

Owner & Pilot

ADVANTAGE

A Magazine for Owners and Pilots from *Skystech, inc.* Publications



SWISS BOOKENDS

The PC-12s Unique Ability to Withstand the Test of Time

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Mid-Year Update



Many factors go into building and growing a successful business. However, none is more important than the quality of your

employees. You spend virtually every day with them, and they become like family over time. In March, two of our senior employees entered retirement after multi-decade careers with Skytech. Ann Parks spent almost four decades with us and was integral in the development and growth of the company. Having held positions in sales administration, accounting, and HR (to name a few) Ann was always there to assist and make everyone's life easier. On the service side of the house, Neil Douglas spent almost three decades with Skytech and held positions as an A&P, IA Inspector, and Parts manager. We could always count on Neil to get the job done and give his 100%. We thank them for everything they did to make us a better company and wish each of them all the best as they enter into their next exciting (and more relaxing) chapter.

As we approach the mid-year mark, we see a strong demand in our sales department, and many tax benefits are still available if our clients can take advantage of them. Our service business continues to grow, and finding enough qualified technicians is an ongoing issue. We hope the addition of our upcoming AOG Service vehicles will help alleviate some of the scheduling challenges and get customers back in the air faster should they experience an AOG event.

We are entering our show season with many upcoming events on the schedule. We hope to see many of you at these events to thank you personally for the opportunity to work with you throughout the year.

Skytech, Inc., publisher of this magazine is an aircraft sales and service company with FBOs in Westminster, MD (DMW), Rock Hill, SC (UZA - Charlotte Metro Area) and Administrative Headquarters in Baltimore, MD (MTN). Your thoughts, suggestions, comments and criticism are important to us and we will always welcome reader feedback.

Please respond to:
 Dave Conover
 Executive Vice-President
 dconover@skytechinc.com

Market Snapshot

MARKET SUMMARY *Information provided by JetNet (Current as of May 15, 2023)*

AIRCRAFT MAKE AND MODEL	FOR SALE (Current)	ASKING PRICE (12 month average)	% FOR SALE (12 month average)	DAYS ON MARKET (12 month average)
Piper M350	9	\$1,387k	5.6%	111
Piper M500	5	\$2,216k	4.5%	85
Citation M2	3	\$6,175k	9.1%	111
King Air 250	9	\$4,878k	3.3%	95
Caravan 208B	19	\$2,104k	1.3%	526
Socata TBM-900	5	\$3,470k	4.5%	27
Pilatus PC-12 NGX	2	-	0.8%	64
Pilatus PC-24	10	-	5.1%	101

SCHEDULE OF 2023 EVENTS*

Sun 'N Fun
 Lakeland, FL
 March 27 - April 1

MMOPA
 Colorado Springs, CO
 August 31 - September 3

POPA Annual Convention
 Austin, TX
 June 14 - June 16

NBAA BACE
 Las Vegas, NV
 October 17 - 19

NBAA White Plains Regional Forum
 White Plains, NY
 June 14

AOPA
 Frederick, MD
 September 8 - 9

EAA AirVenture
 Oshkosh, WI
 July 24 - July 30

NBAA
 Las Vegas, NV
 October 17-19

*Event times/dates/attendance subject to change. Call Skytech at 888.386.3596 to confirm event details.

Propelling Forward Into 2023

An update from Piper Aircraft

BY ALBA WALCOTT - *Piper Manager, Marketing and Events*



Piper Aircraft is proud to share a strong start to 2023 following a successful 2022, which included celebrating our 85th anniversary and rolling out exciting innovations company wide. We delivered 236 total aircraft in 2022, and are on track to surpass our delivery number from previous years in both the trainer and M-Class families in 2023.

