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... and other features

SUMMER 2009

OWNER PILOT Advantage

A Magazine for Owner/Pilots from *Skytech, Inc.* Publications



STAY AHEAD OF THE BUYERS AND YOUR COMPETITION.

The legendary Warren Buffet says to "Buy when everyone is selling and sell when everyone is buying." So far, it's worked out pretty well for him.

Whether you are on the fence about adding an airplane to your business tool belt, or trying to justify the leap to satisfy the age-old "HFF" syndrome (Higher, Faster, Farther), 2009 appears to be the perfect time for someone in the market for an aircraft. There are deals to be made and taxes to be saved, and now is the time to start the process. Technology aside, there has never been a greater need to put yourself in front of your best customers,

and wring another productive hour out of the work day.

As General Aviation patrons, we know and understand the benefits a business or personal airplane can provide. We are in tough economic times, with aviation recently taking the brunt of both the media's and Washington's blows. The fact remains, however; General Aviation simply provides what no other means of transportation can. Maintaining productivity during business trips, having the ability to visit remote (and sometimes multiple) locations in short periods of time,

see *Stay Ahead* on page 4

THE SUN IS COMING OUT.

I'll be the first to admit that I have spent some time on the sidelines regarding major purchases this year. The rollercoaster that we call our economy has kept us all off balance.

That being said, the storm clouds are beginning to part, and the values of used aircraft are stabilizing. The real reasons we own and operate aircraft are still valid. With Bonus Depreciation, the government has handed us some compelling reasons to look at a new airplane this year. Judging by the shift of the political winds, we don't feel like bonus depreciation will be around much longer.

Although we are not experts in which way Washington is leaning, here at Skytech we do know quite a bit about airplanes. We have the ability to analyze your travel needs, pilot skills, and financial appetite to put you in the right aircraft. Feel free to call us to see what we can do for you.

Skytech, Inc., publisher of this magazine is an aircraft sales and service company with locations at Baltimore, MD (MTN) Westminster, MD (DMW) and Rock Hill, SC (UZA-Charlotte Metro Area)

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

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Your opinions, suggestions, as well as ideas for new articles and content are important for continuing improvement and growth that will serve all our readers.

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Thank you!

Vref

POTENTIAL EARLY STAGES OF A LEVELING OUT.

Seven of the eight Vref Market Indices posted no change or much smaller price declines than the previous two quarters. Activity is up, almost across the board. It is possible that we may be in the early stages of a leveling out. In a market that has been desperate to find a base, this is some rare good news.

Though this recession may be more severe than any before it, the classic recovery processes still have to take place. First, sellers have to decide whether they want to sell an airplane or just list it for sale. This is happening in ever-greater numbers as owners reduce asking prices. Also, buyers have to realize that while owners are motivated, they're not crazy.

THE TURBOPROP MARKET

In the recent quarter, the Vref Turboprop Index fell 5.4%, exactly matching its low in 2003. That is a tiny drop compared to the last two quarters. Inventory numbers remain high. According to Jetnet, more than 14% of the King Air B200 fleet is for sale. Prices have reached a level that is more attractive to buyers, and airplanes are beginning to move. As always, the better airplanes and the better deals go away first.

THE SINGLE-ENGINE MARKET

After years of steady declines, most light piston singles have stabilized. There was no change in the Vref Light Single Index and barely a 1% decrease in value for the average complex single in the recent quarter. Generally, the four cylinder, fixed-gear airplanes continue to fare better. However, activity is improved for almost everything except the high time or cosmetically challenged. Complex singles may be flattening out after fifteen quarters of searching for the bottom.

THE PISTON-TWIN MARKET

Both the Vref Light Twin Index and the Pressurized Twin Index are flat this quarter. We have not seen this since 2005. Players in this market know that piston twins have endured all the negatives, such as higher operating costs and stricter insurance requirements. In recent years, many potential buyers fled to much faster and cheaper-to-operate Cirrus SR22s

and Cessna Columbia 400s. However, at very attractive prices, Beech Barons and Twin Cessnas remain a smart choice, especially if you are flying at night or over unfriendly terrain.

SYNOPSIS

Stability seems to be returning. Stories of super cheap airplanes continue to confound the market. When tracked down, there is a reason why they are cheap. In a good economy or bad, very high time, damaged or light equipped airplanes do not constitute a legitimate bottom of the market – they should be considered below the bottom. So many aircraft have been so heavily discounted that it is separating the buyers from the shoppers. Real buyers are sensing the world is not coming to an end, but the best deals will be.

