

FAA OFFICE

The US Federal Aviation Administration is to establish a programme office in Oklahoma City to oversee implementation of the sport pilot/light-sport aircraft final rule, expected in July. The rule will require the FAA to certificate an existing fleet of more than 10,000 uncertificated ultralight and kit-built aircraft.

EMS CONTRACTS

CJ Systems Aviation Group has signed two new air medical transport contracts. The Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based company has located a Eurocopter TwinStar in Perry, Florida, for the Air Medic One programme, and assigned another to MedFlight of East Kentucky in Pikeville.

BELL DELIVERY

Bell has delivered a 206L-4 LongRanger to the Tulsa, Oklahoma, police department to replace an MD Helicopters MD500E. Mission equipment was installed by Bell subsidiary Edwards & Associates.

EUROCOPTER DEAL

Air Methods has ordered five AS350B2s and one EC130B4 from Eurocopter to be delivered by year-end. The single-turbine helicopters will be used for emergency medical services in the USA and will be completed by Air Methods' products division.

TBO EXTENDED

Bombardier has extended the time between overhauls (TBO) for its popular Rotax 912 piston engines from 1,200h to 1,500h, and is working to extend the TBO on the more powerful 914 series.

DIESEL ENGINE

Wilksch Airmotive is to start certification tests and series production of its 120hp (90kW) WAM-120 three-cylinder, two-stroke diesel engine this month. The Milton Keynes, UK-based manufacturer successfully tested the engine in flight in May, installed on a Thorp T-211 kit-plane, and says it aims to receive experimental class approval by the end of June.

GENERAL AVIATION

NAVIGATION EMMA KELLY / PERTH

Australia teams on low-cost ADS-B for general aviation

Successful trial could lead to national implementation, says air traffic services provider

Airservices Australia has teamed with Australian manufacturer Microair Avionics to design and develop low-cost automatic dependent surveillance – broadcast (ADS-B) avionics for general aviation.

The move is part of the air traffic service provider's ongoing demonstration of ADS-B technology in the Burnett Basin region of Queensland, which Airservices Australia hopes will lead to national ADS-B implementation.

GA equipage is a crucial part of Airservices' ADS-B plans. "If we don't get ADS-B to work for GA, [national deployment] won't work at all," says project manager Greg Dunstone.

Microair will use its T2000SFL Mode A/C transponder as the platform for its ADS-B kit. Microair has been tasked with producing an ADS-B transponder, meeting the small size and low price requirements of the GA and sports aircraft

markets. The system will transmit a reply to conventional radar interrogations, in addition to broadcasting ADS-B position and altitude information via digital datalink.

ADS-B is expected to provide operational and safety benefits compared with the procedural separation services that are provided in remote parts of the country. The service provider has called for responses to a proposal to replace the national radar network with 20 ADS-B ground stations from 2005, which would cost around A\$13 million (\$8.5 million) – a tenth of the cost of replacing the ageing radar network, says Dunstone. While everybody sees the potential, the issues of who should pay for it, how much and when remain to be resolved.

"Key parts of widescale deployment rest with GA," says Dunstone. As part of its efforts to ensure the GA community is part of ADS-B

implementation, Airservices is considering innovative finance schemes, including subsidising mandatory equipment, and after a set period of leasing the equipment the GA operator would own it.

Airservices launched its ADS-B programme in January. Two Royal Flying Doctor Service Beech King Airs, an Energen Eurocopter/Kawasaki BK117 community rescue helicopter and two Sunstate Airlines Link Bombardier Dash 8s are broadcasting position reports by ADS-B using Honeywell-Bendix-King's Mode S transponder (*Flight International*, 11-17 February). Another three Dash 8s and more GA aircraft are to join the programme shortly.

The Asia-Pacific region is closely following Australia's ADS-B programme after air traffic management service providers and operators decided earlier this year to implement ADS-B on major traffic flows across the region from 2006.



AMPHIBIANS

Beriev poised to deliver first three Be-103s to Aerocorp

Beriev plans to deliver the first three Be-103 six-seat amphibians to US distributor Aerocorp International in July, when the type is expected to gain US certification. The Russian manufacturer applied to the US Federal Aviation Administration a year ago under the bilateral aviation agreement between Russia and the USA, which allows for mutual recognition of national certificates. The procedure was used by the FAA for the "shadow" certification of the Ilyushin Il-103 light aircraft and Il-96M/T airliner. The Be-103 programme is expected to break even after production of 250 aircraft, says the manufacturer.

REGULATIONS

FAA calls for quieter Grand Canyon flying

Eurocopter has begun EC130 deliveries to Grand Canyon tour operators as the US Federal Aviation Administration prepares a new "quiet technology" (QT) standard for aircraft used in tour operations over the national park.

Eurocopter has delivered two EC130s to Grand Canyon Helicopters and will soon deliver two more to Papillon Helicopters. The six- or seven-passenger helicopter has a fenestron tailrotor, and main rotor RPM is reduced in the cruise, resulting in a flyover noise level of 84.3EPNdB, says the manufacturer. This is within the proposed QT limits.

The standard aims to meet a Congressional mandate to restore natural quiet to the canyon.