STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAVID R. HINSON, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY, SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND AVIATION, CONCERNING WAKE TURBULENCE ISSUES. JULY 28, 1994.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I welcome the chance to appear before the Subcommittee today concerning the FAA's work on wake turbulence. With me is Mr. Anthony J. Broderick, FAA's Associate Administrator for Regulation and Certification.

I know that much of the recent interest in this topic relates to the wake turbulence associated with the B757. At the outset, let me make two points about the B757. First, there is general consensus within the scientific community, inside and outside government, that the strength of the wake vortex associated with the B757 is what would be expected, given the aircraft's weight and other characteristics by which wake vortices are predicted. The duration of its wake vortex is similar to the B727 (another aircraft classified in the "large" category), and, although the B757's wake vortex has a very small core size and high core velocity, these factors alone do not determine vortex strength. The second point is that we are not aware of any wake vortex-related accidents in the United States involving an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) aircraft trailing a B757, nor are we aware of any such accidents worldwide. This is an important point, since there has been speculation about the adequacy and safety of FAA's IFR separation standards for the B757.

Wake turbulence was one of the early issues that faced me shortly after my appointment as Administrator last August, when two apparent wake turbulence-related accidents involving the B757 occurred at Salt Lake City, Utah (11/10/93) and at Santa Ana, California (12/15/93). One week following the Santa Ana accident, we issued a General Notice (GENOT) directing air traffic controllers to issue a wake turbulence warning to

timeliness and adequacy of past FAA actions related to B757 wake turbulence; and 2) to review the FAA's handling of the FOIA request. That review is now complete, and a copy of the final report was provided to me and Secretary Peña on July 26. Copies of the report have been made public, and have been provided to the Subcommittee.

The report was prepared for Secretary Peña and me by the DOT General Counsel Steve Kaplan and the FAA Deputy Administrator Linda Hall Daschle. They and their team reviewed more than 700 documents, and interviewed over 60 individuals from the FAA, other government agencies, and industry. Let me briefly highlight some of the report's key conclusions and recommendations, and then I will describe where our current wake vortex program is headed. As I am sure you have noted, the report addresses the Billings accident, which NTSB found was the result of the pilot-in-command's failure to follow established wake vortex avoidance procedures, as published in the Airman's Information Manual, to provide his own wake turbulence separation. With respect to the Santa Ana accident, the report noted that the NTSB has not issued its determination of probable cause. The report indicates that from 1989 to 1993, the wake vortex research program was not the subject of significant interest within the agency; it suffered from intermittent funding, and a high turnover of program managers leading to changes in approach to the program. The report also finds that the process used to identify, track, and resolve emerging safety issues within the FAA can be improved, along with the inter-organization management of cross-cutting technical and safety issues.

The review team made a number of recommendations concerning wake vortex and organizational issues. One key area involved the integration of research and development with the operating arms of the FAA, in order to more effectively resolve safety issues. In particular, the team believed that a review of our R&D programs should focus on how the organization sets goals, responds to changing technology, integrates information from

structure should provide for a clear understanding of organizational responsibilities and accountability.

Although I have not had an opportunity to evaluate fully the report's recommendations, I can say that I believe they represent a series of thoughtful and constructive approaches both to the wake vortex program and the management of safety issues generally. I have already initiated action to address the report's recommendations on the FOIA issue. I am working with our Chief Counsel and our Public Affairs office to put into place an improved process for dealing with Freedom of Information Act requests. I fully intend to press forward with our initiatives in wake vortex training, and will pursue to completion potential revisions of the weight classifications for aircraft.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, let me highlight where we stand today in our wake vortex efforts. We have established an IFR separation standard of 4 miles for aircraft following a B757. That step, though perhaps not definitively called for by scientific data, was adopted following the NTSB recommendations out of an abundance of caution. Ongoing efforts will help us substantiate whether that standard should prevail in the long-run.

In the interim, we and NASA, along with a number of industry partners, are working in concert with Boeing to establish a comprehensive training program, with appropriate aids, along the lines of the previously-developed windshear training program that proved to be so successful. That effort, which began in April, should be completed this fall, and will provide substantial assistance to both pilots and air traffic controllers in better understanding and avoiding wake turbulence. Let me stress that, as in many other areas we have looked at in the past, pilot training is a key part of the answer. We cannot lose sight of the fact that the human factor is associated with roughly 80% of aviation accidents.

That completes my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to respond to questions you may have at this time.

REMARKS FOR FAA ADMINISTRATOR DAVID R. HINSON

FAA TOWN HALL MEETING

FAA AUDITORIUM AND TELECAST

JULY 29, 1994

Good Afternoon.

I'd like to welcome our audience here in the FAA Auditorium and all of you watching on the satellite hookup.

If this is your first time to participate in one of our town hall meetings, let me tell you how it works.

