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Business Airport

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April 2018

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How to attract a new breed
of business jet traveler

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Welcome

One of my fondest memories from my childhood was one Christmas Day in the late 1990s when my mother bought computers for my sister and me. I remember the moment we ran down the stairs to see it sitting on our old drawing desk. We were so happy that both my sister and I cried. This machine was like something from the future and we couldn't believe that we owned one.

Looking back now, the computer was huge, it took ages to switch on, and connecting to the internet was difficult as it would continually drop out. But we didn't mind. We were content with this new technology and the opportunities it offered us to connect with the world from our living room.

Fast-forward to today, and that contentment with such a large, slow and often problematic computer seems bizarre. Sitting on my desk right now, I have an iPhone, an iPad and a laptop. I can switch any of these on instantly at the touch of a button and they enable me to quickly connect to the internet wherever I am. Technologies like this have become a way of life.

In today's world, we often take technology for granted. I believe that it is important to remember, however, how far we have come in terms of technological advances. We are extremely lucky to be living in a world where connecting with people, places and companies is as easy as picking up your smart device.

Technology, of course, isn't new to the business aviation world. But it is starting to have more of an impact

thanks to an increasing number of millennials entering the sector, both as employees and as customers. The characteristics of this generation mainly concern an increased use and familiarity with communications, media and digital technologies.

Key figures in the industry are starting to acknowledge the millennial trend. Late last year, Embraer Executive Jets' president and CEO, Michael Amalfitano, announced that the business aviation industry needs to address the impact of millennials on the market, and PrivateFly predicted that in 2018 this younger generation will become the next private jet audience.

On page 48, we look at the growth of the millennial generation in the business aviation industry and investigate their needs, such as more choice, customization and personalization. In addition, on page 20, ConnectJets CEO Gabriella Somerville talks to *Business Airport International* about how she believes the rise of millennials and increasing use of apps and social media are opening up the business aviation community to a much wider audience.

The way we connect with customers is changing and it's important to embrace this change because the next generation, Generation Z, will be even more tech-savvy and will bring with them a whole host of new challenges and opportunities.

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MEDIA & EVENTS
Published by UKI Media & Events, a division of UKIP Media & Events Ltd

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Join our group on Search for *Business Airport International*

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT, UK

Business Airport International is published quarterly. Annual subscription price is £80/US\$104. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldwide Shipping USA Inc, 155-11 146th Street, Jamaica, New York 11434. Periodical postage paid at Jamaica, New York 11434. US postmaster: send address changes to *Business Airport International*, c/o Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldwide Shipping USA Inc, 155-11 146th Street, Jamaica, New York 11434. Subscription records are maintained at: UKI Media & Events, Abinger House, Church Street, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1DF, UK. Air Business is acting as our mailing agent. USPS Permit Number: 4930

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Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Average net circulation per issue from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017, was 8,429
 Print publication: ISSN 2042-7212
 Online publication: ISSN 2397-6454





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San Bernardino Airport

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Runway length: 6/24 - 10,000ft (3,048m)
FBOs: Luxivair SBD

Jetex Flight Support has entered a co-branding agreement with Luxivair to launch its first private terminal in the USA at San Bernardino International Airport (SBD), California. The partnership allows Jetex to deliver aviation services at Luxivair SBD terminal, which opened five years ago and is the only facility of its kind at the hub.

Michael Burrows, executive director of San Bernardino Airport, said, “We’re elated to get to work with some amazing new partners.

“The Jetex partnership is a co-branding agreement that expands Luxivair SBD’s worldwide presence, while aligning and integrating Southern California’s premier FBO with Jetex’s expansive network and renowned customer experience.

“Jetex is a world leader in our industry, and Luxivair SBD is proud to support its continued growth into

the USA and other markets through this integral co-branding partnership, a relationship we are confident will seamlessly complement the incredible Jetex customer service experience,” added Burrows.

The two-story, 12,000ft² building boasts a spacious glass-enclosed atrium lobby, a pilot lounge, snooze room, flight-planning room, a complimentary snack bar, a movie theater and conference facilities. There is also concierge services, ramp-side vehicle access, crew cars and an outdoor lounge area.

Passengers will benefit from the on-site US Customs service, helping international flights avoid the congested airspace in Southern California. SBD is just 60 miles east of Los Angeles.

Sunny Landeros, brand and communications director at Jetex Flight Support, commented, “This beautiful terminal is great for our clients because of

Main image: **Luxivair SBD provides passengers with an alternative to busy LAX**

Above right: **The terminal boasts on-site US Customs, a glass atrium lobby and even a movie theater**

“Clients can be in and out quickly without dealing with congested LAX”

Sunny Landeros, brand and communications director at Jetex Flight Support



Abu Dhabi agreement

San Bernardino signs MoU with Abu Dhabi Airports

Adding to its list of new partnerships for 2018, San Bernardino International Airport Authority (SBIAA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Abu Dhabi Airports, linking Al Bateen Executive Airport with the Californian hub.

The MoU – signed by Abdul Majeed Al Khoori, acting CEO of Abu Dhabi Airports and SBD’s executive director Michael Burrows – allows for continued collaboration between the two parties in order to maintain and further develop safe and secure, environmentally compatible and efficient air transportation systems.

Burrows commented, “The MoU with Abu Dhabi Airports Company is a significant strategic alliance, connecting two former military installations – Al Bateen Executive Airport and SBD International –

that have now been established as commercial public airports serving business aviation on a global scale.

“It establishes a framework to develop leading best practices for our airports, while offering the potential for important service enhancements in management, operations, development, and expansion programs.”

Abdul Majeed Al Khoori, acting CEO of Abu Dhabi Airports, added, “We are delighted to have signed this MoU with such a pioneering industry peer. Abu Dhabi Airports and San Bernardino International Airport Authority both recognize the opportunities this agreement will offer our airports in terms of substance and economic development, and a solution to manage challenges arising from growth in demand.”



Left: The terminal is to celebrate its fifth anniversary later this year

its convenience and significant cost savings. Clients can be in and out of Los Angeles quickly without dealing with the congested LAX Airport.”

Wendy Bechtel, FBO manager at San Bernardino Airport, added, “Jetex customers will delight in the unexpected when they land at Luxivair SBD. From our first-class amenities to our dedicated concierge and ground support crew, every detail will be attended to with class and efficiency.”

The partnership will boost Jetex’s global reach to the west coast of the USA, adding a second US presence in addition to its operations team based in the coastal resort city of Miami. Here, Jetex offers customers a breadth of services including trip planning, fuel and ground handling arrangements, customs and immigration, and weather briefing, as part of a 24/7 operation. ○

FIREBLADE AVIATION WELCOMES FIRST INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO SOUTH AFRICAN FBO



Above: **The international arrivals and departures entrance for Fireblade customers is adjacent to the business lounge (below)**

“We are excited to service international movements, which will complement our current domestic aircraft movements and enable Fireblade Aviation to fulfill its intended potential”

Fireblade Aviation has welcomed the first international flight to its facility at O R Tambo International Airport, marking the culmination of years of effort and a rigorous approval process by the South African government.

The approval process began in August 2012, and has seen Fireblade Aviation undertake many court battles to win the right to serve international flights at its FBO. The first commercial flight arrived from Thailand on February 12, 2018 and is a significant milestone for Fireblade, the South African aviation sector and South Africa’s high-end tourism industry, according to the company.

Jonathan Oppenheimer, CEO of Fireblade Aviation, said, “We are excited to service international movements, which will complement our current domestic aircraft movements and enable Fireblade Aviation to fulfill its potential. We encourage all privately owned and chartered aircraft to use the Fireblade terminal when flying to Johannesburg and South Africa.”

The first formal request to handle international flights at the Fireblade terminal was made on March 18, 2013, and received support from a number of industry bodies including Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA). “There are several benefits to having fully operational international border control capabilities at Fireblade,” a spokesperson from ACSA said. “Our main terminal at O R Tambo International will be freed up for additional capacity when commercial business aviation can use the Fireblade terminal. Runway crossings will be reduced, which will improve safety and cut times for departing and arriving aircraft. There is also a genuine need for the premium services offered by Fireblade at the largest airport in Africa, since the lack of these facilities currently affects our reputation and brand.”

Among other officials, the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Revenue Service and the South African Police Service were on-site at the Fireblade terminal to provide the required government clearance for international flights in February.

The handling of these arrivals at the Fireblade terminal is done through a sterile customs and immigration facility adjacent to the business lounge, designed by and under the strict control of government officials.

Fireblade Aviation has invested R260m (US\$22m) in developing its facilities since it opened in 2014 and hopes that its new international capabilities will enable the company to further grow its business, offering VIP services to passengers and crew. ○

Vital statistics

Location: O R Tambo International Airport, South Africa

Operating hours: Monday-Friday 7:00am-7:00pm; Saturdays and Sundays 8:00am-5:00pm. FBO is available for movements 24/7

Runway length: 03L/21R – 14,495ft (4,418m); 03R/21L – 11,155ft (3,400m)

Fuel: Available 24/7





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FORT LAUDERDALE EXECUTIVE AIRPORT BECOMES FIRST US GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT TO INSTALL SELF-SERVICE APC KIOSKS

Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE) has introduced automated passport control (APC) self-service kiosks at its on-site US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facility, making it the first general aviation airport in the USA to do so.

To use the kiosks, passengers input the same information requested on a customs declaration form, scan their passports and fingerprints, confirm their flight number, and take a facial photo. The kiosk then produces a receipt, which is presented to a CBP officer at the airport's border.

US citizens, Canadians and those residing in a Visa Waiver Program country are eligible to use the kiosks. There is no charge to use them and neither pre-registration nor membership is required, but Visa Waiver Program residents must have Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approval.

Of the 4,895 travelers that have cleared customs at FXE since the installation of the kiosks, 1,355 passengers used the APC.

Rufus James, airport manager at FXE, said, "Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport is one of the top-five busiest general aviation airports in the country. With nearly 170,000 take-offs and landings annually, thousands of travelers pass through FXE each year.

"One of the top priorities for FXE is to remain a technologically advanced airport of the future. We will continue to investigate and offer state-of-the-art technologies that enhance traveler

Right: **The kiosks eliminate the need for customs declaration forms**

Below: **The hub is the first general aviation airport in the USA to adopt the technology**



"One of the top priorities for FXE is to remain a technologically advanced airport of the future"

security, processing and the overall experience, to ensure travelers enjoy a quick, efficient and seamless transition from flight to the ground, using the most up-to-date technology available," he added.

In addition to being the first general aviation hub to install APC kiosks, FXE was also the first to introduce Global Entry kiosks. These allow pre-approved, low-risk passengers to fast-track their entry into the USA after landing.

FXE serves as a gateway to the Caribbean and South America, playing home to more than 1,050 aircraft and offering services including four full-service FBOs and a 24-hour FAA air traffic control tower. ○



Track and trace

In a nod to adopting new technology, earlier this year FXE launched WebTrak, a web-based service that provides the local community with historical and near-real-time flight-tracking and noise-level information. WebTrak is integrated into FXE's website, displaying flights, weather, noise levels and FXE's noise monitoring locations to the public via an interactive map.

"We recognize that our residents and businesses have concerns about aircraft noise. By introducing WebTrak, FXE is providing an informational tool that enables the public to track flights in the vicinity of the airport and report specific details about excessive noise," said Rufus James.

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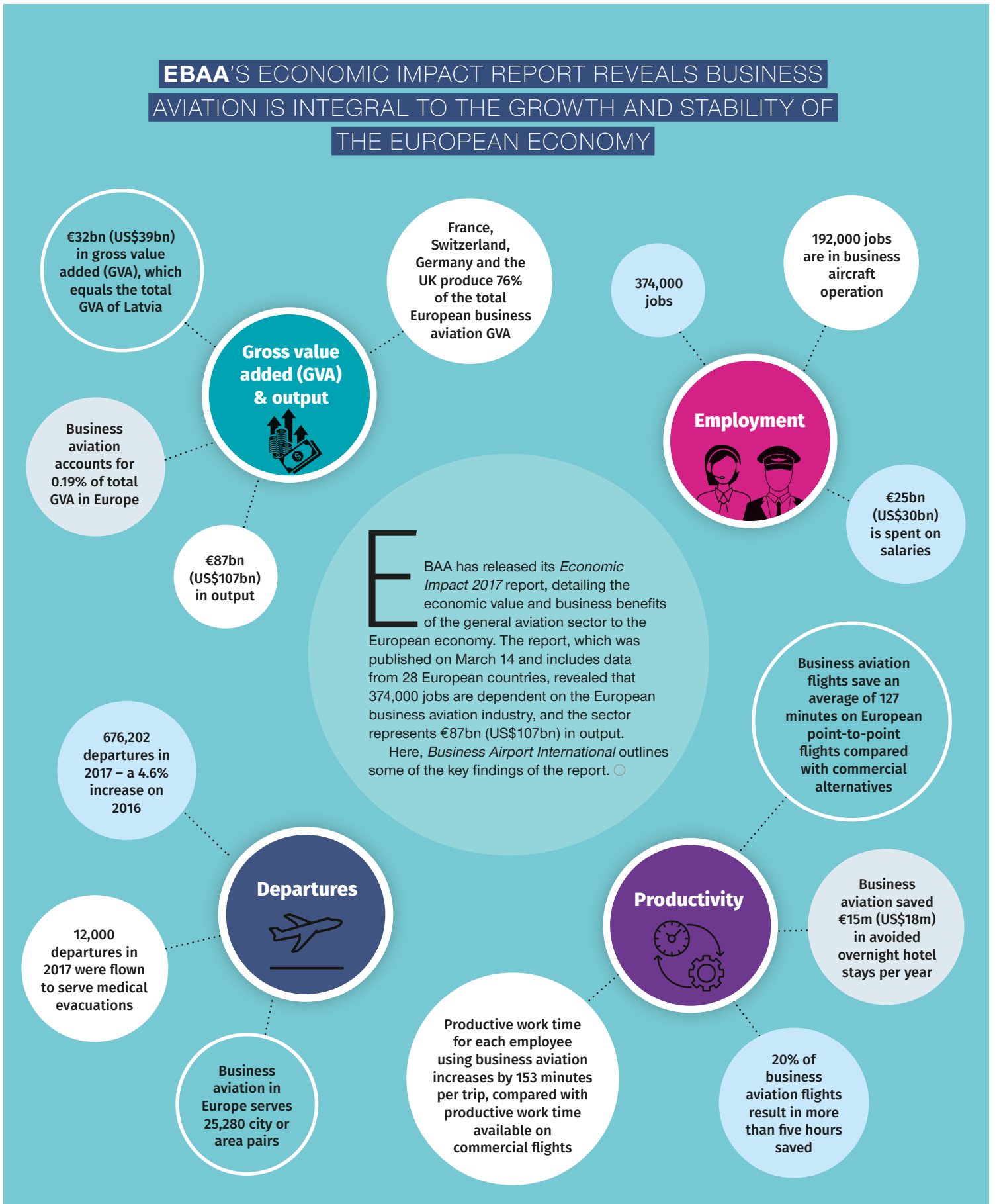
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“Once 5% of US public-use airports fall prey to closure, what does the future hold for business aviation?”

Dave Hopkins



The vice president of the Santa Monica Airport Association discusses the recent conflict between its own interests, the City of Santa Monica and the FAA

Santa Monica Airport (SMO) is a key part of the USA's national transportation system of more than 5,200 public-use airports. SMO handles around 90,000 aircraft departures or landings every year, equating to around 200 movements per day. About 80% of these are small propeller aircraft, with the remaining 20% being jets. SMO has been in operation for over 100 years and currently more than 220 aircraft are based at the airport.

The City of Santa Monica was given the airport by the US Federal Government's War Assets Administration in 1948 with the goal of it staying an airport forever. A whole generation of Americans sacrificed, saved and contributed to war bonds to build an aviation infrastructure.

The US federal government gave much of that infrastructure – such as SMO – to towns and cities across the USA to help jump-start the emerging air transportation industry into the juggernaut of jobs, wealth creation and prosperity it is today.

Airport land and airports were gifted by the federal government for no charge, on the condition they remain airports forever, and no other town or city at present has been able to breach this obligation aside from Santa Monica. For this reason, SMO as a test case is really important. If SMO closes, then around 230 other public-use airports – around 5% of US public airports nationwide – could be under threat by the SMO closure precedent. This is the number of 'deed of trust' airports we have been

able to identify from the War Assets Administration documents. Once 5% of US airports fall prey to closure, what does the future hold for the regional, business and personal use of aircraft?

In January 2017, Santa Monica City Council and the FAA concluded a secret deal away from any public input and scrutiny – as required by law – to shorten SMO's runway from 4,993ft (1,503m) to 3,500ft (1,066m) in 2017. The deal also authorized the city to close SMO at the end of 2028.

The city labels this secret deal the Consent Decree. The deal was pushed through between the Obama and Trump administrations in January 2017 by an interim and acting FAA administrator and the interim acting city attorney.

SMO is profitable and generated at least 1,500 jobs and US\$274m in annual economic impact in a city study conducted in 2011. The hub is one of the quietest airports in the nation, with a comprehensive noise monitoring system and, with electric-powered jets on the horizon, this point is even more valid.

Santa Monica Airport Association (SMAA) and others are parties to a Federal Appeals Court lawsuit opposing the City of Santa Monica and FAA's Consent Decree of February 2017, detailing the shortening of the SMO

Right: **The airport is also home to the Museum of Flying and art exhibitions**

Below: **Santa Monica's runway now measures 3,500ft (1,066m)**
(Photo: Michael Rosebrock/ Shutterstock.com)



runway in December 2017 and possible closure at the end of 2028. The lawsuit alleges various FAA violations of statutory and regulatory requirements. A Court Federal Appeals decision is expected in 2018 and odds favor an overturn of the Consent Decree.

How does all the above make me feel? Santa Monica City Council disregards all the above facts and is attempting to steal a key, long-term, local community and national asset to turn it into another short-term gain of a mixed-use shopping and business park.

Myself, SMAA and our allies are dedicated to preserving SMO, just like the generation that helped build SMO into a key regional airport during World War II. SMO cannot fall to the developer's axe and we refuse to lose. The precedent created would be a disaster for US regional airports, which is why dedicated activists like me fight to preserve and protect the airport so we can pass it onto the next generation. ○

This article reflects the opinions of Dave Hopkins, vice president of the Santa Monica Airport Association; www.santamonicaairport.info



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“GAINS is expected to contribute to better integration of GA at controlled and uncontrolled aerodromes”

Philip Church



Helios’s principal consultant explains on behalf of the GAINS consortium how its recently launched project aims to encourage SESAR to adapt its sat-based technologies for general aviation operations

General aviation is an important economic enabler in Europe and a feeder to the airline industry. General Aviation Improved Navigation and Surveillance (GAINS), a recently started Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) project, aims to demonstrate how solutions developed by SESAR for scheduled airlines can be adapted for use by the general aviation community.

Co-funded by the SESAR Joint Undertaking under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, this two-year project will be overseen by a consortium that includes representatives from the general aviation (GA) community: AOPA UK, Pildo Labs, Funke Avionics and Trig Avionics. Aviation consultancy Helios (an EGIS company) is the project coordinator.

