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LAW ENFORCEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Police Service [SAPS] ordered six new Robinson R44 helicopters and deliveries commenced this summer. The primary use of the craft is believed to be training.

The SAPS chose the Flight Management Systems FMS Moving Map for their new aircraft and the six were delivered with the FMS Moving Map systems installed.

Senior Superintendent Petrus Oberholster, Commander National Heliport SAPS Air Wing had the opportunity to view a fully operational system at the ALEA National Conference in Houston Texas, before taking delivery of the first aircraft. [FMS]



One of the new R44 helicopters on flight test with Robinson this summer.

UNITED KINGDOM

CHILTERN: The International Credit Crises is being blamed for setbacks to the programme for a new police helicopter for the multi-force Chiltern Consortium.

It is claimed that a £250,000 [\$500,000] hole has appeared in the funds set aside for a new Eurocopter EC135 P2 helicopter to be based at RAF Benson, Oxford.

It is being reported that the police have gone to the Government for a grant to ensure they can buy the helicopter, despite the fact that the grant aid has already been allocated, the airframe recently ordered and the deposit paid on the basis of a price of about £4.35M. It is now being suggested that the 'about' figure has moved upwards thanks to the weakening of Sterling against both the Euro and the US Dollar. The cost is now £4.65M.

Chiltern is the lead authority on the purchase of a handful of EC135P2 helicopters that are to be delivered to UK police forces over the next couple of years. Each of these will have an identical specification which it is hoped will serve to reduce prices and increase the overall value to the operator.

An annual report on the existing EC135T1 helicopter G-CHSU based at Benson showed it had attended 1,004 incidents in the county between April 2007 and April 2008. It led to 98 arrests, found 17 missing people and evacuated seven people to hospital.



UNITED STATES

FEDERAL:: Last month a new Eurocopter AS350B3 A-Star helicopter N852BP was dedicated and placed into service with a seal that bears the name and call sign of Robert F. Smith, the Customs and Border Protection pilot who died in a helicopter crash in May last year. Smith's call-sign was X-Ray 8014. The seal will remain assigned to and displayed on this CBP aircraft for the entirety of its service.

It is said that this is only the second time that such an honour has been bestowed by the agency.

Smith's helicopter, N851BP, crashed during a routine operation May 22, 2007 near El Paso, Texas. A Border Patrol agent in the helicopter with Smith, Steven Takacs, 30, survived the crash.

Although the current preliminary NTSB accident report does not mention these details, it is said that the honour was bestowed due to the manner of the crash.

It is said that Smith was flying the mission when he spotted three illegal aliens crossing the border. He radioed the Border Patrol on the ground, and they arrested the three men. At that moment, an object hit the tail of his helicopter, and it began spinning out of control.

He is said to have put his own life in peril avoiding children playing and finally setting the aircraft down on his side leaving his companion hanging in his straps. The passenger survived, but Bob, hitting first, was killed instantly.

LOUISIANA: Concerns are being raised about the rising cost of travel in police helicopters being imposed on the budget by State Governor Bobby Jindal since he took office in January. In the first eight months of office – January to September 1 - Jindal spent nearly \$180,000 in taxpayer money to travel in a pair of State Police Bell 430 helicopters. He uses the police helicopters for long distance travel within the state but airlines outside the state.

Although much of the travel has been in support of his political duties he has attended Sunday services numerous times in north Louisiana although these were not included on his



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public duties.

The costs are absorbed within the police aviation budget and the report claims that although at \$25,000 airline flights are in themselves costly because they tend to include an entourage of other staff the helicopters are easily the governor's most expensive travel costs. He uses the helicopters to conduct town hall meetings, to push legislation and to attend church. Jindal has made use of the facility far more often than the previous Governor.

During the period Jindal used State Police helicopters to attend Chamber of Commerce banquets five times, eight times to go to town hall meetings and a dozen times to worship in churches across the state. In addition other flights in his itinerary included a halftime appearance at a basketball tournament, speaking at a high school graduation, signing legislation and going to a fishing rodeo.

Louisiana State Police purchased the two Bell 430 helicopters for \$6.3M each in late 2004 during the time of Governor Blanco. The new helicopters ratcheted up the state's costs because the twin engines require two pilots to be onboard. Aside from crew costs three years ago, the helicopters cost \$787.35 an hour to operate. They now cost \$1,200 an hour, largely because of increased fuel prices.

Although the critical news article makes mention of the twelve visits to away from home Sunday church services it does concede that the itinerary has included such as lunches with local officials.

The official line is that the Governor is 'honoured to worship with people across the state.'

As is the case with most State Police air units in the US helicopters are seen as one of the perks of the governor's office along with a mansion home and police-chauffeured vehicles.

MARYLAND: In January 2007 there were reports that the Princess Anne Police Department in Somerset County had been given a donated helicopter two years earlier and yet it had never flown a single police mission. There were hopes that nearby police agencies might offer funds for an air unit but it was not expected to fly before that summer.

Again the Bell OH-58C was being highlighted in early October 2008. Questions were being asked about the same stored Bell parked up at a 'secret location' on the Lower Shore. The media claim that the hidey hole is not on an airfield but a chicken shed in Wicomico County, right behind the County Sheriff's home.

The media claims that no unit is in the offing it just looks as if the free helicopter – still finished in its dour camouflage and operational marks '26C' - is just sitting there in the dry increasing in value. After five years - in 2010 - Princess Anne can sell the helicopter potentially for as much as \$100,000. The federal government forbids the for-profit sale of donated military surplus parts but the usually difficult to get airframe can be sold off after a period—used or not.

In the wake of the recent fatal accident to one of its Dauphin's the Maryland State Police Aviation Command has progressively resumed helicopter operations. It was operating at six of its eight sections by third week of October. Trooper 6, the helicopter assigned to the Centreville Section was the sixth to be declared operational.

OKLAHOMA: United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS) recently delivered a new customised Bell 206L4 LongRanger N202TP to the Tulsa Police Department.

URS completed the helicopter with the equipment Tulsa PD requires to meet their mission. Some of the specific equipment included the FLIR Ultra 8500, Spectrolab SX-16 Search-



light, SLASS System, Paravision Diamond Back Monitors, Avalex Digital Recorder, the Meta-Map System and the Onboard Systems Cargo Hook.

The avionics and communications suite incorporated the Garmin Com/NAV/GPS, NAT FM transceiver and audio panels and the MACOM 800MHz tactical radio. Air conditioning, bleed air heat, engine oil filter and the inlet barrier filter were also installed. URS finished the 206 with the Police Department's customized exterior paint scheme.

Tulsa PD will use the new helicopter to enhance their current fleet for support of field units and search and rescue. [URS]

Ed: The new Tulsa helicopter joins a similar model acquired in 2003 and is apparently replacing N500TP an MD500E QTR acquired more than a decade ago.

PENNSYLVANIA: Luzerne County Sheriff Michael Savokinas is seeking to set up a helicopter air support unit operation in his organisation over the next few years.

Luzerne County covers 891 square miles and has more than 310,000 residents, They are looking to finance the helicopter purchase using federal grant money with the local budget picking up the cost of pilotage, fuel and maintenance.

The sheriff's idea grew out of a recent helicopter tour of the county.



AIR AMBULANCE

AUSTRIA

ÖAMTC: In a shock announcement last month it was reported in the media that the Austrian car club ÖAMTC is planning to end its Christophorus helicopter-rescue service due to soaring costs and issues regarding the contract with the Austrian government. Fortunately the truth turned out to be a little less dramatic.

Whilst ÖAMTC President Werner Kraus and club General Secretary Hans Peter Halouskad had made an announcement that aired their dissatisfaction with the current contract situation with a section of the renowned Austrian air-rescue service. The resultant storyline was somewhat overstated in the media

It was announced that ÖAMTC will stop cooperating with the Austrian government after its contract with it expires in 2010 and that as a result the nine locations that ÖAMTC took over from the Interior Ministry in 2001 will be affected but not the whole operation. Long term readers will recall that the handover was front page news on PAN at the time and it led to a major shift in direction for the police fleet away from rescue towards security.

At the core of the problem appears to be growing financial problems precipitated by health-insurance companies that have been paying less and less for rescue flights. That has been further affected by rising fuel prices.

To an enquiry by PAN to ÖAMTC led to Ralph Schueller of the organisation saying: -

'It's true that the Austrian car club ÖAMTC has announced a precautionary notice of cancellation by the end of 2010. This announcement is rooted in the insufficient financing through public authorities and in the thereby increasing amount of money that the Austrian car club has to contribute. This notice of cancellation concerns nine of the 16 locations of the ÖAMTC-helicopter-rescue service. The Austrian car club is optimistic that all involved authorities will together find a satisfying solution in the remaining time. The ÖAMTC has repeatedly declared that he is willing to continue helicopter rescue service not only at the remaining locations but also in those nine affected of the cancellation. But secure finance is a precondition.'

The ÖAMTC air operation made its 175,000th mission in July this year. Since the first rescue flight in July 1983, its helicopters have spent 25,000 hours in the air.



CANADA

ONTARIO: In the wake of a large helicopter order announced in August the not for profit Ontario air ambulance operation, Ornge, is to receive new fixed wing resources with the announcement of an order for six Pilatus PC-12NG aircraft.

The Pilatus PC-12 planes, which will cost about \$35M in total, will start flying in 2009 and 2010 and will be based out of Sioux Lookout, Timmins and Thunder Bay.

In 2005 Ornge, formerly the Ontario Air Ambulance Service Corporation, was tasked by the ministry of health to run the air ambulance service. Based in Toronto, Ornge handles 18,000 calls every year from serious accidents and on-scene trauma calls to transfers of the critically ill from hospital to hospital.

Up until now, Ornge did not own any planes, relying on various service providers to operate the 76 fixed-wing aircraft at 22 bases, nine of which are manned around the clock.

INDIA

MUMBAI: MESCO Airlines a Mumbai-based helicopter charter services plans to expand its operations by adding 'large size helicopters.' The expansion plans are at a preliminary stage. It currently has a fleet of seven helicopters catering for short haul travel and one five seat aircraft. MESCO plans to offer air ambulance and fire fighting services in addition to utility and business travel and is already talking to various potential police, fire and ambulance customers.

