

OWNER & PILOT Advantage

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



PILATUS OBTAINS PC-24 TYPE CERTIFICATES

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AN OPTIMISTIC 2018

Excitement and optimism abounds in the aviation industry with new products and innovation. With the recent FAA and EASA certification of the Pilatus PC-24 Super Versatile Jet, Pilatus continues to build on their stellar reputation by not only certifying the PC-24 on time – they did so while producing an aircraft that exceeded many of their original performance parameters! They have also launched an ambitious “Entry Into Service Program” that quite possibly will revolutionize and set a new standard for how new aircraft are introduced to the market. Additionally, Piper Aircraft and the M-Class Aircraft - led by their flagship M600, continue to add technology and performance up and down their product line.

While the latest US Tax Bill will keep many accountants busy analyzing it for some time; it appears on the surface that 2018 may present a tremendous opportunity for new and pre-owned aircraft acquisitions. Tax advantages coupled with robust economic condi-

tions could make 2018 a very busy year.

As we move into 2018, the aviation show season is just around the corner providing numerous opportunities to get a firsthand look at everything the personal and business aviation has to offer. With charter hours flown continuing to rise it appears that the need for reliable efficient travel is growing exponentially. Maybe this is the year to look into full or partial ownership. If one of the regional shows doesn't fit into your schedule we are always available to coordinate a personal demonstration with you.

While there is a lot of industry news and excitement, we would be remiss not to mention another milestone retirement from our Skytech family. After successful stints with Cessna and Beechcraft, Mike Fitzgerald recently retired after 19 years with us. Mike joined Skytech and provided guidance and inspiration in virtually every facet of the business as we navigated the ups and downs of the aviation roller coaster. Mike was instrumental in many

of Skytech's accomplishments over the years; not least of which, transforming this magazine from an outsourced newsletter into a fully in-house written and published product. While we will miss his aviation knowledge and humorous twist on just about everything, we couldn't be happier for him as he embarks on his next adventure. Mike and his wife Marcia are enjoying their North Carolina mountain home, time with grandchildren, traveling and (hopefully) finally playing a lot of golf. Congratulations and Thanks from all of us Mike! ■

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.

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NEW TAX LAWS IMPACT ON GENERAL AVIATION

New federal tax laws that are in effect have big impacts across the General Aviation landscape. A brief overview of the changes are below. As always, contact an industry professional to see the impact on your unique situation. Fantastic opportunities exist for buyers of business aircraft.

100-PERCENT EXPENSING (BONUS DEPRECIATION)

The new tax law allows for 100-percent expensing of qualified aircraft

placed into service after September 27, 2017 and before January 1, 2023. Through the efforts of NBAA and a coalition of General Aviation groups, the new law allows for 100-percent expensing of both factory-new and pre-owned aircraft.

LIKE-KIND EXCHANGES

Taxpayers will no longer be eligible to defer taxable gain on the sale of an aircraft via a like-kind exchange, and the gain would be subject to recapture for tax purposes.

TRANSPORTATION EXCISE TAX DOES NOT APPLY TO OWNER FLIGHTS ON MANAGED AIRCRAFT

The tax bill clarifies that owner flights on managed aircraft are not subject to Federal Transportation Excise Tax (FET), but rather are subject to the non-commercial fuel tax. ■

For more information about how you may be impacted by new tax laws, contact Daniel Cheung by visiting www.aviationtaxconsultants.com

Vref



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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.

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BUSINESS JET INVENTORIES

2017 VALUE RECAP - MARKET LEADER 2017 - VOLUME 4

After the US election and the "Trump Bump," there has been renewed excitement and an increase of activity for both General and Business Aviation. (I'm not saying that they were related, just making an observation). With activity levels rising and inventory levels declining, there's a fresh energy and much needed boost in confidence. This was a year of much anticipation. Judging by what we are seeing, it generally did not disappoint.

