

Owner & Pilot

ADVANTAGE

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



Skytech Welcomes *Georgia*

IN THIS ISSUE

Tax Facts • 4

Skytech Welcomes
Georgia • 7

Moments That Change
Us Forever • 8

The Pilatus PC-12:
A Humanitarian Workhorse • 10

The 4th Quarter Transition



Fasten your seatbelts and hold on tight! A common saying even outside of aviation, but rings

very true for Skytech at this time of the year. As we start the 4th quarter, we are already beginning to feel the compression of activity as that end-of-the-year wall approaches. Anything from delivery of existing aircraft orders to working deals that we just started, the heat is on.

We are proud to be representing Pilatus and Piper at NBAA in Las Vegas shortly with the conclusion of the 2024 trade show season. Already on the calendar for 2025, we have some national and regional events already scheduled. Some of these events we have attended in the past, and some will be new events to explore. Nevertheless, rest assured that 2025 will be a very busy year as well.

As we add more and more airplanes to the fleet each year, the Service of those aircraft has been a top priority. To aid in serving the Southeast, Skytech has recently expanded its footprint to Atlanta at the Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK). Skytech will have a Maintenance and Sales presence at the former Aero Center Epps Atlanta/Epps Aviation facility at PDK. We look forward to this increased maintenance capacity with very seasoned and experienced staff already in place.

Here's to an exciting 4th quarter and an equally exciting 2025 with additional expansion ahead. •

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:
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Market Snapshot

MARKET SUMMARY *Information provided by JetNet (Current as of October 18th, 2024)*

AIRCRAFT MAKE AND MODEL	FOR SALE (USA/International)	ASKING PRICE (12 month average)	% FOR SALE (12 month average)	DAYS ON MARKET (12 month average)
Piper M350	18 / 7	\$1,392k	13.0%	646
Piper M600/SLS	14 / 6	\$3,459k	10.5%	151
Citation M2 (Gen 2)	27 / 4	\$4,347k	10.1%	1,060
King Air 250	7 / 1	\$5,235k	2.9%	141
Caravan 208B	10 / 3	\$2,618k	2.6%	122
Socata TBM-900	5 / 2	\$3,233k	6.4%	142
Pilatus PC-12 NGX	5 / 11	\$6,883k	4.2%	121
Pilatus PC-24	7 / 8	\$11,410k	5.7%	201

SCHEDULE OF 2025 EVENTS*

Safari Club
Atlanta, GA
January 9-12

Sun 'N Fun
Lakeland, FL
April 1-6

POPA Annual Convention
Nashville, TN
June 12-14

EAA AirVenture
Oshkosh, WI
July 21-27

NBAA
Las Vegas, NV
October 14-16

Visit www.skytechinc.com for the most up-to-date show schedule.

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

Recent Highlights



GEORGIA EXPANSION

Skytech has officially expanded into Georgia! The former Epps Aviation Pilatus Service Center at Peachtree DeKalb airport (KPDK) in Atlanta, Georgia, has formally adopted the Skytech name. Learn more about this exciting announcement on page 7.

HURRICANE RELIEF

The Skytech team in Rock Hill, South Carolina has worked tirelessly with local organizations to get essential supplies to those that have been affected by hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina. We're happy to provide as much support as possible in an effort to help the communities.



EXECUTIVE PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to Tatyana Yudovin and Carm Matricciani on their recent promotions to the executive team! Tatyana accepted the position of Vice President of Business Support, and Carm Matricciani took the position of Vice President of Operations!



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THE ADVANTAGE
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REQUESTS YOUR
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
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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

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“If you write off a business aircraft, that’s a huge red flag and you will be audited.”

This is a widespread sentiment I hear when speaking to prospective aircraft owners and tax advisors across the country. IRS audit risk is a significant planning consideration as we design an ownership structure for our clients. The art of aviation tax planning is to devise an ownership structure that satisfies the myriad of competing enforcement agencies: IRS compliance and audit risk, Federal Aviation Administration regulations compliance, state sales and use tax strategy, financing and banking requirements, etc.

With proper planning, getting audited by the IRS is still an unlikely occurrence. Certain reporting scenarios are indeed high risk, which will draw attention from IRS auditors. Staying away from these high-risk reporting scenarios will be the key to staying under the IRS audit radar. For example, if you report your business aircraft on a Schedule C sole proprietorship tax form—without other business activities—your audit risk augments significantly.