Coming out of Q1, Piper Aircraft announced some extraordinary accomplishments and initiatives as a company. In late March, we shared that once again Piper will be the first OEM to market with the latest technology from Garmin—PlaneSync™. This new connected aircraft management system will be available in our flagship product, the M600/SLS, later this spring. PlaneSync™ allows owners to stay connected to their M600/SLS by remotely accessing key information about their airplane through the Garmin Pilot app, including but not limited to viewing fuel levels, oil temperature, exact aircraft location and weather, and database currency status. Another key feature of PlaneSync™ is that it will automatically update aircraft databases when connected via a 4G LTE connection or Wi-Fi.

In addition to PlaneSync™, Piper has worked closely with Garmin to incorporate even more updates into the G3000 system. The expanded software includes enhancements to synthetic vision, onboard weather radar, taxiway routing depiction, glide range ring capabilities, and stabilized approach callouts for increased situational awareness, to name a few.

In April at AERO Friedrichshafen in Germany, we announced the approval of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in Piper turboprops, including the M600/SLS, M600, M500, and Meridian. This represents an exciting next step toward Piper's commitment to making aviation a safer, greener, and more accessible industry. The new SAF includes the designation as Jet A and Jet A-1, and the introduction of SAF to the Piper turboprop line will not require a change in aircraft placarding or Pilot's Operating Handbooks. SAF is not only FAA approved via SAIB NE-11-56R4, but is available for use in every country that turbine M-Class aircraft operate.

Within our trainer family, our Flight School Alliance continues to expand, and now includes Blue Line Aviation, best known for their six-month Career Pilot Program, a career-driven program awarding students certifications from Private Pilot through Multi Engine Instructor. Their primary location is in Johnston County, North Carolina, and they have just recently announced an expansion to Winter Haven, Florida. Recently at the Sun 'n Fun Aerospace Expo, Blue Line Aviation signed a purchase agreement for up to 115 Piper Archer TXs and Seminoles, which will be utilized at both flight training locations. The transition from their existing fleet to an all-Piper fleet will take place over the next four years.

Piper Aircraft looks forward to bringing more technological advancements and improvements to general aviation in 2023, and continuing to share our love of aviation with you. As always, thank you for being an integral part of the Piper family. •



Spring/Summer 2023

PUBLISHER
Dave Conover

EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND
WRITER
Jennifer Longo

COLUMNIST
Sean Wallace
Suzanne Meiners-levy
Alba Walcott

GRAPHIC ARTIST
Jennifer Longo

THE ADVANTAGE
MAGAZINE STAFF
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FEEDBACK!

We would greatly appreciate hearing from you! Please tell us what you think of *Advantage* magazine and offer any thoughts you have for improving this publication. Our goal is to provide helpful, interesting information that you enjoy reading.

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

Email us at:
Advantage@Skytechinc.com
800-394-1334

Thank you!

The Pilot-In-Command is solely responsible for the safe and proper operation of his/her aircraft and it is the responsibility of the pilot-in-command to operate that aircraft in compliance with that aircraft's Pilot's Operating Handbook and other official manuals and directives.

www.skytechinc.com



Tax + Facts

By Suzanne Meiners-Levy, Esq .
SHAREHOLDER OF ADVOCATE CONSULTING
LEGAL GROUP, PLLC



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WWW.ADVOCATETAX.COM
TOLL FREE: (888) 325-1942



An Army of IRS Agents? Be Ready for “Battle” in Defending your Pilatus Aircraft Deductions

The news cycle has been filled with reports of increased IRS enforcement budgets and armies of new business auditors tasked with recovering hundreds of millions of dollars in lost tax revenues. Such reports often make business owners nervous and even hesitant to take deductions to which they are entitled. With careful planning and recordkeeping, there is little reason to fear an IRS exam. General aviation aircraft continue to serve a vital role in growing and maintaining business operations across industries, and powerful purchase incentives codified in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 have translated into significant tax deductions worthy of a strong defense. This article provides three tips for making sure that you are prepared to defend your aircraft deductions.

1. Remember That Aircraft Expense Deductibility is Governed by On-going Usage

For most active business operations, establishing that the aircraft is an ordinary and necessary business expense pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 162 is an easy threshold to meet. Aircraft are vital transportation equipment, that have repeatedly been accepted as useful tools by the Internal Revenue Code and courts. In determining whether the aircraft is a business asset pursuant to Section 162, taxpayer intent is considered when considered in conjunction with an objective industry standard.

