FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 68-97
Friday, May 2, 1997
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: (202) 267-8521

FAA Purchases Security Equipment for Airports

WASHINGTON -- Continuing President Clinton's initiative to improve aviation security, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced its purchase of an additional $12.2 million worth of trace detection security equipment for the nation's largest and busiest airports.

"President Clinton and I are committed to making air travel as safe and secure as possible," said Vice President Al Gore, who chaired the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security. "The use of new and improved explosive detection technologies will increase dramatically the ability of airports and air carriers to protect the flying public."

This new contract for the purchase of trace detection security equipment is the result of the September 1996 initial report by the commission, which recommended that the federal government purchase significant numbers of computed tomography systems, advanced technology X-rays, and other innovative explosives detection systems. Congress allocated $144 million in the FAA's 1997 fiscal year budget for this purpose and the FAA formed an integrated product team to plan, purchase and install the sophisticated equipment at the nation's airports.

"The new trace detection equipment will increase airport and air carrier safety by collecting, analyzing and identifying trace amounts of many different types of explosives," said Cathal Flynn, FAA's associate administrator for Civil Aviation Security. "These rapid analyzers have high detection probabilities with low false-alarm rates and allow for rapid baggage screening. They will be used to enhance the X-ray machines for the detection of explosives with little or no interruption of passenger or baggage flow."

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The three companies selected for this contract award are Thermedics Detection Inc. of Chelmsford, Mass.; Barringer Instruments Inc. of New Providence, N.J.; and Ion Track Instruments of Wilimington, Mass. Deliveries will begin within 60 days. Trace detection systems are designed to detect extremely small amounts of explosives on such things as electrical equipment, articles in carry-on or checked baggage, and on other suspect items found in or around airports. After careful evaluation of their systems, the agency placed Thermedics, Barringer and Ion Track on its approved vendors list for trace detection equipment.

Over the next two years, the FAA anticipates purchasing over 500 trace detection systems from companies on the approved vendors list. Currently, the agency is evaluating systems developed by several other manufacturers. Once equipment is approved, the companies will be added to the agency's list of approved vendors.

The trace detection systems being purchased under this contract include:

- **THERMEDICS EGIS 3000** (Technology: High-speed gas chromatography with chemiluminescence detection)

  The EGIS System consists of a free-standing analytical unit. Sample collection is accomplished by wiping a surface with a specially designed filter. The filter is then placed into the analytical unit and the EGIS begins an 18-second analysis to determine the presence and kind of explosives in the sample.

- **BARRINGER IONSCAN 400** (Technology: Ion Mobility Spectrometry)

  Ionscan is a detection-identification device designed to screen and search for trace quantities of explosives that contaminate baggage, electronics and cargo. Sample collection is accomplished by either wiping a surface with a cotton cloth in a swab holder, or by using a battery-operated hand-held "vacuum cleaner" that uses a filter card. The sample is then placed onto a sample tray and slid into an analyzer which automatically confirms and identifies explosives within 5 seconds.

- **ION TRACK ITEMISER** (Technology: Ion Mobility Spectrometry)

  The Itemiser is also designed to screen and search for trace quantities of explosives that contaminate various objects. Sample collection is accomplished by either wiping a surface with a paper filter or by using a battery-operated hand-held "vacuum cleaner" that uses a paper filter. The sample is then dropped into an analyzer which confirms and identifies explosives within 5 seconds.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 70-97
Tuesday, May 6, 1997
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-8521

Aviation Safety Improvements In the Past Year

WASHINGTON -- Aviation, the safest form of travel in the United States, has been made even safer over the past year. As a result of lessons learned from the regulatory issues involving ValuJet, the regulatory approach to both new carriers and maintenance practices, as well as the transport of hazardous materials has undergone a transformation.

More aviation and hazardous materials inspectors are being hired. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) best inspector resources are being focused on new carriers. A national certification team of safety experts is being formed and before any new airline can fly, it will have to win the team's approval. For the first time, new carriers will fly under increased supervision by FAA safety inspectors for their first five years of existence.

Oxygen generators may no longer be shipped as cargo on passenger planes, and rules are being readied to prohibit the shipment of oxidizers aboard passenger aircraft. Regulations to require both smoke detectors and fire suppression equipment in Class D cargo compartments are being written. Moreover, the FAA and the Transportation Department's Research and Special Projects Administration have worked aggressively and cooperatively with the shipping industry to broaden understanding of the rules regarding shipping hazardous materials.

These safety improvements enhance an aviation system that already is the envy of the world.

- more -

Safety improvements in the past year by the FAA, Research Special Projects Administration (RSPA), and Department of Transportation (DOT) include:

- The FAA grounded ValuJet until it met the terms of a consent order that required stringent tests to prove its ability to fly safely, and place limits on its expansion.

- The FAA heightened safety oversight for airlines using outside contractors for maintenance or training.

- The FAA conducted an unprecedented 90-day review of its aviation regulation and certification practices. As a result, the national certification team is being formed; new airlines must meet tougher certification standards and face increased scrutiny for the first five years; carriers with less than five years' experience are being subjected to the five-year heightened surveillance policy and will undergo increased inspections. In addition, the FAA is assigning its best inspectors to new carriers, and redesigning the program to oversee large carriers. Inspector numbers have risen to over 2,900 so far. DOT is applying more stringent financial requirements on new entrants.

- The FAA set in motion rulemaking to require the retrofit of fire detection and suppression systems in aircraft that don't now have such safety features.

- RSPA has banned the shipment of oxygen generators on passenger planes, worked with the FAA to better educate the public and shippers about hazardous materials shipment, and prepared regulations to bar oxidizers from passenger plane cargo compartments.

- To further raise the visibility of hazardous materials issues, the FAA has created a new Division of Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security within its Office of Civil Aviation Security.

Hazardous Materials Compliance

Hazardous Materials Safety Standards

The DOT has stringent standards for the transportation of hazardous materials and an excellent safety record for hazardous materials shipments. To maintain this excellent record, we are always looking for ways to enhance safety. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) provides valuable input into this process.

Following the ValuJet crash, the department listened to the NTSB and did more than requested. We immediately banned all oxygen generators from being shipped as cargo on any aircraft. We issued a proposal to ban all oxidizers from cargo compartments that cannot be reached by the crew in an emergency. And we are looking at banning oxidizers from other cargo compartments as well, even if the crew can enter the compartment during flight.

Helping People Comply With Safety Standards

We know that having good standards is not enough -- we must make sure people understand the rules and know how to comply with them. That is why the Department invests heavily in activities that inform people about our rules and help them stay in compliance.

Since ValuJet, we have reinvigorated our efforts to get the word out. We have held conferences and seminars, provided free training videos and other training materials, and distributed millions of brochures to airports, travel agents, and others explaining what materials may not be transported by air. We operate a free hotline and an Internet site to respond to any questions on hazardous materials transportation and increase awareness of our safety standards. And we are proposing through legislation to provide funds to states to help small businesses comply with our standards.

Stopping People Who Do Not Comply With Safety Standards

Despite our efforts, there are always people who either refuse or neglect to meet safety standards. We are committed to stopping these people and their illegal shipments.

In the last year, the FAA has hired 76 new hazardous materials inspectors, and plans to add 32 more by the end of June. RSPA has 5 new inspectors on board and is in the process of hiring 10 more. Both agencies have increased their legal and support personnel to support these inspectors in prosecuting hazardous materials violators. And these inspectors will receive enhanced training before entering the field. For example, FAA's training course on hazardous materials has been expanded from 2 to 9 weeks.

Once on the job, departmental inspectors aggressively examine carriers and shippers. Inspections may last two days and cover every aspect of a company's hazardous materials operation. A data system is being developed to target repeat offenders and others who may threaten safety. And we have proposed legislation to go after the dangerous practice of hiding or failing to declare hazardous materials shipments.

Where problems are found, action will be swift and severe. More cases will be referred to the U.S. Attorney's office for criminal prosecution and more violations will be announced to the public, further enhancing awareness of the rules and the consequences for making bad safety decisions.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May, 6, 1997
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-8521

FACT SHEET: FAA ACTIONS REGARDING VALUJET

Aviation, the safest form of travel in the United States, has been made even safer over the past year. As a result of lessons learned from the regulatory issues involving ValuJet, the regulatory approach to both new carriers and maintenance practices, as well as the transport of hazardous materials has undergone a transformation.

More aviation and hazardous materials inspectors are being hired. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) best inspector resources are being focused on new carriers. A national certification team of safety experts is being formed and before any new airline can fly, it will have to win the team's approval. For the first time, new carriers will fly under increased supervision by FAA safety inspectors for their first five years of existence.

Chemical oxygen generators may no longer be shipped as cargo on passenger aircraft, and rules are being readied to propose to prohibit the shipment of oxidizers aboard passenger carrying aircraft. Regulations to require both smoke detectors and fire suppression equipment in Class D cargo compartments are being written. Moreover, the FAA and the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Special Projects Administration (RSPA) have worked aggressively and cooperatively with the shipping industry to broaden understanding of the rules regarding shipping hazardous materials.

