

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **ALASKAN SAABS**

Saab Aircraft has sold two used Saab 340Bs to Peninsula Airways (trading as PenAir), of Anchorage, Alaska. The two aircraft will be delivered by the end of the year, and could be joined by a third Saab in 1997.

■ **ROMANIAN MAINTENANCE**

US-based C-S Aviation Services and Romaero have signed an agreement to form a joint-venture maintenance company for operators in Europe. C-S Romaero will be based in Bucharest, Romania, and will offer heavy-maintenance services for narrowbodies, including the Airbus A320, Boeing 727 and 737 and the McDonnell Douglas DC-9 and MD-80.

■ **LUFTHANSA INDIA**

Lufthansa has received formal approval from the Indian civil aviation authority for its "Lufthansa Cargo India" division to begin operations. The carrier, which will operate as Hinduja Cargo Services, is a joint venture owned 60% by UK-based Hinduja Group, with the remaining 40% held by Lufthansa Cargo. Based in New Delhi, the carrier will begin operations in October, linking major Indian cities with Lufthansa's cargo hub at Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Four Boeing 727-200s will be operated initially, with a fifth aircraft to be added by mid-1997, when connections to South-East Asia will start.

■ **FEDEX FIRE**

Fire extensively damaged a FedEx McDonnell Douglas DC-10 on 5 September en route from Memphis to Boston. The aircraft was diverted to Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, New York after smoke was detected. The crew was unharmed. A US National Transportation Safety Board investigation has begun.

Embraer evaluates next regional developments

AS EMBRAER establishes its EMB-145 in the regional market on its approach to service entry, the Brazilian manufacturer is evaluating possible developments of its commercial product line.

Embraer president Mauricio Botelho says that the company is evaluating developments in size categories on either side of the 50-seat, three-abreast EMB-145, and assumes that "...they will be jet-powered". Botelho concedes that a simple growth derivative of the EMB-145 is not yet envisaged, with any larger jet-airliner requiring a new wing and fuselage.

According to Luis Carlos Affonso, Embraer's director of engineering, studies for a larger-jet development centre around a wider fuselage, enabling at least four-abreast seating. "The wing would also have to be enlarged, and a more powerful version of the Allison AE3000 turbofan adopted," he says.

During the past ten years Embraer has sold more than 300 EMB-120 Brasilia turboprops in the highly competitive 30- to 35-seat market. With Fairchild Dornier and Raytheon already studying jet-powered developments for this market, however,



New Embraer models could be set to take-off in EMB-145 footsteps

Embraer may be forced to modify its own product line. Affonso says that a "shrink" of the EMB-145 is a possibility. "It would be quite straightforward to develop a shorter, lower-capacity, derivative if the market required it," he says.

During the Farnborough air show, Continental Express became the first North American customer for the EMB-145, with a commitment for 200 aircraft, including 25 firm orders and 175 options. The first aircraft will be delivered in December, while the options extend over the next 12 years.

Affonso says that US Federal Aviation Administration certifica-

tion will take place "by early November", while European Joint Aviation Authorities approval is expected "in mid-January".

According to Affonso, EMB-145 production is running at one aircraft a month, but is set to rise to four. "We will reach two a month in the second quarter of 1997, and four a month by the end of next year...the average [rate] for 1997 will be around three aircraft a month," he says.

Including the Continental Express order, Embraer has accumulated 63 firm orders for the EMB-145 and 217 options from customers in nine countries. □

Condor will decide on A320s by year end

AIRBUS INDUSTRIE HAS received commitments from German charter operator Condor for up to 24 Airbus single-aisle aircraft, which are expected to be converted to a firm contract before the end of the year. Airbus says that the deal include orders for six A320s and six A321s, plus six additional options on each type.

The Lufthansa subsidiary has confirmed that it is holding "serious discussions" with Airbus on an order for "aircraft in the A320 family", with the acquisition to be undertaken in addition to the recent order for up to 24 stretch ed

Boeing 757-300s (*Flight International*, 11-17 September).

Condor says that a final decision will not be taken until the end of the year: "We have signed an MoU [memorandum of understanding] to secure some delivery positions," it says, "but the [Airbus] decision depends on other decisions that must be taken on larger projects over the next couple of months... we expect to announce the decision around mid-November". The airline declines to confirm delivery dates, or the number and models of aircraft involved.

The 24 Condor aircraft are part

of some 56 orders and commitments which Airbus holds, but did not announce formally during the Farnborough air show.

During the show, the consortium announced 32 firm orders from Asiana, Cathay Pacific and FedEx, worth \$2.5 billion, but says that it has a further 28 firm orders and 28 commitments worth an additional \$6 billion.

The firm orders, which include one for ten A320s from an undisclosed customer and already included in the firm backlog, are expected to be finalised and announced in the coming weeks. □