The challenge in taking deductions, provided that the aircraft acquisition is properly structured and managed to avoid inadvertent tax traps, lies in the evaluation of the use of the aircraft over time. It remains an ongoing responsibility of the business owner to maintain an aircraft flight log that accounts for the purpose of every passenger on each flight, as well as the purpose of any deadhead trips. See, e.g., 26 CFR § 1.274-10. In addition to the log, retaining supplemental documentation supporting the business trips, such as meeting agendas, e-mails, and contracts, can be used to solidify travel deductibility. Having an organizational system to maintain these records contemporaneously makes the audit process much less disruptive and smoother. It is critical that aircraft owners understand that use requirements extend beyond the year in which bonus depreciation may have been taken, and endure throughout the period of aircraft ownership.

2. Confirm that all Entertainment Use and Personal Use is Properly Accounted For

All personal use of a business aircraft results in a tax consequence to the aircraft ownership entity and related businesses taking tax deductions. This includes the presence of a personal passenger on any business trip. However, there is a stark difference in the treatment of trips for entertainment purposes, and those taken for personal non-entertainment reasons. Provided that a specified individual is eligible to receive fringe benefit compensation, they may be able to impute income pursuant to standard industry fare level (or “SIFL”) rates and preserve the deductibility of all of the related aircraft expenses at the company level. For personal entertainment travel, the appropriate tax treatment is a proportionate disallowance. The economic difference between these two types of treatment is substantial. In addition to potentially avoiding the disallowance of expenses, personal non-entertainment flights may be used to support or help preserve accelerated depreciation deductions, such as Section 179 and bonus depreciation, along with MACRS, while entertainment use does not. Accordingly, assuring that your business and aircraft ownership is properly structured to provide SIFL flights, if possible, and that the SIFL is being timely reported on the tax return is essential. Check in with your aviation tax advisor to ensure that you understand how personal use is recorded and reported on an on-going basis.

3. Maintain a Team Focused on the Aircraft Deductions and Well-Versed in IRS Defense

One of the most significant trend lines in general aviation in recent years has been the entrant of new businesses and individuals into general commercial travel has become ever less reliable. This has been phenomenal for industry growth, and holds great promise for the future of general aviation. That said, as the market begins to calm and businesses fall into a clear pattern of aircraft use, the details of the aircraft structure can get lost in the mix of other business concerns, and new owners may be unaware of the variables that impact deductibility.

It is critical

to remember that just as the aircraft requires ongoing routine maintenance, so does meeting the ongoing income and sales and use tax requirements for the business taking aircraft deductions. Working with a legal and accounting team fully apprised of any business structure changes or changes in mission can help the owner avoid costly unintended tax mistakes. Aviation-focused tax professionals understand what questions to ask and any adjustments to make as markets shift and laws are interpreted. Reaching out to your aviation tax specialist on a regular basis can provide peace of mind should an aircraft audit become a reality.

While IRS audits strike fear in the hearts of knowing business owners, maintaining good records, accounting for personal use, and having a strong team in your corner can convert the experience into a minor business hassle rather than a disruptive economic event. •

¹ Suzanne is a Managing Attorney and Shareholder at Advocate Consulting Legal Group, PLLC, a boutique law and accounting practice focused exclusively on the concerns of general aviation aircraft owners and operators. She is a licensed attorney in New York, Florida, Texas and Tennessee.

² See, e.g., *Marshall v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, T.C. Memo 1992-65, ([i]n this day and age, there is no doubt that the use of private airplanes by executives in charge of large projects is a common practice.)

³ 26 CFR § 1.274-10.

⁴ Notably, 274-10 as codified in 2013, related specifically to personal entertainment flights. In late 2017 the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act added business entertainment flights to those subject to disallowance.

