanese marketplace.

Fokker deal
Fokker Services (stand 720) has signed an agreement with Stumpf Group for the completion of its new ACJ. Completion work will start in March 2007 at its Woensdrecht facility in southern Holland, with customer delivery due in September 2007.

Winglets upgrade
The firming up of Gulfstream II prices has led Aviation Partners to announce at NBAA that it is again offering its IISP blended winglet upgrade for \$475,000. The company says the upgrade will improve runway performance, enhance rate of climb and improve fuel burn by 7%.

PW617 flight marks program milestone



Phenom engines now flying.

Engine maker Pratt & Whitney Canada announced today at NBAA that its PW617F, selected to power the Embraer Phenom 100 very light jet (VLJ), has successfully completed its maiden flight on the company's Boeing 720 flying testbed, marking a significant milestone in its development program.

The 4h maiden flight reached 20,000ft (6,100m) and included a number of tests to assess the engine capabilities.

"The engine performed flawlessly and exceeded our expecta-

tions," said Dan Breitman, vice-president – turbofan development, P&WC.

Featuring dual-channel full-authority digital control, the PW617F was chosen by Embraer to power the Phenom 100 in May 2005 and engine design work began in July 2005. Designed with a 50% reduction in parts count, the PW600 series incorporates the latest technologies while offering optimum value to operators.

PW617F certification is expected in the fourth quarter of 2007.

Rolls-Royce confirms the market growth

Rolls-Royce predicts continued growth in business jet deliveries through the remainder of the decade – and forecasts an engine market worth \$70 billion over the next 20 years, with medium and large business jets dominating in terms of aircraft and engine value.

The company's annual business jet forecast was released today at NBAA – echoing other companies' positive predictions for the industry.

R-R forecasts that 51,000 engines, valued at \$70 billion, will be needed over the next 20 years to meet demand for 24,000 new corporate jet aircraft; from very light jets through to business jets. Demand is being fueled by the business community's increasing

recognition of the value of using business jets as a productivity tool.

Of the 24,000 new corporate aircraft expected to enter the market, nearly half are expected to be in the medium or large business jet category. According to the market forecast, only commercial 130- to 190-seat aircraft will surpass the medium and large business jet category in deliveries over the next 20 years.

The forecast predicts that nearly 12,000 medium and large business jets will be delivered between 2006 and 2025. In terms of fleet size, this market segment is expected to grow by 142% to more than 16,500 aircraft by 2025.

Speaking at NBAA, Alan Stiley, R-R vice-president for marketing, corporate and regional aircraft, said: "The market

is recognizing the increasing value and utility of the new generation of medium and large business jets. While very light jets are getting a great deal of attention it's the larger aircraft that will have the delivered aircraft and engine value."

R-R suggests that while more than 21,000 engines of less than 3,000lb thrust (13kN) will be delivered for very light jets, the value of those deliveries will be only \$14 billion. At the same time, engines in the 6,000-10,000lb-thrust range can expect more than 13,000 deliveries at a value of \$23 billion – so it is not surprising that Honeywell and Snecma are both working on proposed new entrants in the sector.

Honeywell has that certain Zing factor



Scott Taylor – bringing in the Zing.

A new intelligent monitoring network and platform – Zing – was announced by Honeywell at NBAA.

The network will enable Honeywell's engine remote diagnostics service for business jet operators whose aircraft are powered by TFE731 turbopfans. Honeywell intends to extend the Zing service to all its powerplants.

Honeywell's new engine remote diagnostics subscription service is similar to those of airlines – but at a fraction of the cost, making it affordable for business jet operators.

Using the international encrypted GSM network, Zing will be tested through a pilot scheme, with a view to introducing it as an operational subscription service early in 2007.

Dispatch

Honeywell sales and customer marketing vice-president Scott Taylor said: "This new service for TFE731 engines provides business jet operators with maximum dispatch availability and operational control, no matter where their aircraft are."

Effectively a high-speed information network between operators and their aircraft, Zing will help them to manage their fleets more efficiently. Engine data is wirelessly transmitted through the network where it is rapidly translated into alerts and actionable maintenance information by the intelligence embedded in the service, making support more convenient, faster and simpler.

Blackhawk to modify P&WC engines

A five-year agreement has been signed between Pratt & Whitney Canada and Blackhawk Modifications of Waco, Texas for 550 new PT6A engines under the Canadian aerospace company's converter enhancement program.

Blackhawk will use the P&WC engines for its various engine upgrade programs on Raytheon King Air, Cessna Conquest 1 and Piper Cheyenne series turboprop aircraft under supplemental type certificates (STC).

The company also expects to receive STC approvals for several other aircraft types over the coming years.

P&WC's converter enhancement program allows modifier or converters like Blackhawk Modifications to buy and install new engines on any type of aircraft. Operators benefit from more power, faster climb and higher cruise speed, with minimal changes to the aircraft's airframe. The used core engines are normally rebuilt and resold, or used for spare parts.