With a March to May stock market rally, some claim that the recession is waning. Others remind us there are at least two other shoes that have to drop – commercial real estate and credit cards. Since this recession is touted to be unprecedented, it is logical to believe that a recovery might also be difficult to foretell. When the sun finally comes out tomorrow – or next year – airplanes will still be valuable tools. And, they have never been a better deal. While much of corporate America tries to distance itself from corporate airplanes, many visionaries are actually creating flight departments. For airplanes that are priced right, the buying has started. •

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CONSERVATIVE: BUT NOT PARALYZED.

John Foster, President of Skytech, Inc.

I'm acquainted with a couple who would be first-time home buyers, but won't buy a home today because they characterize themselves as "conservative". Their stated concern is that one of them might lose their job. "Conservative" is not the same thing as "Paralyzed By Fear". A conservative first-time home buyer buys a house when the values are devastated and the interest rates are the lowest in a lifetime – like now. Someone who is paralyzed by fear will pass on the best buying opportunity of a lifetime because of employment concerns. What's curious is that as long as you are in the work force there will always be an opportunity to lose a job – even if you own your business. So what you are really talking about are the probabilities of losing a job and not being able to get another one. And even that can be mitigated by buying mortgage insurance.

At Skytech, we are conservative without being paralyzed by fear. As evidence of that, despite the economy we just completed a construction project in our Charlotte-area facility, and have initiated a major renovation and construction project of a new Baltimore-area location that will become fully functional in the Fourth Quarter of 2009. We're doing that because we are looking ahead - with great enthusiasm, frankly - to 2012-2013. One of the many reasons for our optimism is the advent of the PiperJet, which is a high-tech iteration of a conservative, Single-Engine airplane. Conservatives like us love single-engine, turbine powered airplanes. Just our cup of tea.

Being conservative also means that if you have a sincere need for air transportation you will seriously entertain the purchase of a single-engine turboprop. It's the lowest common denominator, if you will, among dedicated business airplanes. Low operating costs, outstanding performance (SE airplanes typically have a higher percentage of their gross weight available as

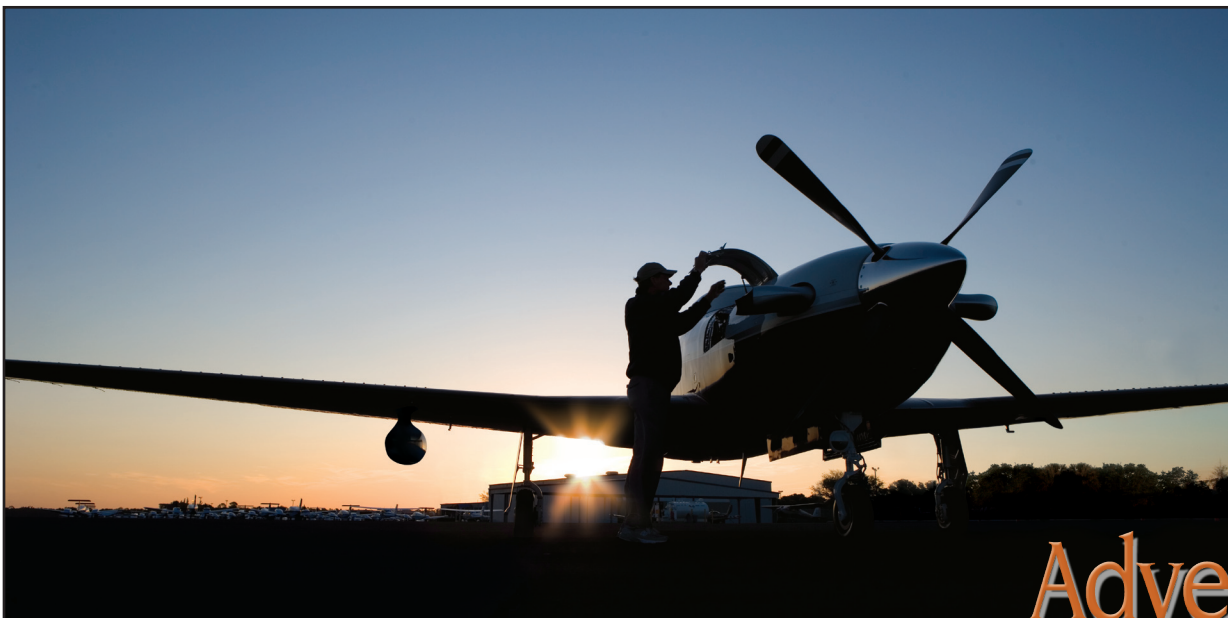
useful load), multiple backup systems and "under-the-radar" financial outlays all come together in a single engine turbine. It's a conservative's dream.