The objective of GAINS is to validate concepts enabled by Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and EGNOS. These include specifically electronic conspicuity and instrument flight procedures to meet the needs of GA, including both fixed wing and rotorcraft. While the work of SESAR to date has targeted operational and technical improvements that address the needs of scheduled airline traffic, general aviation, which comprises more than 100,000 users in Europe, remains an important economic enabler and feeder to the airline industry. Given the variety of uses supported, GAINS aims to demonstrate to the wider aviation community how

improvements being developed by SESAR can be adapted to enhance GA operations without prohibitive cost or certification requirements.

Through live flying exercises, the project intends to demonstrate clearly the ability of GA to use new technology and procedures in flight, and therefore test the viability of adapting SESAR solutions to improve GA’s operations and integration within a variety of operational contexts and environments. The flights to be undertaken are intended to: demonstrate to the wider GA community the benefits of these technologies, collect evidence on performance of these technologies within the typical operational environments of GA, support regulatory adaptations with the certification authorities to enable wider deployment, and demonstrate the deployment of SESAR solutions to enable integration of all airspace users.

More specifically, GAINS will be testing surveillance solutions and navigation solutions adapted to GA.

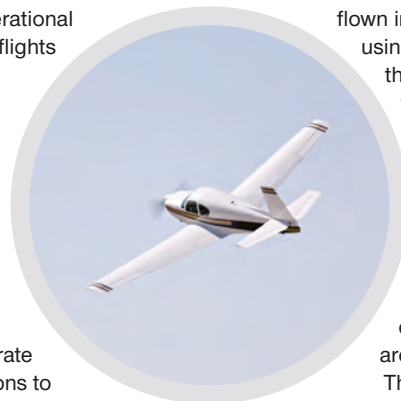
The surveillance solutions demonstration will be focused on: the use of Electronic Conspicuity (EC) ADS-B, in and near the aerodrome environment where the risk of airborne conflict is 10 times greater than en-route in uncontrolled airspace, and transmission and reception of ADS-B signals to improve traffic situation awareness and possible infringement of controlled

airspace. This is particularly interesting to aerodromes without a radar service, as well as Air Navigation Service Providers.

The navigation solutions demonstration will cover the use of established onboard equipment for navigation to demonstrate applications relevant to GA. Relevant procedures will be designed and coded and a range of different approach procedures will be flown in varying operational environments using a range of GA equipment, with the aim to explore: how variations to standard procedures might facilitate the integration of GA instrument flight procedures, the relationship between navigation performance and GA equipment, and the use of air and ground ADS-B traffic display in a range of operating environments where these IFPs are implemented.

The project is still in the planning stage, but the first demonstration flights may start in the last quarter of 2018.

GAINS is expected to contribute to better integration of GA at controlled and uncontrolled aerodromes, as well as improving safety, efficiency and predictability of operations. It may also make the provision of basic air traffic services possible at aerodromes, where it is normally economically unviable. ○



Above: **Adapting SESAR technology to suit general aviation aircraft could improve operational efficiency**

This project has received funding from the SESAR Joint Undertaking under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 783228.

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Miami

Your guide to flying to Florida's waterfront city

Words | Kirstie Pickering

Main airports in Miami, USA

Miami International Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Signature Flight Support. Services include ground handling, customs and immigration, gourmet catering, hangar, executive conference room, pilot lounge

Fuel: Jet A, Avgas

Runway length: 8L/26R – 8,600ft (2,621m); 8R/26L – 10,506ft (3,202m); 9/27 – 13,016ft (3,967m); 12/30 – 9,355ft (2,851m)

Distance from Miami: 9 miles (14km)

Miami Executive Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Air Sal, International Flight Center, Reliance Aviation and Signature Flight Support. Services include flight planning, limousines, sauna, passenger lounge, customs and immigration, and showers

Fuel: Jet, Avgas

Runway length: 9L/27R – 5,003ft (1,524m); 13/31 – 4,001ft (1,219m); 9R/27L – 5,999ft (1,828m)

Distance from Miami: 18 miles (29km)

Miami-Opa Locka Executive Airport

Operating hours: 9:00am-midnight, seven days a week

Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Atlantic Aviation, Fontainebleau Aviation and Signature Flight Support. Services include a wide range of aircraft repair and maintenance offerings including airframe, powerplant and avionics repair, US customs

Fuel: Jet-A

Runway length: 9L/27R – 8,002ft (2,439m); 12/30 – 6,800ft (2,072m); 9R/27L – 4,306ft (1,312m)

Distance from Miami: 14 miles (23km)



27

75

Weston

27

27

Miami Executive Airport



Fontainebleau Aviation

Fontainebleau Aviation is the premium extension of a brand of properties with 50 years of experience in hospitality and luxury. The facility is located at Miami-Opal Locka Executive Airport, the largest of Miami Dade's airports. Originally, the company began operations as Turnberry Aviation, the Soffer family's flight department. As of September 2011, the flight department branched into Fontainebleau Aviation, the FBO.

In less than a decade, Fontainebleau took on a US\$25m development project and expanded into a footprint that sits on 42 acres (17ha) of land. The facility is home to a total of nine hangars ranging from 20,000ft (1,858m) to 35,000ft (3,251m).

Fontainebleau is equipped to raise the level of customer service throughout the experience by extending premium amenities in a state-of-the-art facility. Modern-luxe finishes furnish the new two-story building, with every detail embracing the lifestyle of its customers and the functionality of their operation. A 12-seat A/V-equipped conference room with floor-to-ceiling windows sits at the cusp of the lobby level. The facility also features four private crew-rest lounges and a pilot lounge, while a grab-and-go micro-market is open to all guests and tenants. The gym, a training room and an eight-seat conference room with ramp views reside on the second floor.

Nearby, there is the high-end Aventura Mall, Turnberry Isle Miami, Turnberry Marina and the iconic Fontainebleau Miami Beach. Guests receive benefits with each property by way of access to special rates.

On-site, the FBO offers aircraft maintenance and detail through Precision Aircraft Maintenance and Precision Aircraft Detail. The location is preferred by both the Corporate Aircraft Association and JetSmarter, proving the FBO to be a premium full-service destination.

For other airports near
Miami, see page 18





Other airports near Miami

Boca Raton Airport



Operating hours: 24/7
Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Signature Flight Support and Atlantic Aviation. Services include hangar space, flight planning rooms, conference room and lounge, courtesy transportation
Fuel: Jet-A, 100LL
Runway length: 5/23 – 6,276ft (1,912ft)
Distance from Miami: 48 miles (77km)

Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport



Operating hours: 24/7
Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Signature Flight Support, National Jets Air Center, Jetscape and Sheltaire Aviation. Services include a crew lounge, hangars, maintenance, snooze room, hot cookies
Fuel: Jet A+, Jet-A, 100LL
Runway length: 10L/28R – 9,000ft (2,743m); 10R/28L – 8,000ft (2,438m)
Distance from Miami: 30 miles (48km)

North Perry Airport



Operating hours: 24/7
Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Bobby's Landing Fuel Depot and Hollywood Aviation. Services include 164 hangars, general maintenance, courtesy car, showers
Fuel: Jet-A, 100LL
Runway length: 10L/28R – 3,240ft (987m); 10R/28L – 3,255ft (992m); 01R/19L – 3,260ft (993m); 01L/19R – 3,350ft (1,021m)
Distance from Miami: 20 miles (32km)

Miami Homestead General Aviation Airport



Operating hours: 24/7
Facilities: Fixed-based operations provided by Homestead Executive Jet Center. Services include hangar and ramp space, car rentals and a pilot lounge
Fuel: Jet-A, 100LL
Runway length: 18/36 – 3,999ft (1,218m); 10/28 – 3,000ft (914m); 9U/27U – 2,500ft (762m)
Distance from Miami: 37 miles (59km)

Miami Homestead General Aviation Airport

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Main: One of Gabriella Somerville's favorite aircraft is the Avanti EVO, which is the third generation of Piaggio's flagship model

Making a connection

Gabriella Somerville, founder of aircraft sales and charter company ConnectJets, shares her career experiences and stresses the importance of giving back to the community

Words | Helen Norman





“There is a lot more investment being made in the business aviation market, which is great for the industry as a whole”



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“One of my fondest memories from those early years was when we went to the Biggin Hill International Air Show. I remember being extremely excited. There was so much to feast your eyes on”

Where did your interest in aviation come from?

Aviation was always a topic of conversation in my family. My uncle, Roy Somerville, was

a squadron leader with the Red Arrows, so my father regularly took me to airshows as a young child to see him perform. My father was a carpenter and he used to make a lot of wooden aircraft, which I used to play with all the time. From a very young age, I was imbued in aviation. One of my fondest memories from those early years was when we went to the Biggin Hill International Air Show. I remember being extremely excited. There was so much to feast your eyes on.

I didn't always plan to embark on a career in aviation. When I left school I went into retail and had various jobs until about the age of 19, when the aviation desire revived itself. I began to think about the romance of travel and at that time Virgin had launched its new image and brand, and I realized that aviation was where I wanted to be. Initially, I didn't really look at it as a long-term career. I just liked the idea of traveling the world and having fun.

How did your career progress?

My first job in aviation was with British Island Airways as a stewardess on British Aircraft Corporation One-Eleven jets. I then got my dream job at Virgin Atlantic, where I worked for seven years as cabin crew. This was an extremely fun role. I flew around the world and I worked on some of Virgin's

inaugural flights, including to Los Angeles and Hong Kong. I loved being part of the fun, energetic Virgin concept.

After seven years, I left Virgin because I wanted to go and further my career. I joined British Airways as cabin crew and during my six years there I worked my way up to become fleet coordinator between Heathrow and Gatwick.

When did you move to the business aviation sector?

I had been working in the commercial aviation industry for about 14 years when I decided to leave British Airways and take a career break. Some people say that I had the 'seven-year itch' at BA! For me, the purpose of the break was to ask myself whether I actually wanted to continue with my career in commercial aviation, or whether there was something else out there for me. That is when the entrepreneurial drive started to bubble underneath. I bought myself a little property in Chamonix, in the Alps, and decided to set up a small events company.

I had been out there for about 10 months when I met a fellow aviator who invited me to EBACE. It was at EBACE that I met Judith Moreton, who worked for Bombardier Skyjet International – the private jet charter division of the manufacturer. Before I knew it, I was coming back to London to interview for a client relationship manager position. Skyjet was doing well at the time and it was great to be working on something relatively young and embryonic. SkyJet was bought by VistaJet in 2008 and I then became vice president of sales for the company's charter program.

Above: **Gabriella Somerville has more than 25 years' aviation experience**

Right: **In 2009 Somerville sold her Alpine chalet and used the capital to found the ConnectJets company**

Business Airport

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“I believe femininity in the marketplace is a powerful tool. We have our own way of communicating. I am not afraid of my gender – I very much embrace it”

Why did you decide to found ConnectJets?

I had always wanted to do something of my own. I had been with SkyJet and then VistaJet for about five years when I had a buyer for my chalet in the Alps approach me. They offered to buy the chalet in cash and at the time it was an extremely favorable exchange rate. Sometimes decisions are not made by intent, they are made by default. When this opportunity came up, I thought about where I could invest the money, and I chose to use it to launch my own business. That is when ConnectJets, a private aviation charter and aircraft sales company, was founded.

The company was started in 2009. A lot of people at the time questioned why I started up a business in a downturn. However, I believed that in any downturn there must be opportunities. And fortunately I was right.

We managed to obtain a very large north American client from around the third week of operations, and by year three we were debt free, turned over around £4m (US\$5.6m), and I still owned 100% of the business. I believe the key to this success was just hard work. If anything, being a new company gave us a little bit more strength. We had nothing to lose in those early years, while other businesses were panicking about falling business.

I mentor now under Richard Branson’s Virgin Unite program (See Mentoring and giving back to the community, page 26) and a lot of the people I work with are starting new businesses. I tell them that there are many factors involved in success, but it really comes down to hard work, commitment and not giving up on your dreams.

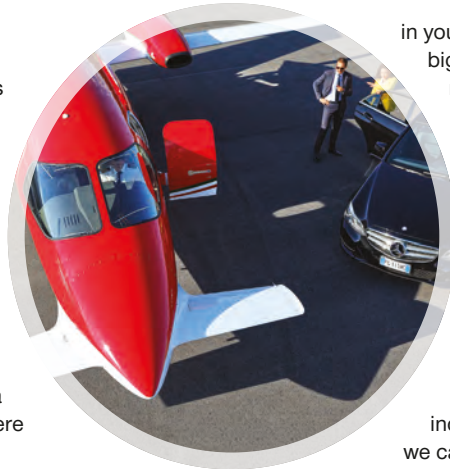
How do you feel as a woman in business aviation?

When I first came into the industry there were very few women and this is still the case in aircraft sales. But the good thing is that the number is increasing, so we are on the right track. But whenever you are breaking through in a new industry, you are breaking up hard ground – whether you are a man or woman. You have to earn people’s respect, which I feel I have done now.

I believe femininity in the marketplace is a powerful tool. We have our own way of communicating. I am not afraid of my gender – I very much embrace it. I believe that women can give so much in the areas of aviation, engineering, crew, aircraft sales and management. It is important to acknowledge that we are good at what we do.

How should the industry be addressing the skills shortage issue?

I loved the news in February that London Biggin Hill opened a new aviation college, which plans to help address a shortage of aerospace engineers and other skilled people in the aviation industry. This is a great example of a business taking responsibility for the future of the industry, which I believe we all need to do. It is very easy when running a business to get involved in the here and now, and



Above: **The Avanti EVO is the world’s fastest twin turboprop, with a cruising speed of 402kts**

Below: **In 2015 the European Women Inventors & Innovators Network gave Somerville an honorary global exemplary award for entrepreneurship**

in your own entity. But I believe we need to have a much bigger vision. You have to give back to the industry. We need to get involved with schools and universities to inform them about this sector. If we don’t get out there and start talking about it or create that interest, we will continue to face a skills shortage.

I think Biggin Hill has done a great job and the college will help inform young people about our industry. Most of the young people I speak with today know very little about our sector apart from how to book a private flight. They don’t know about the behind-the-scenes stuff, which I believe is what we need to raise awareness of so we can get a greater diversity of young people joining the industry. We need a sustainable business and one that we can take into the future.

What are the key trends affecting the business aviation market at the moment?

We are seeing the light jet sector proving popular at the moment. I believe that is because there are a lot more new clients entering the business jet market and they tend to start at the lower end. In particular Piaggio’s Avanti EVO, which is one of my favorite light aircraft to fly in, is popular. ConnectJets became Piaggio’s UK distributor in 2016. The Avanti EVO is a twin turboprop, which travels as fast and as high as a jet. It can travel at 41,000ft at 402kts (460mph). This type of start-up, entry-level aircraft is really seeing a revival.

The market is also seeing a new type of fleet operator, such as Surf Air, which offers a scheduled service on a business jet. This type of business model encourages more people to enter the market. There is a lot more investment being made in the business aviation market, which is great for the industry as a whole.





“Sharing life and work experience with younger generations, such as millennials, is extremely important”

Communication is also much better than it was 10 years ago. And the ways in which we communicate are changing. We now regularly use WhatsApp to contact our clients, rather than email, and social media such as Instagram to market our business. The millennial generation are the ones mainly driving this change. They are a far more open generation. We have to adapt to this and the way they want to book flights, for example. Smartphones and apps give people the ability to be down the pub on a Friday night and book a flight for the next day. Young people can now come into the market and have a knowledge of it very easily because of technology.

How do you see the market progressing over the next five years?

I believe that business aviation will continue to grow year-on-year. Airports in the UK, for example, are seeing more and more movements. I also believe that the marketplace will continue to broaden. We will continue to see new companies offering new types of services, such as Surf Air’s scheduled service. These types of things will also bring down the price point of business aviation travel, so the industry is more accessible to more people.

Technology will also continue to change the way the industry communicates and operates. It will be easier to book flights and manage preferences through the use of smartphone applications. We will also see new technology for aircraft, such as energy-saving designs and new types of engines and fuselages. We could be looking at a very different market in five years’ time. The world is changing so quickly at the moment that no one really knows what is going to happen, but I believe the business aviation industry will continue to be all about speed, price and technology. What I am saying to my mentees at the moment is that the world is changing on a daily basis and we have to learn to adapt in order to be successful. ○

Above: **The Avanti EVO is extremely fuel efficient, and has a large interior space for an aircraft of its type**



Left: **Somerville** pictured during her time as cabin crew at Virgin Atlantic

Mentoring and giving back to the community

Gabriella Somerville is writing a book about her career to date, to inform others in the industry about how she went from serving teas and coffees to becoming the founder and managing director of a multi-million-dollar firm. She admits that she is currently “stuck” in the Virgin chapters “as this was such a fun time in my career”, she says.

“After leaving Virgin Atlantic in 1995, I stayed in touch with some of my colleagues at the airline. I used these contacts to try and obtain a quote from Sir Richard Branson for the book,” Somerville explains. “During that time, I had a lot of discussions with people at Virgin about my career. As a result, they asked me if I would like to come on board as a mentor under the Virgin Unite program,” she adds.

The program was developed in 2004 as a non-profit foundation to unite people and entrepreneurial ideas to create opportunities for a better world. Virgin Unite is all about paying it forward – taking people’s experiences and skills and sharing them with others who may just be starting out in business.

“I have really enjoyed being a mentor,” says Somerville. “My mentees are not in the aviation sector, they are mainly in the retail industry. But I believe that when you start a business, the basic operating methods and principles are the same. I think that I am really there to support them in the mental sense, which I believe is one of the most challenging aspects when starting a business. You have to have the resilience, tenacity and vision to keep going when you face those challenges that inevitably will come at some point.”

Somerville believes that entrepreneurs such as herself need to give back to the community. They need to share their experiences and expertise to motivate the next generation of workers. “Sharing life and work experience with younger generations, such as millennials, is extremely important,” she explains. “These experiences are like data – we need to download them somewhere so people can continue to learn. It is imperative that we pass on to the next generation the things that we have achieved. I look back at my early years at ConnectJets and even though they were successful, they were very challenging and stressful. I would love to have had a mentor then that I could have caught up with once a month.”



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Action



man

Planning for a major event that will see hundreds of aircraft descend on the city in one week? Phil Burke, director of MSP operations at Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport, explains how he prepared to handle 1,100 jets during Super Bowl LII

Words | **Helen Norman and Hazel King**



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In the week leading up to Super Bowl LII on February 4, 2018, the airport communities in Minneapolis-St Paul welcomed more than 1,100 private jets, which is no mean feat in a location that boasts the coldest climate of any major metropolitan area in the USA. Leading the

operations during that week was Phil Burke, director of MSP operations at Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport (MSP), the largest of seven airports owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission. "I started planning for the event in late fall of 2016, giving me a lead time of about 15 months," he explains.

The first thing Burke did was to set up an airport planning committee, which consisted of 29 sub-committees comprising all the different services that would be needed during the event. "We have one FBO here at MSP [Signature Flight Support] and they had a committee to themselves. Regular, coordinated contact with them was key to ensure we had all the plans in place before the aircraft and passengers arrived," he adds.

The regular communication included monthly meetings, where all 29 sub-committees had the opportunity to share the highlights of the progress they'd made over the past month. "This kept everyone on their toes – knowing that they had to report back on a monthly basis provided a good amount of pressure," Burke says. "People were held accountable – everyone on the 29 committees also had to share in writing the progress they'd made over the last 30 days."

When it came to the week of the Super Bowl, Burke admits that everything is a little blurry – and it's no surprise considering the vast number of aircraft, passengers, crew and ground staff he had to coordinate across MSP and the six reliever airports (Anoka County, Airlake, Crystal, Lake Elmo, Flying Cloud, and St Paul Downtown).