The table below includes only 2010 model year aircraft. As always, it is important to remember that each serial number is unique, and values can vary greatly. There are too many variables to consider all in one chart. Percent of New is a comparison of the original MSRP in 2010 to VREF retail values as of 2016 Q4 and 2017 Q4. ■

2010 Model	% of New 2016 Q4	% of New 2017	Change from 2016-2017	Average Annual Depreciation
Piper Archer	67%	67%	0%	4.2%
Socata TBM 850	68%	68%	0%	3.9%
Pilatus PC12	77%	77%	0%	2.9%
Cirrus SR22	74%	73%	-1%	3.3%
Piper Malibu Mirage	77%	76%	-1%	3.0%
Cessna CitationJet 3	58%	57%	-1%	5.4%
Beechcraft G58 Baron	74%	73%	-1%	3.4%
Beechcraft King Air C90GTi	57%	55%	-1%	5.6%
Beechcraft King Air B200GT	54%	52%	-2%	6.0%
Embraer Phenom 100	61%	56%	-5%	5.5%

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PILATUS OBTAINS PC-24 TYPE CERTIFICATES

PILATUS OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

“WE ALWAYS BELIEVED
100 PERCENT IN OUR PC-24
AND WERE PREPARED
TO GO ALL THE WAY TO
THE LIMITS OF WHAT WE
CAN REASONABLY DO
TO ENSURE ITS SUCCESS.
OBTAINING CERTIFICATION
IS OUR REWARD FOR SO
MANY YEARS OF
UNTIRING EFFORT.”

On 7 December 2017 Pilatus obtained type certificates from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the US-American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the first ever Swiss business jet. Certification of the Super Versatile Jet prepares the ground for initial customer deliveries, which will see the PC-24 business jet take off from Central Switzerland for its entry on the global market. In any project to develop a new aircraft, certification by the aviation authorities is by far the most important milestone, given that it means deliveries to customers may go ahead, generating revenue for the manufacturer. The PC-24 development project was officially announced in 2013, but work on the Super Versatile Jet has in fact been in progress for the past eleven and a half years.

COMPLEX PROJECT WITH A TIGHT SCHEDULE

The first PC-24 prototype completed its maiden flight in May 2015. All three prototypes used in the certification programme have flown a total of 2205 hours worldwide so far. Some flight tests were conducted in extreme environments: in icing conditions and very hot temperatures, at altitudes and speeds not usually encountered in everyday operations. Other tests have included bird impacts, structural stress tests, noise tests and general function. All this to prove that customers may depend on this aircraft to operate safely and reliably at all times, in line with statutory requirements. In fact, Pilatus test pilots took the aircraft to the very boundaries of its limits and even beyond,

flying it in configurations and maneuvers forbidden to the commercial pilots who will subsequently occupy the cockpit. Oscar J. Schwenk, Chairman at Pilatus, had this to say on receipt of the type certificate:

“The PC-24 is the first ever Pilatus business jet. Naturally, the requirements associated with obtaining certification for this sort of aircraft are extremely rigorous, and I need hardly mention that we faced some big challenges. In 2013 we announced that the PC-24 would be ready in 2017, and now, shortly before the end of the year, we have achieved exactly that. And all performance data promised to our first 84 customers have been achieved or even exceeded. The PC-24 delivers a maximum speed of 440 knots (815 km/h) compared to the contractually agreed 425 knots (787 km/h) – to cite just one example. That is pure Pilatus, and typical of the qualities which set us apart!”

MAJOR INVESTMENTS IN SWITZERLAND AND USA

Pilatus invested over 500 million Swiss francs of own funds in the PC-24 development programme. A further 150 million francs went into buildings and state-of-the-art production machinery at Stans in order to expand our PC-24 series production capacity in parallel. Pilatus currently has eight PC-24s on the assembly line in Stans, with 23 deliveries to customer around the world planned throughout 2018.

In the USA – one of the most important markets for the company – Pilatus invests in a new completions and support center. The interior design will be discussed with the PC-24 customers on site before implementation.

Schwenk comments further on achieving the milestone of certification:

“I’m extremely proud of my workforce, and would like to thank Pilatus owners, the two aviation authorities and our first 84 PC-24 customers for their trust and confidence in myself and my team. This project involved considerable risk, but we always believed 100 percent in our PC-24 and were prepared to go all the way to the limits of what we can reasonably do to ensure its success. Obtaining certification is our reward for so many years of untiring effort.”

