

Owner & Pilot

ADVANTAGE

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

AIRCRAFT

MAINTENANCE TRACKING

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A SEMBLANCE OF NORMALCY



As spring wanes and we approach summer, it is apparent that the world is waking up. The large aviation shows and owner/operator conferences are making a strong comeback in 2022. Sun N Fun recently wrapped up, and we are looking forward to the European Business Aircraft show, Oshkosh, and the National Business Aircraft Association show in October. Everyone is putting Zoom meetings in the rearview mirror, and the industry has calculated that any Covid variant will be manageable. However, we still have lingering Covid protocols to protect our employees and customers.

The aviation market is on fire, with aircraft inventories at record lows, service departments running at capacity, and charter demand increasing exponentially. It is abundantly clear that the private aviation market has grown throughout the last couple of years, and we are yet to see the peak.

Unfortunately, one area that has not kept up with the demand is the workforce. There is no service facility or flight department around that is not looking to add employees. The industry has to become very resourceful to attract and retain qualified employees.

There is an optimistic outlook for business aviation going forward. Like many other industries, we are emerging out of the pandemic shadow and learning to operate at peak levels. While this can be frustrating, those of us that have been around for a while recognize that the pendulum can and will swing at some point. For now, let us enjoy getting back to more normal face-to-face interactions and take the time to remind ourselves that we are living in phenomenal times and enjoy the ride.

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 April 7, 2022)

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	5	\$1,099k	3.5%	87
Piper M500	2	\$2,075k	1.9%	16
Citation M2	14	\$4,708k	4.6%	58
King Air 250	8	\$5,750k	2.9%	80
Caravan 208B	26	\$1,393k	1.7%	679
Socata TBM-900	0	-	-	-
Pilatus PC-12 NGX	4	\$7,470k	2.6%	51
Pilatus PC-24	0	\$10,300k	0.0%	0

SCHEDULE OF 2022 EVENTS*

NBAA Regional Forum
 White Plains, NY
 June 22

The Elite - New York
 Caldwell, NJ
 September 23 - 24

POPA Annual Convention
 Leesburg, VA
 June 24 - June 26

NBAA BACE
 Orlando, FL
 October 18 - 20

EAA AirVenture
 Oshkosh, WI
 July 25 - July 31

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

Piper®

M600/SLS



AUTOTHROTTLE *Certified*



Since the Piper M600/SLS was announced, a number of exciting features were anticipated with the aircraft – one of which was autothrottle. For those in the United States that have been anxiously awaiting its arrival, the wait is finally over. At the end of 2021, the FAA approved the stand alone autothrottle in the M600/SLS! N163HL was the first model to receive certification. Aircraft officially began delivering from the factory in January of 2022, beginning with serial number 198. Earlier serial numbers have activation kits available to be installed by your Piper service center. Training is available online via Legacy Flight Training center. Now, enjoy the benefits of a reduced workload – and increased safety. Speak with your Piper Sales representatives to find out more about the addition of autothrottle to the Piper M600/SLS. •



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PUBLISHER
Dave Conover

EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND
WRITER
Jennifer Longo

COLUMNIST
Preston Estes

GRAPHIC ARTIST
Jennifer Longo

THE ADVANTAGE
MAGAZINE STAFF
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FEEDBACK!

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
SHAREHOLDER OF ADVOCATE CONSULTING
LEGAL GROUP, PLLC



ADVOCATE CONSULTING LEGAL GROUP, PLLC
WWW.ADVOCATETAX.COM
TOLL FREE: (888) 325-1942



Controlling Use Tax on the Purchase of Your Aircraft in 2022

While tax reform at the federal level remains unclear and 100% bonus depreciation appears on the verge of phasing down at year end, aircraft purchasers are well aware that a major cost in the purchase of any aircraft is the possible applicability of sales and use tax to the transaction. As States remained concerned about the economic impact of inflation and political instability globally, they are seeking additional sources of funding. During past budget shortfalls, aircraft have been the target of securing additional revenues through the aggressive collection of sales, use and property tax. The portability aircraft make it generally easy to avoid sales tax on the purchase by closing in a jurisdiction with little or no tax, or an applicable exemption, but that is only the first step. Use tax generally becomes a significant hurdle in the state or states in which the aircraft is based.