Above: **The airport had to close a runway to make additional room for aircraft parking during Super Bowl LII**

"People were held accountable – everyone on the 29 committees also had to share in writing the progress they'd made over the last 30 days"

Phil Burke, director of MSP operations,
Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport

"It became so blurry because some of the aircraft would land and be parked at the airport they arrived at, while others would just drop their passengers and leave again, so it became hard to keep a record of total number of arrivals, parked aircraft and departures – we got to the point where we lost count of how many aircraft were on the ground," Burke comments.

Find a parking space

One of the main challenges during the Super Bowl week was ensuring there was sufficient aircraft parking for all of the visitors. "Based on our predicted aircraft numbers, we knew we wouldn't have enough parking space on the ramps at MSP, so we had to come up with a plan on how to use other pieces of the airfield without impacting operations," explains Burke. In the end, the airport decided to close one of its four runways to create a parking lot for aircraft. "It was a calculated risk – the runway was seldom used, so it made perfect sense," continues Burke. "Although at one point in the week we had winds that meant we came perilously close to having to use that runway! Thankfully it didn't come to that."

Several other taxiways were closed and used for aircraft parking too. "Thankfully we have redundancies on our airfield when it comes to taxiways, so aircraft movement wasn't severely impacted," he says.

The airports in the region also utilized the General Aviation Reservation System, or Prior Permission Required (PPR) Program, to effectively manage general aviation flights during the Super Bowl. Burke explains, "The PPR program is provided to all of the FBOs so they can take reservations for parking – it has all of the information they need and it allows for good order, so you don't have everyone after the game wanting to leave at the same time."



Above: **More than 300 aircraft were de-iced at the reliever airports in Minneapolis-St Paul during Super Bowl week in February 2018**

He says, “You get a slot for when you can depart, and this makes things very orderly – it went beautifully from our standpoint and the PPR systems were a big factor in that.”

Help on the ground

With such a huge number of aircraft arriving in a short space of time, special provisions had to be put in place to ensure that the airport’s terminals weren’t overwhelmed with arriving passengers. The FBO at MSP had all the facilities needed to service the aircraft ready and waiting at the particular parking spot – such as portable heat and water.

“There were also vans used to transfer the passengers from the aircraft to the terminal,” explains Burke. “At one point, Signature Flight Support had 15 buses running around the airfield collecting passengers in various locations, and they have since said they could have used about double that, so they were very busy during that part of the operation.”

According to Burke, there was a huge ground transportation component to the Super Bowl week, and ensuring it was all well-choreographed was key to smooth operations. He adds, “There were charter buses, limousines, shuttles, etc, and we had to make sure they could move easily in and out of the airport. We had staging areas for them so they weren’t queued up near the terminals and then they would be dispatched just in time to meet the aircraft or passengers. Once they were dispatched off the airfield, we didn’t have any more involvement with those operations.”

Review process

Burke is rightly proud of the fact that no aircraft had to be turned away during the Super Bowl week, and he puts that

down to proper preparation. “In fact, we were prepared for more aircraft to arrive at the airports,” he explains. “In terms of the coordination between the reliever airports and MSP, our specialist reliever department were a sub-committee themselves and so we were in regular contact with them in the week leading up to the event – daily, if not hourly.”

The committees have since held an “after action review meeting”, in which all 29 were asked to talk about the things they learned during the record-breaking week. “For example, we got involved in the de-icing service during the Super Bowl week, which we wouldn’t normally do – this would usually be left to the FBO or ground handler – and it was more challenging than we expected,” Burke says. “We didn’t realize how big an operation it would be – more than 300 aircraft in our reliever airports alone required de-icing – and we have a very strong pollution control program in place that required us to monitor and collect the excess glycol de-icing fluid at the airports. So next time, we’ll know how to better manage that.”

It’s clear that forward planning is the key to successfully managing such a large international event, and Burke used his 15-month lead time wisely. “Internally, people were worried that having 29 committees would be unwieldy and too challenging to keep everyone on task. But I truly believe it was the reason we were successful in handling 1,100 jets,” Burke enthuses.

“My advice to anyone looking to handle a large event like the Super Bowl is to extend your reach as far as you can and get input from as many areas as possible – even if you don’t think they’re going to be directly involved in the event, having them as part of the planning process can be useful. And they might end up playing a bigger role than you can imagine.” ○

“At one point, Signature Flight Support had 15 buses running around the airfield collecting passengers in various locations”

Phil Burke, director of MSP operations, Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport



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in partnership with



Support network



Business Airport International finds out how FBOs, operators and fuel suppliers coordinate their efforts to provide support in the aftermath of a natural disaster

Words | **Steve Johnson**



Banyan Air Service, a large FBO located at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, became a center for relief efforts after hurricanes struck Florida and the Caribbean in 2017. Image courtesy of NBAA



“By building on experience with the power of new technology, social media and more sophisticated data, volunteer crews and their aircraft can be even more effective”

Dan Hubbard, senior vice president of communications, National Business Aviation Association



Business aviation is well known for its convenient and efficient operations, transporting passengers from A to B in style. But when a natural disaster strikes – be it a hurricane, earthquake or fire – the business aviation industry becomes a lifeline for those in need, providing rescue services and emergency aid.

FBOs, fuel suppliers, airport services and specialist agencies step up to the plate to do whatever it takes to provide assistance as quickly as possible. The industry has honed its processes, and continues to do so, to ensure that a professional, safe and efficient service can be provided among the chaos that ensues after a natural disaster.

In the USA, the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) offers a go-to resource for finding aircraft, assets and personnel at short notice. Established in 2005 (the year of Hurricane Katrina, which killed 1,836 people and caused US\$125bn in damage), the Humanitarian Emergency Response Operator (HERO) database proves its worth to aid agencies on every occasion. It has grown to include around 2,000 aircraft ready for use in an emergency.

Dan Hubbard, NBAA senior vice president of communications, says, “It’s important to appreciate that business aircraft, in the context of responding in a disaster situation, extend from a two- or four-seater to the larger corporate executive jet. In certain situations, it may be that only smaller piston or turboprop aircraft can land on makeshift runways, roads or tracks to deliver emergency supplies. Their value alone should not be underestimated.

Above left: **Signature Flight Support’s FBOs play an important support role in disaster relief**

Above right: **AERObridge coordinated relief efforts after Hurricane Harvey in August 2017**

Below: **NBAA member Robert Johnson flew a mission to Conroe, Texas, on September 1, 2017, in his Cessna 421 delivering supplies to those in need. Image courtesy of NBAA**



What’s particularly significant is that by building on experience with the power of new technology, social media and more sophisticated data, volunteer crews and their aircraft can be even more effective.”

FBOs at the ready

FBOs also provide much-needed support and assistance during times of need. Signature Flight Support, for example, has implemented standard procedures and trained staff to mobilize almost immediately in the face of an emergency.

Patrick Sniffen, vice president of marketing at Signature Flight Support, says, “FBOs are particularly important for island-based recovery, where ground relief is not an option. In Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, for example, our location was up and running to support relief efforts well before commercial operations, despite losing a hangar and having glass blown out across the terminal.”

The company also works with many charitable organizations that play a different role in disaster relief. It has partnered with AERObridge, whose mission is to assist in times of catastrophic emergency by coordinating donated aircraft to provide an immediate response.

Trevor Norman, AERObridge field director of emergency services for Minnesota, says, “The first step is to develop a rough plan of attack before any sort of disaster occurs. This means getting a working relationship going with various federal, state and local entities. These include FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency, part of the US Department of Homeland Security] and the Army/Air National Guards,

Recent natural disasters

California wildfires

Date: December 2017
Cost: US\$13bn
Fatalities: 46
Total fires: 9,133
Total area: 1,381,405 acres
 (5,500km²)

Hurricane Harvey

Date: August 17, 2017 –
 September 3, 2017
Cost: US\$125bn
Fatalities: 91
Highest windspeed: 134mph
 (215km/h)
Affected areas: Windward Islands,
 Suriname, Guyana, Nicaragua,
 Honduras, Belize, Cayman
 Islands, Yucatán Peninsula,
 Mexico, Southern and Eastern USA
 (especially Texas, Louisiana)
Category: Category 4 Hurricane

Hurricane Irma

Date: August 30, 2017 –
 September 16, 2017
Cost: US\$67bn
Fatalities: 134
Highest windspeed: 185mph
 (300km/h)
Affected areas: Cape Verde,
 Leeward Islands, Greater Antilles,
 Turks and Caicos Islands,
 The Bahamas, Eastern USA
 (especially Florida)
Category: Category 5 Hurricane

Hurricane Maria

Date: September 16, 2017 –
 October 3, 2017
Cost: US\$92bn
Fatalities: 547
Highest windspeed: 175mph
 (280km/h)
Affected areas: Lesser Antilles,
 Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic,
 Haiti, Turks and Caicos Islands,
 The Bahamas, Southeastern USA,
 Mid-Atlantic USA, Ireland, United
 Kingdom, France, Spain
Category: Category 5 Hurricane

at state and federal level, as well as the airport commissions, local law enforcement organizations, airport managers, FBOs and so on.”

Immediately after a disaster, AERObridge conducts surveys of airports that could be used for relief deliveries, establishes communications to build up a list of initial and immediate needs, and prepares crew and aircraft for take-off.

“Hurricane Maria presented a logistical challenge with its range and capacity. Using Citations, PC-12s, TBMs and King Airs, we were able to deliver generator supplies, household goods and chain saws. We delivered relief workers to the islands and evacuated victims. We pretty much maxed out the gross weight of all the aircraft used in relief efforts,” adds Norman.

Astin Aviation also proved its ability to respond quickly to disaster during hurricanes Harvey and Irma in August/September 2017. The FBO in College Station, Texas, became the single staging point for a range of aircraft performing search, rescue and recovery missions throughout Houston and Beaumont. Operations were conducted around the clock, with staff working 12-hour shifts to accommodate fuel and logistics requirements. For 48 hours, Astin Aviation fielded calls from the military asking if the FBO could take more aircraft, which it did.

In the Caribbean, IAM Jet Centres was able to provide much-needed relief to the UK's Royal Air Force in the aftermath of hurricane Irma, with its flagship FBO on Barbados becoming the operations center for the substantial deployment of personnel and aircraft from RAF Brize Norton in the UK.





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Above left: Staff at Banyan Air Service were on hand to load supplies for those affected by hurricanes last year. Image courtesy of NBAA



Above right: Volunteers help with relief efforts in Conroe, Texas after Hurricane Harvey. Image courtesy of NBAA

Below: Provo Air Center received praise on social media for providing accommodation at its FBO in Turks and Caicos

Provo Air Center's Irma experiences

Despite considerable damage in the Turks and Caicos area, the Provo Air Center FBO was operational immediately after Hurricane Irma passed through in September 2017. Despite phone lines being down, generator power, water, food, radio and internet communications were all in place. Accommodation, albeit basic, was provided in the company's facility, initially for staff and their families as part of the reopening strategy – some doubted their homes would withstand Category 5 winds. But there would soon be a few more staying at 'Hotel Provo'.

Deborah Aharon, Provo Air Center CEO, explains, "On the day after the storm, Cayman Police Airwing helicopter pilots arrived to help with damage assessments and camped out in our Club Lounge. We also had British commandos staying and traded services with a local chef whose home had no power. He cooked for the group in exchange for a room for his family.

"Provo Air Center waives fees for humanitarian flights, but unlike in previous years the government did not waive landing and customs fees in the aftermath of Irma – the need to raise revenue was greater. It was difficult to explain this to those who were bringing us aid.

"In hosting a number of military and NGOs, we noticed a lack of central coordination. I spent the majority of my time looking for supplies and introducing people, knowing that one could help the other."



"Over the course of six weeks, we supported a 24-hour daily rota of A400M, C130, A330 Voyager and Chinook aircraft forming a supply chain of relief material and specialist personnel into the affected British and Commonwealth Caribbean territories, including Anguilla, Turks and Caicos, Tortola and Dominica," Paul Worrell, chairman of IAM Jet Centres explains.

Fuel provisions

It's all well and good having the processes in place to conduct and support emergency flights, but without sufficient fueling, those efforts will be short-lived. Norman explains, "We are always faced with the challenge of fuel shortages, especially when delivering to areas where there might not be fuel available due to a lack of power, contamination or other unforeseen events. Our rule of thumb is to set up shop close enough [to the area of impact] so that fuel doesn't become a major issue. Pilots then have refueling options outside of the disaster area. As well as ramp space, one of the first questions when establishing operations at a local FBO is about fuel availability. Everything we can think of goes into planning a response."

Fuel suppliers such as Epic and Avfuel have established processes and capabilities to ensure they can assist where necessary, but delivering fuel supplies during a disaster doesn't come without challenges. Ryan Mikolasik, chief marketing officer of Epic Fuels, says, "As well as tracking major weather events and fire disasters, we ask 'what if' questions and work with suppliers to ensure they know our plan and expectations."

However, in the event of a natural disaster, it can be difficult to maintain a normal fuel service, let alone provide additional services to emergency flights. There may be infrastructure issues relating to the disaster such as refineries or pipelines being damaged and roads being closed.

"For FBOs that may be hit by a storm, providing them with fuel in advance is often the only way to deliver it safely," comments Marci Ammerman, vice president of marketing at Avfuel. "A truck cannot be dispatched if roads are closed or there's a safety issue."

Fuel suppliers may also be dealing with multiple disasters within a short period of time, as was the case at the end of 2017, when the USA was hit by several hurricanes and wildfires between September and December (see *Recent natural disasters*, on page 37). That means they must be able to take a proactive approach to their supplies when dealing with a disaster's unpredictability.

Ben Spence, Avfuel logistics manager, says, "Our redundant supply and logistics systems allow us to handle



PALS Sky Hope provides relief in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria

Hurricane Maria hit Dominica and Puerto Rico in September 2017. Shortly afterward, Jo Damato, NBAA's senior director of educational development and strategy, took a call from fellow Florida Institute of Technology alumnus Miguel Estremera, the first step in a process that would not only bring aid to those in need, but would demonstrate just how important business aviation is to disaster relief efforts.

The hurricane had destroyed much of Puerto Rico's infrastructure, including the children's hospital. United Airlines pilot Estremera, although based in Boston, is Puerto Rican, and was desperate to get generators, food and water to his family, and 1,000 lb (450kg) of medical supplies to the hospital. He hoped Damato could help.

"Miguel had contacted air traffic controllers in San Juan, who told him they were living in the ATC facility because their homes were destroyed," Damato says. "He said their generator had exploded, and they were running low on food and water. My first instinct was to connect Miguel with Robin Eissler, program director and founder of the PALS Sky Hope Disaster Relief Program [one of the charitable aviation organizations that provides initial airlift support into and out of areas affected by natural disasters]. Within four hours, Eissler had lined up a Citation V and crew in Bedford, Massachusetts to airlift Miguel and his supplies to Puerto Rico."

Fin Bonset, president of the Florida Tech College of Aeronautics Alumni Association, also came on board, working to enlist the help of alumni in the Melbourne, Florida area in supporting relief flights to Puerto Rico.

"I was able to contact several alumni and friends to help," Bonset says, "We immediately had about 20 people donating money, supplies, generators, manpower, aircraft and time. We were able to get all the supplies within a four-hour period, and Atlantic Jet Center at Orlando Melbourne International Airport helped with loading the outbound aircraft. The flights made it to San Juan just in time to help the air traffic controllers and their families, who were running out of supplies."

According to Eissler, PALS Sky Hope has organized and flown almost 70 flights to areas impacted by Hurricane Maria, including Puerto Rico, St Thomas, St Croix and Dominica. "Our coordinators have been working 40 days straight on Maria relief, as well as our Hurricane Harvey and Irma efforts. We have flown everything from a PC-12 to an Embraer Lineage, along with several Falcons, Citations, Gulfstreams and King Airs. NBAA members are always the first to help," Eissler concludes.

"There are always people out there who are willing to donate something. Every little bit helps"

Trevor Norman, field director of emergency services for Minnesota, AERObridge

unforeseen emergencies. We call customers at their FBOs before, during and after natural disasters, reassessing their needs and finding the necessary supply. Capability is augmented by having more people in the office than would normally be needed. It's a team effort."

Generosity of spirit

Of course, providing disaster relief services doesn't come without its costs, but the business aviation industry has a big heart when it comes to charity. For example, everyone on the HERO database not only volunteers their time and aircraft, but also funds the cost to help others. And Signature Flight Support privately funds its disaster relief efforts and assists in raising funds to help team members who are affected by the disaster. Avfuel also funds internally.

AERObridge is 100% donation funded. Every dollar and everything that gets brought in is sent out to those in need. "None of us are compensated in any way. In fact, we donate to our own cause. From what I've seen, we do not have any sort of issue with financing, or material donations. There are always people out there who are willing to donate something. Every little bit helps," says Norman.

Few places on the planet are immune from the devastating powers of natural disasters. And although the USA and the Caribbean in particular often bear the harshest impacts, general aviation in any region should be ready to switch into rescue mode. Tom Haines, senior vice president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association (AOPA), concludes, "General aviation pilots consistently step up to help communities recover from natural disasters and other emergencies. We also applaud FBOs and their staff who work hard to stay open and provide services, under trying circumstances. We know that GA aircraft can get in and out of remote areas quickly and effectively shortly after storms, while larger recovery efforts are hampered. This is only possible with a healthy network of GA airports; it's a critical part of our transportation network." ○

Above: A wide range of supplies are needed in the aftermath of a natural disaster

Below: Volunteers have to sort through and organize hundreds of boxes of donated supplies. Image courtesy of NBAA

Below right: PALS Sky Hope Disaster Relief Program donates hundreds of hours of pilot time to help support those affected. Image courtesy of NBAA





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Germany über alles

There's more to Germany than beer and bratwurst. *BAI* looks at what the economic powerhouse has to offer business aviation

Words | **Kirstie Pickering**



Photo: GNTB

Steeped in history and globally renowned today as a business hub, Germany has established itself as a hot spot for business aviation activity. The country is a business aviation home to more than 40 airports and 87 operators, recording almost 100,000 departures in 2017 alone.

In 2016, Germany overtook the UK as the fastest growing G7 economy, with annual growth of 1.9%. Responsible – directly and indirectly – for 60,750 jobs, business aviation's contribution is undisputable. But just what is Germany's lure for the business aviation sector?

Popular hubs

Its 167 airports available for private jet landings make Germany an incredibly accessible destination. In 2017, the country recorded 98,482 business aviation departures, up 3.5% on the previous year. The most popular market for flights was domestic, with 46,855 movements. France and the UK were placed second and third, recording 13,364 and 11,230 flight movements, respectively.

“The small airports directed to the business aviation sector in Germany are very customer- and service-minded,” says Stefaan Ghijs, CEO and founder of air taxi flight service Fly Aeolus. “They show great flexibility for the operator compared with airfields and airports in other European countries. This makes operational preparation for German flights hugely efficient.”

The most popular flight route in Germany in 2017 was the domestic journey from Dusseldorf to Friedrichshafen, recording 573 flights. Despite this, Munich Airport was the busiest airport for business aviation movements that year, followed by Berlin Schönefeld and Stuttgart.