Safety improvements in the past year by DOT, FAA and RSPA include:

- The FAA grounded ValuJet until it met the terms of a consent order that required stringent tests to prove its ability to fly safely, and place limits on its expansion;

- The FAA heightened safety oversight for airlines that use outside contractors for maintenance or training;

- The FAA conducted an unprecedented 90-day review of its aviation regulation and certification practices. As a result, the national certification team is being formed; new airlines are subjected to rigorously enforced application procedures; and face increased scrutiny for the first five years; carriers with less than five years' experience are being subjected to the five-year heightened surveillance policy and will undergo increased inspections. In addition, the FAA is assigning its best inspectors to new carriers, and redesigning the program to oversee large carriers. Inspector numbers have risen to over 2,900 so far. DOT is applying more stringent financial requirements on new entrants;

- The FAA set in motion rulemaking to propose to require the retrofit of fire detection and suppression systems in aircraft that don't now have such safety features;

- RSPA has banned the shipment of oxygen generators on passenger planes, worked with the FAA to better educate the public and shippers about hazardous materials shipment, and prepared regulations to propose to bar oxidizers from passenger plane cargo compartments; and

- To further raise the visibility of hazardous materials issues, the FAA has created a new Division of Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security within its Office of Civil Aviation Security.

FAA Increased Oversight of ValuJet

The FAA grounded ValuJet until it met the terms of a consent order that required stringent tests to prove its ability to fly safely, and place limits on its expansion.

FAA's Special Emphasis Review of ValuJet.
After over 2,000 inspections of ValuJet's aircraft and operations, the FAA concluded on June 14, 1996, that the airline had deficiencies in the airworthiness of some of its aircraft, in its maintenance operations and in quality assurance of its contractors. As a result of enforcement investigations, the FAA prepared a consent order under which ValuJet would temporarily cease operations.

ValuJet agrees to FAA consent order, suspends operations.
On June 17, 1996, ValuJet surrendered its air carrier operating certificate to the FAA, grounding the airline until the terms of the consent order are met and the FAA deemed it safe to resume flights. ValuJet also agreed to pay $2 million to the FAA as remedial payment for costs associated with investigating, reviewing, establishing, reinspecting and ultimately enforcing the consent order.

ValuJet resumes limited operations on September 30, 1996 following FAA and DOT authorization.

- On August 29, 1996, the FAA returned ValuJet's air carrier operating certificate, authorizing the airline to resume limited operations. In its review of ValuJet's program to return to flight, the agency made the carrier demonstrate compliance with all aspects of the consent order, including:
    - Revision of the airline's maintenance program and procedures;
    - Retraining of all maintenance personnel in such procedures;
    - Revision of organizational structure and addition of personnel to strengthen maintenance program oversight;
    - Completion of FAA review of records and conformity checks on each ValuJet aircraft intended for return to service;
    - Retraining and rechecking of all ValuJet pilots, instructors and check airmen;
    - FAA review of all ValuJet maintenance and training contracts. Airline required to include all contractors performing substantial maintenance or training activities in its operating specifications; and
    - FAA inspection of ValuJet line facilities, maintenance bases, maintenance controls and dispatch operations.
- Following the FAA's actions, the DOT on August 29, 1996, issued a "show cause" order, tentatively finds ValuJet fiscally and managerially fit to resume operations. Interested persons were given seven calendar days to show cause why the DOT's tentative findings and conclusions should not be made final.
- The DOT issued a final order clearing ValuJet to resume its domestic scheduled air service on September 26, 1996.

Improvements to FAA Oversight of New Entrant Carriers and Outsourcing of Contract Maintenance

The FAA heightened safety oversight for airlines using outside contractors for maintenance or training. The FAA conducted an unprecedented 90-day review of its aviation regulation and certification practices. As a result, the national certification team is being formed; new airlines are subjected to rigorously enforced application procedures and face increased scrutiny for the first five years; carriers with less than five years' experience are being subjected to the five-year heightened surveillance policy and will undergo increased inspections. In addition, the FAA is assigning its best inspectors to new carriers, and redesigning the program to oversee large carriers. Inspector numbers have risen to over 2,900 so far. DOT is applying more stringent financial requirements on new entrants.

New FAA inspection policies and personnel action.

- Announced on June 18, 1996, the FAA revised its air carrier inspection policies to heighten safety oversight, particularly for airlines that use outside contractors to perform maintenance or training. Highlights include:
    - Airlines must demonstrate that their contract maintenance and training programs comply with Federal Aviation Regulations;
    - Carriers' operating specifications must list all contractors performing substantial maintenance or training activities. FAA must approve use of any new contractors;
    - FAA inspectors will be required to check not only that repair stations comply with regulations, but also that air carriers assure that maintenance work performed at repair stations complies with the carriers' maintenance programs;
    - Carriers must audit new contractors before submission to FAA to show that the company can perform the contracted work according to the airline's approved programs; and
    - There are 1,894 maintenance facilities that perform heavy maintenance or repairs for Part 121 air carriers.

FAA 90-day review of the FAA's regulation and certification practices.

- On June 18, 1996, the FAA Administrator announced that the Deputy Administrator will lead a comprehensive 90-day review.
- On September 18, 1996, the FAA's 90-day review is forwarded to President Clinton's Commission on Aviation Safety and Security for its review. The report contained six principal and more than 30 supporting recommendations, including stepping up the surveillance of newly certificated air carriers and increasing the number of FAA aviation safety and security inspectors throughout the United States. New initiatives included:
    - Rigorously enforce DOT and FAA application procedures for new entrant carriers, including filing of a complete application with DOT. Limit DOT and FAA assistance to unprepared or unqualified applicants. Increase DOT fees for initial certification of new applicants.
    - Establishment of a national certification team to assist local FAA field offices in processing new entrant carrier certifications and conducting safety audits;
    - Hiring of additional safety inspectors;
    - Redesign of the large air carrier surveillance program;
    - Change the national geographic inspector program to target the most highly qualified inspectors to new entrant carriers, thus increasing the effectiveness of the overall surveillance and oversight of new entrant carriers;
    - Use FAA's authority under personnel reform to remove the disincentives in inspector pay classification that impede assigning the agency's most talented and seasoned inspectors to new entrant carriers;
    - Upgrade and accelerate the introduction of information management technology; and
    - Perform follow-up inspection of new carriers for the first five years.

FAA accomplishments following the 90-day review.

- The new Certification Team is targeting the most experienced inspectors to new entrant air carriers;
- The agency is hiring over 300 additional inspectors;
- New entrant carrier follow-up inspections are being conducted for the first five years of operation;
- Carriers' operating specifications must list all contractors performing substantial maintenance or training activities. FAA must approve use of any new contractors; and
- On October 10, 1996, the FAA issued an information bulletin to all air carriers requiring them to make changes to their operation specifications, if appropriate.

Fire Detection and Suppression Systems

The FAA set in motion rulemaking to require the retrofit of fire detection and suppression systems in aircraft that don't now have such safety features.

FAA will propose rulemaking for fire detection and suppression equipment on commercial passenger aircraft.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has not yet issued its final determination as to the cause of the accident, including the role fire detection and suppression systems might have played. The FAA announced on November 14, 1996 that it will go forward with rulemaking to require fire detection and suppression systems in the cargo compartments of all passenger aircraft. Specifically:

- The agency expects to issue the NPRM by summer 1997 proposing to require retrofit of class D to class C compartments on about 2,800 older commercial aircraft. Approximately 1,000 aircraft are equipped with cargo compartment fire detectors; and
- This retrofit would be for newly manufactured and existing aircraft with a phase in period.

Class C and D cargo compartment liners are designed to be fire resistant. Class D compartments suppress fire through containment and oxygen starvation. Both types of compartments prevent hazardous quantities of smoke from entering the cabin. In September 1980, the agency limited cargo fire detection time to one minute from the start of fire. Fire resistance standards for Class C and D cargo compartment liners were significantly upgraded in June 1986 by limiting Class D compartment volume to 1,000 cubic feet, and upgraded in March 1991 when regulations required retroactive liner compliance. In October 1988, the FAA initiated a rulemaking project to delete the Class D cargo compartments and require retrofit of the fleet. The project was suspended in June 1993 based on significantly unfavorable cost/benefit analysis.

Enhanced FAA Inspection Program

As a result of the FAA's 90-day review, the national certification team is being formed; new entrant carriers are being subjected to the five-year heightened surveillance policy and will undergo increased inspections; FAA's best inspectors are being assigned to new carriers, and the FAA is redesigning the program to oversee large carriers. Inspector numbers have risen to over 2,900 so far.

Changes to FAA's Inspection Program.
On May 14, 1996, the Secretary of Transportation announced further actions taken by DOT and the FAA to strengthen inspection efforts and continue to ensure the safest aviation system in the world. The efforts included:

- **Accelerated inspector hiring.** FAA speeds hiring of additional inspectors. As of April 1997, there are over 2,908 inspectors in the FAA work force. There were 2,776 inspectors in FY 1996. The FAA expects to employ a total of 3,297 inspectors by FY 1998. Previously, there were 2,324 inspectors in FY 1994, 2,531 in FY 1995 and 2,776 in FY 1996.
- **Strengthened data tools.** FAA will upgrade computer data collection and tracking. Both elements are key to the agency's ability to focus resources when violations or other safety concerns are identified.
- **Comprehensive review of FAA inspections operations.** As part of the 90-day review, the FAA examined and made changes to inspector training, standards, assignments and supervision. The report was forwarded to the President's Commission on Aviation Safety and Security on September 18, 1996. It contained six principal and more than 30 supporting recommendations, including stepping up the surveillance of newly certificated air carriers and increasing the number of aviation inspectors throughout the United States. Key elements were:
    - Development of the national certification team;
    - Hiring of additional safety inspectors;
    - Redesign of the large air carrier surveillance program; and
    - Changes to the national geographic inspector program.