First I'll make a few brief remarks, then we'll open up the mike so we can hear from you.

People here in the auditorium can just stand up and ask their questions. Please speak loudly enough so all of us can hear you. If you're watching from one of our field facilities, call us on the number that appears on your television screen. It's a live mike, so everybody can hear your question. I may decide to answer, or I may refer the question to one of the people here on the stage with me.

Before we get going, let me introduce them.

With me here on stage is Associate Administrator for Airway Facilities Archie Archilla; Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs Brad Mims; Assistant Administrator for Human Resource Management Herb McLure; and Agency Streamlining Coordinator Carl Schellenberg.

A lot has happened since our last town hall meeting in May.

Events move so quickly that it's a good idea to review some of what's taken place and to take a look at what is on the horizon.

Since our last meeting...

o 2,600 employees accepted the buyout offer.

o We canceled or modified four major portions of the Advanced Automation System -- scaling it back to the essentials and putting it on a solid, business-like footing.

o We halted the development of the Microwave Landing System.

o We stepped up the introduction of GPS.

o We continued to press forward with our plans to establish the U.S. Air Traffic Services Corporation.

o And on any average day, we helped more than a million air travellers reach their destination safely.

We have a lot that we can -- and should be -- proud of.

Unfortunately, those aren't the stories you hear when you pick up the papers or turn on the television.

There have been disturbing stories about the FAA in the news recently. Issues such as wake vortex, TCAS, and our record in responding to Freedom of Information Act queries, keep popping up, and, quite frankly, many of the stories have been very one-sided. Most recently, NBC Dateline aired particularly negative stories about TCAS and the state of the current air traffic control system.

In the past, the FAA has often refrained from any direct comment on unfavorable news stories. If we were really goaded, we might try that old politician's dodge -- the one about letting our record speak for itself.

Well, experience has taught us that our record can't speak for itself if we don't have a voice. And rather than suffer in silence, the way we've often done in the past, I'm going to see to it that the FAA starts to speak up.

We're going to do a much better job of getting our story out.

We're going to make it our business to let the general public know the reasons behind our actions.

We're going to take the initiative in setting the record straight -- offering quick rebuttals to charges that we consider unfair and unfounded.

And we're going to be more open ... with the Congress, with the media, with the industry, and within our own organization.

When we make a mistake or a miscalculation, we'll not deny knowledge or try to pass the blame.

If we are slow to act, we'll admit it, and take action to see that it doesn't happen again.

But when we think we're right, we'll be equally forthright in arguing our case.

We have every reason to be confident that our story -- when fully told -- will do us enormous credit and build a solid base of public support and understanding.

But it's the people of FAA who make this agency so successful. We are a tightly knit organization, dedicated to a single mission -- aviation safety. And it's not just an empty platitude to speak of ourselves as a family. It's true.

But we're also a smaller family than we were at the time of our last town hall meeting.

The number of employees who took the buyouts this spring exceeds the total number of people who work in most of the other modal administrations in the Department of Transportation.

The FAA's early retirement window is still open, and will remain so until March 31, 1995.

The buyout was a great tool in moving the agency toward its mandated staffing reductions.

Employees need to be aware, however, that while the additional required reductions to meet the fiscal year 1999 goal appear attainable, we are not there yet.

And we're still very concerned about meeting our staffing and funding targets for the new fiscal year.

If we look only at the overall numbers, we're in fairly good shape. But we still have a long way to go before we meet the reductions recommended by the National Performance Review.

Some organizations -- like Airway Facilities, Human Resource Management, Aviation Standards, and Aviation Regulations -- have already worked out their plans for streamlining and have begun the process.

Their head start in reducing staff levels has given the rest of the Agency a little bit of a breather. But the pressure is off only temporarily.

By August 30th I expect to see a streamlining plan for every major FAA organization.

And one month later those individual plans will be rolled into one overall corporate plan which I will forward to the Secretary.

Two months isn't a lot of time for an effort of this magnitude. So I've asked Carl Schellenberg to oversee it for me, and report his progress directly to Deputy Administrator Linda Hall Daschle.

Carl will be reviewing all the plans to make sure that none of our downsizing plans cause us to jeopardize safety or reduce the level of service to the public.

The whole point of Reinventing Government, after all, is better service at less cost.

We intend to keep you as up to date on these plans as we can. Carl will be setting up a system for getting the word out to you quickly.

Rumours are easy to start and hard to stop. So we want to have one credible source of information. That's Carl.

I know that many of you are wondering if those plans include another buyout.

Right now, there are no plans to offer another FAA-wide buyout. I still hope we'll be able to meet our goals through attrition.

The hard hiring freeze will remain in place; there will be no hiring from outside the FAA without approval from the Deputy Administrator or an Executive Director. At least until I have reviewed the agency's streamlining plans and decided on the next steps.