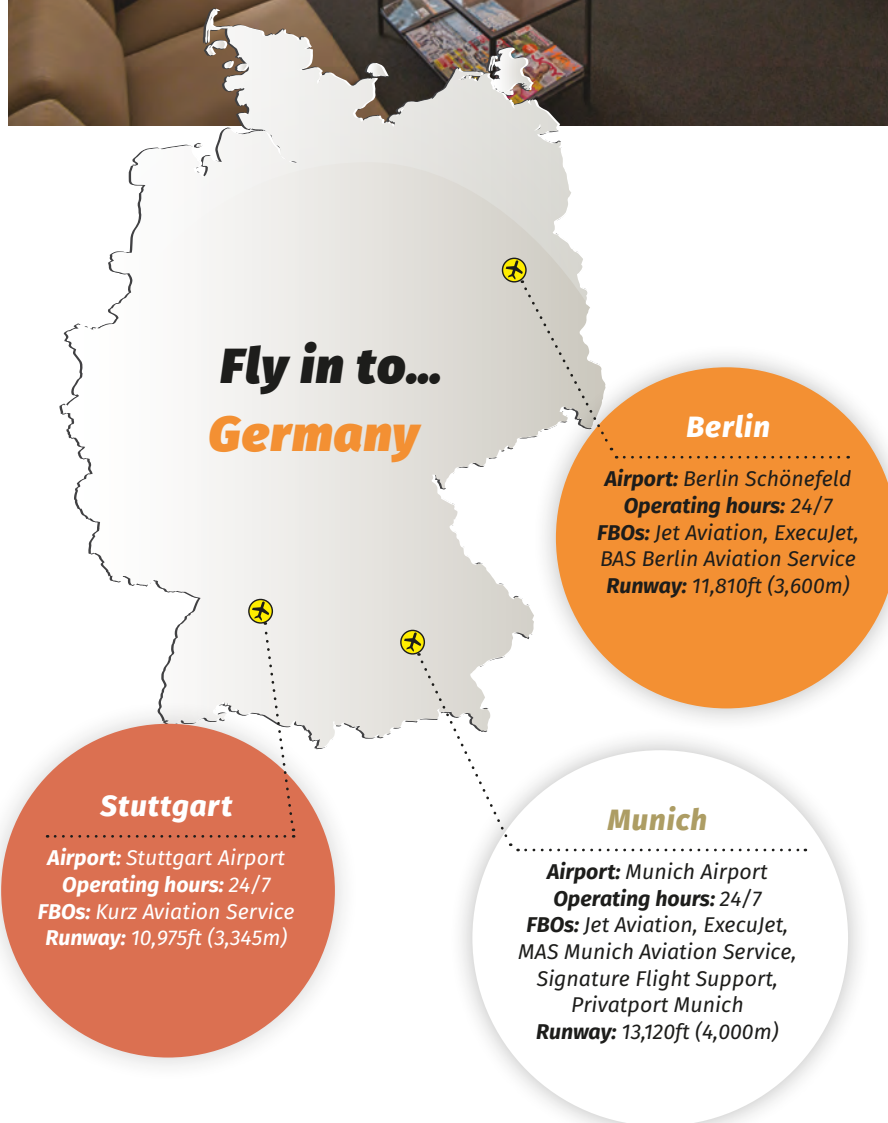
In the south of the country, Bavarian capital Munich has long been home to one of the most popular business aviation hubs in Germany. In 2017, the number of movements in Munich Airport's general aviation segment totaled 20,751 take-offs and landings. On an average day, the hub registers 30-45 movements, which can increase to 60-70 take-offs and landings per day during peak periods.



Left: Jet Aviation's FBO in Munich is one of its four offerings in Germany

Right: Munich Airport has its own general aviation terminal

Below: Fly Aeolus's fleet features 12 Cirrus AR22 aircraft



“Munich Airport’s general aviation offering includes an individual terminal [GAT], a maintenance hall and individual apron positions,” says Eberhard Kolbeck, head of general aviation at Munich Airport. “The GAT is operated by Flughafen München [Munich Airport Authority], offering a choice of several handling agents. Inside the terminal, travelers find a waiting and seating area, a snack bar with mini shop, security and passport control.”

Operators

Jet Aviation has four FBO locations in Germany at Berlin Schönefeld, Berlin Tegel, Dusseldorf and Munich. It offers passenger handling services, including passenger and crew transportation and on-site immigration and customs at all locations, with the option to take advantage of the arrangement of rental cars, taxis, limousines and catering.

Jet Aviation’s Dusseldorf FBO offers interior and exterior aircraft cleaning, weather and flight planning facilities and hangar space, while maintenance can be arranged at its Munich offering.

“Whether they are US flights from the UAE, small aircraft from Dusseldorf or business jets from Moscow, Tokyo or the USA, customers arrive at all of our locations from all over the world and depart for all destinations,” says Philipp Walter, Jet Aviation’s station manager in Berlin.

Martin Adelberger, station manager for Jet Aviation in Munich, adds, “We are very busy from May through August, when many in the Middle East want to escape the heat. We are also busy from the end of September through December, when many private aircraft travel to Munich for shopping, Oktoberfest, medical treatments or a holiday.”

ExecuJet offers a breadth of services at its FBO at Berlin Schönefeld Airport, including full ground handling, VIP lounge facilities, slot coordination and onward travel and



Photo: Christian Langer

“The small airports directed to the business aviation sector in Germany are very customer- and service-minded”

Stefaan Ghijs, CEO and founder of Fly Aeolus



Events in Germany

Aero-Friedrichshafen
A global show for general aviation
April 18-21, 2018
Messe Friedrichshafen



Oktoberfest
A traditional German folk festival
September 22 - October 7, 2018
Across Munich



Carnival of cultures
A four-day festival celebrating Berlin's cultural diversity
May 18-21, 2018
Street parade starts at Hermannplatz, Berlin



Christmas markets
Celebrating the festive period with stalls selling handcrafted goods, hot mulled wine and gingerbread
Throughout December
Countrywide



accommodation booking. The facility offers a limousine service, fuel supply, catering, towing and hangarage.

“We handled roughly 5,000 flight movements last year at our Berlin Schönefeld FBO,” says Sigrun Leidel, general manager in Germany at ExecuJet. “These movements typically involve C-suite individuals, politicians and sports men and women. However, amid the growth period that the industry is currently experiencing, we are also flying more and more people for holidays and leisure activities.

“We pride ourselves on the ability to fulfill all client requests, ensuring the client receives the experience expected from ExecuJet. Our most popular destinations to and from our Berlin Schönefeld facility are London and Moscow, followed by Zürich, Munich and Paris.”

Services for all

As a country spanning more than 350,000km² (135,135 square miles), with events ranging from conferences to Grand Prix, it is crucial that Germany's charter operators offer a varied and plentiful service that meets demand.

Fly Aeolus has a base in the German capital, Berlin. The company prides itself on a price model that it believes compares favorably with the cost of a traditional business class ticket.

“Commercial airlines in Germany offer European flights that only take one hour, although the total travel time takes four hours because of check-in times and security. Looking at the destinations they serve, they connect to around 40 destinations in Europe but the continent has 1,600 airfields and regional airports,” says CEO Ghijs.

“We save customers more than 50% in terms of travel time and deliver them the flexibility of a private jet for a fraction of the costs. Our vision is to make private aviation available to a wide industry target group.

“Driving a car from the north of Germany to the south is time-consuming due to traffic jams,” says Ghijs. “That is why our German customers like to depart from the strip in their ‘backyard’. For every 15-minute drive across the country, there is a small strip from which we can depart.”

A strong and reliable airport service team plays a huge part in a positive customer experience. A streamlined process every time will be appreciated by passengers, many of whom have no doubt experienced stressful travel.

Wisag Aviation Service Holding operates at five of Germany's business airports. At Hamburg, it offers ramp handling, and at Cologne, Berlin Tegel, Schönefeld and Frankfurt, its biggest operation, the company provides a full handling offering.

“We work in the area of services around scheduled and charter airlines, freighters, general aviation and private jets,” says Wolfgang Zedlitz, director sales aviation at the company. “We work with airports by interfacing processes and making local agreements on central infrastructure. In particular, we cooperate with the airports and the specialized private jet service providers to offer services related to general aviation.”

Michael Richter, managing director of the ground service division at Wisag, comments, “Wisag Aviation Service Holding and its affiliated companies employ highly qualified workers with a strong service ethos. This is all the more important given that the aviation industry has

FLYING TO GERMANY

been changing considerably for several years now, with liberalization and cost pressure demanding ever-faster reactions and adjustments to market conditions. We can provide rapid, flexible support thanks to our expertise and our distinctive corporate culture.”

Getting in

The LBA is responsible for licensing those flying into Germany. It grants licenses, revalidation, and license renewals for air traffic and pilots.

Air carriers from non-European economic area (EEA) member states must apply for entry permission prior to commencing charter flights to and from Germany. The permission may be requested for single trips or for a series of flights, and will generally only be granted if there is a reciprocal agreement between Germany and the carrier's home country.

Applications for individual flights must be submitted in writing to the Luftfahrt-Bundesamt – Germany's national civil aviation authority – at least two full business days prior to flying, with series of flight applications required no later than four weeks before the first flight is arranged to take-off.

Charter flights from EEA member states are entitled to operate flights within the European Union with special application or notification as required. This also applies to air carriers flying from Switzerland. Until there is an agreement between the European Union and Switzerland with regards to the approval of cabotage operations, Swiss aviation companies cannot be granted cabotage rights in Germany.

“Working with a fractional ownership model, we have a strong relationship with the LBA,” says Ghijs. “The German civil aviation authority showed an open stand towards innovative business models like ours, which, in our case, is a model based on the sharing economy model of Cirrus SR22 aircraft.”

Tourism

In addition to being home to renowned trade fairs, Germany is full of lively cities offering historical landmarks and tourist hot spots, as well as cultural epicenter Bavaria and the country's little-known North Sea coastline. Oktoberfest and Christmas markets are among its seasonal offerings.

“The busiest periods for general aviation are during the annual security conference, major international trade fairs such as Bauma and ISPO, and important sporting events like Champions League football games,” says Munich Airport's Kolbeck. “During the recent World Economic Forum, we handled additional movements due to a lack of capacities in Davos and Zurich.”

According to the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), Miniatur Wunderland Hamburg, host to the biggest model railway in the world, theme park Europa-Park, and Neuschwanstein Castle in southern Bavaria are the three most visited tourist attractions in Germany.

“Hiking, biking and outdoor activities are among some of the most popular pastimes in Germany,” says a spokesperson from GNTB. “Some of the best trails can be found just a short journey from main airports.”



“Germany is a country rich in regional variations, offering a combination of the traditional and modern. The attraction of Germany's wine and beer traditions cannot be underestimated. Some of its finest vineyards can be found just a short journey from Frankfurt.”

Market growth

Germany's strength in the sector was demonstrated by its recovery after the recession. The fastest comeback across Europe was seen in large jet activity – a sector that has a minimal impact on Germany, with business aircraft representing just 3.4% of aircraft based in the country in 2017 – but recent figures look positive.

“2017 saw a generalized recovery in European business aviation activity, with light jet utilization very much leading the way,” says Richard Koe, managing director at global business aviation market intelligence firm WingX. “Leisure demand sustained, with heavy jets continuing to fly more, despite weakening demand from peripheral Europe.”

“Corporate travel also made a comeback, and this was reflected in a recovery of flight activity in Germany. A total of 128,000 departures during the year represented 3.7% growth on 2016, the equivalent of 384 additional flights each month, more than any other European country. Most of the growth came in AOC flights, up by 9% in Q4 of 2017.”

“Germany is still the largest market in Europe for business aviation,” says ExecuJet's Leidel. “The industry is seeing growth for the first time this decade, and ExecuJet has experienced plenty of activity in the region.”

With this reflection, a positive start to 2018 and the country's position as an economic power hub in both Europe and the wider world, the business aviation market in Germany looks strong, with plenty of promise for the years to come. ○



“Germany is still the largest market in Europe for business aviation”

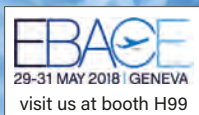
Sigrun Leidel, general manager in Germany at ExecuJet

Top: Wisag operates at five business aviation hubs in Germany



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Youth



Illustration: Yordanka Poleganova

Millennials are a new breed of private jet flyer. These experience-driven young professionals expect their journeys to be high tech – from booking systems through to inflight services and connectivity.

Many people assume that the typical private jet customer is aged 50 or over, but that is simply no longer the case. Private jet charter company PrivateFly's latest quarterly insights report revealed that the average age of its passengers in the last quarter of 2017 was just 38. This is a figure that is steadily lowering, down from 40 earlier in the year.

Statistics from other organizations within the sector corroborate these findings. Consulting its database of members, private jet booking service Stratajet found that the fastest-growing customer group was 18- to 24-year-olds and that the most active segment was the 25 to 34 age group. These carried out nearly one-third of all searches on the site, while more than two-thirds were performed by customers aged 44 or under. And it wasn't just searches – these translated into bookings, too.

How millennials are driving change within
the private jet business

Words | Keri Allan

movement



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“This new breed of flyer is experience-driven, living for the moment and with very high expectations of the brands they choose”

Adam Twidell, CEO, PrivateFly



Above & right: **Digital transformation is changing the way customers get access to private jet services**



“This new breed of flyer is experience-driven, living for the moment and with very high expectations of the brands they choose,” notes Adam Twidell, PrivateFly CEO. “Tech-driven business models are leading the way in appealing to these next-gen business aviation customers. On-demand charter is particularly well served to appeal to this ‘live for today’ audience, which is looking for a private aviation solution that doesn’t come with the ongoing commitment of ownership costs or annual membership fees.”

Millennials are making their presence known to the sector with increasing confidence, demanding a different approach to private jet travel than the industry is traditionally geared to deliver. They want choice and personalization throughout their aviation journey, from the process of searching and booking a flight, through to transfer, aircraft and inflight services.

Millennials demand instant access to services and support and have driven accessibility to private jet travel dramatically. They expect booking and pricing to be as up-front and effortless as possible via a unified platform, modeled on car rideshare apps such as Uber.

“They want to go from point A to B at a specific time with as little human interaction as possible and to know the cost up-front without any surprises,” explains Kevin Flynn, director of aviation maintenance at AbbVie.

Searching and booking flights

In response to this, the industry has changed to better cater for this market by providing a wider range of easily accessible booking services, as Ian Moore, chief commercial officer from private jet charter and hire firm VistaJet points out: “The business aviation industry has had to adapt rapidly over the last decade and now digital transformation is changing the way private operators work – and a lot of that is owing to millennials’ preferences. We see a growing demand for booking more quickly and all through a unified platform – whether the flight itself, ground transportation, catering or payment.”

“Groceries can now be delivered, taxis hailed and takeaways ordered at the click of a button. There exists a mindset among youngsters that they have a right to previously inaccessible services and products,” continues

Say hello to YoPro

First established by the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) in 2014, the Young Professionals in Business Aviation (YoPro) group has developed into an influential community for young industry professionals.

Started to create opportunities for early-career professionals to network and build relationships at an NBAA event, it is now helping up-and-coming millennials to become more actively involved in, and influence, the work of the NBAA, as well as gain access to high-level members of industry.

“YoPro is continuously evolving,” says Sierra Grimes, YoPro founder and NBAA manager of registration. “Organically over time, our original networking event evolved to include an opportunity for attendees to find mentors, as NBAA executives and the board of directors attended. Not only did you get to meet with your peers, you got access to industry experts,” she enthuses.

“This grew in a way that saw us begin to support professional and leadership development and then we established the YoPro Council. This was because we had an influx of inquiries from young professionals asking what they could do or how they could become more involved. NBAA has a bunch of committees and councils for different subsets of the industry and we thought



this would be a perfect way to give another benefit to younger members and add more meat to the YoPro program itself,” she adds.

The council now helps put on education sessions and networking events throughout the NBAA’s conference season and also works on engagement, partnering with local or regional groups to meet and engage with young professional that might not otherwise have access to the NBAA.

It recently announced the inaugural NBAA Top 40 under 40, with the winners set to be announced at the 2018 NBAA Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition in Orlando this coming October. It is also currently partnering with a collective of NBAA committees, the Mentor Networking Group, to establish a structured mentorship program to support professional development.

The aim of the scheme is to help people new to the industry to learn from established professionals and the NBAA was overwhelmed with responses from potential mentors. Twenty were selected for this starting ‘semester’, with young professionals chosen that were following similar career tracks. At the end of the program, feedback will be analyzed and the Mentor Networking Group hopes to expand the mentorship program to help those just joining the sector to gain support and hone the skills they need to have long and successful careers.

Find out more about the work of YoPro by visiting www.nbaa.org/prodev/yopro/





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“The private jet industry has been woefully inaccessible to a wide audience of prospective customers for too long now”

Jonny Nicol, founder and CEO, Stratajet

Jonny Nicol, founder and CEO of Stratajet. “The private jet industry has been woefully inaccessible to a wide audience of prospective customers for too long now. The inefficient means of booking a private jet, which has relied on brokers liaising with a fragmented network of aircraft operators, has prevented private aviation from being seen as a viable means of transportation for the mainstream traveler.

“Private jets are the last form of transportation to be made available online and this has been sparked by an increasing demand for immediacy in all aspects of our lives – driven by millennials. Affordability is driven by accessibility and this surge of innovation has finally made its way into the last luxury service to benefit from the digital revolution – private jet travel.”

When it comes to how they search for and book flights, millennials are increasingly looking for private jets while on the go, with the use of smartphones soaring. Stratajet has seen mobile searches for flights growing at twice the rate of desktop usage; PrivateFly’s mobile bookings increased by 5% between 2016 and 2017, now making up 39% of searches and bookings.

According to Twidell, once a booking has been made, millennials also expect 24/7 communication channels on platforms they know and love. “Personalization and speed also apply at the post-booking stage – we see an increasing number wanting to express their inflight requirements and looking for operational updates via messaging systems such as WhatsApp or Telegram,” he says.

As for how passengers pay for flights, Twidell believes that this year digital payment solutions and cryptocurrencies will be a big growth area, as this is a payment option that appeals to younger customers. “In 2014 we were the world’s first private jet company to accept Bitcoin, and blockchain financial technology is now starting to be adopted more widely by the industry,” he points out.

In terms of specific aircraft types popular with millennials, Kevin Flynn, director of aviation maintenance at AbbVie, believes that the Gulfstream brand remains popular due to its reference in music and TV. However, Michael Amalfitano, president and CEO of Embraer Executive Jets, believes millennials put a lot of importance on how socially acceptable their flight experience is, and look for sustainable aircraft that offer low noise and emissions levels.

Above: **The average age of business aviation customers is decreasing**

Below: **Millennial customers want quick, easy access to the luxury afforded by private jet travel**



“Highly efficient flight paths that generate significant fuel savings and environmentally friendlier operations are more important than ever to customers,” he explains.

Transfers and FBOs

When transported to and from their airplane, this new generation of private jet passengers continues to expect the process to be simple and straightforward.

“The interface passengers have with FBOs has decreased over time. The expectation is that the traveler can get door-to-door, as efficiently as possible,” says Catrina Capistrant, a safety manager and international captain for a multinational financial services company. “The typical millennial will find it most convenient to arrange his or her own ground transportation via Uber or Lyft and drive straight to the jet. The fussing around in the lobby of an FBO is more of a hindrance than a luxury for a traveler on the go.

“Prudent FBOs have shifted their focus from primarily passenger-based customer service, to aircraft and crew support,” she adds.