P&WC is targeting re-engine opportunities through its fleet services upgrade program. In its fleet enhancement program (FEP) customers are offered a new engine of the same type installed on the original aircraft, while its converter enhancement program offers an alternate engine model, delivering higher power.



Rick Shrameck

Epic starts a new Dynasty

Epic is showing its new Dynasty – powered by a single Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6-67A – in NBAA's static park.

With more than 1,100h of flight testing logged towards certification, the Epic Dynasty (a certificated version of the Epic LT single-engine turboprop) is a pressurized high-performance composite six-seat aircraft priced at \$1.9 million.

The Dynasty can take off with full fuel and all six seats occupied and has a maximum range of 1,875nm (3,470km) with optional long-range tanks.

Amid all the industry challenges to categorize the different aircraft chief executive Rick Shrameck bizarrely claimed that his turboprop should be seen as a VLJ.

Believe

"The aircraft – and we definitely believe that it's a VLJ until someone convinces us otherwise – will begin certification tests this fall in Calgary, Alberta as part of a new Canadian aircraft certification program designed for GA. Like its counterpart – the Epic LT – the aircraft is expected to cruise at 340kt [630km/h] with a ceiling of 28,000ft [8,540m] and a range of 1,560nm on standard tanks."

The Epic Dynasty will be the first project to enter the new Canadian Centre for Aerospace Development at Calgary and Medicine Hat, Alberta. The second aircraft to take advantage of the new Canadian system will be the all-new Epic Elite, a twin-engine entry in the certificated very light jet (VLJ) category.

ATI launches revamp of turbo diesel twin



US start-up Aviation Technologies International (ATI) (stand 1439) launched its redesigned RT-700 high-performance, pressurized turbo diesel twin today.

A mock-up of the aircraft, dubbed by ATI as the fastest, most spacious and fuel-efficient business aircraft in its class, will also be on display.

Ravi Tripuraneni, founder and president of the Orange County, California-based company, says ATI is

in the final stages of selecting a powerplant for the RT-700, which is targeted at the business, air-taxi markets and special missions markets, with the 300hp (225kW) Thielert Aircraft Engines Centurion 4.0 and Teledyne Continental TSIO-550A both under evaluation.

The new RT-700 features a shorter fuselage and wings to reduce drag. "We have cut about 5ft [1.5m] off the 32ft fuselage - taking the space from

the large baggage compartment and bulkhead - but we have increased cabin height and width," Tripuraneni says.

The new design boasts a decrease in fuel consumption by up to 40% to around 26USgal/h, he adds.

The RT-700 has a maximum cruise speed of 280kt (520km/h), a rate of climb of 2,000ft/min (10.16m/s) and a range of 1,310nm (2,425km).

Hourly rate gives savings to travelers

Pioneering online charter company OneSky Jets (stand 4391) has launched its Latitude membership card, a pre-paid membership program guaranteeing a maximum hourly rate for on-demand private jet travel, including very light jets and turboprops. "What distinguishes our membership from conventional programs is the concept of a maximum occupied hourly rate – a rate that can only go down," says Greg Johnson, OneSky chief executive. The company estimates it can save up to 40% against its competition on popular routes.

Deposit

Latitude offers private jet hours for a deposit of \$100,000. With more than 1,500 private aircraft on its books operated by 150 Part 135 operators, the company trawls its database for dead-head legs to offer trips for less than the cost offered by conventional service providers.

"With other private jet membership programs, pricing is the same whether a member is going to a popular destination with good connections or a remote location", says Johnson. "OneSky's software can identify a reduced fare and pass this on directly to its members," he adds.

Majors focus on first Middle East conference

The Middle East, one of the biggest forecast growth areas of business aviation, has captured the attention of major players in the sector. The announcement at Orlando today that the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) has appointed an organizer for its annual conference and exhibition is an important step in providing a strong focus for that interest.

Ali Al Naqbi, founding chairman of the MEBAA (stand 4684), told a press conference that with business aviation activity growing at 15-20% annually, the time was ripe to launch the Middle East Business

Aviation (MEBA) conference and exhibition.

He announced that Fairs & Exhibitions (F&E), organizer of the Dubai air show, has agreed a long-term arrangement to manage MEBA.

The inaugural event, scheduled to be held in Dubai from 31 January-1 February 2007, looks likely to be a success, with confirmations from some of the world's leading airframers, including Canada's Bombardier, USA's Gulfstream and Cessna, Brazil's Embraer and Italy's Piaggio.

Despite growing interest in the Middle East from industry sectors including charter, maintenance, FBO and refurbishment, the

value of business aviation is not well understood in the region. Al Naqbi said his association was "looking to increased the region's awareness of the industry" and promote best practice.

In this regard, the MEBA is a good vehicle as it is aligned with MEBAA's goals. "The MEBA conference will be a crucial forum in identifying the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities existing in this lucrative sector throughout the Middle East and initiating the means of addressing them," he says.

The two-day conference will address the interests of two key audiences – aircraft buyers and industry operators.



Ali Al Naqbi: time is ripe.

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