Conservative airplane owners are well-advised to buy airplanes when purchase prices and interest rates are at their lowest. We think that's now – the bottom is here – and even if we were mistaken we're so close to it that a year from now any continued devaluation will have been more than made up for.

And while I'm on the topic of Single Engine turbines I would be remiss if I didn't point out how SE turbines ought to be the darling of the Obama Administration. If you are familiar with Tom Friedman's book "Hot, Flat, and Crowded" he consistently talks about how overcrowded cities create a significant strain on the environment. Worse yet, large cities tend to be located along coastlines, making them a) susceptible to natural disasters and b) crowded by design because everyone lives near the jobs. And most of the jobs are in the metro areas.

So what if the jobs were better dispersed across the country? General Aviation actually helps environmental issues by not requiring people to live in major metropolitan areas in order to get access to air travel. It also allows companies that can create good-paying jobs to locate wherever in the U.S. they would like, reducing the strain on everything from roads and bridges to the electrical grid. Airplanes also reduce the need to grow toward coastal cities, especially in the digital age. Anything that can't be moved at the speed of light can be moved in aluminum containers that jump mountain ranges and whole states at will.

How about a Presidential endorsement of an efficient, low carbon footprint, conservative business travel device to spur the economy? Anybody up for that? •



Advertorial

possessing the flexibility to command your own schedule and controlling the security/safety of employees and family are all reasons owning an airplane has been, and will continue to be, a justifiable expense. Certain conditions exist in today's market that make the leap to aircraft ownership a lot easier, whether you're a first-time or repeat buyer.

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

Although the new administration has not been particularly kind to general aviation, there are some significant opportunities to take advantage of. This past February, President Obama and Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The passage of this act reinstated bonus depreciation for 2009 and raised the Section 179 Expense deduction back to the 2008 level of \$250,000. Bonus depreciation applies to the purchase of new aircraft only, and is worth up to 50% of the total asset cost.

As a simple example, if the purchase price of an aircraft is \$100,000, then the bonus depreciation deduction can be as high as \$50,000, on-top-of (or a "bonus" to) the standard depreciation you would expect to take in the first year of ownership. All total, the first year depreciation in this example can be around \$60,000 and would go a long way to reducing your tax liability in 2009. Furthermore, the 2009 act expanded the carry-back period from two years to up-to five years for certain

qualified businesses. Improvements such as avionics upgrades made to a currently owned aircraft also qualify for 50% bonus depreciation. The Section 179 Expense deduction of up to \$250,000 applies to both new and pre-owned aircraft, with a phase out starting with aircraft valued above \$800,000. One constant with both these programs is that they expire at the end of 2009. Considering the uncertain political future, now is the time to start planning so that these incredible opportunities don't pass you by.

THE NEW AIRCRAFT ADVANTAGE

There is nothing quite like a new aircraft. In taking advantage of these tax incentives by stepping up to a new aircraft in 2009, one can even mitigate the lagging resale value of their current airplane. The valuable tax savings these programs allow, combined with the known advantages a new airplane delivers, are serious factors to consider even if your current airplane's market value isn't where you would like it to be. The end difference in the perceived value you lose by selling your current aircraft at a reduced figure could easily be covered, if not eclipsed, by the value your new aircraft presents through the tax program's effect on your company's bottom line. Beyond the financial reasons for considering a new aircraft this year, there is still the simple fact that nothing beats a new airplane for ease of ownership. Warranty programs, new-low time systems and the most advanced technology available are all reasons this opportunity should merit serious consideration. Warranty programs

bring lower direct operating costs and a new aircraft resets those pesky time-life items back to zero.

BUYER'S OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PRE-OWNED MARKET

To paraphrase Fletcher Aldrich at Vref, "This is surely a great time to get the aircraft you want, equipped the way you want it at a lower price than you ever thought would be possible." If a new aircraft isn't in the cards, there are plenty of opportunities waiting for you in the pre-owned market. Potentially combined with the raised Section 179 Expensing option, the pre-owned market presents buying opportunities for all makes and models. The overall aircraft market is in a state of correction, with prices retreating from the sky-high bubble experienced over the past few years. Through it all, aircraft continue to remain an incredible business asset, with values of popular models typically hovering in the 70-75% range in a period of four to five years after the initial purchase. It would be hard to identify another piece of capital equipment that can provide the advantages a business aircraft can, all while maintaining strong overall resale numbers.