Inflight preferences

Regarding inflight preferences, the biggest expectation the industry has seen from – but not only limited to – millennials has been around connectivity. “Connectivity is key,” says Sheryl Barden, CEO and president of recruitment firm Aviation Personnel International. “Ten years ago it was the service and the food that was really important when on an airplane. Today, it’s all about connectivity.”

“Internet still remains the most important inflight service for our millennial passengers,” agrees Flynn. “The days of chartering an aircraft without internet are coming to an end. I simply can’t imagine a millennial booking a flight on something without a broadband system, so I imagine aircraft owners and companies are outfitting as many aircraft as possible.”

This is very much the case. Millennials’ intensive use and rapid adoption of new technologies for connectivity, social interaction and entertainment has driven the charter market to accelerate adoption of a range of innovative technologies for inflight customer use.

Amalfitano at Embraer Executive Jets says that key demands of the millennial generation include not only

Millennials: key predictions

"I see big changes coming through improved apps continuously refining the booking process to the point where it's as effortless as a car service such as Uber"
Kevin Flynn, director of aviation maintenance at AbbVie



"We will see progression toward complete automation in all facets of aviation"
Jessica McClintock, director of client relations, FuelerLinx



"The private jet industry has opened its doors to a new market and is starting to become affordable to more than just the top 1%. It is also seeing a trend toward convenience over elitism, with companies offering private jet charter solutions that take advantage of the empty repositioning legs and semi-private flying"

Payum Abtahi, pilot at Trans-Pacific Jets



"We might see success in air taxi services utilizing an app-supported shared ride concept. Although low-cost air taxi models have attempted and failed in the past, the emerging millennial traveler may provide a lucrative market for that in the near future, provided the application is well developed"
Catrina Capistrant, safety manager and international captain for a multinational financial services company



"I think we'll see a move toward more efficient and cost-effective jet aircraft, a push led by millennials"
Jeremy Leonard, Virgin America first officer



high-speed connectivity for unrestricted use of social media and communication apps, but also integration of mobile devices with IFE and mobile app-driven cabin management technology: "It's 360° ergonomic, entertainment and environmental control," he says.

Many solutions tailored to the demands of millennials are available in the market, with companies such as Embraer adopting several of these and even developing their own solutions.

"We use JetConneX, Inmarsat's advanced Ka-band high-throughput satellite network and Honeywell's 15Mbps JetWave technology aboard aircraft, such as the Lineage 1000E," Amalfitano notes. "Regarding in-flight entertainment and comfort, Lufthansa Technik's HD is aboard the Phenom 300E and Honeywell's Ovation Selection is on the Legacy 450 and 500. Embraer Aero Seating Technologies VIP seats have integrated app functions including acoustic therapy for gaming or entertainment, as well as thermal control."

Inside help

However, it's worth noting that it's not just millennial passengers that are changing the way the industry does business. Millennials working in the sector are also helping to bring about change.

Working in recruitment, Barden has noticed that millennials within the industry are bringing a lot of new ideas and energy to the sector and challenging the status quo. "They're doing a lot with disruptive technology and we're seeing this in some of the new software coming out for our industry," she notes. "Technology is creating support for pilots and maintenance teams, helping people communicate. For example, an app has been developed

called ForeFlight, which really aggregates all of the different things a pilot needs. Millennials are really helping the industry to think differently, creatively and uniquely.

"From a flight department perspective, millennials want processes in place that are user-friendly and use a high level of technology as they assume that these processes will be more efficient through algorithmic advances and closely choreographed data tables, easily competing with – and crushing – the pen and paper method so heavily relied upon in the past," says Jessica McClintock, director of client relations at aviation software system provider FuelerLinx.

"FBO environments must have the same focus on technology, using social media and mobile apps as an unfiltered voice in the industry, but also maintain the VIP quality attention through well strategized white glove service," she adds.

Amalfitano notes that to drive growth in the sector, business aviation operators need to recognize, address and attract millennials – both as customers and industry professionals. Furthermore, it needs to embrace the technological changes this generation is pushing forward if it wants to keep pace with customer demand.

"With the acceleration of innovation, more disruptive technologies are on the horizon. In five years' time, we expect to be innovating at an even higher rate than today and expect we will have extremely agile collaboration and integration with partners, in order to ensure a key role in the development of new business models," he says.

"Business aviation needs to be agile and make preparations to ensure that disruptive innovation doesn't interrupt business, but rather becomes the base for solid and steady industry growth." ○

Below: Millennials look for sustainable aircraft like the Embraer Phenom 300E when booking a private jet





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Token gesture

More and more private charter firms are accepting payments in cryptocurrencies, with many other business aviation operators set to follow suit. Is it all just a gimmick or does it offer a real advantage in the marketplace?

Words | Paul Willis





Illustration: Phil Hackett



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Back in 2013 UK private jet charter company PrivateFly got some unexpected customer feedback. The customer in question was Olivier Janssens, a Belgian entrepreneur who had recently chartered an airplane through PrivateFly and posted a review online of his experience.

"It's quite hard to get a review in this age of travel so we were pleased that he had taken the time to comment," says Adam Twidell, founder and CEO of PrivateFly.

Janssens' review was uncritical except for one point. He wondered why the company didn't accept payment in Bitcoin. Janssens had a vested interest in the inquiry: as an early adopter of Bitcoin, he had accrued a small fortune in the digital currency and had a personal stake in seeing its use spread. Twidell's curiosity was piqued.

"I'd heard vaguely of Bitcoin but like most people back then I associated it with the darker side of the web," admits Twidell. "Following Janssens' suggestion, I looked in to it. I saw quite a number of respectable companies taking it and the deeper we looked into it, the more realistic it looked."

PrivateFly began accepting Bitcoin payments in 2014. Since then a number of private aviation charter firms have begun taking it and other digital currencies, with the biggest uptake happening in the past 12 months. In November, Silicon Valley-based charter SurfAir announced it had begun accepting Bitcoin and Ethereum payments for its monthly membership and charter offerings. Houston-based online booking platform Tapjets added Ethereum to its payment options in January after setting up Bitcoin payments last year, and another booking platform, SimpleCharters, began accepting cryptocurrencies in the same period.

This sudden spike in adoption has come at a time of rapid growth in the value of digital currencies, which has resulted in some Bitcoin investors experiencing huge returns.



"For a long time we only got a couple of Bitcoin bookings a month, but just recently it's gone exponential"

Adam Twidell, founder and CEO, PrivateFly

"There's a lot more interest right now, probably sparked by press reports about some of the massive gains made in the past year," says Hanna Halaburda, an economist at New York University and the co-author of *Beyond Bitcoin: The Economics of Digital Currencies*. "It's likely that the current value of Bitcoin is unnaturally high and what we're seeing is a financial bubble. But even if it drops in value that's not going to change the growing perception of the currency as something legitimate to deal in."

This growing consumer confidence in digital currencies has been reflected in its use, remarks Twidell. "For a long time we got only a couple of Bitcoin bookings a month, but just recently it's gone exponential," he says.

In the last six months PrivateFly has seen a 180% increase in payments by Bitcoin compared with the previous six months. In January it had its highest-ever Bitcoin transaction when a customer bought a US\$250,000 jet card.

Tapjets, meanwhile, saw 36% of its purchases come from Bitcoin in December. Eugene Kesselman, Tapjets chairman and CEO, thinks much of this growth is from Bitcoin investors looking for ways to spend their new-found riches. "There's been a tremendous amount of wealth created just in the last 12 months and the mechanisms for transforming that wealth into tangible goods and services are few and far between," he comments. "Private aviation is a good place for these high net worth individuals to spend their money. My belief is that by the end of 2018 we'll be looking back on the highest boost the industry has ever seen with this new market of fliers."

Fast and easy

The rising use of digital currencies in private aviation is not only a consequence of their recent surge in value. Digital currencies also fill a gap in the private aviation market – namely the need for frictionless 24-hour payment. "In most forms of payment 24-hour transactions have already arrived,

Bitcoin: Banks remain reticent

Digital currencies have made it much quicker for private aviation companies to transact with their customers. But while they may have improved business for private aviation they have created a conundrum for banking, points out Hanna Halaburda, visiting professor of management at New York University.

On the one hand, she says, banks "are very much interested in Bitcoin" because they see how it could improve their current international wire transfer system, which is cumbersome and expensive. The current system relies on corresponding banks – designated banks that other banks must go through to transfer money internationally. However, the corresponding banks are highly regulated and assume higher

risk. As a result few banks want to be corresponding banks.

"Their scarcity creates a bottleneck, which leads to higher fees and slower transfer times," says Halaburda. Digital currencies would solve this problem but banks have so far been reticent about committing to them because of their association with illegal activity.

The University of Southern California's Pai-Ling Yin thinks that some form of digital currency will eventually supplant what we now know of as international wire transfers. "It may be that banks ultimately co-opt the technology and offer the service themselves," explains Yin. "The average person might prefer to trust a bank to offer this service."

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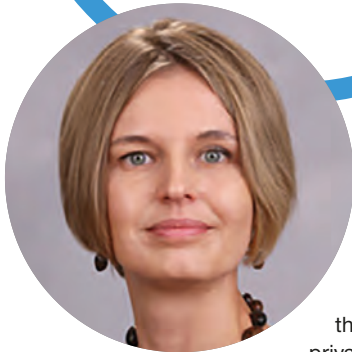
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“Digital currencies combine the best elements of both credit cards and wire transfers”

Hanna Halaburda, economist, New York University



but for large sums of money that’s not yet the case,” says Halaburda.

At present there are two main methods of making the kind of high-value, international transactions that private jet charter firms rely on. The first is by credit card. But there are usually limits on the value of such payments and even when the payment falls within these limits vendors are left vulnerable to fraud because of the charge back option that credit cards offer.

The second method is by wire (electronic) transfer, which is less susceptible to fraud and not constrained by the same cash limits as cards. But international wire transfers are slow and inconvenient, since they usually take three business days to clear and can only be transacted during normal banking hours.

“Digital currencies combine the best elements of both credit cards and wire transfers,” says Halaburda. “They are 24-hour, have very low risk of fraud and the money clears quickly – usually about an hour for Bitcoin.”

What’s more, digital currency payment fees are not tied to the value of the transaction, only to how quickly you need it expediting. This means that for high-value purchases the fee represents a tiny proportion of the transaction. Digital currencies are especially attractive for customers traveling internationally since, unlike with credit cards, there is no extra fee associated with cross-border payments.

“The banks have just been left sleeping and haven’t really listened to customer demand,” says Twidell. “These cybercurrencies can do it for a lot less and take all the pain away from customers.”

Not that digital currencies aren’t without their drawbacks – the most significant being volatility in the currency’s value. In the last year this has mostly worked in favor of investors



Key steps to adopting a digital currency

Know the risks: While the legal status of digital currencies vary around the world, no government as yet has put them on an equal footing with fiat currency. This means that while they are free from any regulatory framework they are also totally unprotected. “It’s an unregulated market,” says PrivateFly founder Adam Twidell. “So if the Bitcoin exchange you are using goes bust in the period when it has your money there’s no compensation.”

Research the currencies: As of this January, there were nearly 1,400 digital currencies available online. Knowing which to accept therefore requires considerable research, says Tapjets’ CEO Eugene Kesselman. “Before we accept any new token we do a substantial amount of analysis on the risk associated with it and how we can mitigate it,” he comments.

In most cases the less-established currencies are more volatile because they

generally have less money backing them up, opines Eugene Kesselman, Tapjets chairman and CEO. SimpleCharters’ Charles Denault reveals his company opted for Bitcoin for no other reason than it was the most mature and the largest: “It’s what we see as the digital currencies leader,” he says.

Market your credentials: The recent boom in digital currencies has made a lot of people a lot of money. Many of these investors are looking for ways to spend their new wealth and, since there are still relatively few businesses accepting these currencies, those who do can stand out.

When PrivateFly first signed onto Bitcoin, for example, it got a lot of endorsements from the Bitcoin community. “Back then in particular they were heralding every new example of a business sector choosing to accept the currency and we happened to be at the vanguard of that,” says Twidell.

since the value has been on an upward trajectory. But this could all change if the value suddenly plummets.

To avoid this volatility most private jet charters use exchanges that charge a fee in return for assuming the risk of the price fluctuations. PrivateFly uses a Bitcoin exchange called Bitpay.

“Once we get the customer’s flight request we log into the exchange, where they give us a conversion rate in Bitcoin that can be passed to the customer,” says Twidell. “The customer then transacts in Bitcoin from their e-wallet to the exchange. The exchange notifies you that they’ve received payment and it’s your decision whether you want to hold on to the Bitcoins or transfer them. We always convert the Bitcoin back to normal currency. It’s not risk-free because you’re reliant on the exchange not going bust in the 24 hours that it takes for you to get your money.”

New generation

While these kinds of risks might scare away some, they don’t put off the new breed of Bitcoin-paying customers who SimpleCharters founder Charles Denault characterizes as “younger and more tech-savvy”.

This assessment is reflected at PrivateFly, where its Bitcoin clientele has an average age of 36 and where the youngest Bitcoin customer is just 21.

“If you speak to millennials, many have invested in cybercurrencies to some extent,” comments Twidell. “They don’t want to be dictated to as to how they pay for something. They want to have options and they’re much less afraid of new technologies.”

This newly affluent subset are also helping to change the demographics of luxury air travel: “A lot of travel companies are seeing the average age of their customers



“Bitcoin is the most mature and the largest – we see it as the digital currencies leader”

Charles Denault, founder, SimpleCharters

The rise of Bitcoin and the blockchain

The extraordinary rise of Bitcoin can be summed up with two figures. The first: one million. The second: 44.

The first figure refers to the amount in Bitcoin that Satoshi Nakamoto – a name used by the unknown inventor or inventors of Bitcoin – is thought to have acquired in the early days of the digital currency. Since that initial acquisition is now thought to be worth a staggering US\$19bn, the second number reflects Nakamoto’s ranking on the list of the world’s richest people.

Nakamoto’s incredible wealth is in part reward for solving an intractable problem that dogged earlier attempts to create a digital currency. Because digital money is really just computer files, in theory there is nothing preventing someone from duplicating that file and spending the money again. This was known as the double-spending problem.

Nakamoto got around it by creating a public ledger in which all transactions are recorded. Every new record, known as a block, is added to the ledger cryptographically in a growing list known as a blockchain. The security of the system relies on the linking of all of these records, which means it is impossible to alter one record without altering the entire ledger.

“Once a transaction is written on the blockchain it cannot be changed and the history cannot be changed,” comments New York University economist Hanna Halaburda. “It’s not the technology that does this. Rather it’s because the incentives are set in such a way that it’s not worthwhile to change it.”

The system’s transparency also means that transactions do not require a trusted third party to oversee them. In other words, money can be exchanged without the need for a bank to act as a go-between.

While Bitcoin has made its inventor, or inventors, rich beyond their wildest dreams, many experts believe that it is blockchain technology rather than Bitcoin that will be Nakamoto’s most enduring legacy. By doing away with the need for third-party oversight, blockchain could change the way transactions are handled in many industries, not least aviation. And there are signs that the change is already happening. Singapore Airlines, for example, announced in February that it plans to use blockchain in a new digital wallet app for its frequent flyer program set to launch this summer.

But blockchain has many other applications beyond facilitating transactions for currencies and pseudo-currencies, argues the University of Southern California’s Pai-Ling Yin, who adds that anything that involves records management could potentially be improved by blockchain: “The biggest change in aviation generally will be in keeping track on information that lots of people need to access,” she comments. “Flight manifests, for example.”

Online private aviation booking platform Tapjets, meanwhile, has deployed what it calls “blockchain-capable technology” to leverage its complex real-time data analysis operation. “What blockchain allows you to do is to obtain data from different sources and reconcile that to a common place,” says Tapjets’ CEO Eugene Kesselman. “To keep track of aircraft movements we are using dozens of data sources. You’re talking about tracking 3,000 aircraft in the air at one time. That translates to a lot of data. In the past you would have needed a supercomputer to process it, but with blockchain the data can be shared over lots of processing units within the chain.”

increase as retirees have more money than ever to spend on travel,” continues Twidell. “But in private aviation we’re seeing the opposite trend, with the average age of our customers decreasing.”

But tech-savvy millennials with money to burn might not be the only ones fuelling this surge in business. According to Pai-Ling Yin, associate professor of clinical entrepreneurship at the University of Southern California, private aviation shouldn’t rule out the possibility that some of this new clientele might be using Bitcoin payments as a way to launder money. “One of the qualities of Bitcoin is that your private information does not have to be associated with the transactions,” says Yin. “The money is the money and it’s not traceable.”

Consequently one avenue open to those carrying large quantities of money made illegally is to deposit the cash in a Bitcoin account and then figure out ways to spend it. “Private plane flights is one spending option that’s now open to them,” continues Yin.

This possibility raises the thorny question of whether private aviation charters that choose to accept digital currencies run the risk of facilitating illegal activity, albeit unwittingly. “Indirect complicity is a huge ethical question that everyone faces in different degrees,” says Yin. “But condoning a black market is probably part of the reason why governments don’t support digital currencies.”

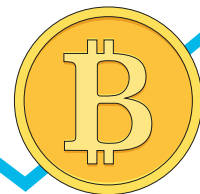
But while most governments refuse to endorse digital currencies, few have made any effort to outlaw them. Ultimately, many believe that governments will instead seek to apply future regulation. This is a step that Adam Twidell thinks is both inevitable and welcome.

“The banks are regulated for good reason,” he says. “I think regulation to some degree has to happen. How light a touch that will be we’ll have to see. But if there’s a happy medium, the banks are a long way away from it at the moment.” ○



“One of the qualities of Bitcoin is that your private information does not have to be associated with the transactions”

Pai-Ling Yin, associate professor of clinical entrepreneurship, University of Southern California



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Blockchain technology could revolutionize the efficiency and security of the business aviation sector. Matthew Jones, senior managing consultant and blockchain leader, Center of Competence – Global Automotive, Aerospace & Defense Industry, IBM Services, explains more



How can blockchain be used in the business aviation sector?

What is blockchain?

The missing link

Blockchain is a digital ledger where data is shared in real time across a scalable network of individuals and organizations. Every event, every transaction, is time stamped and stored in digital blocks, which become part of a growing chain – a permanent record that cannot be altered or tampered with.

An example of blockchain use is in the container shipping industry – the technology is being used to bring increased traceability, transparency and trust to cross-border, multiparty business processes that today are very dependent on paper documentation and process, and suffer from inefficient sharing of information between organizations. For example, Maersk and IBM have established a joint venture to provide more efficient and secure methods for conducting global trade using blockchain technology.

How can the business aviation sector benefit from blockchain?

Blockchain can be used for sharing of maintenance and engineering data between multiple parties – using it will enable organizations to achieve operational efficiencies in the back office processes needed to support aircraft maintenance and turnaround between flights.

The technology can also be used when sharing customer loyalty data between multiple parties – using blockchain will enable organizations to offer a better customer experience and a wider range of products and services to their customers.

Blockchain offers improved parts traceability between multiple parties – using it in the aviation aftermarket will enable easier identification of genuine parts from counterfeits.

The technology also allows for more efficient financial settlement between buyers and suppliers in the aviation ecosystem – using blockchain will enable faster reallocation of working capital.

How can companies implement blockchain technologies?