⁵ MACRS depreciation, Bonus depreciation, and Section 179 expensing all require a taxpayer to maintain a minimum of 25% qualified business use, which may then be supplemented with 25% compensatory use to meet the minimum predominate business use threshold in order to maintain an accelerated schedule.



Suzanne Meiners-Levy

Shareholder of Advocate Consulting Legal Group, PLLC

Suzanne Meiners-Levy is a Partner and the Pro Bono Coordinator at Advocate Consulting Legal Group, PLLC (ACLG). ACLG is a boutique legal practice consisting of a team of tax and legal professionals, whose primary focus is to provide turnkey Aviation “TLC”, or assistance with Tax, Legal, and Compliance matters for general aviation aircraft owners and operators. Suzanne has worked on hundreds of aircraft transactions on behalf of aircraft owners and operators, successfully represented clients in local, state, and federal audits, and has been certified as an aircraft leasing expert witness in both state and federal courts. She is a member of the Bar in Florida, Texas, Tennessee, New York, and the United States Tax Court. She is a sought-after public speaker on tax matters, presenting at a range of aviation professional events, and authors quarterly tax columns for several aviation publications. Suzanne graduated summa cum laude from Vanderbilt University and magna cum laude and Order of the Coif from NYU School of Law. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of and Executive Committee of Juvenile Law Center and is a Program Director and Team Coach for Odyssey of the Mind.

Swiss *Bookends*

BY ROB SAMMARTINO - Director, Pilatus Sales

THE PC-12s UNIQUE ABILITY TO WITHSTAND THE TEST OF TIME

In May 2021, Skytech delivered a 1995 PC-12/41 to a new owner in KY. This is nothing unusual for an aircraft sales organization and the longest-tenured authorized Pilatus distributor in the world. However, this specific aircraft, SN 117, was one of the first PC-12s Skytech delivered in 1995 - the first year of PC-12 production. And interestingly enough, SN 117 remained in Skytech's orbit for over 26 years.

The aircraft had flown 6,500 hours since then and moved from the scenic (Swiss-like) hills of the Shenandoah Valley to the foothills of the North Carolina Blue Ridge mountains. In preparing the aircraft for listing, I was fortunate enough to test fly the plane and roll back the Pilatus memory time machine. Considering my recent experience with the all-new NGX, my expectations were guarded. And outside of its regular maintenance and high level of SB compliance, SN 117

had yet to be modified with the Garmin 600 panel, five-blade prop, or gross weight increase kit - as many early PC-12s do. This made its nostalgic quotient high and its asking price - low. And my test flight reminded me how much Pilatus had right from the start - from the single power lever to the automatic yaw damper, torque limiter, and sweet ballerina-like touchdown of its massive trailing link gear.

The listing generated a tremendous amount of interest, and each call conjured a fond trip down Pilatus memory lane. The most common yet unique question asked was "Why is the price so low"? As one of the only /41 aircraft left in existence, it represented

a rare bird... and a light one at just 6100 lbs - a full 500 lbs lighter than a typically equipped 2022 NGX. But even though it was a Lightweight aircraft and rolled off the line 26 years ago - it still shared all the winning DNA that has made the PC-12 an enduring market success:

"My first flights in the NGX reminded me again how much Pilatus had *right* from the start, how well they *listened* to customer feedback, and how much time and resources they *dedicated* to product *improvement*."



- 330 ft³ Interior
- Flat floor
- Cargo Door
- Trailing link Gear
- Single Lever power control
- Torque limiter
- 1700 NM range
- Wide CG range
- Single pilot simplicity
- 80 Knot Approach speed

Fast forward a few months, and we were delivering one of our first NGX aircraft, SN 2113. When the NGX was announced in the fall of 2019, it was to replace a highly refined NG aircraft that had benefited from 24 years of fine-tuning and product improvements.

It was hard to imagine wholesale improvements to an already mature and well-regarded aircraft. Still, in typical understated Swiss fashion, Pilatus announced the new model with explicit technical detail and, most importantly, plans to deliver the following year! A quick trip to Switzerland verified a plane that more than lived up to the market (un) hype with multiple improvements equally split for the benefit of passengers and pilots. Mind you; this was all accomplished in the shadow of the PC-24, an entirely new aircraft rolled out only two years prior.