Adding a business aircraft to your company, or upgrading your current model, may have been a wish for quite some time. Your warranty might be nearing the end, your engine may be timing out or you may finally want to make that leap to the newest technology. The reasons to purchase an airplane will always be around; however, the time frame for these incredible deals has a finite date. •



A NEW WORKHORSE JOINS ISLAND AIRLINES' FLEET.

Anyone who has spent time in Cape Cod or Nantucket has surely seen red and white twin Cessna's criss-crossing the sky ferrying passengers, cargo and anything else you can imagine to and from the mainland. For the past eighteen years, Island Airlines has operated Cessna 402's exclusively, making the airplane a mainstay of this New England community. Last December, Island Airlines added a fresh workhorse to their fleet and the first new-generation regional airliner to the area in nearly 25 years: a brand-new Cessna Grand Caravan.

The Cessna Caravan is proven with more than 1700 models built to date, having

icing system, also introduced in 2008, for increased safety throughout the harsh New England winters.

The Cessna Grand Caravan is utilized by airline operators worldwide for its adaptability, reliability and economy. Island Airlines' Caravan is configured for nine passengers, with a cargo pod underneath for baggage and other freight. Since its introduction to the fleet, Islands' Caravan has been completing between 15 to 20 flights to Nantucket each day. A flight to/from Nantucket takes about 15 minutes to complete at typical cruising altitudes of 2,000 to 3,000 feet. In addition

anywhere from 40 to 60 percent less ambient noise than the twin-engine Cessna 402's, and also has a quieter cabin inside. Christina Lounsbury, the noise abatement coordinator for the airport, conducted an airport noise report that states the 402's register 73 decibels at their loudest point compared to 68 decibels for the Caravan. Furthermore, the length of noise has also been decreased with the Caravan to 18 seconds from the constant 29 seconds of the 402's.

W. Scott LaForge points out that that Grand Caravan has "more leg, shoulder and head room and air-conditioned comfort"



Officially welcoming the Grand Caravan to the fleet.

"This is the first of the Caravans for our present fleet of Cessna 402's and we have high hopes to add more."



Receiving FAA certification for the Caravan to begin airline operations.

logged in excess of 13 million fleet hours, and performing missions as varied as military, cargo, passenger and executive transport. In 2008 Cessna added the Garmin G1000 Glass cockpit as standard equipment to the Caravan's avionics; integrating all primary flight, engine and sensor data to provide intuitive, at-a-glance situational awareness. Standard equipment also includes the impressive capabilities of the new Garmin digital, fully-integrated GFC 700 automated flight control system. All of this brings new levels of safety and confidence to an already proven airframe. Carl A. Vogel, Island Airline's Director of Operations, has this to say about the new avionics: "It replaces a lot of mechanical gauges [that have] moving parts, meaning less chances of breakdown." In addition to the advanced avionics, Island's Grand Caravan is equipped with a TKS anti-

icing system, also introduced in 2008, for increased safety throughout the harsh New England winters. The Grand Caravan is utilized for cargo operations through Island's Cape and Islands Air Freight service. Concerning cargo operations, W. Scott LaForge, Island Airlines' CEO and President, notes that "Island Airlines already carries more than three million pounds of cargo per year, including its daily morning newspaper flights to the Islands". The Grand Caravan's ability to carry almost 4,000 pounds in a cargo configuration, including over 1,000 pounds in the underbelly pod, will certainly bolster Islands' cargo presence in the region. The locations served by Islands' cargo operations include Nantucket, Boston, Hyannis, New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard and Provincetown.

Another benefit realized by passengers and residents alike is the Grand Caravan's significantly reduced noise footprint. The single 675 hp turbo-prop engine produces

than the 402's as well. Phillip Geraci, Islands' Director of Customer Relations, adds that the Caravan has become very popular with passengers, saying "now people are more apt to relax and wait to get on the Caravan".