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: The chief officers of the air ambulances in the UK are saying that the extra skills of doctors are needed to save lives as the health service at large moves towards larger centres of excellence and increase travelling times to trauma hospitals.

The majority of air ambulances continue to use paramedics to treat patients as they are transferred to hospital. So far only three of the 18 charities which run the 26 emergency helicopters which serve England and Wales use doctors at all times, while another handful occasionally use them.

The Association of Air Ambulance Charities (AAAC) said that with longer journeys for trauma patients, a network of "flying doctors" is needed.

David Philpott, the chairman of the AAAC, said: "We find ourselves being called out to extremely serious cases, many road traffic accidents where the injuries can be horrific.

"But it is no longer about transporting them to the nearest A&E.

"What we are doing is stabilising the patients at the scene and getting them to specialist centres that can be a long way away.

"That requires specialist skills and, without doctors on board, patients may be at risk.

"This is not going to happen overnight, but we have to get there."

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NATIONAL TUK TUK: One man, Steve Lord, with the support of Round Table is undertaking a unique fund-raising adventure in support of air ambulances. It is proving to be a novel and fun way of promoting the Associations of Air Ambulance charities and all other organisations involved.

The carriage being used for this profile raiser is a green and yellow Indian Tuk Tuk three wheel utility vehicle capable of just 33mph. It is a top to bottom journey from Scotland to southern England but not taking the 900 mile direct route, rather eating up 1700 miles of roadway. The 14 day journey in the motorised rickshaw from John O'Groats to Land's End will be making pit stops at various Air Ambulance stations throughout the UK which will inevitably generate a great variety of local PR both for Air Ambulance and local Round Table clubs.

Steve Lord, a 41-year-old industrial chemist from Clitheroe in Lancashire, is driving a vehicle donated by sponsors Eurocopter UK. For the Oxford based helicopter manufacturer it makes a change from sponsoring equally 'off core market' sailing boats as seen last month. Inevitably another sponsor is the biscuit brand Tuc – leading to the machine name morphing into a Tuc-Tuc in some reports.

To find out more about Mr Lord's adventure and follow his progress, go to www.roundtable.co.uk

COUNTY: The County Air Ambulance Trust, the Midlands oldest independent air ambulance Charity formed in 1993, is bringing new or improved helicopter access to all key Accident and Emergency Hospitals and Trauma Centres with the full support of air ambulance operators and NHS Trust Hospitals in the Region.

The project will see the building of new helipads adjacent to trauma rooms and improve-

ments to access routes between landing places and the medical facilities. Even where there are existing landing facilities the pathways often take a torturous route over worn pathways and this is to be remedied.

Agreements have already been reached with Birmingham Heartlands and Oswestry Hospitals where work has already commenced, negotiations are in an advanced stage with the Bristol Royal Infirmary and the Leicester Royal Infirmary, and discussions are taking place with the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham which have all been identified as requiring improved helipad facilities.

A new Helicopter Emergency Landing Pad Appeal (H E L P) has been established to raise all the funds needed to construct or update existing helipads and ensure that all new hospitals have suitable helipad access in the future.

There are currently too few suitable places for the emergency helicopters to land. Hospital building programmes, uncertainty within the NHS about the long term use of hospitals and a lack of cash has resulted in delay and deferral and a serious shortage of helipads. Only a small number of hospitals have helipads and a number of these require updating as facilities on the ground now seriously lag behind helicopter numbers.

County Air Ambulance has benefited from a £30,000 donation by Midland Expressway, the operators of the M6 toll linkway motorway north of Birmingham. The firm has also pledged to sponsor the service for three further years in a deal worth a total of £90,000.

Tom Fanning, chief executive of Midland Expressway, said: 'We are committed to supporting the excellent service provided by County Air Ambulance.'

They may be getting on well with Midland Expressway but a row has broken out between County and another fundraiser over appeals for funding. Bosses at the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance (DLRAA) are furious that County Air Ambulance is still operating in its area and distorting public perception of just which air ambulance is the local one. DLRAA was formed to fill a void left by County when they pulled out of what is now their area.

The £10M appeal to build or improve emergency helicopter landing pads in both the East and West Midlands by County is seen as jeopardising their own campaign to raise £1.5M a year to keep the air ambulance flying. The difficult fundraising situation is made worse by now having to find an extra £15,000 a year to cover increased fuel costs.

DEVON: The new Devon Air Ambulance – reported upon in the last issue of PAN – was called out on its first mission on Thursday October 2nd. The adult male patient was transported from a remote location near Kentisbeare to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Exeter.

Following on from comments expressed in the last edition of PAN Heléna Holt, Chief Execu-



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tive of the Devon Air Ambulance Trust said 'This mission marks a very significant landmark for the charity, and has been the culmination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people. Of course none of this would have been possible without the unstinting support of the community, businesses and friends of Devon.'

She added 'It's now a time for reflection. We know there are many eyes on us within the industry, all waiting to see how it pans out owning our helicopter, instead of the traditional leasing. We have no doubt at all that it was the best step forward for Devon, ensuring the future stability and growth of the service. However we can't afford to rest on our laurels. Just because we own it, doesn't mean there aren't bills to pay, and funds to be raised. We need all of our supporters more than ever.'

North Devon's venerable Bolkow 105DBS4 air ambulance was been replaced as of Saturday 4th October, with G-DAAT, the EC135 which was formerly flying out of Exeter. Both aircraft are owned and operated by Bond Air Services for the Charity. G-DAAT was replaced by the new EC135T2, which has been bought outright by the charity [see last issue].

EAST ANGLIA: To help the East Anglian Air Ambulance conserve vital funds, Marshall Airport Cambridge UK has made a hangar available to provide overnight accommodation for Anglia Two, the Eurocopter BK117C1 air ambulance serving the counties of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

The regional airport, owned by the Marshall Group, will make no charge for housing the air ambulance and preparing it for operational duties each morning. It is also only 12 miles from the aircraft's operational base at RAF Wyton so the move will save the charity the cost of flying the aircraft back to its base at Norwich Airport each evening and back down to RAF Wyton in the morning.

While Anglia Two will now be housed at Cambridge, its operational base remains RAF Wyton and it will relocate to the base each morning to meet its crew of highly skilled clinicians from emergency medical charity Magpas.

Michael Marshall, Chairman of the Marshall Group, already supports the EAAA as the chairman of the Council of Reference of its Court of Benefactors, which assists the charity with the development of its service across the region.

The Marshall Group is an established maintenance and repair facility as well as design engineering expertise perhaps best known for its current work supporting Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft in the UK. The airport formerly known as Cambridge City Airport changed its name last month and will now be known as Marshall Airport Cambridge UK to coincide with the latest development at the airport – the Marshall Business Aviation Centre. The facilities have been expanded to take on a new 25,000 sq ft hangar built adjacent to the existing MRO facility at Cambridge.

The EAAA's first aircraft, Anglia One, provides a dedicated service to Norfolk and Suffolk using a similar BK117C1 helicopter.



Left to right: Michael Black, Treasurer, Magpas; Simon Gray, Executive Director, East Anglian Air Ambulance; Michael Marshall, Chairman of the Marshall Group of Companies and John Watkins, Director, Airport Operations and Development. Steve Norris, pilot, is pictured in the background with the BK117C1 G-RESC flown as 'Anglia Two'.



Norfolk-based car rental firm Apex Car Rental (Norwich) Ltd has given the East Anglian Air Ambulance a new Vauxhall Vivaro 2.0 CDTi van for Laetitia Hilling, Fundraising Co-ordinator for North, East and South Norfolk.

The company's generous gesture ensures that Laetitia and her team have the transport they need to get themselves, the merchandise and the equipment they carry to the many fundraising engagements they attend on the charity's behalf across the county throughout the year.



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HERTFORDSHIRE: The Herts Air Ambulance team launches their HEMS operation on November 5 at Stevenage Borough Councils spectacular fireworks event at Fairlands Valley Park, Stevenage.

The display, managed by Stevenage Leisure, is attended by some 20,000 spectators annually and this years event besides marking the demise of Guido Fawkes and his team of renegade Catholics who attempted to blow up the English Parliament in 1605 will also see the unveiling of the decidedly more modern MD902 Explorer, registration G-HAAT callsign Helimed 55.

The Air Ambulance has been commissioned for an initial period of one year and will operate 5 days a week. It will carry an Accident and Emergency qualified doctor and a Paramedic and will be fully equipped for all the vital Air Ambulance work that will be undertaken in Hertfordshire in partnership with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust flying from North Weald.

KENT: Kent Air Ambulance chief executive David Philpott has launched a campaign that aims to help UK charities claim some of the £73M that British Airways and Virgin Atlantic owe back to UK passengers in illegal surcharges. Philpott is also the chairman of the Association of Air Ambulance Charities [AAAC].

He has created a website, www.givethatmoneytocharity.co.uk, that contains a template letter that charities can adapt to send to their supporters encouraging them to claim back the charges and pass them on to the charity.

Philpott has spent a great deal of time trying to convince the US courts to force BA and Virgin Atlantic to hand over any unclaimed monies to charity. In the US Miracle Flights for Kids will receive any unclaimed cash at the end of December 2012 but there is no similar scheme in the UK and the US courts declined to instigate the requirement here.

At just £20 rebate per flight the individual amounts likely to be claimed is low and many will not bother pursuing it; as a result a large proportion of money in the pot will never be claimed.

Philpott is hoping his campaign will prompt customers owed the monies to spend a few minutes filling out the claim form and then send the refund to a charity.

SUSSEX: Hollywood actress Kelly Preston presented a cheque for £50,000 (\$82,000) to Sussex Air Ambulance on behalf of the L. Ron Hubbard Foundation and the Church of Scientology at the 12th annual Gala Charity Concert at Saint Hill, East Grinstead, UK.

More than 1,500 were in attendance to enjoy the concert and give their support, including Mayors, District Council Chairmen, Town Councillors, and community leaders from all over the South of England. Representatives from a wide variety of embassies attended, including from Cameroon, Bulgaria, Vietnam, Fiji, South Africa, and Liberia. Other guests flew in especially from all over Europe and as far away as the United States and Canada.

The Sussex Air Ambulance Service is a registered charity which provides Helicopter Emergency Medical Service and air ambulance service to Sussex, Kent and Surrey counties. Attending an average of four incidents every day, Sussex Air Ambulance is funded entirely by voluntary donations and provides a team of highly skilled doctors, paramedics and nurses.