Oversight of Hazardous Materials in Air Transportation

RSPA banned the shipment of oxygen generators on passenger aircraft, worked with the FAA to better educate the public and shippers about hazardous materials shipment, and prepared regulations to bar oxidizers from passenger plane cargo compartments. To further raise the visibility of hazardous materials issues, the FAA has created a new Division of Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security within its Office of Civil Aviation Security.

A large number of hazardous materials cannot be shipped by air. In addition, there are severe restrictions on the types of materials authorized for shipment on passenger aircraft as well as strict limits on the amount of specific types of hazardous materials.

Following the accident, DOT, RSPA and FAA immediately instituted new initiatives to enhance safeguards of hazardous materials in air transportation.

Ban on the transportation of chemical oxygen generators on passenger aircraft.
The NTSB investigation focused on ValuJet's transportation of chemical oxygen generators in the aircraft's cargo hold. On May 23, 1996, DOT and the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) placed an immediate ban on transportation of oxygen generators as cargo on all passenger airlines. That same day, the FAA issued letters to groups representing industry, repair stations and field inspectors informing them of the new prohibition on oxygen generators.

NTSB recommendations on hazardous materials.
On May 31, 1996, the FAA, in conjunction with DOT's RSPA, begins immediate review of four NTSB recommendations issued that day. All recommendations are currently "open acceptable."

- **A-96-25 Evaluate hazardous materials programs at all carriers.**
- **A-96-26 Take corrective action based on evaluation.**
  FAA has reviewed FAA-approved air carrier manuals on how to recognize suspicious cargo or baggage. Field inspections to verify that air carriers are following procedures have been completed. FAA will shortly be recommending appropriate corrective action to correct any deficiencies identified during the inspections.
- **A-96-27 RSPA permanently ban oxygen generators on cargo and passenger aircraft when generators have passed expiration date.**
  On May 24, 1996, RSPA published an interim regulation temporarily banning oxygen generators as cargo on passenger aircraft. On December 30, 1996, RSPA issued a final rule permanently prohibiting oxygen generators on passenger aircraft and a proposed rule to prohibit carriage of oxidizers on passenger aircraft and in Class D compartments on cargo aircraft. RSPA intends to publish a supplemental notice and one or more final rules in FY 1997.
- **A-96-28 Prohibit oxidizers in Class D compartments.**
  RSPA issued a proposed rule and is examining current regulations. The FAA has initiated a separate rulemaking project to require air carriers to clearly label cargo compartments as Class C or D.

Staffing and Training:

- Announced on July 15, 1996, the FAA called for a seven-fold increase of previous resources devoted to inspection, outreach and public education regarding hazardous materials in air transportation;
- DOT committed to realign $14 million in FY 1997 to improve oversight of hazardous materials. Of this, $10.65 million will expand FAA's current hazardous materials inspectors and legal work force. Prior to the accident there were 14 inspectors fully dedicated to dangerous goods. The FAA has added 76 people bringing the current total to 90 inspectors and plans to hire 32 more by the end of June for a total of 122. RSPA has five new inspectors on board and is in the process of hiring 10 more. Both agencies have increased their legal and support personnel;

- Inspectors will receive enhanced training before entering the field. For example, the FAA is increasing the training time for dangerous goods inspectors from two to nine weeks; and
- In cooperation with FAA, RSPA is developing a new training module emphasizing hazardous materials regulations that apply specifically to shipments by air. RSPA is also producing a training video.

Data Systems

- A data system is being developed to target repeat offenders and others who may threaten safety. The July 15 budget proposal provided $3.4 million to RSPA to improve coordination of better data systems to identify transportation of hazardous materials; and
- FAA has instituted a new data system for air carrier field inspections. Similar systems will be implemented for freight forwarders, repair stations and shippers.

Inspections

- New intensive air carrier inspections began in February which included inspections of air carrier facilities and verification of employee training for shippers. Similarly, intensive inspections are also scheduled for freight forwarders, repair stations and shippers; and
- RSPA is increasing inspections in all areas, particularly for companies which offer hazardous materials for transportation by air.

Enforcement Actions

- Both the FAA and RSPA are taking aggressive enforcement actions. The FAA has also begun the practice of announcing significant enforcement actions against shippers for hazardous materials violations, further enhancing awareness of the rules and consequences for making bad safety decisions.

Outreach

- On April 8, 1997, FAA names Charles N. Lovinski to head the newly created Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security Division within the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations. The division is charged with increasing awareness and compliance with federal regulations to ensure the security of cargo carried on passenger air carriers;
- In June 1996, RSPA distributed 260,000 advisory notices to industry regarding the transportation of hazardous materials by air;
- RSPA is expanding outreach efforts to state and local enforcement agencies to more effectively and expeditiously disseminate compliance information;
- On December 13, 1996 RSPA published an Advisory Notice in the Federal Register on the transportation of hazardous materials by air; and
- In October 1996, RSPA distributed over eight million "These Fly ... These May Not" brochures to airline passengers and personnel, including 400,000 to federal travelers.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Great Lakes Region, 2300 E. Devon Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 69-97
Wednesday, May 7, 1997
Contact: Don Zochert
Phone: 847-294-7427 After Hours: 847-294-8400

FAA Proposes Fine For Royal Air Freight, Inc.

CHICAGO -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced a proposed $175,000 civil penalty against Royal Air Freight, Inc., of Waterford, Mich., an air transport company dealing primarily in small cargo, for significant maintenance and record-keeping deficiencies.

Royal Air operates out of Pontiac Airport, north of Detroit. Its fleet includes 20 aircraft that range from Cessna 310s to Lear Jets.

The case stems from an in-depth FAA inspection of Royal Air's maintenance practices in 1994. After Royal Air was informed of the discrepancies, the FAA suspended the airworthiness certificates of 10 Royal Air aircraft with maintenance deficiencies or which were not presented for re-examination in a timely manner. Five of those suspensions were subsequently lifted when the company demonstrated the aircraft complied with airworthiness requirements.

The FAA conducted an additional in-depth inspection of Royal Air in 1996, with satisfactory results. The proposed civil penalty is based upon discrepancies found in the earlier investigation.

Royal Air has 30 days to respond to the civil penalty letter before the FAA takes further action. In cases where the proposed penalty exceeds $50,000, the FAA has the authority to settle the penalty. If the parties cannot amicably resolve the matter, the government must file a complaint in U.S. District Court.

This announcement is being made in accordance with the FAA's policy of releasing information to the public on newly issued enforcement actions involving penalties of $50,000 or more.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Southern Region, Atlanta, GA 30337

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 8, 1997
Contact: Kathleen B. Bergen
Phone: (404) 305-5100 After Hours: (404) 305-5180

FAA REVOKES D & C AIRPARTS CERTIFICATE

The Federal Aviation Administration yesterday issued an Emergency Order revoking the repair station certificate of D & C Airparts Corp. of Hialeah, Fla.

The Order was issued based on an FAA investigation which revealed that D & C was performing maintenance on aircraft power supply and emergency power supply appliances without appropriate FAA authorization.

The Emergency Order is effective immediately. D & C may appeal the order to the National Transportation Safety Board, however, the order remains in effect pending appeal.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Aeronautical Center, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-4902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AMC 9705-1
Friday, May 9, 1997
Contact: John Clabes
Phone: 405/954-7500 (After hours: 954-7069)

FAA Revokes Rasmark Jet Charter's Certificate

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued an emergency order revoking the air carrier operating certificate of Rasmark Jet Charter, Inc., El Paso, Texas.

The FAA took the action after determining that Rasmark operated unairworthy aircraft on revenue flights over an extended period of time. The violations uncovered by FAA inspectors include:

- Failure to withdraw aircraft from service despite their need for required inspections and changeout of parts with limited lifetimes;
- Flying with incorrect weight and balance data; and
- Misuse of the minimum equipment list.

Rasmark operated six aircraft under Part 135 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. The company's principal business is carriage of freight, but it also conducts on-demand passenger flights and air ambulance operations.

Rasmark can appeal the revocation order to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), but the order will remain in effect pending NTSB proceedings.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-4902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AMC 9705-2
Friday, May 9, 1997
Contact: Roland Herwig
Phone: 405-954-7500

FAA Announces Contract for Support Services

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today awarded a contract to provide engineering and support services for navigational equipment used in the National Airspace System at the agency's Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City.

The initial contract award to the Management Assistance Corp. of America, based in El Paso, Texas, is $16.8 million, and could be worth up to $106.7 million if all options are exercised.