"This is the first of the Caravans for our present fleet of Cessna 402's and we have high hopes to add more" says W. Scott LaForge. "The Caravan is synonymous to comfort, reliability, durability and safety." Skytech's relationship with Island Airlines began over 20 years ago when the process of bringing this new generation airplane to the Cape was first considered. The addition of the Grand Caravan to Island Airlines' fleet ensures that their tradition of satisfying customers remains in good hands. •

THE NEW G1000

The very first Meridian to roll off the production line in 2001 had an avionics suite that left impressions of commanding “big iron”, and surely invoked the feeling of having “truly arrived” for many pilots. At the time, the arrangement of Meggitt glass attitude/heading reference displays, engine/system monitors and a dual Garmin 530 stack proved to be as good as it gets. As a testament to Piper’s forward thinking, today these panels still provide the state-of-the-art functions found in much larger business jets while maintaining a low pilot workload. As impressive as the first generation avionics package was, the second raised the bar even higher. An Avidyne Entegra avionics suite was introduced in

either an Avidyne Entegra or Garmin G1000 avionics suite in the Meridian. In the world of avionics announcements, the G1000 set-up in the Meridian is not to be missed. This fully integrated, intuitive system offers features (both seen and unseen by the pilot) that elevate this generation of the Meridian into a class of its own. In this, part one of a two part series, we will explore just some of the impressive features now available and provide a sampling of the highlights awaiting future owners/operators.

The G1000 system comprises pilot and co-pilot 10” PFD’s, a 15” center MFD, GFC700 fully integrated digital autopilot, dual audio panels, dual air data computers, a fully integrated transponder and a console-

differences immediately upon entering the G1000 equipped airplane. While making your way to the cockpit, there is no mistaking the enormous center MFD that not only will increase any pilot’s situational awareness, but also that of any passengers in the cabin. Seriously, this is one big display and can easily provide passengers with a map view of the progress made and how much is left of a trip. As you settle into the front seat more design changes appear. Due to the placement of the keypad on the power control console, the bleed air valve and rudder trim control have been moved to the panel; both easy to reach and operate. In addition to the normal electrical system familiar to all Meridian operators, the



2006 models, comprised of pilot and co-pilot Primary Flight Displays (PFDs), a center Multi-Function Display (MFD) and dual Garmin 430's for GPS/COMM/NAV. The simplicity of operation coupled with large displays, and the features they provided, afforded owners with capabilities not only similar to larger business jets, but in some cases better. The Avidyne set-up left many asking the question: “What could possibly be next?” or “How can this get any better?” Enter the Garmin G1000 Meridian.

Recently announced in the spring of 2009, Piper is now offering the option of

mounted keypad that speeds up data entry and minimizes workload. Standard on the G1000 Meridian is Garmin’s synthetic vision (more on this later), Garmin FliteCharts, SafeTaxi and GWX68 weather radar. Options include an enhanced situational awareness package (Honeywell traffic advisory system, Stormscope, TAWS B terrain avoidance), XM satellite radio/weather, ADF, DME, second digital transponder, diversity digital transponder with dual antennas and Jeppesen ChartView.

Anyone familiar with previous generations of the Meridian will notice several

G1000 set-up adds an emergency (EMER) switch for direct connection to the battery in the event of all other total electrical system failures. This direct connection will provide approximately 30 minutes of power for the pilot PFD, stand-by compass light, gear lights and engine parameters.

The G1000 Meridian utilizes a “dark cockpit” approach to warnings and cautions through Crew Alerting System (CAS) messages displayed in a window on the PFD. This means that an airplane operating properly, or with no advisories, will have no lights and thus a “dark cockpit”.

PIPER MERIDIAN

Any light that appears will easily grab the pilot's attention. The messages range from White (Advisory), Yellow (Caution) and Red (Warning). In conjunction with the CAS display window, there are Master Caution and Master Warning buttons above the pilot PFD that visually and audibly warn the pilot of an appropriate condition and allow the audible tone to be silenced. This is a feature commonly found on larger turbine engine airplanes.

The GFC 700 autopilot is an integrated design of the G1000 system. The unit can be operated by either the pilot or co-pilot PFD and either AHRS 1 or 2. The Transfer "XFR" button on the autopilot controller selects control between pilot and co-pilot.

in the climb/descent segments.

Standard on all G1000 Meridians is Garmin's Synthetic Vision Technology (SVT). SVT is another keystone in the avionics revolution, much like glass cockpit technology a few years ago. SVT increases situational awareness through three-dimensional alerts and visual enhancements. Key features of the SVT system include:

- Terrain/Obstacle Alerting (Visually changing color while simultaneously issuing an audible alert to identify potential and imminent terrain conflicts.)
- Pathways give a clear representation of the desired course and allow the pilot to stay center by simply "flying the

further enhancing situational awareness and assisting in potential diversions.

