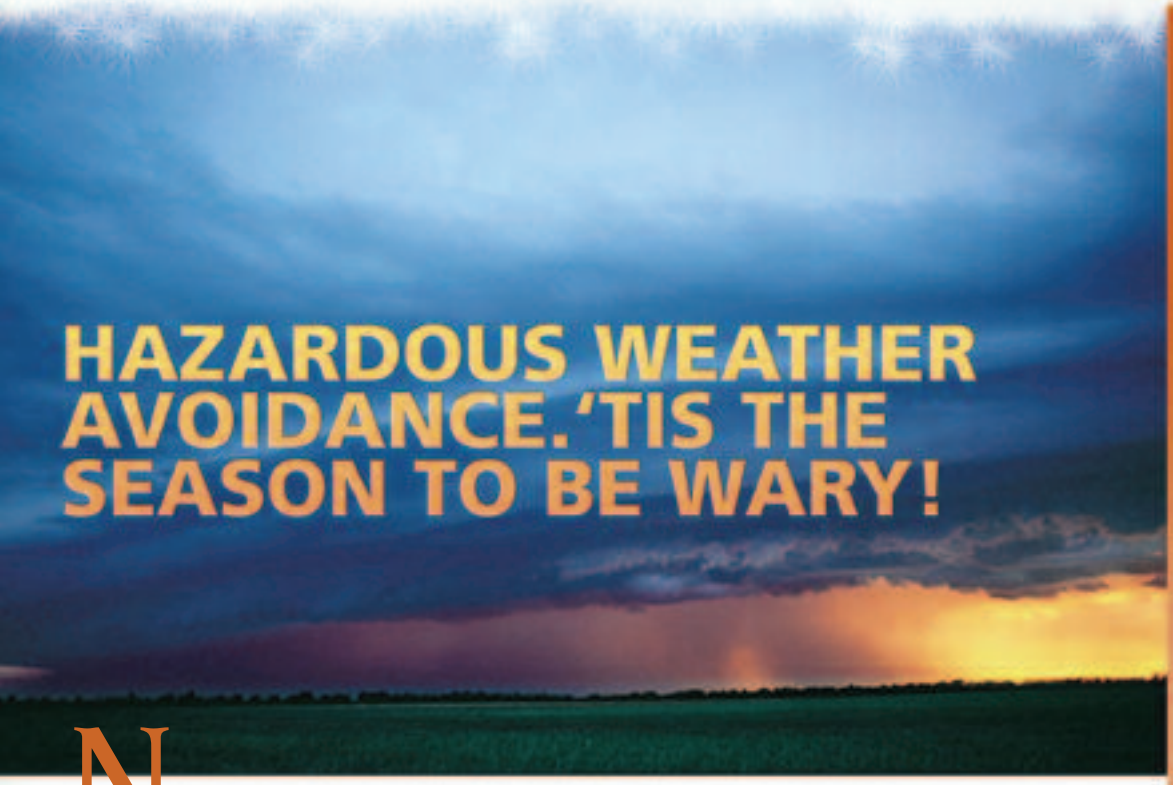
SPRING 2006

OWNER PILOT
Advantage

A Magazine for Owner/Pilots from Skytech Publications



HAZARDOUS WEATHER AVOIDANCE.'TIS THE SEASON TO BE WARY!

Naturally, we are all interested in avoiding scenes such as the one pictured above. We want to find the safest possible flight path to our destination – a path that guarantees thunderstorm avoidance. In this article we will discuss the equipment available to help you detect and safely circumnavigate storm systems.

Then we will give you an expert's storm hazard analysis and a valuable checklist to help you evaluate correctly the weather you encounter en route.

RADAR TECHNOLOGY

Modern airborne radar can display bearing and range to areas of precipitation in front of the aircraft, and by using the Doppler principle of frequency shift it can identify turbulence that is precipitation related.