Companies can start by educating themselves about new technologies and by finding a trusted, reliable business partner to explain not just how some of these efficiencies can be made, but also how and where to get started. The role of specialist magazines such as *Business Airport International* and industry business and trade associations remains very important. At IBM we often say that blockchain is a team sport, so be prepared to collaborate with business partners, industry regulators and perhaps even your competitors to selectively share information for mutual gain. My main advice when implementing blockchain technologies is to start small, experiment, learn and grow.

What do you believe the future holds for blockchain technology?

Blockchain offers the prospect of greater efficiency to aviation ecosystems that are sharing maintenance and engineering data or customer loyalty data between multiple organizations. Blockchain can help businesses to overcome inefficient sharing of information between multiple parties, and allows for increased traceability, transparency and trust between organizations and people. Although blockchain is a new technology that's still in its infancy, there are already many aviation companies beginning experiments.

Blockchain has the potential to disrupt existing business models and to bring improved collaboration across traditional barriers between organizations and industries. IBM is focused on developing blockchain technologies that can be used by all types of organizations, from large enterprises to small startups.

IBM is a strong believer in the power of open-source software, open-source standards and open-source governance to drive transparency, longevity and interoperability in the development of new technologies, hence its support for the Linux Foundation, a not-for-profit industry trade body that drives such efforts through its Hyperledger project (an umbrella project of open-source blockchains and related tools, started in December 2015, to support the collaborative development of blockchain-based distributed ledgers).

As Russia prepares to host the world's biggest soccer event this summer, *Business Airport International* looks at the preparations being made to welcome three million extra visitors to the country, and the pitfalls that operators must avoid

Words | Hazel King





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In 2018, the role of hosting the FIFA World Cup falls to Russia. Having handled several large-scale international events in the past few years, such as the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum, the country's airports are well equipped to handle

Above: **Pulkovo Airport is well equipped to handle large passenger numbers during major international events**

Below: **Leonid Sergeev, CEO of Basel Aero**

the additional three million visitors expected this summer.

"Preparation for the World Cup is going according to plan," says Anna Serezhkina, executive director of the Russian United Business Aviation Association (RUBAA). "Russia has accumulated great experience in holding such major events, and has the technology and experience to ensure uninterrupted services during the event."

The games will be held in 11 cities across Russia: Moscow, St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Rostov-on-Don, Samara, Saransk, Sochi and Volgograd, with the semi-finals in St Petersburg and Moscow, and the opening and final games taking place in Moscow.

Gareth Danker, director of global sales and marketing at ground support company Euro Jet, says, "From what we have observed, the Russian airports have been gearing up for the World Cup and will be prepared, although this will be a unique event as it will span multiple time zones and host cities.

"We expect that St Petersburg is well prepared for the event as every May they handle nearly 600 flights related to the International Economic Forum within a one-week period. So Pulkovo Airport will be very well equipped to handle such a complex operation.

"Moscow also has several airports, including Vnukovo, Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo, which means that group charters with players, fans and the media, plus diplomatic flights, can pick which airport is suitable for them. Vnukovo is typically used for diplomatic and VIP private jet flights and Sheremetyevo is more focused on passenger charter flights," Danker adds.

"At Sochi Airport, additional safety measures will be introduced based only on the request of the relevant executive authorities"

Leonid Sergeev, CEO, Basel Aero



Watch out for cabotage

However, the movement of people within Russia isn't always easy. With extensive cabotage rules, which prohibit foreign operators from transporting passengers internally within Russia, those wishing to travel across the country to each match will need to ensure they plan ahead.

"Right now, cabotage has not been approved for foreign carriers, so it is expected that many flights will have to leave Russia and go to another country before continuing on to another city within Russia, unless the rules change," comments Danker.

"Russia is very stringent when it comes to cabotage," adds Christine Vamvakas, operations communications manager at Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc. "One of the things the authorities are very stringent about is transporting commercial cargo, and they do not permit foreign carriers to pick up passengers from one place in Russia and drop them off in another. You can pick them up and leave the country, but not transport them internally."

According to Vamvakas, operators are able to submit a request with their landing permit if they do wish to receive an exception to cabotage rules, but this will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Civil Aviation Authority. "Usually they lean toward regulatory aspects and they don't permit it," she adds. "Charter passengers therefore have two options - to use a Russian charter operator or commercial airlines if they want to fly between locations within the country."

Safety concerns

Safety is also an important consideration. In 2016, there were multiple clashes in the streets of Marseille in France between Russian supporters and English fans during the Euro 2016 soccer tournament, and visitors to the World Cup this summer will need to be aware of potential safety threats at the event.

Vamvakas comments, "As with any large event, I would always recommend that operators get security threat assessments in advance, not only for the country, but for their specific locations as well. I would also recommend that they get a hotel threat assessment so they have a better idea of where their hotel is located, emergency exits and surrounding areas that may be unsafe, because so many people are going to be there."

It may be worthwhile exploring ground transportation options and deciding on several routes to and from the matches in the event of any violence. But as with everything during an international event, "transportation is going to be in high demand", according to Vamvakas, so it is best to plan ahead.

At the airports, it will be business as usual when it comes to security, according to RUBAA's Serezhkina. "Passengers will be subject to the normal security procedures at the airport, but the number of police and security agents will be increased as necessary," she explains.

"At Sochi Airport, additional safety measures will be introduced based only on the request of the relevant

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Industry update

According to the latest figures from EBAA, business aviation flight activity was up 10% in Russia in the last quarter of 2017, with 4,730 departures in the final three months of the year. This is in line with general year-on-year growth across Europe, which saw a 6.2% rise in flights compared with Q4 2016. Russia handled mostly large jets in Q4 2017 (73.9% of all aircraft handled), again in line with overall growth in the large jet category in Europe. Vnukovo was the seventh-busiest business aviation airport in Europe last year, handling 2,590 departures in Q4 – a rise of 1.6% on Q4 2016.



Fasttailwind / Shutterstock.com

executive authorities of the Russian Federation and the FIFA Executive Committee,” says Leonid Sergeev, CEO of Basel Aero, which manages Sochi International Airport. “We’re currently developing additional general safety measures to address logistics issues. These matters relate to ensuring that the arrivals and departures of the football teams, service personnel and fans work with the existing flight schedule.”

NOTAMS

For the 11 different match locations, each airport will publish its own NOTAMs and procedures will be more stringent on matchdays, with time on the ground severely restricted and aircraft having to reposition to alternative airports for parking.

According to Mikhail Titov, vice president of RUBAA and founder of Bizav Systems, it is likely that the NOTAMs will be similar to those published for the Sochi Olympics. “For example, flight authorization will only be issued after the confirmation of an arrival slot at the airport, and parking at the airport of the city where World Cup matches are taking place will not be allowed for more than two hours, after which the aircraft must fly to another airport for parking,” he says. “We recommend coordinating with your local flight support agents to ensure applications for flight permits are completed correctly.”

The host airports during the events will require operators to apply for slots, and the deviation time from those slots will need to be adhered to – operators will be permitted a +/- 30-minute deviation for flights up to three hours and a +/- 45-minute deviation for flights exceeding three hours – but if they miss their slot, then they risk being grounded. “The airports will be very strict and there will be penalties, although nothing has been issued formally to say there will be a monetary value attached to it,” says Vamvakas.

Planning your trip

“The biggest advice we can give to those wishing to fly to Russia for the World Cup is to plan ahead,” explains Anna Kislova, customer relations at Vipport, which handles all

Above: **Ground transportation will be in high demand, so operators are advised to organize it well in advance**

“Flight authorization will only be issued after the confirmation of an arrival slot and parking will not be allowed for more than two hours”

Mikhail Titov, vice president,
Russian United Business
Aviation Association

business aviation operations at Vnukovo Airport. “Operators need to send their requests well in advance, and if we have any addition special information regarding permits, slots or security, we will be able to give this closer to the event.”

The timelines for permit applications differ depending on the size of the aircraft, number of seats, and the number of flights into the country within a month. For aircraft with fewer than 19 passenger seats or fewer than 10 people on board doing between one and four flights a month, the lead time is one business day; for aircraft with more than 19 passenger seats or with more than 10 people on board the flight doing between one and four flights a month it is three business days; and for those wishing to do more than four flights in a month, the lead time for permits is 14 business days. “This is especially important for operators that are going to be doing many flights transporting their passengers during the World Cup – they need to get their permit requests in at a minimum of 14 business days in advance,” Vamvakas says.

Operators, passengers and crew should also be aware of the visa requirements before coming to Russia. While it is possible to get a crew visa on arrival at Moscow Vnukovo, Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo airports, everywhere else requires you to have a visa in advance. Vamvakas explains, “If you choose to try to get it on arrival – and this only applies to crew – you must give notification to your ground handler in advance

Vnukovo FBO

Vipport has been the exclusive FBO at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow since 2004 and its Business-Aviation Centre Vnukovo-3 is considered to be the biggest and the busiest facility for general aviation in Russia and CIS countries. It consists of two VIP terminals (one domestic and one international),

parking areas, a modern apron and hangar complexes. Vipport will offer its full range of services during the 2018 World Cup: slot coordination; handling and supervision; refueling (Jet A1); crew hotel accommodation at special rates; crew and passenger transfer services; and crew visa support.



ffig / Shutterstock.com

and upon arrival you must have two passport-size photos, and it can take up to six hours to get. When you're dealing with a charter flight that has crew duty restrictions, that can take quite some time and create issues for the crew."

For passengers, there is an alternative to applying for a visa. "During the 2018 FIFA World Cup, foreign fans can enter Russia without a visa, instead using their identity documents and an electronic Fan ID, which is issued when the ticket for the match is bought," explains Aero Basel's Sergeev. "The Fan ID can be used by foreign fans for multiple arrivals and departures to and from Russia without a visa for the entire period, starting from 10 days before the date of the first match and ending 10 days after the date of the last match."

To gain a Fan ID, visitors can go to the official website and see if they meet the requirements. "In any event, we recommend getting your visa in advance because the Fan ID really depends on the events you're going to and there are lots of criteria to meet," advises Vamvakas.

Fuel for thought

It's important to note that the fuel in Russia is slightly different – airports supply TS-1 fuel rather than Jet A or A-1, which shouldn't be an issue for most modern aircraft, but it is best to check your manual, according to Vamvakas. RT fuel, an analog of Jet A, is available at some airports, but again it's best to check with the airport before you arrive. "For drop-offs and pick-ups, don't even consider trying to refuel because the amount of traffic and meeting your slots means there won't be enough time and it could create havoc," warns Vamvakas. "At other locations, it is always best to request in advance for a fuel release and to have a copy of that fuel release with you just in case there is an issue when the fuel truck arrives."

The advice from everyone is to plan ahead, and use the knowledge and expertise of local operators and trip support providers to ensure your trip goes smoothly. "We in Russia very much hope that we will get many guests and that they will be very happy with the quality of service they receive," concludes RUBAA's Serezhkina. ○

Above: **Christine Vamvakas**, operations communications manager, Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc

Guidance for operators

Christine Vamvakas, operations communications manager at Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc, shares her 10 tips for flying to Russia this summer

1. Firm up schedules now – submit requests for permits, airport slots, parking and hotels well in advance because some smaller locations have limited availability. The earlier you put in the request, the better chance you have of getting what you're looking for. Note that even though you submit your slot requests in advance, they won't be advised until 2-3 weeks before the opening ceremony.
2. Avoid changes to schedules – especially when it comes to airport slots. The more changes you have, the fewer options are available.
3. Be aware of cabotage – and apply for exceptions well in advance, although these are not guaranteed to be approved.
4. Always check the NOTAMS – it is imperative to read these closely as they have specific clauses for GA operators and may change at a moment's notice.
5. Be prepared for delays – heavy traffic will be operating, so there are likely to be many delays for operators.
6. Expect higher prices – as is the case with most major events, it is likely pricing for all services across the board will be increased.
7. Organize ground transportation in advance and be aware of limitations – ground transportation will be in high demand and the closer you get to the event, the fewer options there will be, so if a passenger has a specific requirement, you may need to book the entire day with a vehicle at a higher price because of the limited pool available.
8. Request inflight catering in advance – in certain locations, there is a 48-72-hour minimum lead time to get these requests in, especially if the passenger has strict requirements or is looking for something very specific that may not be readily available in the area they're traveling to.
9. Speak to your trip support provider – they will be able to give relevant advice about schedules and any concerns you may have.
10. Get your visas in advance – there are a lot of people applying for these, so the process may be slowed down just because of the number of requests being made.

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Europe's biggest business aviation event is taking place in Geneva in May. *Business Airport International* highlights the must-see conference sessions and exhibitions at EBACE 2018

Words | Hazel King

The main

400+ exhibitors

55+ aircraft on static display

What:
EBACE 2018

When:
May 29-30, 2018

Where:
Palexpo Convention Center,
Geneva, Switzerland

13,000 attendees



event

**100+
countries
represented**

**10+
education
sessions**

**430,000ft²
exhibitor
floor**

Five must-see conference sessions

1

Giving back – Business aviation in times of crisis

When: Monday, May 28, 3:30-4:00pm

Where: Innovation Zone

Introduction by: Eric Drosin, director communications, EBAA

Speakers: TBC

Business aviation is more than just personal and business travel. In times when our world faces challenges ranging from climate change to armed conflicts, it requires bold steps from individuals, communities and businesses to protect our people and planet. Many of these challenges are unpredictable and require rapid action. The business aviation community is already involved in a range of voluntary actions to help in situations like these. This Tedx-style session will highlight how business aviation provides hugely important support services in times of crisis.

2

Beyond limits – How millennials see the future of business aviation

When: Tuesday, May 29, 4:30-6:00pm

Where: Innovation Zone

Moderator: Andrea Gerosa, founder, ThinkYoung

Speakers: Paul Malicki, founder of Flapper, Others TBC

The development of innovative technologies and the digital revolution are impacting all aspects of mobility. Social attitudes are also changing regarding sustainability requirements, sharing opportunities and automated transportation. Business aviation is contributing to this technological development, constantly adapting to society's needs with pioneering solutions. In this session, we will look at the main views of millennials on the future of sustainable personal air transportation. We will listen to their views about the new ecosystem of mobility and the future of sustainable personal air transportation and will share insights from thought leaders in the business aviation industry.

Continued on page 77

Best in show

Sky Valet

Stand L35

Sky Valet is the FBO brand of the Aéroports de la Côte D'Azur group and offers a network of 22 FBOs located at the most iconic destinations in France, Spain and Portugal. The company had a record year in 2017, with over 40,000 business jets movements handled in Europe, and it is now a leading FBO network for those countries.

Thanks to Sky Valet's recent expansion, customers can now fly from Cannes to Paris, then Madrid, and finally Lisbon, and benefit from the same level of services. The company's integrated European network also provides additional benefits such as simplified operational, contractual and accounting processes. When visiting any of the Sky Valet locations, customers will benefit from harmonized and reliable operations, together with customized hospitality in state-of-the-art facilities.

The Sky Valet teams are all inspired by the same determination to provide aircraft owners, passengers and crews with outstanding and personalized services. To achieve this objective, they have been trained by some of the greatest professionals in the luxury industry. The company considers certification as key to ensuring excellence in safety and security, and Sky Valet Cannes and Sky Valet Lisbon are both leading the path for IS-BAH certification. The company is gradually adopting the IS-BAH label across the whole network.

Visitors to EBACE will be able to learn more about Sky Valet's services and the company's plans for further expansion and additional benefits for customers.



Stand T102

London City Airport

London City Airport's Private Jet Centre is the only private jet center situated within London itself, which means the passenger arrives closer to the key business districts. Just three miles from Canary Wharf and five miles from the City, speed and efficiency are appreciated by time-poor business travelers. Its proximity to Central London makes it the ideal gateway for visitors to London. The airport boasts 90-second departure and 90-second arrival times, and offers world-class customer service and facilities. It has recently added products from all the major manufacturers, namely the Global 6000, Falcon 8X, Gulfstream 280, Citation Latitude and Embraer 550.

The demonstrator Global 6000 for Bombardier proudly wears the badge

'Approved for London City Airport', and the company looks forward to adding the Gulfstream 650/600/500, the Challenger 350 and the Pilatus PC-24 to the list of approvals this year – all three manufactures have programs to obtain certification in place.

In terms of movements, London City Airport has a strategy in place to attract visitors to London to use LCY as their preferred gateway, and we expect in excess of 6,000 movements this year. NetJets has continued to be a very strong contributor to this number and the airport is also pleased to welcome the Private Jet Clubs Surf Air and JetSmarter. Visitors to EBACE will be able to learn more about the airport and watch videos from all the manufactures of aircraft visiting London City Airport.

Hayward Aviation

Stand G100

The team at Hayward Aviation are world leaders in business aviation insurance with 25 years' experience and clients in more than 70 countries. Emerging risks such as cyber and general data security and future infrastructural changes across Europe demand flexibility and creativity. Hayward's delivers a calm, competent and high-quality

service so that its clients can focus on serving their customers to the highest possible standards.

Hayward Aviation is a trading name of JLT Specialty. JLT is one of the world's leading providers of insurance, reinsurance and employee benefits-related advice, brokerage and associated services.

JLT owns offices in 40 territories and has more than 10,000 colleagues. Supported by the JLT International Network, the Group provides risk solutions to clients in more than 135 countries.

To find out about the challenges in the business aviation insurance sector in 2018 and beyond, visit us on Stand G100.



Luxaviation & ExecuJet

Stand N116

The Luxaviation Group will once again be exhibiting at this year's EBACE, together with ExecuJet, on its customary large stand with VIP meeting and conference rooms, plus kitchen facilities.

Luxaviation's commitment to providing exemplary service and ensuring customers get an outstanding business aviation experience is what makes the company stand out. With a fleet of more than 270 aircraft, 15 registered AOCs worldwide and a network of 26 FBOs, Luxaviation is one of the world's largest business aviation charter operators.

At this year's edition of EBACE, Luxaviation will be reflecting on the successes of 2017 and looking forward to this year and beyond. Last year was an exceptionally busy one for Luxaviation, with the operator registering more than 45,000 aircraft movements across its network of 26 FBOs, racking up a total flying distance of 14,000,000 nautical miles – the equivalent of circumnavigating the world 645 times. The operator hopes that 2018 will see those numbers increase.

For those wanting to indulge in a spot of culinary creativity, Luxaviation will be hosting live crêpe cookery sessions at its stand. Make sure you stop by to sample these treats and get an insight into how Luxaviation satisfies its customers.

Jeppesen

Stand C35

Jeppesen has launched Operator, a dynamic online business aviation platform that integrates key business aviation functionality in a one-stop-shop, self-service environment. On display at EBACE, the platform continues to evolve to meet the needs of market conditions. Multiple new features are being introduced in the near-term to further drive operational efficiency. This includes a new Personal Assistant app, which works with Operator to provide essential flight information in a quick reference format, and real-time communications between pilots and operations personnel. Using Personal Assistant, pilots are able to access essential information at a glance, including: assigned flights, aircraft type, destination, duration, departure/arrival times, number of segments, a quick-glance checklist trip status, crew and passenger information, their flight plan, scheduled trip-planning services, METAR/TAF information, trip summary details and more. Personal Assistant is



fully integrated with Operator and will automatically display flight information, once trip data is entered into the system.

Operator integrates flight planning; weight and balance; crew scheduling and management; aircraft scheduling; domestic and international trip planning and reporting (financial, maintenance and custom); customer account management; real-time pricing; and cost accounting capabilities, into a single, united user platform.