Defending an IRS Audit

Even though it is a rare occurrence, we advise our clients as if they will be audited. Keeping extremely detailed records to support the business use of their aircraft is of utmost importance. If you are audited, the key to success is to be able to establish that the aircraft is ordinary and necessary to support your business activities and be able to support this claim with contemporaneous documentation. The burden of proof rests with the taxpayer.

Handling of Personal Use

The regulations on how personal use is handled have changed over the years. Currently, personal use of a business aircraft is the focus for the IRS due to the perceived abuse by corporate executives. Reimbursing your company for personal use is problematic in many aspects. Having dry leases with principals for their personal use is cumbersome. Understanding the current fringe benefit rules and applying the correct classification of flights can streamline the compliance process and avoid costly mistakes.

State Sales Tax Audit Risk

Unlike IRS income tax audits, state sales and use tax audits occur regularly. In some states, it is a certainty that an aircraft owner will receive a sales or use tax inquiry from the state Department of Revenue after the purchase of an aircraft. Therefore, if you are claiming a sales tax exemption on an aircraft purchase, you should be prepared to present documentation and flight logs to support the exemption claimed. With the advancement of flight tracking websites and the requirement of state aircraft registration, it is unlikely that you can avoid scrutiny of your aircraft from state taxing authorities by using a Delaware or Montana LLC. This state tax avoidance strategy is playing a game of hide and seek. If caught, you will owe the sales/use tax on the purchase plus penalty and interest.

State sales and use tax planning varies greatly from state to state. Some of the more common exemptions that may be available are:

- Interstate commerce exemption
- Occasional and private party purchase exemption
- Rental and leasing exemption
- Commercial use exemption

Due to its mobile nature, it is important to determine if your aircraft may be subject to the jurisdiction of multiple states and locales, such as the state of a second home or office location.

With the heightened IRS audit interest in private aircraft, this may be the perfect time to conduct a thorough review and inspection of your aircraft record-keeping practice, review flight logs, gather documentation to support the business flights, and be prepared in case of an IRS audit. •



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Daniel Cheung, CPA is the principal of Aviation Tax Consultants. He is based at ATC's Scottsdale, Arizona office.

Aviation Tax Consultants, LLC (www.aviationtaxconsultants.com) is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023. Our consulting services include the elimination or reduction of sales and use tax, maximizing income tax savings, controlling the cost of personal use of the aircraft, complying with passive activity loss rules and Federal Aviation Regulations. Cooperation with client's current tax and legal advisors is welcome and encouraged.

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

Pilatus to Expand Footprint in the *United States*

The Swiss manufacturer of the popular PC-12 single-engine turbo-prop and PC-24 Super Versatile Jet inks deal to develop a factory-owned flagship sales, design, and service center in Bradenton, Florida.



In a ceremony at the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport (KSRQ), Pilatus executives and Airport Authority officials signed an agreement to develop 17 acres on the north side of the airport for Pilatus to construct a new state-of-the-art sales and service facility. The new Customer Center will initially employ more than 50 people to manage aircraft sales, service, design and delivery of Pilatus aircraft in the Southeastern United States. The U.S. is Pilatus' largest market for its business aircraft, this investment is being made to ensure a world-class ownership experience for Pilatus customers.

Important Market for Pilatus

The initial development will include 54,000 square feet dedicated to maintenance activity, spare parts distribution and new aircraft deliveries, plus an additional 17,000 square feet of workshops, office and administrative space. The facility is expected to be operational by mid-2026. Future growth plans for Pilatus' Bradenton location include final assembly for aircraft delivering to North and South America and may ultimately employ up to 300 people.

Thomas Bosshard, President and CEO of Pilatus Business Aircraft Ltd stated: "We are very excited to take this significant growth step to support our customers with an outstanding ownership experience."

Justin Lazzeri, CEO of Pilatus' Sales and Service Center for the U.S. East Coast added: "Our new facility in Bradenton will be a showcase

for 'Pilatus Class' sales and service, and will be a flagship store that will serve as a model for our global network of Authorized Pilatus Sales and Service Centers."

Rick Piccolo, President and CEO of the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, stated: "We are thrilled to partner with Pilatus. This agreement marks a significant milestone in the economic development not only of the airport, but also the region. This endeavor involves a substantial investment of tens of millions of dollars in facility development, which will result in the creation of over 300 skilled positions, offering lucrative opportunities and making a significant economic impact. Given the previously announced commitment by Manatee Technical College to build an Airframe & Powerplant school on the airport, this agreement will provide local employment opportunities for those graduates right here in the Sarasota/Bradenton area. Pilatus has expressed admiration for the airport's planned Aviation Ecosystem, which includes education and training facilities."