How does this Doppler principle work? A storm cell is made up of tiny particles in motion – such as water droplets and dust. Some of these particles move faster than others, depending, of course, upon the movement of air currents within the cell. It stands to reason that the degree of variation in velocities of the particles would be a good measurement of the degree of turbulence – the greater the variation in air current movement, the greater the turbulence. And this can even be detected when it exists in an area of light rain, where you would not normally expect to find turbulence.

Radar equipment with a highly sensitive receiver/transmitter detects this motion in a cell by transmitting a pulse with a known frequency and then measuring the frequencies of the reflected signals. A high degree of variance in the reflected signal indicates the presence of turbulence.

With radar technology that also gives you a vertical display of weather information, you can see how fast a storm is building by monitoring the tops of individual cells.

*see **Thunderstorm** on page 4*

A NEW MAGAZINE IS LAUNCHED.

Relax. Enjoy. Pick up some useful information and have a little fun reading about some of your favorite subjects, such as flying your own aircraft and finding out what's happening in the field of business aviation.

Here is our mission: the editors of OWNER/PILOT Advantage are dedicated to bringing our readers enjoyable and informative articles in every quarterly issue. The magazine is edited with special care for people like you, and our editorial focus will always be on subjects that are relevant to your aviation interests.

Skytech, Inc., publisher of this magazine, is an aircraft sales and service company located in Baltimore, MD and Rock Hill, SC (Charlotte, NC metro area).

This magazine is definitely not an eight-page ad for Skytech, Inc. In addition to the editorial content, each issue will have two Skytech ads or one ad plus information about Skytech in an article that will be identified as an ADVERTORIAL or a CUSTOMER REPORT. This guarantees that you will know the article is about Skytech and/or its customers – which certainly does not preclude it from being very interesting, informative and helpful!

Your thoughts, suggestions, comments and criticism are important to us and we will always welcome reader feedback. Please respond to:

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888-386-3596

USED AIRCRAFT MARKETS MOSTLY SOFT WITH A FEW SHINING STARS.

Several issues are weighing heavy on the market from the high price of Avgas to extensive damage from the 2005 hurricane season to an aging fleet. Twin Cessnas, particularly, are struggling with the aging issue right now. According to JETNET, almost 60 percent of the Beech 58 Barons for sale are 1979 models or older. Of the Cessna 421 aircraft (including A, B and C models) for sale, 83 percent were built before 1980. Whether it's the Cessna Skyhawk, Piper Seneca or Lear 24, most airplanes still rely on 1970s vintage radios. The few low timers with new radios don't stay on the market long.

THE TURBOPROP MARKET

The late model and like-new turbine market is quite healthy. A large number of first-time buyers kept upward pressure on this segment during 2005. Beech King Air B200s clearly led the way gaining back almost all of the ground lost during the recession of 2001 and 2002. Piper Cheyenne activity is centered on the better airplanes, which are edging upward. Mitsubishis slipped again due to perennial bad PR. Single-engine turboprops, Caravans, TBMs and the Pilatus are strong and appreciating. Some very light jets such as the Eclipse and Citation Mustang should start delivering this year. We see no signs of a near-term negative impact on turboprops.

CHANGE FROM Q1 2005 TO NOW	
1985 King Air C90A	+$60,000
1985 King Air B200	+$190,000
1985 Cessna Conquest I	+$90,000
1985 Cessna Conquest II	+$60,000
1980 Merlin IIIB	- $20,000
1980 Mitsubishi Marquise	- $10,000
1980 PA Cheyenne II	+$20,000
1978 TC 690B	+$5,000

THE PISTON-TWIN MARKET

This market remains very soft, and price driven. Just about every twin lost value during 2005, with the exception of the 421 and Piper Chieftains.