FIRST CUSTOMER DELIVERY

The very first PC-24 will be handed over to the American fractional aircraft ownership business PlaneSense® in Stans in December. The aircraft will then be flown to the USA in January 2018, for official delivery to the customer. The first business travelers will enjoy flying aboard it soon after, and may look forward to arriving at their destinations faster, thanks to the PC-24’s unique ability to use short runways. The PC-24’s superb flexibility will open up countless new, as yet unexplored opportunities – as a business jet, Medevac aircraft and for other special missions. That is precisely what really distinguishes the world’s first Super Versatile Jet by Pilatus! ■

PERFORMANCE

The PC-24 has the following performance under international standard atmospheric conditions:

Balanced field length		
(MTOW, sea level, dry paved runway)	2,810 ft	856 m
Landing distance over 50 ft (15 m) obstacle		
(MLW, sea level, dry paved runway)	2,355 ft	718 m
Max. rate of climb (sea level, 200 KCAS)	4,151 fpm	21.10 m/s
Max. cruise speed (flight level 280)	440 KTAS	815 km/h
Range with 4 passengers		
(800 lb payload, LRC, NBAA IFR reserves)		
of 100 nm + 30 min VFR) ¹	2,035 nm	3,769 km
Max. certified altitude	45,000 ft	13,716 m
Stall speed (landing configuration, MLW)	81 KIAS	149 km/h

WEIGHTS

Basic operating weight ¹	11,367 lb	5,156 kg
Max. take-off weight ²	17,968 lb	8,150 kg
Max. landing weight	16,579 lb	7,520 kg
Max. payload ¹	2,522 lb	1,144 kg
Max. payload with full fuel ¹	737 lb	334 kg

¹ Executive configuration (6 seat), incl. one pilot

² 17,650 lb (8,005 kg) limitation until mid 2018



PILATUS

For more information visit www.Pilatus-Aircraft.com

**Skytech is an Authorized Pilatus PC-12 & PC-24
Sales & Service Center**

PA, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, KY, TN, OH



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



“ We are extremely proud of our business partners at Pilatus as they announce certification of the all-new PC-24 Super Versatile Jet. Not only is the airplane unique among performance categories, after 41 years in the new aircraft sales business we have never witnessed a more comprehensive and efficient certification process. Now we get the opportunity to employ a support network that will be equally unique and effective. ”

The PC-24 will be Skytech's fourth market introduction of a clean-sheet, you've-never-seen-one-of-these-before aircraft. It follows the Malibu (1983), TBM-700 (1991), and the PC-12 (1994), each of which created a new market segment that still thrives today. And those four introductions don't count major enhancements to existing designs that were the genesis of the Meridian (2000), PC-12 NG (2008), or M600 (2016). All of our previous introductions share one common feature that was key to the long-term success of the product – a dynamic and fully functional service component that was in place both physically and strategically before the first unit ever made its way to a customer.

With the advent of the PC-24, the establishment of a fully-functional Service Center network has ushered in a level of pre-introduction technical training, parts support, test equipment, and pilot training that we have never seen before. And this from the company whose primary General Aviation product, the PC-12, has been named #1 in Product Support for 16 years in a row, which is a pretty good hint that they know something about customer service. And that comes on the heels of the latest dispatch reliability reports for Pilatus' military trainer products which now rest at higher than 99%. Talk about prepping the surface before you apply the paint...product support is not a necessary evil at Pilatus, it's a mindset.

As a group, the Pilatus Dealer network is excited about the process. Pilatus literally has a PC-24 Entry Into Service team that has completed a first-hand, around-the-world evaluation of the existing and proposed Service Centers complete with a report card. Either you get straight A's in very stringent courses or you don't make it into the network. And their team will be back early next year

for a progress check. It's a demanding – and expensive – buildup of the support system.

One of the major advantages of the Dealer network is that we are, to quote Pilatus CEO Markus Bucher, "locals serving locals". Our network is geographically dispersed yet concentrated where the operators are. In full support of the Dealer unit is the factory itself, augmenting our own 24 / 7 / 365 support with essentially a duplicate system. And their system reeks of Swiss innovation and precision in everything from the robotic parts warehouse to aircraft that are wirelessly connected to the service network. It is the best of both worlds.

The independently-owned companies that are responsible to service the Pilatus products are the ones that sold the airplane so we have an unparalleled and vested interest in customer satisfaction. The salesperson, demo team, contract administrator, delivery specialist, warranty support staff, parts staff, and maintenance staff are all simply different extensions of the same phone number...and they're all in the same location. It's a proven and remarkably effective business model.

Skytech's specific support model, utilizing dedicated service aircraft and portable tooling to augment our physical locations, was created decades ago by the mobility of the products that we support. Ironically, we don't spend a lot of our marketing budget promoting our service airplanes but our support model pre-dates virtually any of those heavily advertised copycats in the industry. We're fully prepared to bring that model to bear in regard to the PC-24. If you ever figure out how to break it. ■

-John Foster, President of Skytech, inc.