The NGX has been a phenomenal market success, and our take rate after the demonstration flight has been close to 100%. Much more than an auto-throttle and roll-out paint scheme, the NGX incorporates more than 25 material improvements to the impressive time-tested NG. They include:

For the Pilot

- Auto-throttle
- Full electronic control of engine and prop
- Touch screen FMS controller

- 10% engine power increase
- Prist-free fuel system
- 5000-hour engine TBO
- Emergency descent mode
- Tactile feedback
- Dual channel FCU (no MOR)
- Single power lever (no prop)
- ADS-B In with integrated display
- 600 hour maintenance interval

For the Passengers

- Larger cabin windows
- Redesigned interior
- Lie-flat forward facing seats
- Improved air conditioning system
- Quieter cabin with prop low-speed mode
- Dual cup holders
- Adjustable fan with indirect overhead A/C
- Improved seat design
- Indirect overheads lighting
- USB and 115AC power
- Indirect, adjustable up/down wash lights

My first flights in the NGX reminded me again how much Pilatus had right from the start, how well they listened to customer feedback, and how much time and resources they dedicated to product improvement. I am often asked which year model PC-12 is best to buy. I always respond with, “set the budget and then buy the newest Pilatus it will allow – up to and including a new NGX”. I fully believe this to be sound advice and SN 117 + SN 2113 surely prove the concept – at polar opposite ends of the spectrum. Pilatus started with a winning formula in 1995 and has never stopped improving its craft. Regardless of which “bookend” shall take its place in your space, it is my suspicion, you will become a happy member of the Pilatus family. •



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Chuck Massanopoli:

Over Three Decades of Aviation

BY CHUCK MASSANOPOLI - *Customer Liaison*

My aviation career had humble beginnings. I completed training and became a certified Aviation Maintenance Technician in 1981. Unfortunately, this was also when the US decided to deregulate the airlines and when the country was in one of the worst recessions in history. It was against this backdrop that my aviation journey began. I drove to almost every airport within 100 miles looking for an opening. I tried other related fields for a few years until I could finally find a job pumping gas at the local airport for \$5/hr. I quickly moved into a maintenance position and was lucky to have some good mentors in the beginning of my career. The year was 1984, and I never looked back.

Fast forward five years. I held increasingly advanced positions for a regional airline, where I honed my troubleshooting and inspection skills. It was a fast-paced environment where the goal was to provide safe, reliable aircraft to satisfy customers' needs. Communication is key in this regard, and I learned never to assume you knew what to expect from colleagues or customers. One thing I developed during my time there was the driving desire to do things the "right way" and show pride in workmanship in everything I do. I have carried this forward throughout my aviation career. It was this desire that led me to make a change. If not for a notice in a Lancaster, PA, newspaper that my mother-in-law came across, my career would not have included Skytech. It was one of those little things that did not seem significant then.

The beginning of my time at Skytech coincided with many changes in the Service Department. We had an increased involvement with Piper Aircraft as they ramped up production of the PA46 airframe. We were service centers for Mooney, Piper, Cessna, and eventually Pilatus Aircraft. Because of the involvement with these OEMs, the need for additional equipment, people, and organization was necessary. I contributed to developing inspection and paperwork procedures, tool room set up and influenced support equipment pur-

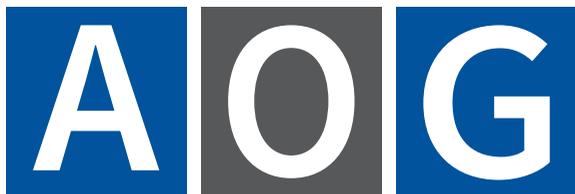
chases. Remembering the people who helped me early in my career, I tried to impart my experience and knowledge to those just starting in aviation maintenance. It was satisfying to see other technicians succeed and grow, many of whom have gone on to run their own aviation departments.