The Chief Executive Mr. Dave Philpott and Sussex Air Ambulance staff and crew, were invited up on to the stage to accept the check from Ms Preston and Mr. Bob Keenan, Director of the L. Ron Hubbard Foundation. Over the years, the Saint Hill Gala Charity Concert has supported numerous charities, from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and the RSPCA to the National Drug Prevention Alliance and the Bluebell Railway Trust. The concert follows



the tradition that was started by L. Ron Hubbard in the 1960's when he resided at Saint Hill Manor and supported many of the local charities. www.scientology.org



THAMES VALLEY & CHILTERN: The third Ferrari Funday (FFD) in aid of the Thames valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance (TVACAA) broke its own fund-raising record amassing £32,000 for the emergency service which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

The event took place on Sunday 20 July at the Newbury Showground when over 130 Ferraris were on show alongside the brand new TVAC EC135 Eurocopter, the very latest in air ambulance design which had only been in service for barely a week.

The event has now raised an incredible £87,000 for the charity in just three years of operation. Next year's Ferrari Fun Day will again take place at the Newbury Showground on Sunday July 19 2009.

NORTH WEST: The Christmas sales period is upon us and most air ambulance charities are hard at work selling hundreds of seasonal cards to raise yet more funds for the wholly charity funded operations. The EC135 operating North West Air Ambulance sought to go one better and offer the buying public a little something different.

It was intended to raise a smile and much-needed funds for the charity but it seems that although it is not a new idea the new offering, a risqué calendar, has prompted anger among some ambulance staff and as a result the calendar '*Bare in the air*' has been banned from ambulance stations across the region. It is said that paramedics from the North West Ambulance Service (NWS) are up in arms about the product.

The images in it were produced thanks to the freely given time of a number air ambulance staff and supportive members of the public. The volunteers, including the helicopter pilot, posed nude, with parts of the aircraft and a variety of strategically-placed items to cover them.

It is all very reminiscent of the highly successful scenario depicted in the movie *Calendar Girls* where some nominally prim and proper ladies of the Women's Institute did exactly the same thing and led to massive sales of the calendar and led to the world market movie.

It is said that integrity and dignity at work policies were being compromised and the whole thing was set up without reference





to their knowledge. The Air Ambulance as an independent charity has no need to seek permission of the NWAAS, but it seems odd that paramedics seconded to work on the helicopter were not aware of the project and even odder that they are prudes being driven out of their closets.

The Air Ambulance say that the overwhelming buying public response to the calendar has been 'absolutely fantastic' – exactly who the complainants are has yet to be ascertained. The calendar, costing £5, is on sale in Booths supermarkets throughout the north west and can be obtained from the NWAA via their web site at www.northwestairambulance.com

Ed: Perhaps this is another of those cases where someone in an NHS Union office thought it would be a good idea to say it was a bad idea on behalf of the silent majority who on the whole will not have blinked an eyelid – just in case someone took offence! May their Christmas turkey go as rancid as their support..

WARWICKSHIRE & NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: One hundred thousand pounds has been donated to the air ambulance by a charitable trust. It is their highest donation ever. The Soroptimist International of Rugby Charitable Trust handed over the money at the operations air base on Coventry Airport last month. In return for this major portion of the WNAA's annual operating costs of £1.4M the Soroptimist International of Rugby Charitable Trust logo is now featured on the helicopter. [Telegraph]

Soroptimist International of Rugby Charitable Trust was registered as a charity in April 2007 following the sale of a block of apartments in the town of Rugby which provided accommodation for women in the area on low incomes. The trust offers grants to worthy causes, was founded with two main objectives: to help terminally ill or disabled people and their families and carers, and to promote good health.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: The Blythe City Council voted to begin charging Blythe Ambulance Service dispatch fees at its meeting on Sept. 23. Blythe Ambulance will be charged an annual fee of \$22,161.05 plus an 18 percent administrative fee for a total of \$26,150.04 beginning the current fiscal year. If Blythe Ambulance doesn't agree to the terms, Dispatch services will be cancelled from year end. The department has been dispatching for Blythe Ambulance since the 1980s and in 2007 their ambulance calls were 13% of all calls for service dispatched by Blythe PD.

Until now no charge was levied for this service to Blythe Ambulance but they had charged Desert Air Ambulance an annual fee of \$5,500 for what amounted to 1% of all calls handled. It is expected that Blythe Ambulance will pay the fee.

MARYLAND: Last months fatal crash of a State Police AS365N Dauphin helicopter has reopened a debate on the provision of air ambulance services to the region and what is the

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only state run air ambulance service.

Some say that the crash has increased pressure on the governor and the legislature to privatise the service or find money to replace the ageing fleet in a scenario that sees all state funding facing shortfall. A new fleet would cost local taxpayers at least \$120M for a fleet of twelve. Funding for the first three is already in the system. The argument put forward is that a private service ought to be able to serve a greater number of state residents and could be funded in a year for less than the price of one helicopter.

Although the cause of the accident remains unclear critics are pointing out that the two patients, one of whom survived, were not seriously injured and should not therefore have been flown in the first place. The claim is that the state resource is being over-used because it is just that, a state resource. A review of guidelines for deploying the helicopters is underway. Meanwhile many critics are saying that the existing decision-making process about when to call a helicopter is resulting in a large number of unnecessary air rescues. [Washington Post]

Ed: And so the debate with no apparent end goes on. Individual states and organisations are facing up to this giant problem in a piecemeal fashion but many of the practices are so ingrained that it will take someone at the highest level to put it right. There is no one fault working here but at least there are signs that some rogue operations are being singled out for action and closed down. It is doubtful whether public opinion will long allow the industry to proceed at the current pedestrian pace.

MISSISSIPPI: Rescue 7, the medical evacuation helicopter that serves ten counties in the Southeast Mississippi Air Ambulance District, is out of action following an incident while landing at a traffic accident site. One of the four blades on the main rotor clipped a tree.

The repairs required resulted in the Agusta A119 Koala N521RC being transported out of the state to Birmingham, Alabama, over 200 miles [338km] away. Rescue 7 is normally based out of Bobby L. Chain Municipal Airport. The helicopter provides emergency medical air service to Lamar, Covington, Forrest, Greene, Jeff Davis, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone and Walthall counties.

Amid a degree of criticism about the service being provided to the affected counties it has emerged that in each of the past three years, the helicopter had been unavailable for a minimum of two months because of routine maintenance or unexpected repairs. The cost of that maintenance was also seen to be high; last year, the bill was \$450,000 - 11.8% of the district's \$3.8M budget. During fiscal year 2006-07 maintenance and repairs grounded the helicopter for 98 days.

Some of the downtime associated with the aircraft is unavoidable. FAA regulations require mandatory inspections after every 100 hours of flight time and such as 500 hour inspections require even more-depth inspection. The nearest certified inspection site is Birmingham and the Agusta reaches the 100-hour threshold each two to three months. The inspections have ranged from eight days to a quite memorable 31-days during the 2,100-hour inspection in August last year. Added to those predictable events in the last three years the Koala has suffered additional unscheduled events including a vertical gyro failure, hydraulic failure, stability augmentation system failure and an engine oil leak.

There have been discussions about replacing or supplementing the seven years old helicopter [c/n 14019] but so far the costs associated with that option [\$3.2M] have been too daunting to meet. Whilst it is the mechanical problems that have apparently dogged the service at times it is simply either bad weather or multiple calls that have added to the sense of anguish surrounding availability.

Lamar County is one of those reviewing its financial contribution to Rescue 7 and they have already been in talks with different providers - Air Methods-owned Gulf Coast MedEvac included - before deciding where to place their budget dollars. Air Methods have a sizeable fleet and would be able to provide a back-up aircraft. They have also indicated that their maintenance budget was way under the \$450,000 being bandied about for Rescue 7. They are even saying that the numbers do not add up to six figures - therefore under \$100,000.

[Clarion/Media]

OHIO: Newspapers got it wrong again when the Cincinnati Enquirer reported that an air ambulance operation was refusing to carry an off-duty Warren County Sheriff's deputy injured in a three-vehicle crash on Interstate 71.

While fire crews worked to free the deputy, dispatchers asked CareFlight at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton if their medical helicopter was available - a routine move in crashes involving trapped motorists - only to find that the six-foot-nine deputy would have *been too tall to fit* into CareFlight's medical helicopter. Although the deputy went to the hospital in a conventional ambulance because his injuries were not considered critical that over tall comment sent the wires buzzing. The operator has a fleet of Eurocopter AS365N helicopters, not a craft usually associated with lack of space. So perhaps there was some other issue?

All a misunderstanding it seems. The Miami Valley Hospital representative Nancy Thickett told PAN *'The Cincinnati Enquirer article was not accurate. We do not have a height restriction'*.

Ed: Meanwhile this did lead to some interesting replies to enquiries to other air ambulances in the UK. In an area of growing awareness and where land ambulances now have lifts installed to overcome 'manual handling' issues air ambulances have no stated restrictions on height or weight. In general Rob Wilkinson the Clinical Manager of Kent Air Ambulance [MD902 helicopter] explained that they have a practical clear space of 7 feet 6 inches in the Explorer and if the situation ever arose they would simply leave the legs overhanging the end of the stretcher.

On weight even when fully loaded most operations would leave them with a minimum allowable patient weight of 200 pounds [due to fuel burned off in the transit] but if there was an issue they would simply resort to the practice they used when flying the smaller AS355F and leave a crew member behind on scene. Loading a heavy patient would simply be a case of finding more people to lift the stretcher.

FIRE

MEXICO

PUEBLA: United Rotorcraft Solutions (URS) have delivered a multi-mission configured Bell 407 to the Gobierno Del Estado de Puebla.

The helicopter will be used for law enforcement, fire fighting, EMS and search and rescue. URS completed the 407 with the integration of the avionics and communications systems included the Garmin GNS530AW Comm/NAV/GPS and the SL-40 Comm-2, NAT Audio System, the Technisonic VHF/FM Radio, the Honeywell HSI, the Avidyne TCAS and a Stormscope.

Some of the special mission equipment installed included a Cargo Hook, SX-16 Searchlight, NAT PA System, The TylerTech Special Ops Platforms and the Simplex Fire Tank. The airframe was also equipped with wire strike protection and inlet barrier filter. The State of Puebla needed this helicopter completed quickly and URS were able to undertake the completion in 90 days. [URS]



UNITED KINGDOM

HAMPSHIRE: There may be continued pressure to interest UK fire departments in acquiring full size utility helicopters but this effort has yet to provide the hoped for returns. Meanwhile the tangible interest of fire people has been in a much more modest area.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service now has an eye in the sky thanks to a state-of-the-art mini-helicopter. In April the Service took ownership of the Carvec Kestrel Aerial observation and photography platform – a high performance remote controlled helicopter capable of being flown out to a distance of 500 metres from the pilot and to a height of up to 400 feet for between 15 and 20 minutes.

The helicopter and its associated equipment will be stowed and mobilised with the Incident Command Unit which is based at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters in Eastleigh.



UNITED STATES


CALIFORNIA: It was not that long ago that a series of fatal crashes heralded the end of vintage and veteran aircraft fighting fires in the USA. True enough a significant number of the old craft were taken offline, but not all.

The giant Martin Mars fire fighting seaplane continues to fly the mission this season. An example of the type seemed ready to be in use after it arrived at Lake Elsinore after Coulson Flying Tankers in Canada arrived at an agreement with local officials to station the 7,200-gallon-capacity aircraft on the lake so it will be ready to respond quickly to wildfires. Coulson were paying for moorings on the lake even though a fire fighting contract is yet to be signed with the authorities.

But the Mars firefighting seaplane left Lake Elsinore almost as quickly as it arrived. One week after it docked for what city officials expected would be an extended engagement, the Vancouver Island-based crew packed up and headed back to Canada without being used. Coulson Flying Tankers proved unable to secure an on-call contract with either the US Forest Service or Cal Fire and opted to return home.

The provision of air cover in the region turned into a political hot potato in the run up to the Presidential elections. The Bush administration failed in its long standing promise to outfit California Air National Guard C-130 cargo planes for firefighting duty. The aircraft failed to appear for this years extended fire season despite pressure from the military and elected officials.


Last year's devastating fires killed 10 people, charred 800 square miles and destroyed al-




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most 2,200 homes in the state. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger warned President Bush in April that it "would be reckless" to face another fire season without the aircraft but none is available equipped to fight fires.

The fire fighting gear is still under test and validation according to the ANG. That is despite of promises that it was being developed since 2003 and that civil aircraft have demonstrated similar systems for years.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

ATLANTIC: Last month Spanish coastguards reported they had rescued some 230 African would be migrants aboard a single vessel south of Canary Islands. All of the Africans aboard were male, twenty were children. Coastguards spotted the wooden boat when it was about 90 kilometres south of Atlantic archipelago and took them to port of Los Cristianos on island of Tenerife. This is the largest recorded number of migrants in a single vessel in this region.

The following day a second boat carrying almost 100 people washed up on the beach of Pozo Izquierdo on Gran Canaria.

Dozens of Africans have died in the past few months trying to take advantage of calmer summer weather to make the journey to the Canary Islands and Spanish mainland to find jobs in Europe. Tens of thousands have reached Spanish shores in recent years, prompting Spain's Socialist government to toughen its line on illegal immigration. Thousands more are believed to have drowned or died of thirst or exposure in the attempt.

Immigrants traditionally attempted to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to get to the Spanish mainland but a crackdown there has led traffickers to increasingly use longer and more dangerous routes, including to Spain's Canary Islands located to west of Morocco.

Nearly 5,400 illegal immigrants have arrived on Canary Islands so far this year, down from 6,655 in 2007. [afrol]

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: It is claimed that SAR operations will be speeded up by 20% with the arrival of the third AW139 helicopter at the Emergency Management Queensland [EMQ] hanger at Cairns Airport. The Government invested \$48M over three years to buy three of the helicopters.

The now complete AW139 fleet offers a 30% increase in range and a 20% increase in speed over the fleet they replace. EMQ remains one of Australia's busiest emergency helicopter networks with in excess of 2,500 hours annually.

MALAYSIA

Controversy has arisen over the recent decision to select the Eurocopter EC725 to replace the elderly Sikorsky Nuri fleet. At the core of the complaints is a suggestion that the RMAF had not tested the aircraft prior to selecting it. Sources state categorically that the EC725 was flight tested against the AW139 and another alternative, the Mil Mi-17, is already operated by the Bomba (fire department) and therefore pretty much a known quantity.

The result is that the previously firm intentions to go ahead with the order have somewhat evaporated.

Meanwhile AgustaWestland has just sent out a press release to say that it has accepted orders for three of its AW139 helicopters to equip the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) plus options for several additional aircraft. These helicopters will be used to perform search and rescue, coastal patrol and law enforcement duties around Malaysia's extensive coast line.

Ed: I guess we can now expect another tit-for-tat series of complaints about how that contract was handled. All destined to keep the old aircraft in service it seems.

UKRAINE

The Ministry of Emergencies of Ukraine and Eurocopter signed a contract for the acquisition of two Eurocopter EC145 helicopters to be based in the Kiev region, they will be used for a wide range of missions that cover rescue, emergency medical evacuation and fire fighting. The aircrafts will be delivered next year.

UNITED KINGDOM

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA): In a recent article The Scotsman newspaper highlighted areas of potential conflict between the needs of the SAR mission and the European Working Time Directive. The 'Directive, which came into effect in 1998, was designed to protect the health and safety of workers but it was always known that it would not fit well with all situations – particularly with the emergency services.

Regulations introduced a statutory limit on average weekly hours of work; a legal entitlement to paid leave; and new laws on rest breaks, night work and shift patterns. They specify a maximum of 48 hours in the working week, averaging out over 17 weeks.

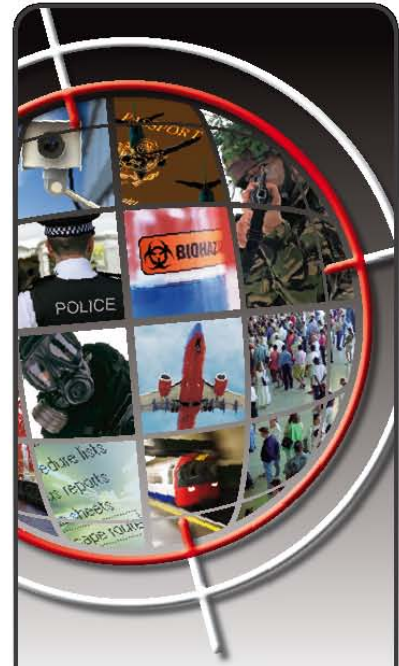
Action by a Sumburgh SAR crew highlighted these uncertainties about the Directive on hours and rest periods, which could put the UK air/sea safety service out of action if not resolved.

Under the regulations, SAR crews can work for a maximum of 2,000 hours a year. Previous practice had been to discount 50% of a 24-hour shift if the crew was not called out but crews became concerned that non-flying time was not being discounted and they had exceeded, or were about to exceed, their limit and could face possible censure.

Although the employer was not pre-warned the Sumburgh 'stand-down' action was covered by nearby SAR resources. Now, perhaps jolted by the wake-up call, talks are underway to set up a permanent formal agreement that works within the working time regulations.

Many voiced reservations about the adoption of both the Sikorsky S92 and the AgustaWestland AW139 when they were destined for introduction to service with the MCA under the new UK Coastguard contract last year. The two different types replaced the elderly Sikorsky S61 in service. The doubters were disregarded at the time but in time the weaknesses in both types have now surfaced to give credence to their worries.

At first it was the Sikorsky's based in northern Scotland that came under the spotlight after it became clear that the basic airframe did not possess the range capability of the S61 it replaced and then that the long-range fuel tank was taking up an inordinate amount of cabin space. The MCA's answer has been not to fit the tank as standard—bringing about a few 'wait a minute' moments for those in peril on the sea as it is presumably fitted. Time as I understand it is of the essence..



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More important is the news that the AW139 helicopters based on the south coast at Lee and Portland have been grounded at night, until further notice, because of problems with unspecified 'specialist equipment' on board. MCA crews declared that the AW139 was not fully capable of undertaking the night mission and requested a return to flying the previous equipment – the Sikorsky S61. This retrograde step will continue until they consider that a full night-time capability is demonstrated on the AW139.

Even the doubters did not predict that development.

SKY WATCH CIVIL AIR PATROL: Tony Cowan MBE (an ex RAF Squadron Leader and former Unit Executive Officer with the Cambridge Police Air Support Unit) was elected as the new Chairman of Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol at the service's Annual General Meeting held at Peterborough Connington airfield.

Peter Macintosh (ex RAF Red Arrows) was elected as Chief Pilot, moving from his post as Safety Officer, a position which is currently vacant until a suitable replacement can be found.

A new appointment is Chief Engineer, this post being filled by Robin Braithwaite, Chief Pilot of No.8 (Kimberley) Unit, based at RAF Henlow. Robin is a Halton Brat having been trained by the RAF as an Airframes & Engines Technician, and is a current LAA Inspector.

The retiring Chairman was Arnold Parker, he Founded Sky Watch as a private pilot and has nurtured his baby and seen it grow. He feels confident enough to let go of the reins a little and has every confidence in the future of Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol in the hands of a new team that includes so many with the credentials to take Sky Watch to greater heights.

Arnold will remain active in Sky Watch, running No.2 Unit at Rufforth, Yorkshire, with its Observer Training Programme and continuing to edit the magazine Sky Watch Report.



The new Chairman Tony Cowan presents retiring Chairman Arnold Parker with an engraved commemorative tankard to acknowledge Arnold's tenure as Chairman of Sky Watch.

WEST MIDLANDS: The number of emergency services acquiring and using small hovercraft continues to grow. The police in the West Midlands have set up their own Shallow Water Operations Team [SWOT] using a small hovercraft and caterpillar amphibious wheel driven craft. The SWOT set-up provides an alternative to bringing in trained divers to recover objects – including dead bodies – from water.



UNITED STATES

NEW JERSEY: The National Transportation Safety Board is offering a two-day course - Transportation Disaster Response - A Course for Emergency Responders, at its NTSB Training Center in Ashburn, Virginia on November 18-20, 2008.

This course is designed specifically for emergency responders and planners; this course provides participants with the tools to most effectively manage a major transportation disaster. Audio/video materials, case studies, recent examples and panel discussions are employed to illustrate key principles of the unique aspects of responding to major transportation disasters.

Instructors will be from the NTSB, New Jersey State Police, Minneapolis Police Department and specialized FBI units.

For more information please go to: http://ntsb.gov/Academy/CourseInfo/TDA402_2008.htm or contact Erik Grosf at the NTSB's Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance 202-314-6189.

FROM THE FACTORY *PRODUCTS*

Last month **Eurocopter Canada** held an opening ceremony for its newly expanded customer service facility in Richmond, British Columbia. The expansion is part of the company's plans for growth in the BC market and its commitment to customer service in the region and across the country.

The new facility - which has grown to over 11,700 square feet - will support the company's sales efforts for its rapidly expanding business in BC, provide technical support, and serve as logistics and spare parts distribution centre for all Canadian customers. Eurocopter Canada delivered their 500th aircraft earlier this year to Phoenix Heli-Flight.



Axsys Technologies, makers of high-performance cameras and optics has opened a 67,000-square-foot expansion at 44 Simon St. Nashua, New Hampshire.

Axsys sited a 78,000-square-foot manufacturing plant at 24 Simon St. in Nashua a decade ago, and bought up smaller optics companies, such as DiOP. The expansion will double the plant size and bring its space up to 145,000 square feet.

The company will move its law enforcement related gyro-stabilised camera system manufacture from its Grass Valley, California site to Nashua. Design and engineering work in Grass Valley will remain there.

Axsys makes surveillance cameras, imaging systems and related motion control technologies for the Air Force's Global Hawk drone, and a high-definition gimbal mounted camera for the BBC. It is a longtime Original Equipment Manufacturer for contractors such as BAE Systems.

As part of the opening celebrations, the company's President, Scott Conner, donated an infrared camera to the Central New Hampshire Special Operations Unit (SOU). Representatives from the nine police departments comprising the SOU were on hand to watch Chief Robert Cormier, head of the SOU, accept the donation from Axsys. The infrared camera will be useful to the multi-community unit in search and rescue operations.



The Dornier 228 NG (New Generation) aircraft of **RUAG Aerospace** recently successfully completed a five-day test flight programme with the new five-blade propeller. The test flights were conducted by the MT-Propeller company in Straubing.

The new MT propeller is noticeably quieter and lighter than previous ones used, it has a lower in addition extremely low in vibration and less susceptible to corrosion.

It is expected that comprehensive Dornier 228 NG performance flights will be finalised this month then, detailed information will be available in regard to enhancement of flight characteristics and increase in performance.

RUAG will be delivering six Do 228 New Generation aircraft to a customer in Asia in due course. RUAG decided to resume series production of the aircraft a year ago.

Well over two hundred Dornier 228s were built at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany, and marketed worldwide from 1982 to 2002. With the purchase of the Aircraft Services division of the former Fairchild-Dornier, RUAG also acquired the rights and licences as original manufacturer of this aircraft model. Some 150 Do 228s are currently in service. Many of them are maintained by RUAG.

The fuselage, wings and tail unit will be supplied by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) of Kanpur (India). This company has been building Do 228-12 aircraft under licence for the Indian market for some years and is RUAG's key partner in the Do 228 New Generation project. Final assembly and outfitting will take place at RUAG's Pfaffenhofen plant.

Sikorsky has signed an agreement with Carson Helicopters that will lead to the launch of a modernisation programme for the Sikorsky S-61.

The programme will breathe new life into this iconic symbol of rotorcraft excellence, providing the enhancements needed to perform effectively in high/hot operating conditions and to put this aircraft back to duty for years to come.

Approximately 620 S-61 helicopters remain in service in both the commercial and military markets worldwide. The aircraft first began flying in 1959, and the more than 1,000 that were produced have flown 3.8M flight hours combined.

The modernisation will consist of extensive airframe refurbishment, state-of-the-art glass cockpit, cargo hook and hoist system, and new composite main rotor blades that dramatically improve aircraft performance in high-hot conditions as well as provide additional lift and speed capabilities.

The upgrades will be undertaken at Sikorsky Aerospace Services' facility in Chase Field, Texas. www.sikorsky.com

The **Boeing C-17 Globemaster** in the Aeromedical Evacuation [AME] role is hailed as an exciting development for the Australian Air Force, in that this large general purpose transport has been designed with an integral AME capability in mind. Extensive Operational

Testing and evaluation has occurred this year to ensure that the C-17 meets Australian requirements and standards for medical equipment and AME.

With its integral litter bays, oxygen, power and excellent lighting, the airframe is well suited to the AME role as the increased reach capability and speed allows for faster long-haul retrievals than previously possible in a much more comfortable environment. The C-17 allows reduced transit time for the retrieval team, less flying time and fewer stops for the patients.

Initial Operating Capability was reached ahead of schedule and, as a result, two C-17 AME missions have already successfully been completed. The first mission involved the retrieval of five Australian Defence Force personnel from the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) to various medical facilities within Australia, with the second mission being a follow-on opportunity. On these missions, the aircraft demonstrated its inherent flexibility by multi-tasking in logistic support and as an AME platform.



At an event on its booth at the Air Medical Transportation Conference [AMTC] in Minneapolis **American Eurocopter** celebrated its 2500th US helicopter delivery with long-time customer PHI, Inc., one of the world's leading helicopter services companies. The 2500th helicopter is an EC135 to be delivered to the PHI Air Medical Group shortly after AMTC.

The delivery of the EC135 to PHI is especially significant, since the very first helicopter delivered into the United States by a constituent part of the modern Eurocopter was a Sud SA.3130 Alouette delivered to PHI in 1957. PHI's fleet today includes AS350B2/B3 AStars, EC135s and BK117s.

At the same show American Eurocopter announced that LifeLine Critical Care Transport has ordered four EC145s to upgrade its current fleet of BK117s. The first aircraft is scheduled to arrive in late 2009 with complete transition to the new fleet expected by the end of 2010.

LifeLine has relied on the BK117 airframe for over 25 years, the upgrade to the EC145 was an obvious choice because of the outstanding performance of the BK117 and the tremendous support from American Eurocopter."

Flight For Life Transport System has also acquired two EC145s, one of which is scheduled to go into service at the end of 2008 and the other in early 2009.

Eurocopter say that the single-engine EC120 has become the helicopter of choice for personal travel and corporate/VIP operators. Over the last five years it has been outselling its competitors by more than two to one in this market segment.

Over 500 of the five-seat EC120s have been ordered by to date, with more than 100 purchased by American Eurocopter customers in the United States.

The EC130 continues to grow in popularity as a corporate helicopter and is fast becoming a helicopter of choice for a wide variety of customers. At NBAA the company featured a black corporate Maverick Helicopters EC130 on display on their booth.

There are currently 94 EC 130s in service in the United States, the majority in use for air tour activities with corporate/private use the next most popular mission but a few fly with police air units and ambulance operations.



The US Navy has become a new military user of the UH-72 Light Utility Helicopter, provided by **EADS North America**, with the service ordering five aircraft for use in pilot training at the Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland.

HeliSim and Eurocopter officially inaugurated the first EC225 Full Flight Simulator (FFS) in Marignane, France, on October 10th. The addition of this new FFS to HeliSim's scope of simulators further enhances Eurocopter's commitment to reinforcing its training capabilities for its customers, with flight safety being a top priority to the company.

The EC225 FFS is to be qualified to Level D according to JAR FSTD 1H standards. It includes a full-motion system with six degrees of freedom, an instructor station, simulation of all systems and optional equipment solutions, avionics system and full replica of the EC225 cockpit, sound system, original OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) simulation data package and a visual system field of view of 200° horizontal and 60° vertical daylight/dusk/night. The visual database features detailed airports, heliports, helipads and platforms as well as realistic 3D moving models and full correlation between databases.

Taj Air and **Piaggio Aero Industries** S.p.A. announced at the Indian Aviation 2008, the International Conference and Exhibition of Civil Aviation taking place in Hyderabad, the agreement to become Taj Air the exclusive distributor of the P.180 Avanti II for India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Maldives and Mauritius. Taj Air will promote, distribute and service Piaggio Aero Aircraft.

Metro Aviation, Inc. will soon introduce another innovation designed to improve customer satisfaction and safety for the helicopter air medical industry. The EC145 mobile demonstrator and training device (MDTD), designed, engineered and assembled by Metro Aviation was unveiled during the Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota last month. This first-of-its-kind device is designed to facilitate air medical customers with interior design, layout, and equipment selection as well as evaluation of their configuration. Cabin crew training can also be accomplished at the customer location prior to the delivery of their actual aircraft. The MDTD is a complete Eurocopter EC145 cabin with seating, primary and secondary litter systems, cabinetry, cabin lighting, medical equipment racks and grids, functional intercom, medical control panels as well as provisional medical gas, suction and electrical outlets. The platform is a Dodge Sprinter van chosen because of the bi-lateral sliding door configuration resembling the EC145 door arrangement.

FLIR Systems has received contract awards totalling \$14.8M from US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The contract awards included \$9.0M for Star SAFIRE(R) HD stabilised, multi-sensor systems. The units delivered under these orders will be used for homeland security missions.

European Union regulators have started legal action against Italy over its contracts for buying helicopters, the European Commission said on Thursday.

In April, the EU's highest court ruled that Italy broke EU laws by buying helicopters only from Italian company **Agusta**, part of the state-controlled Finmeccanica SIFI.MI group.

The US Defense Department has decided not to approve the continuation of the ARH70 combat helicopter being built for the Army after the cost of each helicopter soared nearly

A promotional banner for the Dubai Helishow 2008. The left side has an orange background with the text 'DUBAI 2008 HELISHOW' in large, stylized letters. Below this, it says 'The third edition of Dubai Helishow - the International Helicopter Technology & Operations Exhibition'. At the bottom left, it lists the dates '11th - 13th November 2008' and the location 'East Hall, Dubai Airport Expo, Dubai, U.A.E.'. The right side of the banner features a black and white photograph of a helicopter in flight. Overlaid on the photo is the 'Helishow DUBAI 2008' logo and a white button that says 'Online Registration'.

Note the **new website** for the Dubai Helishow: www.dubaihelicoptershow.com

70% to \$14.5M. Boeing has apparently been stirring and marketing its MD500 based Little Bird as an alternative for the re-run of the contract. If they are successful they are expected to use MDHI airframe production and to fit out the airframes in their own [former McDonnell-Douglas] plant at Mesa, Arizona.

Meanwhile **Bell Helicopter** announced that the company would lay off approximately 500 workers. This represents about 4% of the Bell Helicopter workforce and includes a 20% reduction in the management-level staff.

Last month **Embraer** held a commemorative observance of the 40th anniversary of the first flight of the Bandeirante prototype, which occurred in October 1968. Embraer presented a restoration of the second prototype of the Bandeirante to the Santos Dumont Foundation. The airplane, with registration number 2131, was disassembled and transported to Embraer's headquarters, where teams consisting of current and former employees, many of whom worked on the Bandeirante program in the 1970s, handled the restoration process.

Night Flight Concepts (NFC), of Port Saint Lucie, Florida, a FAA Part 145 NVG Repair Station for inspection, testing, and maintenance of NVG's. The FAA Part 145 designation authorizes NFC to conduct and certify the 180-day service inspection; and removal and replacement of components for most make and model night vision imaging systems (NVIS) available.

The 180-day NVG service inspection by NFC includes certifying the battery pack, goggle adjustment ranges, helmet mount adapter, current draw, gain, high/low resolution, image distortion, image intensifier, infinity focus, eyepiece diopter settings, binocular collimation, low battery indicator, and purge. The NVG is returned to the owner/operator within 72 hours with a complete test data sheet, an air-worthiness compliance certificate, and a NVG trend analysis sheet (minimum of three inspections required to develop trend analysis).



Night Flight Concepts has announced the ability to offer the first and only FAA TSO-C164 approved night vision aviator goggle, the NVAG-6 by Nivisys Industries, LLC of Tempe, AZ. The Technical Standard Order (C164) authorizes the recipient to produce and deliver NVG's for use in the civil aviation community under the approval of the FAA.

Sikorsky Aircraft signed a contract to provide an S-76C++ helicopter to Boston MedFlight for air medical critical care transports in the Northeast.

The new helicopter will be Sikorsky's first night vision-capable S-76C++ air medical helicopter. The aircraft will be operated and maintained by EraMed, LLC. It will replace an AS-365N2 Dauphin, and is slated to be delivery this year.

Boston MedFlight is a CAMTS-accredited Critical Care Transport service. Its mission is to extend the tertiary care services of the major Boston hospitals to the citizens of Massachusetts and New England. As a non-profit organization, Boston MedFlight transports patients regardless of their ability to pay. Boston MedFlight is financially supported in part by a consortium of Boston hospitals including Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Medical Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Children's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Tufts Medical Center.

To date, more than 700 S-76 helicopters have been delivered, serving a multi-mission role that includes offshore oil, VIP including head of state, emergency medical transport, search and rescue and civil defence.

Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS) has received an amendment to its current EC130 B4 FAA Inlet Barrier Filter (IBF) Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) to include the Eurocopter AS350B3 with dual hydraulic systems installed. This new approval clears the way for operators of this enhanced AS350B3 to utilise a proven filtration solution. AFS IBF systems are already in use by AS350 and EC130 operators internationally, performing law

enforcement, air medical, firefighting, news gathering and utility missions. Canadian and European approvals are in process for the EC130, extending the AFS solution for AS350B3 dual hydraulic and EC130 operators worldwide.

The AFS system features a sealed intake plenum that replaces the inlet screens, sand filter/particle separator or alternate barrier filter. Design of the IBF utilizes the existing cowl with minimum modification, including incorporation of an aft-facing bypass system. The filter and bypass system are flush with the upper surface of the EC130 or B3 dual hydraulic cowl, utilising an internal bypass plenum. By incorporating deep pleats, AFS technology allowed the filter footprint to be limited to the upper surface of the cowl and still accommodate the bypass. An emergency bypass capability is an important IBF feature that is lacking in most traditional sand filters and particle separators.

A simple compact cockpit switch, common with existing AFS certified systems, allows indication and activation of the bypass system. An integral Filter Maintenance Aid allows for on-condition inspections between established cleaning intervals, eliminating unnecessary service. AFS AS350/EC130 IBF-equipped aircraft can also operate with no inlet driven flight or gross weight restrictions to the basic inlet performance charts, with the option to also operate to the sand filter performance charts when required. www.afsfilters.com

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

5 September 2008 Bell 407 N911WN. Air ambulance of Air Link of Scottsbluff, Nebraska operated by Air Methods. Suffered a bird strike whilst flying from Regional West in Nebraska To PSL in Denver with a patient on board. A noise was heard at the time but no damage or problems highlighted. The next day, a spot of blood and feathers were found on the front left of the helicopter. No damage found. [Concern]

24 September 2008 Eurocopter EC135 N135ED. Air ambulance of Carilion Clinic Life Guard out of Roanoke Virginia USA operated by Air Methods. The aircraft was en route from Roanoke to the Christiansburg, Virginia base of Life-Guard 11. While en route, a Transmission Chip Light illuminated. The fuzz burn procedure was completed successfully. The light illuminated a second time, and the fuzz burn procedure was again utilized, without success. The decision was made to make a precautionary landing. Aircraft landed without further incident in a church car park. A mechanic attended and after some work the aircraft was flown out. [Concern]

27 September 2008 Sikorsky S76 N370GS. Air ambulance of Good Samaritan Air-Care of Kearney, Nebraska operated by Rodgers Helicopter Service. While transitioning south of the local airport on approach to the base hospital, a signaling flare was shot from the ground towards the aircraft. The flare passed in front of the helicopter but did not appear to make contact with the ship or rotor disc. The helicopter was inspected by the PIC and ground safety personnel and no damage was noted. [Concern]

30 September 2008 Eurocopter BK117B2 C-FIOM. Air ambulance of STARS Air Rescue, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The aircraft was enroute from Peace River, Alberta to the QE II hospital in Grande Prairie, Alberta with a patient on board. Approximately 20 NM north of Grande Prairie, the Master Caution Light illuminated along with the #1 Engine Chip Caution Panel Segment. Checklist procedures were carried out and the engine was shut down. An emergency was declared. The aircraft diverted to Grande Prairie Airport to carry out a precautionary single engine landing without further incident. Upon investigation a very small metallic chip was found on the #1 engine scavenge debris monitor. [Concern]

2 October 2008 Eurocopter AS350B32 N172AE. Department of Homeland Security. Whilst undertaking training suffered severe damage in a hard landing at Blaine, Washington. [FAA]

3 October 2008 Agusta A119 Koala N521RC. Air ambulance operated by the South-east Mississippi Air Ambulance District and based at Forrest General Hospital. Rescue 7 was damaged while landing at a traffic accident site in Wiggins, Stone County. The MRB struck trees. [media]

11 October 2008 Eurocopter AS350B3 N3817. Air ambulance of Careflight. The team was attending a PR at a local fire department field location for a search and rescue training day. The physical location was next to a river in a canyon area. Upon completion, the helicopter lifted and initiated a departure to the west into the wind. During the climb out, contact was made with unmarked distribution wires which stretched across the river and that had not been spotted during the low recon before landing. The quarter inch wires contacted the windscreen causing minor damage. The pilot manoeuvred the helicopter to a clear area and shut down to access for damage. The incident was reported and an investigation initiated.

7 October 2008 Agusta A109E Power N951AL. Air ambulance of Airlift Northwest based in Seattle, Washington. Operated by Air Methods Corporation. Airlift 2 was en route to an area hospital experienced a bird strike to the main rotor blade. The pilot aborted the flight and returned back to base at Boeing Field in Seattle.

13 October 2008 Bell 206 N42AZ Arizona Department of Public Safety A helicopter team had been called to Bear Mountain to rescue two stranded hikers. One of the hikers had gotten aboard the helicopter. As Officer Bruce Harrolle was escorting the second patient into the chopper, he was struck by one of the helicopter's rotor blades and fatally injured.

15 October 2008 Bell 222 N992AA Air ambulance of Air Angels Inc., of Bolingbrook, Illinois. Four people were killed when the helicopter struck a radio transmission tower and crashed in the Chicago suburb of Aurora, Illinois whilst headed for Children's Memorial Hospital from Valley West Hospital in Sandwich at night and in poor weather. The dead were an infant, Kirstian Blockinger, the pilot Dell Waugh, 69, nurse William Mann, 31, and paramedic Ronald Battiato, 41.

The helicopter came down in a field near a residential area in east Aurora and was engulfed in flames.

This crash is the ninth involving fatalities in the past 12 months involving US medical transport helicopters. It has also been alleged that this is the third crash for the company in six years, and this has prompted Childrens Memorial Hospital--the flight's destination--to suspend flights from the company that has flown critical-care flights in Illinois, Indiana and surrounding states for over 10 years.

The pilot reported no mechanical problems before takeoff and weather was not thought to be an issue below 10,000 feet. Early information suggested that Waugh was flying at 1,400 feet above sea level, or about 700 feet above the ground. The wire braced lattice radio tower involved – that of radio station WBIG – was 749 feet tall.

18 October 2008 Eurocopter AS350B3 N911MT. Air ambulance of Life Flight, St. Patrick Hospital Missoula, Montana operated by Metro Aviation. The flight was inbound to the Trauma Center with a patient on board from a scene call 120nm distant. The pilot suspected fuel indicator problems and was closely monitoring the fuel supply. Seven minutes out from the hospital the "Fuel Low" light illuminated. The pilot elected to make a precautionary landing and it was completed without incident. The medical crew and patient com-



The banner features the TranSec World Expo logo on the left, which includes the text "Transport Security Expo & Conference" and the website "www.transec.com". In the center is a circular emblem with a globe and the words "MANUFACTURER", "INTEGRATOR", "END-USER", and "SERVICE". To the right of the emblem are four circular images: a blue truck, a white cargo plane, a high-speed train, and a large ship. On the far right is a large, stylized image of a security camera. Below these elements, the text "3-4 June 2009 | Amsterdam RAI" is displayed.

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pleted the transport by ground ambulance. A broken wire and a faulty resistor were found. This caused the fuel indicating system to show 15 gallons more at the beginning of the flight than was actually on board. [Concern]

18 October 2008 Eurocopter EC135 N135ED. Air ambulance of Carilion Clinic Life-Guard, Roanoke Virginia operated by Air Methods. The aircraft was en route to a Public Relations event in Dublin, Virginia from their primary base at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center in Christiansburg, VA when caution lights indicated FADEC failure. The pilot decided to return to the base. While on finals the pilot opted to divert to the local airport for its better facilities. An uneventful precautionary landing was completed without incident. The duty mechanic in discussion with Eurocopter Tech Reps led to the NG sensors being cleaned and swapped from engine to engine. This resolved the issues resolved and the aircraft returned to base. [Concern]

21 October 2008 Robinson R44 PJ-LIH. Leeward Islands Helicopters. Operating in an emergency medevac night IFR role outbound from St Maarten to the small island of Saba to collect a heart patient at night when it crashed under unknown circumstances into the sea about half way between the start point and the destination near Juancho Yrausquin airport on Saba killing the two persons aboard. One was a local police Chief Inspector Alfred Churchill Marsdin and the pilot was the company owner and chief pilot Micheal Huttenlocker. On current information it is understood that this was not a police operation and that although Marsdin remained a 30-year police veteran he was a business associate in the helicopter company on that night. [media/Pprune]

26 October 2008 Eurocopter BK117 N138HH. Air ambulance of the Hartford Hospital LIFE STAR Hartford, Connecticut, operated by Air Methods. Pilot initiated a precautionary landing after experiencing a significant reduction of power in the #2 engine. The landing was accomplished without incident. It was determined that the #2 engine needed replacement. [Concern]

PEOPLE

Captain **Steve Ford**, a pilot with the Devon Air Ambulance Trust was killed in a tragic motorcycle accident last month.



Captain Steve Ford—his favourite work photo

Heléna Holt, Chief Executive of the DAAT said “Steve Ford was a truly remarkable man and pilot, respected and loved by all the team.

He has led a life of giving, joining Bond Air Services, the company we lease one of our helicopters from, after a distinguished career as a pilot in the Army.

Whenever he could, Steve gave up his time to volunteer for the charity, whether that was accepting cheques on the charity's behalf at presentations, helping at the recent Commando Challenge, or acting as a marshal at our base to base annual motorcycle ride. He was a star.

“We are a close knit team, both in and out of work, and we are devastated at the news of Steve's death. Our thoughts are with his wife Julia, who also worked for the charity, and their children at this very difficult and sad time.”

Nigel Hare, Clinical Support Officer for the Devon



Air Ambulance said "Steve's enthusiasm played a pivotal role in developing the service the Devon Air Ambulance offers today. Recently, through his training role, he has been able to share this experience to help develop other Air Ambulance services throughout England, Scotland and Wales. His death is a great loss, not just personally and to the team here in Devon, but throughout the UK."

RECENT EVENTS



The organisers of the first instance where the well regarded Helitech brand was staged on mainland Europe took them to Portugal. Whilst undoubtedly secretly crossing their fingers they were publicly predicting Helitech Europe to be a major success. The end result was a mixed bag of success and failure. Pretty much what might be expected of an event first footing in the wake of wholly unexpected banking problems. Add to that a general industry opinion that there are just too many shows, conferences and the like even a disaster could be forgiven.

Regardless of the undoubted problems that surfaced over the three days Helitech Europe worked pretty well and it should survive into the future as a biannual event opposite the UK event if the ongoing 'credit crunch' allows. Some shows will inevitably fall by the wayside in the current financial climate only the strongest stand much of a chance and first footing shows must clearly be at risk.

According to the organisers Helitech's first outing to Airport Cascais near Estoril, Portugal has been well received by both exhibitors and visitors—which is undoubtedly true—but the attendee count was pretty modest at 'more than 1,350' (pre ABC audit). There were 108

exhibiting companies from 18 different countries displaying a range of helicopter orientated equipment, technology and services. There were a few no shows according to the empty stand spaces but again most shows have those.

The show received a number of VIP visitors from the region including the Mayor of Cascais, the President of Portugal's Civil Aviation Authority and a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development from the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha. They were not buying anything but they had grasped the business opportunity for their region and made the visitors welcome.

The small aerial firefighting demonstrations by a pair of AS350's drew the crowds and meant that Helibravo, in conjunction with the Autoridade Nacional de Protecção Civil (ANPC), could showcase its firefighting capabilities. The audience was also able to see the first public demonstration in Europe of Simplex Manufacturing's FAST Bucket, no Kamov fired up and around the airfield the fixed wing fire fighting aircraft did not stir.



In the dedicated static display area, 13 helicopters were on view to visitors. They included examples of the Kamov KA/32 A11BC configured for firefighting, as well as a Eurocopter AS350B3. Overall the choice was pretty much Eurocopter or Kamov by numbers with AS350s, EC135's and a Dauphin making up most. Bell and Robinson had a presence through their aircraft. AgustaWestland were represented by locally based AW109, AW139 and a AW119 Koala. Across the single runway, occasionally shrouded in thick smoke, stood a plentiful supply of unconnected static material but even this failed to attract many plane spotters to the bottom left hand corner of Europe. Spotters mean numbers not customers.



Helitech's Exhibition Director, Sue Bradshaw, said: 'We are absolutely delighted with the response to our first time in Portugal. The support we have received from the aerodrome here at Cascais as well as the local authorities has been fantastic. Feedback so far from exhibitors and visitors demonstrates that the location is popular – and we know that strong sales have been reported and many contracts signed.'

Local officials turned over Cascais Airport to the visitors and made a point of making everyone welcome. Not a few remarked that it was a definite first for an operational airport to be first closed for a period and then set on fire to ensure that a small aerial water bombing demonstration could go ahead each afternoon.

The aerial firefighting display, organised by Helibravo amounting to trained firefighting experts setting fire to piles of shrubbery beside the runway while a team of firemen from the Portuguese National Authority for Civil Protection (ANPC) on board two AS350 helicopters demonstrate how they work together to put out forest fires. A bit of fun that Helitech has not addressed in years, not that I expect Duxford to be set fire to next year!

The event was themed to focus attention on aerial fire fighting an area which is becoming an increasingly important capability in southern Europe. Unfortunately it was not a very forgiving theme for the organisers. The closure of the local fire season was delayed this year and it did not finally draw to an end until the end of day two. That robbed the event of visitors and, apparently, aircraft. It is said that seven display helicopters failed to arrive but I am still confused to why better use was not made of other resources close to hand including the fixed wing fire aircraft parked close but not close enough, Helitech has flirted with fixed wing before.



It says Proteccao Civil on the side but this aircraft travels the world from fire to fire - origin Australia

The same seasonal problem blighted the 'Aerial Firefighting Conference' being operated by the Shephard Group at the same time. Although the audience was creditable one of the major speakers, the Los Angeles County Fire Departments' Air Operations Battalion Chief, Tony Marrone, was unable to attend because fires were still flaring in California and he was recalled at the last minute from giving his presentation on the integration of aircraft into operations to fight wildland fires. This was a well planned package under the guidance of Lee Benson and I am aware that a number of important people had travelled specifically to Portugal to take in that original programme. Their disappointment may have been damaging but steps have now been taken to mitigate that.

There were logistical problems with the venue, many complained about the poor road access from Lisbon – not the distance, the congestion brought about by winding local roads – and between the main site at Cascais Airport and the off-site conference at the superbly appointed Hotel Quinta Da Marinha. But these are details that can be designed out next

time and little more than a thorn in the side of the organisers.

It was the Helitech formula that attracted the exhibitors and provided a good variety of products for the attending visitors. But there were notable absentees. Eurocopter were there but whilst their representatives were seen in the halls most of the other major Western companies, Bell, Sikorsky, AgustaWestland, MD etc were absent or reliant upon local operators which must have proved a major disappointment for the organisers even if they were claiming the overall number of attendees 'exceeded their expectations'. Among the more significant attendees were Axyss, Bristow Helicopters, Kamov, Powervamp, Pratt & Whitney Canada, Simplex Manufacturing, TLC Handling, and Carl Zeiss.

The main exhibition hall was pretty quiet throughout the three days but initial reports suggest that business was being done and new contacts made. This would not be the first event that undertook an adequate level of business quietly. The lack of numbers could easily be ascribed to the absence of spotters in this corner of the Iberian Peninsular. Reports of high air fares from the US must have had a detrimental effect.

The day before the fire fighting conference the EHEST held its annual helicopter safety conference and the following day was set aside for another Shephard event set aside for VIP Helicopters.

It will be a while before the dust settles on Helitech Portugal but it looks promising—but vulnerable to the world financial situation.

Helitech – the original – returns to the Imperial War Museum, Duxford in the UK next year 22-24 September 2009.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



In a few days the 2008 **Police Aviation Conference** will kick-off at Olympia, London with another varied programme of interesting presentations from an international range of emergency services professionals drawn from Europe and the Americas.

As the editor compiled the core programme with a mind that others will be standing to say their piece - and will not be standing up to speak himself [phew!] – it is difficult to bang this drum too loudly lest it not meet the ideals of the attendees.

That said I believe that the result will serve to inform and to challenge everyone at the conference. This is not some regurgitation of many long spoken about subjects, this is I hope mainly something new and primarily features items from those who are at the leading edge of police aviation rather than figureheads who stumble in the face of real questions. The subjects mainly cover rotary wing, both large and small but in here you will find fixed wing light UAV's and more importantly the tactical side.

I hope that even at this late date you will consider joining us in London. I can guarantee that outside the conference hall the company is good – second to none – and that the British beer is no longer the only warm thing on site!



DUBAI HELISHOW

Just days after the Police Aviation Conference it's time to temporarily set aside the wind and rain and helicopters and climb aboard a wide-body and jet-off once again to stand under the fierce sun and take in the bi-annual Dubai Helishow.

Much has changed since the last event and perhaps the show will be able to present those changes in a palatable form. At the last show the local Civil Defence organisation was just taking on board a number of ex-military Bell helicopters for use in fire fighting and there were dreams that the police in the region were ridding themselves of their old skid equipped Bell's in favour of a new fleet of AW139's with wheels.

It will be interesting to clarify the exact reasons why the transition has stalled in many of the countries in the Middle East leaving the old Bell's still operational as bugs are shaken out of the newcomers. It is said that high levels of wear in the undercarriage have been resolved by leaving the wheels permanently down and that tail boom cracking is causing concern here and across the world fleet.

EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

If you get to visiting the Emergency Services Show at Stoneleigh Park, Coventry back in the cold and rain of Britain [19- 20 November 2008] call by Stand No 350 where Blazepoint, a leading name in rugged mobile computing technology, will be using the event to introduce a range of equipment designed to enhance operational effectiveness and reduce risk in extreme environments and stressful situations. Highlights include a new PDA, 13.3" laptop and two tablet PC's with applications in a diversity of sectors, from first responders through commercial security to field operatives in energy and utilities.



The company is a major supplier to some of the most important UK MoD programmes as well as those of over 20 other NATO nations and its rugged technology is constantly meeting the needs of users in some of the world's most demanding environments.

Blazepoint's mobile computing technology/capability enables a variety of important functions such as remote reporting and data analysis as well as communication between emergency services. It also reduces time spent on administration, freeing up field personnel for operational duties.

The ruggedisation of the ndura RUGGED® range extends significantly beyond re-engineering of the external housing. It includes internal components, special coatings, sealants and other design features that allow computers to be exposed to extreme temperatures, humidity, sand/dust, water, salt fog, vibration and shock. Blazepoint can also provide products manufactured specifically for use in hazardous or explosive environments.

Blazepoint will be introducing a number of new products and can also supply leading brand plastic ID card printers designed to produce secure identification cards. To see a demonstration of these Zebra and Fargo printers visit their stand.

MW Power, industry-leaders in microUAV to the Emergency Services are also at the show displaying their now familiar German Microdrone quad rotor mini-UAV and now are announcing an agreement with BlueBear Systems Research. The BlueBear B-MAV has just won the MoD Grand Challenge flying in challenging weather. This award-winning fixed-wing product will move MW Power into an equally exciting market, where extended longevity, durability, and range are paramount.

Both the Microdrone and BlueBear will be show-cased at the forthcoming Emergency Services Show, Stoneleigh. For more information please call Alistair Fox on +44 1270 875 115 or glance at www.mwpower.co.uk



Enix Energies will be displaying a range of Interplex Warning Beacons at this year's 'The Emergency Services Show 2008'.

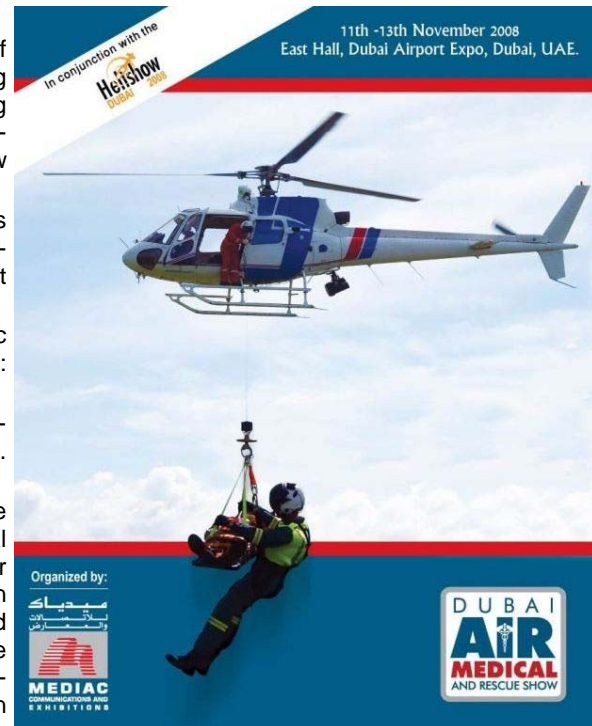
Ideal for use at helipads and private airports, Interplex offer a full range of high visibility, bat-

tery operated and solar powered portable warning beacons using LED and photovoltaic technology. The high intensity LED's, with viewing distances from 1km to 10km's and long operation times, offer an economical alternative to costly conventional flashing lights. As an established brand, Interplex products have been utilised by major forces throughout Europe for the last 20 years.

For further details on the full range, contact the Sales department e-mail: info.uk@enix-energies.com or visit Enix Energies at stand 93 of The Emergency Services Show 2008.

• DIARY

- 8-12 November 2008. 115th International Association of Chief of Police [IACP] Conference, San Diego, California. Compelling speakers (over 200 educational sessions!), influential networking (Host Chief's Night!), and cutting edge technology (over 740 exhibiting companies!). IACP continues to offer solutions for the new world of policing. [Click here](#) to register now!
- 10-11 November 2008 The Association of Air Ambulance Charities (AAAC) Annual Conference. The AAAC is a national umbrella organisation that exists to support the work of the UK's Independent Air Ambulance Charities. www.airambulancecharities.co.uk
- 11-13 November 2008 Dubai Heli-Show. Julia Cuthbert, Mediac Communications & Exhibitions Mobile: +44 (0)7734 563 324 email: cuthbert@mediacom.com www.dubaihelicoptershow.com
- 12-14 November 2008 London Trauma Conference, Royal Geographic Society, Knightsbridge, London. www.londontraumaconference.com
- 13 November 2008 HAI Helicopter Firefighting Safety Forum at the Courtyard by Marriott – Meridian, Idaho. The Fall 2008 HAI/Federal Interagency Helicopter Firefighting Safety Forum. HAI operator members who conduct helicopter firefighting operations, with an interest in providing services to the US Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), are encouraged to attend the Forum. The Forum will address safety initiatives, safety management systems, training, human factors, accident analysis, and an overview of the past fire season as well as looking ahead to the 2009 fire season. The HAI Government Contracting Committee will meet Wednesday, November 12 from 2-6 pm and again with the government on Friday, November 14 from 8-12 pm. All meetings are open. To register for this Safety Forum, email a completed [registration form](#) to Nicole Graves at Nicole.graves@rotor.com
- 14-15 November 2008 4th Annual HPSN [Medical Education & Simulation] Europe Conference Schloss Waldthausen Meeting Center, Mainz, Germany. This is a free conference for educators interested in medical simulation. The two-day event includes educational workshops, meetings and hands-on events. Pre-conference courses will be held from November 13. HPSN Europe, c/o AQAI GmbH, Wörrstädter Straße 31, D-55283 Nierstein Tel: +49 6131 3807520 Fax: +49 6133 61216 E-Mail: info@hpsn.de www.hpsn.de
- 19-20 November 2008 The Emergency Services Show, Stoneleigh Park, Coventry, UK www.the-emergency-services-show2008.com
- 25-28 November 2008. Sicurezza 2008, Milan, Italy. Covering 81,230 square metres, with 780 exhibitors and nearly two dozen seminars to attract around 32,000 visitors this is a major security event in northern Italy. international exhibition for anti-intrusion, fire prevention passive defense systems and building automation. Technologies and services for territorial protection; products and equipment for both local policing and private security guarding.
- Visit www.sicurezza.it or contact Fiera Milano Tech +39 02 3264415 - Fax. 4284. piera.fagioli@fieramilanotech.it



The New Bell 429

Certification of the new Bell 429 with Transport Canada, FAA and EASA is expected early next year. The basic aircraft will be certified to Single Pilot IFR and category "A" per FAR 27 airworthiness regulation.

Although sleek, advanced, flexible, exceptionally quite, fast, all of these adjectives—and more—have been used to describe the new Bell 429 light twin helicopter, the first thing that will get your attention when you see the aircraft is the very roomy passenger cabin and the huge baggage compartment.

The 429 is a product created for the customer, by the customer. By setting up customer focus groups, Bell Helicopter took a unique approach when it set out to design this new helicopter. Customer input was sought all along the design process and the result shows. The wide open cabin with flat floor provides 204 cu ft of interior space, a volume usually found in a larger class of helicopter. This large volume allows maximum flexibility in how the cabin space is used.

For Air Ambulance (Helicopter Emergency Medical, HEMS) you can put two patient litters side by side and still have room for the medical technicians seated at the patients head to comfortably do their job. The 429 was shown in Aerolite medical configuration at Prague AirMed show last May and at Farnborough show. At AMTC medical show in Minneapolis, the 429 was displayed with Air Methods medical interior. Letter loading is easy in the Bell 429 either from the large side opening (almost 60 inches wide) or through the optional rear doors.

In the corporate configuration a roomy plush interior can be installed. Ferrying off-shore oil workers is no problem with seating capacity for eight. Optional rear clam-shell doors can increase ingress/egress access. Meticulous thought went into creating an environment that could deliver as much of what the customer wanted as possible.

Bell worked hard on the performance of the aircraft to provide capabilities that would set a new standard in the marketplace. The result is remarkable. The 429 provides a maximum flying range of 350 nm at long range cruise speed and with a fuel capacity of 215 U.S. gallons, it results in 3.8 hours of endurance at best endurance speed.

The design team at Bell also wanted to provide superior load and lift capacity and have delivered a helicopter that has a useful load of over 2600 lbs and a cargo hook capacity of 3000 lbs. 600 lb hoist and floatation system will also be available as optional equipment. Again, the idea is all about creating flexibility that gives the customer options resulting in a helicopter that delivers real value.

With the exception of the empty weight which is slightly above target, all key performance parameters, speed, hover, range and endurance exceeded initial program targets.

Safety is a critical component of any modern design and Bell once again delivers a helicopter that sets a new benchmark in this arena. The 429 is the only light twin that is certified to the latest airworthiness requirements for enhanced safety, has the lowest take-off and approach noise level in its class, all while providing excellent ride quality unmatched by others.

Taking the total solutions approach didn't stop with the helicopter itself, Bell has also taken customer input to create the training and support network that will be needed to keep the 429 in the forefront of fielded helicopters. Bell is ramping up to be able to produce over 100 429's a year to satisfy the remarkable demand seen so far for this model. The current order book stands at over 350 and growing. No other model has seen such a high demand before certification.

Creating a revolutionary helicopter is one component of a winning market strategy, but when you combine it with Bell's legendary customer support you get an unbeatable market position. Bell has consistently been ranked #1 in customer support. In Professional Pilot's survey, Bell has been fortunate to be ranked #1 14 consecutive years. Aviation International News has Bell ranked #1 for 4 of the 5 years it has conducted its survey. These results show the importance Bell places on its relationship with its customers. 24/7 from anywhere in the world when you call the Bell service desk somebody is there to help you. Bell knows the importance of keeping your helicopter in the air, creating value for you and your business. [BHT]



The Bell 429 exhibited at the 2008 Heli-Expo in Houston