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ACSF SYMPOSIUM REINFORCES INDUSTRY SAFETY RECORD IMPROVEMENT

Alexandria, VA, March 4, 2010 – This week, the Air Charter Safety Foundation (ACSF) hosted its 2010 Air Charter Safety Symposium, a unique event for the on-demand and shared aircraft ownership industry.

Nearly 100 on-demand and shared aircraft ownership leaders gathered at the symposium to discuss current and emerging safety challenges and initiatives and learn how to foster a healthy safety culture.

Charlie Priester, chairman of the Air Charter Safety Foundation, began the symposium with a potent reminder of why the foundation and symposium were created in the first place – life is precious. Priester stated, “Nothing is more important than the safety of our customers and staff – a fact that is supported by the commitment to safety demonstrated by ACSF members and those in attendance.”

Symposium Highlights

- James Ballough, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) special assistant to the associate administrator for aviation safety, noted that Part 135 industry accidents have decreased as a result of technology improvements and industry cooperation with initiatives such as the National Air Transportation Association’s (NATA) Safety 1st Flight Crew Briefings. Ballough said, “The future is NextGen, SMS and continual safety recommendations including standardization and the review of Part 135 certificates or lack thereof.”
- Lindsey McFarren, president of McFarren Aviation Consulting, offered practical advice for mitigating security concerns. McFarren said that general aviation security should always be kept in perspective and must be approached with common sense – a topic she also addressed in a recent [article in NATA’s Aviation Business Journal](#).
- In an afternoon session, Flight Safety Foundation’s Jim Burin presented statistics on business aircraft safety and listed controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), approach and landing, loss of control and human factors as the prime areas of concern for the foundation. He said that loss of control has replaced CFIT as the highest risk area, but overall business jet accidents have declined over the last decade.
- Dr. Don Arendt, SMS program manager for the FAA dispelled some misconceptions regarding safety management systems (SMS) and discussed emerging issues with SMS

implementation. Arendt addressed the FAA's position on SMS implementation and noted that there are presently no FAA authorized procedures to accept or approve SMS programs, as the FAA has made no rule on SMS implementation within the U.S. Some barriers to successful SMS implementation include operators viewing SMS as a traditional safety program instead of a safety management system, disengaged top management, and poor documentation and integration.

- Ken Gray, director of operations, Executive Fliteways, capped off the first day by sharing his company's SMS and audit experience. Among Gray's suggestions for easing SMS implementation and the audit experience is to begin both with comprehensive documentation and implementation of a system of measurement to ensure that you are actually performing the procedures set forth in the documentation. Gray recommended the ACSF pre-audit checklist as an invaluable tool in this process as well as the AVSiS software for safety event reporting and benchmarking. Gray said, "The easiest lessons to learn are those learned by others. We can successfully improve industry safety with honest reporting."
- The Honorable Christopher Hart, National Transportation Safety Board vice chairman, began his session stating, "Safety and productivity can be improved simultaneously, if done right." Collecting, understanding and sharing data is imperative to an operator's SMS. Hart noted that there was a 65% decrease in the fatal accident rate between 1997-2007 due to proactive safety information programs and system think – all participants working collaboratively, using data to identify problems, prioritize problems, develop solutions and evaluate interventions.
- An effective and efficient automated risk assessment tool, RA Check was launched by the NATA on the last day of the symposium. RA Check combines a highly comprehensive FAA-endorsed risk assessment tool with the automation necessary to make its use quick, easy, and accurate. Visit www.nata.aero/racheck for more information and a 30-day free trial.

ACSF President James K. Coyne summed up the event, saying, "Instilling a robust corporate safety culture takes a concerted, organized and sincere effort – an effort supported by the ACSF membership, safety programs and initiatives."

Presentations from the symposium will be made available to the public on the ACSF Web site at www.acsf.aero/symposium.

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Through research, collaboration and education, the Air Charter Safety Foundation advances charter and shared aircraft ownership industry standards and best practices; promulgates safety, security and service benchmarks; and promotes the universal acceptance of safety management systems.