Taking a relationship with BoldIQ to the next level, Jeppesen will introduce an optional module to optimize allocation of business aviation resources. The Solver engine will enable users to automatically resolve operational conflicts in seconds and make resource suggestions based on dozens of potential contributing and limiting factors. Jeppesen will be highlighting the power of integration during EBACE, featuring Operator and its new functionality.

Continued from page 75

3

Brexit – the final countdown... less than a year to go

When: Tuesday, May 29, 4:00-5:00pm

Moderator: Giulia Mauri, partner, Pierstone

Panelists: Mark Bisset, partner, Clyde & Co; Matthieu de Varax, founder and partner, ODISE; Marc Bailey, CEO, BBGA; Alex Werner, Netjets Transportes Aéreos SA

EBAA, in partnership with the EBAA national associations and Clyde & Co, published a Brexit analysis report. The report analyzes the current relationship between the EU and the UK, before presenting six scenarios for the future. It maps out the key topics of interest for the business aviation industry – traffic rights, ownership and control, VAT/customs duty and the future relationship with the European Aviation Safety Agency – analyzing how these topics would fare under future scenarios. The session will address the latest Brexit negotiation developments and will be an opportunity for business aviation stakeholders to raise their concerns and exchange their views of those various scenarios.

4

More Mojo – Social media and mobile journalism for BizAv

When: Wednesday, May 30, 8:30-10:00am

Where: Room X

Moderator: Eric Drosin, director communications, EBAA; and Taunya Renson-Martin, strategic comms advisor, EBAA #ExpandingHorizons is a new milestone in communicating business aviation. This session will look at the results of our internal social media audit across key markets and will share relevant insights on how to boost our communication efforts. At the same time, we will look at our groundbreaking #Expanding Horizons EBACE mobile journalism newsroom and what BizAv communicators can learn from the latest MoJo trends.

5

Beyond limits – what a career in business aviation could look like

When: Thursday, May 31, 10:00am-1:00pm

Where: Room Q

Moderator: EBAA and Bursan-Marsteller

Speakers: Andrea Gerosa, founder, ThinkYoung. Others TBC We're asking students, "Do you want to work in a pioneering, innovative and diverse industry? Business aviation offers a career path you might not have thought about just yet." The development of innovative technologies and the digital revolution are impacting all aspects of mobility, and business aviation is contributing to this technological development with pioneering solutions. This session will introduce the diverse job opportunities in our industry and will share insights by industry representatives on the future of sustainable personal air transportation and what millennials think about it.

Information correct at time of going to press.



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RUAG Aviation

Stand R115

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RUAG's passion for aircraft and its reliable one-stop-shop services extend beyond business jets to include helicopters as well. RUAG supports its customers' helicopter requirements with highly trained and experienced specialists providing comprehensive MRO services and an extensive array of state-of-the-art solutions for complex



system upgrades, advanced avionics, and airframe and component MRO.

RUAG's engineering team guarantees direct Design Organization Approval (DOA) and EASA Part 145, 21G and 21J compliance, as well as FAA repair station status, ensuring accuracy for all design, development, modifications, upgrades and repairs.

RUAG is an authorized service center for OEMs of renown, such as Airbus Helicopters, Bell, Bombardier, Cirrus, Diamond, Dassault Aviation, Embraer, Leonardo, Piaggio, Sikorsky, Textron Aviation, and Piper. It is also a service center for 328 Support Services, Viking and MD Helicopters, and is certified for approvals for the Gulfstream G550.



Avfuel

Stand E89

Avfuel looks forward to connecting with international customers and prospects at EBACE 2018. This year's attendees can visit with representatives from Avfuel's sales and marketing departments, along with Avfuel-branded co-exhibitors Air Service Basel, Avflight, Banyan Air Service, Castle & Cooke Aviation, Duncan Aviation, Fargo Jet Center and Premier Jet Center, Sheltair and SouthAir Iceland. Avfuel and Duncan Aviation will host EBACE guests at their annual cocktail event from 4:00-6:00pm on Wednesday, May 30, on Stand E89.

Having entered 2018 on an upward trajectory by adding 241 contract fuel locations and finalizing two European branding partnerships in 2017, along with signing on ARGOS VIP in Rome and Milan, Italy, to its branded network earlier this year, Avfuel's team looks forward to fostering relationships old and new at EBACE to bolster its international presence.

South Air Iceland

Stand E89

South Air Iceland has been an exhibitor at EBACE since 2001, so this will be the company's 18th event. The company is attending first and foremost to meet old friends and all its customers, but of course it hopes to make some new friends too.

South Air will be introducing its company and the services it offers in Iceland, and will be on hand to explain why people should make their tech stops at one of its locations. The company is currently operating from Keflavík International Airport, Akureyri Airport and Egilsstaðir Airport, and offers fantastic fuel prices through its AvFuel partners.

Staff from South Air will be on hand

throughout EBACE to answer questions about Iceland. Iceland is a hot spot for travel these days and South Air recommends that when crossing the Atlantic, passengers should stop for at least a day or two to enjoy the hospitality and unspoiled nature.

Last but not least, South Air will continue its tradition of offering visitors a shot of Iceland's finest beverage – Brennivín, or Black Death as its sometimes called! This unique schnapps is best served ice cold and goes well with the fermented shark Icelanders like to eat during the winter! Out of respect for everyone attending EBACE, South Air will not be bringing the shark – let's just say it has an acquired aroma.



Careers in Business Aviation Day

When: Thursday, May 31, 10:00am-1:00pm

EBAA will be hosting its Careers in Business Aviation Day during this year's event, which provides high school and university students with an opportunity to learn about the business aviation industry. It includes a day of student-focused speakers and the chance to explore aircraft and exhibits first-hand. A tour of the static display will take place between 12:00pm and 1:00pm.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. will showcase the latest in aircraft innovation at the upcoming 2018 EBACE in Geneva. Among the aircraft planned for the company's static display are the all-new Gulfstream G500 and the company flagship Gulfstream G650ER.

The all-new G500 will visit Geneva during the final days of a 12-country world tour that began in January. The G500 comes to EBACE with an increased range over its originally announced capabilities, range the aircraft has demonstrated time and again for customers during its flight test program. The aircraft can fly 5,200 nautical miles at its long-range cruise speed of Mach 0.85; at its high-speed cruise of Mach 0.90, the G500 has 4,400nm of range.

Inside, the G500 features a cabin that enables travelers to make the most of every moment on board, whether they are working, dining or sleeping. The G500 interior features 100% fresh air infused every two minutes, the lowest cabin altitude in its class, industry-leading cabin sound levels and 14 26in-wide signature Gulfstream windows, all complemented by the work of Gulfstream's award-winning interior design team. The G500's Symmetry Flight Deck features the

Stand
T139; Static
display
stand 28



industry's first active control sidesticks and the most extensive use of touchscreens in a civilian flight deck – setting a new standard for advanced aircraft innovation.

Gulfstream's flagship, the G650ER, can circle the world easily in one stop and has done so with record-setting speed. The interior can be configured into four separate, transitional living spaces that include a private stateroom, a large conference and dining space, and an entertainment or presentation suite. Wide seats and a generous aisle are benefits of the G650ER, along with 16 of Gulfstream's large, panoramic windows.

Valcora

Stand H99

Valcora is a fast-growing fuel supplier based in Geneva, Switzerland, with offices in Dublin, Singapore, and soon to open in Canada. The company supplies fuel worldwide and has built a large network in a very short space of time – Valcora was founded in July 2016 by Daniel Coetzer and Valerie Bouthiaux.

Valcora developed its own fuel system, whereby customers can log in and book fuel online. Using their previous industry experience, both founders developed the Valcora fuel system specifically for business aviation. It automatically calculates and applies taxes as applicable to the customer's operations and process orders.

The Valcora fuel card is popular both in Europe and elsewhere and customers can pay for fuel and services at a variety of locations. Valcora is the preferred supplier for the Luxaviation fleet worldwide and provides a reliable service at a very competitive price, 24/7.

Valcora's tax department ensures taxes are charged correctly and, where appropriate, VAT exemptions applied. The company ensures it supplies correct invoices with all fees and taxes shown as line items, so that customers can see exactly what they are paying for.

Valcora staff will be on hand throughout EBACE 2018 to discuss all your fuel needs.

International Aircraft Transactions Seminar

When: Monday, May 28, 8:00am-5:00pm
The seminar brings together leading experts on topics including aircraft financing, emerging European tax issues, the current status of the business aircraft market and more.

Business Airport International

Stand J95

Your visit to EBACE 2018 wouldn't be complete without a trip to the *Business Airport International* stand! Representatives from the magazine, alongside colleagues from *Business Jet Interiors International*, will be on hand throughout the show to talk about the latest news and trends in the business aviation industry, and discuss opportunities for you to work with the magazine. Both titles are published by UKi Media & Events, a global publishing company based in Dorking, UK.



Jetcraft

Static
display
stand SD21



As a global leader in business aircraft sales and acquisitions, Jetcraft will be exhibiting one of the largest non-OEM static displays at this year's EBACE on Stand SD21. The company will once again be showcasing a selection of large cabin aircraft from its extensive inventory, so visit its stand to step on board the latest desirable jets and business liners by Gulfstream, Bombardier, Dassault and more.

Jetcraft draws on both its annual market forecast and data gleaned from its worldwide offices to provide crucial insight into the industry in each region. For the latest on European business aviation, and a taste of the high life, the Jetcraft stand is a must-visit.



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- Conference rooms for on-site meetings
- Transfer to the Alps ski resorts (limousines, luxury 4WD, helicopter)
- Comfortable, fully equipped lounges
- Catering services
- Interior and exterior aircraft cleaning services
- Liaison with Fuel Supplier (A1 Jet fuel)
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All in one

Jeppesen has consolidated several business aviation apps to increase operational efficiency for pilots, FBOs, crew and passengers

At NBAA 2016, Jeppesen and BoldIQ launched Operator, a dynamic online business aviation platform that integrates key business aviation functionality in a one-stop-shop, self-service environment. As the number of business aviation operators using this tool has increased, so has understanding of what features and functionality are needed in real-world use. The result of this interactive process with its customers has led Jeppesen to develop several key solution enhancements that will benefit business aviation operators around the globe.

So, what's new? Jeppesen is working to incorporate multiple new features in the near term to further drive operational efficiency. This includes a new Personal Assistant app, which works with Operator to provide essential flight information in a quick reference format, and real-time communications between pilots and operations personnel.

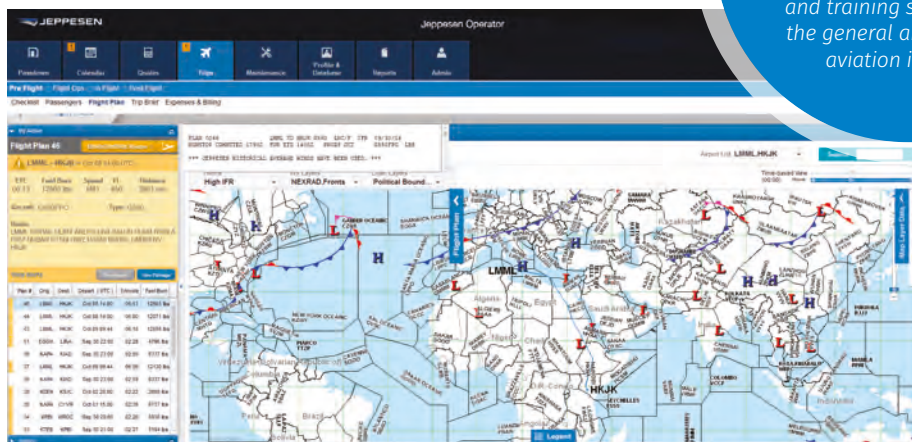
Using Personal Assistant, pilots are able to access essential information at a glance, including assigned flights, aircraft type, destination, duration, departure/arrival times, number of segments, a quick-glance checklist trip status, crew and passenger information, their flight plan, scheduled trip planning services, METAR/TAF (weather) information, trip summary details, and more. Personal Assistant is fully integrated with Operator and will automatically display flight information, once trip data is entered into the system.

Additional functions

From the time of its launch, Operator has integrated flight planning; weight and balance; crew scheduling and management; aircraft scheduling; domestic and international trip planning and reporting (financial, maintenance and custom); customer account management; real-time pricing; and cost accounting capabilities. In teaming with BoldIQ, Operator combines Jeppesen's 40 years of experience with flight planning and international trip planning with BoldIQ's 10+ years of aviation on-demand flight operations

Vital statistics

Location: 50 offices around the world
Parent company: Boeing
Services: Navigation, planning and training solutions for the general and business aviation industry



and optimization experience, into a single, united user platform.

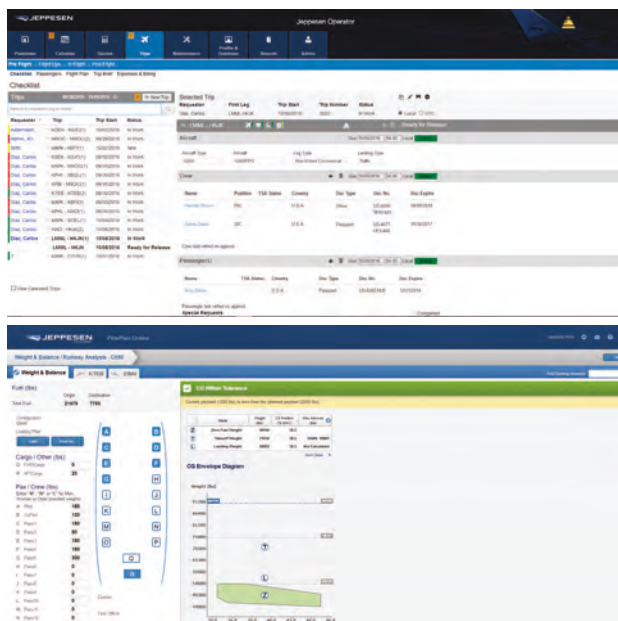
Jeppesen will introduce an optional module to optimize allocation of valuable business aviation resources.

The powerful Solver engine will enable users to automatically resolve operational conflicts in seconds and make resource suggestions based on dozens of potential contributing and limiting factors.

This Solver engine will be offered as an integrated component of Operator, and is also available in a standalone version that can be used with an existing fleet scheduling platform.

Above: **The Operator Flight Plan System is one of the most comprehensive in the industry**

Below: **Operator's features include flight planning and customer account management**



Jeppesen Operator continues to enhance business aviation operations through improved data sharing, simplified access and usability, and increased resource utilization, all backed by proven technology. When using the Concierge database service in association with Operator, a customer has the option to connect with Jeppesen's international trip planning global experts for assistance with traditional trip planning tasks such as managing flight plans, permits and handling arrangements, or to establish a line of credit, to eliminate operational financial concerns that could jeopardize a planned flight. Airport, FBO and vendor data for Operator systems is generated by the Jeppesen Aviation Database.

Pulling together these business aviation elements also requires the need for ensuring compliance with regulatory and business policies and procedures. Operator uses multiple rules engines, including those unique to a customer's operations, to satisfy this need.

Jeppesen Operator is gaining momentum as the go-to tool for the integration of essential resources. The addition of the Personal Assistant app and the availability of the Solver engine illustrate the ongoing advancement of solution technology to meet current needs and anticipate what's to come in the global business aviation landscape. ○



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Reader Inquiry Number 101

Swiss service

Passengers looking to enjoy everything Switzerland has to offer should look no further than **Sion Airport** for quick and efficient entry into the country

Sion Airport in Switzerland offers many advantages to both business and leisure travelers. Time is the most important commodity for passengers and flying to and from Sion can offer huge time savings.

Geneva Airport operates almost at capacity; currently, there are no flight slots available and business jet traffic has saturated the airport. Consequently, passengers departing on private, charter or scheduled flights must allow more time just to clear security at the airport, in addition to time spent in the departure lounge, at the gate, and on the aircraft while taxiing to the runway. For many travelers, this has become frustrating and unacceptable.

At Sion Airport, outbound passengers can save valuable time on their journey in several ways. Parking and vehicle drop-off areas are immediately outside the airport; check-in desks and passport control are located in the main terminal, just a short distance from an aircraft waiting on the apron; and the short taxi distance means departing passengers are airborne very quickly.

Inbound leisure passengers can be on the ski slopes of Verbier less than one hour after landing. Business travelers are just 45-60 minutes from the headquarters of various multinational organizations based in Montreux, Vevey and Lausanne. Sion's private jet clients enjoy hangar facilities and VIP handling. All these conveniences create the efficient, personal and friendly service that Sion Airport is renowned for.



It's often assumed that a smaller airport such as Sion lacks the services or facilities of a large airport. On the contrary, the airport is able to use its size as an advantage to passengers. It's small and flexible, which enables it to be entirely service-oriented and offer a highly personalized experience. This is evident in the loyalty of the airport's business aviation users, many of whom have used it for years.

Developments

Business aviation has been a focus for development in recent years. The Valais region is home to many of the best

Above: **Sion Airport provides quick access to the beautiful Valais mountain resorts**

Below left: **Passengers only have to walk a short distance from the aircraft to the terminal**

mountain resorts in Europe, all of which are popular with wealthy property owners and travelers. This has fueled demand for private jet facilities and Sion has responded with dedicated hangars and tarmac for private and business aviation. Additionally, the airport has created a private customs and immigration facility to offer passengers maximum privacy as they arrive and depart from Sion.

Business aviation continues to be a top priority at Sion Airport and the company is looking forward to building relationships with new partners in the future. A further focus is to take advantage of the airport's unique location. The appetite for year-round activity holidays is growing across Europe, particularly in the UK. Sion Airport offers very short transfer times to some of the best winter and summer mountain destinations in Europe.

Last winter season, Sion Airport once again welcomed Swiss International Air Lines for more test flights. This new collaboration could open up several routes for the future into the Valais. ○

SION AIRPORT

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Northern charm

XLR Executive Jet Centres further strengthens its FBO offering with a new facility at Liverpool John Lennon Airport

March has seen another exciting development in the XLR Executive Jet Centres success story with the opening of a brand-new, state-of-the-art FBO facility at Liverpool John Lennon Airport in the UK. This follows the company's opening last year of its Birmingham FBO and hangar. Both of these facilities put XLR Executive Jet Centres firmly on the FBO map, and XLR hopes to announce further developments at other airports throughout 2018.

Having already developed a strong and successful FBO base at Exeter Airport in the southwest of England, XLR is proving to be more than a match for the big FBO providers – offering a unique and sophisticated service based upon excellence in customer service.

Customers using the XLR FBO facility at Liverpool John Lennon Airport are guaranteed a whole new experience – with the highest levels of customer service being offered in a beautifully designed and spacious facility, customers will not be disappointed. Conveniently located to the east of the passenger terminal with easy access from public roads, the FBO offers a purpose-built terminal and car parking in a secure and controlled environment.

The airport is also located close to key northwest transportation routes such as the M57, M62 and M56, and is not far from the A1, M6 or M1, which enables passengers in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, the Midlands and the Northeast to use the facility. The recent opening of the Mersey Gateway toll bridge has greatly improved access to the airport from Cheshire and North Wales, and XLR Liverpool is easily accessible to all parts of Manchester.

The FBO facility offers dedicated passenger and crew lounges, as well as a crew rest/sleep area with complimentary refreshments and beverages, plus dedicated apron parking. XLR's stands are very close to the FBO and access to airside is available through the adjacent security point. As with XLR's other FBOs, the team are fully competent in providing weather and operational briefings to pilots and local information to aid their clients. It



can also provide negotiated rates for both catering, chauffeur-driven cars, refueling and corporate hotels.