In conjunction with the forward looking weather radar, the pilot of a G1000 equipped Meridian has the following at their fingertips with the GDL 69(A) option:

- High-resolution NEXRAD weather data
- METARS (Graphical and Textual)
- TAF's, TFR's, Winds Aloft (at altitude)
- Echo Tops, Cloud Tops
- Freezing Levels, Lightning
- Storm-cell data (size, speed and direction)
- AIRMET's, SIGMET's
- County Warnings
- Surface Analysis, City Forecast
- XM Radio



In addition to the normal features you would expect on an airplane of this pedigree, the GFC 700 introduces a number of "jet-style" functions. These include:

- A Low Bank (BANK) feature reduces the bank angle in turns to 15 degrees, creating less noticeable movement to passengers in the cabin.
- A Flight Level Change (FLC) feature allows the pilot to command an Indicated Airspeed (IAS) hold while climbing/descending to a selected altitude. A roller control knob allows the pilot to select one knot increments to fine tune performance

airplane through the box."

- Three dimension Traffic visually displays on the PFD with color coded circles representing the threat level.
- Runways appear (numbers and all) to give the pilot the complete situational awareness experience while on approach or verifying the correct runway prior to take-off.
- A "Zero-Pitch" line shows the aircraft's level horizon while simultaneously displaying cardinal heading markings.
- Airport markers appear on the landscape almost like highway exit signs;

The addition of G1000 avionics to the Meridian further enhances the pedigree of an already proven design. Through fully integrated components such as the very capable GFC 700 autopilot, and state-of-the-art features like synthetic vision, the future of the Meridian looks very bright. In our next issue, I will recount a flight in a new Meridian and highlight more enhancements the G1000 offers. •



FACTS

FOR OWNER/PILOTS

BONUS DEPRECIATION RETURNS WRITE OFF 60% OF A NEW AIRCRAFT PURCHASE IN 2009.

President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009 on February 17, 2009. This legislation brings back bonus depreciation and an increase to Section 179 Expensing for qualified business aircraft purchases.

A PILATUS PC12-NG EXAMPLE

By fully integrating your aircraft into your trade or business, you can also generate tax savings by substantially deducting all the operating expenses of the aircraft. Sales and use tax savings can amount to an additional four to nine percent of the aircraft total purchase price. Sales and use tax savings opportunities vary depending on the state that serves as home base of the aircraft. The accompanying table illustrates the approximate amount of potential tax depreciation generated from the purchase of a Pilatus PC12-NG, based on 100% business use:

Improper planning for personal use of a business aircraft can lead to substantial missed opportunities for savings or deductions; therefore it is extremely important to understand the impact of personal use on a business aircraft. Federal Aviation Regulations and Internal Revenue Code compliance cannot be overemphasized.

In some cases, you may not be able to take full advantage of the deductions discussed above. Proper planning begins with the help of aviation tax specialists. Failure to document and support the proper business and personal use or failure to file the proper tax election with the taxing authorities can jeopardize these deductions. Finally, it is imperative that you operate your aircraft in full compliance with the Federal Aviation Regulations. To find out more, please contact Aviation Tax Consultants at 1-800-342-9589. •

*Daniel Cheung, CPA,
Member*



Aviation Tax Consultants (ATC) assists aircraft purchasers in acquiring aircraft in a tax efficient manner. Our services include the elimination or reduction of sales tax at the time of purchase, maximizing income tax savings, controlling the cost of personal use of the aircraft, avoiding passive activity loss rules and complying with Federal Aviation Regulations. Cooperation with client's current tax and legal advisors is welcome and encouraged.

Purchase Price – \$4,200,000 Tax Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of Purchase Price Depreciated	60%	76%	86%	91%	97%	100%
Potential Tax Deductions from Depreciation	\$2,520,000	\$672,000	\$403,200	\$241,920	\$241,920	\$120,960
Potential Income Tax Savings from Depreciation*	\$1,008,000	\$268,800	\$161,280	\$96,768	\$96,768	\$48,384
Potential Sales Tax Savings (6%)	\$252,000					

* Potential tax depreciation includes Bonus Depreciation in 2009.

* Potential income tax savings computed based on 40% combined federal and state marginal income tax rates.

PIPER AIRCRAFT ACQUIRED BY IMPRIMIS TO SECURE NEW GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.

- Imprimis committed to keeping Piper's headquarters, production and product development facilities in Vero Beach, Florida
- New owner fully supports PiperJet development
- Seeking long-term growth opportunities in Asia, and strengthening current positions in core markets

Piper Aircraft, Inc. announced that its new owner, Imprimis, aims to secure the long-term success of Florida's 72 year-old General Aviation company, and to invest significant capital in Piper's current operations to strengthen its position in its traditional markets and support the development of key new products such as the PiperJet.