 Crafted in Switzerland

PC-12 NG



 **PILATUS** 

POWERFUL. EFFICIENT. VERSATILE. SOUND LIKE ANYBODY YOU KNOW?

You demand continuous improvement in your business, so why not expect it from your business aircraft? Through intelligent design the new PC-12 NG climbs faster, cruises faster, and is even more quiet, comfortable and efficient than its predecessor. If your current aircraft isn't giving you this kind of value, maybe it's time for a Pilatus.

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PLAN NOW OR PAY MUCH MORE LATER

THE VALUE OF ROUTINE MAINTENANCE FOR PART 91 AIRCRAFT



The process of selecting the right business or personal aircraft to suit your needs can sometimes be a challenging and often confusing exercise given the number of choices available on

the market and the subtleties that can make the difference. Lots of thought goes into making a sound business decision. That same emphasis on making the right acquisition choice must extend to the practice of maintaining your aircraft to the standards from which it left the factory for continued safe flight, as well as reliable operation.

Good maintenance is a must for many reasons; safety, legality and dispatch reliability to name a few. Depending on the operating status of your aircraft (Part 135 Operating for Hire, or Part 91 Private Transport), there are FAA-mandated maintenance schedules. In short, Part 135 operation normally requires the operator to follow all manufacturer recommended inspections, whereas Part 91 requires only an annual inspection. Does this mean that a Part 91 airplane can be efficiently maintained to factory standards and safety levels with one inspection a year? The answer is...not always.

A PROACTIVE APPROACH

The name of the game in maintenance is identifying problems before they become worse, consequently more expensive and possibly dangerous. The model of airplane you own, including whether it is turbine or piston, and the frequency and type of flight activity will go a long way in dictating the proper maintenance schedule for the owner. In some cases, the decision to maintain a Part 91-operated aircraft though all recommended inspection intervals can ultimately save an operator both time and money. In fact, the FAA mandates that all turbine aircraft be on some type of approved maintenance program. In lieu of writing their own program, most owners defer to the manufacturer's recommended maintenance procedures. If you do that, then you must follow them.

The Pilatus PC-12 is an excellent example of an aircraft that benefits from 150-hour interval inspections over simply the annual inspection requirement. The yearly cost of maintenance on PC-12's maintained through 150-hour programs

have proven to be the same or slightly less when compared to the once-a-year annual inspection. A big reason is that the interim inspections are inherently lighter, or less involved than the annual inspection, but allow your shop to catch items before they escalate into costlier and more complicated repairs. In most cases, to accept the core of a time limited or rotatable item, it must meet the minimum requirements for overhaul. By allowing a part to stay on the aircraft to failure, the full cost of a replacement part would far exceed that of a normal exchange. Changing parts before they fail can only be done through ongoing preventive maintenance. Another added benefit of such maintenance practices is being able to spread the time limit/overhaul inspection costs out over the course of the year instead of all at once. Ultimately, a PC-12 maintained through 150 hour inspections will prove to save an operator money and downtime due to unforeseen problems over the course of ownership.

CONSULT YOUR MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Not all airplanes fit in the same mold as the PC-12, but benefits from routine maintenance, no matter your aircraft or overall service schedule, are hard to ignore. Nobody knows your airplane better than a factory authorized service center, and a consultation will help decide the best approach for your situation. Use of a factory authorized service center assures the operator of factory-spec parts and procedures, of personnel specially trained and qualified in the factory's products, and machine-specific knowledge that can make the sometimes higher per-hour price cost effective by needing fewer shop hours. Additionally, a factory service center-maintained airplane can be a big bonus when the time comes to sell. Just read the ads from sellers stating "service center maintained."

There are varying degrees of routine maintenance; not all require a switch from the annual inspection to interim inspections. For example, an engine inspection during normal fluid and filter changes can allow your shop to inspect key areas that can save significantly by catching a problem early. Engines are usually the most expensive single component in an aircraft. Keeping up with scheduled maintenance through a trusted service center can save in down-time and money, particularly since the costs of overhaul or replacement engines can push the initial investment beyond the point of economic feasibility.

A little research and smart planning with your shop at the start of your aircraft ownership experience can save you grief, added expense—or worse, injury later. The better you integrate maintenance needs into your operational practices, the more convenient, seamless and cost-effective those down cycles will be. ■

Originally published in the Spring 2009 - Skytech Advantage Magazine.



