Chapter 736 Newsletter for April 2018

FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL 2.0 INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE

The House of Representatives is expected to consider a six-year FAA reauthorization bill the week of April 23. Dubbed H.R. 4, the legislation addresses many safety and technology reforms, but it makes no mention of so-called air traffic control privatization.

The revised bipartisan bill has found much more support among Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster's (R-Pa.) colleagues sans ATC "privatization." H.R. 4 was introduced by the entire leadership of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and its six subcommittees.

H.R. 4 provides much-needed long-term funding and stability for the FAA. The legislation invests in U.S. airports and makes reforms to improve safety. Among many other provisions, the legislation also would direct the FAA to initiate a rulemaking to increase the duration of aircraft registration for noncommercial general aviation aircraft to 10 years.

The legislation would direct the FAA to establish a task force composed of representatives from GA aircraft owners, operators, labor, and government to assess the oversight and authorization processes and requirements for aircraft under Part 91. The task force would be required to make recommendations to streamline the processes and reduce regulatory cost burdens and delays. The FAA would be required to implement the recommendations of the task force no later than 18 months from the date the bill is signed into law.

Under H.R. 4, the aircraft registration office would be exempt from closure in the case of a government shutdown. The legislation also seeks improvements on privacy including guidance on pilots and operators who want to block their N-number from real-time public flight tracking.

The Senate FAA reauthorization bill is awaiting action by the full Senate. Once both bills have cleared their respective chambers, a House-Senate conference committee will meet to iron out the differences.

GA Pilots Need Better Weather Info, Study Finds

General aviation pilots are not excelling when it comes to understanding weather information that's critical to flight safety, according to a recent study conducted at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. The researchers tested 204 GA pilots to measure their ability to interpret weather information from various sources, including radar displays and written reports. The pilots correctly answered only about 58 percent of the questions. Pilot training is part of the problem, but according to researcher Elizabeth Blickensderfer, weather displays and reports that are difficult to interpret also contribute to the poor performance. "We have to improve how weather information is displayed so that pilots can easily and quickly interpret it," she said. "At the same time, of course, we can fine-tune pilot assessments to promote learning and inform training."

As an example, Blickensderfer said, respondents were prompted to choose the correct interpretation of METAR (Meteorological Terminal Aviation Routine Weather Report) information, for example: "CB DSNT N MOV N." Pilots also were asked to interpret a ground-based radar cockpit display, which shows only recent thunderstorm activity—not current conditions. The test also asked pilots to look at an infrared (color) satellite image and determine where the highest-altitude clouds would most likely be found. Commercial pilots with instrument ratings scored highest, with an average of 65 percent; instrument-rated private pilots ranked second, at 62 percent; and non-instrument-rated private pilots scored 57 percent.

FLYING-CAR VENTURE TERRAFUGIA EXPANDS WORKFORCE

Terrafugia, the company founded in 2006 by five Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduates to bring the goal of a practical flying car to life, has added 75 jobs to its workforce, is recruiting, and expects to hire 50 or more additional workers by the end of 2018.

The **acquisition** of Terrafugia last fall by privately held Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, a Fortune 500 company with assets "that span the automotive chain," provided Terrafugia with resources for the expansion, Woburn, Massachusetts-based Terrafugia said in an April 10 **news release**.

"Technology and innovation are at the core of Terrafugia, drawing in unique talent across departments. The recent jump in staff shows our commitment to breaking ground in the emerging flying car market," said CEO Chris Jaran, noting that a year ago, Terrafugia had fewer than 20 employees.

"With [Geely Holding Group's] leadership and innovation in the automotive space, we are able to build the team we need to meet on-time deliverables."

Terrafugia's ramping-up of jobs in Woburn added positions in engineering, accounting, human resources, marketing, and operations.

A new research-and-development division in Petaluma, California, where engineering designs and concepts are being created, is expected to be the site of much of the company's future growth, the announcement said.

The company expects its first product, a two-seat, fixed-wing "roadable aircraft" called Transition, to enter the market in 2019.

Its next generation concept is the TF–2, a vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft designed for cargo and passenger loadings.

Information on open positions is available on the **careers page** of the Terrafugia website.

FAA ALLOWS PILOTS TO CONDUCT PA–28 FUEL SELECTOR\INSPECTIONS

The FAA has published a final rule that supersedes an airworthiness directive (AD) issued in January, and will allow owners of many Piper PA–28-series airplanes who hold at least a private pilot certificate to inspect their aircraft fuel-tank selector cover placards for proper positioning.

Since the AD was issued Jan. 23, its compliance deadline has been pushed back three times in response to successive alternative method of compliance requests from AOPA—first to allow for public comments to be reviewed, and now, to cover the time interval until the updated AD's April 20 effective date.

Aircraft owners who elect to use AOPA's global **AMOC** must first notify their appropriate principal inspector or manager of the local flight standards district office. After the AD's April 20 effective date, aircraft owners can perform the initial inspection.

The AD arose "from a quality control issue that resulted in the installation of fuel tank selector covers with the placement of the left and right fuel tank selector placards installed in reverse," according to the document, which adds that "the unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in fuel starvation and loss of engine power in flight."

In its favorable response, the FAA noted that since it issued the AD, "we have determined that the owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate will be allowed to perform the preflight check of the fuel tank selector placards."

The inspection check must be entered into the airplane records to show compliance with the AD. If the inspection reveals that the placards are not properly installed, a temporary placard must be installed before further flight, with a permanent corrected placard replacement accomplished within the next 100 hours time-in-service.