Sharon Hillstrom, president and CEO of the Bradenton Area Economic Development Corp., expressed: "The aviation ecosystem we offer in the Bradenton Area on Florida's west coast is one-of-a-kind. Working with the team at the airport, we provide a world-class location for companies like Pilatus that are bringing capital investment and jobs to our community."

First-Class Customer Experience

Florida and the U.S. East Coast represent the highest concentration of Pilatus aircraft operations, sales and service activity in the world. In 2022, more than 6,200 Pilatus flight operations were conducted in the state of Florida alone.

The construction of the new Bradenton facility is part of a larger company strategy to support the growing fleet of more than 2,250 Pilatus aircraft already based in North and South America. The design of the facility and the customer experience best practices will be shared with the global network of independent Pilatus Authorized Sales and Service Centers so that owners and operators of Pilatus aircraft worldwide enjoy a consistent, seamless and exceptional ownership experience. •

Visit www.pilatus-aircraft.com to learn more.



Skytech Welcomes *Georgia*

October 7th, 2024, Skytech officially assumed responsibility for the former Aero Center/Epps Aviation Pilatus Service Center. This location has formally adopted the Skytech name and will remain the Authorized PC-12 and PC-24 Pilatus Sales & Service Center for the Southeastern region.

We are excited to have the opportunity to serve this new location, and we hope to provide a smooth transition for the employees and unbeatable service for the new and existing customers. Skytech will offer Pilatus and PC-24 aircraft service and parts at this location. Scott Ducker, a Sales Representative formerly for Epps, will continue to be the Sales Representative in the area.

Find us at Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK)!

Address: 1988 Airport Road, Chamblee, GA 30341

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Moments that Change Us *Forever*

BY MIKE BELL - Veteran's Airlift Command Volunteer & Skytech Customer

"With *advances* in medical technology, many veterans today survive injuries that would have been fatal in earlier conflicts. However, these men and women face lifelong *challenges* and often struggle with commercial travel."

There are moments in life that change us forever. For pilots, these milestones often include the first solo flight, the checkride that earns our license, and progressing through various aircraft—each marking a significant step in our aviation journey. I began flying later in life, quickly advancing from Cessna 172s and 182s to my first aircraft, a Cessna 206, followed by a Piper Meridian and a Citation Mustang. Later came a Diamond DA 40, a Piper Mirage, and my current plane, a legacy Pilatus PC-12. The PC-12 is unique in the market, offering a cabin comparable to a midsize jet, the operating cost of a single-engine turboprop, a 1,500 nm range, a pallet-sized cargo door, and takeoff and landing capabilities on unimproved surfaces.



In late October 2011, while flying a Cessna Mustang, I had dinner in Baltimore with Scott Ernest, then CEO of Cessna. Little did I know that this dinner would change my life. Our conversation turned to using airplanes for volunteer work. I had been flying occasionally for Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic, a wonderful organization. Scott shared that Cessna had repainted a Mustang to honor American military service

members and was encouraging its pilots to fly for an organization called the Veteran's Airlift Command (VAC). Intrigued by his description, I researched the VAC when I returned home.

The VAC's mission is to provide "free, private air transportation to our nation's combat-injured veterans for medical or other compassionate purposes through a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots." The VAC was founded by Walt Fricke, a decorated former Army helicopter pilot who flew hundreds of combat missions in Vietnam. Fricke's vision for the VAC stems from his experience of spending six months in the hospital after being medevac'd out of Vietnam in 1968.

With advances in medical technology, many veterans today survive injuries that would have been fatal in earlier conflicts. However, these men and women face lifelong challenges and often struggle with commercial travel. Airport security can be a challenge, with little recognition of the fact that their injuries were sustained in defense of our nation. The VAC is committed to providing these veterans with dignified transportation for the rest of their lives.

Walt nearly lost his foot due to shrapnel when the rockets he fired exploded in the launch tube. Inspired by his hospital experience, he began flying veterans and their family members in his personal plane. Friends encouraged him to start the VAC, and since its inception, volunteer pilots have transported over twenty thousand passengers. The VAC operates on a modest budget, with no office space, and coordinators working from home. Veterans and their families submit mission requests, which are then vetted and matched to volunteers through a network of thousands of pilots.