Under the contract, the company will provide electronic and software engineering services involved in the restoration, maintenance, troubleshooting and modification of ground-based equipment. This includes navigational aids, communications, radar, weather and environmental engineering and computer support services.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 9, 1997

Contact: Lorie Dankers
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MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater will dedicate Washington National Airport's new Air Traffic Control Tower and Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility Monday, May 12. He will be joined at the dedication ceremony by local Members of Congress and FAA officials.

The new tower replaces National's existing tower, which was constructed in 1941, and is part of a 35 gate, three-level terminal building currently under construction. The new tower and TRACON have been in operation since April 5. The new facilities are part of a $1 billion Capital Development Program at National Airport.

WHO: U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater
Members of Congress
FAA Officials

WHAT: Washington National Airport Tower and TRACON Dedication

WHEN: Monday, May 12
10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Washington National Airport
New Terminal

There will be an opportunity for press to tour the tower and TRACON facility immediately following the dedication ceremony.

Parking for the dedication ceremony will be available in Parking Garage B. At the airport, follow signs to Parking Garage B and drive to level 5. Drive to the far north end of level 5 and proceed through elevator lobby into the new terminal. Take stairs up one flight to dedication ceremony. For more information, please call 703-413-1535.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 72-97
Monday, May 12, 1997
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Picks Joint University Program for First Excellence in Aviation Award

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has selected the Joint University Program (JUP) for Air Transportation to receive the agency's first Excellence in Aviation award.

The new FAA award recognizes JUP -- a consortium of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ohio University and Princeton University -- for 26 years of important aviation research and development efforts. The JUP program has clearly benefited the aviation community and the flying public, and has helped make the aviation industry more efficient and productive.

"Sometimes we don't take enough time to recognize the contributions of our research partners, and this award will help thank researchers outside the agency who are working to make aviation safer," said George Donohue, associate administrator for research and acquisitions.

Begun in 1971, JUP operates with research grants awarded to the three universities by the FAA from funds contributed equally by the agency and NASA. Each university submits a research proposal, which is reviewed collectively by the FAA and NASA. Government and industry researchers scrutinize the results of JUP research in quarterly review conferences. New ideas and directions for research can be started up on the spot with a minimum of paperwork.

As participants in a common program, the three universities achieve an uncommon degree of cooperation and interchange of ideas. Their diversity of interests and capabilities helps promote the broad perspective needed to address today's air transportation issues.

Through the Excellence in Aviation award, the FAA formally recognizes significant accomplishments stemming from aviation-related research. This distinction lets the government recognize superior research efforts and highlights the benefits of such activities.

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The Excellence in Aviation designation is a competitive, non-monetary award to be presented annually to individuals or institutions after the FAA evaluates documentation that clearly shows how their past research benefits the aviation community today.

For additional information on submitting nominations for the Excellence in Aviation award, please contact Patricia Watts in the Office of Aviation Research, 609/485-6509, or by email at patricia.watts@faa.dot.gov.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Eastern Region, Jamaica, NY 11430

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 73-97
Monday, May 12, 1997
Contact: Arlene Salac/Jim Peters
Phone: 718-553-3010

Secretary Slater dedicates Washington National Tower

WASHINGTON -- Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today dedicated Washington National Airport's new Airport Traffic Control Tower and Terminal Approach Control (TRACON) facility and announced a $10 million grant to improve the safety of pedestrians using the main terminal.

"The safety and integrity of the traveling public is our highest priority at the Department of Transportation," said Slater. "This new tower is just one example of the steps we are making to ensure the safety of the air traffic control system within the Metropolitan Washington area and throughout the country."

Arlene Feldman, regional administrator for FAA's Eastern Region, said the new facility will enhance the efficiency and safety of this airport.

Designed by a team of FAA managers, air traffic controllers and air traffic system specialists, the 201-foot tower is part of a $1 billion capital development program which includes a 35-gate, three level terminal building currently under construction. The new facilities contain air traffic communications and computer and radar equipment that provide FAA personnel with the technological capability to meet their goals.

The grant will fund a project to provide an enclosed passage between the south parking structure and the existing main terminal to alleviate pedestrian safety hazards and exposure to bad weather.

Washington National

The facility's air traffic personnel include 66 air traffic controllers, 10 supervisors and 15 administrative air traffic employees. Personnel at the tower, responsible for installation and maintenance of aviation equipment, include 15 air traffic system specialists, three air traffic system coordinators, one supervisor and one secretary.

- more -

Washington National Airport is the nation's 36th busiest airport with 310,410 airport operations last year.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Great Lakes Region, 2300 E. Devon Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 74-97
Monday, May 12, 1997
Contact: Don Zochert
Phone: 847-294-7427

FAA Proposes Ice Detector Systems
For Embraer EMB-120 Series Aircraft

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today proposed that ice detector systems be installed on Embraer EMB-120 series aircraft to help pilots recognize ice accretion in flight.

The proposed Airworthiness Directive would affect 220 registered airplanes operated in the United States by Atlantic Southeast Airlines, Comair, Continental Express, and United Express.

Specifically, the proposal would require installation of an ice detection system on EMB-120 aircraft and changes to the airplane flight manual, including the addition of information regarding operation in icing conditions and requirements for activating ice detection systems. Flight crews currently use visual cues to detect ice build-up.

Installation of an ice detection system would cost approximately $4 million nationwide and would be required within six months. Flight manual revisions would be required within 30 days. A 45-day comment period will begin following publication of the directive in the *Federal Register*.

The FAA proposal is designed to assure the continued safe operation of EMB-120 aircraft and is based upon extensive review of pilot reports and service experience data. It is part of the agency's continuing commitment to address in-flight icing concerns. On April 24, 1997, the FAA unveiled a detailed in-flight aircraft icing plan that calls for improvements in icing detection and forecasting, flight crew training, and procedures.

EMB-120 aircraft are twin-engine turboprops manufactured by Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A., Brazil, with a worldwide fleet of 282 planes. They can seat about 30 passengers.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 75-97
Monday, May 12, 1997
Contact: Kathryn Creedy
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Proposes to Amend Two Flight-Free Zones in Grand Canyon

WASHINGTON -- As part of its continuing effort to restore the natural quiet to the Grand Canyon, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is proposing to establish new flight corridors in Grand Canyon National Park.

The proposed rule would amend two flight-free zones in the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA). The first corridor, in the eastern portion of the SFRA, provides an "incentive corridor" reserved for the least noisy aircraft. The second corridor, through the central region of the canyon, would create a useable air tour route while addressing concerns of the Native Americans about overflights of their cultural properties and sacred sites.

Under the proposed rule, the new eastern and central corridors would be effective as early as January 1998. Comments on the NPRM published in the Federal Register today are due May 27, 1997.

"By altering the National Canyon Corridor in the central region of the park and proposing an incentive route for quiet aircraft in the eastern region of the park, the FAA expects several benefits," said Barry Valentine, FAA acting administrator. "Making the central region route available to all aircraft would eliminate the possibility of aircraft congestion south of the flight-free zone. The incentive route in the eastern region will encourage operators to acquire quieter aircraft."

"The 'substantial restoration of natural quiet' at Grand Canyon National Park is both our mission and our mandate from President Bill Clinton and Congress," Deputy Solicitor of the Interior Ed Cohen said. "Each step in the process manifests the difficulties we face in reconciling existing overflight conditions, our trust responsibilities with neighboring tribes, and a genuine phase-in to natural quiet. It is a work in progress, and a goal that we strongly support."

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The proposed new routes respond to comments on a previous notice of availability of routes, consultations with Native Americans, and recommendations from the National Park Service.

On Dec. 31, 1996, the FAA published three concurrent actions, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, a Notice of Availability of Proposed Commercial Air Routes and a final rule establishing new flight-free zones. These actions modified other zones and set curfews for commercial sightseeing operations. They also capped the number of commercial tour aircraft than can overfly the park. There were about 80,000 to 95,000 air tour flights over the park in 1996. The curfew and caps on operations became effective May 1, 1997.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 71-97
Wednesday, May 14, 1997
FAA Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521
Department of Agriculture: Martha Cashion
Phone: 202/720-3310

FAA Taps Department of Agriculture for ICE-MAN Contract

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today awarded a contract worth up to $250 million for FAA administrative computer systems.

The Department of Agriculture's National Information Technology Center (NITC), Kansas City, Mo., won the contract for the Integrated Computing Environment - Mainframe and Networking system (ICE-MAN). Under the contract, NITC will establish a system that combines the center's expertise in information management technology with hardware, software and technical support services to support the FAA's administrative information systems. ICE-MAN is a follow-on to the Computer Resource Nucleus (CORN) contract.

The firm-fixed price, indefinite-quantity contract includes a 3-year base period with a minimum of $1 million and five 1-year options worth up to $249 million. The FAA selected NITC because its proposal offered the "best value" to the government -- a combination of technical excellence and cost to the FAA.

The systems that will run on ICE-MAN affect many facets of FAA operations, including management of aviation safety data and administration of payroll, personnel and financial files. ICE-MAN will provide data processing services to the FAA and other Department of Transportation offices via mainframe and other computing resources. Customers will pay based on system usage.

The ICE-MAN acquisition benefited from key elements of the FAA's successful new acquisition management system, which was effective April 1, 1996. The system emphasizes management of procurements by an integrated product team composed of FAA engineers, scientists, financial analysts and users from various areas of the agency.