CHANGE FROM Q1 2005 TO NOW	
1982 Beech B55 Baron	- $8,000
1990 Beech 58 Baron	- $5,000
1982 Beech Duke	- $5,000
1981 Cessna 310R	- $5,000
1982 Cessna 340A	- $6,000
1982 Cessna 414A	- $6,000
1982 Cessna 421C	+10,000
1981 Piper Aztec	- $1,000
1990 Piper Seneca	- $5,000
1982 Piper Chieftain	+$15,000

THE SINGLE-ENGINE MARKET

If you're feeding a 520 cubic-inch engine, the $100 hamburger is a thing of the past. Fortunately, there are buyers who don't seem too worried about operating costs. Most of the action in this market is with those airplanes that are cheap to own and cheap to operate. •

CHANGE FROM Q1 2005 TO NOW	
1980 BeechV35B	- $2,000
1990 Beech A36	- $7,000
1984 Cessna 172	+$1,000
1978 Cessna Cardinal	+$1,000
1978 Cessna 177RG	+$2,000
1981 Cessna 182R	+$1,000
1984 Cessna 210N	0
2000 Cirrus SR20	- $5,000
1990 Mooney M20M	- $5,000
1984 Piper Archer	0
1990 Piper Arrow	- $2,000
1990 Saratoga SP	- $2,000

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HEARD IN THE PILOT'S LOUNGE

Stop by the pilot's lounge for intriguing anecdotes, fascinating facts and a dash of hard-earned lessons.

Q: How many airports in the U.S. with runway lengths greater than 3,000 feet are not accessible by airlines?
A: About 3,500 in the lower 48 states. If the runways were laid end to end the pavement would easily reach from New York City to Mexico City.

Q: What size was the largest hailstone ever recorded?
A: Bowling ball size. If you were flying on September 3, 1970, over Coffeyville, Kan., you would have seen hail up to eight inches in diameter weighing one pound, 11 ounces.

Q: What is the only aircraft equipped to fly into the eye of a mature thunderstorm?
A: The North American T-28 Trojan. The special T-28 sports armor-plated leading edges, steel bracing over the canopy, and a three-quarter-inch-thick windshield.

Q: How many sonic booms does an aircraft create when going supersonic?
A: Two. The nose and tail of all supersonic aircraft, including the space shuttle, create sonic booms that occur just a split second apart. By the way, did you know that thunder is a sonic boom created by lightning?

see *PILOT'S LOUNGE* on page 6

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SELECTED AS A DEALER FOR THREE MAJOR OEMs.

Have you ever wondered how or why an aircraft manufacturer selects a company to be a dealer – a contracted representative to sell and service their aircraft in an exclusive geographical area?

Major general aviation aircraft manufacturers typically operate with just six to twelve such representatives to cover the entire country. Consequently, they rarely have a need to look for fresh representation of their products, which makes new aircraft dealerships hard to come by.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

When an opportunity does present itself the process typically starts with an examination of which companies have a verifiable reputation for integrity and experience in sales, combined with a regional presence (in that order). The list is quickly reduced to include only those companies that possess the maintenance and avionics capabilities required to support the sale and after-sale service of technologically advanced new aircraft.

Modern facilities to house those capabilities carry tremendous weight, because manufacturers want their representatives to look like they know what they are doing. A positive first impression is followed by a make-or-break exam – can the prospective company qualify as the Manufacturer's Authorized Service Center, including factory training for all of the company's technicians?

If you pass that exam, then you have to display the financial capacity to spend tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars for model-specific tooling to support the newly trained technicians. Having an FAA Certified Repair Station to back up the Factory Service Center will also be viewed favorably if not required outright. Finally, the operating systems of the prospective representative must be advanced enough to integrate seamlessly into the systems employed by the manufacturer. In the final analysis, any company that survives the selection process has to be somewhat unique in the industry.

THE SKYTECH ADVANTAGE

SkyTech is the contracted Dealer for three major manufacturers – Cessna, Piper, and Pilatus. We're the only company in the world that can say that. We bundle the attitude, capabilities, and experience that make us unique into a phrase we call the SkyTech Advantage – a collection of very meaningful customer benefits. Our advantages over other companies are concentrated in two major arenas – Technical Services and Aircraft Sales.