Imprimis Managing Partner Stephen W. Berger pointed to Piper's substantial track record and respect the company enjoys within the General Aviation industry as being among the primary reasons to acquire Piper.

"Piper's capabilities, its excellent dealer family and extensive customer base, coupled with Imprimis' capability to provide financial support, our dedication to growing the companies we invest in and our contacts within Asia provide fertile ground for Piper to expand its business in the Asian market and throughout the world," said Berger. "Even with the existing worldwide economic recession – Piper remains strong and well-run, with a strong balance sheet, a comprehensive product line, and a workforce dedicated to providing its customers with excellent products and services," Berger said. "At the same time, Piper has extensive expertise in international markets and the facility to expand into new and emerging markets as well – all essential to our search criteria. Piper's iconic status, coupled with its commitment to product innovation, excellent quality and a management team and workforce second-to-none made it a compelling choice," Berger said. "Imprimis sees this acquisition as a perfect fit as we develop plans for Piper's continued growth in its existing markets and for significant expansion within the Asian markets where much of our focus lies."

SKYTECH FBO UPDATE: Carroll County Regional Airport (DMW)

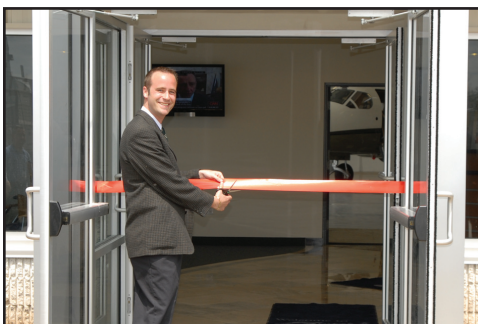
On May 6th, county executives, airport officials and other notable guests were invited to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony signifying the opening of the recently renovated passenger lobby and terminal area of Skytech's newest location; the Carroll County Regional Airport in Westminster Maryland. The passenger lobby and terminal area is equipped with modern amenities including a WSI weather station, Wi-Fi connectivity, a dedicated

crew rest lounge and other exceptional features sure to make any visit enjoyable. Guests were witness to the renovation and construction already under way for the future service hangar and adjoining office space. A Pilatus PC12 NG, a Cessna Grand Caravan and a Piper Meridian were on display in the future service hangar for all to experience.

As in our Rock Hill location, Skytech operates a full service FBO at the Carroll

County Regional Airport including rental car services, GPU, interior cleaning and aircraft dry washing. Heated storage hangar space at Carroll County is available for aircraft as large as a Gulfstream III.

While construction and renovation continues, look for more exciting news about Skytech's newest facility in the next issue of Owner Pilot Advantage. •



FLYING WITH THE FAMILY PET.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SAFE AND ENJOYABLE AIR TRAVEL.

Among the many advantages travelling in private aircraft affords, the ability for pet owners to bring along their companion ranks near the top. Including your pet into travel plans can be very rewarding. Although typically viewed as a relatively simple matter, there are some aspects of private air travel that should be considered for the health and safety concerns of both your pet and all others on board.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Just as with pilots and other human passengers, the health of your pet must be considered prior to flight. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that all pets be at least 8 weeks old and weaned at least 5 days before air travel. Prior to embarking on your voyage, you should ensure your veterinarian is aware of any travel plans and confirms that no health concerns are present. Animals with cardiovascular and/or respiratory disease may not be able to tolerate the stresses imposed by flight. Brachycephalic breeds (those with short faces such as Pugs, Bull Dogs, Boston Terriers, Persians, etc.) have anatomical airway obstructions that may make breathing at high altitudes more difficult. A pressurized aircraft, just as with human passengers, may alleviate a lot of the stresses that a non-pressurized airplane imposes. As a general rule of thumb, for the healthiest of animals you should adhere to the same oxygen requirements set forth by the FAA for human passengers. As with humans, health conditions may dictate further restrictions.

Your pet's temperament is another worthy consideration. A method of restraint for energetic animals, whether it's through a crate/travel carrier or even a pet harness that can be secured to seat belts or attachment points, would eliminate the distraction of potential cabin or cockpit chaos. Bringing along favorite toys and a comfortable bed will go a long way towards making your pet feel at home in a strange environment.

If at all possible, limiting food and water intake for a few hours prior to departure will help to minimize any in flight "situations". Allow for ample time prior to departure for your pet to relieve itself.



SEDATION?

