

The monthly newsletter of RegisterAnAircraft.com – the Aviation Division of The Sovereign Group

## Cessna & Beechcraft - the perfect couple

US industrial conglomerate Textron, the owner of Cessna Aircraft, Bell Helicopter and other components, put an end to industry speculation by confirming its purchase of Beech Holdings, parent company of the Beechcraft Corporation, for \$1.4 billion on 26 December.

Beechcraft, the manufacturer of piston and turboprop aircraft including the King Air range, only emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in February 2013. As part of its financial reorganisation, the Hawker Beechcraft name was retired and it announced that it would cease production of its corporate jet lines including the Hawker 4000 and Premier 1A.



The purchase of Beechcraft creates what industry commentator Alasdair Whyte described as a “unique portfolio” of aircraft. Textron CEO Scott Donnelly said: “From our customer’s perspective, this creates a broader selection of aircraft and a larger service footprint – all sharing the same high standards of quality and innovation. The iconic King Air product line perfectly complements our Caravan and Citation jet line-up and our combined global service network will deliver the superior level of services expected by our Cessna, Beechcraft and Hawker customers.”

The twin turboprop King Air range does not have a competing Cessna design and will fit neatly between the single-engine 208B Caravan and light Citation jets. It is understood that under the terms of the deal Textron will also acquire the type certificates for the Hawker 4000 and Premier 1A jets although it made clear it had no intention of reopening the jet production lines. One of the major advantages of the sale must be the large customer base of King Air twin turboprop clients who may be looking to shift to a Citation jet aircraft, a transaction which would now be handled by the same group. Since emerging from bankruptcy, Beechcraft has had a successful trading period with sales for 2013 set to top \$1.8 billion and profits of \$150 million underlined by strong delivery figures for the first three quarters of the year.

## Corporate aviation move to Dubai World Central

It has been clear for a considerable time that business aviation operators in Dubai would have to relocate from Dubai International Airport (DXB) to Dubai World Central – Al Maktoum (DWC), 37km southwest of the city. DXB is heavily congested with limited parking spaces and slot restrictions, whereas the new facility at DWC has no such issues.

Ali Al Naqbi, founding chairman of the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA), has now added to the call for operators to relocate. Four FBOs have already moved and this number looks set to increase over the next few months, particularly as DXB will be effectively closed for a period of 80 days from 1 May 2013 when runways are being overhauled. During this period corporate and general aviation operations will not be permitted and the airport will operate on a single runway basis. It seems increasingly unlikely that they will return.

## RANA SERVICE CENTRE:

### Registration jurisdiction

There is no “one size fits all” aircraft registry. Each of the competing new and existing registries has to have a unique selling point. The reasons for registering an aircraft away from the owner’s home base jurisdiction can be many and complex. To attract this comparatively small but lucrative market, registries must be able to offer outstanding service, be cost-effective, give flexibility in terms of acceptance of aircraft and crew standards, provide confidentiality and political neutrality, not to mention potential tax savings and asset protection through corporate ownership. RANA has built up excellent relationships with both established and new registries and can provide expert advice on their offerings and suitability in each case.



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## China - The numbers

As we reported last month, China eased many of its domestic airspace restrictions with effect from 1 December, removing the requirement to request flight approval from the country's military. This shift in policy should, according to most commentators, serve as a boost to general and corporate aviation. A snapshot of the number of corporate jets currently on the registers of China, Macau and Hong Kong demonstrates that the market, while growing, remains in its infancy compared to other economies.

There are currently 214 aircraft registered in China, 37 in Hong Kong and 7 in Macau. An analysis of the total by type shows the popularity of large cabin aircraft and the success of Gulfstream's sales efforts –

ACJ 318/319	9	Dassault Falcon 7X	12
Boeing BBJ	4	Embraer Legacy	5
Challenger 605	14	Embraer Lineage	1
Challenger 800/850	14	Gulfstream IV/G450	38
Global Express	13	Gulfstream V/G550	50

These figures do not of course include aircraft owned by Chinese citizens that are registered in other jurisdictions.

## Corporate Aircraft News

The first week of December marked two significant milestones for **Honda Aircraft**. On 3 December, the manufacturer marked the 10th anniversary of the prototype HondaJet's first flight, although it was not until 2006 that the firm decided to press ahead with the commercial project. Three days later, the FAA awarded Part 33 type certification to the GE Honda Aero Engine HF120. With this certification Honda can now press ahead with final testing prior to planned FAA project certification and initial customer deliveries in the first quarter of 2015.

On 23 December two of **Cessna's** new models, the Citation M2 and Sovereign+, received FAA certification, allowing the manufacturer to commence deliveries of both aircraft to new owners. The M2, based on the 525 Citation Jet CJ1, features winglets, a new powerplant, and enhanced cabin and avionics. It first flew in August 2013. The latest version of the 680 Sovereign features new P&WC PT306D engines as well as blended winglets.

In another significant boost for the manufacturer, on 13 December US-based private club membership operator Wheels Up announced that it will offer Citation Excel and Sovereign aircraft to its members. Wheels Up will initially take 20 aircraft but this figure is forecast to exceed 100 if the programme's membership reaches 10,000 by 2020.

**Embraer** confirmed that the Legacy 450 made its first flight on 28 December.

### AIRCRAFT FACT FILE:

## Piper PA-42 Cheyenne III



#### CATEGORY:

Turboprop

#### MANUFACTURER:

Piper Aircraft, USA

#### ENGINES:

2x P&WC PT6A-41 turboprops

#### LENGTH:

13.23 m

#### WINGSPAN:

14.53 m

#### RANGE:

4,207 km

#### MAX. SPEED:

582 kmh

#### SEATING CAPACITY:

Up to 9

#### NO. OF CREW:

1 or 2

#### MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW):

5,080 kg

#### DESCRIPTION:

The original Piper Cheyenne (the PA-31T) was based on the PA-31 Navajo Chieftain with turboprop powerplant. After several enhanced versions the PA-42-720 Cheyenne III was announced in September 1977 with FAA certification being granted in early 1980 and deliveries followed in June of that year. The Cheyenne III was aimed as a competitor to the hugely successful Beechcraft King Air range of twin turboprops.

The Cheyenne III offers an extended fuselage, a distinctive T-tail and improved avionics over previous versions. It has itself been replaced by the enhanced Cheyenne IIIA. As well as finding a ready market among corporate aircraft owners, the design has also been used by major airlines including Alitalia and Lufthansa as trainers.