What is a sales tax vs. a use tax? Although sales and use tax are not universally defined, for purposes of this discussion a sales tax is a privilege or license tax on persons engaged in the business of making retail sales by which ownership of tangible personal property is transferred for consideration: a tax on the act of selling. Use tax complements sales tax and is a tax on the consumer for the privilege of storing, using, or consuming within the state any tangible personal property: a tax on the end user. The sales tax and use tax are generally mutually exclusive, in that any sales tax already paid on the transaction will be credited against use tax owed.

Because aircraft are easily transportable, sales tax can be

eliminated by transacting the transfer in a state such as Oregon or Massachusetts which have no sales tax. Other states have little or no sales and use tax on aircraft purchases, including North and South Carolina. Finally, over a dozen remaining states have “fly-away exemptions” that provide an aircraft will not be subject to tax if it is promptly removed from the state and registered elsewhere. However, these exemptions often have technical requirements that must be carefully considered before relying upon them. Aircraft sales/use tax is an area of extreme differentiation from state-to-state, so parties must exercise extreme care in determining the point of delivery and closing of the transaction.

Use tax, however, is more complex a challenge, and will generally be imposed by the state of domicile (and possibly even in other states with nexus to the aircraft) if sales tax would have been imposed had the transaction occurred within the state. Therefore, culminating the sale in a tax-free state is generally only the initial step in controlling sales and use taxes. The purchaser should also plan for avoiding or minimizing use tax, through one of the various exemptions that may be available on a state-by-state basis. Examples of common exemptions (which may or may not be present in any particular state) include:

- **Common Carrier Exemption.** Common carrier exemptions, if present, are often not unique to aircraft, but may apply more broadly to transportation equipment used in the movement of persons and property for hire. Several states have common carrier exemptions that applies only to commercial airlines. However, many states exempt charter operators operating under FAR Part 135, provided certain threshold use tests are met. Under certain circumstances, selected states will even extend the common carrier exemption to aircraft operators serving members of their controlled group and operating under FAR Part 91.
- **Casual Sale.** These exemptions apply to the sale of aircraft by individuals or companies not regularly engaged in the aircraft sale business. One potential hazard is that a number of state laws which include a casual sale exemption specifically carve out aircraft from the exempt property designation, and therefore tax it. Other states, like Texas, impose significant burdens on a purchaser to vet a casual seller.
- **Resale Exemption.** Because the sales and use tax is a tax at retail, the purchase of the property will generally not be subject to tax if it is acquired in a wholesale transaction. This wholesale transaction exemption would generally apply when the aircraft is acquired for purposes of resale or for lease. Therefore, when a dealer acquires an aircraft for the purpose of selling it to another, tax is imposed on the dealer sale, but not his purchase. Likewise, when property is acquired for lease to another, the acquisition of the property is generally exempt from sales tax, while the lease payments are then subject.

→ **Interstate Exemption.**

Certain states recognize that if an aircraft is used primarily in interstate commerce, it is not subject to either sales or use taxes. The scope of this exemption generally turns on the level of interstate use, and the degree to which it resides in the state. Some states, such as California and Maryland, have defined testing periods after which the aircraft is deemed exempt- others do not. Strict compliance with state requirements is a must when using this exemption.

- **Corporate Transactions.** In a number of states there are exemptions for bulk sales of property as part of the sale of an on-going trade or business, statutory mergers, dividends to shareholders, tax-free contributions of property to partnerships or corporations, and other similar transactions. In some cases, it may be possible to structure transactions pursuant to these exemptions and thereby effectively limit the applicability of sales/use taxes.

The sales and use tax law applicable to aircraft is exceedingly complex, and is often not uniformly clear. As the states' tax appetites continue to grow, they appear to be increasingly aggressive, even in areas previously thought to be exempt from tax. Purchasers are therefore cautioned to carefully plan their transactions and be cognizant of potential risks. Most business aircraft are eligible for use tax exemption or reduction in some form in most, but not all, states. Through proper planning, structuring, and filing, you can avoid a surprise use tax bill and use those funds to keep your business aircraft in the skies.