At Skytech, I grew in my career responsibilities, technical expertise, and management training. After obtaining my Inspection Authorization, I continued seeking additional education, attended many of our affiliates' OEM schools, and earned an associate's Degree in Aviation Maintenance. My lifelong passion for learning continues to find many exciting opportunities in aviation.

The culmination of my training is with Pilatus Aircraft, first with the PC-12 and later with the PC-24. Attending the inaugural training programs for both Pilatus aircraft was invaluable. I was able to experience the culture behind the product. My career has spanned over three decades, and the technological advancements in that time have been incredible. I never thought I would see an airplane that could fly itself, and now with the advent of Advanced Air Mobility products, the sky really is the limit!

I look forward to the continued growth of Skytech and being able to contribute to its success as they join forces with Pilatus Aircraft. •

"The culmination of my training is with *Pilatus Aircraft*, first with the PC-12 and later with the PC-24. Attending the inaugural training programs for both Pilatus aircraft was *invaluable*."



Preparing for the Unexpected

BY PRESTON ESTES - *Vice President, Service*

Operators never want their busy schedule interrupted by an aircraft having maintenance issues; unfortunately, it is inevitable. When problems arise, the object is to minimize aircraft downtime & customer frustration. Operators are usually never lucky enough to have AOG (Aircraft On Ground) events happen at their service center or close to a properly rated service facility. Per Murphy's law, it's often at a small airport in a remote area that offers little to no maintenance services. Today's aircraft have become so complex, often needing special tooling and/or proprietary OEM software, prohibiting a local shop from helping even if they want to. Compounding the problem, many tasks require RII (Required Inspection Item) sign-offs, which need an additional, separate technician that is rated to inspect and sign off the work. These factors and the popularity of "tip-to-tail" maintenance programs and other customer support initiatives have created the need for formal, dedicated AOG maintenance programs or upgrading an existing program. If an aircraft is under warranty or on a maintenance program, the service center is usually contractually obligated to respond to AOG calls in a specified amount of time. Contracts aside, providing top-tier customer service is necessary if you are in the aircraft sales and service business.

At Skytech, the number of off site AOG responses increased from 10 events in 2010 to 83 events in 2022. There is an obvious correlation of events to the increase in aircraft each year. Still, the more significant drivers have been the technological advancements, especially in avionics and aircraft type. In the advanced "next-gen" turboprop and business jet world, many events require the aircraft to be repaired on site unless an MEL is available and applicable to the issue.

A typical procedure five years ago was to pull technicians from working in the shop and send them on the road. Logistics for each event were sorted out on a case-by-case basis regarding parts, tooling, and transportation needs. It sometimes created inconveniences by taking productive techs from a scheduled event and pilots away from other tasks; it was rare enough, however, that we just learned to deal with it. Those days are gone as it has evolved into dedicated technicians and equipment to meet the demands.

AOG techs face a completely different schedule than the "9 to 5" scheduled jobs in the shop. They spend days on the road, nights away from families, and end up working nights and weekends as required to get the aircraft back in service efficiently. They must be ready to go at a moment's notice without much pre-planning. This work environment necessitates a corresponding salary. A dedicated department also allows for potential revenue performing MRT (Mobile Repair) work since

the infrastructure is already in place. The aircraft may not be AOG, but a customer may request work to be done at their location. This saves operational costs of the aircraft, especially something the caliber of a midsize jet. It also allows the service facility some extra revenue to help offset the cost of the technicians and equipment and potentially relieve some of the service department's workload.

Dedicated AOG equipment allows for a more efficient operation logistically, given the "short notice" nature of the work, but it involves significant capital costs up front. An adequately outfitted AOG/MRT service truck is easily a six-digit plus figure. Logistically, these trucks allow for rapid response with minimal planning other than the required parts to repair the aircraft. Most of the tooling and consumables are loaded up and ready to go at all times. This helps streamline the process for the technician. The downside, depending on the location of the AOG aircraft, is the limitation of the speed of the truck.

