ABACE 2017 HIGHLIGHTS ENTHUSIASM FOR BUSINESS AVIATION

News / Business aviation, Events / Festivals

As the Asian Business Aviation Conference & Exhibition (ABACE) concluded its third and final day, organizers reported that the sixth edition of the event was perhaps the strongest to date.

ABACE took place April 11–13, 2017, at the Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport. The event is produced through a partnership between the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and the Shanghai Airport Authority (SAA), and co-hosted by the Asian Business Aviation Association.

“ABACE appears to have met or exceeded everyone’s expectations,” said NBAA President and CEO Ed Bolen. “The industry continues to see opportunities in the region, as illustrated in part by the introduction of two aircraft models displayed for the first time in China. We were also pleased with the strong support for general aviation shown by government leaders here. Clearly, there continues to be enormous potential for business aviation in China, and across Asia.”

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Bolen pointed to other examples illustrating the show's success:

· The ABACE exhibit floor had more than 180 exhibitors, and the show's floor footprint was the largest ever. About 40 percent of ABACE exhibitors were based in Asia, and more than 40 countries were represented among ABACE attendees, demonstrating the show's international representation.

· ABACE featured 33 aircraft on display this year, including the full spectrum of business aircraft, from pistons through intercontinental jets – including an air-ambulance aircraft – and helicopters. Ten exhibitors hosted chalets situated on the display ramp.

· ABACE also featured the first-time appearance of an exhibitor's solar-powered, unmanned aircraft.

Bolen noted the government support for the general aviation industry demonstrated at ABACE; for example:

- Top national and international officials served as keynote speakers for the ABACE2017 Opening General Session. On the stage at the session were Jiang Huaiyu, director general of the Eastern Regional Headquarters for the Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC); Geoff Jackson, executive director for the U.S.-China Aviation Cooperation Program; Hanscom Smith, counsul general of the United States Consulate General in Shanghai; Axel Cruau, the French Consul General in Shanghai; Stephen Creamer, director of the Air Navigation Bureau at the International Civil Aviation Organization, and Jing Yiming, SAA president. Wang Jijie, SAA vice president, was the host of the ceremony.
- The SAA president was also part of a forum, hosted by the Eastern China Regional Administration of CAAC, the SAA and the NBAA, focused on the continued development and expansion of China's business aviation infrastructure.

Jiang Huaiyu mentioned at the forum that ABACE had been successfully held in Shanghai for the past five years, serving as an international communications platform for business aviation in China and across Asia.

With China's reform and opening up, as well as the continued economic development, the number and scale of business aviation companies, and the number of business aviation flights have seen an annual increase of 20 percent.

The advantages of business aviation in the process of developing general aviation can be observed in the personalized, multilevel and popular purchasing trends. The General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China released the Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Promoting the Development of General Aviation Industry in May, 2016, which is the first official document issued from a national strategical perspective with guidance on the development of general aviation.

Following the guidance, the Civil Aviation Administration of China recently issued the Thirteen Five-Year Plan of the General Aviation Development. Furthermore, Feng Zhenglin, director of the CAAC emphasized during the 2017 China NPC & CPPCC Annual Sessions, that the country is promoting the development of civil aviation, with the intention to encourage the economic development in the region. General aviation has become a crucial component in the development China's civil aviation industry.

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Jing Yiming stated in his remarks that there were over 6,000 business aviation traffic movements at the two Shanghai airports in 2016, an annual increase of 10 percent compared to 2015. “With the release of the new national policy for developing general aviation, the business aviation industry in Shanghai will enjoy a wider market space and richer resource supply,” he said.

“SAA values and is continuously paying attention to the development of business aviation in Shanghai. The second business aviation base at Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport has begun construction and is expected to operate in 2018.

“Preliminary research on the Pudong Airport business aviation base project has also been carried out,” he said. “With the support from the government, SAA is putting great effort into facilitating the development of business aviation, with a goal to make Shanghai the business aviation center of North East Asia, and a qualified outstanding Global City, and to contribute to the nation’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ strategy.”

As in years past, ABACE provided a number of educational offerings, including sessions examining the ongoing evolution of unmanned aircraft systems; humanitarian uses for rotorcraft, including for medical transportation and emergency response; special considerations for financing new and used aircraft; promoting a robust safety culture in business aviation flight operations; and the impact on business aviation operations following the recent implementation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Open Skies Agreement.

The show also featured a Careers in Business Aviation Day, with participation from 235 students, from eight schools located in Shanghai, Nanjing and the Hunan province. The event, which was jointly organized by NBAA and AsBAA, included an opening presentation, dedicated sessions for the students and a tour of the ABACE2017 aircraft display.

Bolen concluded: “Over the past five years, ABACE has grown to become a must-attend event, not only for industry stakeholders in China and throughout Asia, but also for the worldwide business aviation community. We thank our exhibitors, attendees and sponsors, and we look forward to returning to Shanghai for the 2018 edition of ABACE.”

ABACE2018 will take place from April 17-19, 2018, in Shanghai China.

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