



TRU PROFLIGHT OPENS FLORIDA TRAINING CENTER

News / Maintenance / Trainings



TRU Simulation + Training officially opened its new **ProFlight** satellite pilot training center in Lutz, Fla., on September 28, marking the Textron subsidiary's major push into the business aircraft training arena. Textron formed TRU in 2013 and in July last year acquired ProFlight, a Cessna CitationJet and Conquest training provider based in Carlsbad, Calif. Going forward, TRU (Booth N3032) will be the provider of factory training for all new Textron Aviation and Bell Helicopter Textron aircraft.

The company's new Lutz facility, which is 15 miles north of Tampa International Airport, earned FAA Part 142 certification in June and now has two simulators installed: an FAA level-D Citation CJ3 device and a King Air 350i/250 Pro Line Fusion touchscreen simulator pending similar approval. It also has several classrooms, a King Air flight training device with a projection visual display and a "next-gen" CJ3 procedures trainer that is essentially a non-certified flight training device that uses three high-definition monitors placed side-by-side as its visual display.

Next year, the Lutz location will add level-D CJ4, Grand Caravan and Citation Latitude simulators, while the existing King Air device will also be approved for C90GTx training. By the end of 2018, up to a dozen full-motion simulators for new Cessna and Beechcraft products are expected at the Lutz center, TRU president and CEO Ian Walsh told AIN, though this will require an expansion—already planned—of the current three-bay simulator facility.

Next year will also see a CJ3+/M2 device added at TRU's ProFlight facility in Carlsbad, Calif., as well as Bell 429 and 525 simulators at a new TRU location in Valencia, Spain, that is slated to

open next year. Further expansion is planned in Brazil, which will have Bell 412EPI, 429 and 525 simulators when it opens in late 2017/early 2018, and Singapore, which is slated to open in 2018 and offer Bell 429 and 525 simulator training.

In addition, TRU opened a new 35,000-sq-ft aircraft maintenance training center at the Textron Aviation campus in Wichita last month. Training initially will focus on King Airs with Rockwell Collins Pro Line Fusion avionics: the C90GTx, 250 and 350i. In 2017, it plans to expand maintenance training to include all current-production Cessna and Beechcraft airplanes.

Walsh, a 14-year Textron veteran who started at Bell Helicopter and left a post at the parent company's Weapons and Sensor Systems division to head TRU, said he expects ProFlight's business aircraft training business to quadruple in the next three years, with the helicopter training side also experiencing healthy growth. That likely would mean adding another ProFlight training center at some point, though Walsh is focused on further developing the Lutz and Carlsbad facilities in the near term.

"But it's not about being the biggest business aircraft training company," Walsh told AIN, "it's just about being the best." —C.T.

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