On the Technical Services side, in addition to our three Authorized Service Centers, we bring two FAA Certified Repair Stations to the table (CRS C41R727N and CRS LF1R294K). These repair Stations employ Certificated A&Ps who are organized into teams. Each of the Team Leaders is an IA, as are a number of the Team Members. All of our Technicians are cross-trained on all of the aircraft that we service.

Each Team is connected to real-time information via wireless laptops, and our computerized maintenance ensures that the records for any work that we do on your aircraft are always available – even if you misplaced your logbooks. Additionally, we feature industry-leading expertise in major airframe repairs for our core models. And we have been doing it for 30 years.

Our Sales Representatives function more like educators than salesmen, and our staff has more than 125 years of experience educating potential aircraft buyers. We've tracked sales of specific models for over 20 years and our databases contain a wealth of market data that is simply unavailable anywhere else. Moreover, our multiple OEM affiliations provide a comprehensive overview of industry activities and trends, plus first-hand information that can help you with purchase opportunities and decisions. Year in and year out, 50% of our sales are repeat customers and referrals.

You can see that the SkyTech Advantage is really your advantage. So please feel free to partake at any time. •

Advertorial

Thunderstorm
from page 1

STORMSCOPE – A DIFFERENT LOOK

Initially, a popular misconception was that Stormscope simply detected lightning. Actually, most of what Stormscope receives is electrical noise. It puts dots on a display showing where air friction is – warm air and cold air mixing and creating static electricity.

During the cumulus stage of a thunderstorm, there can be severe turbulence, strong winds and convective windshear, but the cell is usually precipitation free. In this situation, radar will be unable to show you the hazards that exist, but Stormscope will accurately define the area to avoid.

An ideal companion to airborne radar, Stormscope can "see" ahead when radar signal attenuation will not allow you to see the storm behind the storm. It maps electrical discharges throughout the area, 360° around the aircraft from up to 200 miles away, with discharge points indicating storm size. Simply stay 25 nm away from the discharge pattern indicated on your display to avoid thunderstorm hazards.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EQUIPMENT

In the final analysis, that "computer" in your skull is your most important equipment for dealing with hazardous weather. Your analysis of information and your judgment are the main factors in your likelihood of living to be a wise, old pilot.

Weather detection equipment can only show you where areas of precipitation and turbulence exist. What it is, or what it is about to become, calls for a subjective judgment by the pilot.

For that reason, Archie Trammell developed his "Objective Storm Hazards Indexing Test," which has assisted pilots at all levels of experience in making good decisions for many years. We will cover the first six of his ten questions, because they require no data from onboard equipment that you may or may not have.

THIS TEST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Each "yes" answer is bad news, indicating a thunderstorm potential, perhaps a very serious one.

1. Is the local atmosphere significantly unstable?

This is the critical question. If the atmosphere is unstable, that radar echo or cloud up ahead is most likely a thunderstorm. If it's extremely unstable, the storm could be severe.

For an answer to this question, refer to the Convective Outlook for the period, from the National Severe Storms Laboratory.

2. Is the surface dewpoint greater than 10° C?

Based on historical records, when the dewpoint is less than 50° F (10° C), a severe thunderstorm is improbable. But above a dewpoint of 50° F, the possibility for a serious thunderstorm exists. The higher the dewpoint, the greater the danger, because surface level moisture is the fuel of a thunderstorm and dewpoint is a direct measure of moisture content.

3. Is the temperature/dewpoint spread greater than 17° C?

When it is, the moisture content is low. This is significant only when a radar echo is present or when you've visually identified a cumulonimbus formation producing rain. If the rain aloft falls into a high temperature/dewpoint spread – meaning a warm, dry atmosphere – the raindrops will tend to evaporate. When water evaporates it cools the air, and it will sink. The result will be vertical shears and possibly one or more strong microbursts.

Answers to questions 2 and 3 are available from any weather station and are always given in the ATIS.