CHARTER MARKET TRENDS

Aircraft charter activity has reached cruising altitude and is still climbing. There are many reasons to support the growth of this segment of business aviation, and no reason to believe it will slow down anytime soon. Charter hours are higher now than any time before the Great Recession. The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) reports on General Aviation activity every year in their General Aviation Statistical Databook and Industry Update. The last report in 2016 highlighted the activity in 2015, and that breakdown of 135 On-Demand is below:

U.S. General Aviation and On-Demand Part 135 Total Hours Flown by Use and Aircraft Type (2015)

Total Hours	Jet	Turboprop	Piston	Rotorcraft
2,516,449	1,068,684	620,101	435,794	391,870

All signs point to even higher reported numbers for 2016/2017, and 2018 shows no sign of reversing the trend. There are a lot of ways to experience aircraft charter, from large owned-and-operated fleets to privately owned airplanes connected with management companies. In either case, aircraft charter is an almost gateway to the industry. All it takes is an experience or two of what is possible and you're hooked. Many charter users go on to various forms of ownership in the future. Increased charter activity is an excellent sign for the health of the industry as this stands to reason that new life is experiencing the joys of private travel for themselves. Whether you're a charter user, an aircraft owner, or an industry professional – this is all great news.

Aircraft owners looking for ways to offset ownership costs have more options now than ever before with this increased demand. Professional aircraft management companies can offer fantastic opportunities to completely oversee your asset while tailoring a charter program to meet your desired use. This can allow the owner to have all the benefits of ownership with reduced expense. Cash flow analysis programs allow prospective buyers, or current ones looking to explore options, to see how adding various amounts of charter can impact their unique situation. Tax companies who specialize in business aircraft can structure programs to meet your needs.

Charter brokers play an important role in this market,

and operators do well to establish good relationships with the vast network throughout the world. However, a trend in the past couple years spurred by robust online programs available to operators and brokers alike, has many end-user companies both chartering their own aircraft and searching for the best options when clients needs lie elsewhere. Like anything in business, establishing a relationship with a company has many advantages. This is no different as there's no need to jump from one person to the other. Many of the larger fleet operators have established in-house brokerage arms to fill customer's needs. Boutique operators are afforded the same tools with often-times a more personal touch. All of this means good things for end-users who want options without needing to place multiple requests. Just because your operator doesn't have what you need in their fleet doesn't mean they can't find it and oftentimes go the extra mile due to your existing relationship.

As the figures from GAMA show, business jets top the charts when it comes to total usage. One of the larger brokerage firms in the country who sees requests across every type of aircraft has reported the top private jet types requested in 2016 for domestic departures. One turboprop makes this list: the ultra-versatile Pilatus PC-12.

Gulfstream G-IV	Hawker 800XP	Phenom 100
Beechjet 400A	Citation CJ3	Learjet 60
Pilatus PC-12	Challenger 601	Citation Excel
Hawker 400XP	Citation CJ2	

This same firm reports their top requested flight destination from 2016 as well. Those that originated with a domestic departure are:

Las Vegas, NV	Miami, FL	New York, NY
Washington, DC	Nashville, TN	Los Angeles, CA

An active and healthy charter market is good for the industry as a whole, regardless of your role in the process. For end-users, establish relationships with your trusted provider and take advantage of the powerful tools afforded them today. For aircraft owners, consider taking a look at what charter usage can mean for you in the right set-up. It's a fantastic symbiotic cycle when an owner offsets costs by growing the next generation of business aircraft users. Talk about a win-win. ■



M600™ REAL-WORLD NUMBERS

PIPER M600 FACTS

The single-engine Piper M600 is more of what you want in luxury, performance and value. Operators call it the best value in its class because it was designed for owners who want extra range and speed without the inflated cost. The new clean-sheet wing is at the heart of the changes to the Piper M600 providing slick aerodynamics that help you go farther, faster without leaving anything or anyone behind. The published specification from Piper are as follows....

**All specifications and performance data are preliminary and subject to change.*

1,484 nm

MAX RANGE

2,635 ft

TAKEOFF DISTANCE
(OVER 50 FT OBSTACLE)

274 ktas

MAX CRUISING
SPEED

2,659 ft

LANDING DISTANCE
(OVER 50 FT OBSTACLE)

5.6 psid

MAX CABIN
DIFFERENTIAL

30,000 ft

MAXIMUM APPROVED
ALTITUDE



“Other owners have said this; but the aircraft is really understated. When I say understated, I mean that its flying qualities and performance are far, far superior to all other previous PA-46 variants.”

