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IN BRIEF

NEW MAN AT GAMA

The US General Aviation Manufacturers Association has elected John Rosanvallon, Dassault Falcon president and Dassault Aviation executive vice-president of civil aircraft, as its chairman for 2011.

Rosanvallon previously served as GAMA's vice-chairman of the board and chairman of GAMA's Security Issues Committee and its Communications Committee.

CHINA VENTURE

ExecuJet Aviation has formed a joint venture with Tianjin Haite to develop a business aircraft maintenance and management company in China. ExecuJet Haite Aviation Services China will be based at Tianjin Binhai airport, where it plans to develop a fixed-base operation. "The MRO facility will encompass a 6,000m² (65,000ft²) facility. ExecuJet will obtain a Chinese Part 135 aircraft operator's certificate and a Part 145 maintenance certificate and expects to initially maintain in excess of 40 business aircraft annually," says ExecuJet.

CARAVAN MILESTONE

Cessna marked earlier this month the 25th anniversary of the first customer delivery of its Caravan single-engine turboprop. The airframer says the Caravan is certified in 100 countries and the fleet has amassed more than 13 million flight hours. The 2,000th Caravan was handed over in September to Caribbean operator Air St Kitts-Nevis.

TBM PROMOTION

Daher Socata has unveiled a maintenance programme for newly purchased TBM 850s. The promotion gives new owners of the single-engine turboprop free scheduled maintenance for five years or 1,000 flight hours, a five-year warranty on avionics and systems and a seven-year warranty on the airframe.

EXPANSION JOHN CROFT WASHINGTON DC

Gulfstream to invest \$500m in R&D, production capacity

'Project X' will see construction of new facilities in Savannah and up to 1,000 new jobs

Buoyed by positive trends in the large-cabin market, Gulfstream has kicked off a \$500 million, seven-year programme to renovate and expand its business jet production and research and development facilities in Savannah, Georgia.

Filling those new facilities will be as many as 1,000 new employees, says Gulfstream, boosting its workforce by 15% to 6,500.

Earlier referred to as "Project X" on development drawings, the programme will see construction on a 64Ha (159 acre) parcel of land at Savannah/Hilton Head International airport.

"Our primary focus will be on research and development and manufacturing facilities," says Gulfstream, "but we will include the expansion of other existing Gulfstream operations as well." The company adds that the project is still in the planning phases.

While Gulfstream's backlog has steadily decreased from a high of about \$25 billion in firm orders, potential options and aftermarket as of the third quarter 2008 to



Gulfstream: "We are seeing signs of a modest recovery"

roughly \$18 billion as of the third quarter this year, officials see reason to be optimistic.

"We are already beginning to see signs of a modest recovery," says Joe Lombardo, president of Gulfstream. "In the third quarter of 2010 we booked more orders than we had in any quarter since the downturn began in mid-2008. This expansion is necessary to meet the projected increase for new business jet aircraft and the maintenance that will follow."

Fresh programmes to occupy

the new buildings are likely to be refreshers for the C450 and G550 jets, bringing the technology advances now being built into the fly-by-wire G550 back to the older-generation aircraft.

A hint as to what at least one of the new aircraft might be called can be found in the trademark applications with the US government. According to the latest update, Gulfstream has an unused trademark for which it applied in 2007 and has renewed five times to date – the G600. ■

CONSULTANCY MURDO MORRISON LONDON

Jet Aviation pitches JetStart scheme to new owners

Jet Aviation says airframers are backing a programme to help new owners of private jets establish their own in-house flight departments.

The consultancy scheme, branded JetStart, is aimed at buyers who want to run their own aircraft rather than place it under a management contract and is designed to cut through the red-tape surrounding starting an in-house aviation operation.

Some wealthy individuals who acquire a new or secondhand business jet think that operating it is just a case of employing a professional pilot, says Bob Seidel, senior vice-president of Jet

Aviation Flight Services, the Swiss company's North American management and charter arm, which handles 73 aircraft on behalf of owners.

"You wouldn't file your income tax statement without the help of an accountant, but people think: 'I just need a pilot. How hard can it be?'," he says.

Activities that the scheme can cover include insurance, sourcing crew and pilot training, setting up vendor accounts and budgeting. "We have identified 135 tasks that a new owner has to carry out," says Chris Wheeler, who heads the JetStart division. "A lot of them don't know where to start."

Although Seidel will not reveal targets for the new business, he says manufacturers have welcomed the scheme as being of value to their customers.

"Most offer some sort of entry-into-service help, but it's only really a week-long handover. It doesn't cover how to set up a flight department and areas such as how to document maintenance," he says.

Seidel says some customers who take up the programme may be convinced to switch to a full management contract. "It's a great opportunity to introduce the Jet Aviation brand to new owners," he adds. ■