

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ BELL 427 CERTIFICATION

Bell received US certification for the light twin-turbine Model 427 late last month, clearing the way for delivery of 80 helicopters the company has on order. In the meantime, Bell "is still looking at the 412, trying to decide what to upgrade and modernise", says Bell president John Murphy.

■ SCHWEIZER BOOST

Schweizer Aircraft hopes that the delivery in April of its first three/four-seat Model 333 will help boost deliveries, which slumped to 40 330s, 300Cs and 300CBs last year. The Rolls-Royce Allison 250-C20W-powered helicopter offers a 90kg (200lb) increase in useful payload over the 330.

LoPresti gets Fury design rights

KATE SANSFIELD/LONDON

THE SWIFT MUSEUM Foundation, owner of the Globe Swift light aircraft type certificate, has granted intellectual rights to LoPresti for the Swift-based Fury design.

The move clears the way for LoPresti, based at Vero Beach, Florida, to begin certificating its all-metal two-seat side-by-side piston single. The move draws to an end a bitter two-year battle between the two entities over the ownership rights to the Fury design, although a separate outstanding dispute between LoPresti and Swift licence owner Aviat Aircraft is still blazing.

"We have signed a formal agreement with the Swift Museum, saying that LoPresti is the sole owner of the modifications designed and developed by our team for the

Fury. We have agreed not to use the Swift name in promotional material," says LoPresti managing director Roy LoPresti.

The LoPresti Fury has had a chequered history. The aircraft, originally the SwiftFury and based on the 1946 Globe Aircraft design, was developed under licence by LoPresti Piper, which spent more than \$7 million on "improvement, flight testing and design work". When Piper went bankrupt in 1991, it withdrew support for the SwiftFury, leaving LoPresti with insufficient funds to extend the Globe Swift licence. It was transferred to Aviat, and the aircraft, which is still being developed, was renamed the Millennium Swift.

"The final resolution of the SwiftFury programme ownership languished for several years although LoPresti has continued to fund and direct its development.

Now the dust has settled, we hope to secure the remaining investment by March to fund the programme through certification and first deliveries (planned for late 2001)," adds LoPresti. The company plans to claw back the bulk of the early 1990s 569 aircraft orderbook.

The 10-month legal dispute between Aviat, based in Afton, Wyoming, and LoPresti continues, with Aviat accusing its competitor of violating trademark and "trade dress" laws. Aviat is objecting to the physical form of the Fury, believing that it will create market confusion with Aviat's Swift.

LoPresti, meanwhile, has responded with a counter lawsuit alleging that Aviat "illegally appropriated design data and parts" from the original LoPresti Piper Swift-Fury design for its 135kW (180hp) Millennium Swift (*Flight International*, 7-13 July, 1999). □

FAA snag sparked Premier revamp

RAYTHEON AIRCRAFT says a "communication" problem with the US Federal Aviation Administration led to the need to redesign the flight control system on the Premier I business jet.

The redesign late in the development programme will delay certification to the end of June (*Flight International*, 1-7 February, P31).

Premier I programme manager Duncan Koerbel says the jet was designed to minimise the hazard posed by engine rotor burst, "but we got tangled up [with the FAA] in the definition of 'minimise'."

While the FAA agreed with the system redundancy provided, he says, the certification authority felt

there were better locations for the hydraulic system reservoir and the flight-control cable runs to the elevator and rudder.

As a result, Raytheon has relocated the reservoir, which was between the engines, to the forward part of the baggage compartment. The control cables for the rudder, meanwhile, have been rerouted away from those for the elevator. Electric trim provides back-up redundancy for both control surfaces, Koerbel says. Redesigned parts are being made.

Three aircraft are in flight test, but the fourth - for function and reliability tests - will stay on the ground until new parts are fitted. □

AASI poised for Jetcruzer 500 production

ADVANCED Aerodynamics and Structures (AASI) has acquired the final critical machinery needed for full-scale production of its Jetcruzer 500 turboprop, slated to begin later this quarter.

The equipment includes a 150t (330,400lb) hydro press system to mass-produce parts, a three-axis milling machine and high-precision

measuring equipment. Long Beach, California-based AASI is performing maximum cruise speed tests on the six-seat Pratt & Whitney PT6A-66A-powered single, for which it has chalked up more than 180 orders, valued at \$220 million. Certification and first deliveries are planned for late this year. □



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