Utilizing company aircraft is a great alternative that allows the technician to get to an airplane quickly when warranted. The quicker response time is helpful for the customer and makes the technician available for another task much sooner. It minimizes what we refer to as "windshield time" that comes from simply driving a truck. One disadvantage to this approach is the high cost of operating the aircraft and the associated flight crew. It may also make the aircraft/crew unavailable for other purposes, like a potential revenue-generating charter flight. The use of aircraft also comes with significant limitations in carrying equipment. Often, the use of aircraft jacks or other bulky/heavy tooling is required that is either too big or too heavy to haul in a plane. In some situations, the hybrid use of trucks and aircraft works excellently. It gets the technician to and from the job quickly and allows for equipment to be brought in by truck. Both means provide an effective way to minimize customer downtime. The number of trucks/technicians can be expanded as required. Depending on demand, the truck/tech can also be based in various locations geographically. This minimizes downtime as well as the need to supplement with aircraft.

While an AOG/MRT program takes a lot of organization and logistics, a well-run, efficient program can minimize frustrations for customers and service center personnel. The goal is to take care of the customer quickly and efficiently to reduce their downtime and travel with limited disruptions. A well-run AOG/MRT program helps achieve that goal. Skytech has our first two AOG trucks in the process of being outfitted and hopes to begin integrating and implementing this program into our 2023 service support operations. •

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S a Word to the Wise

BY SEAN WALLACE - Director of FBO Operations/Safety Manager

The Impending Transition from 100LL

Most of us don't think twice when filling our vehicles with unleaded fuel. It is readily available and required for almost all cars made today. The mandatory use of unleaded gasoline to protect catalytic converters in all vehicles, starting with the 1975 model year, coupled with the increasing awareness about the adverse health effects of lead, resulting in it being completely phased out in 1996; however, not in aviation. The most common and reliable type of avgas is 100 octane Low Lead, also known as 100LL. 100LL contains tetra-ethyl lead (TEL), a lead additive used for the high-power setting typical in aircraft engines. Without TEL, the octane level for many aircraft engines would be too low and possibly cause engine failure. Until recently, there has been no safe alternative to 100LL.

Last October, the EPA issued a proposed endangerment finding that emissions of lead from aircraft that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare. Any final endangerment conclusion is expected this year. Though airborne lead levels have dropped dramatically since the 1980s with unleaded fuel being used in vehicles, piston aircraft seem to be the next hurdle for the 2030 target of eliminating lead. With the potential for a final EPA endangerment finding this year and new fuel findings, the target of 2030 may be sooner, but what does that mean for pilots and owners?

In 2015, Swift Fuels introduced UL94—a 94-octane unleaded

fuel meeting ATSM D7547 with FAA approval. Though not regularly available yet, this fuel is a safe alternative for some aircraft owners. Another company, General Aviation Modifications Inc. (GAMI), has created G100UL. G100UL is a promising fuel that GAMI states, "All gasoline-powered airplanes and engines in the FAA's type certificate database are covered by the STCs for G100UL, which is the first and only FAA-certified, totally lead-free, high octane avgas." GAMI is currently selling supplemental type certificates (STCs) for its G100UL and plans to have the fuel in California by mid-2023 and nationally by 2026. The average STC cost is roughly \$600 for a plane similar to a Piper PA-32.

The addition of new unleaded fuels is a significant step in the right direction and is backed by many pro-aviation companies. However, as owners and pilots, we must be aware that airports could soon have more fuels to offer besides AvGas and Jet-A. Simply ordering AVGAS will no longer be applicable and could result in misfuelling. Remember to specify the fuel's octane with any additives on your next fill-up. Having line technicians repeat the order back is another excellent way to ensure you receive what you need. Sumping the fuel is also a must, but with G100LL hitting the market soon, be careful. The fuel color of G100UL is straw, much like Jet-A. So word to the wise, be ready for the slow removal of 100LL and stay informed about what new fuel may be in your aircraft. •