-Phil Soucy, Piper M600 Owner/Pilot

To read the full review from Phil Soucy, visit <http://bit.ly/2E4Ctei>

LET'S SEE HOW THIS TRANSLATES INTO REAL-WORLD FLYING AFTER HAVING THE M600 IN THE FLEET.....

- Takeoff rolls with normal technique have been around 1500-1600 feet
- Climbs at mid-weight at Vy (122 indicated) have typically yielded around 2000-2100 FPM through 10,000 feet
- Climbs at VX are around 15-17 degrees nose up
- Climbs at Vy are around 10-13 degrees nose up
- Inventory M600's have routinely been 5-7 knots faster than book (both max and normal cruise)
- Typical descent from altitude: 1500 FPM, Max Cruise TQ Setting will normally yield 240 Indicated Airspeed.

THE M600 REALLY SHINES ON CROSS-COUNTRY FLIGHTS



AVL to ESN: 370 NM, 1.4 hours, FL 250, -32C, 1550 TO, 785 Degrees C ITT, 330 lbs per hour fuel flow, **282 KTAS**

DMW to UZA: 358 NM, 1.6 hours, FL 260, -29C, 1460 TO, 795 Degrees C ITT, 315 lbs per hour fuel flow, **281 KTAS**

UZA to PVG: 248 NM, 1 hour, FL 230, -28C, 1425 TO, 715 Degrees C ITT, 305 lbs per hour fuel flow, **274 KTAS**

“The range and payload numbers are really what sets this aircraft apart from others. I’m based in Leesburg VA and have made several trips to Florida non-stop landing with over 2 hours of fuel.”

-Phil Soucy, Piper M600 Owner/Pilot

To read the full review from Phil Soucy, visit <http://bit.ly/2E4Ctei>



Piper completed an M600 demo tour last spring through France, Germany, Russia and Poland. All total, the M600 flew 7,000 miles and burned approximately 38,000 pounds of fuel. The typical Atlantic crossing for Piper involves hopping countries via the northern route. **The M600 with it's increased ranges left from St. John's, Newfoundland and landed at Lajes Airport in Portugal 4hrs 38mins later after flying 1,271 NM at FL 280 and averaging 42 GPH for a fuel burn of 1,290 pounds.** The tailwind was less than 20 knots.

LET'S SEE HOW THIS RANGE CAN BE USED ON A SAMPLE TRIP USING N647ST

KPNE - KAPF (901NM)



200 lbs pilot



100 lbs of baggage



200 lbs front seat passenger



3:35 minutes



130 lbs aft bench passenger



1558 lbs of fuel



130 lbs aft bench passenger





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 a Word to the Wise

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION.....

BY PRESTON ESTES - VICE PRESIDENT OF SERVICE

Scheduling downtime for aircraft maintenance most certainly falls into the “necessary evil” category of the ownership experience. There’s never really a great time, and it always seems like it was just yesterday the last one occurred. However, scheduled maintenance is, by its very name, there to help avoid the other sometimes “unnecessary evil” of unscheduled problems. This really is an area where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Part of scheduled maintenance is looking ahead – oftentimes far ahead – to see what is on the horizon that could present a problem if not addressed now. Lead time for parts, vendors, etc. can all play into an effective game plan to limit not only aircraft downtime, but also out of pocket expense.

A topic we’ve hit hard in recent issues is the impending ADS-B deadline. We’ll continue to do so as this truly can represent a real nightmare for anyone caught out of compliance, but absolutely has the potential to be a non-event if scheduled ahead of time. The priority is to not be caught in the rush of the closer-than-you-think January 1st, 2020 deadline.

Every month we creep closer to the deadline, the amount of aircraft left to update in the FAA registry is creating a very, real logjam that will be felt across shops and vendors alike. The FAA has publicly stated that the deadline will hold firm, so it’s very unlikely to see an extension.

This “Word to the Wise” is for anyone still on the fence about when is a good time to pull the trigger on their ADS-B upgrade. When determining your maintenance plan for 2018, strongly consider planning ahead to ensure you can check the box and put the requirement in your wake turbulence. Even if you have plans to sell the airplane prior to the deadline, savvy buyers will likely require an upgrade as part of the sale. Waiting until 2019 may creep into the danger zone of experiencing needless delays. At the end of the day, this is a necessary evil of a specific variety – one that casts an extremely large net, but has a very easy solution. Don’t wait until you’re out of time and options. ■