4. Is the thunderstorm's speed of movement greater than 10 knots?

To estimate gust potential, add 30 knots to the speed at which a thunderstorm is moving across the ground. A 10-knot or greater speed of movement may result in gusts near the surface in excess of 40 knots. A speed greater than 20 knots means it's a severe thunderstorm.

The answer to question 4 is not always easy to acquire. The best source is ATC, because often a controller will watch the speed of storm movement in order to anticipate traffic flow. However, you'll have to ask for the information.

5. Is there visible evidence of a hazard?

Cloud to ground lightning is cause for extreme caution. Even cloud-to-cloud lightning is a bad sign. And, certainly, the presence of a roll cloud, particularly a vertical one, is a sign of extreme danger.

6. Is it the southernmost cell in a line?

The southernmost cell is often the most dangerous one because surface level moisture fuels thunderstorms. In the U.S., surface level moisture comes predominantly from the Gulf of Mexico. Therefore, the cell at the south end of the line has the least competition for fuel, and it will grow faster.

Remember that when cells organize into a line or cluster, there's a local instability in an otherwise relatively stable atmosphere. So this is another source for an answer to question 1.

Remember, three or four "yes" answers to the six questions do not necessarily mean that a dangerous thunderstorm will develop, but you will know that the potential is there. As the "yes" answers add up, your natural optimism should begin to disappear, because this is one of those times when Pilot Pessimism can be a great aid to flight safety.

Have a safe thunderstorm season! •

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NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW AFFECTS ALL PILOTS.

NEW LAW CONTAINS FIVE-YEAR LOOK-BACK FOR RECKLESS MISCONDUCT.

Recent changes in the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005 generally received scant attention from high net worth individuals.

Most aircraft owners reflect little on potential exposure resulting from a catastrophic accident. However, they should recognize that it is possible for them to reposition their assets and control the attachability of them in the event of a devastating judgment. The judgment is of value only to the extent that the creditor has the right to attach assets in its satisfaction.

PILOT PLANNING NEEDS ATTENTION

Exemptions from creditor attachment under the new bankruptcy law are generally determined under state law. If an individual has resided in the state within the prior two years, his resident state will generally control. However, the bankruptcy law overrides state exemptions in the case of willful or reckless misconduct. For example, if an aircraft accident causes serious physical injury or death to another individual, and it was shown that the pilot's conduct constituted recklessness, protected assets could be converted to attachable assets.

The homestead exemption protects a primary residence from creditors, and varies significantly under state law. The new bankruptcy provision greatly curtails the effectiveness of this exemption for new purchases of all taxpayers and generally eliminates it as an exception for injured plaintiffs in the case of serious physical injury or death. This special treatment applies during the first five years following the alleged misconduct.

The second provision makes it more difficult for creators of asset protection trusts to protect assets against future claims. Under the new law, if assets are transferred to an asset protection trust with the intent to hinder, delay, or defraud current or future creditors, the asset transfer may be presumed fraudulent if the person declares bankruptcy within ten years.

Although the new bankruptcy law has singled out two exemptions and rendered them less effective, asset protection strategies are still available under federal and state exemptions. One of the most commonly recognized exemptions is for qualified pension and profit sharing plans. The new law also protects rollover IRAs to the same extent it covers qualified plans. The law also adds a provision to cover contributory IRAs established through annual contributions, though only $1,000,000 in assets is protected.

WHAT SHOULD A PILOT DO?

Asset protection planning is now more important than ever for pilots. Adequate liability insurance is virtually non-existent, and the new bankruptcy law greatly reduces the effectiveness of certain planning tools. It is important to recognize that state law exemptions often turn on who is the beneficiary of the assets. It is also important to recognize that asset protection planning cannot be done without consideration of estate planning issues, second marriage issues, special needs issues, and other non-tax dispositive goals.