As Veteran's Day 2011 approached, I signed up for the VAC and began receiving emailed mission notifications. I soon volunteered for my first mission:

"VAC Mission: Richmond, VA to Boston, 11/22 (returning 11/27)
VAC PRIORITY MISSION: 1st LT Jake M., a 2009 West Point graduate,

was severely injured by an IED in Afghanistan on July 23, 2011. He lost both legs and suffers from a traumatic brain injury. This will be his first trip home since his injury, and he'll be traveling with his girlfriend, Lisa. Jake is determined to stay in the Army, and Lisa has remained by his side, putting her future plans on hold after recently graduating with a master's in education. He will travel with a collapsible wheelchair and a walker. Your help would be invaluable."

My first mission took place on November 22, 2011. I flew to Richmond, Virginia, from my home base in Gaithersburg, Maryland, to meet Jake and Lisa. Upon arriving in Boston, we were greeted by Jake's family in a heartwarming homecoming. Witnessing this moment left a profound impact on me. I was captivated by the VAC's mission. Years later, in 2022, I reached out to Jake and Lisa, learning they had married, had two beautiful children, and were living in Texas. They sent me beautiful heartwarming photos of their family.

Thirteen years and hundreds of missions later, the VAC has introduced me to people, places, and experiences I never would have imagined. I've gone sightseeing, hunting, and fishing across the United States. I've made lasting friendships and met people deeply committed to helping others. Through the VAC, I've discovered and befriended individuals in dozens of organizations dedicated to supporting veterans, from small hunting and fishing groups to a ranch in South Dakota that hosts thousands of veterans annually, to a Florida organization started by a paralyzed Marine that fields nationally ranked wheelchair rugby and basketball teams.

I have been honored to meet and fly three Medal of Honor recipients from the Vietnam, Korean, and Iraq wars. I've flown single, double, triple, and even quadruple amputees; the first North American double-arm transplant recipient; and a 106-year-old D-Day veteran. I've met veterans from all walks of life, each one humble, patriotic, and thankful. One of my closest friends is a combat-wounded veteran



missing his left arm at the shoulder and with a prosthetic right leg. He went on to earn a master's degree from Georgetown, is an instrument-rated pilot, and currently leads a nonprofit supporting other veterans.

Last year, my friend Joe and I had the privilege of transporting Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr., his wife Jean, and their family to West Point from their home in Columbus, Georgia, for the unveiling of his Medal of Honor plaque. Joe and I both describe the experience as "magical". We spent time with the family, toured West Point, dined in the cadet mess hall, and were welcomed as family members. When Colonel Puckett passed, Joe and I attended his honor ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda and attended a private family reception with our wives later that evening. The next day we were again honored to transport his family and ashes back to Columbus.

Through the years, I have flown veterans in a Cessna Citation Mustang, a Piper Mirage, and the Pilatus PC-12. While each aircraft has served its purpose, the Pilatus stands out for these missions. Its cargo door allows a wheelchair-bound veteran to be loaded easily. I've trusted Skytech for years with my Piper and Pilatus aircraft purchases and maintenance, including my legacy PC-12 (serial no. 107). Their service has been invaluable, with a dedicated team who prioritize safety and customer needs. They are top notch in service and support, having flown a team in to repair my aircraft on numerous occasions over the last two decades. Their current head of maintenance in Westminster, MD has been exemplary in keeping my airplane safe and flying. He constantly researches options for me and keeps his customers safety and financial needs at the forefront. Skytech feels like my partner in this mission.

I have a deep passion for flying, and using this love to help others has brought me unexpected benefits. I have met and befriended thousands of veterans that were injured in support of our country, and others that give of their time to help their fellow Americans. They have inspired me and sustained my faith in this Nation. The Veteran's Airlift Command has profoundly transformed my life. I encourage you to get involved—this experience will undoubtedly change yours as well. •

THE PILATUS PC-12: A *Humanitarian* Workhorse

BY RICK SHEPARD - Executive VP of Operations, Skytech

It's a common occurrence to see a PC-12 pull up on the ramp with a plane full of passengers. They may be businesspeople on their way to a meeting or a family starting their weeklong vacation. Whatever the mission, you cannot argue about the comfort, reliability, and safety that the PC-12 provides for its passengers. Recently, I saw another side of the PC-12 that some pilots, like me, rarely see: the utility.