XLR's executive aviation manager, Steve Barker, said, "This is an exciting episode in the development of XLR and I am so proud to be part of its future. Our decision to establish a base in Liverpool came following detailed research of the opportunities and demands of this sector. We've seen the corporate aviation sector growth at the airport and decided the time was right as part of our expansion plan to create a new FBO center. Our aim is to position XLR's FBO at Liverpool John Lennon Airport as the FBO of choice for

Top: **XLR's new FBO is part of Liverpool Airport's efforts to upgrade its private travel experience**

Left: **The facility offers chauffeur-driven cars**

Right: **The Liverpool jet center's private entrance and passenger lounge**

those wishing to use northwest England as their gateway to the UK."

Chris Beer, director of XLR Executive Jet Centres, added, "We are delighted to announce another exciting chapter in the XLR brand. We knew from the outset that the proposal to establish an FBO at Liverpool John Lennon Airport with a dedicated corporate aircraft base was the right decision. It provides a gateway to the Northwest of England, making it an ideal location for so many corporate users. Its future is very bright."

XLR Executive Jet Centres is the corporate aviation brand of Regional & City Airports, which is part of the Rigby Group owned by business entrepreneur Sir Peter Rigby. ○

Vital statistics

Location: Liverpool, UK

Owner: Rigby Group

Services: Dedicated passenger lounge, crew rest facilities, a conference center and a private parking area for business jets

Runway length: 7,496ft

XLR EXECUTIVE JET CENTRES

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Reader Inquiry Number 103



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Network power

Faced with an increasing number of FBOs – of varying standards – the canny customer is turning to networks such as **ExecuJet** for consistently good service and adherence to global safety regulations



Fixed-based operators, commonly known as FBOs, have changed almost beyond recognition from the trailers and lean-tos that populated airports 20 years ago. Much more common today are beautiful passenger and pilot lounges and extensive high-end facilities such as ground support, refuelling and de-icing, fuel storage, hangars and aircraft repairs.

Levels of quality and service vary widely, however, and the number of FBOs in the market is growing, with the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) putting the number in the USA alone at more than 3,500. How, then, can pilots, crews and passengers choose which FBO to use?

Though the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the USA and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) both regulate some activities that fall under the remit of the FBO, often it is down to the FBO to ensure all of its services are operating to high safety standards. This means extra legwork for the user, as each independent FBO may have a different set of rules for what constitutes best practice.

Joining forces

Network FBOs make choosing a well-equipped, first-class facility straightforward. Networks such as ExecuJet – a global service – and The Paragon Network in the USA have been created to give customers standardized services wherever they are traveling, under one recognizable brand.



In addition, with the advent of IS-BAH, the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling, airspace users can be assured that participating FBOs are held to the highest global safety standards. Regulatory programs such as IS-BAH and Safety 1st by NATA are implemented more efficiently by network FBOs, which maintain consistency across the board.

All ExecuJet FBOs, for instance, meet NATA Safety 1st standards, and many hold IS-BAH accreditation. This gives customers valuable indications of the level of service they can expect at any branded FBO.

Keeping competitive

These larger networks also have the capacity to lead the industry in implementing programs such as IS-BAH. In 2017, ExecuJet's FBOs in Berlin, Zurich and Lanseria, South Africa, were the first in their respective territories to achieve IS-BAH Stage-II accreditation, paving the way for other facilities to follow suit.

For FBOs themselves, joining a network may be the only way to remain competitive in a saturated market – or, indeed, to survive. An airport will often push an on-site independent FBO to invest in new line services and facilities when its lease is up for renewal, with pressure filtering down from municipal governments that see FBOs as gateways

Above left: **ExecuJet connects passengers to destinations around the globe**

Above right: **Its Zurich FBO offers ground handling and concierge services**

Below: **Ettore Poggi, group FBO director at ExecuJet**

to economic investment. The increased costs then fall on customers, who start seeing services that previously would have been included in the handling or fuel costs being charged separately.

As a result, many independent FBOs close or look to join an established FBO network, passing along to their customers the improved efficiency and cost benefits that accompany such a move. This also means that when issues arise, an FBO has the power of a network behind it, ensuring swift and total recovery.

Globally connected

Last year was one of significant environmental events, with a resulting impact on FBOs in the affected areas. ExecuJet's FBO in St Maarten, for instance, suffered severe damage during Hurricane Irma, yet relief aircraft were immediately dispatched from elsewhere in the company's network, bringing supplies and aid to those in need. By the end of the year, ExecuJet announced the full reconstruction of the FBO, demonstrating the efficiency, benefits and capability that comes with having a global network. ○



Vital statistics

Established: 1991
Locations: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East
Services: Private jet charter on 160 managed aircraft, maintenance, 26 FBOs worldwide. Part of the Luxaviation Group

EXECUJET

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Touch of excellence

Travelers looking for a superior service and keen to experience everything the Nordic region has to offer should consider using **Finavia Business Flight Center at Helsinki Airport**

Finavia Business Flight Center (BFC) at Helsinki Airport does not consider itself to be just an FBO. Instead, BFC sees itself as a valuable business partner to its clients along the Nordic circle route, something it strives to achieve in its everyday operations.

To succeed in this mission, BFC relies on six factors: its unbeatable geographical location, 24-hour opening, a general aviation terminal in a peaceful location, an extensive range of scheduled flight destinations, airport operational reliability, and low air traffic fees.

Trained to excel in all four seasons – in the endless sunshine of spring and summer, in the wet and dark of autumn and in freezing, snowy winters – staff at BFC guarantee safe and reliable operations at Helsinki Airport around the clock, 365 days a year. As proof of operational excellence, BFC says the airport has closed to flights only once in its history. This rare event happened 15 years ago during adverse weather and lasted for just 15 minutes. Closure has since been avoided thanks to the airport's world-class winter operations procedures, known as 'snow-how'.

VIP service

Offering 130 non-stop destinations, Helsinki Airport is one of the best connected long-haul airports in Northern Europe. Its location along with competitive costs and 24-hour opening makes well-connected Helsinki Airport an excellent location for technical stops and crew changes. Dozens of regular visitors can testify to BFC's claims



to be an unbeatable business partner in the Nordic region.

Finavia BFC is always involved in special events and plays a crucial part in high-profile state visits and other VIP flights. Among its more unusual VIP clients are two giant pandas that arrived in Helsinki in January 2018. BFC had an important role in arranging a special media event and the arrival ceremony, which was held in the airport's VIP President Terminal. This terminal is available to rent. Suitable for up to 100 passengers, it has exclusive meeting

Above: **Finavia BFC offers a place to both relax and do business**

Below: **Stringent winter procedures mean cancellations are almost unheard of**

rooms and a welcoming festive lobby. VIP transfers between flights and jets are also available. Passengers carrying only hand luggage can enjoy a seamless travel experience, connecting from a scheduled flight to a private jet in just 15 minutes.

Airport fees at Helsinki Airport, operated by Finavia, are among the lowest for a European hub-airport. That means guaranteed operational cost efficiency to its customers. Despite already competitive pricing, BFC is able to add extra value to each service and is known for great customer experiences, as well as delivering a 'home away from home' feeling.

Finland is a tourism hotspot, especially Lapland – known for the purest air in the world, mesmerizing wilderness and Santa Claus, of course. The country ranks also as one of the safest in the world, and BFC understands what security, confidentiality and safety mean in business aviation. ○

FINAVIA BUSINESS FLIGHT CENTER

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Reader Inquiry Number 105



The future is bright

Helmut Gross, CEO and founder of **MTS Aviation**, considers the stability of the business aviation sector and what 2018 holds for the Malmö Airport-based FBO

Vital statistics

Airports: Malmö Airport, Sweden

Founded: 2007

Services: Complete ground-handling capability, cargo storage ramp access, florist arrangements



The changes in Scandinavian general aviation business ownership – particularly in Sweden – have had considerable impact on the region’s FBO operations. Private aviation has undergone a structural reorganization with the help of reliable and well-established businesses and companies.

Some companies haven’t achieved success due to a lack of control within the core of their business and having a remote, number-focused approach to management that can result in lost opportunities. Successful business comes from having competitive ideas,

stable finances and good customer flow from the very beginning. This belief is based on the decades of business aviation and FBO experience of MTS Aviation’s CEO and founder, Helmut Gross. The FBO, based at Sweden’s Malmö Airport, has catered to thousands of international and domestic customers.

Despite the turbulent times within the general aviation industry recently, MTS Aviation’s FBO operations have achieved growth in recent years thanks to unique circumstances such as Malmö’s proximity to Copenhagen Airport, the remote Roskilde Airport in Denmark, and the

fast connection between Sweden and Denmark via a bridge, making it possible for clients to serve their customers in two countries on the same day.

Such destinations provide customers with the opportunity to use the Malmö Airport facility, which strives to create the best service experience possible.

Joining the alliance

Looking to the future, there is set to be some interesting cooperation between FBOs in Scandinavia in 2018, and the IS-BAH certification of MTS Aviation’s FBO will be a step toward this alliance.

The FBO hopes to establish an aircraft operator at its facility this year. With Malmö placed in the very south of Sweden, it is popular with customers starting their journeys to destinations in central and southern Europe, Russia, the USA and Africa, avoiding the connecting flights in favor of a private experience.

So 2018 will be another year with enormous challenges, especially considering that business aviation aircraft have the ability to fly to three times more airport destinations than commercial airlines do. ○

Above: **The Malmö hub offers services including passenger transportation and maintenance facilities**

Left: **The MTS Aviation crew celebrates the 2,000th landing with the Dassault Falcon test flight team**



MTS AVIATION

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Reader Inquiry Number 106

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Mototok's remote-controlled tugs simplify hangar operations and guarantee precise movement of aircraft

Traditionally, a diesel tractor with a towbar was used to move aircraft or helicopters in hangars. Then came the first electric vehicle with an attached towbar. In the 1970s, the first towbar-less tug was introduced, followed by the first remote-controlled electric tractors, which were very compact and extremely agile, with a capacity to move up to 75 tons.

The electric motors in these vehicles are controlled numerically and allow for fully parameterized accelerations and decelerations, which enable movements to centimeter accuracy. Depending on the weight, speed and turning radius, the machine's calculator also protects against the dangers of oversteering (which can damage the front landing gear leg) and even corrects overtorque mistakes – an incident feared by handlers.

Another problem often encountered when moving airplanes in hangars is collisions or scratching. With the radio remote-controlled tug, the operator moves around the aircraft and is able to get a better view of the whole aircraft – wings and all. The joystick on the Mototok tug is very sensitive and enables the operator to move the aircraft with great precision.

Braking is also powerful and the wheels of aircraft or helicopters are secured with hydraulics, making it impossible for the landing gear to escape from the tug's chassis.

Previously, moving aircraft in and out of the hangar required multiple operators, but with the Mototok radio remote-controlled tug, this is no longer the case – the process becomes a fool-proof, one-person operation. ○



MOTOTOK

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **107**

Above: **The Mototok tug makes moving aircraft like the Gulfstream G5 quick and easy**

DC Aviation Malta celebrates its 10th anniversary with upgrades to facilities and services

DC Aviation Malta, a subsidiary of DC Aviation GmbH, will be marking the 10th anniversary of its FBO in Malta in May 2018. The company has already started to roll out some upgrades with the advent of the new year. It has added a third Mercedes Vito to its executive fleet of cars and now has a completely refurbished dispatch and crew/passenger lounge in the departures hall at Malta International Airport, doubling its footprint and offering comfortable seating, a free and fast internet connection, and refreshments. DC Aviation Malta continues to be the only dedicated business aviation handling company with a proper crew dispatch and lounge in the departures hall.

DC Aviation is also now offering its customers the use of two customer offices and a conference room in the departures hall, and a state-of-the-art crew and passenger



Above: **Passengers can relax in the new departure lounge at Malta International Airport**

lounge has also been completed on the ramp exclusively for its customers, complete with snooze room and all expected facilities.

Business aviation has continued to grow in Malta at an exponential rate and this is expected to continue in 2018. DC Aviation's managing

director, Stanley Bugeja, says more services and facilities will be rolled out in 2018 to coincide with the company's anniversary in May.

DC now has its own Maltese air operator certificate and is operating an Airbus 318, and will shortly operate a Dassault Falcon 7X.

"Malta might be a small island, but it continues to punch above its weight in the business aviation arena. DC Aviation is committed to continue to be at the forefront of the industry in Europe – but most certainly in Malta," adds Bugeja.

DC Aviation is a founding member of the Malta Business Aviation Association and Bugeja sits on the board of governors of the European Business Aviation Association. ○

DC AVIATION MALTA

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Reader Inquiry Number **108**

Bangor International Airport is celebrating 50 years of service

In 1968, the city of Bangor, Maine, purchased Dow Air Force Base and created what is today known as Bangor International Airport (BGR). But long before 1968, Bangor and its strategic location had a place in the developing aviation industry.

August 19, 1923 was one of Bangor's first important aviation dates – on that day General William ('Billy') Mitchell brought what was essentially the entire US Air Force to Bangor and landed and took off from what was then little more than a hayfield. While not known as the Air Force back then, the 29 aircraft (19 bombers and 11 fighters) comprised the entire military air fleet at the time.

General Mitchell has been called by many the father of the US Air Force. He was also somewhat prescient when he predicted during a speech to the Bangor Rotary that Bangor "is a natural air center, and is ideally suited as an airdrome".

While there were other aircraft reported to have taken off or landed in Bangor, General Mitchell's air group is the first known to land and take off, thus marking the beginning of a long and robust role for Bangor in aviation history.

In time, that hayfield, owned by TW Morse and FA Rick and then Edward Godfrey, became known by many names – Godfrey Field, Bangor Airport, Bangor Municipal Airport, Dow Field, Dow Air Force Base, and finally Bangor International Airport.

By 1931, commercial aviation in the USA began to flourish and Bangor was not overlooked. An airline that began as the Boston-Maine Airways and was then purchased by National Airways (and was famously promoted by Amelia Earhart in Bangor in 1933) became Northeast Airlines in 1940.

Today, passengers can fly to many places, all over the world, with

Right: An aerial image of the original airfield at Bangor International



just one stop since American, Delta and United operate to major connecting hubs. BGR is also well known as a trans-Atlantic tech stop for many of the world's major airlines, as well as military and business aircraft.

So while the airfield may be about 100 years old, Bangor International Airport is celebrating 50 years of providing air service since its launch on July 1, 1968. ○



BANGOR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **109**

Skylink Services provides superior ground handling and VIP passenger services in Cyprus

Skylink Services is the only provider of ground-handling services for executive aviation aircraft in Cyprus. The company began operations in 1998, filling the gap in the executive aircraft ground-handling market at Larnaca and Paphos, Cyprus's international airports.

Skylink Services now owns and operates the only FBO facility at Larnaca International Airport, offering professional VIP aircraft and passenger handling services. Officially opening its doors in June 2010, this 1,600m² (17,000ft²) facility is unique in Cyprus. The company offers 24-hour services, and is dedicated to providing a stress-free experience for both passengers and crew.

Currently representing more than 400 international companies worldwide that either own or operate executive aircraft, the company caters for aircraft ranging



Above: Skylink Services' lounge at Larnaca International Airport

from very light jets to large aircraft, including the Boeing 747 and Airbus 340.

Skylink Services also manages and operates the new Heads of State lounge facility at Larnaca International Airport. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus granted Skylink Services sole responsibility for the building,

management and operation of this new facility, due to the company's high standards and quality services. This lounge is used by all heads of state, as well as other dignitaries visiting the Republic. For example, on June 6, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI completed a historic official visit to Cyprus, departing through the lounge.



During these high-profile events, Skylink Services ensures that the increased traffic created by visiting delegates and heads of state is handled smoothly. Passengers and crew are always escorted through the terminal with convenience and efficiency.

Skylink Services also operates at Paphos International Airport, providing all services linked to the company aside from an FBO. ○

SKYLINK SERVICES LTD

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Reader Inquiry Number **110**

Business Airport

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BUSINESS AIRPORT INTERNATIONAL EXAMINES THE REACTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE REMOVAL OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PRIVATIZATION FROM THE US HOUSE FAA BILL



On February 27, 2018, Bill Shuster, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman, announced he would set aside his proposal for removing air traffic control (ATC) from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The general aviation industry has been fiercely fighting against the privatization plans, with the NBAA and other organizations encouraging all members of the general aviation community to urge their government representative to vote 'no' to the bill.

In a statement following the decision, the NBAA said, "We are profoundly grateful for everyone who has made their voice heard on this critical issue, including NBAA's members

and the entire general aviation community, as well as a chorus of opposition from a diverse, informed and united coalition.

"The many members of Congress who carefully considered this issue, listened to concerns from their constituents, and ultimately stood with the general aviation community, should also be applauded.

"The general aviation community came together like never before, and clearly told Congress that handing over our nation's ATC system to an airline-dominated board is a risk we simply cannot take. Everyone should be proud of this significant effort."

Business Airport International took to social media to find out what those in the industry think and if they agree with the decision. ○

Your social media posts

Steven Lofgren, first officer, A-320, United Airlines, in response to an article about the inspector general's report saying FAA has bungled a US\$36bn project, wrote on LinkedIn: "This is exactly why ATC privatization was needed. Unfortunately, entrenched general aviation special interests were successful in defeating the effort, in order to maintain the status quo. Billions of taxpayer dollars blown with no accountability. Hopefully, this IG report will be the basis of a renewed effort to separate ATC from the bungling bureaucrats at the FAA."

Greg Kinsella, vice president – sales and acquisitions at Hagerty Jet Group, posted on LinkedIn: "The right decision was made [...] by not continuing with the proposed airline controlled privation of ATC. The airlines need to start using the technology that already exists in which the government has invested and business/general aviation uses every day to deliver a superior product."

Richard McSpadden, executive director, Air Safety Institute, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, wrote on LinkedIn: "Great news! Congressman Bill Shuster pulled the misnamed 'ATC privatization' provision from the FAA Reauthorization Bill. Congratulations to all in the GA community who banded together to push back this misguided plan."

Nicholas Sabo, AAE, Airport Management, posted on LinkedIn: "A prudent decision to back away from the unjustified privatization of ATC. Now let's focus on a long-term FAA Reauthorization Bill with increased AIP spending and higher PFC limits to lessen the shortfall in airport development funding over the next five years."

Julie Boatman Filucci @julieinthesky Good to see #Colorado make a strong stance in support of #GeneralAviation by denouncing #ATCPrivatization and planning

to ease restrictions on #seaplane #flying @AOPA @SeaplanesOrg @NoPrivatizedATC.

Dave Higdon @RealHigdon Good news for aviation! The drive to privatize air traffic control has failed and been withdrawn. Now for the other half of the struggle – long-term reauthorization of the FAA.

Airplanista @Av8rdan Now that Shuster has pulled his horrible ATC privatization scam for the airlines from the FAA Reauthorization Bill, we need to thank @NBAA, @EAA, @AOPA and their members who make a LOT of noise on this issue. You NEED to join if not already a member.

Brigham A McCown @BAMcCown I said 18 months ago this wouldn't fly. Now we must concentrate on modernization efforts and get #NextGen back on track.

Your comments

What do you think?
Is Bill Shuster right to drop ATC privatization plans from the FAA reauthorization bill? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this or any other topic affecting the business aviation industry, so visit www.linkedin.com and search *Business Airport International* to join in with the debate.

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