The expertise of the ICE-MAN product team, coupled with the flexible new FAA acquisition guidelines, contributed to a significant reduction in contract pre-award time. The contract was awarded in less than five months, compared to more than a year needed to award the CORN contract under the old acquisition regulations.

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The new acquisition system resulted from legislation successfully sought by the Clinton Administration to free the FAA of overly bureaucratic red tape which delayed installation of equipment at its facilities. The reforms, which drew heavily on "common sense" best practices from the private sector, are designed to increase management accountability, speed up procedures and dramatically reduce paperwork throughout the FAA.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 77-97
Wednesday, May 14, 1997
Contact: Bob Hawk
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA AD Requires Check of Boeing 777 Engine Fire Extinguisher Switch

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today issued an Airworthiness Directive (AD) requiring operators of Boeing 777 aircraft to check an engine fire switch override button to ensure it will unlock so flight crews can trigger fire extinguisher equipment in the event of an engine fire.

The AD is a precautionary measure following a single report of a seized override button on a 777 aircraft fire switch handle that could prevent unlocking and arming of engine fire bottles. The handle lock feature prevents the handle from being inadvertently pulled unless a fire is detected. The lock can be manually overriden by the override button located under the handle. The cause of the seized button has been isolated and the check of the override button required by today's AD will determine the need for replacement.

"This AD is another important effort by the FAA to achieve the highest level of safety for the traveling public," said Guy Gardner, associate administrator for Regulation and Certification.

The FAA regularly issues ADs on all aircraft manufactured and certified in the United States.

Since certifying the 777 on April 19, 1995, the FAA has issued seven ADs affecting the aircraft type, including today's action. On April 23, the FAA issued an AD requiring visual inspections to detect distress and replace any faulty ball bearings in GE90 engines on five 777 aircraft. Last week, the agency also issued an AD requiring inspection of wire bundles that control flight system actuators to determine corrosion, and repair or replacement if found necessary. If uncorrected, the condition could reduce system protection against lightning strikes.

Today's AD affects the first 40 Boeing 777 aircraft, including 20 in the United States.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Eastern Region, Jamaica, NY 11430

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AEA 13-97
Thursday, May 14, 1997
Contact: Arlene Salac/Jim Peters
Phone: 718-553-3010

FAA Proposes Fine for US Airways, Inc.

New York - The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed a $67,000 civil penalty against US Airways, Inc., a Pittsburgh, PA based air carrier, for failure to comply with an engine airworthiness directive. An airworthiness directive is an agency requirement for a repair, modification and/or inspection of an aircraft.

The case involves US Airways operation of a McDonnell Douglas DC-9 in August 1996. The carrier operated the aircraft for approximately 67 flights without compliance with Airworthiness Directive 95-12-19. This directive was implemented to prevent fan blade failure.

US Airways has 30 days to respond to the civil penalty letter before the FAA takes any further action. In cases, as here, where the FAA's proposed penalty exceeds $50,000, the FAA has the authority to settle these penalties. If parties cannot amicably resolve the matter, the government must file a complaint with the appropriate U.S. District Court.

The announcement of the civil penalty proposal today is being made in accordance with FAA's policy of releasing information to the public on newly issued enforcement actions in cases that involve penalties of $50,000 or more

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 76-97
Wednesday, May 14, 1997
Contact: Bob Hawk
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Proposes $285,000 Fine Of
Aerolineas Nacionales del Ecuador (ANDES)

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed a $285,000 fine against Aerolineas Nacionales del Ecuador (ANDES) for its alleged failure to adhere to maximum allowable weight requirements in the operation of a DC-8-53F civil aircraft.

The carrier's alleged violations occurred between July 17 and August 19, 1996, and were discovered by FAA aviation safety inspectors. Specifically, the FAA alleged that the carrier operated the aircraft in excess of the maximum permissible zero fuel weight and maximum cargo pallet position weights.

The FAA determined that ANDES' failure to comply with weight limitations created a particularly unsafe condition in that, as a result, weight and balance and center of gravity computations could not properly be assured.

ANDES has 14 days to respond to a civil penalty letter issued by the FAA before the agency takes any further action.

ANDES performed civil air transportation under an operating certificate issued by the government of Ecuador, and was authorized to conduct operations to and from the United States. On October 1, 1996, Ecuador's civil aviation authority indefinitely suspended ANDES' operating authority because of maintenance discrepancies involving its failure to have in place internal controls or oversight of maintenance.

The announcement of the civil penalty proposed against ANDES is being made in accordance with the FAA's policy of releasing information to the public on newly issued enforcement actions in cases that involve penalties of $50,000 or more.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 16, 1997

Contact: Lorie Dankers
202-366-5565

MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater will be joined by the ten operating administrations of the department to host an Open House celebrating the 30th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Transportation on Monday, May 19, 1997.

The Open House will include remarks by Secretary Slater in the DOT Plaza at 1:00 p.m., followed by a public reception. Exhibits and technology demonstrations from each of the modes within the Department will be showcased as well.

This event is one of many Open Houses throughout U.S. DOT offices nationwide. It is designed to welcome the public and transportation community and to share the many departmental accomplishments and programs.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR DOT 30TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

Monday, May 19, 1997

All events will take place at the DOT Plaza
U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters
400 Seventh Street, SW
Metro stop: L'Enfant Plaza

Noon - 3:00 pm	Modal Exhibits on Display from DOT's Operating Administrations
1:00 p.m.	Kick-Off Remarks by Secretary Slater

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 70-97
Tuesday, May 6, 1997
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-8521

Aviation Safety Improvements In the Past Year

WASHINGTON -- Aviation, the safest form of travel in the United States, has been made even safer over the past year. As a result of lessons learned from the regulatory issues involving ValuJet, the regulatory approach to both new carriers and maintenance practices, as well as the transport of hazardous materials has undergone a transformation.

More aviation and hazardous materials inspectors are being hired. The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) best inspector resources are being focused on new carriers. A national certification team of safety experts is being formed and before any new airline can fly, it will have to win the team's approval. For the first time, new carriers will fly under increased supervision by FAA safety inspectors for their first five years of existence.

Oxygen generators may no longer be shipped as cargo on passenger planes, and rules are being readied to prohibit the shipment of oxidizers aboard passenger aircraft. Regulations to require both smoke detectors and fire suppression equipment in Class D cargo compartments are being written. Moreover, the FAA and the Transportation Department's Research and Special Projects Administration have worked aggressively and cooperatively with the shipping industry to broaden understanding of the rules regarding shipping hazardous materials.

These safety improvements enhance an aviation system that already is the envy of the world.

- more -

Safety improvements in the past year by the FAA, Research Special Projects Administration (RSPA), and Department of Transportation (DOT) include:

- The FAA grounded ValuJet until it met the terms of a consent order that required stringent tests to prove its ability to fly safely, and place limits on its expansion.

- The FAA heightened safety oversight for airlines using outside contractors for maintenance or training.

- The FAA conducted an unprecedented 90-day review of its aviation regulation and certification practices. As a result, the national certification team is being formed; new airlines must meet tougher certification standards and face increased scrutiny for the first five years; carriers with less than five years' experience are being subjected to the five-year heightened surveillance policy and will undergo increased inspections. In addition, the FAA is assigning its best inspectors to new carriers, and redesigning the program to oversee large carriers. Inspector numbers have risen to over 2,900 so far. DOT is applying more stringent financial requirements on new entrants.

- The FAA set in motion rulemaking to require the retrofit of fire detection and suppression systems in aircraft that don't now have such safety features.

- RSPA has banned the shipment of oxygen generators on passenger planes, worked with the FAA to better educate the public and shippers about hazardous materials shipment, and prepared regulations to bar oxidizers from passenger plane cargo compartments.

- To further raise the visibility of hazardous materials issues, the FAA has created a new Division of Dangerous Goods and Cargo Security within its Office of Civil Aviation Security.

Hazardous Materials Compliance

Hazardous Materials Safety Standards

The DOT has stringent standards for the transportation of hazardous materials and an excellent safety record for hazardous materials shipments. To maintain this excellent record, we are always looking for ways to enhance safety. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) provides valuable input into this process.

Following the ValuJet crash, the department listened to the NTSB and did more than requested. We immediately banned all oxygen generators from being shipped as cargo on any aircraft. We issued a proposal to ban all oxidizers from cargo compartments that cannot be reached by the crew in an emergency. And we are looking at banning oxidizers from other cargo compartments as well, even if the crew can enter the compartment during flight.

Helping People Comply With Safety Standards

We know that having good standards is not enough -- we must make sure people understand the rules and know how to comply with them. That is why the Department invests heavily in activities that inform people about our rules and help them stay in compliance.

Since ValuJet, we have reinvigorated our efforts to get the word out. We have held conferences and seminars, provided free training videos and other training materials, and distributed millions of brochures to airports, travel agents, and others explaining what materials may not be transported by air. We operate a free hotline and an Internet site to respond to any questions on hazardous materials transportation and increase awareness of our safety standards. And we are proposing through legislation to provide funds to states to help small businesses comply with our standards.

Stopping People Who Do Not Comply With Safety Standards

Despite our efforts, there are always people who either refuse or neglect to meet safety standards. We are committed to stopping these people and their illegal shipments.