When seeking assistance in designing an effective asset protection vehicle, it is important to remind the planning professional that a significant portion of your exposure could be subject to attack under the "reckless misconduct" exception. To be effective, planning must be undertaken with the recognition of this new exposure. •

Louis M. Meiners, Jr., CPA, JD – February 13, 2006

Louis M. Meiners, Jr., is an attorney and CPA who serves as president of Advocate Aircraft Taxation Company. Advocate's practice is limited to serving the needs of owners and operators of aircraft. Services include aircraft operational analysis, sales and use tax management on aircraft acquisitions, income tax planning, federal excise tax planning, and representation before taxing authorities. Meiners can be reached at (888) 325-1942, or loum@advocatetax.com.

This article is designed to provide information of general interest to the public and is not intended to offer specific legal advice. You should consult Advocate Aircraft Taxation Company or your tax and aviation advisor if you have a matter requiring attention. Note: This memorandum represents a general overview of tax developments and should not be relied upon without an independent, professional analysis of how any of these provisions may apply to a specific situation. Disclaimer: Any tax advice contained in the body of this article was not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, by the recipient for the purpose of avoiding penalties that may be imposed under the Internal Revenue Code or applicable state of local tax law provisions.

PILOT'S LOUNGE
from page 2

Q: What does the Beech King Air C90B have 17,074 feet of?
A: Electrical and avionics wiring. Stack the Eiffel Tower on top of the Empire State Building on top of The Matterhorn and you'll have enough wire to stretch from base camp to the top of the tower.

Q: Who set two world records by flying a 1994 Piper Dakota around the world solo?
A: Polly Vacher. At 57, the physiotherapist and mother of three from Birmingham, England, is the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean in a single-engine airplane and the oldest woman to fly solo around the world. Vacher took off from Birmingham on January 11, 2001, and returned home 29,000 miles and 124 days later on May 17. She circled the globe to raise money for a charity, the Royal International Air Tattoo Flying Scholarships for the Disabled, which funds scholarships to help paraplegics learn how to fly. •

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE UNEXPECTED OCCURS.

As the reliability of current production airframes, power plants and electronics continues to improve, the likelihood that a failure of one of these systems will lead to an incident or accident becomes more remote each year. However, distractions at a critical moment during takeoff or landing, an unexpected wind shear, poor runway conditions, a missed step in a checklist or an incursion with wildlife are much more likely and are just a sample of the many incidents that occur each year and cause significant damage to aircraft. For many owner pilots, this is a completely new scenario in which they have no prior experience. In most cases there are no injuries to anything except the aircraft.

Most pilots are well aware that one of their first calls should be to advise their insurance broker that there has been an incident. If there has been no personal injury and nothing failed in-flight to cause the incident, the FAA or NTSB will not get involved. But, as a precaution, it is not a bad idea to notify the local Flight Standards District Office and let them "officially" advise you as to whether they wish to pursue the matter further.

RECOVERY

As your aircraft is recovered, find out if there is any inside storage space available. Not only will this help protect your investment from further damage, a damaged aircraft is an obvious target for possible avionics theft. If there is no inside storage available, consider having a local shop remove the panel mounted avionics and put them under lock and key or give them to you for safekeeping. If you are lucky enough to acquire inside storage, make sure the aircraft is locked and secured.

ESTIMATE PROCESS

The estimate of repair is probably the most important step in the process and cannot begin too soon. Depending on the parts required, it may take a few days for the estimate to be completed. You will want as much detail as possible and the repair estimate should be prepared based on an on-site inspection of the aircraft. The estimate cannot include any items not related to the repair or anything that could be construed as "betterment."

A complete set of digital photos are important and will be used frequently to help in expediting the completion of the estimate. It is also important to note, that while you can authorize anything on your aircraft to be accomplished, the insurance company has to approve the charges prior to actual accomplishment.

