

AVIONICS

Cessna picks Garmin suite for Mustang cockpit

Garmin International has been selected as avionics supplier for Cessna's entry-level Citation Mustang, in the company's first deal to provide an integrated glass cockpit. Garmin's G1000 avionics suite was selected over Honeywell's in-development Apex system, among other competitors.

Having selected the avionics and engine, Pratt & Whitney Canada's PW615F turbofan, Cessna will now begin efforts to convert around 300 deposits on the Mustang into firm orders.

Certification of the \$2.6 million aircraft is scheduled for the middle of 2006, with deliveries beginning in the fourth quarter of that year.

Cessna says it was looking for an "easy to use" system for Mustang customers stepping up from single-engine and turbo-prop aircraft. "We found the simplicity and technology we were looking for in the G1000," says president Charlie Johnson. The system is lightweight and modular, with an open architecture, and integrates traffic, terrain and weather data to improve situational awareness, says Cessna.

Garmin's integrated avionics system for the Mustang is centered on a 380mm (15in) multifunction display flanked by 255mm primary flight displays for pilot and co-pilot.

In addition to these high-resolution flat-panel displays, Garmin will provide dual integrated radio modules providing VHF communication/navigation, GPS navigation and ILS landing guidance; dual Mode S transponders with traffic information service; dual solid-state attitude and heading reference systems and digital air-data computers; three-axis automatic flight control system; colour weather radar; and integrated Class B terrain awareness and warning system.

CLOSURE GRAHAM WARWICK / WASHINGTON DC

Chicago runway in ruins after mayor's night raid

Bulldozers move in on Meigs Field after long-running dispute over downtown airport

Aviation groups are furious at Chicago mayor Richard Daley's surprise closure of downtown Meigs Field. In a night raid on 31 March, construction crews carved Xs across the sole runway, closing the lake-side airport and stranding 16 general aviation aircraft. The destruction has raised fears that other threatened airports could be at risk.

Daley, who has been trying since 1996 to close Meigs and turn it into a park, cited unspecified security concerns in justifying his unilateral action. Just days earlier, the Transportation Safety Agency and Federal Aviation Administration had imposed a temporary flight restriction over central Chicago at Daley's urging. The FAA was not informed of Meigs' closure until after the runway was cut.

Aviation groups were quick to condemn the raid. "Mayor Daley obviously saw an opportunity, using the ruse of security and the cover of night, to pursue his long-standing goal of closing Meigs Field," says Ed Bolen, president of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association. Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association president Phil Boyer accuses Daley of "playing dictator" and breaking his promise to keep Meigs open.

The pledge to keep the down-

town airport open until at least 2006, and possibly to 2026, was enshrined in a 2001 agreement with the governor of Illinois, under which Daley secured state support for expansion of Chicago O'Hare in return for accepting the project to build a new airport at Peotone. But federal legislation required to seal the deal was defeated in Congress, and Daley says he is no longer bound by the agreement.

The Meigs closure was not illegal because, while most public-use airports in the USA are required to stay open in return for receiving government grants, Chicago has repaid federal funds used to improve the airport. But the precedent concerns aviation groups. "Now, any community with the merest whim to close their local airport can do so and point to Chicago as their justification," says National Air Transportation Association president Jim Coyne.

Coyne has called for "swift and strong condemnation" of Daley's

actions "by the FAA and others within the federal government". FAA administrator Marion Blakey says the FAA is "concerned" about the closure of Meigs Field as it will increase pressure on Chicago O'Hare and Midway airports.



Bulldozers carved Xs across the Meigs runway

PHOTO: DAVID KLOBUCHAR

ORDER

Air Logistics continues fleet renewal with 206L-4 additions

US offshore operator Air Logistics has ordered 14 Bell 206L-4 LongRanger light single-turbine helicopters under a five-year, \$150 million fleet renewal programme launched in February with an order for 15 Sikorsky S-76C+ medium twins (*Flight International*, 11-17 February). Deliveries of the LongRangers, for offshore oil support operations in the Gulf of Mexico, will begin in the second quarter and continue into 2005. Headquartered in New Iberia, Louisiana, and with operations in Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria, Air Logistics has a fleet of more than 90 Bell 206s, including 206L-4s. S-76C+ deliveries are under way at a rate of three a year and will continue into 2006. The Sikorsky contract includes options for up to 15 additional aircraft over the same period. Air Logistics also has the option to trade in up to three older S-76A/A+ helicopters a year for the next three years to offset the cost of the new machines.

OBITUARY

MILT SILLS DIES

Milt Sills, who was involved in the development of every Cessna Citation business jet, died of cancer on 27 March, aged 69. Sills joined Cessna in 1965 as an engineering test pilot, and rose through the ranks to become senior vice-president, product engineering, in 1997. Under Sills' leadership, the Citation X won the 1996 Collier Trophy as the first US commercial aircraft to cruise at Mach 0.92.