Often thought of as the ticket for uneventful air travel, the general consensus among the veterinary profession is to avoid sedation. Many sedatives may cause cardiovascular and respiratory depression; the effects of which at high altitudes could be unpredictable. In addition, sedation may compromise equilibrium thus leaving your pet ill-equipped to brace themselves during turbulence or other flight maneuvers. Allow time to acquaint your pet to the airplane prior to actual travel. A familiarization with the surroundings may alleviate some of the fears surrounding them.

HEARING CONCERNS

The first and obvious concern is whether hearing protection is required for animals. Depending on the noise level of your cabin, you may consider using pet-approved ear plugs or other devices such as animal designed headsets. One popular version, called Mutt Muffs, can be found at numerous online stores.

The second and not-so-obvious concern regards the effect of climbs and descents on inner ear pressures. Animals with Otitis (ear disease/infection) may experience marked discomfort, especially in unpressurized aircraft. Much like humans, animals suffer the same potential discomforts these transitions present in unpressurized aircraft. Unlike humans, your pet will not know to swallow or yawn to relieve the pressure. Bring some treats or peanut butter to help smooth these changes in altitude.

CONCLUSION

When planning for a trip with your pet, involve your veterinarian to ensure all aspects of the safety and health of your animal are considered. Proper planning and some common sense can make travelling with your pet a very enjoyable experience. It is just one more example of the freedoms General Aviation allows. •

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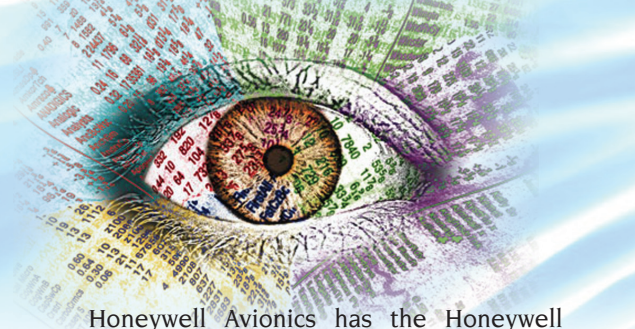
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A WORD To The WISE

by Dave Conover



THE VALUE OF AN EXTENDED AVIONICS WARRANTY PLAN

Today's avionics equipment and integrated glass cockpits provide us with reliability and redundancy that vastly exceeds the capability of even a few years back. However, the environment that we subject our aircraft to does tend to induce failures. Gone are the days of the avionics technician trouble shooting discrepancies down to the individual "box", and then proceeding with an in-house repair of an individual resistor or diode. With the myriad of feature-packed instrument panels and multi-functional digital components, today's avionics technician has an equally challenging job of diagnosing problems. However, the component level repairs are now almost exclusively performed at the manufacturer's level. While this provides a consistent standard throughout the industry, and allows the manufacturer improved quality control of their products, it commonly leads to another set of challenges for the avionics facility.

"MURPHY'S LAW"

Usually failures don't occur concurrently with standard maintenance intervals, so an aircraft reposition is required for diagnosis and repair. Whether the equipment is under warranty or not, once the problem is isolated the choices vary: from letting the aircraft sit until the manufacturer completes the repair (make sure you get a time estimate); ordering/installing a loaner (requiring another flight to reinstall the repaired unit); or in some cases obtaining an exchange unit to get back in the air faster (but normally at a higher price). Depending on the specific situation, any of the above options can accommodate an operator's needs. However, in some instances the logistics of the repair scenario just don't add up.

KEEP IT FLYING

Taking a page from corporate aviation's side of the business, with often strict budgetary requirements and a premium on minimizing downtime, two manufacturers have developed extended warranty plans that have proven to be very practical.

Honeywell Avionics has the Honeywell Avionics Protection Plan (HAPP) and Avidyne has established the FlexCare program. Some of the Honeywell equipment is not only costly to repair it is equipment that is deemed required or essential by most of us. Flight control systems, EFIS displays, gyro's, radar, EGPWS, and TAWS are a few of the common Honeywell products. Additionally, Avidyne covers many of our instrument panels with a 2 or 3-panel Entegra Flight Display package.

REVIEW YOUR OPTIONS

Extended warranty plans are sometimes not considered the best investment; however, these packages can make a lot of sense for the personal/business aircraft owner that desires all options be available at a predictable cost when facing an avionics issue. While the terms vary on these plans, they usually offer 1 – 5 year fixed terms that include prepaid freight, exchange options, no charge loaners and ownership transferability. Contact your local avionics shop to review your options and eligibility to enroll in one these programs. •



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