A lot of you have been asking when those positions vacated as a result of the buyout will be filled.

The legislation that authorized the buyout was very specific. It contained a provision that reduced the agency's FTE's and positions for fiscal year 1995 by one for each buyout.

Each organization has been given the flexibility to manage their work forces within revised employment ceilings.

While circumstances may require backfilling individual positions, each manager understands that such an action will have to be offset by a reduction elsewhere in the organization.

There is another issue I'd like to clear up.

At our last town hall meeting, I said that there would be no further agencywide reorganization before a decision was made about the Air Traffic Services Corporation.

But obviously ... with significantly fewer people ... there have to be some changes. If it's necessary for us to consolidate functions when it makes sense to group them together, that's what we'll do. If individual programs need to reorganize to meet streamlining targets, that's what they'll do.

Because of attrition and buyouts, we are already seeing changes in the organization.

Let me run through some of the recent changes in case you haven't heard about them.

Dr. George Donohue, a vice president at the Rand Corporation, has been named Executive Director for Acquisitions. George will oversee all procurement, systems development, and research and development at the agency.

We have selected Carolyn Blum to head the Southern Region. Carolyn has been acting Executive Director for System Development in Headquarters for the past five months.

We are moving Jerry Franklin, who has been acting Regional Administrator in Central, to the top slot in Great Lakes Region.

John Turner, who has been the Associate Administrator for NAS Development, is replacing Jerry in Central Region.

And Arlene Feldman will move from the New England Region to the Regional Administrator's job in Eastern.

We hope to make a selection on the replacement for Arlene very soon.

These are just a few of the things that have been on my mind these past few weeks.

Now, I'd like to open the meeting up to you. Call us at the number you see on your screen.

Let's take a question from someone here in the auditorium while we wait for our first call.

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OPENING REMARKS
FAA ADMINISTRATOR
DAVID R. HINSON
EAA CONVENTION AND FLY-IN
OSHKOSH, WI
JULY 31, 1994

Thank you, Tom (Poberezny) for that generous introduction. And my thanks to all of you for joining us this morning. Let me add my congratulations to Paul and Tom for this outstanding air show. It's events like this that keeps us all constantly aware of what general aviation means today to our national life -- and what it needs tomorrow if it's to have a place in our nation's future.

I have many old friends in the audience today. And they all know that my interest in general aviation isn't just Washington political talk which I've picked up the past few months.

I've been flying airplanes -- of all sizes and types -- for nearly 40 years. I've been a fixed base operator and I was once the Pacific-Northwest distributor for Beech Aircraft.

So general aviation is something I know about and care about.

Before I go any further, I'd like you to meet the FAA team with me here on the stage.

(Insert names here)

Some of you may remember that, when I was here last year, I didn't get to say much, because I hadn't yet been confirmed in the job.

Today, I'll try to make up for that. I know that many of us have strong opinions on many of the same issues. I also know that we may not always quite agree. That should be enough to spark a lively -- maybe even enlightening -- discussion.

To keep the proceedings moving, we'll follow the custom of past forums.

I'll make a few remarks. Then we're going to open up the meeting so we can hear from you. We'll do our best to answer your questions.

On the tenth of August, I will complete my first year at the FAA. So I thought this would be a good time to review some of the events of the past twelve months. And to talk a bit about our plans for the future.

My comments will focus on three subjects.

The first is safety. This is always our first priority. And, as always -- there's room for improvement.

Last year, 715 people lost their lives in general aviation accidents. I just can't accept that -- I don't accept it.

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The duty which I dread the most is reading the
ccident reports each morning. If it's a typical day,
iere may be six accidents. That's the average.

The number of accidents continues to go down a bit. But the accident rate is going up again.

After a decade of steady improvement, I'm afraid we may be seeing the beginning of a very discouraging trend.

The GA rate now exceeds 8 accidents for every 100 thousand flight hours.

And it's nearly twice as high for personal and recreational flying.

What it comes down to is this: we're crashing more planes than we're replacing.

It's bad enough to lose the planes. But -- the greatest misfortune of all -- is the needless loss of life.

In 1993 -- a year which recorded the fewest number of fatalities -- there were still, on average, two deaths a day.

What makes this figure so intolerable is the fact that most of these fatalities could have been prevented.

We know that human error is a factor in 80 percent of these accidents.

We're seeing an especially troubling trend in homebuilt aircraft.

o There is one or more fatal accidents a week in a homebuilt.

o Nearly one accident in five occurs within the first two flights.

o Fourteen percent (14%) happens on the pilot's first flight -- usually within the first few minutes.

o Aircraft handling is a factor in nearly 50 percent of all homebuilt accidents -- which suggests a lack of familiarity with the aircraft.