In the last year, the FAA has hired 76 new hazardous materials inspectors, and plans to add 32 more by the end of June. RSPA has 5 new inspectors on board and is in the process of hiring 10 more. Both agencies have increased their legal and support personnel to support these inspectors in prosecuting hazardous materials violators. And these inspectors will receive enhanced training before entering the field. For example, FAA's training course on hazardous materials has been expanded from 2 to 9 weeks.

Once on the job, departmental inspectors aggressively examine carriers and shippers. Inspections may last two days and cover every aspect of a company's hazardous materials operation. A data system is being developed to target repeat offenders and others who may threaten safety. And we have proposed legislation to go after the dangerous practice of hiding or failing to declare hazardous materials shipments.

Where problems are found, action will be swift and severe. More cases will be referred to the U.S. Attorney's office for criminal prosecution and more violations will be announced to the public, further enhancing awareness of the rules and the consequences for making bad safety decisions.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 78-97
Friday, May 16, 1997
Contact: Kathryn Creedy
Phone: (202) 267-8521

FAA Announces Assessment of Foreign Compliance With International Safety Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As part of an effort to provide the public with more information about aviation safety in international travel, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced the results of the agency's assessment of Egypt's ability to provide safety oversight of its air carriers that operate in the United States. Egypt was found to comply with international standards and has been rated as Category I.

The assessments are not an indication of whether individual foreign carriers are safe or unsafe, rather they determine whether or not foreign civil aviation authorities are in place and the extent to which those authorities ensure that operational and safety procedures are maintained by their air carriers.

The focus of the FAA's foreign assessment program is on the civil aviation authority and not individual carriers. These civil authorities are assessed for their adherence to International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) aviation safety standards, not FAA regulations.

Travelers may call 1-800-FAA-SURE (1-800-322-7873) to obtain a summary statement about whether a foreign civil aviation authority has been assessed and the results, if available. They may also check the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) Internet site at **http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa.htm** for a listing of all current assessments, a description of each of the categories and an overview of the IASA program.

Countries whose air carriers fly to the United States must adhere to the safety guidelines of ICAO, the United Nations' technical agency for aviation which establishes international standards and recommended practices for aircraft operations and maintenance.

The FAA, with the cooperation of the host civil aviation authority, only makes assessments of those countries whose airlines have operating rights to or from the United States, or have requested such rights.

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Specifically, the FAA determines whether a foreign civil aviation authority has an adequate infrastructure for international aviation safety oversight as defined by the ICAO standards. The basic elements that the FAA considers necessary include: 1) laws enabling the appropriate government office to adopt regulations necessary to meet the minimum requirements of ICAO; 2) current regulations that meet those requirements; 3) procedures to carry out the regulatory requirements; 4) air carrier certification, routine inspection, and surveillance programs; and 5) organizational and personnel resources to implement and enforce the above.

The FAA has established three ratings for the status of these civil aviation authorities at the time of the assessment: (1) does comply with ICAO standards, (2) conditional and (3) does not comply with ICAO standards.

- **Category I, Does Comply with ICAO Standards:** A civil aviation authority has been assessed by FAA inspectors and has been found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with ICAO aviation safety standards.

- **Category II, Conditional:** A civil aviation authority in which FAA inspectors found areas that did not meet ICAO aviation safety standards and the FAA is negotiating actively with the authority to implement corrective measures. During these negotiations, limited operations by the foreign air carriers to the U.S. are permitted under heightened FAA operations inspections and surveillance.

- **Category III, Does Not Comply with ICAO Standards:** A civil aviation authority found not to meet ICAO standards for aviation oversight. Unacceptable ratings apply if the civil aviation authority has not developed or implemented laws or regulations in accordance with ICAO standards; if it lacks the technical expertise or resources to license or oversee civil aviation; if it lacks the flight operations capability to certify, oversee and enforce air carrier operations requirements; if it lacks the aircraft maintenance capability to certify, oversee and enforce air carrier maintenance requirements; or if it lacks appropriately trained inspector personnel required by ICAO standards. Operations to the U.S. by a carrier from a country that has received a Category III rating are not permitted unless the country arranges to have its flights conducted by a duly authorized and properly supervised air carrier appropriately certified from a country meeting international aviation safety standards.

The FAA has assisted civil aviation authorities with less than acceptable ratings by providing technical expertise, assistance with inspections, and training courses. The FAA hopes to work with other countries through ICAO to address non-compliance with international aviation safety oversight standards.

The FAA will continue to release the results of safety assessments to the public as they are completed. First announced in September 1994, the ratings are part of an ongoing FAA program to assess all countries with air carriers that operate to the United States.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 16, 1997
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

Fact Sheet
Blast Effects on Wide-Body Aircraft

The Challenge

The detonation of even a small explosive device aboard a commercial aircraft poses a real threat to the plane and the survival of its passengers and crew. An explosion in the cargo hold or the passenger cabin can knock out critical flight systems or even cause catastrophic structural failure.

The large containers used to carry passenger baggage and cargo on wide-body aircraft -- the Boeing 747, for example -- offer a tempting target to potential terrorists. The containers, usually made of aluminum, are sturdy enough to hold up to the stresses of regular airline service, but are not designed to survive a bomb blast. Designs for new "hardened" containers are currently being tested.

Perhaps the most infamous incident involving a bomb in a luggage container was the downing of Pan Am 103, a Boeing 747, over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988. Investigators determined that a small explosive device hidden in a container started a chain of events that led to breakup of the aircraft. The crash killed 259 people on the plane and 11 on the ground.

Containers are not the only target. A suicidal terrorist could potentially detonate an explosive device in the passenger cabin with devastating effects that also could lead to structural failure and loss of the aircraft.

The Solution

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a wide-ranging program to develop detection technologies that prevent a bomb from ever getting aboard a commercial airliner. But to guard against the remote possibility that an explosive comes aboard, the FAA also is working diligently to harden aircraft against blast effects.

On May 17, 1997, the FAA and the United Kingdom's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are combining their assets to study the blast effects and potential mitigation methods on commercial wide-body aircraft. A jointly acquired pressurized 747-100 will be used in the tests, which will take place at Bruntingthorpe Airfield, Leicestershire, England (about 70 miles outside of London).

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The goal is to study measures that could protect civil aircraft from explosions in luggage. The trial will involve four simultaneous explosions in the Boeing 747. Three will test hardening methods. The fourth, against an unprotected part of the aircraft, is expected to cause catastrophic structural failure by blowing a large hole in the airframe.

These tests are an important part of the FAA's aircraft hardening program. Since 1991, the agency has been studying different types of technology that could protect aircraft against certain explosives. The hardening program has included studies of aircraft vulnerability, tests of current and hardened luggage/cargo containers with actual explosives and manufacturing and maintenance issues associated with hardened structures.

The FAA's primary research objectives for the Bruntingthorpe tests are:

- Identify and study methods and techniques of minimizing explosive effects through the use of hardened containers and hardened panels.

- Study and identify potential ways to enhance aircraft resistance and survivability to explosives within the aircraft structure.

- Conduct a series of tests on the 747 to determine how vunerable the aircraft structure is to blast effects and to study what damage would produce catastropic structural failure. The test will use various explosive charge weights, configurations and locations.

- Study the effects of an explosive event occurring in a wide-body commercial aircraft cargo bay.

Since 1991, the FAA and CAA have had a mutual interest in developing innovative methods and technologies to lessen the chance of catastrophic failure due to an in-flight explosion. The British Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, which is conducting the Bruntingthorpe tests for the FAA and CAA, has its own successful aircraft structural analysis and hardening program.

The Results

By combining their individual research efforts, the FAA and CAA will mutually benefit by studying innovative ways to protect aircraft cargo holds from internal blast, and subsequently be able to apply new technologies to combat terrorism. The lessons learned from this joint research will be disseminated to the aircraft and luggage/cargo container industries.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 79-97
Saturday, May 17, 1997
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-8521

Great Lakes Aviation Ltd. Grounds Flights Following FAA Inspection

WASHINGTON -- Great Lakes Aviation Ltd., of Spencer, Iowa, yesterday voluntarily agreed to suspend operations following Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspections that uncovered deficiencies in the air carrier's operations. The company operates as Great Lakes Airlines and, under code-sharing agreements with United Airlines and Midway Airlines, as United Express and Midway Express, respectively.

Prompted by findings by the FAA's Des Moines, Iowa Flight Standards District Office, the agency increased surveillance of Great Lakes Aviation's maintenance operations on April 29. Those inspections found that the airline allowed personnel who were not properly trained and qualified to perform aircraft maintenance. The FAA alleges that the airline operated unairworthy aircraft. During the investigation, discrepancies were reported to the operator so appropriate corrective actions could be initiated.

"The FAA does not hesitate to take swift action to protect the safety of the flying public," said Acting FAA Administrator Barry L. Valentine.

Great Lakes Aviation agreed to suspend operations after the FAA informed the carrier that it planned to suspend its operating authority. The FAA will continue to work with Great Lakes Aviation until the agency is satisfied the carrier is in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations.