ADJUSTERS

Once your insurance broker notifies the parent company of the incident you will receive a call from the insurance adjuster. When you speak with the adjuster, it is in your best interest to clearly state your desires for the repair of the aircraft and who should perform the repairs (if known). Be cautious about agreeing to anything at this point as it may come back to haunt you. The adjuster will ask you to forward a repair estimate and most likely will visit the aircraft in person. Remember, you have full control over who will repair your aircraft and how the repairs will be accomplished. The insurance company controls how much they will pay. Be very cautious about authorizing any work without insurance company approvals or you may be financially at risk. Getting the detailed estimate prepared and approved by all parties is paramount at this stage, and once that is done, the repair process can begin.

REPAIR FACILITY

Depending upon the location of the incident, the type of aircraft and the extent of the damage, it is probable that your regular service facility will not be able to handle the repair – and there are many factors to consider when selecting a repair facility. One of the most important questions to ask is: have you performed this type of repair on this type of aircraft previously? If the answer is yes, ask for some references.

Many facilities throughout the country are capable of repairing less complex aircraft and perform adequate repairs on a regular basis. However, when repairs involve high performance aircraft with pressurized cabins, there are fewer facilities with the experience and specialized tooling required. In short, for this type of aircraft you are best protected by working with a factory-authorized service center that is most likely an FAA repair station. This will ensure that they have direct access to parts and have current documented training and inspection procedures reviewed by the FAA. They will be better equipped to deal with any FAA approvals and be in a position to work with you every step of the way through the process. The insurance company may ask for an additional estimate or two for their verification, but they have a difficult time arguing with accepted procedures and repair practices as outlined by the manufacturer. Normally, having repairs performed by a manufacturer's authorized service facility helps to minimize any diminished value relating to the damage.

This has been a brief review of initial steps involved in the repair process should an accident occur. Remember that being proactive at the beginning sets the tone for a successful repair project – one that will have you flying again as soon as possible. •

A WORD To The WISE

from Dave Conover

Downtime due to maintenance, even when scheduled, is frustrating. Giving up the freedom and flexibility we enjoy with a personal/business aircraft even for a short period of time is difficult. However, when an unscheduled event occurs, "Mr. Murphy" makes sure it is at the most inopportune time.

REDUCE UNSCHEDULED EVENTS

While no one questions the requirements for regular maintenance, trying to reduce the number of unscheduled events can be the key to a more reliable aircraft. The corporate and professional aircraft managers have become very proficient with this, since their jobs can depend on having a reliable aircraft. However, with a little planning ahead, owner/operators can improve their dispatch reliability and possibly even save a few dollars!

First of all, many of us are not fortunate enough to have our maintenance facilities based on the same field as our aircraft or have a technician on staff. Thus, even the smallest event will involve flight time and add expense to our budget. So in short, the goal is to capture as much as possible at each scheduled event to eliminate excessive service flights. With fuel being one of the highest contributors to an aircraft's direct operating cost, this is an important consideration.

ADVANCED PLANNING HELPS

Secondly, plan ahead for preventative maintenance. For this you may need some assistance from your service facility. Many of the facilities servicing current production, high performance piston/turbine aircraft have a maintenance tracking system on your aircraft. If you know you have a large phase inspection, avionics upgrade or annual coming due, a little research in advance might be worthwhile. Changing an item that may be due for replacement in a short period of time (such as a vacuum pump or starter generator) or performing a service function slightly ahead of schedule (transponder inspection or fuel nozzle check) can be a good idea. It will not only eliminate a future service visit and prevent the possibility of failure on the road in a remote location, it allows the work to be accomplished in conjunction with other activities. In some cases, there can be some labor reduction when events are combined. Additionally, in today's "just in time" inventory structure, if a part is not back ordered, you may save some dollars on shipping or expediting fees.

BREAK MURPHY'S LAW

Historically, the normal general aviation attitude is to get the aircraft in and out of the shop as fast as possible. However, by taking a step back and working with your service facility to identify possible high failure items and to forecast time replacement items in advance, you may actually save a few dollars. And you could circumvent an unscheduled event that "Mr. Murphy" was just waiting to send your way. •

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