Seasoned pilots know that the key to safe flying is knowledge of your aircraft, proper training, and plain old-fashioned common sense.

We've got to do a better job of instilling this same seriousness about safety in every pilot.

Surely, this is an issue which should be a common concern.

There is clearly a breakdown here -- a failure to pass on the traditions and standards of general aviation to the next generation of pilots.

And it's a break in tradition which all of us must work together to repair.

I find it hard to think about relaxing the rules and regulations now on the books, when I see the GA accident rate on an upswing.

I need to hear from you how we can reverse this trend.

One initiative which I strongly endorse is the new Flight Advisors Program which Tom and the EAA Board of Directors have introduced in each of their chapters.

For our part, I've announced that the FAA is restructuring its accident prevention program. We'll be placing greater emphasis on safety education, customer service, and partnership.

We're expanding the range of products to reach a wider audience, and we intend to improve the quality of the guidance materials and training for counselors.

We've also given it a new name. It's now the Aviation Safety Program. More importantly, we've redoubled our efforts to provide pilots with high quality information and remedial education.

We can produce the materials. But the success of this program depends, in large measure, on the grassroots network of volunteer counselors who get the information into the hands of the pilots.

That's an important part of our new partnership.

Working together, we can succeed in making general aviation fully as safe as commercial aviation.

That's not an unattainable goal.

NTSB reports show that accidents and fatalities both declined by about one-third over the last decade.

This record is a tribute to the experience and professionalism of thousands of pilots, mechanics, and flight instructors.

It's a tribute to the educational initiatives put forth by EAA and its sister organizations. And to the dedication of the FAA's flight inspection and safety people.

We've worked well together so far. But it's clear there's a lot of work still to do.

Anytime we take safety for granted -- anytime we relax our standards -- we risk seeing those accident rates go back up. We risk our lives. And we weaken public support and undermine the viability of the industry.

We can't afford that either.

General aviation's contribution to the economy has been well documented. In fact, you've heard in just about every speech from the FAA for the past few years.

We know, too, that for the past decade or more, GA has endured crippling losses which seemed, at times, to threaten its very existence.

In 1980 there were 29 U.S. manufacturers of piston aircraft and 15 foreign manufacturers. Today the numbers are reversed -- only 9 U.S. firms and 29 foreign. And along with this reversal, this country lost 100 thousand jobs.

There were only 547 piston engine aircraft sold last year -- the lowest number since World War II.

In last ten years, the number of active pilots dropped 15 percent.

Phil Boyer says -- and our forecasts agree -- that the pilot rolls drop about 9 thousand a year.

The size of the GA fleet, and the number of hours flown has also declined -- a trend which our forecasters say could continue until well into the next century.

I'm told that, for the last decade or more, this nation has been losing an average of one public landing area per week.

Close to one-half of our fixed base operators lost money in 1992. When flight services aren't available, airfields die and turn into shopping centers and parking lots.

That was pretty much the situation in GA when I came to the FAA a year ago.

There was a lot of activity on a number of fronts. Yet, surprisingly, there was no coordinated effort to turn this around.

I signed on with this Administration because President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Transportation Secretary Peña have made it clear that they are willing to act to support the recovery and future growth of U.S. aviation.

The President's budgets have made the first serious attack on the deficit in nearly a generation -- and his struggle for universal health coverage for all Americans attempts to bring order and fairness to a system where uncontrolled costs are a danger to our fiscal health.

The economy is strengthening. We will never have a better chance to revive general aviation than we have right now.

One of the first things I did when I arrived at the FAA last August, was to form a policy stating my goals for general aviation. I was surprised to find out later that this was the first definitive statement on GA by an FAA Administrator since the crisis began more than a dozen years ago.

I released the policy in Kansas City, at the first-ever FAA-industry forum to revitalize GA.

This meeting showed us that if we -- and by "we", I mean "all of us" -- if we wanted to turn GA around, then we were going to have to get together and do it.

There was no single solution. There are too many complex problems for that.

We could watch the situation get worse. Or we could step in and do something about it. We chose the latter.

We came away from that meeting with 59 recommendations for breathing life back into GA. And, as I recall, we accepted all but four.

Today, those recommendations are part of a new General Aviation Action Plan that lays out -- not just our goals -- but what we have to do to achieve those goals.

For the first time since the crisis in GA began, we have a comprehensive, coordinated plan of action, supported by the entire GA community.

The plan has these five objectives:

-- to improve safety

-- lower the cost of flying

-- develop new R&D products for GA

-- guarantee access to the system, and

-- to provide low cost, user friendly service.

Some of you are probably thinking "OK, you have a plan. What does that get me?".

The answer is a lot more than you may think.

Our enhanced safety objectives are included in the plan.

We have a half-dozen or more initiatives under way to provide better service at less cost. These range from providing faster test results to redesigning how we issue airman certificates.

We're considering several measures to reduce the cost of flying, including revising the rules on third-class medical certificates, and easing the requirements for inspection and maintenance on certain types of planes.

We've already made it easier to certify small, low performance aircraft. The Quicksilver 500 -- which we certified last August -- was the first to win certification under our new primary category rule.

But much of the credit for this new rule belongs to Tom and Paul, to Phil Boyer, and to Paul Fiduccia.

On March first, the Damona Katana (Da-mo-na Ka-ta-na) became the first airplane to receive FAA certification under new harmonized rules for small airplanes certified in the United States and Europe.

The Zenair CH 2000 will receive its Type Certificate shortly.

Five new airplanes have been certified under FAR Part 23 regs since last year's EAA convention.

We have a renewed effort to work with NASA to develop a research program specifically targeted to the adaptation of new technologies for GA.

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin and I have agreed to combine technical resources and to increase our investments in research and development for small planes. Between our two agencies, we have the strongest program that we have had in years.

The push is on to design advanced cockpit technologies for GA, including an affordable data link. And to develop new applications for GPS.

It's only been a year since the FAA certified the first GPS receiver. Now, there are nine U.S. companies in the market. Eleven receivers have been certified and seven more are awaiting approval.

With this kind of competition, our booming avionics industry is constantly adding new capabilities. These aren't just GPS receivers anymore. These are flight management systems loaded with advanced software.

For about five thousand dollars, your Cessna or Mooney can have a flight management system as sophisticated as what is installed on a late model air liner.

The pilot is literally able to navigate at the flip of a switch.

We're moving fast to clear the way for the use of GPS on an ever-expanding scale for all phases of flight.

We've set a firm deadline to approve differential GPS for Category One approaches and to determine its feasibility for Category Two and Three operations.

The first primary GPS procedures for Denton, Texas, Frederick, Maryland -- and here at Oshkosh -- should be published very shortly.

Once again, GA will be the first to benefit from this fast evolving technology.

These are all good efforts. They show that we still have a lot of ideas about what can be done to assure a future for general aviation.

Eleven organizations representing GA interests have formed a coalition to promote these initiatives. We meet regularly to report our progress and take away new assignments.

We've all got to move in the same direction. For if we work at cross-purposes -- lag behind -- undermine each other's efforts or attempt end-runs -- the final outcome will be delay and confusion.

Given the caliber of the people on the coalition, I don't expect that to happen.

We get frustrated from time to time, certainly.

But we need to remember that many of the difficulties besetting GA reflect massive, long-term trends which are having a powerful and sustained impact.

There is no better example of this than the nation's growing concern for the environment. No segment of our society is exempt from nationwide moves to curtail noise and reduce pollution.

For our part, we need quieter propulsion systems and clean, low cost fuel. The FAA and NASA have several joint projects to develop these.

I am working with the Environmental Protection Agency and its director, Carol Browner, to create policies which are both fair and responsible for the aviation sector.

With the help of organizations like EAA, we've stopped the use of blue dyes in non-aviation fuels. That goes into effect on October 1. But we'll all have to watch very carefully until all the residual fuel supplies are used up.

We've expanded our collaboration with EPA to avoid similar mix-ups -- and to prevent slot controls or other restrictions on general aviation aircraft.

Environmental issues are a constant concern for us. The FAA deals with them. Right now, we're working with the National Park Service to come up with a solution for flights over the Grand Canyon and other parks.

There are convincing arguments on both sides of this issue. We've not made any decisions yet. Our job -- and that of the other agencies involved -- is to find a solution that respects the legitimate claims of all concerned: a solution that tries to build on whatever common ground we can find among the competing interests.

No one thinks this will be easy. It never is.

Not if we all insist on holding out for the best possible deal for ourselves. It's called gridlock. And it's a way of life in Washington.

One problem we've had for years at the FAA involves the management of our air traffic control system. How are we going to make sure that the capacity of our airspace can accommodate future demand?

While many have recognized the existence of the problem, there has long been a stalemate because the powerful interests involved could not agree on what to do.

In the meantime, the problem didn't fade away. The efficient management of air traffic became increasingly difficult and the risks of continued inaction began to escalate.

As you know, the Clinton Administration took the initiative in trying to break this deadlock -- out of the conviction that aviation was vital to our national economy.

The President has proposed the formation of a government owned and operated corporation to take over the air traffic control functions now performed by the FAA.

The corporation would be self-supporting, financing itself through user fees charged to commercial aviation.

General aviation will pay only the fuel tax you pay now. And your access to the system is guaranteed, just as it is today. Everyone with a stake in aviation should welcome and support this proposal. For it will benefit us all.

It will benefit passengers.

It will benefit the air carriers and the airports.

It will benefit the tax-paying public.

And it will benefit all of us who are general aviation pilots.

I know there is skepticism about the federal government's resolve to protect and promote the interests of general aviation.

But it should be transparently clear that one of the first to benefit from expanded airport and airspace capacity is the general aviation segment of the industry.

If capacity grows in phase with expanding need, we can avoid what otherwise must become inevitable: the rationing of access -- especially at those places which are already heavily congested.

In the brutal competition of scarce space, an airplane carrying a hundred passengers will clearly have an advantage over one which carries only one or two.

Under these circumstances, general aviation stands to be a clear loser.

But we will all lose in the end.

For with the continued attrition of general aviation, we lose a vital economic resource.

--We lose a reliable source of trained and experienced pilots.

--We lose a testing laboratory for exciting new ideas in technology.

--We lose a valuable part of our heritage.

For the extinction of general aviation would mark the loss of the founding spirit of American aviation.

This, to me, is the great intangible benefit of the idea for the ATC corporation: by freeing air traffic technology from the repressive grip of bureaucratic control, we will go a long way in preserving the creative, entrepreneurial edge which has made this industry so dynamic and open to change.

It is in the vital interests of our entire industry that we support this proposal.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Now, I'd like to open the meeting up to you.

We want to hear from as many of you as we can. So let me lay out some ground rules. Direct your questions or your remarks to me. I may answer, or I may refer the question to one of my colleagues.

If we know the answer, we'll give it to you.

If we don't know, we'll take an IOU and send it to Tom.

If we can't comment, we'll say so and move on to the next question.

OPENING REMARKS
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And no issue more urgently requires our attention than the issue of safety.

The duty which I dread the most is reading the accident reports each morning. If it's a typical day, there may be six accidents. That's the average.

The number of accidents continues to go down a bit. But the accident rate is going up again.

After a decade of steady improvement, I'm afraid we may be seeing the beginning of a very discouraging trend.

The GA rate now exceeds 8 accidents for every 100 thousand flight hours.

And it's nearly twice as high for personal and recreational flying.

What it comes down to is this: we're crashing more planes than we're replacing.

It's bad enough to lose the planes. But -- the greatest misfortune of all -- is the needless loss of life.

In 1993 -- a year which recorded the fewest number of fatalities -- there were still, on average, two deaths a day.

What makes this figure so intolerable is the fact that most of these fatalities could have been prevented.

We know that human error is a factor in 80 percent of these accidents.

We're seeing an especially troubling trend in homebuilt aircraft.

o There is one or more fatal accidents a week in a homebuilt.

o Nearly one accident in five occurs within the first two flights.

o Fourteen percent (14%) happens on the pilot's first flight -- usually within the first few minutes.

o Aircraft handling is a factor in nearly 50 percent of all homebuilt accidents -- which suggests a lack of familiarity with the aircraft.

Seasoned pilots know that the key to safe flying is knowledge of your aircraft, proper training, and plain old-fashioned common sense.

We've got to do a better job of instilling this same seriousness about safety in every pilot.

Surely, this is an issue which should be a common concern.

There is clearly a breakdown here -- a failure to pass on the traditions and standards of general aviation to the next generation of pilots.

And it's a break in tradition which all of us must work together to repair.

I find it hard to think about relaxing the rules and regulations now on the books, when I see the GA accident rate on an upswing.

I need to hear from you how we can reverse this trend.

One initiative which I strongly endorse is the new Flight Advisors Program which Tom and the EAA Board of Directors have introduced in each of their chapters.

For our part, I've announced that the FAA is restructuring its accident prevention program. We'll be placing greater emphasis on safety education, customer service, and partnership.

We're expanding the range of products to reach a wider audience, and we intend to improve the quality of the guidance materials and training for counselors.

We've also given it a new name. It's now the Aviation Safety Program. More importantly, we've redoubled our efforts to provide pilots with high quality information and remedial education.

We can produce the materials. But the success of this program depends, in large measure, on the grassroots network of volunteer counselors who get the information into the hands of the pilots.

That's an important part of our new partnership.

Working together, we can succeed in making general aviation fully as safe as commercial aviation.

That's not an unattainable goal.

NTSB reports show that accidents and fatalities both declined by about one-third over the last decade.

This record is a tribute to the experience and professionalism of thousands of pilots, mechanics, and flight instructors.

It's a tribute to the educational initiatives put forth by EAA and its sister organizations. And to the dedication of the FAA's flight inspection and safety people.

We've worked well together so far. But it's clear there's a lot of work still to do.

Anytime we take safety for granted -- anytime we relax our standards -- we risk seeing those accident rates go back up. We risk our lives. And we weaken public support and undermine the viability of the industry.

We can't afford that either.

General aviation's contribution to the economy has been well documented. In fact, you've heard in just about every speech from the FAA for the past few years.

We know, too, that for the past decade or more, GA has endured crippling losses which seemed, at times, to threaten its very existence.

In 1980 there were 29 U.S. manufacturers of piston aircraft and 15 foreign manufacturers. Today the numbers are reversed -- only 9 U.S. firms and 29 foreign. And along with this reversal, this country lost 100 thousand jobs.

There were only 547 piston engine aircraft sold last year -- the lowest number since World War II.

In last ten years, the number of active pilots dropped 15 percent.

Phil Boyer says -- and our forecasts agree -- that the pilot rolls drop about 9 thousand a year.

The size of the GA fleet, and the number of hours flown has also declined -- a trend which our forecasters say could continue until well into the next century.

I'm told that, for the last decade or more, this nation has been losing an average of one public landing area per week.

Close to one-half of our fixed base operators lost money in 1992. When flight services aren't available, airfields die and turn into shopping centers and parking lots.

That was pretty much the situation in GA when I came to the FAA a year ago.

There was a lot of activity on a number of fronts. Yet, surprisingly, there was no coordinated effort to turn this around.

I signed on with this Administration because President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Transportation Secretary Peña have made it clear that they are willing to act to support the recovery and future growth of U.S. aviation.

The President's budgets have made the first serious attack on the deficit in nearly a generation -- and his struggle for universal health coverage for all Americans attempts to bring order and fairness to a system where uncontrolled costs are a danger to our fiscal health.

The economy is strengthening. We will never have a better chance to revive general aviation than we have right now.

One of the first things I did when I arrived at the FAA last August, was to form a policy stating my goals for general aviation. I was surprised to find out later that this was the first definitive statement on GA by an FAA Administrator since the crisis began more than a dozen years ago.

I released the policy in Kansas City, at the first-ever FAA-industry forum to revitalize GA.

This meeting showed us that if we -- and by "we", I mean "all of us" -- if we wanted to turn GA around, then we were going to have to get together and do it.

There was no single solution. There are too many complex problems for that.

We could watch the situation get worse. Or we could step in and do something about it. We chose the latter.

We came away from that meeting with 59 recommendations for breathing life back into GA. And, as I recall, we accepted all but four.

Today, those recommendations are part of a new General Aviation Action Plan that lays out -- not just our goals -- but what we have to do to achieve those goals.

For the first time since the crisis in GA began, we have a comprehensive, coordinated plan of action, supported by the entire GA community.

The plan has these five objectives:

-- to improve safety

-- lower the cost of flying

-- develop new R&D products for GA

-- guarantee access to the system, and

-- to provide low cost, user friendly service.

Some of you are probably thinking "OK, you have a plan. What does that get me?".

The answer is a lot more than you may think.

Our enhanced safety objectives are included in the plan.

We have a half-dozen or more initiatives under way to provide better service at less cost. These range from providing faster test results to redesigning how we issue airman certificates.

We're considering several measures to reduce the cost of flying, including revising the rules on third-class medical certificates, and easing the requirements for inspection and maintenance on certain types of planes.

We've already made it easier to certify small, low performance aircraft. The Quicksilver 500 -- which we certified last August -- was the first to win certification under our new primary category rule.

But much of the credit for this new rule belongs to Tom and Paul, to Phil Boyer, and to Paul Fiduccia.

On March first, the Damona Katana (Da-mo-na Ka-ta-na) became the first airplane to receive FAA certification under new harmonized rules for small airplanes certified in the United States and Europe.

The Zenair CH 2000 will receive its Type Certificate shortly.

Five new airplanes have been certified under FAR Part 23 regs since last year's EAA convention.

We have a renewed effort to work with NASA to develop a research program specifically targeted to the adaptation of new technologies for GA.

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin and I have agreed to combine technical resources and to increase our investments in research and development for small planes. Between our two agencies, we have the strongest program that we have had in years.

The push is on to design advanced cockpit technologies for GA, including an affordable data link. And to develop new applications for GPS.

It's only been a year since the FAA certified the first GPS receiver. Now, there are nine U.S. companies in the market. Eleven receivers have been certified and seven more are awaiting approval.

With this kind of competition, our booming avionics industry is constantly adding new capabilities. These aren't just GPS receivers anymore. These are flight management systems loaded with advanced software.

For about five thousand dollars, your Cessna or Mooney can have a flight management system as sophisticated as what is installed on a late model air liner.

The pilot is literally able to navigate at the flip of a switch.

We're moving fast to clear the way for the use of GPS on an ever-expanding scale for all phases of flight.

We've set a firm deadline to approve differential GPS for Category One approaches and to determine its feasibility for Category Two and Three operations.

The first primary GPS procedures for Denton, Texas, Frederick, Maryland -- and here at Oshkosh -- should be published very shortly.

Once again, GA will be the first to benefit from this fast evolving technology.

These are all good efforts. They show that we still have a lot of ideas about what can be done to assure a future for general aviation.

Eleven organizations representing GA interests have formed a coalition to promote these initiatives. We meet regularly to report our progress and take away new assignments.

We've all got to move in the same direction. For if we work at cross-purposes -- lag behind -- undermine each other's efforts or attempt end-runs -- the final outcome will be delay and confusion.

Given the caliber of the people on the coalition, I don't expect that to happen.

We get frustrated from time to time, certainly.

But we need to remember that many of the difficulties besetting GA reflect massive, long-term trends which are having a powerful and sustained impact.

There is no better example of this than the nation's growing concern for the environment. No segment of our society is exempt from nationwide moves to curtail noise and reduce pollution.

For our part, we need quieter propulsion systems and clean, low cost fuel. The FAA and NASA have several joint projects to develop these.

I am working with the Environmental Protection Agency and its director, Carol Browner, to create policies which are both fair and responsible for the aviation sector.

With the help of organizations like EAA, we've stopped the use of blue dyes in non-aviation fuels. That goes into effect on October 1. But we'll all have to watch very carefully until all the residual fuel supplies are used up.

We've expanded our collaboration with EPA to avoid similar mix-ups -- and to prevent slot controls or other restrictions on general aviation aircraft.

Environmental issues are a constant concern for us. The FAA deals with them. Right now, we're working with the National Park Service to come up with a solution for flights over the Grand Canyon and other parks.

There are convincing arguments on both sides of this issue. We've not made any decisions yet. Our job -- and that of the other agencies involved -- is to find a solution that respects the legitimate claims of all concerned: a solution that tries to build on whatever common ground we can find among the competing interests.

No one thinks this will be easy. It never is.

Not if we all insist on holding out for the best possible deal for ourselves. It's called gridlock. And it's a way of life in Washington.

One problem we've had for years at the FAA involves the management of our air traffic control system. How are we going to make sure that the capacity of our airspace can accommodate future demand?

While many have recognized the existence of the problem, there has long been a stalemate because the powerful interests involved could not agree on what to do.

In the meantime, the problem didn't fade away. The efficient management of air traffic became increasingly difficult and the risks of continued inaction began to escalate.

As you know, the Clinton Administration took the initiative in trying to break this deadlock -- out of the conviction that aviation was vital to our national economy.

The President has proposed the formation of a government owned and operated corporation to take over the air traffic control functions now performed by the FAA.

The corporation would be self-supporting, financing itself through user fees charged to commercial aviation.

General aviation will pay only the fuel tax you pay now. And your access to the system is guaranteed, just as it is today. Everyone with a stake in aviation should welcome and support this proposal. For it will benefit us all.

It will benefit passengers.

It will benefit the air carriers and the airports.

It will benefit the tax-paying public.

And it will benefit all of us who are general aviation pilots.

I know there is skepticism about the federal government's resolve to protect and promote the interests of general aviation.

But it should be transparently clear that one of the first to benefit from expanded airport and airspace capacity is the general aviation segment of the industry.

If capacity grows in phase with expanding need, we can avoid what otherwise must become inevitable: the rationing of access -- especially at those places which are already heavily congested.

In the brutal competition of scarce space, an airplane carrying a hundred passengers will clearly have an advantage over one which carries only one or two.

Under these circumstances, general aviation stands to be a clear loser.

But we will all lose in the end.

For with the continued attrition of general aviation, we lose a vital economic resource.

--We lose a reliable source of trained and experienced pilots.

--We lose a testing laboratory for exciting new ideas in technology.

--We lose a valuable part of our heritage.

For the extinction of general aviation would mark the loss of the founding spirit of American aviation.

This, to me, is the great intangible benefit of the idea for the ATC corporation: by freeing air traffic technology from the repressive grip of bureaucratic control, we will go a long way in preserving the creative, entrepreneurial edge which has made this industry so dynamic and open to change.

It is in the vital interests of our entire industry that we support this proposal.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Now, I'd like to open the meeting up to you.

We want to hear from as many of you as we can. So let me lay out some ground rules. Direct your questions or your remarks to me. I may answer, or I may refer the question to one of my colleagues.

If we know the answer, we'll give it to you.

If we don't know, we'll take an IOU and send it to Tom.

If we can't comment, we'll say so and move on to the next question.

I expect the number one question on your minds concerns the revocation of Bob Hoover's medical certificate. So let me address that now and move on.

I know this has upset you -- it has upset all of us.

But I believe you all know that Mr. Hoover has filed a petition for review with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Oral arguments begin in October.

This case will be decided in a court of law.

I hope you understand that there is absolutely nothing I can say as long as this appeal is pending.

Once it's settled, we can talk about it as much as you like.

Now, who has the first question.