Great Lakes Aviation operates a fleet of 53 twin-engine turboprop aircraft (41 Beechcraft 1900 and 12 Embraer 120 aircraft). Scheduled service is offered to 82 cities in 21 states and three cities in Mexico under Federal Aviation Regulation Part 121. It also offers on-demand service under Part 135 on aircraft with nine or less passenger seats and service to 22 cities under Essential Air Service provisions. The air carrier transitioned to Part 121 operations this year as part of the FAA's "commuter rule."

Major hubs are Denver, Chicago, Minneapolis and Raleigh-Durham, N.C. The company operates 500 flights per day carrying approximately 887,000 passengers annually.

Passengers are advised to call their travel agent or airline to discuss alternate travel arrangements.

This FAA action is not related to the November 19, 1996, United Express accident in Quincy, Ill., which is currently under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 80-97
Monday, May 19, 1997
Contact: Marcia Adams
Phone: 202-267-8521

Departments of Transportation and Interior Move Toward Quieter National Parks

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today established a National Park Overflights Working Group (NPOWG) to develop a plan to ensure the preservation of the natural quiet in the nation's parks.

The NPOWG will be in existence for 100 days after the date of the initial meeting, which is scheduled for May 20-21. A final report will be submitted by the working group in no more than 100 days.

A Presidential mandate, issued on April 22, 1996, directed the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the leadership of relevant departments and agencies, to undertake additional transportation planning to address impact of transportation on national parks. In response, final rules were developed addressing sightseeing overflights of the Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain National Parks, and additional proposals for the Grand Canyon are being developed.

"I am confident that the working group will produce a rulemaking document in a fair and reasonable manner that strikes a balance for all entities involved -- the national park system, air tour operators and visitors to our national parks," said Secretary Slater. "This notice of proposed rulemaking is the first step toward achieving that balance while ensuring natural quiet and safety for those visiting the parks."

"Americans view the National Park System as a unique treasure that belongs to all of us," said Secretary Babbitt. "I look forward to the report of the working group and its recommendations for how to proceed with our Presidential mandate to restore natural quiet in our national parks."

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The mandate further directed the Secretary to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking for the management of sightseeing aircraft in national parks where it is necessary to reduce or prevent the adverse effects of such aircraft.

The working group will include representatives of the aviation industry, parks and conservation groups and Native Americans.

The members include:

- Andrew V. Cebula, vice president, government and industry affairs, National Air Transport Association
- Tom Chapman, vice president, government affairs, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Dave J. Chevalier, president and general manager, Blue Hawaiian Helicopters (also representing Helicopter Association International)
- Chip Dennerlein, National Parks Conservation Association regional representative
- Boyd Evison, former national park superintendent and regional director
- James Host, former director, Kentucky State Park, chief executive officer, National Tour Association
- Charles Maynard, executive director, Friends of Great Smokey Mountains National Park
- Alan Stephen, president, Twin Otter International
- Native American tribal representative - to be named

The final report will be made available to the public, and public meetings will be held following the publication of the notice of proposed rulemaking.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 81-97
Tuesday, May 20, 1997
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Grants Office Helps Lead Vice President's Reinvention Revolution

WASHINGTON -- Researchers across the country will soon be able to use the Internet when applying for certain Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grants thanks to an electronic commerce project spurred by Vice President Al Gore's federal reinvention revolution.

Three branches of the Department of Transportation -- the FAA, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration -- received a $155,000 grant from the Government Information Technology Services Board to start the program. The effort will provide electronic grants via the Internet to participating colleges, universities, non-profit organizations and companies involved in research and development.

"In addition to our acquisition and personnel reform efforts, we are working hard to make the FAA the model federal agency in adopting innovative, customer-focused policies and procedures. Ultimately, that will save the public time and money," said George Donohue, FAA's associate administrator for research and acquisitions.

During the first phase of the program, which should be completed in June, the FAA is participating in a feasibility trial during which test solicitations and payments are being sent. The second phase will electronically authenticate the identity of applicants and content of the applications.

By establishing an electronic system that facilitates grant applications and requests for payment, the FAA hopes to lower processing costs, provide faster, more responsive service by eliminating many paperwork requirements, improve accuracy and create a streamlined process that is less labor-intensive and more efficient.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 82-97
Thursday, May 22, 1997
Contact: Drucella Andersen
Phone: 202/267-3883

FAA Statement on GAO Findings Concerning Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is pleased that the General Accounting Office (GAO) agrees that the agency followed its customary grant process in awarding airport improvement funding to Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport. In making grants for the new airport, the FAA considered the project's effect on overall national air transportation system capacity, project benefit and cost, and the financial commitment of the airport.

By subsequently issuing a Letter of Intent to the Northwest Arkansas Airport Authority, the FAA has greatly speeded construction of the new facility, from three years to slightly more than a year, with an estimated savings of $24 million.

Drake Field, which currently serves the region, is safe but has physical limitations, particularly the surrounding mountains. As the GAO noted, the facility does not meet current FAA airport design standards and its runway capacity is constrained. These factors led local communities to request federal help in building a more modern airport capable of expansion.

Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport will meet existing airport standards and promises to accommodate the expected aviation growth in the region. The new airport has local community and airline support and the support of the Arkansas Congressional delegation.

The FAA believes that the GAO, in raising issues about the airport's potential success, did not fully appreciate that uncertainties are inherent in the airport development process. Although the FAA uses the best data available, there is always an element of uncertainty about projected air traffic levels, airline use and community involvement in the construction or expansion of any airport. The FAA's past experience is that users realize the advantages of modern, expandable airports and ultimately make them highly successful.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 1997

CONTACT: Kathleen B. Bergen

FAA TO BUILD NEW AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL FACILITY IN PEACHTREE CITY, GA

The Federal Aviation Administration has purchased a 35-acre tract of land in Peachtree City, Ga. to build a new air traffic control radar facility, Regional Administrator Carolyn Blum announced today. The new Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) will be relocated from Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport to the site on Georgia 74 near the Falcon Field airport.

"The new TRACON will provide an ideal environment for air traffic controllers to continue to provide the safest service to the flying public," Blum said. "It will enable us to provide controllers with the latest equipment and to expand as technology advances into the 21st Century."

The site was purchased from Peachtree City Holdings, LLC. It was selected from a field of 26 sites in 17 counties within the Atlanta metropolitan area. The $56.3 million cost of the program includes $14.2 million for land and construction and $41.6 million for equipment and telecommunications.

Planning for the TRACON relocation began in September 1993 using an innovative partnership of FAA labor and management. The planning team consisted of FAA management and the unions which represent air traffic controllers and airway facilities technicians, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) and Professional Airway Systems Specialists (PASS).

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"Bringing labor and management together from day one allowed all parties to have full participation in the site selection process," Blum said. "The team approach maximized the opportunity for input, and ensured that we would select a location which would be acceptable to all."

The team recommended the Peachtree City site following intensive study and a selection process which considered cost, operational requirements, environmental impacts, and quality of life criteria.

Construction of the new facility is scheduled to begin in March 1998 with commissioning expected in July 2000. Relocation of the TRACON to the new facility will support the continued growth of air traffic operations in the Atlanta metropolitan area and will accommodate new air traffic control technology which is being installed at FAA facilities nationwide.