In late September, Hurricane Helene made landfall, bringing torrential rain and damaging winds to the southeast. Although Florida is no stranger to tropical weather, most would argue it was a "Doozy." However, parts of the South were hit especially hard, especially in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. Snow and ice storms are common natural occurrences there, but the devastation is unprecedented when an estimated 30 inches of rain falls all at once.



Many of our friends, family, co-workers, and customers instantly found themselves in dire straits and essentially cut off from the world. I and many others quickly recognized that private aircraft would be part of the solution to providing aid. Unlike many instances where debris must be cleared from the road to get access areas and transport supplies, the streets and even the roadbeds were no longer recognizable. Bridges were missing and any infrastructure left was severely compromised.

With many fellow aviators eager to help, it was a common sight to see a variety of four-seat, light singles and twins coming to the rescue. Most were packed to the gills as much as their useful load would allow. With the typical flight to the area, less than 100 NM, from Charlotte, NC, speed was not king, but instead volume/size and caring capacity were highly desirable, and if you had a cargo door, that was icing on the cake. With nearly 3900 lbs. useful load and cargo door, it was time to go to work for the Pilatus.

Several larger aircraft bringing supplies to the area were headed to AVL, the "Big Airport." However, there are still a handful of smaller

mountain airports that were accessible and in desperate need of supplies, most being served by helicopters and smaller aircraft. With runway lengths less than 3000 feet at elevations around 3000 MSL, anything larger than a Piper Cherokee was a rare sight.

Having the PC-12 loaded with nearly 1800 lbs. of food, water, baby diapers, plus fuel for the round trip could significantly impact performance and handling. Although I could feel the aircraft was heavier, climbing away at 2000 feet per minute gave me much confidence. Although I have been flying the PC-12 for many years, I could not resist the urge to look back at all those supplies and think, "What a truck!" Speaking of trucks, it took no fewer than four trucks to unload all the supplies the PC-12 was hauling. We even got quite the chuckle from ground crews when we opened the forward lavatory to reveal about 100 neatly stacked rolls of toilet paper. Toilet paper in the bathroom of your airplane...makes sense to me!

We often talk about secondary markets for the PC-12. Flying a humanitarian supply mission helped demonstrate and solidify why the aircraft is so desirable to cargo operators and others who require a big door for a big load. No matter if it's people going to meeting or a pallet of water to a disaster area, the PC-12 will get it done!

Born in the Swiss Alps, the PC-12 was right at home with navigating the unique challenges that come with serving these smaller airports that were cut off and in desperate need.

Although Skytech will soon be welcoming live passengers back aboard on our next flight, it was good to be reminded and see first-hand the utility and just how capable the PC-12 can be. •

"I and many others quickly recognized that *private aircraft* would be part of the *solution* to providing aid."



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a Word to the Wise

BY SEAN WALLACE - Director of FBO Operations/Safety Manager, Skytech

Adaptability in the Industry

The business aviation sector is experiencing a dynamic shift, with several key developments shaping the industry. From innovative technologies to sustainability initiatives, the landscape is evolving rapidly. A combination of technological advancements, regulatory changes, and a growing emphasis on environmental sustainability drives this transformation.

One of the most significant developments in business aviation is the advent of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. Companies across the globe are pioneering this technology, which promises to revolutionize urban transportation by offering a solution to traffic congestion. eVTOL aircraft are designed to be quieter, more efficient, and environmentally friendly compared to traditional helicopters. This innovation is expected to make air travel more accessible and convenient, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

Another technological advancement is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in aviation operations. AI is being used to optimize flight routes, improve fuel efficiency, and enhance safety. For instance, AI-powered predictive maintenance systems can identify potential

issues before they become critical, reducing downtime and maintenance costs. Additionally, AI is being utilized in customer service to provide personalized experiences and streamline booking processes.

Sustainability is another major focus in the business aviation sector. The industry is making significant strides in reducing its environmental impact through the adoption of sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs). SAFs are produced from renewable resources and have the potential to reduce carbon emissions by up to 80% compared to conventional jet fuels. Airlines and airports are working together to develop the necessary infrastructure to support the widespread use of SAFs.

In conclusion, the business aviation sector is at a pivotal moment, with technological advancements, sustainability initiatives, regulatory changes, and industry recognition shaping its future. Staying informed and adaptable is crucial for navigating this dynamic landscape. As the industry continues to evolve, those who embrace these changes will be well-positioned for success. •