This article provides an introduction to a complex, and often ambiguous, area of law. Knowledgeable people may disagree as to outcomes in particular cases. Always consult with your advisor.



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.

Aircraft Maintenance *Tracking*

BY PRESTON ESTES - *Vice President, Service*

There is no denying that aviation maintenance tracking is a crucial part of any aircraft maintenance program. Over time, what has evolved is the ease of use and capabilities of the various players that have entered the maintenance tracking market, especially with the entrance of PC & computer software in the mid-'90s. Since then, the evolution of maintenance tracking has made remarkable strides. We've gone from carbon copy work cards created on a dot matrix printer, required to be mailed in once completed, to cloud-based server programs with virtually endless capabilities. What used to

be cumbersome & aggravating is now seamless, second nature, and, depending on the program, automated.

In general, maintenance tracking programs have been a necessity for turbine aircraft, especially business jets & airliners. Years ago, you would not even consider a maintenance tracking program for piston or small turbine aircraft because it was more time-consuming than doing it manually. Still, today's technology is applicable on even the most simplistic aircraft.

Why use aircraft maintenance tracking software? Simple. With an internet connection and log-in credentials, your aircraft's entire maintenance history and current status are at your fingertips. An aircraft owner, pilot, or maintenance facility can easily access all the same information. You can run reports for items due in any timeframe you like; next 100

hours, 90 days, six months, etc.

While there are currently many programs available that all claim to be the best, it comes down to what capabilities you need and the price point you want. As with anything, there is a fine line between the two. If you find something priced low, its capabilities may not be worth the savings for your particular needs. The old adage "you get what you pay for" applies to a point.

My suggestion is to talk with your service center or maintenance provider about the right option for you. They are not salespeople pushing a particular program and will know better than anyone what is suitable for your specific circumstances. Sometimes the make/model of the aircraft will move you in a direction. Not that you don't have options, but it may be designed for your aircraft and will be the most efficient program to set up & utilize.

Today's most prominent name in the maintenance tracking world is CAMP (Computerized Aircraft Maintenance Program), initially developed in the mid-1960s by a Grumman employee for the then-new Gulfstream GII corporate jet. As a Pilatus service center, Skytech uses CAMP almost exclusively, and it is the OEM maintenance tracking program for the Pilatus PC-12 and PC-24. New aircraft deliveries come with one year of CAMP's service complimentary. It also integrates with Corridor aviation maintenance software as the same parent company owns both companies. You can import & export "due lists" back and forth from a Corridor work order with a simple mouse click, eliminating manual entry of a "due list" and automatically updating items in CMAP once the work order is complete.

As you can see, it depends on the type of aircraft and what works best for the owner and, maybe, more importantly, the service provider. You may find administration charges from your service provider offset all the money saved by going with a less expensive program, so it is imperative to do your due diligence & consult with the experts before making a decision. The yearly subscription fee of a maintenance program may seem significant, but the cost savings on maintenance and the increased resale value of an aircraft on a maintenance program more than makeup for that fee. •

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With an internet connection and log-in credentials, your aircraft's entire maintenance history and current status are at your fingertips.

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The Piper M600/SLS

Coast to Coast

BY COLE MCKIBBIN - Skytech Piper Aircraft Sales

Since I started flying at the young age of 14, I have had the opportunity to participate in several amazing trips. Having experienced flying the east coast and several jaunts westbound through the Rockies and into California, my aviation career has been nothing short of spectacular.

Upon graduation from college in 2018, I took a naturally aspirated Cessna 210 from Clemson, SC, east to Charleston before turning around and venturing westward with one simple goal: to put my feet in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Over the next five weeks, the airplane and I covered over 8,100 miles in 66.5 hours of flight time and stopped in 27 different cities in 17 states.

Since joining the Skytech team in 2018, I have had some fantastic opportunities and seen much of the country – this time sitting in pressurized comfort in the flight levels!