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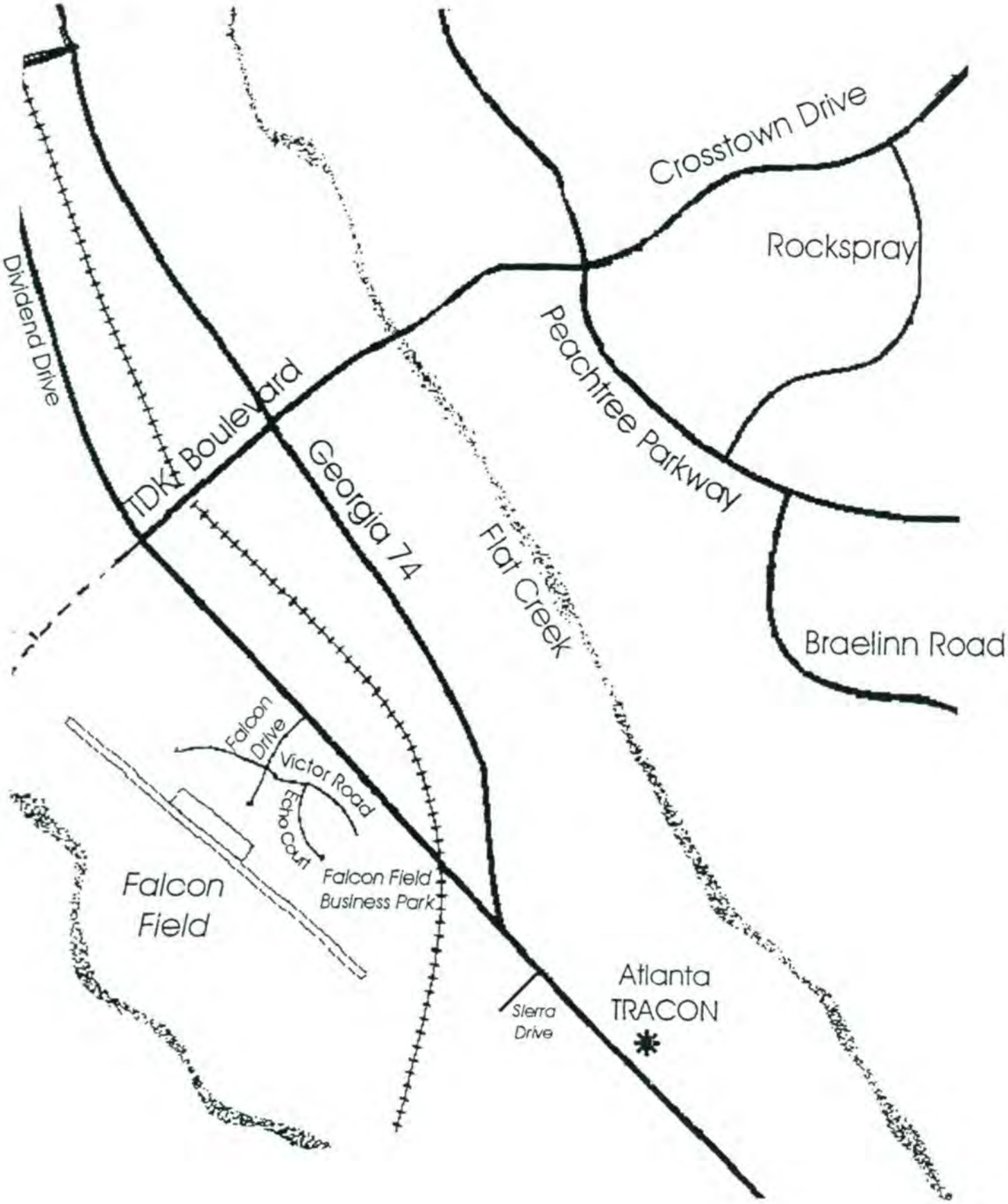
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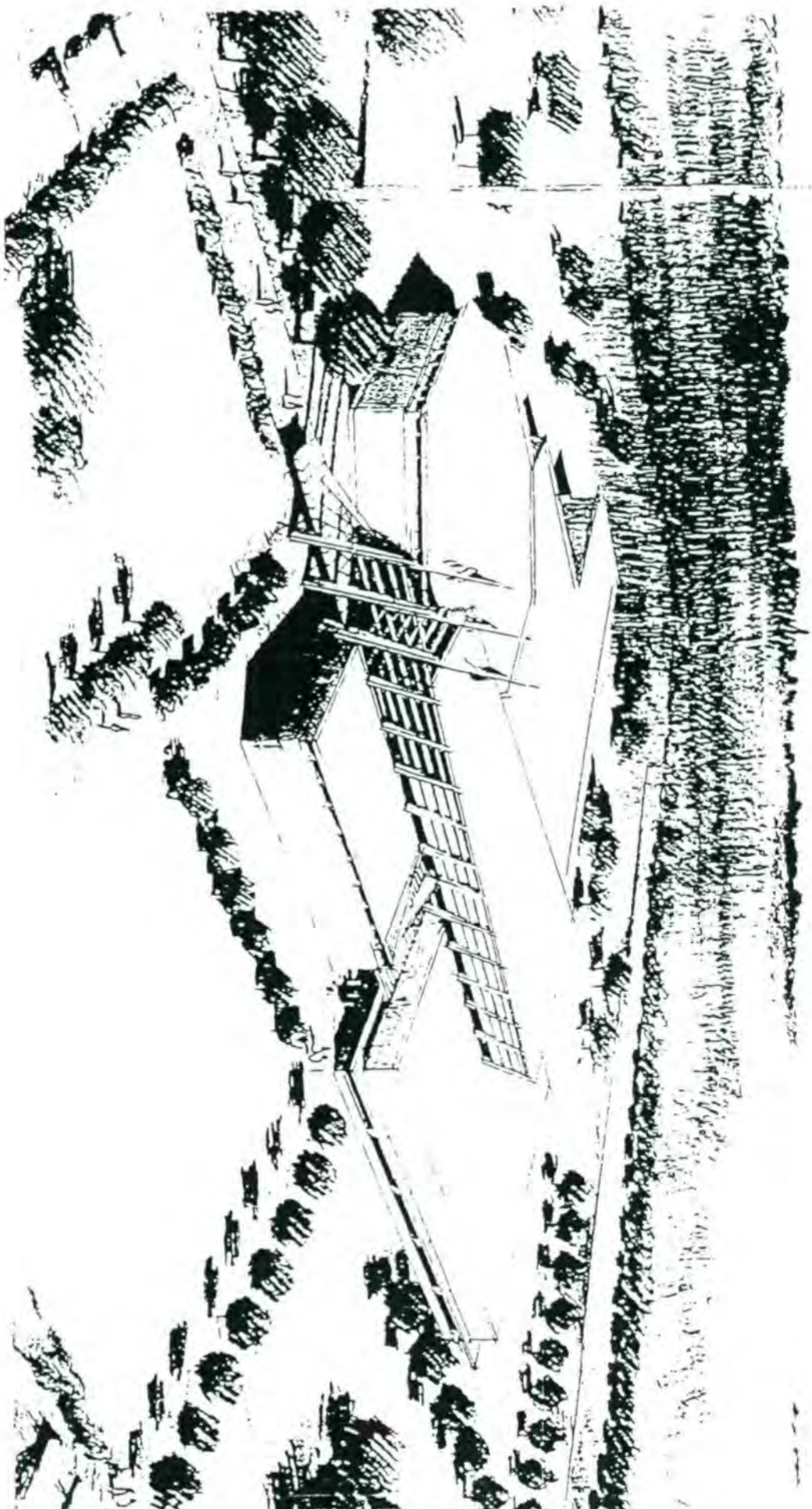

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 83-97
Friday, May 30, 1997
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521
HAI: Marilyn McLinnis
Phone: 703/683-4646

Media Advisory
Kids and 'Copters Mingle in FAA-HAI Education Project

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Helicopter Association International (HAI) are sponsoring a demonstration of law enforcement and rescue helicopter operations from 9:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, at Wood Acres Elementary School, Bethesda, Md. The event is the climax of an innovative FAA-HAI education project that could be a model for a broader national program.

Helicopters from the U.S. Park Police and Washington MedStar will land close to the school in response to a simulated hazardous material spill on nearby River Road. Marines from the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Va., will secure the landing zone and subsequently guide the helicopters in. The aircraft will begin to arrive at 9:30 am in 15-minute increments. Media representatives will be able to interview the FAA project leader, the helicopter crews and Wood Acres students touring the helicopters..

Using the world of helicopters and their role in aviation as a springboard, experts from the FAA and HAI worked closely with Wood Acres teachers and staff to incorporate material about helicopters and their community service missions into the students' curriculum. Speakers from the FAA, HAI and other participating organizations visited the school May 22-30 to present the material and help the students with special projects.

Wood Acres Elementary School is located at 5800 Cromwell Dr. in Bethesda. Directions are available by calling 202/267-8521. Media representatives should arrive at the school by 9:00 a.m. and go to the office for sign-in.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 84-97
Friday, May 30, 1997
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Orders Immediate Grounding of MD-900 Explorer Helicopters

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today issued a Priority Letter Airworthiness Directive (AD) ordering operators of MD-900 Explorer helicopters to immediately cease flights and ground operations until further notice. The AD is prompted by the discovery of a broken adjustable collective drive link during a McDonnell Douglas post-flight inspection on May 8.

The drive link assembly is a component of the primary collective flight control system that controls the helicopter main rotor blades. Failure of the part could result in loss of control of the helicopter.

Immediate investigation and testing by McDonnell Douglas followed the May 8 incident and a notice was issued to operators on May 9 as well as replacement link assemblies with instructions to replace the part. Further testing by the manufacturer revealed that the drive link assembly requires redesign. McDonnell Douglas issued a Service Bulletin yesterday and requested emergency action by the FAA.

"The agency's Airworthiness Directive will prohibit operation of the MD-900 helicopter until the manufacturer formulates acceptable repair or replacement procedures," said Barry L. Valentine, FAA Acting Administrator.

Worldwide there are 49 MD-900 Explorer helicopters in service, 26 of which are U.S. registered. An additional 12 helicopters are owned by McDonnell Douglas.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 85-97
Friday, May 30, 1997
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Picks Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc. to Review Agency Acquisitions

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today selected Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc., McLean, Va., to perform a congressionally mandated review of the agency's new system for acquiring goods and services. The agency's acquisition reform effort has strong bipartisan support and is a test case for streamlining federal acquisition processes and regulations at other agencies.

Under the $156,837 firm-fixed-price contract, Booz-Allen & Hamilton will conduct an independent assessment of FAA's new acquisition management system, which began April 1, 1996. The company also will review efforts by the agency to promote full and open competition for contracts above $50 million.

"We created the new system to make our acquisition process work better and cost less, and we've seen excellent results over the past year," said George Donohue, associate administrator for research and acquisitions. "Although it was requested by Congress, we see this independent assessment as one way to evaluate our progress and identify areas that may need improvement."

The FAA is scheduled to receive a final report by Aug. 31. The agency will provide the results as part of a report to be delivered to Congress by Dec. 31. Along with personnel and funding reforms, the FAA expects its new way of doing business to pay big dividends to the American public.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov