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Lake Havasu City, Arizona (now the site of London Bridge). Last October Aspen received a one-year contract from the US Navy to fly equipment and personnel between Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island, California. The airline sent its three remaining 440s to Burbank on this contract,

leaving five 580s to handle the Denver-Aspen traffic.
Although it has competition on Denver-Aspen from the Twin Otters of Rocky Mountain Airways, Aspen Air-ways now carries 65 to 70 per cent of the traffic on the route. Aspen's traffic has grown from 25,000 pas-sengers in 1967 to 114,000 in 1975 and an estimated 150,000 in 1976.
The airline is privately owned and does not publish financial results, but Mr Hickman tells Flight that it has been in the black since 1970 and that its traffic and profits continued to in-crease during the recession and fuel crisis years of 1974 and 1975. The airline's 1975 profit was double the 1971 figure.

Commuters seek CAB approval
AMERICAN commuter operators are
beginning to file applications to the
Civil Aeronautics Board for certifi-
cates, reports Joan Feldman from
Washington. This meant that while
these third-level carriers have all the obligation s of the large-scale scheduled operators, they also come under the CAB's protective regulatory "umbrella" and qualify for Board sub-sidies.

Since Air New England first filed
in July 1971 for certificate authority (it was approved by CAB for such operations, which began in January 1975), there have been applications from Air Midwest, Air Wisconsin and, most recently, Cochise Airlines. Air Midwest was given a certificate in the summer of 1976, but the Board has not yet acted on Air Wisconsin's re-quest.
Though externally similar, the four cases da in fact have a number of different aspects. Air New England, for example, which serves the highly seasonal (summer) New England area, was beginning to see daylight as a profitable commuter serving the same area for which it is now receiving a subsidy. But, under Congressional pressure to guarantee all-year-round service to New England, the CAB added ANE to the certificated ranks. Air Midwest, a commuter replacing Frontier Airlines in Western Kansas, was in extremis when it filed for its certificate. But in approving the Wichita-based operator's request for subsidised, small-aircraft operations the CAB backpedalled away from what is generally seen as a trend, saying that it was not setting a policy of guaranteeing services to small com-munities.
Air Wisconsin's situation is the very reverse of Air Midwest's. It is highly successful and is not seeking government subsidy on any of the routes which it serves. Rather, it wants to be part of the system so that it can enjoy the benefits of certificated^system status, including CAB recognition (considered to be of some value) and. participation in

joint fares and marketing agreements. Cochise is similar to Air Midwest in some aspects. It too is in difficulties, its small-community services in the Southwest US having been supported by a subsidy from the Four Corners Regional Commission. Now the Com-mission has told Cochise that it will withdraw financial support in 1977 and that the federal government should be shouldering the responsi-bility. Cochise is also unique in that it wants to add cities to the US certifi-cated air network, quite the reverse of the trend in recent years. The carrier wants a subsidy, temporarily at least, before it will serve points that have been abandoned by regional airlines.
It will be interesting to see whether the CAB's response to the Cochise and Air Wisconsin petitions concedes that a new "small-community" service policy is involved. Early in 1976 the Board promised Congress a new "small-community" policy in conjunc-tion with its regulatory reform bill, but this undertaking has yet to pro-duce results.

The designation Ag-Cat § indicates a version offering an enlarged swath width. The example
seen here features the Continental R-975 engine introduced as an alternative power-plant for 1977 (see news item)

FLIGHT international, I January 1977

More power for Ag-Cats . . . Buyers of the 1977 Grumman Ag-Cat B can choose the 525 h.p. Continental R-975 engine instead of the hitherto-standard 450 h.p. Pratt & Whitney R-985. Grumman says that over 5,000hr of agricultural proving flying has been completed by seven aircraft fitted with the R-975. Spare parts are assure since new parts are still available, and the overhaul cost of the engine should

be less than that of its older competitors. Its TBO is expected to be

between l,000hr and l,200hr.
Grumman notes that the two engines offer a high degree of com-monality over items such as cowlings alternators and induction system—an obvious benefit for the large fleet operator. The power increase will make itself most felt in "hot and high" operations. Take-off ground roll at the standard weight, 4,5001b, is 540ft, increasing to 970ft at the per-mitted maximum of 6,0751b. Initial climb rate with a 3,1251b payload is 750ft/min.

Improvements embodied in all Ag-Cat variants for 1977 include a revised hopper door giving better sealing, better brakes and a large-capacity air-intake filter. Optional equipment includes air-conditioning and a speci-ally contoured pilot's seat.

. . . and for the Pawnee Brave Piper is offering a Pawnee Brave powered by a 300 h.p. Lycoming IO-540-KIG5

engine, the unit used in the manufacturer's Cherokee Six and Lance
The Brave 300 will have a normal take-off weight of 3,9001b and a restricted-category weight of 4,4001b The maximum useful load is 2,2001b and hopper capacity can be eithe 225 or 275 US gal. Recommended price of the Brave 300 is $50,990.

First British Aerostar Mann Avia-tion of Fairoaks, recently appointed British distributor for the Ted Smith Aerostar, expects to receive the firs British Aerostar 601P during January The aircraft is to be certified to public-transport standards for operation o behalf of its owner by Falcon Jet Centre at Heathrow. The P model i

the pressurised version of the Aerostar 601, featuring an extended wingspan for improved cruise efficiency.