In March of 2020, I flew an M600/SLS westbound from Rock Hill to Denver. We stopped in Nashville to pick up an additional passenger before making a non-stop flight to Rocky Mount Metro, on the western side of Denver. Even with 80+ knot headwinds, the flight was just shy of 5 hours, and we landed with over 475 pounds of fuel.

In December of the same year, I mimicked that trip twice – we flew from Rock Hill to Denver with fuel stops in Wichita, KS. On both occasions, we landed in Wichita after almost five hours aloft with more than 450 pounds of fuel still in the tanks. The hop from there to Denver was just under two hours.

February of this year offered another unique trip. Due for my PC-12 recurrent training, I elected to travel to the new PC-12 NGX simulator in Scottsdale, AZ. Avoiding the airlines, I took a Cessna Silver Eagle westbound. As incredible as this airplane is, the pressurization system is quite limited. The 3.35 maximum differential equates to a 12,000' cabin at an altitude of 23,000', whereas in the M600, the 5.5 differential will keep a much lower cabin in cruise. Even at 30,000', the M600 will hold a 10,000' cabin, equating to a much more comfortable experience and a more refreshed attitude upon arrival.

Eastbound is always fun with strong tailwinds! Above the bumps at FL270, the M600 trues at over 270 knots, sipping 275 pounds of fuel. Non-stop from Denver to Rock Hill, SC, or even Baltimore, MD is possible in the M600. Even more impressively, the airplane landed with over 650 pounds of fuel on both trips!

Personally, my favorite trip east occurred in October of 2021. Following NBAA, I was asked to fly the show plane back to Charlotte. As this was Piper's autothrottle testbed aircraft, I jumped at the opportunity and began planning the trip. With a 7:00 departure time, ForeFlight showed under 6 hours to Charlotte non-stop. With a 275 knot true airspeed and a fuel burn of 275 pounds at 27,000', the M600/SLS beat book.

We had an average ground speed of 299 knots on that trip alone, and the airplane covered almost 1,700 NM in 5 hours and 40 minutes! After we shut down in Charlotte, I noted more than 300 pounds of fuel still in the tanks.

As much fun as the trips out west are, the range of the M600 has also proven itself useful on the east coast. In February, I flew two individuals and their dog from Ocean Reef, FL, non-stop to Allentown, PA. The aircraft hopped up to 27,000', where we sipped fuel and enjoyed a 9,000' cabin. We battled headwinds, ice, wind, and rain for the next four hours – all thanks to a nasty storm system moving through the northern part of North Carolina and into Pennsylvania – before shooting the RNAV approach into Allentown at close to minimums.

The range, comfort, cost, and payload carrying capabilities of the M600/SLS continue to amaze me as I have not found an aircraft that combines these four items so nicely. Selfishly, I cannot wait for the next trip out west, or even up the east coast, to test what else the M600 can do! •



COLE MCKIBBIN, Skytech Piper Aircraft Sales

DC, VA, WV, WV, NC, SC

PiperSales@skytechinc.com



CURRENT STATE

BY DAVE CONOVER
Senior Executive Vice President & Sales Manager

of the Market

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the business aviation industry, like most industries, faced significant challenges to overcome. While we had little control over many of them; we simply had to react and adapt to the litany of ever-changing guidelines and mandates. However, there was an unseen benefit that rapidly emerged and has continued to grow. Aircraft charter and managed aircraft utilization began rising and have not let up.

While there were, and are, many safety protocols in place, it has become abundantly clear that people want to travel, and private aviation allows them to be in control of their environment. This comfort level led existing clients to continue traveling throughout the pandemic, albeit not necessarily purely on business trips, but to relocate to other desirable destinations where they felt comfortable and could work remotely if needed. For similar reasons, this created a new segment of individuals to look at private aviation for the first time. In both cases, many of these folks may never travel commercially on a regular basis again. Taking this one step further, the increase in activity and a base of new clients also lead to an increase in sales.

The sales market remained strong throughout the early months of the pandemic, although the industry struggled to keep up and could not react and expand to meet the demand. Around the third quarter of 2020, the new and pre-owned sales activity began surging rapidly. This caused new and pre-owned inventories to drop to near historic lows, which caused pre-owned prices to increase at a phenomenal rate. The laws of supply and demand were on full display and aided by favorable tax policies; the fourth quarter was pandemonium in the pre-owned market with folks trying to get aircraft in service by year-end. On the new side, manufacturers have set production levels and cannot react to rapid market swings. Additionally, vendor supply chain issues further limited their ability to increase production rapidly.

As we enter the second quarter of 2021, the market is still highly active. Pre-owned inventory of good late-model aircraft is limited. Most manufacturers are working with a backlog of new orders ranging from 1 to 4 years. However, the rapid escalation of prices seems to have stabilized a bit. We may never go back to previous

values, and most in the industry feel we have reached a new plateau.

The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) recently released their data on 2020. Overall, the industry saw a 10.2% increase in shipments, with turboprops leading the increase at 19%. North America leads the worldwide market, accounting for 68.7% of the piston shipments, 52.6% of the turboprop, and 65.9% of the business jet shipments. With the strong market demand and manufacturers doing whatever they can to moderately increase production, we will see increases in shipments continue to grow over the next couple of years.

While there may be some dark clouds on the distant horizon, we have many reasons to be optimistic. Values, while stabilized, are likely to remain strong due to demand. The pandemic has reinforced to new and longtime aviation believers that private aviation is an invaluable tool to provide secure and uninterrupted transportation. Domestically, the tax laws remain favorable, with bonus depreciation still at 100%, and if current laws remain, it will still be 80% in 2023. While pre-owned inventories can only rise so much, a certain amount of late model inventory will be coming into the various aircraft dealerships through trades on new deliveries that may ease some of the demand.

The increased values have led to investments in some older aircraft to fill in some of the supply gaps. In turn, manufacturers have stepped up production as much as possible to meet the demand, and they continue to make strides toward producing the most technologically advanced aircraft possible. In many cases, the advances in technology increase passenger safety and efficiency to reduce operating costs.

Across the board, the private aviation sector is robust and showing signs of tremendous growth potential for the near future. As an industry, our biggest goal is to confront this growth opportunity head-on and make every attempt to meet and exceed our customer's expectations. •

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S a Word to the Wise

BY SEAN WALLACE - Safety Manager & Future Flight Research & Development

The Importance of Hands-on Flying

Over the last two years, we have seen immense change. Travel has been restricted, supply chains have halted, and economic hardship has plagued businesses. These events have impacted the aviation industry by furthering a pilot shortage and displacing many flights that fell to travel restrictions. Flight hours have dropped all around the industry, and average flight times are likely down for many GA pilots, with some leaving the cockpit for extended periods.

However, as travel restrictions are lifting, the weather is warming, and we start socializing normally again, we see many of the cobwebs dusted off aircraft in storage for the last two years. Aviation shows are kicking off, and we are eager to take to the sky again. Many pilots may not want to admit that they may need to dust the cobwebs off of themselves, too.

Stick time is a hot topic lately as many of us resume flying again. Technological advancements already limit hands-on flying; we now have to consider how extended time outside the cockpit can be dangerous. The issue has caught the attention of both the military and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal addressed how a sequester of budget cuts since 2013 has resulted in the aftermath

of semi-trained pilots. Though this may not be directly related to the past two years' events, less flying time is correlated. The military has discovered that roughly three hands-on flight hours a week are needed to keep pilots' skills progressing. Approximately one hour is necessary to prevent skills from declining. Training before resuming normal flight operations may be prudent if you do not see regularly logged hours.

The FAA has taken note of the importance of hands-on flying as well. In February, an AC on Flight Path Management was open to comment. The AC provided recommended guidance to enhance aircraft planning, direction, and control training. They also suggested that a renewed emphasis on hand flying is needed, as pilots/operators rely too heavily on autopilot functions.

As we all resume our regular flight hours, it is essential to question if our aircraft needs any maintenance, but it is equally important to consider whether our skills need some fine-tuning. The military and FAA already have the issue of low stick time on their radar. A word to the wise: refine your hands-on skills; there may be a time when they are all you have. •